

## **The Zion Flame April 2025**

### **Zion Lutheran Church**

Mailing address: P.O. Box 434 Custer, WA 98240  
7215 Valley View Rd. Ferndale, WA

Email: [office@zionlutheranwhatcom.org](mailto:office@zionlutheranwhatcom.org)  
[www.zionlutheranwhatcom.org](http://www.zionlutheranwhatcom.org)



**Pastor Becky Langholz**

**Dear ones,**

**I am writing this article on March 20th, the first official day of spring. The signs of change are all around: crocuses and daffodils blossoming, birds chirping and new growth bursting forth. It is an invigorating time. Sparks of possibility and newness give us hope for what is to come. In our church lives, we are still in the season of Lent and will celebrate a “late” Easter this year on April 20th.**

**Metaphors about plants, trees, fruit and growth are helpful to us when considering our faith journeys. We have spoken about Lent as a time of “pruning” so that the new life that God has in store for us might have space to come forth. Scripture has led us and will continue to in this season of inner reflection and repentance. What habits or misunderstandings are getting in the way of us serving God as we are called? Do we daily entrust our lives into God’s care or are we still holding back? Are we bearing good fruit? If (and when) not, what are the obstacles?**

**Daily life in our broken world is difficult. In The Life Impossible by Matt Haig (Our “Cozy Readers” selection for March), the main character reflects, “Every single person on this planet is a context and the circumstances of that context can never be seen fully. We are mysteries, even to ourselves. This world can brutalize us in a myriad of ways” (73). This reality leads us to approach one another and ourselves with tenderness and compassion. It calls us to seek some relief for suffering. We grow committed to nurturing wholeness and healing for all.**

**My deepest hope is that faith can be something of an antidote to the brokenness and brutality of earthly life and that it might support this great healing. I pray that in our lives together as a church family, we might be able to find mutual consolation, redemption and purpose in and through all that we experience—individually and collectively. The springtime hope we cling to as Christians is not naïve to life’s hardship; rather, it is forged out of hardship. The path from cross to resurrection is one that we all are invited to walk, with Jesus leading the way.**

**We will walk this path this month as Lent concludes and then Holy Week and Easter arrive. As spring progresses all around, so too may our trust in God’s everlasting promises of mercy and abundance. Thanks be to God.**

**See you in worship,**

**Pr. Langholz**

**Zion Lutheran Church Mission Statement**

Since 1903 The beloved, forgiven people of God. **Called** to spread the Good News so as to build up the body of Christ. **Gifted** to share the healing love of Jesus Christ with our hurting world.

**Empowered** by the Spirit to be a caring country congregation for ministry to one another and the larger community.

**Zion's Relational Covenant**

In our life together, we will...

Give thanks to God for the gift of our church and each other. Honor and respect our diverse opinions, perspectives and work-styles. Take responsibility for our own feelings and deal with issues directly. Ask clarifying questions and avoid making assumptions. Speak up honestly in the proper time and place. Make decisions in a transparent manner. Support decisions made by the group. Pray for unity in our congregation.

**History Corner:**

Springtime means time to start mowing the church grounds! Here is a picture of a faithful volunteer doing so in the mid-1950s. Note the newly constructed parsonage in the background, as well as the absence of the parsonage, garage and Tree of Life.

**Bishop's Convocation**

Pastor Becky will be away Tuesday April 22-Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup> at Seabeck Conference Center for the annual Bishop's Convocation event.

**Camp Lutherwood**

**Work Party.** Camp Lutherwood and Retreat Center on Lake Samish is hosting work parties to prepare the camp for summer. The next one is on Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> at 9am. Email [office@camplutherwood.org](mailto:office@camplutherwood.org) or call (360) 734-7652 for more information.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

## Worship

### Holy Week Schedule



Holy Week

**Sunday, April 13th, 10am:** Palm Sunday and reading of Passion Story

**Thursday, April 17th, 5:15pm:** Maundy Thursday "Dinner Church"

**Friday, April 18th, 6pm:** Good Friday Worship

**Sunday, April 20th, 8:30am and 10am:**

Easter Sunday Breakfast and Worship

Plan to participate and experience this most holy time of the year for Christians. May Easter blessings of new life be with us all.

### YouTube Channel

#### Connect with Zion

online: Resources for worship and reflection are available on our church [YouTube channel](#).



