



THE ECHO

JULY/AUGUST 2021

MT. ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

A congregation of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC)

4065 Mt. Zion Rd. Lucas, Ohio 44843 419-892-2023

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In this Journey...there is hope.



I tell you what, it has been a rough couple of months for me. I am not writing that to gain any sympathy or pity...I am just stating a fact as I am sure there are plenty of people out there whose past year has been grueling and devastating. I think of all those who have had to deal with the repercussions of this pandemic both in illness and in extra work or lack of work. It has been a rough year + for many of us. That is why this sermon series we are on called: "While we are

waiting" means so much as we look at Paul's 2nd (actually 4th) letter to the Corinthians. I sometimes truly feel like I am stuck in a car on this long grueling trip and it isn't all that much fun, I am hot, tired, and bothered at times. Occasionally, I find myself asking, is this trip ever going to end, is the destination really worth it? And the emphatic answer is **Yes** and **Yes!** The destination is so worth the trip no matter how grueling. Keeping our focus on the destination is the tremendous hope we are to cling to while on this journey.

Paul tells us to focus on the end for that is our hope as he writes to encourage the people of Corinth saying, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Cor 4:7). The gospel of Jesus' victory over death is for us. Jesus gives us life, joy, hope and peace, even during struggle, sickness, and stress. His power and authority, his death and resurrection is for me and for you! So we continue on this journey, knowing the victory has been won and given to us through Christ Jesus. And we who are struggling in our journey have that same treasure and hope...the hope of the risen Christ.

This hope--a hope only God can give us--is not just the expression that everything will be alright. It's not just trusting that someday this whole pandemic will just be a question on a Trivial Pursuit card. It's not even the belief that we will be okay through this outbreak, even if others die in the midst of it. True hope is the confidence that death is not final.

Death was not the end of Jesus. Instead, Jesus was the end of death! That Jesus conquered death is the new hope of all of us who believe. As St. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15, Jesus' defeat of death now belongs to us who hope in Him. Jesus is risen, and one day, we too will rise. All of us who have been baptized into Jesus have been baptized into His death and will also rise to new life with Him (Rom. 6:1-4).



Christian hope means that death is now but a rest for us, a peaceful sleep from which Jesus will awaken us when He returns for us (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Christian hope means that every time we place the body of a loved one in the ground, we do so in the full confidence that the Jesus who claimed them as His own in the promise of baptism will one day make good on that promise and raise them to life again. That is our destination...not death but eternal life after death in the presence of God at the messianic banquet feast.



Yet, there is even more to Christian hope. Jesus hasn't only promised to raise us from death, He has also promised to renew all of creation, to end suffering, disease, and evil forever. Real hope is not just hope that everything that has been upended by this pandemic will return to "normal," though we hope it does. Real hope isn't just the hope that there will be a successful vaccine for COVID-19, though we do hope for that. Real hope is that the risen Christ will return and fix everything wrong with this broken creation, and that this cure will last for all eternity.

Like I wrote at the beginning, sometimes in our journey in this life, our emotional hope ebbs and flows, but the gift of hope given by the God who raised Jesus from the dead lasts forever. To those of us who have received that hope, our risen Lord has a task for us. It is the same task that He gave to His first disciples: tell others so that they also receive this gift of hope. You see this gospel gift is also for our neighbor, the ones on this long grueling car ride. Titus 2:13-14 reminds us of the our hope and how we need to share that with our fellow passengers. For now we are free to dedicate ourselves to service to God and our neighbor. This freedom is a gift, and our vocations are how we can live out our lives in service to God and our neighbor. Yes we are to focus on our destination because that is our hope but we are not to forget our neighbors who are in the car with us. Let them know of the real, true and solid hope of Jesus Christ and His return. Of resurrected bodies and life everlasting in the presence of our king. For the joy set before us, let's keep our eyes on the cross, love our neighbor as ourselves, and get to church to receive the gifts God has given us.



Pastor Eric

FINANCES

	MAY	YEAR TO DATE
Income	\$8,589.00	\$46,602.36
Expenses	\$8,947.04	\$48,585.30
Net	-358.04	-1,982.94
Benevolence	\$1,095.00	\$7,421.00

ROOF PLEDGES: \$34,082

MISSIONARY UPDATE – Chris Briggs family

The website for our missionaries is: <https://deafining-moments.epistle.today/>

Health Update on Caitlin: A few days after arriving in Michigan, Caitlin had her first appointment with the pediatrician and her first round of blood work. Based on some of the initial assessments, the pediatrician made a referral for her to be seen at a special neurological center in Grand Rapids for some in depth brain scans and neurology testing. Unfortunately, we learned that the earliest that they would be able to see her was November...of 2022. It was great to know that they are so good at what they do that they are booking 18 months out, but the pediatrician said we would need to look at other options that could provide the data a bit sooner.

