

MT. ZION HERALD

February, 2024

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Love's Ashes

This year there is the strange occurrence of Ash Wednesday falling on Valentine's Day. To many it will seem quite odd and even a contradiction to try to observe a day of love and also a day of self-denying repentance. The two don't seem to go very well together.

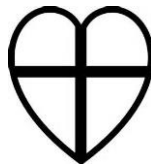
But for the Christian at least, there is a connection. After all, the historical man St. Valentine was a martyr for the Christian faith. He engaged in the ultimate act of self-denial because he loved and trusted in Christ Jesus His Savior above all things.

As the story goes, in about 270 A.D. the Roman emperor Claudius issued an edict forbidding marriage. It was a time of war, and he was having a hard time getting men to be willing to serve as soldiers. He thought that one of the

reasons was that married men did not want to leave their wives and families for battle. And so, he canceled all engagements and weddings. During this time a Christian

bishop named Valentine is said to have invited young couples to come to him in secret to be joined in matrimony and not be denied God's gift of marriage. The emperor supposedly learned about this and brought the

bishop to the palace. Claudius was impressed with Valentine's dignity and conviction and attempted to convert him to the Roman gods to save him from execution. Tradition has it that Valentine refused to renounce Christianity and instead attempted in vain to convert the emperor. While Valentine was in prison awaiting execution, it is said that he came to love the jailer's daughter. But a short time later, in



February of 270, he was executed by beheading. His written farewell message to the one he loved began, "From your Valentine."

And so here we can begin to see the connection between St. Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday also for our own lives. We recognize marriage as a good gift of God. The love a husband and wife are to share is something that is part of the Lord's design for our lives. And yet the marital relationship remains a picture of a greater reality, the love of the Groom Christ for His bride the Church.

Because we love and trust in Christ above all things, we learn to hate anything that would turn us away from life with Him, despising sin and all the false teaching and allurements of this world. On Ash Wednesday we devote ourselves especially to turning from these things in true repentance. We confess where we have not

been faithful to Christ. We seek to put to death our sinful nature and turn away from anything that would rob us of life with Christ. We engage in a discipline of self-discipline and self-denial as a devotion to the God whom we love.

As we engage in self-giving and even self-denying love to our spouses in this world, we set our hearts above all on the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which will have no end. And so we also engage in daily contrition and repentance, dying to ourselves that we may rise to new life with Christ forever in the resurrection of the body. We wear the ultimate sign of love on our foreheads, the holy cross of Jesus.

God grant you all a blessed observance of both Ash Wednesday and St. Valentine's Day!

-Pastor Koch

The Most Important Part of Parenting

Luther: "Unfortunately it seldom happens that we bring up children to serve God, to praise and honor Him, and want nothing else of them. People seek only heirs in their children, or pleasure in them; the serving of God finds what place it can... False natural love blinds parents so that they have more regard for the bodies of their children than they have for their souls... Therefore, it is of the greatest importance for every



married man to pay closer, more thorough, and continuous attention to the health of his child's soul than to the body which he has begotten, and to regard his child as nothing else but an eternal treasure God has commanded him to protect, and so prevent the world, the flesh, and the devil from stealing the child away and bringing him to destruction" (Martin Luther-AE 44:12, 13).

Chakra Healing? For Christians?

There is a word floating around a lot in in the town I live in (Colby, Kansas) these days. Chakra. You can find it painted on the windows of businesses. A month or so ago you could go to Fike Park and hear the Chakra bowls humming their supposedly healing sounds. You can go and receive Chakra healings at multiple businesses. And of course, this is not just a growing trend in Colby. If you go online, sites many people trust such as WebMD and Healthline speak of these things as rather normal topics of health and wellness.

The idea behind the word is that the body is full of seven or so wheels of energies that run along one's spine and that the Chakra are accessible as surface points on the body. A knowledgeable person is thought to be able to manipulate.

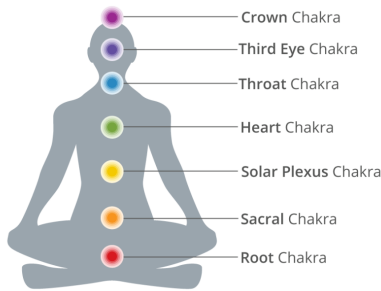
Now, some of you reading this article find this terminology quite familiar. You have sought of treatments outside of traditional medicine locally and have heard this language and largely just thought of it as new lingo for new ways of healing. Others of you find this language so foreign that you struggle to even know what the ones who use it mean.

