

APRIL 2026

VOICE OF ZION

A Monthly Publication of
 Zion Lippe United Church of Christ
 9000 Copperline Rd E
 Mt Vernon IN 47620
 812 985-2437
 website: zionlippe.org

Secretary email:
zionlippesecretary@gmail.com
 Secretary Hours:
 Tues, Wed and Thurs 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Rev. Jeff Long, Pastor
 Pastor cell: 812 306-4675
 Pastor email: zionlippepastor@gmail.com

Sunday Family Worship at 10 am

Worship Attendance

Date		In Person	Virtual (est.)
2/25	Lent	71	n/a
3/1		152	68 devices
3/4	Lent	68	n/a
3/8		145	107 devices
3/11	Lent	63	n/a
3/15		175	110 devices
3/18	Lent	65	n/a
3/22		132	66 devices
3/25	Lent	50	n/a

Sunday School Average Attendance

March: Adult = 16
 Children = 7
 Youth (grade 6-12) = 2
 Confirmation = 9

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES ARE LIVE STREAMED and RECORDED FOR LATER VIEWING ON YOUTUBE !

You can always join us for Sunday worship wherever you might be. To easily view the live worship service simply go to our church webpage... www.zionlippe.org... and click on the "Watch Live" tab and you will be able to view the worship service when it goes live. For later viewing of recorded services, go to YouTube and search for Zion Lippe.



Greeter Schedule for upcoming Sundays:

March 29 – Ron Strupp
April 5, Easter 10 am – Joli & Kinley Willett
April 12 – Gary & Staci Voegel
April 19 – Doris Strupp & Karen Evrard
April 26 – Phil & Sherry Wuertz

May 3 – Sandy Willett
May 10 – Steve & Marcia Yurks
May 17 – Joe & Rhiannon Anderson
May 24 - Martha Ziegler
May 31 – Darlene Breiner

We will have magnetic name tags available for our greeters, and hand-shaking is optional. Please try to be here about 9:30 am or so. If you know ahead of time that you can't greet the Sunday you are scheduled, you can let Rosie Bogard know – but if something comes up and you can't make it don't fret!



APRIL

In order to share in the joys and celebrations of our lives as a congregation we publish a monthly list of birthdays and anniversaries of members and friends of Zion. Numbers in () represent year.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 1 Phil Wuertz, Remi Brown
- 2 Sean Hollen, Dan Hoffman
- 3 Diana Walker
- 5 Jared Reidford, Ramsey Barrow
- 8 Robert Juncker, Max Simpson
- 9 Jennifer Ploetz, April McCutchan
- 10 Lori Breiner
- 11 Nick Neidig
- 12 Cherie Johnson, Samantha Reese,
Andrew Reese
- 13 Rob Bullington, Jr.
- 14 Kyle Voegel, Tom Lang, Steve Brown
- 15 Jim Donner, Jessie Brame
- 16 Scott Dougan, Ashley Shreffler
- 17 Kyle Hoenert, Mary Schauss
Melanie Mann
- 18 Philip McCutchan, LeeAnn Hoenert,
KayLee Roberts
- 20 Linda Koch, Lindsay Calvert
- 22 Tyson Barrow
- 23 Elise Lewis
- 24 Debbie Reineke
- 25 Diana Redman, Harper Schmitz
- 27 Megan Ploetz, Lisa Seitz
- 28 Linda Juncker
- 29 Dillon Davenport, Lily Swope
- 30 Austin Spears

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

- 1 Kraig & Mackenzie (Smith) Schmidt (2017)
- 4 Rob & Cherie Johnson (1987)
- 9 Travis & Robin (Schroeder) Crowe (2016)
- 12 Philip & April McCutchan (2003)
- 15 David & Lisa Simpson (1989)
- 18 Bill & Doris Smith (1992)
- 25 Robert & Rachel Hast (2015)
- 26 Terry & Mary Jane Schroeder (1980)
- 26 Phil & Sherry Wuertz (1986)
- 27 Cody & Jennifer (Taylor) Elless (2013)

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed or not correct, please call the office at 985-2437 so we may update our records.

Confirmation Class



Congratulations to Emma Axton, Ramsey Barrow, Warren Bredemeier, Sam Englebright, Lyla Hautman, and Lincoln Price, who were confirmed at Zion on Palm Sunday March 29, 2026.



Holy Week Worship

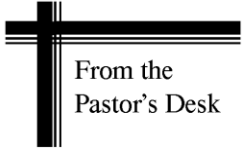
Maundy Thursday (April 2) is the Thursday before Easter, which commemorates the Eucharist during the Last Supper and the final meal Jesus Christ shared with his apostles before his crucifixion. **Worship will begin at 7:00 p.m. (no meal)**

Good Friday (April 3) is celebrated on the Friday before Easter and marks the day Jesus was crucified and died. **Worship will begin at 7:00 p.m. (no meal)**

We hope you will journey with us through the final days of Jesus' earthly life as a way to prepare for the Joy of Easter Sunday.

