

July 16, 2023 • Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
9:00 and 11:30 am



Zion ⁺lutheran
church

WELCOME TO ZION

When we gather for worship, we're receptive to God's word and we rejoice in God's grace through song, prayer, and Holy Communion. The history of Christian worship is rich with rituals formed by generations. These traditions, prayers, and pastoral teachings help connect our lives with Christ. In our daily lives, we show God's love by serving our community, both locally and globally.

We are a group of believers seeking to respond to Christ's call to worship and serve, even as we wrestle with the big questions of life. We want you to know that you and your questions, faith, and doubts are welcome here!

HOW WE WORSHIP

The Holy Spirit gathers people around the means of grace: the Word of God and the Sacraments. From the table of Holy Communion where Christ comes with forgiveness, life, and salvation, God sends us out to share the good news and care for those in need. Our worship follows this pattern in four parts: Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending. By its very nature, Lutheran worship is participatory and the service is contained within this bulletin. Worship leaders guide us through the service and our responses are printed in **bold type**.

We welcome children in our worship services! If needed, a nursery is available down the hall past the restrooms. The restrooms contain changing tables, as needed.

Throughout the service, members of Zion's music ministry offer their talents as an offering to God. Please receive their musical gifts as a time for prayer, contemplation, or praise of God rather than a performance to be applauded, so that we may worship God throughout our time here together.

GREEN SEASON

The Sundays following Pentecost take us through the summer months and into the fall. These many months take us through many of the stories during the ministry of Jesus. We will also spend a significant portion of the Green Season hearing portions of Paul's letter to the Roman church. The purpose of these readings is to encourage us to grow in our faith in Christ - like the growth of a green plant - little by little, each day.

ON THE COVER

Sower at Sunset,
Vincent Van Gogh, 1853-1890

From Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57797>.
Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Van_Gogh_-_S%C3%A4mann_bei_untergehender_Sonne.jpeg.

Zion Lutheran Church

9944 Leslie Road • San Antonio, Texas 78254 • 210-688-3090 • zion@zionsa.org

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, gathers us in worship.

PRELUDE

Over My Head, African-American Spiritual
Celeste Mussey, Soloist

WELCOME

Pastor Bill Swantner

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

A brief silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God,

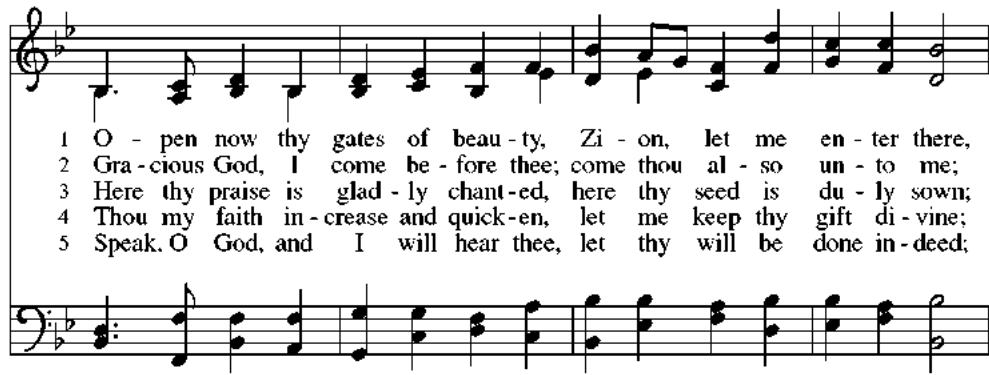
have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

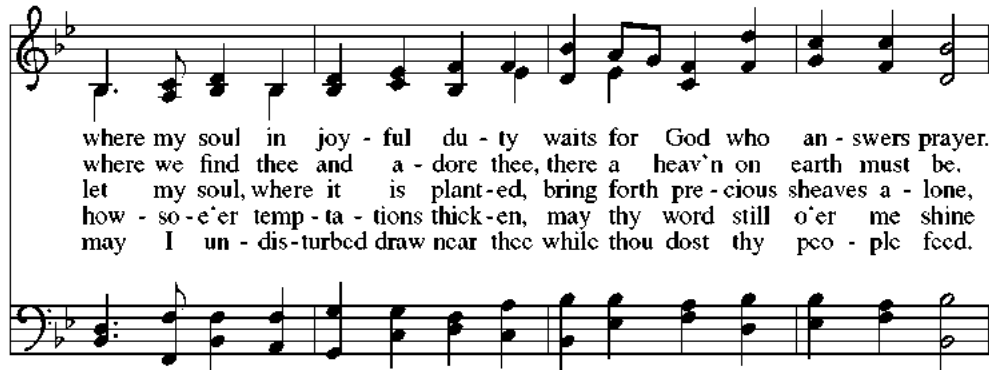
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty



1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,
 2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so un - to me;
 3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant - ed, here thy seed is du - ly sown;
 4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick - en, let me keep thy gift di - vine;
 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done in - deed;



where my soul in joy - ful du - ty waits for God who an - swers prayer.
 where we find thee and a - dore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be.
 let my soul, where it is plant - ed, bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,
 how - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick - en, may thy word still o'er me shine
 may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee while thou dost thy pco - plc feed.



Oh, how bless - ed is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace!
 To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, let it be thy tem - ple now!
 so that all I hear may be fruit - ful un - to life in me.
 as my guid - ing star through life, as my com - fort in all strife.
 Here of life the foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

Text: Benjamin Schmolck, 1672–1737; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
 Music: UNSER HERRSCHER, Joachim Neander, 1650–1680

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
 and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



1 Lord God, heav-en - ly King, al - might-y God and Fa - ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of



God, you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us; you are



scat-ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our pray-er.



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



3 For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly



Spir-it, in the glo-ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

The praises of Zion, O God, are your due;
Your mercies are countless, our merits are few;
The weight of transgressions your grace will remove,
And give life we cherish, redeemed by your love. *Refrain.*

Your strength has established the sea and the plain;
Each day all creation your praise sings again;
The God of salvation, our hope for always,
A shelter in darkness, the light of our days. *Refrain.*

The earth's endless bounty, Lord, let us preserve;
Its richness and splendor we less than deserve;
The cycle of seasons gives sense to the year,
An autumn for harvest, a springtime of cheer! *Refrain.*

SECOND READING: ROMANS 8:1-11

¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Please rise, as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. *Repeat alleluia*
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!”

¹⁸“Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pastor Kathi Johnson

Please rise as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling



1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heav'n, to
2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - 'ry
3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us all thy
4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion, pure and spot - less



earth come down! Fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy
trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us
life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -
let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -



faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion,
find thy prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;
more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing,
ly re - stored in thee! Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,



pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
Al - pha and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as
serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788

Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887

APOSTLES' CREED

Let us now confess our faith using the words of the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic* church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**catholic: universal*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

United by the Holy Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

Each petition ends: Hear us, O God

Response: **Your mercy is great.**

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Please be seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please check the back pages of this bulletin for additional announcements.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus.

OFFERING

At this time, we give our offerings with thanksgiving to God. These offerings support the mission and ministry of Zion, including the care of those in need. To give online, please visit ZionSA.org. Children are invited to come forward during the music and place their offerings in the jar to the left of the Chancel area (near the Sacristy door). During the offering music, the pastor sets the table with the elements for Holy Communion. Please know that this is the Lord's table, and all are welcome to receive Communion.

OFFERING MUSIC

He's Been Faithful, by Carol Cymbala
Celeste Mussey, Soloist

Please rise, as you are able.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of mercy and grace,
the eyes of all wait upon you, and you open your hand in blessing. Fill us with good things at your table, that we may come to the help of all in need, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
 heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the
 high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command, his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and the promise of his coming again, we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty, not as we ought but as we are able; we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, ✠ your servants, and these your own gifts of bread and wine, so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace, and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, may be formed to live as your holy people and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION

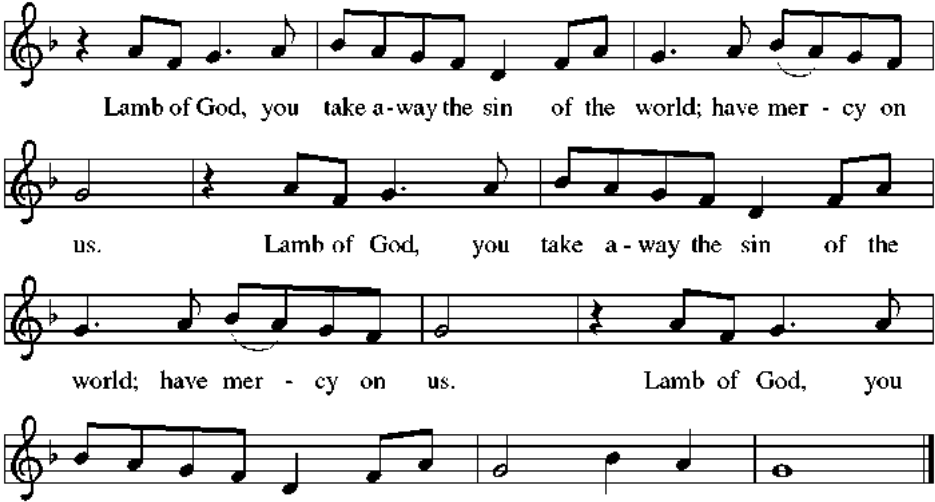
These are the gifts of God for you, the beloved people of God.