But this language is not new. It is quite ancient actually. It is the language of

Hinduism and Buddhism, false religions. This idea of internal energies which can be manipulated through Chakra points and their associated Mantras (word or sounds you say or hear) is a part of their religious practice. In fact, the names of the Chakras come from Hindu gods and goddesses traditionally. All of this false religious thought, is aimed at awakening in you an enlightened freedom from earthly things to see spiritual things clearly through what they call "the third eye."

This talk can seem almost appealing to those of us who do understand that we

do have a spiritual nature to our existence, especially when our bodies are giving us trouble. But we must be clear, Christians are not looking to be freed mentally from the illusion of earthly things to know merely spiritual ones as Eastern religions would teach. We believe God created earthly things good and perfect, which were then corrupted through sin. We believe Jesus took on human flesh to save us body and soul, flesh and spirit, and to restore all creation to its former glory. We believe in the resurrection of the body and look forward to a new heaven and earth in which we will live.



We understand that this earthly world is broken and therefore groans during our existence, but do not think the answer is to think our troubles out of existence, escaping the illusion of physical matter. We look for God to make all things, material and spiritual, perfect again. We trust that he has assured that it will be so on the Last Day due to Jesus' work on the cross.

I want to be clear that not necessarily everyone using this language even understands the origins of it or consciencely buys into the full religious worldview that accompanies it. Some use techniques similar to those who do believe these things, believing solely that physical properties of the body can be affected by other physical properties in various substances, stones, etc. And this may be possible in the same matter that foods, vitamins, or medicines can do the same.

But I do want you to be aware that increasingly, those using this terminology will tell you that they are doing something more than physical. To be trained in these healing arts almost always means learning the spiritual ideas that lie underneath these healing arts. Many come out of this training believing they are spiritual guides. Some in our town will lead you from such supposed healing practices into other

practices such as seeking to contact the dead.

Our catechism warns us against the use of satanic arts because the Scriptures make clear that we have but One who we cry out to for healing. Now of course, that does not mean that we cannot use a wide variety of gifts that God has given to us like

doctors, supplements, medicines, dietary advice and so forth and receive them as gifts from God. But what we cannot do is engage is anything that would suggest that we are looking to another force to heal us. We cannot embrace a way of thinking that is in direct contradiction to what God

But what we cannot do is engage is anything that would suggest that we are looking to another force to heal us. We cannot embrace a way of thinking that is in direct contradiction to what God has revealed to us in his Word.

has revealed to us in his Word. To do so is to do what the catechism calls engaging in satanic arts.

If you hear this language, or other language that is foreign to you, ask the one speaking it a couple questions. Ask them where this language comes from. Ask them if they see themselves as spiritual healers. Talk to them about your faith and theirs. And if it is clear that they are trusting in some other force or feeling to heal you, flee. Help your brothers and sisters know where to avoid and where to receive good care that honors God.

Phillip Hoppe

2023 Mount Zion Financial Report

This is a financial report for 2023. There were 71 giving units (families or individuals) who contributed \$213,941.93. That is an average of \$3,013.27 per unit.

This compares to:

2022 - \$209,889.00 averaging \$2,690.88 per giving unit.

2021 - \$236,935.72 averaging \$2,520.59 per giving unit

2020 - \$191,059.62 averaging \$1,675.96 per giving unit

2019 - \$192,848.75 averaging \$1,706.63 per giving unit

2018 - \$162,199.85 averaging \$1,374.32 per giving unit

Not included in the above amount are plate offerings of \$6,463.25, Buck of The Month of \$312.00, and aluminum cans of \$89.00. That is a total of \$6,864.25 which makes a grand total of \$220,806.18 for 2023.

Your individual statements were put in your mailboxes. If you have any questions or corrections, please see Gene Miller.

Again, thank you for your faithful giving to Mount Zion. Remember, a tithe is an offering of 10% of your income given in thanks to God for His gifts in Christ and to support the ministry of the Gospel.

Your Finance Committee

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday to the following Mt. Zion members:

1st Jordan Halverson

2nd Cory Nicholson

2nd Nick Socha

8th Janis Allan

15th Daniel Roehrdanz

Happy Anniversary to the following couples:

16th Roger & Lois Leslie (15 years)

24th Jack & Kris Cline (51 years)

24th Gordon & Gladys Hakala (58 years)

February Assistants & Communion Helpers Schedule

Sunday, Feb. 4, 9 AM	Tim Krogen	Communion helper – Emil Gohr
Sunday, Feb. 11, 9 AM	Andrew Brondos	Communion helper – Gordon Hakala
Sunday, Feb. 18, 9 AM	Blake Taylor	Communion helper – Emil Gohr
Sunday, Feb. 25, 9 AM	Gordon Hakala	Communion helper – Joe Beiler

Saturday Usher:

Feb. 3, 5 PM	Eric Lawson	Feb. 17, 5 PM	Joe Beiler
Feb. 10, 5 PM	Matt Kalchbrenner	Feb. 24, 5 PM	Matt Kalchbrenner

Altar Guild for February: Karen Jeffrey and Sara Kohlmeier

Ladies Guild News

Ladies Guild will have a Food Drive in March to benefit Hope Lutheran Church. They will also be having a Bake Sale in March. Watch the bulletin and church calendar for dates. Any donations of bakery are welcomed.

The next meeting of the Guild will be March 12th. All ladies are invited.

Joan Wehrman, Secretary

Lenten Suppers

We will again be serving a light meal before the midweek Lenten services, starting on February 21st. Meals will be served at 5:30 p.m. and the service will be at 6:30 p.m. The sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board. Sign up if you can help with any of the listed tasks. Please come and join us!



Daily Bible Readings

(Readings in italics are optional extended readings)

Thurs., Feb 1	Zech 11:4–17 Tim 4:1–18	Sat., Feb 17	Gen 3:1–24 Mark 2:1–17
Fri., Feb 2	Zech 12:1—13:9 Titus 1:1—2:6	1st Sunday in Lent	Gen 4:1–26 Mark 2:18–28
Sat., Feb 3	Zech 14:1–21 Titus 2:7—3:15	Mon., Feb. 19	Gen 6:1—7:5 Mark 3:1–19
Sexagesima	Job 1:1–22 John 1:1–18	Tues, Feb 21	Gen 7:11—8:12 Mark 3:20–35
Mon., Feb 5	Job 2:1—3:10 John 1:19–34	Wed., Feb 22	Gen 8:13-9:17 <i>Gen 9:18-11:26</i>
Tues., Feb 6	Job 3:11–26 John 1:35–51	Thurs, Feb 23	Mark 4:1-20 Gen 11:27-12:20
Wed., Feb 7	Job 4:1–21 John 2:1–12	Fri, Feb 24	Gen 13:1-18 <i>Gen 14:1-24</i>
Thurs., Feb 8	Job 5:1–27 John 2:13–25	Sat, Feb 25	Mark 5:1-20 Gen 15:1-21
Fri., Feb 9	Job 6:1–13 John 3:1–21		Mark 5:21-43
Sat., Feb 10	Job 6:14–30 John 3:22—4:6	2nd Sunday In Lent	Gen 16:1-9, 15-17:22 Mark 6:1-13
Quinquagesima	Job 7:1–21 John 4:7–26	Mon., Feb 26	Gen 18:1-15 <i>Gen 18:16-20:18</i>
Mon., Feb 12	Job 8:1–22 John 4:27–45		Mark 6:14-34
Tues., Feb 13	Job 9:1–35 John 4:46–54	Tues., Feb 27	Gen 21:1-21 Mark 6:35-56
Ash Wednesday	Gen 1:1-19 Mark 1:1-13	Wed., Feb 28	Gen 22:1-19 Mark 7:1-23
Thurs., Feb 15	Gen 1:20—2:3 Mark 1:14–28	Thurs., Feb 29	Gen 24:1-31 Mark 7:24-37
Fri., Feb 16	Gen 2:4–25 Mark 1:29–45		

Mt. Zion Lutheran Church

Church Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Vice-President Blake Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. 9 members were present.

Pastor Koch opened the meeting with a meditation on Exodus 3, reminding us that, like Moses, we are called to believe in God's promises long before they are fulfilled.

Secretary's Report: The minutes from the November 2023 meeting were accepted as corrected.

Treasurer's Report: Emil Gohr's printed report for December 2023 was accepted as presented.

President's Report: President McIntosh was welcomed back following his recovery. He had nothing new to report.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Koch reported that a Table Talk potluck on in-home devotions is scheduled for Saturday, February 10th at 11:45 am. A Zoom Bible Study on forgiveness and reconciliation will begin on Monday, February 12, 2024, at 7:00 pm. The regular educational offerings of Sunday School, Bible Class, and Junior Catechesis continue.

Membership Changes: None reported.

Board Reports

Elders: Joe Beiler reported that the board reworked the guidelines for Elders and Ushers and will forward it to the church office. Kyle Wendtland has agreed to serve as an Usher for Saturday night services. Next month, the elders will begin contacting delinquent members.

Trustees: Pastor reported that the two furnaces that heat the church were not working on Saturday and Sunday. He will report more in New Business.

Finance: Gene Miller reported that our contributions for 2023 exceeded our disbursements by \$22,000.

Education: See Pastor's report.

Outreach: No report

Old Business: We reworked the guidelines for renting our facilities. Sara will make the desired changes and present at our next meeting.

New Business: Pastor Koch said that we needed emergency service for our furnaces this past Saturday. We need to replace the two furnaces that heat the church, as well as the air-conditioning units. Council members will get estimates for the replacement of these items, and the council will approve the project at a special meeting. A furnace fund will be started for donations. Gene Miller will make a thermometer for the narthex to track our progress.

Sara presented a proposal to move our financial record-keeping to an electronic system using the church's Shepherd's Staff software. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to begin recording giving electronically.

With no other new business presented, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Pastor Koch closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Kohlmeier
Secretary

Upcoming Meetings for 2024

Church Council: April 16, May 14, October 15, November 12

Voters': March 17, June 16, September 15, December 15

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2023

BEGINNING BALANCE RETAINED IN CHECKING 33407.48

RECEIPTS

Plate offerings	951.00
Weekly envelopes	16758.46
Communion / Altar	79.00
Initial Offering	40.00
Flowers	107.00
Buck-of-the-month	27.00
Advent	597.00
Missions	70.00
Aluminum cans	48.00
Bulletins	100.00
Christmas	1740.00
New Years Eve.	175.00
Thrivent Choice Dollars	117.00
Interest	<u>0.30</u>
TOTAL	20809.76

Note;

YTD totals do not include any
"Foot Steps of St. Paul" trip
monies. 0.00

DISBURSEMENTS

Salaries	7997.34
FICA	467.48
Utilities	1570.17
Pension & insurance	3404.68
Car mileage allowance	307.70
Continuing education	129.79
Church & parsonage maintenance	12.66
Grounds maintenance	318.00
Miscellaneous	64.06
Sunday School	99.63
Prepaid expenses	338.26
Communion / Altar	56.00
Window fund	1050.00
Music/Choir	1200.00
Adult education	176.00
Worship supplies	178.73
Dues, subscription, fees	537.81
Office supplies	943.18
Postage	132.00
Guest Pastor	250.00
Guest organist	<u>240.00</u>
TOTAL	19473.49

L. C. Extension Fund, general use 1831.94

RESTRICTED FUNDS IN CHECKING


Communion / Altar	0.00	Food Pantry	70.00
Missions	0.00	Mt. Zion Care Team	507.79
Gift & Memorial	8549.49	Pastor's Home Equity Fund	1500.00
B-O-T-M	125.26	Ladies Bible Study Books	236.00
Sunday School offerings	515.76	Window Fund	1084.00
Diapers	150.00		
TOTAL	12738.30		

OPERATING FUND STATUS AS OF DECEMBER 31

FUND	20809.76	Rec'd	I	FUND	231639.76	Rec'd
FTM	<u>19473.49</u>	Disbursed	I	YTD	<u>196896.01</u>	Disbursed
	1336.27		I		34743.75	Retained in checking
			I		<u>12738.30</u>	Restricted Funds
					22005.45	Actual operating funds

Emil C. Gohr Treas.
01/23/24

February 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					Private Confession & Absolution: Sat. 4:15-4:45 or Sun. 8:15-8:45 or by appointment	
				1	2	3 Divine Service—5 pm
4 DivineService-9 Sunday School & Bible Class-10:15	5 Jacob (Israel), Patriarch	6	7 Jr. Catechesis – 6:30 pm	8	9	10 Silas, Fellow worker of Sts. Peter & Paul 11:45 am-Table Talk Potluck Divine Service—5 pm
11 DivineService-9 Sunday School & Bible Class-10:15	12 Zoom Bible Study – 7 pm	13 Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos Ladies' Guild Meeting-1 pm Elders-6:30 pm Board of Dir-7 pm	14 Valentine, Martyr Divine Service – 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday	15 Philemon and Onesimus	16	17 Divine Service—5 pm
18 Martin Luther, Doctor and Confessor DivineService-9 Sunday School & Bible Class-10:15	19 Zoom Bible Study – 7 pm	20	21 Lenten Supper – 5:30 pm Lenten Vespers – 6:30 pm	22	23 Polycarp of Smyrna, Pastor and Martyr	24 Divine Service—5 pm
25 DivineService-9 Sunday School & Bible Class-10:15	26 Zoom Bible Study – 7 pm	27	28 Lenten Supper – 5:30 pm Lenten Vespers – 6:30 pm	29		

**Mt. Zion Lutheran Church
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www.mountziongreenfield.org

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