The following week, Ren and Caitlin drove to Ohio to meet up with my mom who was going to be an extra driver for the trip to DC and back. They drove to Herndon, VA (just outside of DC) on Monday so that they could be ready for the 5.5 hours of testing that would start the next morning. During a conversation with the tech who was conducting the first set of tests, it came out that they were actually supposed to be there for 6 days of testing - not one. This news caught everyone by surprise. They quickly contacted me, and I made arrangements to move Ren and Caitlin to an extended stay hotel until Saturday and to book a flight back to Columbus for my mom since she couldn't stay that long. Because they hadn't notified Ren about the extent of the testing, the clinic managed to double up their appointments/testing so that they could be headed back by the weekend.

While it was nice that they could be headed back after 5 days, Ren said doubling up the tests was exhausting for Caitlin. They did a wide range of tests to not only confirm certain diagnoses but to also try to rule out others (blood tests, brain scans, muscle tests, stress test, memory, neurology, tilt table, etc.). Then they contacted the Holland Hospital to have more labs done here this week. Caitlin said that after having 33 vials of blood taken during the last week-and-a-half she thinks she is officially empty. This past Friday was the last of the test that have been scheduled by the cardiology clinic (there may be a few more from her primary pediatrician) so now we are waiting for results and the follow up visit in VA which should be sometime during the second or third week of July.

What we do know at this point is that the cardiologist has confirmed the diagnosis of POTS (postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome) as well as EDS (Ehlers-Danlos syndrome). The cardiologist also seemed to suspect that there may be some additional underlying conditions, but we won't be able to determine that until the test results come back. The upside to what we have learned is that this could/would explain A LOT of what Caitlin has been experiencing for the last couple of years (chronic fatigue, chronic pain, inability for focus and retain information...her brain literally isn't getting enough oxygen, sound and light sensitivity, and even depression and anxiety), but the downside is that there is no cure for either syndrome at this point and the advice/treatment that had been offered by some of the doctors in the past was actually doing more harm than good (we don't fault them because these are relatively rare syndromes and they didn't know).

Because of all the additional testing, the need for an extended stay, and the fact that Ren hasn't been able to spend any time getting the house ready to rent, I have come up to help for a little over a week. I will be spending this week in Michigan and then travelling back to Jamaica on the 28th so I can be ready to host a couple of groups from Holland starting in the middle of July.

Please keep us in your prayers as we spend some time this week processing everything that is happening, trying to just "check off some of the boxes" on the to-do list, squeezing in a few visits/meetings, and finding some time to just enjoy being together as a family (being with Ren, Caitlin and Dasha for Father's Day was an incredible blessing!!).

Thank you all for your love and support and for making it through this incredibly long update. Blessings, Chris, Ren and Caitlin



FELLOWSHIP

- The committee would like to do a combined Mothers' Day/Fathers' Day breakfast on June 13. This event will be in lieu of regular Bible study and Sunday school. Goetta (a German tradition of pinhead oatmeal and sausage) and eggs are on the menu.
- A back-to-school event is planned for after church on August 29th.

OLD BUSINESS

- Replacement of the older church road sign is being championed by several congregational families. An announcement to this effect will be made at the next congregational meeting.
- A draft of the 200th Mt. Zion report will be available for comment by the end of June.
- A quote from Vidonish will be obtained for placement of some older stained glass in the windows nears one of the side door entrances.

NEW BUSINESS

- The Mt. Zion non-member scholarship was won by Ms. Sauder.

GOOD AND WELFARE

- Picking up on Pastor Eric's opening devotion, the astronomy of the Ascension of Jesus on May 14th of the year 33 is remarkable. All the visible planets, except Venus, are in a straight line between Regulus, the king star, and the Sun. Moreover, the planet Jupiter is in the constellation Gemini (the twins), which from early Christian lore is thought to represent Christ and his church. A motion to adjourn was made by Dave seconded by Nate. Motion carried.

Meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted, Michael Dourson

Some thoughts from the council president.

The Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Genesis 3:9

"Where are you?" The Almighty and all-knowing God of the universe was not asking that question because he was unable to locate Adam. He asked the question because he was giving the man a chance to come clean. Like any parent who knows exactly what his child has done, the Lord God was lovingly giving Adam an opportunity to be honest about what he did.

God could ask the same question of us today. "Where are you?" Are we hiding from God in a busy schedule—filling up our days with so many things that it is never convenient to address issues in our spiritual lives? Or maybe we are burying ourselves in social media and websites so that we never have to face reality about a specific failing in our lives. Perhaps we are spiraling downward in a cycle of addiction or despair over the guilt that we have so far refused to come to terms with.

Where are you?

We should ask our selves what is more important than service to God. There has been a call go out to all our churches to look for individuals that would be interested in serving in the ministry of God's word. We must listen for the call of the Holy Spirit to serve.

We may not always want to be found by God, but he made every effort to seek us. In love, he sent Jesus as our Savior from sin to die on the cross and give his life in our place. Jesus then rose from the dead to guarantee our forgiveness and our place in heaven. In Christ, we are God's forgiven children who have no need to hide. Where are you? By the grace of God, one day, the answer to that question will be: "I am in heaven forever with Jesus." Psalm 62.5

With love in Christ.

Ralph Hall

SEMI-ANNUAL MT. ZION CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – May 16, 2021

Ralph Hall, President, welcomed all to the meeting.

Pastor Eric opened with a devotion and prayer.

Minutes from the Jan. 20, 2020 semi-annual meeting were passed out. Lee Cook made a motion to accept the minutes Chuck Briggs seconded. Motion carried

Audrey Cook has completed her term and eligibility to be on the church council. David Culler has completed his first term and is eligible for re-election. David agreed to run again and Ken Frayer agreed to run for a first term. Ralph Hall asked for nominations from the floor. There were none. Paper ballots were handed out and the nominees were accepted unanimously.

The roof project has been completed. The pledges so far are at \$33,000.

The sign was brought up at council. Several families in the congregation are going to pay for it. It will be placed somewhere along St. Rt. 39 between Mt. Zion Rd and Lucas village.

Julia Ferrell moved that we adjourn. Nate Arnold seconded.

Respectfully submitted,
Audrey Cook

Your new Church Council

Elections are complete and we have a new church council with officers

Ralph Hall remains as president

Nate Arnold remains as Vice President

David Culler remains as Treasurer

Mike Dourson has been elected as Council Secretary

The other members are as follows:

Ethel Briggs Ken Frayer (newly elected) Ashlee Hall

Audrey Cook has served her 2 terms and has departed council. She fabulously served as the council secretary and will be missed greatly. A special thanks to all who continue to serve in the capacity of the administration of the church...a thankless job but a vital one. Thank you for obeying the calling Christ has set before you.

Please include these brothers and sisters in Christ in your prayers:

Members: Gary Cook, Harrison Gapter, and Kate Steward. Family and others: Caitlin Briggs, Ray Cooper, Tyler Duckworth, Sharon Keiser, Lou Leasor, Kathy Reining, Katie Spear, Matt Williams, Charlie Winger, and Kay Zgela.



During the month of July, you are encouraged to greet and pray for these members and friends of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.

**If there is anyone you would like to add to our Birthday/Anniversary list please contact the Church Office with your request! Thank you!



- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 2 Nancy Arnold | 30 Nicole Johnson |
| 4 Andrew Smollen | 30 Cole Barrett |
| 6 Olivia Cook | 31 Alan Westfield |
| 14 Andrew A. Culler, Jr. | |
| 18 Nicole Cook | |
| 27 Andrew Fraizer | |
| 28 Audrey Cook | |

- 8 Adam & Ashlee Hall
 9 Ralph & Melinda Hall
 21 Jim & Mary Tomlinson
 26 Eric and Freda Steward



During the month of July, we THANK these members who are offering their service to the church in various ways:

<u>Acolyte</u>		<u>Lector</u>		<u>Fellowship Time</u>		<u>Nursery</u>	
4	Daniel Fraizer		Martha Dourson		Mary Tomlinson		Linda Sweval
11	Keegan Arnold		Marie McKenna		Freda Steward		Freda Steward
18	Bobby Grover		Ralph Hall				Kim Smollen
25	Outdoor Service		Tim, Cooper		Audrey Cook		

- Ushers The Adam Hall Family
 Ashlee Hall
Communion
Offering Counters Ken Frayer & Dave Culler
Altar Guild Amity Arnold & Marie McKenna



During the month of August, you are encouraged to greet and pray for these members and friends of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.