Easter Sunday (April 5)

- Sunrise Service at 6:30 am
- Breakfast served after Sunrise Service
- 10 am Easter Worship with Communion
- Egg Hunt following 10 am Worship



Dear Church Family, Every good story has a twist. The kind that makes you stop, blink twice, and say, “Wait...what just happened?” Easter is that kind of story.

If we’re honest, the disciples didn’t see it coming. They had front-row seats to the greatest ministry in history—healing, teaching, miracles on demand—and still, when the cross came, they thought it was the end. Not a plot twist...just a plot *collapse*. Cue the sad music, roll the credits, everybody go home.

And then—Sunday morning. Suddenly, the story they thought was over wasn’t over at all. In fact, it had barely begun. The stone wasn’t just rolled away from a tomb—it was rolled away from their expectations. God wasn’t finished. Not even close.

Which brings me to us. Because if we’re really paying attention, Easter isn’t just something that *happened*—it’s something that keeps *happening*. God still specializes in plot twists.

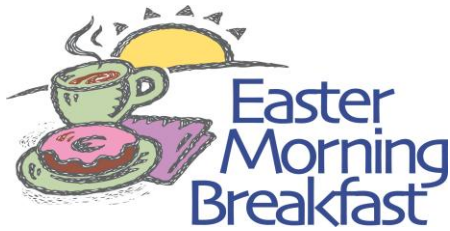
- That situation you wrote off? Not finished.
- That relationship you thought was beyond repair? Not finished.
- That part of your life that feels stuck, buried, or sealed up tight?
- You guessed it...not finished.

Now, I know what some of you are thinking: “Pastor Jeff, I’ve seen a lot, and this feels pretty final.” Fair enough. The disciples stood in front of a literal sealed tomb. That’s about as final as it gets. And yet. Easter reminds us that God does some of God’s best work in places we’ve already given up on. He’s not intimidated by sealed stones, impossible odds, or our very convincing reasons why something can’t change.

So this Easter, as we celebrate with songs, flowers, and enough chocolate to keep dentists employed for years to come, don’t miss the deeper invitation: What if the story you think is ending... is actually setting up a comeback?

What if God is quietly preparing a “He is risen” moment in your life right now? And what if hope isn’t just a nice idea—but a reality waiting just on the other side of what looks impossible? That’s the good news of Easter. The tomb is empty. The story continues. And by God’s grace...so do we. He has risen indeed— (And yes, that’s still worth getting excited about.)

Blessings on your journey... **PJ**



We're excited to share that our Youth Group will be serving breakfast on Easter Sunday following our 6:30 am Easter Sunrise Worship Service. We plan to start serving around 7:30 a.m. and will continue until everyone has had a chance to enjoy a meal.

Even if you're unable to attend the Sunrise Service, you're warmly invited to join us for breakfast and fellowship. The youth will be receiving a freewill offering, with all proceeds supporting our Community Youth Group.

We hope you'll come hungry—and ready to celebrate the joy of Easter together!

You're warmly invited to join us for an Easter Egg Hunt following our 10:00 a.m. Easter Worship Service!

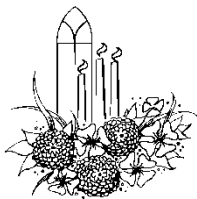


Bring your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, friends—or anyone who would enjoy a fun and festive celebration. All children will gather on the north side of the church (by the new cemetery), where volunteers will guide them to their designated egg hunt areas.

This year's event is being organized by Lauren Kern, who is happy to answer any questions you may have. If you'd like to help, we gladly welcome donations of individually wrapped candy. You can drop them off at the church office or bring them with you on Sunday morning.



Congratulations to Kyle & Mariah Voegel on the birth of their daughter, Julia Reese Voegel, born February 15, 2026.



We extend heartfelt sympathy to the family of Rueben Schroeder. Rueben passed away March 6, 2026 at the age of 85. Funeral services and burial were held March 12 at Zion.

We also extend heartfelt sympathy to the family of Katy Lang. Katy passed away March 7, 2026 at the age of 50. Funeral services were held March 14 at Zion with private burial at St John's Cemetery Bufkin.

We cherish many good memories of Rueben and Katy.

March 10, 2026 Council Meeting Highlights

Council President Tim Hoenert called the meeting to order. All Council members were present. Pastor Jeff was unable to attend due to a meeting for Good Samaritan.

JJ Mohr was present for the beginning of the meeting to be interviewed and discuss the Choir Director position. Council approved hiring JJ Mohr as the new Choir Director effective after Sandy's retirement April 5.

February meeting minutes were approved, and February treasurer's report given. The Council is looking into options to invest church money to get better returns.

2/28 YTD Regular Offering: \$23,896.74

2/28 YTD General Fund Income: \$25,404.38

2/28 YTD General Fund Expense: \$29,432.45

Worship Report - there are six Confirmands this year.

Christian Ed - Tentative dates for Vacation Bible School will be June 7-9.

Property - Handicap assistance bars have been installed in the men's and women's restrooms downstairs.

Council voted in favor of replacing both sanctuary furnaces for \$ 6,000 by Brad Becker. Heat Exchanger is going bad in the units.

Jeff Ludwig will be contractor for mowing both cemeteries and all church grounds.

Siemer's Glass will replace the rubber strips on both glass doors on south side of foyer entrance.

Two new dusk to dawn lights have been installed on the West Side of the Church.

The steeple project should be starting soon.

Roger Roedel added three loads of rock to the gravel parking lot.

Stewardship - Brian will submit a request to the Endowment for the South Terrace Elementary School Robotics team.

Recreation - Adam is planning to have viewing parties in the Sunday School Hall for the NCAA tournament.

Pastor Report - Lauren spoke on behalf of Pastor Jeff. Gayle Gurksnis has requested membership at Zion. Council approved Gayle as new church member.

Old Business

Membership – Nancy reported there are 33 church members that we have no contact information on record (no address, email or phone). There are several others that we only have a phone number on record (no address).

Nancy is looking into getting a company for a new Church directory.

Solar batteries – Carl is gathering more information.

Next meeting is April 14th, 2026, at 6:30 pm



GAYLE GURKSNIS -Pronounced: GURKS - NIS

Gayle Gurksnis (formerly Gayle Brown) was born and raised on the west side of Evansville. Like many others in her family, she graduated from Reitz High School, and later attended the University of Evansville. She began her working career at Indiana Bell in downtown Evansville where she said most of those earnings went to pay off her DeJong’s bills! After the Bell system broke apart in 1984 she continued working for AT&T, and then the spinoff company, Lucent Technologies before retiring in Denver, CO in 2000.

In 1986 she met her future husband on an airplane while flying into Denver. That meeting led to a 37-year loving and exciting marriage, to retired Air Force officer, Thomas Gurksnis. Following retirement, the 2 of them traveled extensively in their motorhome for over 9 years visiting all the wonders of the USA and Canada.

In 2013, Gayle’s husband was diagnosed with a rare muscle wasting disease called Inclusion Body Myositis that required them to stop traveling, so they settled back in Denver where eventually the disease resulted in Tom’s death in 2023. His death was followed a year later by the death of Gayle’s only child, John. Following these losses, Gayle leaned heavily on her Evansville family and through their unending persistence she decided it was time to return to her roots, so in March 2025, after being away from Evansville for 50+ years, she moved back to westside Evansville and says that she is very thankful to be back “home”!

After returning to the Evansville area, Gayle was invited to a Zion grief support group. Then attended a Blue Christmas service, our cookie walk and many of our Sunday services in person or online. Zion is so blessed to welcome Gayle as a member of the congregation!



 **A Joyful Welcome to Our New Choir Director** 

With grateful hearts we are thrilled to announce that J.J. Mohr will be stepping into the role of Choir Director following Easter! J.J. brings a depth of musical talent and experience to our congregation. From years of vocal training and choral performances with esteemed groups such as the Evansville Philharmonic Chorus and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, his passion for music is both evident and inspiring. He has been a member of Zion's Choir for many years, supported music ministries at local churches, as well as founding and directing the Deaconess Chorus for eight years.

J.J.’s love for music and heart for ministry shine through. We are truly blessed that he has answered the call to lead our choir in this new season.

Please join us in offering J.J. a warm welcome and lifting him up in prayer as he begins his ministry with us after Easter. We look forward with great joy and anticipation to all that God will do through him and through our music ministry in the days ahead!

ZION LIPPE UCC
9000 COPPERLINE ROAD E
MT. VERNON IN 47620



**Relay for Life
Fundraiser Meal
Sunday, April 19 at Zion
Following 10 am worship.**

The free-will donation meal will feature burgers, brats and hot dogs with all the sides.

Come enjoy a meal and help raise funds for the American Cancer Society!

2026 Church Council

President – Tim Hoenert
VP/Membership –
Nancy deClaisse-Walford
Secretary - Jeff Droege
Treasurer – Carl Barchet
Worship – Rosie Bogard
Stewardship – Brian Crase
Christian Ed – Lauren Kern
Property – Roger Roedel
Recreation – Adam Kendall