Life & Growth at Zion

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

Welcome to Worship!

Information for guests & visitors, including our beliefs and procedures for Holy Communion as a congregation of the LCMS, can be found on the cards in the back of each pew. If you have any questions please reach out to our pastors or the church office using the contact information found on the last page of this newsletter.

Blessings on your time in worship!

As We Gather...

On the surface, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard seems wrong. Shouldn't the worker receive the wages he or she deserves for his or her time and labor? It offends our sense of fair play that one who worked less should receive the same as one who worked more. If you only focus on the perspective of the laborer, that might seem true, but if you focus on the generosity of the vineyard owner, you get a very different perspective. God's mercy is not the reward for our labor but a pure gift of grace given to those who deserve none of His kindness. When you begin to look at this parable from that perspective, God's abundant generosity becomes clear. The Lord does what none of us would do—forgives all our sins, no matter how great, and bestows upon us the mercy and salvation we did nothing to earn and could never deserve. How can anyone begrudge Him such generosity?

Week at a Glance

Sunday, September 20

- 8:30am: Traditional Worship w/ Holy Communion
- 9:30am: Sunday School
- 9:30am: Pray & Praise with Parents
- 9:40am: Bible Class
- 10:45am: Creative Worship

Monday, September 21

No School-Martin Luther School
(Professional Development Day)

- 1:30pm: Nursery Roll Circle
- 6:00pm: Ladies Bible Study Potluck
- 6:30-8:00pm Mary/Martha Bible Study
- 6:00pm: Elders Meeting
- 7:00pm: AA Meeting

Tueday, September 22

- 1-2:30pm: Tuesday Bible Class
  Study of the book of Job continues

Wednesday, September 23

- 5:45pm: Hosanna Choir Rehearsal
- 6:00pm: Confirmation
- 6:00pm: King's Kids
- 6:45pm: Bells
- 7:30pm: Youth Group

Saturday, September 26

- 5:00pm: Worship w/ Holy Communion

Sunday, September 27

- 8:30am: Traditional Worship
- 9:30am: Sunday School
- 9:40am: Bible Class
- 10:45am: Creative Worship w/ Holy Communion
- 3:00pm: Kuchenfest @ Messiah-Mandan

UPCOMING Events

Sunday, September 20
9:40am
Pastor Marcis will lead
"The Writings of the Apostle Paul",
Bible Class in lower level.

Monday, September 21
1:30pm
Nursery Roll Circle
Home of Karen Anders

Monday, September 21
Mary & Martha
Ladies Fellowship & Bible Class
6:00pm Potluck
6:30-8:00pm Bible Study

Tuesday, September 22
Tuesday Bible Class Begins
1-2:30pm
Everyone is welcome to join this study of Job.

Friday, September 25
10pm-6am
Lock-in Grades 5-8

Sunday, September 27
3pm
ND Lutherans for Life
Kuchenfest @ Messiah, Mandan

Sunday, September 20
God Creates Adam & Eve
Genesis 2:4-22
(Preschool-Grade 4)
Acolyte Review
(Get to know the Elders)
and Apple Crisp!
(Grades 5-8)

Sunday, September 20
8:30am: Chase Johnson
10:45am: Hadlee Schmidt
Samantha E.

Sunday, September 27
8:30am: Hadley Zacher
10:45am: Kira & Cooper Younker

Today's Sermon

"Equalizing Grace"

The parable that Jesus tells in the Gospel reading for today is an important one for us to remember. We see the Law and the Gospel clearly through this parable. First, this parable of laborers who go out into the vineyard and are paid the same for different work shows us that our idea of fair might not be that same as God's justice. It humbles us to see that grace which saves extends to us all because we all need it. But second, this parable is for those who identify with the vineyard workers hired at the 11th hour. The grace of God extends to many according to His goodness. You don't have to be the strongest, the smartest, or the best of anything to still receive God's grace. God has made you worthy. Trust in Him.

