

# Amaz<sup>ing</sup>!News

JANUARY // 2021



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

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**“Trust in him at all times,  
O people; pour out your  
heart before him; God  
is a refuge for us.”**

—Psalm 162:8

In January, we naturally find ourselves in an **in-between** time. Behind us we see the joy of Christ’s birth and reflect fondly on our celebrations of that gift. We look ahead towards the season of Lent, knowing that our focus will soon change to repentance. But for now, we find ourselves in the **in-between**: Epiphany.

The season of Epiphany starts with the gifts of the Magi, ends with the Transfiguration, and **in between**, we find stories of Jesus. We read of His baptism. We watch as He calls His disciples. We see Him in this **in-between**, and we learn that God is still at work, even in this time.

Perhaps you relate to the **in-between**. We look back at 2020 with grief for so much that was lost.

We hope for a time in the near-future when our familiar is restored. But for now, we find ourselves...**in between**.

Please join us in the next several weeks as we explore God’s story through the lens of Epiphany. Read with us. Pray with us. With us, learn about...

- The God who has always known us. “Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance...In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.” (Psalm 139: 4-5, 16)
- The God who revealed his plans to Samuel in the middle of the night (1 Samuel 3)
- The God who saw Nathaniel even before Nathaniel saw him, as he sat below a tree, in an **in-between** time (John 1:48)

Join us as we worship the God who meets us in our **in-between**.



from  
**Pastor Tim**

**Senior Pastor**

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

# changes



We have finally been able to flip our calendars and reach a new year. What a year 2020 has been! "Change" is one of the nicer ways of looking at the pandemic. We have changed the way we interact with each other; the way we eat out; the way we travel; the way we worship (smaller in-person or online); the way we age. We have come up to changes that have needed to be made for many years, including how many of us in this culture downgrade people of color. And we have been blessed by technological advances that made the Covid-changes a bit more manageable, as we are able to make connections with loved ones far away.

Now that we are in a new year, all of that will go away, right? Well, no. Most of us will not receive the vaccine for possibly a few months; our racial issues will take a while to bring equity (but we need to keep working on this!); we will be wearing masks, and we will be worshipping differently for a while. The New Year will bring its own changes: Administrative Manager of 15 years, Dale Nordahl, has retired, and we will welcome Jen Milligan to our Office; Pastor Cindy has accepted a call to Bethlehem, Toledo; and my retirement is scheduled for this spring. 2021 will bring its own changes and challenges.

Of course, this is not new. Ever since God created the heavens and the earth there have been changes. New life, growing and growing older have been forever. Since the earth started spinning there have been seasons, one after the other. Life is never what it has been.

And yet there is One who has broken the cycle of death. Jesus, the very presence of God in our midst, risen from the dead, and right there everything is new. Each day, each breath, each birth, each beauty, each sunset, each person become extensions of God's amaZing love poured into creation. You are the new breath of God in your place. And whatever changes are in your life, right there, in you, God holds you strongly!

So, make your resolutions, changes your bad habits, start good new ones. But hold onto hope, knowing that you are precious in God's sight!

We will make it through Covid! We will celebrate together again! Jesus is Lord! Thanks be to God!

**Pastor Tim Philabaum**



# HAPPY NEW YEAR!



from  
**Pastor Cindy**  
Interim Associate Pastor  
[pastorcindy@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:pastorcindy@zoarlutheran.com)

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.**

(Proverbs 3:5-6)

Yes! 2021 is here. I trust in the Lord and must say that I have great anticipation and great expectations for what is in store for us in this new year. First of all, there is so much hope. We just celebrated Christmas...the birth of the Christ Child. God's best gift ever! And because of this gift we are never alone. Emmanuel...God is with us always; every day and everywhere we go. This is good news!

Second of all, a vaccine is on the way and this will help us get out of the pandemic that we have all endured in a variety of ways. I am grateful for the scientists and researchers who have made this life saving shot available. There is finally a light at the end of the tunnel. Praise God!