**If there is anyone you would like to add to our Birthday/Anniversary list please contact the Church Office with your request! Thank you!



- 6 Elyse Laps
- 8 Gary Cook
- 10 Charles Winger
- 18 Susan Laps
- 18 Jessica Grover
- 22 Russ Cook
- 22 Phil Smollen
- 24 Stuart Smith

29 Olivia Arnold

- 1 Mike & Kathy Grover
- 3 Karen & Ken Frayer
- 19 Mike & Martha Dourson
- 30 Dave & DeeDee Culler



During the month of August, we THANK these members who are offering their service to the church in various ways:

Acolyte

Lector

Fellowship Time

Nursery

- 1 Andrew Smollen
- 8 Shelby Grover
- 15 Atticus Hall
- 22 Zac Winters
- 29 Outdoor Service

- Kim Smollen
- Gary Cook
- Matt Culler
- Ashlee Hall
- Sheri Culler

- Martha Dourson
- Karen Frayer
- Ayesha Fraizer
- Jan Grubaugh

- Ashlee Hall
- Valeria Winters
- Melinda Hall
- Audrey Cook
- Ethel Briggs

Ushers

Jim and Mary Tomlinson

Communion

Ken Frayer

Offering Counters

Nate Arnold and Mike Dourson

Altar Guild

Tammy Cooper & Kathy Grover



EMBRACING CALLINGS WITHIN A FAMILY

(from *Lutheran Life* magazine, Issue 121 pp 24-25)

When new babies come into a family, typically there is great rejoicing with oohs and aahs over how cute they are, wondering which parent they most look like or act like and dreams of what they will become when they grow up. What will he or she be interested in? What gifts and abilities will God grow in him or her? What will be his or her calling in life?

These questions often follow us from childhood into adulthood. Who are we? What purposes has God set before us? Teenagers grapple with these questions as they consider their steps after high school. Midlife crises are birthed from reevaluating these questions of purpose and meaning. Even retirees ask these questions anew as they discern God's will for their lives in a new season.

Author Jeffrey Leininger begins his book *Callings for Life* with these wise words: "Our calling in life is better understood in the plural rather than the singular."⁹ Rather than fixating on a singular purpose for life, we become all who God created us to be when we recognize that any way we "love and serve our neighbor by God's grace and with Christ's forgiveness is to do His will and accomplish His purposes."¹⁰

We don't need to wait for God to profoundly announce a specific calling over us, or assume we're too young or too old to be used by God. Rather, we need to recognize that to be in our calling is to recognize all the opportunities we have right in front of us to love and serve those around us.

Who's around us? Our family! Before we explore the world "out there," we live in our family units right here. We have endless opportunities to carry out the calling of loving and serving others right in our own living room with the people we live with. There are dishes to wash and clothes to fold, hugs to offer and cries to share, forgiveness to give and grace to receive. There are lessons to teach and lessons to learn, responsibilities to embrace, and Christlike servanthood to model.

We'll never run out of work to accomplish through our familial callings. Leininger quotes Luther, who said, "Yea if you had five heads and ten hands, even then you would be too weak for your task."¹¹ This is not just true for grown-ups.

New born babies don't have a calling *just* in the future. Rather, each family member has a calling in the present. Leininger writes, "Because of the work of Christ Jesus—and *solely* because of His work—the people in your life do not simply have potential value. They have *full value* right now, as forgiven and redeemed children of God. Their *present* matters, and their *presence* matters."¹²

To embrace vocations within a family is to first and foremost celebrate family members for who they are— children of God—above and beyond what they can do or contribute. In doing so, we can learn to love our family as Jesus loves us: unconditionally and undeservedly. People's identity "does not stem from how many souls they might save . . . or what great job they'll land . . . or whom they might marry, where they might live, and how much money they'll make."¹³ While we can look forward to seeing the path God has for each person, the reason we value family is purely out of love—love we first received from Christ when we were unworthy of it and love we now freely give in response to Christ. We seek to love and serve our family because that's what it means to follow Jesus. That's what it means to have a noble calling.

Pastor's note: I would take this a step further and say that our calling in our family includes our church family.