Please be seated.

COMMUNION

Jesus welcomes all to this holy meal! Children who commune should be assisted by adults who are with them. Those who do not wish to receive Holy Communion are invited to come forward to receive a blessing. If you are unable to come forward, please notify an usher and we will bring the sacrament to you. Gluten-free wafers are available; please ask the person serving bread. White grape juice is available in the center of the communion tray for any who are unable to drink wine. After taking Communion, please return to your seat for singing and prayer.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMN

As Rain from the Clouds

1 As rain from the clouds will your word come to earth.
 2 As grain that is scat - tered your word has been sown
 3 As rays of the sun shall your word light the world.

as snow from the heav - ens re - fresh - ing the land.
 on rocks and on road - ways, in good earth and sand.
 a - wak - ing and warm - ing and heal - ing our land.

Then soft - en our soil that the good seed may grow
 Make fer - tile our soil that the good seed may grow
 Then shine in our hearts that the good seed may grow

and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand.
 and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand.
 and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand.

We praise you, our God, for the dew of your word;
 We praise you, our God, for the seed of your word;
 We praise you, our God, for the light of your word;

we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil.
 we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil.
 we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil.

We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,
 We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,
 We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,
 for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.
 for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.
 for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.

Text: Delores Dufren, OSB, b. 1939
 Music: AFTON WATER, Jonathan F. Spilman, 1812-1896; arr. hymnal version
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After communion, we rise and share in blessing and prayer.

BLESSING

May the true body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you always In God's grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER

Let us pray. Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us out in peace.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
 The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN

The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve



1 The Spir - it sends us forth to serve; we go in
2 We go to com - fort those who mourn and set the
3 We go to be the hands of Christ, to scat - ter
4 Then let us go to serve in peace, the gos - pel



Je - sus' name to bring glad tid - ings
bur - dened free; where hope is dim, to
joy like seed and, all our days, to
to pro - claim. God's Spir - it has em -



to the poor, God's fa - vor to pro - claim.
share a dream and help the blind to see.
cher - ish life, to do the lov - ing deed.
pow - ered us; we go in Je - sus' name.

Text: Delores Dufner, osb, b. 1939
Music: CHESTERFIELD, attr. Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820
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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Dignitate, by Andrew Moore

AVAILABLE FOR PRAYER

Immediately following each service, Stephen Ministers are often available to pray with you at the altar rail. All prayers and conversations are confidential.

Worship Support

Altar Guild

Doris Enderlin, Susan Johns,
Mary Ann Schmitt, Sharon Solanik,
Carolyn Thronson, Marcy Wilburn,
Gina Williams

Lay Reader

9:00 & 11:30

Julie Dupont

Cantor

Celeste Mussey

Communion Servers

9:00

Linda Hoffman, Jake Apodaca

11:30

Rachel Cannady, Suzi Lockamy

Livestream

Steve Johnson, David Umlang

Sound

Scott VanDoren

July Ushers

9:00

LeShea Clabough, Kevin McGee,

Dave and Doris Newman,
Karen and James Sturdivant,
Russell and Susanne Warren

11:30

Chris Berg, Audrey DeHart,
Caleb DeHart,
Kim and Mike DeHart

THIS WEEK AT ZION



Scan QR code for
this month's
calendar

Sunday, July 16

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------|--------------------|
| Worship in person | 9am | Sanctuary |
| Worship Camp | 10:30 | Sanctuary |
| Worship in person and online | 11:30 | Sanc & YouTube |
| Addams Family Performance | 2:30 | Family Life Center |

Monday, July 17

| | | |
|----------------|------|--------------------|
| Game Group | 1pm | Education Building |
| LMM Fellowship | 6:30 | Sea Island |

Tuesday, July 18

| | | |
|--------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Exercise Group | 9am | Church 2 |
| Council Meeting | 6:30pm | Fellowship Hall |
| Warriors Anonymous | 7pm | Church 2 |

