

# Amazing!News

DECEMBER // 2018



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FROM ZOAR LUTHERAN CHURCH | [WWW.ZOARLUTHERAN.COM](http://WWW.ZOARLUTHERAN.COM)

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## GOD IS NOT OUT TO GET US. WE DON'T NEED TO BE AFRAID

There is a well-worn story about Christmas that bears repeating: A certain family had a tradition where the Mother and children would go to the Christmas Eve service, and the Father would stay home and read the paper. The Father was not a bad man, but he just couldn't believe in the childhood stories anymore of God coming as a baby in a manger. As soon as the family left for church, he opened up the paper and began to read by the fireplace. Suddenly, he heard something bang into the window. The man thought the bird flew into the glass trying to get out of the snow into the warmth of his home. He felt for the bird, and went outside, hoping to bring it in. But as he approached the bird, the bird just flew against the window even harder. Pretty soon, the bird fell into the bushes below the window, half frozen, yet too afraid to be caught by this huge man. The more the man tried to reach for the bird, the more the bird flew frantically into the snow and thorns of the bushes. After a few minutes in the cold and seeing the bird continue to injure itself, the man yelled out in frustration, "Stupid bird, can't you understand that I'm trying to help?" The man paused and thought, "If only you understood you wouldn't fly away ... if only ... if only I could become a bird, and get you to understand." With the baby in a manger, we learn one of the most important lessons of faith. God is not out to get us. We don't need to be afraid of God. God is here to help.



from  
**Pastor Tim**  
Senior Pastor  
pastortim@zoarlutheran.com



# WELCOME TO ADVENT

Sometimes I like waiting: the peaceful moment as clouds come across the horizon bringing rain; a chance to pause and breathe in the beauty around me; time spent with family as a loved one is preparing to enter God's eternal kingdom; and even the occasional gift of a red traffic light, during which I stop the forward hustle for just a moment.

But much more often I do not like to wait: for a visit to a new grandchild; for healing in the leg; for a festival to come; and, also, sometimes at that traffic light, when I don't want to stop the forward hustle!

Welcome to Advent! All around us the culture has brought out the Christmas cheer (even before Halloween!) But wait – not yet! We still have to (or get to) journey through the advent season of waiting.

We wait because we know Jesus is coming again. We wait for the end of pain, of brokenness, of disease and death, of fear, of strife between nations and in our own families. We also wait for the time to see Jesus face-to-face, to know only joy, to be reunited with loved ones who are in God's eternal

Kingdom. The promise is that one day the waiting will be over. Alleluia!

And we wait, as with an expectant parent, for the joy of the birth of Jesus. We journey with the surprisingly pregnant Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. And there, at the right time, after centuries of waiting, Mary gives birth to her first-born son, wraps him in bands of cloth, and lays him in a manger (See St. Luke). This is where we first come to find hope in our waiting, and joy in our days.

We also know that the day will come when Mary's Son will take death on our behalf, conquer it, and rise to glory. Our waiting has promise, and hope, and joy, because of Jesus.

So, as you journey through these days, take a moment to breathe in the joy of Jesus' presence. For some of you there will be no time this month, with lives full of activity and family. For others, you have plenty of time on your hands. But I call each of you to find a time to stop and give thanks for the abundant blessings you have received. Jesus is waiting for you with love!

# HOLY LIGHT : A SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> 3 PM

Zoar Lutheran Church, in collaboration with Saint Rose Catholic Church presents Holy Light: a Service of Lessons and Carols. Voices, Handbells, Strings, and Pipes will all help us usher in the spirit of the Season. A free-will offering will benefit the Cocoon Shelter and a reception will follow.

## HOSANNA ROCK

DECEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> 11 AM

Please mark your calendars for some very special story-telling time! On Sunday, December 16, at the 11:00 o'clock service, Zoar's Sunday School will present the story of Jesus' birth with the aid of an original score written by Sheila Wilson: Hosanna Rock! As its name suggests, we will see and hear angels, sheep, and the whole town of Bethlehem share a hand-jiving, toe-tapping program of the greatest stories ever told.

