



The Humility of Jesus

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedience to the point of death - even death on a cross.”

(Philippians 2: 6-8)

This is one of my favorite portions of scripture. Paul's point in Philippians 2 is both the deity of Jesus and his humanity, but even more Christ's humility. We have just celebrated the wonder and glory of God Emmanuel, God with us. We have again celebrated God made flesh, the birth of the Christ Child. But what does this all mean? St. Paul tries to explain in Philippians. Jesus, because he shared God's own nature, and because he was truly God, did not regard being God as a matter of exploitation. Jesus knew that being God wasn't a matter of grasping, but of giving, because God's very nature is gracious, merciful, and sacrificial.

So, Jesus emptied himself, and this is how he did it: He took the humblest form of all, a slave-like form, by being born as a human being. The glorious God became truly, fully human in Jesus. Moreover, Jesus humbled himself even further, not only in becoming human, but especially in becoming obedient unto death itself, acting as if death had authority over him, even though he held ultimate power of death. Jesus died in the most shameful way by being crucified on the cross.

Notice that Jesus did not put off his divine nature when he humbled himself. Rather, he saw that servanthood, self-giving love, and sacrifice were essential aspects of God's own nature. God revealed himself to Moses as "the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34: 6) This is the same God who, in Jesus, chose the way of humility.

The humbling of Jesus was a two-step process. First, he humbled himself by becoming human. The infinite, all-knowing, all-powerful God became a tiny, limited, helpless baby.

This is, of course, the part of the story we celebrate at Christmas. And here we see that the humbleness of Jesus birth is magnified by his surroundings: born in a barn, not a palace, visited by shepherds, not Jewish and Roman dignitaries. The One who shared God's own nature was laid to rest in the animals' feed box. Now that's about as low as it goes.

But not for Jesus. The second part of his humiliation happened in his death. The Source of life, the One who claimed to be "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," chose to die - and not just any old death. He died by crucifixion, one of the most brutal, barbaric means of executing criminals ever

invented by the human mind. Crucifixion was so horrible that polite Romans didn't even talk about it. Yet this was the path chosen by Jesus, who humbled himself beyond human comprehension. Indeed, no being has ever fallen further from obvious glory than Jesus. From God's own nature to death on a cross: that's as far as one can travel in the hierarchy of glory.

My friends, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, as we're reminded of his humble human beginnings, let us not forget that this is just the beginning. Christmas is not the end of Jesus' human story, just the start. And we don't really grasp the full meaning of the beginning until we grasp the end: his death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter.

Philippians 2 begins with the pre-existence of Jesus, moving through his birth as a human being to his humiliating death upon the cross. But it doesn't end there. Verses 9-11 complete the story:

“Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

In this Christmas season we imitate those who came to worship Jesus. We bow at the manger, offering our devotion to the baby who is God Incarnate.

God bless you this new year and let everything that we do, be done to the glory of God.

Please pray for me as I pray for you.

Pastor Mark



BOARD CHAIRS, TREASURERS, ETC., please have your annual report in by January 11, typed and ready for printing. You can email them to Linda at ziontrf@mncable.net. Thank you!

ENVELOPE BOXES are available for pick up. Please note that they have been renumbered for 2022. Most contributors will have a new contribution number in 2022.

The Call Committee is pleased to have received the names and profiles of two potential candidates and have had a "get acquainted" visit via Zoom with one of them. We continue to discuss these possibilities and anticipate getting additional names. Please keep this call process in your prayers as we search for candidates that best fits Zion's congregation.



- **January 5** – Confirmation resumes
- **January 9** - Sunday school resumes
- **January 9** – Sunday of the Baptism of Our Lord
- **January 11** – Annual reports due in office
- **January 11** – WELCA – 10:00 AM
- **January 11** – WELCA – Board meeting – 9:00 AM
- **January 17 – 21** - Falls Delivered Meals
- **January 18** – Grief Support for parents and grandparents – 10:30
- **January 19 or January 23** – Youth sledding – tentative
- **January 30** – Annual meeting after 9:00 worship service
- **January 30** – Food and Fellowship breakfast after annual meeting

Falls Delivered Meals

Zion is responsible for delivering Falls Delivered Meals from January 17 – 21. If you can help, please call Koni Johnson at 681-1344 or the church office at 681-3296.