Wednesday, July 19

| | | |
|-----------------|------|--------------------|
| Crafty Bunch | 9:30 | Education Building |
| Weight Watchers | 9:30 | Church 2 |
| AA Meeting | 7pm | Church 2 |
| Al-Anon Meeting | 7pm | Fellowship Hall |

Thursday, July 20

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Quilting | 9:30 | Fellowship Hall |
| Weight Watchers | 9:30 | Church 2 |
| Stephen Ministry Training Class | 7pm | MC 7 |
| Addams Family Performance | 7:30 | Family Life Center |

Friday, July 21

| | | |
|---------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Addams Family Performance | 7:30 | Family Life Center |
|---------------------------|------|--------------------|

Saturday, July 22

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Weight Watchers | 7:30 & 9:30 | Church 2 |
| Addams Family Performance | 7:30 | Family Life Center |

Sunday, July 23

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------|--------------------|
| Worship in person | 9am | Sanctuary |
| Worship Camp | 10:30 | Sanctuary |
| Worship in person and online | 11:30 | Sanc & YouTube |
| Addams Family Performance | 2:30 | Family Life Center |

Women of Zion

Join in activities and fellowship with other women in the congregation. Scan the QR code to get on the mailing list, or send an e-mail to WOZ@zionsa.org.

Women of Zion Events

- Tuesday August 8, WOZ Bible Study & More. Fellowship, service projects with a Bible study on the second Tuesday at 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. All women are invited!



WOZ@zionsa.org



Men's Fellowship

Third Monday, July 17 at 6:30pm

All men are invited to meet at Sea Island (11715 Bandera) for food, thoughtful study, camaraderie, and all YOUR ideas for Men's Ministry! Contact David Umlang at lmm@zionsa.org if you need more details.

Zion Theatre Group's Addams Family

Tickets for the Zion Theatre Group's production of The Addams Family are now on sale. Performances are today and next weekend—July 16, 20, 21, 22, 23

To purchase show tickets, go to ztg.booktix.com. To order dinner seats, email Sammy at theatre@zionsa.org. Please review your date and seat selection carefully before placing your order. With online sales, exchanges and refunds are not available.

Game Group

July 17 at 1:00pm

Come for table games and daytime fellowship for all ages. Meet in the Education Building.

CONTACT



zionsa.org



[zionsa](https://www.facebook.com/zionsa)



[@zionsatx](https://www.instagram.com/zionsatx)



zion@zionsa.org



210-688-3090



9944 Leslie Road, 78254



8:30am-5:00pm

Friday close at 3:00pm

STAFF DAY OFF

Pastor Kathi - Monday

kjohnson@zionsa.org

Pastor Dan - Friday

dheim@zionsa.org

Rob Mikulski - Monday

rmikulski@zionsa.org

Sammy Mikulski - Monday

theatre@zionsa.org

Staff Update

During the summer, if you have information for the bulletin and/ or Z-mail, please contact Megan via email, Publications@ZionSA.org. You can also phone Karen Sturdivant in our Church Office, 210-688-3090.

Interested in Serving in Worship?

Come to Worship Camp!

We welcome hundreds of people to our campus on Sunday mornings, and we'd love for you to help provide that welcome! If you'd like to serve as an usher, communion server, and/or lay reader, come to Worship Camp. We'll meet three weeks in July at 10:30am - July 16, 23, and 30. Pick the date that works for you! This is for everyone - whether you've been serving a while or are learning something new. Questions? Reach out to Pr. Kathi via email or phone.

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Zion is a Stephen Ministry Church!

Stephen Ministry Training Update

Our Stephen Ministers complete their training this week and prepare to be commissioned next Sunday's worship services. Pray for God to bless their caregiving and to work

through them to bring hope and healing to people's lives:

SESSION NINETEEN: GO—GOD IS WITH YOU!

This session is a time for review and inspiration as our Stephen Minister trainees prepare to "follow Jesus" in their caregiving journey. They review what it means to be caregivers who are Compassionate, Full of Faith, Skilled, Trustworthy, and Christ-Centered.

With the completion of their training, they are ready to provide quality, one-to-one caring ministry on behalf of our congregation.

If you or someone you know could benefit from the listening ear, caring presence, and Christ-centered support of a Stephen Minister, please call 210-688-3090 and ask for LeShea Clabough.

