

## Contact Information

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## GOOD TIDINGS FROM ZION

March 2023



### March helpers

Cleaner—Harvey and Carol

Usher—Gary Otto/George Nygren

Lector—Charlie/Diane

Communion Asst.—Carol

Acolyte

March 5—Karsen

March 12—Evie H.

March 19—Evie H.

March 26—

### *He Gets Us*

If you watched the Super Bowl...and didn't go for more guacamole and chips during the commercials... you saw the ads. There was one that was a Central American family fleeing their home country. The caption read, "Jesus was a refugee." The tagline was "When Mary and Joseph's baby was threatened with death, they fled from Bethlehem. He gets us. All of us."

There were several in a similar vein. One was about loving your neighbor. One was about family conflict. All of them ended with He gets us. All of us.

Apparently there is a way for churches to enroll in whatever this is, and then anyone who sends an inquiry to the organization behind the ads will be connected to the local church nearest them who signed up.

The sponsors apparently had a primary goal of reaching Gen Z who are by and large turned off by the church, largely because of its anti-LGBTQ stance, the backing of far right politics, and so on.

You'll notice the word apparently appears a lot – it's all a little vague. But, the campaign has done what once seemed impossible – united the very conservative church and the very liberal church in angry opposition.

Some Christians on the left oppose the campaign because it appears to be funded by wealthy donors who are noted for very far right beliefs – some could even be called Christian nationalists. They worry that there is an agenda that has yet to be revealed.

Some far right Christian groups oppose the campaign because the messages are too "woke."

I think it's largely unknown whether the campaign will do anything they were hoping. I talked to my non-church connected son about it. He's a millennial and not Gen Z, but if anything, I suspect the main difference between Millennials and Gen Z is that Gen Z is even further along the non-church path.

He said he can't imagine why anyone would think an ad campaign would reach Gen Z...or even Millennials. They've been bombarded by so many ads their whole lives they mostly tune out almost all of them. And he didn't really get some of the ads.

So what does all that mean for us? I actually think the messages themselves are pretty good. I'm not likely to sign us up for whatever the program is because I don't think it makes much sense in our context.

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My son said he thought the best way to connect with people outside the church is one on one, not an ad campaign. So maybe the ads could be used as a way in to those conversations. What the ads say is what we've said about Jesus for a long time...he gets us. He's been in the same painful places and situations we have. He does get us. Bringing the ads up in a conversation about faith could be helpful.

Something like this: "Did you see those Super Bowl ads? My church has been saying those things about Jesus for a very long time. Come check us out if you want to hear more."

I do think the ads are on to one thing. Even people who aren't very interested in the church are often still interested in Jesus. And the church has often not acted much like Jesus.

Over and over, data has shown that the number one reason people try out a church is because someone invited them...and not the pastor. Maybe these ads are a way for you to broach the faith topic and invite someone who might be intrigued by the Jesus the ads portray.

Christ's peace,

*Pastor Kris*

### **Addendum**

One of the tasks the ELCA asks of churches every year is to report on a variety of congregational statistics and some assessments of the health of the congregation. I'm not always super good about getting them done, but this year I did. It can be a bit of a soul-crushing endeavor, although I think they've improved it. I did it right after I wrote my article.

One of the questions was this: "The ELCA is engaged in an intentional effort to 'activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice, and love.' How familiar are most members of this congregation with this effort?" Since I wasn't familiar with it, I'm guessing most of you weren't either. Now we are.

It's a more formal way of saying what I said in my article. And the key is "the way of Jesus." So much of religion has become about the right beliefs. But we are called to walk the way of Jesus. The world doesn't need to be told what to believe. It does need people who will walk the way of Jesus—a way of love, healing, forgiveness, reconciliation, and new life.

## ***Calendar***

**Worship is livestreamed to the church YouTube channel. You can find the link to that and the bulletin on our website: [Online Worship](#)**

<b>March 1</b>	6:00 pm—Lent Midweek—Bethlehem
<b>March 5</b>	9:00 am—Worship with Holy Communion Rite of Holy Baptism for Adeline Theresa Christo
<b>March 8</b>	6:00 pm—Lent Midweek at Zion
<b>March 12</b>	9:00 am—Worship
<b>March 15</b>	6:00 pm—Lent Midweek at Bethlehem
<b>March 19</b>	9:00 am—Worship
<b>March 22</b>	6:00 pm—Lent Midweek at Zion
<b>March 26</b>	9:00 am—Worship
<b>March 29</b>	6:00 pm—Lent Midweek at Bethlehem

### **Holy Week**

**April 6—Maundy Thursday service with Holy Communion and stripping of the altar**

- Zion at 6:30 pm
- Bethlehem at 8:00 pm

**April 7—Good Friday Tenebrae service, 6:30 pm at Bethlehem only**

**April 9—Easter**

- 8:00 am—Worship at Bethlehem, breakfast to follow
- 9:00 am—Easter breakfast at Zion
- 10:15 am—worship at Zion

**Vacation Sundays**—I have two vacation days for sure set for the coming year. If you would like to lead worship and/or share the message either of these Sundays, talk to me.

May 7

June 25

July 16 is probable but not yet confirmed