Questions:

1. Who are the two groups that this parable is for?

2. What does "laboring in the vineyard" look like in the context of the Christian life?

3. Is everybody equal before God?

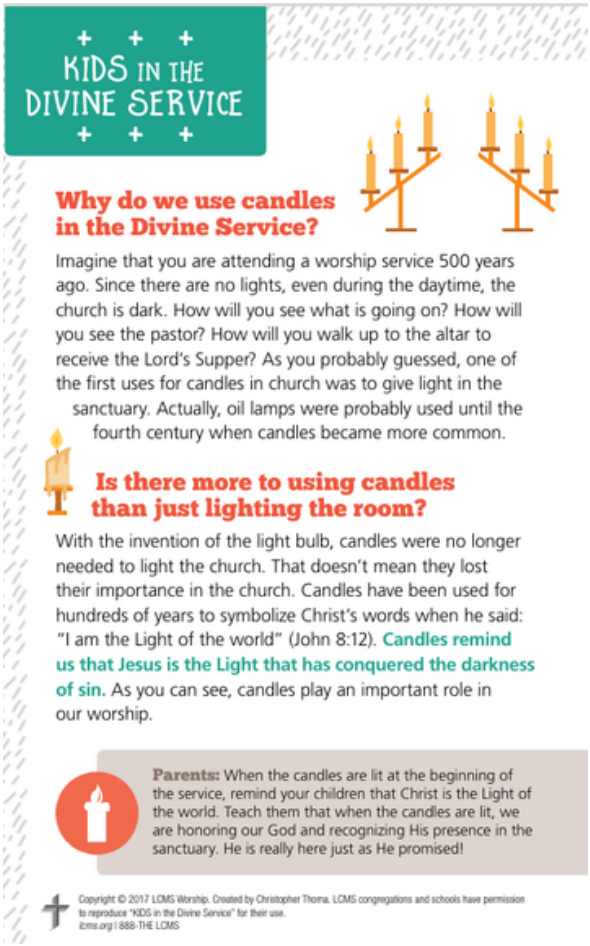
To hear or view Zion's podcast or video podcasts, go to: *www.zionbismarck.org*
Choose: "About Us", then "Podcasts", click on "Learn More;"
Choose either the Video Podcasts or Podcasts,
then select the one you would like to see or hear.

Bible Class will meet in the basement. Pastor Marcis will lead the study on, "*The Writings of the Apostle Paul*".
You are invited to join the class

Zion YOUTH

Wednesday, September 23rd
7:30-9:00pm
Mark your calendars for
Bible study about the new Stained-Glass Symbols in the sanctuary & the History of Stained Glass.
Questions? Contact Director of Family Ministry, Kristin Nistler
Kristin.nistler@gmail.com
*Activities are subject to change based on weekly needs, so, please make sure you check the GroupMe App on Wednesdays.

The Nursery Roll Circle will meet Monday, September 21, at the home of Karen Anders. Bible Study handouts will be provided.



KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

Why do we use candles in the Divine Service?

Imagine that you are attending a worship service 500 years ago. Since there are no lights, even during the daytime, the church is dark. How will you see what is going on? How will you see the pastor? How will you walk up to the altar to receive the Lord's Supper? As you probably guessed, one of the first uses for candles in church was to give light in the sanctuary. Actually, oil lamps were probably used until the fourth century when candles became more common.

Is there more to using candles than just lighting the room?

With the invention of the light bulb, candles were no longer needed to light the church. That doesn't mean they lost their importance in the church. Candles have been used for hundreds of years to symbolize Christ's words when he said: "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). **Candles remind us that Jesus is the Light that has conquered the darkness of sin.** As you can see, candles play an important role in our worship.

Parents: When the candles are lit at the beginning of the service, remind your children that Christ is the Light of the world. Teach them that when the candles are lit, we are honoring our God and recognizing His presence in the sanctuary. He is really here just as He promised!

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YOUTH RETREAT

Grades 9-12
Rapid City, SD
October 23-25, 2026

Contact Kristin for more details:
kristin.nistler@gmail.com
701-400-2069

Bible Studies

Devotions & Worship

If you are interested in sponsoring a student or doing a partial scholarship, please contact Kristin!

Hiking in the Black Hills

Wahiki Water Park

$200 per person

COVERSHOTEL, FOOD AND TRANSPORTATION

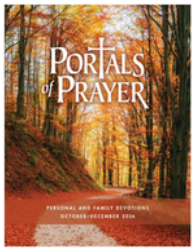
$100 Deposit & registration due by 9/27/26

9-Week Sunday Bible Class

The Writings of the Apostle Paul
in Chronological Order

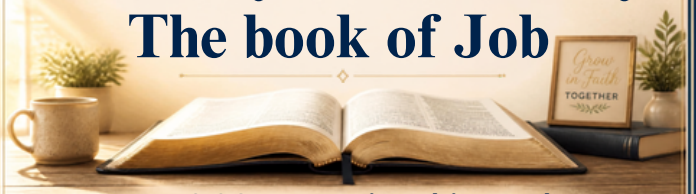
Sundays,
9:40 AM–10:40 AM
in the church basement.

