

Contact Information

Pastor Kris Bohac—402 499 4993

krisbo90@gmail.com

President Diane Rine—402.480.1483

Facebook—[Zion Lutheran Church ELCA](#)

Website—www.zionithaca.org

Zion Lutheran Church
589 County Rd. 13
Ithaca, NE 68033

GOOD THINGS FROM ZION

September 2023



Go and...share your story

A favorite hymn for many people who have grown up with and loved traditional hymns is *I Love to Tell the Story*:

I love to tell the story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory,
Of Jesus and His love.

However, it's been my experience that most of us really don't love to tell the story. Especially not to those who have never heard. I think there are some good reasons for that. One is that too many Christians have told the story in a way that has completely alienated huge segments of the population. It's a harsh, exclusive vision of heaven and hell with altogether too much certainty about the hell that awaits some. Another is the general skepticism of anything outside the realm of what we can sense and measure.

But I think an important one that we can do something about is that we don't actually know how to tell the story or even what the story actually is. When I ask people what Jesus is about, most will mumble something about Jesus died for our sins so we can go to heaven when we die. I've always bemoaned how incomplete that is, but at this point in my faith life and career, I'm ready to say it isn't even correct. It is not what the Bible says.

Of course, the Bible does talk about Jesus' death as his victory over sin...including our own. It's not that so much that I debate, although I think our understanding of how that happens can be off the beam.

More importantly is this notion of going to heaven when we die. That's just not what Jesus taught. At all. It's not what he meant by eternal life or kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven. Instead, Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is at hand. It's here. To be sure, in the present age, it's still entwined with the forces of evil, like wheat and weeds growing together. All those forces of evil – the sins of humanity – put Jesus on the cross and killed him. His resurrection was his victory over those forces...a victory that the Holy spirit working in us and through us continues to unfold.

(cont. pg. 2)

Jesus does say we will be raised to this eternal life when we die. But we don't have to wait until we die to live in God's kingdom. The Spirit continually works against evil in and through us and brings us and the world to something new—now and into eternity. That's a story we can tell.

So maybe you're thinking, OK I get that but how do I connect that to my story? Here's a suggestion. Write (or record) a faith memoir. What are the key turning points in your faith story? What things have impacted you? In what ways has the Spirit used you? Where are the places where one thing in your life or one aspect of your life died and something new and life-giving arose? When has God given you a clear glimpse of your own shortcomings and failures and led you to forgiveness and transformation? Are there other ways you see God working in your faith memoir?

My best example is leaving medicine to go to seminary. It was the death of one dream...one identity...and the birth of a new. But there are other less dramatic ones.

Often the stories you might tell in your faith memoir will be stories you've told before, but not always seen them in light of God's work of death and resurrection.

Once you've written some of your memoir, is there someone you think could benefit from hearing even a little part of it? Who might you share it with? If you want to share it with someone safe first – a spouse, friend, or me – do that. But then, can you share it with someone who might need to hear it? Maybe you'll wait until an opportunity arises, but will you be ready to share it?

Peace,

Pastor Kris

September helpers

Cleaners—George and Megan

Usher—Harvey/George

Lector—Nygrens

Communion Asst.—Charlie

Acolyte—parents please sign up on SignUp

Genius—you should have gotten an email

Calendar

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

September 3 9:00 am—Worship—**No communion**

September 6 7:00 pm—Wednesday school

September 10 9:00 am—Worship with Holy Communion
After worship—preschool Sunday school

September 13 7:00 pm—Confirmation

September 17 9:00 am—Worship

September 17 Bethlehem Potato Bake—5 to 7 pm

September 20 7:00 pm—Confirmation and Wednesday School

September 24 9:00 am—Worship. **Fair Day! Bring your favorite fair entry (or two) to share with those of us who couldn't get there!**

September 27 7:00 pm—confirmation



Justice in Action is a faith based, inter-denominational group of folks in Lincoln who are dedicated to living out their faith by working for justice on behalf of people impacted most by some of our societal inequalities and injustices. The Justice in Action group believes that organized people can make a bigger difference in policies than individuals acting alone.

Their chosen focus this year is on mental health and criminal justice reform. Criminal justice reform often gets cast in a negative light as being “soft on crime.” This is a political ploy not really based in the realities of such work. At least in Nebraska, this group has primarily focused on community based ways to reduce the numbers of incarcerated people—things like diversion programs, mental health access, and post-release programs. As Nebraska is poised to begin building a new prison to offer updated facilities for inmates, we've learned it will be full basically on day 1. JIA's work has been to research the issues and advocate for evidence based solutions to prison overcrowding. It's hard to argue with the notion that programs that keep people out of prison and that keep them from going back once they're out are a good thing. The next meeting of the Justice in Action group is November 6 at 6:30 pm at Eastridge Presbyterian Church. I plan to go—let me know if you'd like to go too.

Here's their website link if you'd like to learn more: <https://www.justice-in-action.org/>