Laura Rude

Happy New Year Zion Church Family!

Hard to believe we are starting a new year already. This past year has been chalked full of ups and downs but through it all God has been loving, good and faithful. Our church family continues to be faithful with financial support, selfless in volunteer support and blessed with a great staff. The year ahead will bring us many more blessings and I'm sure a few surprises.

As you start the new year looking to form new habits or strengthen old habits, let's not forget about our relationship with Jesus and look to your church family for support. As I recently read about New Year's resolutions: "You remember that list you made with two scoops of optimistic enthusiasm, sprinkled with unrealistic expectations, and topped with the cherry of knowing the list isn't serious anyway. "Just remember that with Christ, all things are possible! Let us support each other in our spiritual journeys.

Our annual meeting will be January 30th. Please come with your comments and questions. This is a great time to have a conversation as a church and get updates on the happenings in the church. The Congregation Council and Church Boards continue to work hard on behalf of the church. There are still many positions that still need to be filled. We have so many talented members and many hands make light work! Please consider serving one of the boards or as a church officer.

1 Peter 4:10 "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

My prayer as we start a new year.

*God's timing, not mine. God's will, not mine.
God's plan, not mine. God's glory, not mine.*

Humbly Serving,
Laura Rude, Zion President



Silver Creek

Wishing you a new year full of worship, love, and all good things from above. Wishing you the happiest of new years! May you praise the Lord for all things merry and fall back on Him if times get scary. He is always with you. Remember this, and you will have a very blessed new year!

Silver Creek has lots to be thankful for in 2021 and look forward to in another great year in 2022. As a congregation, we need to continue to pray for a full-time pastor who is looking to serve a rural community. The call committee is working to find the right person and would appreciate our support and prayers.

January 16th is the date of our annual meeting. We will meet after services with a potluck meal to follow. All reports are due to Kristi Housey by January 9th in order to get the booklet printed. Any items to be added to agenda should also be sent to Kristi.

WELCA will not meet in January but will continue with activities in February. Further notice will include dates. Officers will meet and plan program for the year and get booklets printed.

Bev Rupprecht

May you share the light of Christ in the New Year.

Lay Ministry/Evangelism

- Home communion is on hold for now because of COVID. We will be encouraging family members to pick up communion from the office to serve their family members.



- Zion will be checking on homebound shut ins and single members during this time. Tracee Bruggeman will be making phone calls from the church so that members will see that it's a phone call from Zion.
- Pastor Mark will be presenting information on our Lutheran doctrine during fellowship hour after January 1.
- Name tags will be worn on the 3rd Sunday of every month for the next few months. Now that we have only one worship service and see unfamiliar faces who may have worshiped at another service, we need to connect with those we don't know.

Deb Holtan/Marijo Nabben



HAPPY
New Year



**Zion Lutheran's Congregational Council Minutes
December 20, 2021**

The Congregational Council Meeting was called to order by President Laura Rude at 5:30 pm. In attendance were Laura Rude, Pastor Mark Helgeland, Tim Numedahl, Denny Minks, Cookie Overbye, Mike Spears, Marijo Nabben, Judy Melby, Glenice Johnson, Sharon Jorde, Penni Nelson and Deb Holtan.

Pastor Mark led the council in prayer.

The Secretary's report from November 14, 2021, was presented. A motion was made to accept the minutes as printed and seconded. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: \$2,640.00 from the Pie Auction went towards the Faith Fund. The Noisy Offering and proceeds from the "Food and Fellowship" breakfast from Sunday December 19th in the amount of \$1,158.60 will be sent to the DeFrang family. The Treasurer's Report was filed for audit.