9 Jeffrey Leininger, *Callings for Life: God's Plan, Your Purpose* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2020), 1.

10 Leininger, 6; emphasis in original.

11 Leininger, 7–8, quoted from *The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther*, ed. John Lenker, vol. 10 (Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands Co., 1905), 242, and reprinted in *The Sermons of Martin Luther*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 242.

12 Leininger, 46; emphasis in original.

13 Leininger, 46.

July 2021

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				<p>1</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i> <i>Elaine in office</i></p>	<p>2</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i></p>	<p>3</p>
<p>4</p> <p><i>Communion</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-3</i> <i>Karen in office</i></p>	<p>6</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 10-3</i> <i>Karen in office</i></p>	<p>7</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-9</i> <i>Bible Study</i></p>	<p>8</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i> <i>Elaine in office</i></p>	<p>9</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i> <i>LAFP</i></p>	<p>10</p> <p><i>LAFP</i></p>
<p>11</p> <p><i>Communion</i></p>	<p>12</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-3</i> <i>Karen in office</i> <i>VBS 5:30-8</i></p>	<p>13</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 10-3</i> <i>Karen in office</i> <i>VBS 5:30-8</i></p>	<p>14</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-9</i> <i>VBS 5:30-8</i></p>	<p>15</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i> <i>Elaine in office</i> <i>VBS 5:30-8</i></p>	<p>16</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i> <i>VBS 5:30-8</i></p>	<p>17</p> <p><i>Pastor out of town</i></p>
<p>18</p> <p><i>Pastor out of town</i></p>	<p>19</p> <p><i>Pastor out of town</i> <i>Karen in office</i></p>	<p>20</p> <p><i>Pastor out of town</i> <i>Karen in office</i></p>	<p>21</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-9</i> <i>Bible Study</i></p>	<p>22</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i> <i>Elaine in office</i></p>	<p>23</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i> <i>LAFP</i></p>	<p>24</p> <p><i>LAFP</i></p>
<p>25</p> <p><i>Outdoor service</i></p>	<p>26</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-3</i> <i>Karen in office</i></p>	<p>27 <i>Pastor in office 10-3</i> <i>Karen in office</i></p>	<p>28</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-9</i> <i>Bible Study</i></p>	<p>29</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i> <i>Elaine in office</i></p>	<p>30</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i></p>	<p>31</p>

August 2021

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

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Fri

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<p>1</p> <p><i>Communion</i></p>	<p>2</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-3 Karen in office</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 10-3 Karen in office</i></p>	<p>4</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-9 Bible Study</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3 Elaine in office</i></p>	<p>6</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i></p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>9</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-3 Karen in office</i></p>	<p>10</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 10-3 Karen in office</i></p>	<p>11</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-9 Bible Study</i></p>	<p>12</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3 Elaine in office</i></p>	<p>13</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3 LAFP</i></p>	<p>14</p> <p><i>LAFP</i></p>
<p>15</p> <p><i>Communion</i></p>	<p>16</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-3 Karen in office</i></p>	<p>17</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 10-3 Karen in office</i></p>	<p>18</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-9 Bible Study</i></p>	<p>19</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3 Elaine in office</i></p>	<p>20</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3</i></p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-3 Karen in office</i></p>	<p>24</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 10-3 Karen in office</i></p>	<p>25</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-9 Bible Study</i></p>	<p>26</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3 Elaine in office</i></p>	<p>27</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 9-3 LAFP</i></p>	<p>28</p> <p><i>LAFP</i></p>
<p>29</p> <p><i>Outdoor Service Back to School Blessing</i></p>	<p>30</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 12-3 Karen in office</i></p>	<p>31</p> <p><i>Pastor in office 10-3 Karen in office</i></p>				

Mt. Zion Lutheran Church
4065 Mt. Zion Road
Lucas, OH 44843



JULY OUTREACH
Lucas Community VBS
July 12-16, Grace Bible
5:30 Meal 6-8 VBS
Kindergarten thru 6th Grade

The Lucas Area Ministerial Association is sponsoring a community VBS this year. Your help is needed...crafts, team leader, helper, Recreation Leader/helper. Mt Zion is responsible for the meal of Mac and Cheese and chicken nuggets with dessert and drinks on Thursday July 15th. You can help by volunteering in helping at VBS or cooking for the meal, by buying needed materials, or donating to buy needed supplies.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED