



Zion noiz

The Newsletter of Zion Lutheran Church
Piedmont, California
December 2025



Rejoice! Finding Joy in the Holiday Season

The end of the year brings us into a season of holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. These special days serve as powerful reminders to rejoice in God's blessings:

Thanksgiving: We give thanks for our material blessings.

Christmas: We rejoice in God's grace through the arrival of Christ and the salvation He brings.

New Year's: We give thanks for the year that has passed and the promise of another year.

Joy vs. Happiness

It is important to understand that rejoicing is not the same as being happy. There are many times in life when we are simply not happy—and often for good reason. For many, the holidays are stressful times. During this season of celebration, those who feel unhappy can sometimes feel even more isolated because of the surrounding festivities they struggle to enjoy.

A Biblical Perspective on Joy

The Bible offers a deeper understanding of joy that transcends temporary happiness.

The Book of Philippians: Joy in Adversity

The book of Philippians is often called the most joyful book of the Bible, yet it was written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison. It contains the famous command:

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4)

Romans 5: Rejoicing in Hope and Suffering

Paul expands on this concept in Romans 5, where he explains the solid foundation for our joy:

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:1-5, ESV)

The Unshakeable Foundation of Hope

This deep joy allows us to hold onto hope, even in times of sadness and grief.

Our hope is not simply based on the idea that “things will get better,” but on the real message of the holidays—the message of Christmas.

Continued on page 3

Weekly Worship

Sundays: 9 am Traditional Worship In-person & Online.

All Worship Services are Available 24/7 via the Zion App, Website, YouTube and Facebook.

Bible Class: Sundays at 8 am Wednesdays at 10 am

SEEK

DISCIPLE

MULTIPLY

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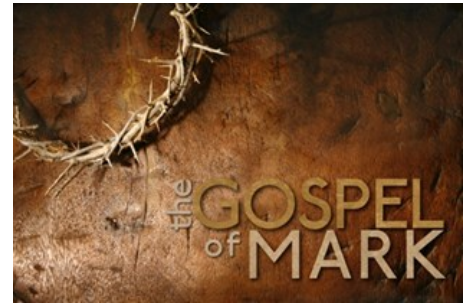
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STUDYING GOD'S WORD

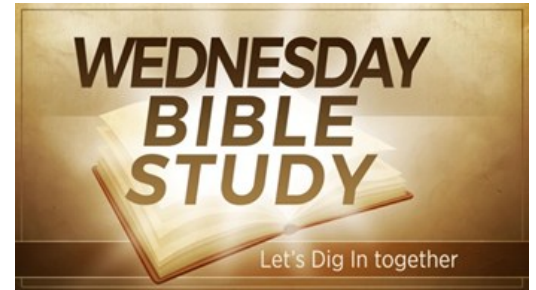
Sunday Bible Class I

Bible Class I continues to meet each Sunday at 8:00 am in the Garden Room, and everyone is invited to join us as we search the Scriptures for guidance, hope, peace, and strength. Led by Paul Grunow, the group has begun studying the Book of Mark. Depending on where the discussion leads, the class may cover a full chapter or just a few verses each week. Every session offers an opportunity for a solid study of God's Word and spirited discussion among fellow believers. Come grow in faith and understanding as we explore the Gospel of Mark together.



Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Join us each Wednesday morning at 10:00am for Bible Tapestry, a time of study, reflection, and fellowship in God's Word. Led by Pastor Dorn, we will explore the Scriptures, seeing how the many threads of the Bible are woven into God's great story of salvation. All are welcome—come and be blessed by His Word and by the community of believers who gather to study it either in-person or via Zoom.



Dec. 3: Day of the Lord
Dec. 10: Prophecy
Dec. 17: Kingdom of God
Dec. 24: Christmas Eve
Dec. 31: New Year's Eve

Zoom Link for Wednesday Morning Bible Study

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85173401109?pwd=AOu5B8EfdT6LFBCvAGfOk4x42bdQsB.1>

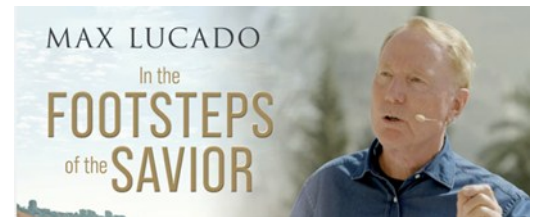
Meeting ID: 851 7340 1109. Passcode: YeahZion

Sunday Bible Study II

Bible Class II continues with the Bible Study by Max Lucado, "In the Footsteps of the Savior", at 8:00am in the Conference Room.