We could reflect back on the social distancing and mask wearing year of 2020...there is certainly much to reflect on: good, bad, and in-between. Let's just say it was a year none of us are ever likely to forget...even if we live to be 110 years old. We will forever be changed and must move forward in faith, with optimism and strength and courage for the future.

So, let's look ahead. Remember...God is with us always. This will be a year of transition for Zoar. In the church there will be new leadership and different pastors. There will be change. Let our grace-filled God lead the way.

**Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.**  
(Psalm 119:105)

Our Lord God is with us wherever we go. We trust that God's word will guide us. These times in our world and in the church are forever changing. The time is now for Zoar to reflect upon and review the past, enjoy and embrace the present and dream big dreams and make plans for the future as a new pastoral leader is called. I am grateful for the guidance the Northwestern Ohio Synod has available to assist you on this journey.

In the Northwestern Ohio Synod Bishop, Daniel Beaudoin has chosen to focus on Generosity this year. 2021 is "The Year of Generosity." Zoar is an extremely generous church and very mission-minded to help and support others. It is a blessing to witness this generosity in the many vital ministries among you. So, to focus on "Generosity" this year will be extremely exciting for Zoar. The Bible Memory verse for 2021 is:

**For where your treasure is there your heart will be also.**  
(Matthew 6:21)

Please know that I have received much JOY being with you and I will treasure these times in my heart. It has been a blessing to be here at Zoar for the past 17 months as your Interim Associate Pastor. Serving alongside Pastor Tim and the rest of the staff and leaders here has been priceless. We follow the Northwestern Ohio Synod Mission statement that says we are sent by the Crucified and Risen Jesus to: Make Disciples, Equip Leaders, Strengthen Parishes and Launch New Communities.

It is my desire to continue following this mission statement as I am sent to serve as the pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in the East Toledo Parish, beginning in late January. Even though I will be serving at another church, I will forever remember my precious times here; Zoar is an AMAZING place!

2021 – We trust in the Lord in this year of change and this year of blessings which come from Emmanuel, God, who is with us always every day and everywhere we go.

**In Christ,  
Pr. Cindy Ritter**



# GATHER/GROW/GIVE



## LET'S BUILD BEDS

Out in the countryside is a barn, replete with all sorts of wood-working tools and equipment. Gathered around the benches, using the drills and sanders, are men and women of Zoar and of the Perrysburg Exchange Club, using their gifts and care to build beds.

"Let's Build Beds" is an organization in Toledo that builds beds for youth who are sleeping on the floor. Their mission statement is: *We believe that every child deserves a bed of their own to sleep in at night. We believe that every child is full of infinite potential. We help children by providing a bed & empowering them to assemble it and be successful.* Lumber arrives and is cut, holes are made, and the wood is sanded and ready to be assembled.

What a great gift for the youth of Toledo! What a great ministry for Glen Abke and his cadre of wood-workers. At this point they have made almost 100 beds. Thank you!

"Let's Build Beds" is also in need of new sheets, blankets, and pillows. You may bring in these items to Zoar's Gathering Space, and we will make sure they are delivered to "Let's Build Beds."

## FEED OUR FAMILIES CHRISTMAS

Weeks of planning, preparation, and gathering, led by Tracy Rickman, Brandy Bennington, Rhonda Jones, and their team, had come to fulfillment. On Saturday, December 11, 40 Volunteers arrived and were stationed. 35 families (about 95 children) came in throughout the day. They were appropriately distanced, while parents shopped for their children, children shopped for their parents, and families received several weeks' worth of food. So many items had been donated that boxes upon boxes of toys and gifts were then taken to Redeemer Lutheran for their Christmas giving. Wow!

Children were able to choose gifts for their parents that were then wrapped, so that the parents could open them on Christmas. In addition, a picture was taken of the children, so that they could make an ornament, or frame the picture. Dignity, joy, and respect were gifts that were also shared with all present. Truly, this was the hands of Jesus in action!

Feed Our Families began many summers ago to provide food for those families whose children, during the school year received a free or reduced lunch. During the pandemic, this gifted team has provided groceries every other week. This Christmas giving was the culmination of the ministry in this crazy Covid-2020. They will begin again in January – of course gifts of food or donations will be gratefully accepted.

Thank you for this blessing of God's grace to God's people!





from  
**Omaldo**

**Cantor**

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

Like the Magi of old, we begin a new year paying attention to the signs around us, observing fortuitous alignments, and discovering how ancient wisdom speaks to the present moment. As an introspective endeavor, this exercise can be fruitful: it can spur our imaginations and invite further reflection.

January first is the date in which—following the ancient Jewish tradition of naming boys on the date of their circumcision—we venerate the Name of Jesus and declare it a name above all names. And this is good news! This auspicious beginning to 2021 is a most salutary reminder to all of us who have lived through a time whose very numerical moniker has come to signify just about every possible misfortune one can imagine. So, as a dreadful year recedes in the rearview mirror of our minds, I pray that guided by this “Name above all names,” we too embrace hope anew, leaving behind the challenges (but not the lessons!) of 2020 and remember—as the John Clare once suggested in his poem, “The Old Year”—that time itself has a provisional quality.

The Old Year's gone away  
To nothingness and night:  
We cannot find him all the day  
Nor hear him in the night:  
He left no footstep, mark or place  
In either shade or sun:  
The last year he'd a neighbour's face,  
In this he's known by none.

Happy New Year,  
**Omaldo**

## ZOAR'S ANNUAL MEETING

Zoar will host our Annual Meeting on **Sunday, January 31, at noon**. Plans are to host the meeting in person, with members able to attend via Zoom. We will be making decisions on the 2021 Budget as well as voting on new Council and Committee leadership.

## WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Gospel-writer John has recorded that Jesus prayed that, “they (His disciples) all be one.” (John 17:11). History shows the reasons for all the divisions now present in the Church of Christ. But for many of us, the prayer continues that the Church see ourselves as One Church, full of diversity, but part of the family of Jesus.

A special week has been set aside to focus on this prayer. Beginning with The Confession of St. Peter (January 18 – see Matthew 16:16) through the Conversion of St. Paul (January 25 – see Acts 9) we uphold this truth in prayer.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a “Full Communion Partner” with The Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, The Presbyterian Church, The Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the Moravian Church. In this we share understandings of the Gospel and Church leadership. Pastors from one may serve in the other. With these there are special ways to celebrate our unity.

The ELCA also has a unique relationship with the Roman Catholic Church, having moved closer through the Joint Declaration on Justification by Grace through Faith, and other agreements. Other churches who share in Bi-lateral conversations include: The African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Mennonite Church, and the Orthodox Church.

You are invited to use this week to center your prayer that all the Church may see as God see us – as united in our faith and witness. The “Day” will come when we will all see this truth together. Thanks be to God!



**OUR 85+  
MEMBER  
JANUARY  
BIRTHDAYS:**

January 2	Donald Coffey
January 4	Paul Smithers
January 7	Les Meier
January 14	Ramona Abke
January 20	Lois Hill
January 27	Don Creps
January 27	Paul Meyerholtz
January 28	Marcelene Davis

# JANUARY YOUTH EVENTS

## **3rd – Christmas/Early Epiphany Party!**

4PM on Zoom. Sign Up Required!

## **10th – Service Sunday!**

4-5PM Tie-Blankets for Homebound/Hospital/etc. Sign up required  
(Some supplies will be provided for pick up)!

## **17th – Cookie Baking!**

4-6PM Sign up required (a shopping list will be provided for the cookie recipe)!

## **24th – Outdoor Adventure 1-2PM**

(Sledding/snowy adventure – weather and COVID permitting) Sign up required!

## **31st – Zoar Youth Cooking Challenge!**

4-6PM Sign up required (Some supplies will be provided for pick up)!

## **Current Sunday School Operations**

After reviewing the recent Sunday School Parent Survey and assessing the situation in our community, Life Long Learning and Youth and Young Adult Committees have decided to continue operations remotely through the month of January. Sunday School for PK-4th Grade students will continue at 10AM via Zoom and 5th-12th grade Sunday School will take place in conjunction with youth group via Zoom at 4PM.

## **Winter Youth Group Events**

All January Youth Group events will be held remotely, but that can't stop us from growing in our faith while having fun together! These events are open to all 5th-12th Grade Youth and will be held via Zoom at 4PM on Sundays! Several hands-on activities have been planned! Registration is required. You can learn more in your Weekly Update emails from Amanda! Wish to be added to this list? Please email Amanda at [arich@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:arich@zoarlutheran.com).



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

### **Greetings Friends,**

Peace to you and yours in this new year! Though we begin this year reeling with the leftovers of the last, I hope that you are able to find renewed hope in a new beginning, with new opportunities to encourage change, to heal, to remain healthy and to grow in Christ together.

Rather than a 2021 resolution I am choosing one word to focus on and I encourage you to do the same. My word of the year: HOPE. In 2021 I am committing to seeking hope in all things: the good, the bad, the new, and the old.

I am writing this with hope, while fervently praying that you find your spirit renewed and ready to take on a new year together.

Peace,  
**Amanda Rich**



# 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

## JANUARY // 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2 6PM Worship
3 8:30, 9:45, 11:00AM Worship  2PM Digging Deeper  4PM Youth	4   7PM Social Ministry	5  3:14PM Prayer with Staff	6 11AM Staff 3:30PM AL 2 6PM Confirmation	7   7PM Choir Zoom	8  1PM Solo Again	9   6PM Worship
10 8:30, 9:45, 11:00AM Worship  2PM Digging Deeper  4PM Youth	11	12  3:14PM Prayer with Staff	13 11AM Staff 1PM Rachel Circle 6PM Confirmation 7:30PM YAYA	14   7PM Social Justice Zoom	15	16   6PM Worship
17 8:30, 9:45, 11:00AM Worship  2PM Digging Deeper  4PM Youth	18   7PM Worship & Music	19  3:14PM Prayer with Staff 7PM Council	20 11AM Staff 6PM Confirmation	21  12PM FOF	22  12PM Blood Drive	23   6PM Worship
24 8:30, 9:45, 11:00AM Worship 1PM Youth 2PM Digging Deeper	25  6:30PM Personnel 7PM Call Committee	26  3:14PM Prayer with Staff	27 11AM Staff 1:30PM AL 1 6PM Confirmation	28   7PM Evening Vespers	29	30   6PM Worship
31 8:30, 9:45, 11:00AM Worship  12PM Cong. Meeting 2PM Digging Deeper 4PM Youth						

for a complete list of events, please check  
the Z-Blast for weekly announcements

### ZOAR STAFF

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Tim Philabaum  
Interim Associate Pastor: Rev. Cindy Ritter

Cantor: Omaldo Perez  
Director of Youth Ministry: Amanda Rich

Administrative Manager: Jen Milligan  
Secretary: Suzanne DeLaney  
Custodian: Paul Cannon  
Communications Assistant: Sonia Krolak

# WE WISH TO THANK OUR SPONSORS

Would you like to place a birthday announcement or congratulatory message in the Zoar monthly newsletter? Send an email to [communications@zoarlutheran.com](mailto:communications@zoarlutheran.com) for pricing and availability.

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

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"Let your light so shine, that they may see your good works and give glory to your heavenly Father." (Matthew 5:16), from Jesus' baptism to our baptism into Jesus' family.

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Rev. Dr. Tim Philabaum  
Senior Pastor  
  
Rev. Cindy Ritter  
Interim Associate Pastor

**Worship times:**  
Saturday: 6 PM  
Sunday: 8 AM Virtual Worship,  
8:30, 9:45 & 11 AM  
Youth Sunday School at 9:45 AM

*Be*  
**AmaZed!**

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