Prayer Chain

Zion's Prayer Chain is available to offer prayer in the case of a special situation. Please contact Pr. Becky if you have a request for the Prayer Chain. In addition, as a congregation we are "pausing for prayer" on Thursdays at 8:45am. You are invited to stop and pray from wherever you are.

### Lent Wednesdays

Our Wednesday Lent events continue April 2nd and 9th. We are holding soup suppers and services starting at 5:15pm. Join us in the basement "quilt chapel" for this special time of worship, reflection and fellowship. Many thanks to those who have been able to provide soup and bread.



### **Our prayers as a congregation continue:**

- For all in need of healing and consolation, especially Bethany (friend of Robin Ogmundson), Donna (friend of Joyce Dippold), Max (great-grandson of Anne Hansen), Joyce (sister of Donna Pollman), Molly and Noah (grandchildren of John Veleber), Lori (friend of Dawn-Marie Hanrahan), Tracy (daughter of Nancy Boat) and Pat (relative of Rev. Marjorie Lorant).
- For all battling cancer, especially Al Dalrymple, Rev. Marjorie Lorant, Rachel (friend of Phyllis Crockett), David (friend of Dawn-Marie and Ken), Gladis (niece of Rosemary and Norman) and Nick (friend of Sue Flaherty).
- For these ministries: Lutino Adunu in Gulu, Uganda, Hogar Irekani in Michoacán, México, World Relief of Whatcom County, Blaine CAP, Interfaith Coalition and our partner ELCA congregations in Whatcom County.

### Stewardship

#### Financial info (through February 2025)

General Fund \$33,387.70  
 Special Funds (designated): \$40,478.37  
 Thrivent Reserve Fund: \$58,783.29  
 Receipts YTD 2025: \$21,834.54  
 Expenses YTD 2025: \$21,736.61  
 Net 2025: \$97.93

#### Online Giving

Did you know you can give to our church online?

You can even set up automatic withdrawals or give to specific special funds. Check out our church website:

[www.zionlutheranwhatcom.org](http://www.zionlutheranwhatcom.org) and the "Give" tab for more information.

#### Church Cleaning



We'll meet to clean the church together on the first Saturday of the month, April 5th at 9am.

Zion's Church Council meets on Thursday, April 10th at 4:30 pm. If you have items for the meeting, please get them to Pr. Becky or President Norman Meyers by April 2nd.



#### Church Council Officers

At its February meeting, Zion's Council elected officers for the year: Norman Meyers, President; Dawn-Marie Hanrahan, Vice President; Mary Holm, Secretary; Ken Quinn, Treasurer. Our deepest gratitude for the time and talents of these faithful servants.



At its March meeting, on the recommendation of the Organ Task Force, Zion's Church Council voted to purchase a new Rodgers organ. Thanks to the generosity of a donor, we have funds designated for this purchase

of just under \$18,000. The organ will be built in Hillsboro, Oregon and then shipped to Zion in August. What a blessing to worship God with music!

Pr. Becky is in the church office Mondays and Thursdays from 9-12pm. She also works from home and can be reached on her cell phone: (360) 393-6630 or via email at [pastor@zionlutheranwhatcom.org](mailto:pastor@zionlutheranwhatcom.org). Fridays are her day off; only emergency or prayer chain calls/texts on Fridays, please.

**Outreach and Missions**



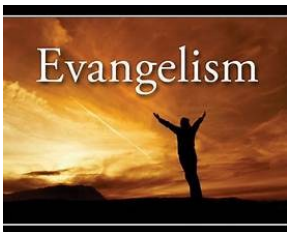
**Lenten Drive for the Lighthouse Mission:**

During the Sundays in Lent (through April 13th), we will be collecting requested items to support the Lighthouse Mission. If you are able, bring some of the following to church: multivitamins, razors, shaving cream, boxer briefs (M-XL), hand warmers, new baby toys and blankets, hygiene items and puzzles. Speak to Rosemary Meyers if you have any questions.

**Tour of Lighthouse Mission.** The Evangelism Committee has arranged a tour of the new Lighthouse Mission in Bellingham on Tuesday, April 1st at 3pm. Please sign up on the sheet at the back of the sanctuary. We'll meet at 2:15pm to carpool from Zion. Speak to Rosemary Meyers for more details.



Zion's quilters are meeting to quilt many Thursdays at 10:00 am. Check to Brenda Bannerman about schedule details.



The Evangelism Committee meets on the second Monday, April 14th at 2pm. Speak to Rosemary Meyers for more details.

Local church groups are getting together to help support immigrants and refugees in our county. If you are interested in getting involved, please speak to Pr. Becky.

**Zion's On-Going Collections**

- Non-perishable food items
- Household items and toiletries



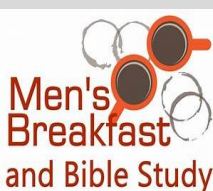
Think "First Sunday for the Food Bank!"

We are encouraging everyone to regularly remember our neighbors in need by contributing food and hygiene items to the basket in the narthex. We partner with local non-profits to get these items out to our community members in need.




Zion will also collect your aluminum cans for recycling. Proceeds have funded many church improvements over the years. Drop off cans in the bin by the basement ramp door. Speak to Brenda Bannerman for more details.

*Fellowship and Learning*




**The Men's Breakfast and Bible Study** will not meet in April. We'll look forward to gathering again on Saturday, May 10th at 8:30am.



**Monday Bible Study** is meeting weekly from 12-1:30pm in the upstairs meeting room in April. We will meet on the 7th, 14th and 28th. All are welcome.

**4th Tuesday Lunch Out.**

A "Just for Fun" lunch out will take place on Tuesday, April 22nd at 12pm, location TDB. Speak to Sue Flaherty for more details.



*April Birthdays*

- 4 Mary Holm
- 5 Shannon Halme
- 6 Rob Tennyson
- 11 Alec Langholz
- 12 Anne Hansen
- 22 Sue Flaherty
- 25 Harry Yasayko
- 30 Lothar Titel and Paloma Jose day



On May 31st at 10am, we will host a workshop on preparing for the death of a loved one. We will be joined by a representative from Thrivent Financial as well as an estate attorney. Pr. Becky will also offer some information on spiritual planning for the time of death. More details to come.

*The Spirit* is a publication of the Northwest Washington Synod of the ELCA. It is intended for synod members, congregations & organizations.

They are encouraged to reproduce these articles in their own monthly organizational publications.

NW Washington Synod, ELCA | 5519 Phinney Ave North; Seattle, WA 98103 | 206-783-9292 | [www.lutheransnw.org](http://www.lutheransnw.org)

April 2025



### From the Bishop:

As you probably know, thousands of bison once roamed the plains of North America. In the late 1800s they were almost brought to extinction. Thankfully, due to conservation efforts, bison are back in the United States plains – even if they aren't nearly as ubiquitous as they once were.

You probably also know that bison are the largest mammals in North America. Male bison (called bulls) can weigh up to 2,000 pounds and stand 6 feet tall, while females (called cows) weigh up to 1,000 pounds and can reach a height of 4-5 feet. Bison calves weigh 30-70 pounds at birth. These are large and powerful creatures.

But even though bison are formidable, the plains can still be dangerous. Their main predators are wolves and mountain lions (what we in the west call cougars), who prey on the weak and the slow – like young bison. Bison typically run when they sense danger, but when predators approach without warning, bison form a multilayer circle of protection. The cows form a ring around the young, and the bulls form an outer ring surrounding the cows.

Just picture this for a moment. A wolf is coming ... the bison cannot run anywhere. And instantly, instinctively, they corral their young in the middle, the females encircle the young, and the males encircle the females. The two rings facing outward. It is a pretty powerful picture. The bison community automatically protects those who cannot protect themselves.

May I ask why we, as humans, seem to do a worse job of protecting the vulnerable than bison? We know God's imperative from Genesis to Revelation. I mean, who did the prophets cry out for? The laborer, the prisoner, the widow, the orphan, the foreigner, the enslaved, the marginalized. Who did Jesus heal? The blind, the deaf, the paralyzed, the bleeding, the possessed, the outcast, the sinner, the forgotten. Again and again, God calls for each beloved person to be held safe – to be provided for and protected – and, when necessary, for those able, to encircle those who are defenseless, especially those society has called expendable.

