

ZIONBeacon

Shining GOD's Light and Love



– DECEMBER 2023 –

Sharing God's love in tangible ways.

We participated in Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoebox ministry as a church. We filled and submitted 49 Boxes. Be praying for the children and families who will receive these gifts along with the Gospel Message included in each box in the child's language. May many lives be changed forever.



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16

A BRIEF WORD FROM THE PASTOR:

"What do you think of when you hear the word "Christmas"? For too many today it is a word that is dreaded and only leads to more stress. For small children this word could be synonymous with the word presents. Yet for others, this word causes people to think of happy family gatherings and memories of a simpler time. Fundamentally, when I think of the word Christmas, I think of hope.

We have hope because Jesus has come. Jesus is the "game changer" for all of us. When we surrender our lives to Christ and His will, we can have hope because we are promised eternal life with Him in heaven. As more and more people in this life give their lives over to the care and control of Jesus, we can have hope that things in this world will get better. To some extent suffering will lessen, and there is a chance for reconciliation. When we let Christ have His way in our life, there is hope for humanity as well as charity, peace and joy. This is because when we let Jesus rule and reign in our life, we see others the way Jesus sees them.

(continued on page 2)

During this holy season of Advent, let's think back to all the times we saw God working in our lives. Then let's think of where we are presently. And let's pray and think of where God may want to spiritually take us in the future. When the Bible uses the word "hope," it would be better translated for today as "confident expectation." What do you anticipate? What do you pray for? And what do you confidently expect Jesus to do in you and through you?

We as Christians all know we are going to heaven. But how is God going to use us right now and for the rest of our lives? Every week we pray together: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What are we praying for and confidently expecting the Holy Spirit to do in us, our family, our church, our community, our country, and our world?

Paul wrote: "Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently... And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:23-25, 27-28). As a church under the New Covenant of Jesus, we look forward to when Christ shall return to earth and fully establish His kingdom, a kingdom that shall never end. At the same time, we also look forward prayerfully and joyfully to what Jesus will do this Christmas and for the rest of our natural lives. It's exciting when we partner with Christ and cooperate with the Holy Spirit!

May God bless you!

Pastor John Mark Henry

A collage of three photographs showing people playing games at a table. The top photo shows a group of people playing cards. The middle photo shows a group of people playing a board game. The bottom photo shows a group of people playing a board game. There are also icons of playing cards and dice.

Game Night

Come join us for some fun...

*We have a monthly fellowship time on the **second Friday** of every month at **6:30 pm** where we gather to share in food, fellowship and games!*

Bring your family!

Invite your friends!

Bring a game or two to play!



YOUTH CONVENTION



"The Iowa Church of God Youth Convention was held December 8th-10th

*Beginning on Friday evening and ending on Sunday. This event was held at the **Burundi Church of God in Cedar Rapids, IA.** The **speaker** for the convention was the engaging **Pastor Jason Knoll** from Minnesota, a former youth pastor. This cross-cultural event (African-Burundi and American), was a marvelous opportunity. Be sure to talk with our youth and leaders who attended to find out more about their experiences.*



Thanksgiving

A fabulous feast and time of fellowship was had by all at our Thanksgiving meal and the concert by the ***Fine Line*** Bluegrass Band.

We ended the evening with everyone singing ***"This Little Light of Mine"*** and shining our phone lights.





Mark your calendar and plan to attend the **Annual Business Meeting** on January 21, 2024. We will review 2023, elect new leaders, review and vote on the proposed Budget for 2024. **Your participation is very important.**

Dates to be aware of:

Youth meet on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm

Dec 22 - Christmas Potluck Meal 5:30 pm
Dec 25 - MERRY CHRISTMAS

2024

Jan 1 - Happy New Year 2024
Jan 21 - Annual Church Business Meeting

December Anniversaries:

20- Stan & DeAnne Reiley (65 years)
23- Bryan & McKenzie Baum

December Birthdays:

11 - Justin McDowell
15 - Phillip Baum; Royce Speer
18- JJ Gilbert
22- Shelby Fenton

January Anniversaries:

06- Allen & Teresa Yates
14 - Ted & Judi Couch

January Birthdays:

02 - Tom Williamson
05 - David Weeks
07 - Elliana Rukgaber
10 - Christopher Howk
15 - John A Waite
17 - Jim Fenton
21 - Marjeana Derby
23 - Mike Farrell
25 - Betty Brandt
30 - Ashley Baum



Sarah Howk
FEATURED LEADER OF THE MONTH

Sarah has been attending Zion for 20+ years. She has served as a Youth Leader, Church Council Member and in various roles for VBS. Currently Sarah uses her skills to post information and inspiration on the church social media pages. She also designs the presentation slides and runs the computer for Worship Team practices and Sunday Services. This requires hours of behind the scenes work. She is always willing to teach others some basics, if you would like to volunteer some time.