Weekly Monday–Friday reading assignments correspond with the Sunday class.



Portals of Prayer
October-December 2026
is now available on the counter in the upper foyer, and on the coffee bar.
Please take one.

Tuesday Bible Study
The book of Job



1-2:30 PM Begins this week.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME
Study meets in the church basement

Pray & Praise with Parents

- Kids under age 3 & a Parent
- Songs-Rhymes
- Basic Bible Stories

Meet in the church Nursery
Sunday Mornings
9:30-10:30 am

Hope and Healing Through Grief

Starting October 6th

Tuesdays for 5 weeks 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

center COUNSELING
Hope and Healing in Christ

Join us for a welcoming Christian grief support series for adults mourning the death of a loved one.

What to Expect:
Week 1: Welcome, Trust, and Understanding the Grief
Week 2: Making Space for the Pain
Week 3: Remembering Together and Reconnecting
Week 4: Carrying Love Forward
Week 5: Remembrance, Hope and Candlelight

Refreshments provided.

Led by:

Les Wolfgram

Jasmin Yoder, LMSW

Sign up:

Tuesdays
October 6th - November 3rd
6:30pm - 8:00 pm

Location:
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
801 E Denver Ave, Bismarck, ND 58504

Call or Email with questions
office@centercounseling.org
(701)380-5100

MLS Chapel
8:20am
September 23
Pastor Woodside

Martin Luther SCHOOL

Thursday, September 24 at 6:30pm
Martin Luther School
Back to School Concert

Martin Luther School is in need of a part-time bus driver, hours are 12-2:30, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, & Friday. Position primarily involves trasnporting chidren to Bismarck Baptist Church from Martin Luther School, but may include an occasional in-town field trip. Two teachers are on the bus to supervise the students. Applicants need a current CDL license, Class B, with both passenger(P)endorsement and a School Bus (S) endorsement. Pay: $23.00/hour
For information,contact Mrs Wolfgram at wolfgram@lutherschools.org

SAVE THE DATE

Love and Respect

A Marriage Enrichment Conference

Presented by Pastor Mark Christensen

This conference is an excellent opportunity to invest in your relationship and learn what could be life changing insights into male and female dynamics. Married couples and engaged couples will learn how to resolve conflict, dealing with the negative reactions (the crazy cycle). They will also learn how to motivate each other by meeting each other's needs (the energizing cycle). Even those who feel hopeless in their relationships will gain understanding on how to handle an indifferent or unresponsive partner (the rewarded cycle). Each cycle centers on two concepts: love and respect. These two words surface in social research and the Bible (Ephesians 5:33) as the two key ingredients for a successful marriage. Those attending a Love and Respect conference experience understanding, forgiveness, reconciliation, change, and hope.

Zion Lutheran Church
413 E Ave. D
Bismarck, ND

October 9, 2026
6:30pm-9:30pm

October 10, 2026
8:30am-3pm

Cost: $40 per couple (includes conference workbook, snacks and lunch on Saturday)

A cord of three strands is not easily broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:12

A sign-up sheet is located on the table at the back of the sanctuary or email *pastormarkchristensen@gmail.com* to reserve your spot (space is limited).

Mission Support Opportunity from Pastor Les Wolfgram

I am writing to share an exciting and impactful opportunity that I will be undertaking this November as part of our MA Clinical Mental Counseling Program at Concordia University Irvine. I have been given the opportunity to travel to Belize from November 7-14, where we will provide much-needed mental health services to a local community.

Purpose of the Trip:

During our time in Belize, our primary focus will be on supporting students and teachers of an underserved community by providing mental health counseling. Based on the needs identified by the local school's principal, we will deliver counseling sessions focused on Adlerian and Solution-Focused Therapy. These methods are designed to offer effective and immediate support, helping students and educators manage stress, improve well-being, and foster a healthier school environment.

Impact and Learning:

This mission trip is not only an opportunity to give back to a community in need but also an invaluable component of our professional development as future mental health counselors. I will apply the clinical skills I have learned in real-world settings, gaining hands-on experience that will shape my career. Moreover, I will enhance my cultural competence and learn to navigate the unique challenges that come with providing mental health services in different cultural contexts. The trip will also provide a wonderful opportunity to share Christ to restore hope for hurting children.

How You Can Help:

Every member of our team has agreed to build a network of prayer and financial support. I would be honored if you would be a part of my support team. You can support me by sending a check payable to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 801 East Denver Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58504 with a special note for "Belize Trip" in the memo. Any amount, large or small, will be greatly appreciated and will directly contribute to making this mission trip a success. Thank You!