In this Study God has more in store for you than you can imagine! This video Bible study will provide an encounter with the life altering Holy One as we follow in the footsteps of the Savior through the Holy Land.

If you have not participated in any of Zion's Bible Studies on Sunday Mornings, now is the time with the start of the Advent and Christmas Season..



Iron Men

Join us on **Tuesday, December 9 at 6:30 pm**, as we watch Christmas with the Chosen: Holy Night.

A young mother labeled "impure." A shepherd boy considered "unclean." Experience Jesus' birth through their eyes as Christmas with The Chosen: Holy Night blends The Messengers and The Shepherd into one special remastered and re-scored story. This special feature also includes an original performance from Andrea and Matteo Bocelli, six favorite songs from the past, and two beautiful new monologues. If you haven't been able to join us before that is OK we want you to join us now! After all, you know the story and have read much of "The Book"!

Join us for our "manly" meal, fellowship and faith building!



By faith, we cling to:

God's love shown to us in Jesus.

The knowledge that God can take our bad times and bring good out of them (Romans 8:28).

The peace we have with God through Christ, which is the result of His life, death, and resurrection.

Even in miserable situations, we have hope because of God's faithful love.

Wishing You Joy

May the holidays be holy days for you and your loved ones. May God's Spirit bring you deep, abiding joy, even through the ups and downs of the season.

Happy Holidays!

Catechism Corner

Zion's Stained Glass Windows

Continuing with the stained-glass windows 3 and 4 on the pulpit side.



The third is Noah's Ark. Read about Noah in Genesis chapters 6-8.

The fourth window is the door posts and lintel of the door of the Israelites in the last plague. Read Exodus chapters 7-12 to learn about all 10 plagues.

Church Humor

Blackmail

It was coming up to Christmas and Sammy asked his mum if he could have a new bike. So, she told him that the best idea would be to write to Santa Claus. But Sam, having just played a vital role in the school nativity play, said he would prefer to write to the baby Jesus. So his mum told him that would be fine.

Sam went to his room and wrote 'Dear Jesus, I have been a very good boy and would like to have a bike for Christmas.' But he wasn't very happy when he read it over. So he decided to try again and this time he wrote 'Dear Jesus, I'm a good boy most of the time and would like a bike for Christmas.' He read it back and wasn't happy with that one either. He tried a third version. 'Dear Jesus, I could be a good boy if I tried hard and especially if I had a new bike.' He read that one too, but he still wasn't satisfied.

So, he decided to go out for a walk while he thought about a better approach. After a short time he passed a house with a nativity scene in the front garden. He crept in, stuffed a statue under his coat, hurried home and hid it under the bed. Then he wrote this letter. 'Dear Jesus, If you want to see your mother again, you'd better send me a new bike.'

Christmas Service

It was a cold and misty Christmas morning in the very depth of Winter after a heavy fall of snow and only one farmer and the minister managed to arrive at the church for the morning service. 'Well' said the clergyman 'I guess there's no point in having a service today.'

'Well that's not how I see it,' said the farmer. 'If only one cow turns up at feeding time, I still feed it.'

Remember to Have No Fear: Your Best Gift

“Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord.’” (Luke 2:8-11 NKJV).

Have you ever been surprised by a special gift on a wonderful day? Or have you received special news on an ordinary day? Some very ordinary shepherds taking care of their ordinary sheep one cold night got a very special and best surprise. A host of heavenly angels proclaimed that the King, a Savior, was born. One by whom the whole world would be rescued from sin and death. Nothing looked ordinary any more. There were Joseph and Mary, a baby, some lambs, goats and donkeys. Nothing particularly special. The baby was wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger, a feeding trough. I’m sure His mother, Mary held Him up and gazed at Him. Was there ever a more perfect baby? Don’t we always feel that way? I’m sure Joseph felt proud and protective.

We’ve all heard the first Christmas story. Many of us can recite it by heart. Do we look forward to hearing it this Christmas? Do we look forward to believing it in our hearts?

Children often talk about the latest computer game or the largest Lego set. Women look longingly at jewelry or appliances. (It depends on what you need!) And men have their favorite gift ideas, too.

But what do we really need?