Madam President stated that Zion's Foundation did meet on December 14th, reminding the Foundation that they need someone from the Foundation to represent them at the Annual meeting. Zion's Annual Meeting will be on Sunday January 30th. Glenice Johnson stated that the Foundation does have its own By-Laws and a copy was given to Delray Sparby. Those By-laws, according to the Synod guidelines need to be included in our constitution. The congregation will vote on these by-laws at the Annual Meeting.

Madam President reported that the REAL (Resources Enriching African Lives) has had one individual that has been making a \$1,080.00 donation to this organization and will no longer be contributing. There are enough funds in our missions to make this donation. The money goes towards scholarships for three African girls for their schooling. The council's discussion is to make the donation this year but wanting to review this next Fall.

Pastor Mark reported that he has been very busy. Also, that his vacation plans for January have been cancelled.

Penni Nelson reported from Silver Creek that their Christmas Eve service will be at 5:30. January 16th is their annual meeting.

Stewardship: There are no numbers to report on the "Stewardship Drive"

Worship: Sharon Jorde reported for the board, pointing out that Sunday January 9th is Baptism of our Lord Sunday. Letters will be going out to parents of children that have been baptized in this past year with a candle lighting at the 9:00 service. The board has purchased four more communion trays. Two more tables are being made for use during communion to hold the communion trays. The tables will have a bottom shelf to hold the empty trays. The board would like to go back to bringing the offering plates to the altar. The council suggested that the offering will continue as is, with the plates at the back of the church, but that, yes, bring them forward during the usual time of offering during the service, but leave one offering plate at the back of the church as there are times that people forget to place their offering when coming in so there is a place for them to still do so as they are leaving.

Properties: Mike Spears reported that they got the Christmas trees up, the repair person was here for the elevator, and a new water heater was installed in the kitchenette. Mike also stated that he is working on estimates for the new digital sign for outside of the church. So far, the estimates seem quite high, so the board is looking for an outlet that is closer to us and at a more reasonable price.

Evangelism and Lay Ministry: Marijo reported she and a couple of other board members sent out thirty cards to the homebound and shut-ins. The board is still wondering how to handle the delicate subject of people in the congregation that assume they are members for example by marrying someone that is already a member. Would it be possible during the couple's marriage classes; the subject could be addressed during one of those meetings? Give them that option. An idea was presented to the board to get the youth more involved with our church service. Could one or two of the youth read the Psalm for a given Sunday from the balcony? The idea was given to Judy Melby and should be passed on to Carol Narverud. Marijo stated she will be in contact with the nursing homes as to what their policies are after the first of the year as far as visitations.

Christian Ed and Youth: Judy Melby reported they felt the Gingerbread House Contest went well even though there was a snowstorm that Sunday. The board put it together at the last minute and have decided they need to make a few changes but will have the contest again next year. The board discussed the IFA accounts that belong to students that have graduated. A letter will be sent out to each individual asking that they donate their money back to the church to one of its many groups. A list of options will be included in the letter. Jenna Holen put together all the goodie cups/bags for the Sunday School kids! It's been suggested that the youth help with the Spirit of Giving with a possibility of two credits towards their confirmation requirements. With the church only having one service, the credits for acolyting are limited. The board is planning a "Family Sledding" with hot cocoa and BBQs in January. The

breakfast went well. Madam President emphasized the importance of having coordination between the Sunday School and the Youth Board. She gave the example, on the Sundays with the breakfast, to possibly let out the Sunday School classes at 10:30 so the kids can have breakfast with their parents as a family. Judy also reported they have a new board member, Krista Johnson.

Parish Fellowship: Glenice Johnson reported that they are working on the new booklets for Sharing Servants. They need to reconsider how to get the volunteers from each month's lists to participate. Parish Fellowship board members are taking care of the month of December because they can't get any volunteers.