This is the call God places on each of us – to protect and care for the most vulnerable. Yet, we are witnessing and experiencing the opposite in our society and through government actions. Beloveds in Christ, do not be deceived. When food assistance and benefits are slashed, the vulnerable are left defenseless. When rights are stripped away from women, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, immigrants, and others, they are being cast to the wolves. Jesus himself warns in Matthew 7, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

As followers of Jesus, in these times that may bring discouragement or a sense of being overwhelmed, in these times when it feels wolves are coming at you or for someone you love, may you feel encircled in love and protection – even as you are called to encircle others. May we advocate, love boldly, and protect those who are most at risk. Let us take heart in the promise of God's justice and mercy. Let us be a people who uplift the weary, feed the hungry, and shelter the displaced. May we be a church that embodies Christ's compassion and courage, refusing to look away, refusing to be silent, refusing to let the wolves win. For all people are beloved in God's eyes.

I close with this. I have a little miniature bison on my desk in my office. I look at it often to remember that I am protected by God and that I am called by God. May you remember – as a baptized and beloved child of God, God has called you in this time and in this place. And you are not alone. For even as you protect others, God protects you. Amen.

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

[bishop@lutheransnw.org](mailto:bishop@lutheransnw.org)



### From the VEEP:

“You are a superpower.” Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

“So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all and especially for those of the family of faith.” Galatians 6:9-10

Throughout history, when things have looked bleak, humankind has looked for heroes. Two thousand twenty-five years ago, an oppressed people were looking for a savior – a hero to sweep in and free them from the political and social rule of the Roman Empire. They were on the lookout for a hero.

But what, exactly, makes someone a hero? This is a question that my students and I would discuss every time I taught my unit on the hero’s journey. Because I am a comic book geek, the conversation often veered into comparing various superheroes and rating their levels of heroism. One favorite topic was Batman vs. Superman. Batman does not have any superpowers. He can’t fly, or move mountains, or shoot heat beams from his eyes. He is most definitely not invulnerable. So, what makes him a hero? Well, he is committed to justice. Because he is vulnerable, he risks his life every time he puts on the suit. This willingness to put himself at great risk for others is one of his most defining heroic traits. In fact, it is why some would argue he is a greater hero than Superman even though his heroic acts are on a much smaller scale.

Superman, on the other hand, doesn’t risk his life when he steps in front of a bullet, and he does have superhuman abilities. However, what makes Superman a great hero isn’t his powers or his invulnerability, it is how he chooses to use those powers. This strange visitor from another planet is the most powerful being on Earth and he could let that power corrupt him and use his might to take over the world and subjugate humanity. Instead, he uses it to fight for truth and justice. It is Superman’s willingness to use his power in the service of others that is his greatest heroic trait.

Those people two millennia ago were waiting for a hero when Jesus came onto the scene. They were looking for a great military leader to save them from their oppressors. Instead, they got a very different kind of savior, but a heroic one, nonetheless. Like Batman, Jesus is vulnerable and risks everything for us, ultimately sacrificing his very life. Like Superman, Jesus rejects the temptations of using his abilities and position in self-serving ways. He might not have been the hero they were looking for, but he was the hero humanity needed.

In today’s mixed up, turbulent world, we are also looking around for heroes. But, rather than sitting around waiting to be rescued, what if we set about being our own heroes, following Jesus’ example? What kind of hero could I be? I’m not faster than a locomotive, nor able to leap tall buildings in a single bound, but I do have power related to various social privileges related to the color of my skin, my country of origin, my education and professional background. I can choose to reject the temptation to use that privilege only to promote and protect myself and use it instead in service to others. I can risk myself to stand with the oppressed against the oppressors. I can support and champion organizations that do the good work of feeding the hungry, sheltering the unhoused, welcoming the refugee, and healing the sick. I can subscribe to Faith Action Network’s weekly newsletter and follow their suggestions for action. I can support Lutheran Community Services Northwest. I can educate myself about AMPARO, the ELCA’s strategy to **Accompany Migrants with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities**.

As we continue our Lenten journey and prepare for the celebration of Easter, let us all listen for God’s call and when God asks, “Who shall I send?” consider responding, “Here I am, Lord, I will go.”

Here is what I or the council have been up to in March:

- March 8 and 9: I attended the ordination and installation of Bobbi Jo Cyr as deacon and mission developer at Luther’s Table in Renton.
- March 15: Synod Council met via Zoom.
- March 17: The Synod Equity Team had our first training with Organizing for Mission, and the bishop and I hosted a Zoom orientation for our Churchwide Assembly voting members.