I am deeply grateful for any support you can provide. Your generosity will not only aid us in my professional growth but will also make a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve in Belize. After I return, I look forward to sharing my experiences and the impact of our work with you.

Thank you for considering supporting our mission. Together, we can bring hope, healing, and empowerment to a community in need.

In Christ,

Pastor Wolfgram

North Dakota
Pro-Life Youth Event
Saturday, Sept. 26,
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Heritage Center, ND State Capitol
Registration begins at 9:30.
Taco bar lunch included.
Sponsored by: ND Right to Life
& ND Lutherans for Life

From the District President's Desk

The Estate of the Church is the Estate that the Lord has given to proclaim eternal life in Christ. The Lord has ordered His Church as those who hear the Word and those who preach the Word. (John 10:27; Luke 10:16; Acts 20:28-30; among many others) When one walks into the Divine Service, the primary job of the hearer of the Word is to receive, and the primary job of the preacher is to preach, proclaim, and distribute the Gifts to Christ's Bride. Certainly the hearers offer their thanks and praise, but, like a patron in a restaurant, the primary vocation of the hearer is to receive the Gifts of Word and Sacrament. Luther writes in his work On the Councils and the Church, "Now wherever you find these offices or officeholders, you may know that God's people, the holy Christian people, are there. For the church cannot be without bishops, pastors, and preachers, and conversely, they cannot be without the church; the two must exist together."

—Rev. Mark Chepulis, North Dakota District President

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA
413 EAST AVE D
BISMARCK, ND 58501
701-223-8286

Senior Pastor:
Rev. Thomas R. Marcis, Jr. (701) 220-8437
tmarcisjr@gmail.com
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Vincent J. Otto (701) 319-5667
rev.vincentotto@gmail.com
Director of Family Ministry:
Kristin Nistler (701) 400-2069
kristin.nistler@gmail.com
Director of Junior Youth Ministry:
Russ Weixel (701) 400-6492
weixelzion@gmail.com
Administrative Secretary:
Gayle Little (701) 220-0582
zionlcmsbis@gmail.com
Assistant Secretary:
Roxanne Rosin
zionoffice501@gmail.com

Website:
www.zionbismarck.org

Worship:
Saturday 5pm - Contemporary
Sunday 8:30am - Traditional
Sunday 10:45am - Creative
Sunday School (September-May) 9:30 am
Adult Bible Class (year round) 9:40 am

Linda Sullivan is in charge of the altar flowers for the month of September. You can reach Linda at 701-955-2500

Worship Attendance

Saturday, September 12
5:00 pm - 45
Sunday, September 13
8:30am- 110
10:45am- 147

Stewardship

September MTD General Offering:
$22,368
Average Budget Monthly Expenses:
$58,750

"Building Healthy Families"

Do you find that hurtful or disrespectful words sometimes come out of your mouth during the week as you interact with your spouse or family? If so, know that continuing this habit unchecked is damaging to your relationships in ways that you might not even realize. Try memorizing this verse and call it to mind when you are tempted to bite at someone you love this week: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." (Psalm 19:14) You – and your relationships – will be better for it!
www.LutheranFamilyService.org

Become an LCRL Champion and stand with a clear Lutheran voice for religious liberty in our nation. Your support strengthens faithful advocacy and equips Christians to engage today's challenges with courage and conviction. See *www.LCRLFreedom.org/champions*.

Main Street Living

Rev. Jeff Kasmerski, Admission Counselor at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN, presents a message from the seminary chapel. This program is interpreted and closed captioned for the deaf and hard of hearing. For more information visit: *www.mainstreetliving.com* . This is the Life program: "My Husband, My Sorrow" – A man and woman must deal with whether they should consummate an adulterous affair.

"MAIN STREET LIVING" is a locally-produced TV program that includes a 30-minute worship service.Programs are broadcast starting at 10:00 am Central Time on WDAZ Xtra Channel 8.3, Bismarck/Dickinson.

"Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life."
- John 6:68 -

Today's Readings:
Old Testament
Isaiah 55:6–9
Epistle Reading
Philippians 1:12–14, 19–30
Holy Gospel
Matthew 20:1–16

NextWeek:
Old Testament
Ezekiel 18:1–4, 25–32
Epistle Reading
Philippians 2:1–4 (5–13) 14–18
Holy Gospel
Matthew 21:23–27