WELCA: Glenice Johnson reported they had their Christmas Tea. There are four (4) active circles. They plan to have a workday in February to go through storage areas and clean. The group is in the process of looking for some type of vanity tables for the restrooms and wall décor. Glenice is asking for different groups from the church to help with the Lenten Suppers. So far, the Men's Breakfast, the Senior Choir, the Council and WELCA will be volunteering to either cater or make the meal. The Seder Meal will take place for the 5th Graders and their families that will be receiving their first communion. The Seder Meal is on Maundy Thursday, April 14th. WELCA also sent out cards to the homebound and those in nursing facilities. They also gave their annual Christmas cash to the church staff along with donations to other groups which included the Falls Meals on Wheels, Hospice, Lutheran World Relief, VIP, Food Shelf and Rural Missions Synod, and Zion's "January Faith Fund" (General Funds) for a total of \$3,150.00.

Public Relations: Darlene Hulteen's report stated that she had the dumpster picked up. The ads for the Christmas worship times were put into the Times.

Call Committee: Tim and Glenice reported that they had a zoom meeting with one candidate and that there is a second potential to be interviewed.

The suggestion was made with the next Family and Fellowship be moved to the Sunday of the Annual Meeting.

A question was presented to the council asking where the Eagle Scouts plaque is. Brent Smith has it.

The meeting was adjourned after praying the Lord's Prayer at 6:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Holtan
Secretary for the Congregational Council.



Confirmation

Confirmation Resumes January 5

January 5, 12, and 26 – regular class nights

January 19 – Worship study night

Meals

- January 5 – Tater Tot Hotdish
- January 12 – Chicken Alfredo
- January 19 – Hot Ham and Cheese
- January 26 – BBQs and Fries

Please make sure you show up for scheduled acolyting and S/Os.

2022 ELCA Youth Gathering

July 24-28 in Minneapolis, MN

If you are in grades 8-12 and are interested in this wonderful fellowship opportunity, please get in touch with Kami. Once we get kids' names who are interested, we will set up a meeting where more details will be announced.



Parents, please sign up for our Confirmation Remind!

Sunday Servant Opportunities and Acolytes Reminds and Confirmation changes are sent this way.

December Youth Activities

- Made ornaments and decorated tree in Narthex



- First Annual Gingerbread Contest Winners:
 - 1st Place – Brooks and Crosby Olson
 - 2nd Place – Rowan Jamison'
 - 3rd Place – Enzo and Penelope Nelson
- Sunday School Program – over 60 children
- Food and Fellowship Breakfast after Sunday school program. Free will offering was given to DeFrang family.

January Youth Events

- **Sledding** behind armory – Sunday, January 16 or January 23 from 2:00-3:00
 - Hot chocolate and goodies after sledding
 - Watch bulletin for exact time
- **Noisy Offering** for January – For Sunday school room furniture
- **Food and Fellowship** breakfast – January 30, after annual meeting
- Tentative **Hotdish Cookoff** in February



Worship Together in the Sanctuary

Zion – 9:00 - Silver Creek – 10:30
 Zion Sunday School – 10:00

Worship Online

If you choose to worship from home, take advantage of the alternatives to in-house worship.

- KTRF radio – 1230 AM at 9:00
- Cable TV – Channel 3 – KTRF – 9:00
- Garden Valley – Channel 37 – 12:00 Noon
- Log in to Zion's webpage – ziontrf.org and listen to the service over the internet.
- Facebook Live – 9:00 on Zion's Facebook Page



God of all time-

Help us enter the New Year quietly, thoughtful of who we are, mindful that our steps make an impact and our words carry power.

May we speak only after we have listened well.

Creator of all life, help us enter the New Year reverently, aware that you have endowed every creature and plant, every person and habitat with beauty and purpose.

May we regard the world with tenderness.

May we honor rather than destroy.

Lover of all souls, help us enter the New Year joyfully, willing to laugh and dance and dream, remembering our many gifts with thanks and looking forward to blessings yet to come.

May we welcome your lavish love. In this new year, may the grace and peace of Christ bless us now and in the days ahead. Amen