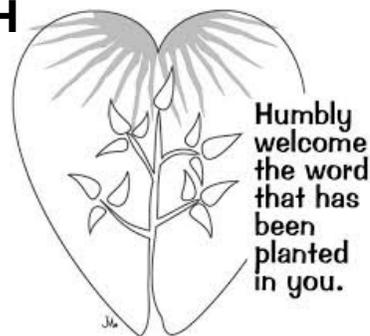


ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH



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THE HERALD – SEPTEMBER 2016

We are a congregation that strives to be an inviting, faithful, and growing presence in our community and in our world, with a passion for living and spreading the love of Jesus Christ by using our spiritual and material gifts in the service of all God's people

Sep 11	10:00 am	WORSHIP	Genesis 2 (Creation and Fall)
Sep 12	7:00 pm	COUNCIL	
Sep 18	10:00 am	WORSHIP	Genesis 15 (Abraham's Descendants)
Sep 25	10:00 am	WORSHIP	Genesis 37 (Joseph's dream, conflict)
Oct 02	10:00 am	WORSHIP	Exodus 12 (Passover: blood of the lamb)
Oct 09	10:00 am	WORSHIP	Exodus 32 (Golden calf, God forgives)
Oct 16	10:00 am	WORSHIP	1 Samuel 1 (Birth of Samuel, Hannah sings)
Oct 23	10:00 am	WORSHIP	2 Samuel 7 (God's promise to David)
Oct 30	10:00 am	WORSHIP	1 Kings 17 (Elijah and the widow)

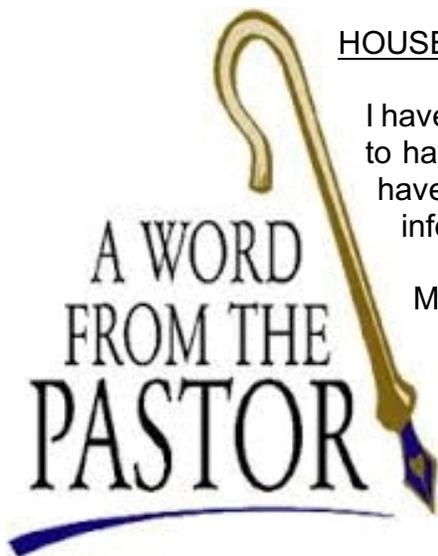
2016 Zion Council

Nick Beck (Chair) Wayne McCracken (Vice Chair)
Mickford Durgana Ginette McCracken Alethia McIntosh Ed Strath

Non-Council Positions

Ingrid Beck (Treasurer) Brian Cartwright (Recording Secretary)





HOUSE CHURCHES

I have for some time considered started a “House Church.” I am hoping to have my plans finalized for the start of October. It looks like I may have some interested souls. Here I would like to share some information on what a “house church” is all about.

Many who first hear about the idea of house churches, think, That’s not real church. They think the only reason a congregation would meet in a house instead of a larger traditional or contemporary church would be because they couldn’t afford a building or they didn’t have the vision or ability to grow into a “real church.” The early church started in homes. So why would anyone in a free country continue to do so when larger churches with exciting youth programs, riveting preachers and spectacular worship music

are not hard to find.

House churches are nothing new, though you’ll sometimes hear them referred to as part of a “house church movement”. This “movement” has been around for decades, and it’s often touted as the next big thing. Visionary pastors say, “The age of the megachurch is over, and the age of the microchurch is beginning.” This kind of hype clouds an authentic work of the Holy Spirit, who is interested in diverse ways to reach diverse people. House churches are another manifestation of the body of Christ and meet needs not always met by larger or more traditional churches.

In some places, house churches are the norm. Because of strict government control of religion in China, for example, most churches are underground and are unofficial house churches. A Pew study estimates the total number of Christians attending house churches in China is around 35 million.

Some people prefer the terms “simple” church or “organic” church, recognizing that these small, more independent groups of believers can meet nearly anywhere: businesses, bars, restaurants, parks or shelters. The key features of these churches are that they are simple and easy to replicate.

We turned our efforts toward house churches because the people we were trying to reach — those who have been hurt, burned or turned off to church — often associate pews, sanctuaries, vestments and hymnals with spiritual oppression. The “institutional church” is referred to in harsh terms. They want to see authentic community lived out in relationships.

Even churches that meet in alternative venues with hip music put most of their energy into creating an event that attracts people: the worship service. A church’s effectiveness is often measured by the size of its worshipping congregation. While these metrics are important, it’s worth asking what we’re really measuring with attendance figures. Does a large gathering indicate faithfulness or discipleship?

Church leaders suggest that an alternative to the “attractional” church is the “missional” church — one focused on going and living out the gospel in new places. Certainly some large churches are also missional churches, but the focus in missional churches is practices, not programs. Rather

than getting people to come to church, the goal is to take the church to people.

From the very beginning, Jesus' followers have met, eaten, prayed and worshipped in homes. It wasn't until sometime around the year 240 that buildings were set aside specifically for use by worshipping congregations. According to church historian Everett Ferguson, a site in Dura-Europos in Syria reveals a home that was remodeled to accommodate a Christian congregation. Two rooms were combined to make one large worship space, and another room was converted into a baptistry. Christians started building larger buildings specifically for church use in the third and fourth centuries. When the Roman emperor Constantine declared Christianity the official religion of his empire, the building boom began in earnest.

So, for 300 years, the church existed primarily in homes. In John Wesley's day, Methodism was essentially a small-group renewal movement within the Church of England. People met in homes for Bible study and accountability. Later on in the United States, circuit riders often held worship services in people's homes as they followed Western expansion.

House churches vary as much as "traditional" churches. They may have an order of worship or no set plan at all. They may gather around a meal. They may or may not do corporate singing. The emphasis is on keeping things simple and replicable. If the house church becomes overly dependent on one person or one structure, it cannot reproduce itself.

It's important to note that some of the greatest strengths of house churches are also their greatest weaknesses.

Intimacy: Communities are physically close to one another. No "back pew" exists to fill up first when people arrive early. Guests are immediately known by name. While this creates a strong sense of community, it also can scare off people who prefer to remain anonymous. Those who are uncomfortable sharing much about themselves can feel ill at ease.

Hospitality: Some people think they can't host a house church because there's dog hair on the couch or crumbs on the table, and the stress of making the house perfect for guests every week scares them away from the idea. "Scruffy hospitality" points out that it's more important to "welcome people into my humility than my standard of excellence."

Leadership development and discipleship: In a house church, everyone is a potential leader. Anyone who can read may read Scripture, liturgy or prayer. Anyone may lead singing. Because of this high degree of involvement, the level of spiritual growth is high, but it requires commitment.

Stewardship: More resources mean more ministries to more people. But proponents of house or simple churches point out that 20 percent of typical church budgets go toward building rent, mortgage, maintenance and utilities; 38–50 percent goes toward staff; and only about seven percent goes toward programs and ministries. House churches don't have to pay for buildings, meaning more of their members' giving can potentially go toward mission and ministry. Theoretically, house churches can give a greater return on investment for their giving dollars — it's just that there aren't as many of those dollars available to do large projects.

House churches are clearly not for everyone, and many house church leaders are wary of the idea being hyped as the next big thing or having it co-opted as a mere growth strategy. But for some groups of faithful followers, they are a tie to our past and a window into our future.

OLIVE BRANCH NEWS (from FaceBook postings)

Savings and Loan Cooperative Bank

On September 7th and 8th The Olive Branch for Children will be launching our Akiba! Nufaika! Savings and Loan Cooperative Banks in the communities of Mwashota, Lyangunda, Lyanang'we and Madundas. Olive Branch head office staff Daudi and Lucy spent time sensitizing the communities about the importance of saving their money and the value of the program. We are sure we will be registering hundreds of community members in the program next week. GO TEAM!!!

Breakfast Program for Kindergarten Students

A good breakfast helps children perform at school. We are now offering a porridge program in 5 of our Montessori Kindergartens located in the most remote and vulnerable communities we serve! The porridge program provides over 400 children with nutritious porridge Monday through to Friday!!!!

August Activities

What an extremely busy month! Our health campaigns for August included:

1. De-worming and Hygiene Campaigns
2. HIV testing and Follow-up Care
3. Pre and Post Natal Mother and Child Care
4. Blood Pressure testing and monitoring
5. Malnutrition screening and follow-up care

1909 children and youths received hygiene education and deworming medication. 451 individuals were tested for HIV. Over 30 tippy-taps were constructed. Hundreds received ongoing care and support. Thanks to our incredible team for giving their all!

Tippy Taps

Hygiene is so important to ensuring children stay healthy and can focus on their studies! We have built tippy taps at each Montessori Kindergarten in our Montessori Outreach Program, at the Primary Schools within our catchment area and in the communal areas of the communities we serve.