God created a perfect, beautiful world. He created a man and a woman and everything they could want. There was a perfect relationship with God. But into this paradise came an ugly head of “want and desire.” “I want something else. I want something better.” And the created couple took of the forbidden fruit and sinned. The perfect connection with God was broken. How would mankind become connected to the Almighty again?



Throughout history of God’s people, sacrifices and laws were followed to keep His people faithful. The ultimate sacrifice would need to be able to fulfill every law – jot and tittle. It would need to pay the price for every sin.

Only a perfect sacrifice would do.

*“Humble virgin, arise and take heart
You’ve been chosen to carry a son
Give no heed to the trembling inside
For the wonder has only begun
Do not fear, do not fear
The child you will hold is the Savior
foretold drawing near
Do not fear
Lowly shepherds, look up and take
heart
See the glory of heaven burn bright
Hear the anthem of joy and good
news
Hope has dawned in a stable tonight
Do not fear, do not fear
The child in the hay is the Ancient of Days drawing
near
Do not fear
Weary children, be still and take heart
Every longing you feel is a cry
For the rest He has offered to all
Come to Him, for His burden is light
Do not fear, do not fear
The God who redeems you and ever will keep you is
near
Do not fear”*

(Do not Fear, Jon Althoff and Nathan Stiff ©2020 Sovereign Grace Worship)

Do not fear, for God has provided a perfect salvation to pay the penalty for sin. A sacrifice and substitute for all our sin. The best present for our souls for all eternity.

It is completely a gift. A gift of Grace.

The best gift for Christmas is Jesus.

This past year we have looked at what we remember about Who and What God is. This coming year we will look at why we do not need to fear. Nothing is too difficult for God.

– Marlene S. Grunow
prayer ministry

Game Night!

Tuesday, December 16 @ 6:30 pm

Join Us for Game Night!

Get ready for some fun! Come out on **Tuesday, December 16 at 6:30pm** for an evening of games, laughter, and fellowship.

Bring your favorite board game or try something new—there will be **plenty of laughs, and friendly competition!** Roll the

dice, play a hand, or just enjoy cheering others on. Everyone's welcome—**don't miss the fun!**



Day Adventurers

Thursday, December 11 @ 10:30 am

Lindsay Wildlife Experience

The Lindsay Wildlife Experience is a museum and wildlife rehabilitation center in Walnut Creek, California, that connects people with wildlife through exhibits and programs. It is the first wildlife hospital established in the United States and treats over 5,000 injured, sick, or orphaned California native animals annually with the goal of releasing them back into the wild. The center features a museum with various animal exhibits, educational programs for all ages, and opportunities for visitors to see the rehabilitation hospital in action.

We will carpool from Zion meeting at 9:30 am, explore the museum. Seniors (65+) \$15 Adults \$17. Lunch to be determined.

Sign up in the narthex!



Christmas Pillowcase Project

The Christian Concerns Committee again asks for your financial support with the Christmas Pillowcase project. This year we plan to provide 70 Pillowcases for the men in the City Team Renew program. As always, the pillowcases will include personal hygiene products, a towel and wash cloth, a t-shirt and socks, a knitted cap and scarf provided by our Zion knitters, and a sweet treat. The project

estimate for this year is \$2500. Please prayerfully consider how you can support this project. You may place a check in the offering plate, donate via Subsplash or use the QR code to donate directly to the project. Please mark your check payable to Zion and put CCC in the memo line.



God Bless your kind and generous hearts!!!



Movie Night

White Christmas

Saturday, December 20 @ 7:00 pm

"White Christmas" spins the romantic and humorous tale of Bob Wallace and Phil Davis (Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye), two Army buddies who became a top-notch musical comedy team after the war and are now the toast of Broadway. While on the road in Florida, the stars become involved with two aspiring singers, the sister act of Betty and Judy (Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen). Despite some romantic complications between the couples, everything ends on a happy note when Christmas Eve brings rave reviews for the show and much-needed snowfall!



PARISH NURSING

Hope

This is a season of hope.

Hope is good for our health. A study from Harvard's Human Flourishing Program (13,000 people, average age 66) found that those with more hope throughout their lives had better physical health, better health behaviors, better social support and a longer life. Hope also led to fewer chronic health problems, less depression, less anxiety and a lower risk of cancer.

Having hope, as opposed to living in fear or being cynical helps us to see possibility in present-day circumstances and not become overwhelmed. People who feel hopeful are good problem-solvers, more resilient and persistent, more engaged and productive at work, more creative and adaptable, and better at recovering from adversity.



How can we have more hope?

Faith Communities -Engage with church and the community of believers. Amidst a community of like believers, people have drawn strength, found peace and experienced the elevation of the human spirit, just by knowing there is something or someone much larger than them.

Meaning and purpose. Having a sense of meaning or purpose in life can foster hope. Hope is essential to how we live our lives and exemplify a life of faith as believers. Knowing the truth and confidently living our identity in Christ requires eternal perspective, knowing of the truth of God's promises through the word, a hope built on faith, and married with action. Think about what gives your life meaning.

Choose a "hero of hope." Nelson Mandela endured 27 years of imprisonment yet persevered to build a new nation. Other heroes of hope – Martin Luther, Stephen Hawking, Helen Keller, Mother Teresa. Who is your hero of hope?

Some Bible passages about hope:

Romans 15:13: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit

Romans 12:12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Romans 5:3-5: Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Wishing you comfort, joy and hope,
Stephanie

LWML annual Christmas Ornament/Cookie Exchange Party is

Friday December 5th, 7pm at the home of Suzanne Layden. Please RSVP to mcfarland_becky@hotmail.com. If you wish to participate in ornament exchange please bring a wrapped ornament (valued at about \$10). Also bring a plate of homemade cookies for cookie exchange. Please contact Becky or Suzanne for more information.



The annual Christmas boutique will be held, after church, on Sunday, December 7. Homemade goodies and gifts will be available for cash purchase, so don't forget your \$\$\$\$! If you wish to participate, please bring your items on Sunday Dec. 7. Please price your items. The Boutique proceeds will be sent to our seminary to support our future pastors.

I look forward to starting off the holidays with exciting activities!

SERVING THE LORD WITH GLADNESS

Communion Assistant Schedule

December 2025

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Sunday, December 7 th | 9:00 am | Brian Walsh |
| Sunday, December 14 th | 9:00 am | Paul Grunow |
| Sunday, December 21 st | 9:00 am | Dave Nemy |
| Sunday, December 28 th | 9:00 am | Jonathan Schaff |

Lay Reader Schedule

December 2025

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Sunday, December 7 th | 9:00 am | Nancy Hovermann |
| Sunday, December 14 th | 9:00 am | Stephen Hovermann |
| Sunday, December 21 st | 9:00 am | Jonathan Schaff |
| Sunday, December 28 th | 9:00 am | Oscar Castillo |

Altar Flowers

December 2025

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Sunday, December 7 th | 9:00 am | Advent No Flowers |
| Sunday, December 14 th | 9:00 am | Advent No Flowers |
| Sunday, December 21 st | 9:00 am | Advent No Flowers |
| Sunday, December 28 th | 9:00 am | Louise Schnute |

Usher Schedule

December 2025

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Sunday, December 7 th | 9:00 am | Michael Grunow Brendan O'Brien |
| Sunday, December 14 th | 9:00 am | George Berge Peter Grunow |
| Sunday, December 21 st | 9:00 am | Michael Grunow Brendan O'Brien |
| Sunday, December 28 th | 9:00 am | George Berge Peter Grunow |

Coffee Hour Hosts

December 2025

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Sunday, December 7 th | 9:00 am | Dal Ferro |
| Sunday, December 14 th | 9:00 am | Open |
| Sunday, December 21 st | 9:00 am | LWML |
| Sunday, December 28 th | 9:00 am | Open |

Object Lesson

December 2025

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|----------------|
| Sunday, December 7 th | 9:00 am | Brian Walsh |
| Sunday, December 14 th | 9:00 am | Rachel Gessert |
| Sunday, December 21 st | 9:00 am | Leni & Alfred |
| Sunday, December 28 th | 9:00 am | Steve Harger |

*Christmas Eve
Candlelight Worship
Wednesday, December 24
7:00 pm*

*Christmas Day Worship
Thursday, December 25
10:00 am*

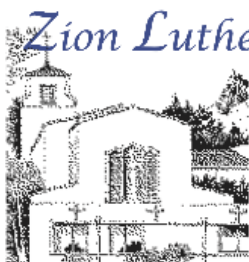
Advent Soup and Salad Potluck and Worship

Wednesday December 3, 10 & 17

Join us for a Soup and Salad Potluck
beginning at 6:00 pm.

Sign up in the narthex to bring a Soup,
Salad, Bread, or Dessert.

We continue the evening with an Advent
Worship.



Zion Lutheran Church

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This newsletter is also available on-line..