## THE INNKEEPER

DECEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup> 6 PM

DECEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup> 7:15, 8:30 & 11 AM

The Christmas Story comes to life at Zoar on December 22<sup>ND</sup> and 23<sup>RD</sup> as Michael Searle performs *The Innkeeper*. This first-person account of the events of Christ's birth on Christmas Eve and the morning of Christmas Day. This monologue takes a familiar story and helps us see it through an eyewitness who was there that night. The setting of this story is 40 years after the birth of Christ as the Innkeeper shares his tale with Saint Luke, who is writing a book about Jesus' life.

## AN EPIPHANY BACH VESPERS

JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup> 3 PM

On Sunday, January 6, at three o'clock Zoar Lutheran Church will be present An Epiphany Bach Vespers, with a Festival Choir comprised of singers from the community and Zoar's own Chancel Choir. Join us in celebrating this festival of light with the glorious sounds of our musical ensembles. A free-will offering will be taken. A reception will follow.



from  
**Omaldo**

**Cantor**

[operez@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:operez@zoarlutheran.com)

Dear Friends,  
The Church, in its wisdom, has for many centuries advised us to ponder the meaning of the liturgical breath we call Advent! At first, one may not think of the Advent season as a breath, but I can assure you that for many years now, the season of Joyful Anticipation has functioned for this musician as a deep inhalation before the Christmas plunge.

Every year we are called to meditate on what it means to wait for the God that already dwells among us. Every year, I think about what the Incarnation means to me: how heart-breaking it is that the creator of the universe, out of love, became a child and grew to one day die on the cross like a common criminal. I once read that the difference between fear and excitement depends on the breath. In life and in singing all depends on our breath. So here is a question for all of us: Is our breathing deep and energized when we sing in church? May we always sing our joyful alleluias without reservation or hesitation.







## TRUNK OR TREAT

A BIG THANK YOU to all those who volunteered their time, donated needed items and attended this year's Trunk-or-Treat Celebration. This year 276 people attended our event. In doing so they were welcomed by games, a hot meal and LOTS of candy! Rain was no match for us! The celebration continued and fun was had by all! We look forward to sharing in the celebration of the season again next fall.





# DECEMBER SCHEDULE

December 2<sup>ND</sup>: Advent Workshop - During Sunday School hour

December 16<sup>TH</sup>: Hosanna Rock - Sunday School Christmas Program

December 16<sup>TH</sup>: Caroling for All Ages

December 27<sup>TH</sup> - 30<sup>TH</sup>: 2018 Great Lakes Gathering



## ADVENT WORKSHOP

### DECEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup> - DURING SUNDAY SCHOOL HOUR

This year's Advent Workshop will be held December 2nd during the Sunday School Hour. Sunday school children and their families are invited to join us in creating an interactive advent calendar for the whole family. Come and celebrate the advent season as together we await the celebration of Jesus' birth.

## CAROLING FOR ALL AGES

### DECEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> 12 - 2 PM

Join Amanda, Omaldo and the Zoar Youth Groups for caroling in our community. Join us at Zoar for a quick Birthday Party for Jesus followed by carolling for local nursing homes and other friends of Zoar. Grab your Santa hat or reindeer ears and join us in spreading the JOY of the holiday season! ALL ARE WELCOME!



## 2018 GREAT LAKES GATHERING

### DECEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup> - 30<sup>TH</sup>

Several of our Zoar youth will be attending the Great Lakes Gathering, formerly known as the Michigan Gathering this month in Lansing, MI. There the youth will participate in worship, service projects, small group activities and more!

## LOOKING AHEAD TO JANUARY

## MLK WEEKEND SNOW ADVENTURE

### JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup> - 21<sup>ST</sup>

Save the date! Looking for something to do during your LONG weekend in January? Join us in tubing and/or tobogganing! More details to come very soon!



from  
**Amanda**  
Director of Youth Ministries  
[arich@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:arich@zoarlutheran.com)

Dear Friends,

As a child the month of December brought much excitement! The hope for snowfall (and maybe even a snow day), creating the "rough draft" of my Christmas Wish List, baking sugar cookies, going shopping with my grandparents, singing Christmas Carols, watching Christmas movies and wishing the days until the big day would pass more quickly. When the day finally arrived, I would always be the first to jump out of bed and wake up the whole family!

With the beginning of December comes the arrival of Advent. A season in which we are given time to prepare our hearts and our minds for the coming of our sweet Jesus. In the midst of the JOY of the season, it is often easy to get lost and distracted by the hustle and bustle. The shopping, the baking, the year end deadlines and so many other items create a fog in our vision. The resulting stress often causes us to lose sight of what it is we are longing and preparing for.

Did your family share in any Advent traditions? What is your favorite holiday memory? This Advent season I invite you to look back at your childhood and share the wonderful memories with those around you. Seek to find JOY in the season and reminisce, live with childlike faith.

Blessings,  
Amanda



from  
**Pastor Mike**  
Community Pastor  
pastormike@zoarlutheran.com

You'll hear one word more than any other during the holiday season. I'd like to say that word is Jesus or Gospel or even gratefulness. But it's not. The most popular word, by far, is gift. Everyone wants to talk about gifts they're giving or gifts they're getting. It's not just a national obsession. It's a global one. We spend at least a month—and these days, likely two months—in a mad dash to find the right gifts. Many people think that the idea of giving gifts at Christmas began with the magi bringing their presents to the baby Jesus. It does begin in the Bible, but it isn't the wise men who gave the first Christmas gift. Actually, God is the one who started the whole gift-giving extravaganza. We can look to John 3:16 as a reference point when it says "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son,..." God gave. Giving is God's nature. It is who God is from the beginning of the Bible to the end. God pours goodness and blessing into our lives.



## ZOAR CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

The Incarnation (God-in-flesh) event at Bethlehem is a pivotal event in history. God steps out of eternity and into time -- our time. In a mere 30+ years He will take all the sin and brokenness of the world on Himself, nailed to the cross, buried in the tomb, and then rise from the dead, alleluia! Only the God-Man Jesus could accomplish this for us. Only out of the love of God are we freed from the brokenness that infects us and the whole world. Join us this Christmas season as we celebrate the birth of our savior Jesus Christ. See how Love Is Born for you, Love is born for all.

### BLUE CHRISTMAS DECEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup> 2 PM

Our Christmas season is filled with services to celebrate the birth of Jesus' birthday beginning with Blue Christmas, December 2<sup>ND</sup> at 2 PM. Not everyone is feeling holly and jolly for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other disease, and a number of other situations make parties and celebrating painful for many people in our congregation and community. Join us as we hear scripture and reflection, sing songs that help hearts to heal, and light candles to remember, to remind God of our need, and to reflect.





## CHRISTMAS EVE EVE

DECEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup> 7:15, 8:30, 11 AM & 6 PM

## CHRISTMAS EVE

DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> 3:30, 8:30 & 11 PM

This Christmas we will hear the story of our Savior's birth. As we read from Luke 2 and listen to Mary and Joseph story of their trip to Bethlehem and the birth of their son, we will celebrate the birth of a King. Who came to earth to forgive our sins. All Services will be complete with carols, candles and communion. The 3:30 PM service is a family service. The 8:30 and 11 PM service will include Festival Worship featuring a brass ensemble.

Christmas is a great time to invite friends, family, neighbors or co-workers who may not normally attend weekly worship. Who are you going to invite this year?



### TIPS FOR INVITING FRIENDS TO CHRISTMAS

#### 1. Start with Prayer

Ask God to reveal specific people you should invite to Zoar for Christmas. Pray that God will soften their hearts so that the invitation will be accepted.

#### 2. Tell them what's good about the service.

Do you enjoy the music? The candles? The message? Let your friends know your favorite part of Christmas at Zoar.

#### 3. Be clear about the time

Our invite cards are great for this! Keep a couple in your purse or car. Then you can hand them out and let your friends know which service you will be attending.

# GATHER/GROW/GIVE

## BOUGHT YOUR GOAT YET?

CHRISTMAS GIFT POSSIBILITIES THROUGH THE ELCA

As you give gifts to friends and family this holiday season, consider giving gifts of food security and clean water to a total stranger half way around the world. Through the ELCA Good Gifts program, you can provide a pig, a cow, a goat, or a variety of other gifts and make new life possible for people caught in deep cycles of poverty, starvation, and illness.

A variety of free resources are available to help you share ELCA Good Gifts with friends and family. Order these free resources by visiting the online store at [www.elca.org/goodgifts](http://www.elca.org/goodgifts) or by calling 800-638-3522. Look through the 24-page ELCA Good Gifts catalog that features more than 50 different gift-giving options.





# A BOOK CLUB CHRISTMAS

## DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup> 12 PM

Zoar's book club meets December 7 at 12:00 pm for a time of sharing favorite hymns, stories and poems of Christmas. Food and treats will be in abundance. The meeting takes place in rooms L1/L2. All are welcome.



## FOF CHRISTMAS DISTRIBUTION

### HELP SPREAD CHRISTMAS CHEER

Feed Our Families is hosting our third annual Christmas distribution Saturday, December 15. We will invite 36 families with a total of 94 children, which we serve during our summer distribution. Each family will be given a bag of groceries, personal items and a gift card for each child. The parents are also able to shop for additional items for their school age children. However, we would like to empower the children by allowing them the opportunity to shop for their parents. This is where FOF is asking for your help. We are looking for the following donations for parents:

Moms - perfume, jewelry, fashion scarves, dish towels, dish cloths, coffee mugs, books, slippers

Dads - flashlights, tools, gloves, car scrapers, books, cologne, wallets, coffee mugs, socks, phone chargers

Please place your items in the marked bin in the Gathering Space. If you have any additional questions, feel free to contact Tracy Rickman at 419-206-7927 or Cynthia Blubaugh at 419-376-1851.

## UGLY SWEATER CHRISTMAS PARTY

### DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> 5 PM

Calling all parents of young kids. This is your night. Or, should we say late afternoon? Beginning at 5:00 PM, Parents of Young Kids will meet at Poco Piatti's for an Ugly Sweater Party. Prizes will be awarded. So, go mad with the ugly. There is no cost for the food. But any and all beverages are on you. Childcare will be available (at a cost) in the church nursery from 4:30 – 8:30.

## SYNOD WIDE PROJECT

### READ THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR

Bishop Daniel Beaudoin of the Northwest Synod of Ohio has declared 2018 to be the year of the Bible in the synod. Among the several initiatives and projects the bishop envisions is a complete reading of the Bible in all the congregations. Reading schedules will be made available to everyone during the month of December at church and through email. Why read the Bible in a year? Here are five good reasons.

1. It helps you learn the overarching story of Scripture.
2. It will improve your ability to interpret and exegete Scripture.
3. It will keep you habitually in the Bible.
4. It will ensure you are engaging (and being engaged by) Scripture at least as frequently as you're engaging other books.
5. It will force you to navigate those tricky, less traveled roads of Scripture.

# Z O A R C A L E N D A R O F E V E N T S H I G H L I G H T S

## DECEMBER // 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Lois Widdel Birthday
2 Advent Workshop Blue Christmas	3 Poinsettia Orders Due Elizabeth Kaczar Birthday	4	5	6 Men's Breakfast Richard Williams Birthday	7 Book Club Christmas Party	8
9 Holy Light Ugly Christmas Sweater Party Walter Krueger Birthday	10	11	12	13	14 Kitchen of Hope	15 FOF Christmas Party Catherine King Birthday
16 Hosanna Rock! Sunday School Christmas Program Christmas Caroling	17 Robert Artz Birthday Kathleen Heath Birthday	18 Esther Speck Birthday	19	20	21	22 The Innkeeper
23 The Innkeeper Christmas Eve Eve	24 Christmas Eve Betty Creps Birthday	25 Church Closed	26 Church Closed	27 Church Closed	28 Church Closed Ann Lieder Birthday	29 Mary St John Birthday
30	31 New Years Eve					

for a complete list of events, please visit  
[zoarlutheran.com/calendar](http://zoarlutheran.com/calendar)

### ZOAR STAFF

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Tim Philabaum  
 Community Pastor: Rev. Dr. Mike Brown

Cantor: Omaldo Perez  
 Director of Youth Ministry: Amanda Rich  
 Director of Communications: Mollie Rauscher

Administrative Manager: Dale Nordahl  
 Secretary: Suzanne DeLaney  
 Custodian: Paul Cannon



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Would you like to place a birthday announcement or congratulatory message in the Zoar monthly newsletter?

Contact Mollie at [communications@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:communications@zoarlutheran.com) for pricing and availability.

**Deadline is the 5th of the preceding month!**



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CURRENT RESIDENT OR

Rev. Dr. Tim Philabaum, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Dr. Mike Brown, Community Pastor

Worship times:  
6 PM Saturday,  
7:15, 8:30 & 11 AM Sunday

Sunday School for all ages at 9:45 AM

*Be*  
**AmaZed!**



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**"Glory to God in the  
highest heaven, and on  
earth peace among those  
whom he favors"  
Luke 2:14**