Zion's Dinner Out

Thursday, August 3, 6:30pm

You are invited to join in fellowship and a meal at Max and Louie's New York Diner, 226 W Bitters, Suite 126 - adjacent to Santikos Embassy Theatre.

RSVP by July 30 to Dave or Doris Newman at 210-859-7860 or ddnewman@mac.com.

Your generosity empowers Zion's Ministry

From Sunday morning worship to feeding families for the holidays, collecting clothing for local charity or relief supplies shipped hundreds of miles, to friendships fostered worldwide with simple hand stitches.

Because you kindly share your time, lend your skills, and support your ministry financially, Zion's impact reaches far beyond the four walls of our sanctuary. On behalf of everyone we're able to help, thank you for your contribution.

For more ways to support Zion's mission, scan this QR code.



Summer Reflection

Pastor Kathi Johnson

Worship Camp starts this Sunday! It's not really a camp - no bug spray or sunscreen will be required. But every so often in our life together as a church, it's good for us to consider better ways of offering welcome to those who decide to worship with us on Sunday mornings. We already have great groups of ushers, communion servers, and lay readers - but if you've even **thought about** participating in one of these ministries, come to Worship Camp on one of the three Sundays (July 16, 23, 30) to see how **you** can be a part of extending welcome to worshipers!

A few weeks ago, I preached about welcome, saying that how we welcome people matters. And in that sermon, I posed some questions:

- How do we make space for others here at Zion - not just on Sundays, but in our smaller groups and gatherings, too?
- How do we welcome those who've always gone to church somewhere, and those who've never gone to church anywhere?
- What about those who haven't been welcome in churches ever before?
- How do we allow for children and the elderly, and those of us who are in between?
- How do we allow for people to be sad, or joyous?
- How do we welcome those who live differently than we live, or those who don't live nearby?

I closed that sermon by saying that how we welcome people matters, not just because Zion is a great church with great people, but because **when we welcome people here, we welcome them with the very love of God!** Extending that love of God is what we are **all** called to do.



**JULY 16, 2023
SEVENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST**



God's word makes a difference for our lives.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Sunday | Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 | Parable of the sower |
| Monday | Isaiah 55:10-13 | God's word is powerful |
| Tuesday | Romans 8:1-11 | Life in the Spirit |
| Wednesday | 2 Timothy 3:10-17 | Paul's charge to Timothy |
| Thursday | Joshua 1:1-9 | God's commission to Joshua |
| Friday | Hebrews 4:8-13 | The rest that God has promised |
| Saturday | Psalms 65 | Thanksgiving for earth's bounty |
| Sunday | Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 | Parable of the weeds |

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!"

Matthew 13:8-9 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Creative God, your word accomplishes all that you desire; we thank you for your work of love that brings hope and healing through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtimes Prayer:

Almighty God, by your strength you bring forth food from the earth. Thank you for the abundant harvest that we enjoy today. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God's creative word bear fruit in your life through Christ.



JULY 16, 2023

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Lord, Let My Heart
Be Good Soil*



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What do you think it takes to be a good gardener and have a successful harvest?
- We can receive God's word in worship, by reading the Bible, and through prayer and conversations. What is a favorite way for you to receive God's word?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23.

Jesus compares the sower's seed to God's word that bears much fruit. The seed needs to be planted in good soil to grow. Jesus compares the soil to our lives and our ability to hear and receive God's word. We can wonder if we are the good soil that receives God's word, but it may be that at different times we exhibit all four soils. There are times God's word doesn't stick (the path); sometimes it takes root but quickly dries up (rocky ground); sometimes the word gets smothered by competing concerns (thorns); sometimes the word takes root and produces much fruit (good soil). Our lives can experience all of these moments. This parable can be a humble reminder for us to be open to God's word so that our lives bear the fruit of love and peace. No matter how God's word bears fruit in our lives, it grows into a surprising harvest.

Discuss: How and when are you most attentive to God's word in your life?

Pray: **Dear God, you who are the source of all living things, bless us with faith in your word and your work in our lives to bless the world through Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE



Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you serve others with the power of God's healing and forgiveness?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Gather four small pots. Fill the first with gravel to represent a path, the second with rocks, the third with thorns or thistles, and the fourth with good soil. Tell the parable of the sower in your own words. As you hold each pot, pray: **Lord God, keep us from having hearts that are hard, like a path. Keep us from having hearts that are shallow, like soil on rocky ground. Keep us from having hearts that are easily choked, like seeds among thorns. Instead, make our hearts like good soil, so that we gladly receive your word and accept it. Amen.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

