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# The Messenger

ST. JOHN - ZION LUTHERAN CHURCHES

*From The Pastor's Desk:*

## *Something About a Song*

*“O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord; bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods.” -Psalm 96: 1-4*

There is just something about a song, music has shown to help folks with PTSD, music has played large roles in helping Alzheimer's patients, and so much more. Music has this power that we cannot always explain, or maybe even notice in the moment.

Singing, connects us, to our very selves, to each other, and

to moments, and more. As we enter into February, may we listen for the music around us, the music that reminds us we are loved, the music that inspires us to love others.

Meta Herrick Carlson wrote this blessing/ poem:

There is a stealthy restoration in signing together,  
For it pulls our panicked breathing into one chorus  
Of wind between measures,  
drawing deeply  
Where we need not to be frightened.

Our bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made,  
With chemicals and instincts to protect  
Who we are what we already have.

But this is survival, a barely being place.

How risky, then, that God is calling us  
Out of our shallow gasps for air  
And into the deep, abundant breath of life,  
Robust melodies that move us forward.

It is difficult to feel this wind all alone,  
So remember to sing together and often,  
Always expanding the body and making room  
For shalom and the Spirit in the heart of your song.

In Christ,  
Jay Kiel

## ST. JOHN COUNCIL MEETING - JANUARY 11, 2026

St. John's council began its meeting following the annual meeting. President Dana Cook calling the meeting to order. Other council members present were, Jeanne Trachsler, Dave Rischmueller, Kathy Hintz, Jill Stone-Brisky, Gail Meyer, Vicar Jay, Bonnie Gruber and Sally Ladsten. Secretary's and Treasurers reports were just done at the annual meeting.

Old Business: Old business was discussed at annual meeting. Steeple will wrap up completion this upcoming week. The bathroom on the first floor is now complete. The 2026 budget was approved at the annual meeting. Internet in church and parsonage is now live thru Lightspeed. The Messenger questionnaire has had great success. The new delivery systems will start with the February messenger. Super Bowl Sunday coming up February 9th . Sign up is in the Narthex.

New Business:  
Sally Ladsten accepted the position at the annual meeting to join the council. Officers were named for 2026.



Dave Rischmueller nominated Dana Cook as President, Jeanne Trachsler seconded. Motion carried. Kathy Hintz nominated Dave Rischmueller for Vice President, Jeanne Trachsler seconded. Motion carried. Dave Rischmueller nominated Jeanne Trachsler for secretary, Kathy Hintz seconded. Motion carried. Discussed the SP Food Pantry as they have changed the way they do things. They do not need organizations to help anymore. Their website provides volunteer options. Jill Stone-Brisky has proposed a fund raising idea for St. John's. More to come on that!

Next council meeting will be a joint meeting held at Zion on Monday, February 9th at 6:30pm.

Usher for February is Kathy Hintz.

Dave Rischmueller made a motion to adjourn, Kathy Hintz seconded.

Closed with Prayer

In Peace,

Jeanne Trachsler,  
Secretary

## Thank you

**Zion Congregation would like to give St. John's a big thank you for lowering the percentage amount of our cost share. This will help tremendously. This might help make it possible for us to keep our doors open for this year. That's the best we can do, is one year at a time. Thanks to all of you from the members of Zion**

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ST. JOHN ANNUAL MEETING - JANUARY 11, 2026

President Dana Cook called the meeting to order on Sunday, January 11, 2026 at 10:55am following worship.

Vicar Jay opened with a brief prayer.

Secretary Report: Secretary Jeanne Trachsler read minutes from the Semi-Annual Meeting. David Rischmueller made motion to approve, seconded by Sarah Cook.

Treasurer's Report: All documents for the year were handed out to the congregation. Gail Meyer, Treasurer fielded a few questions. Linda Boettcher made a motion to accept the treasurer's report for 2025, seconded by Sarah Cook.

Pastor's Report: Vicar Jay informed the congregation about his journey with TEEM thru Wartburg Seminary. One class left to complete with upcoming internship and hopeful graduation May 2027. Vicar Jay will report on progress at the Semi-annual meeting. Website is now live and you can find the address for it on the front of our weekly bulletin or on facebook. Confirmation classes and Sunday school classes are going well.

WELCA Report: Linda Boettcher presented the WELCA yearend summary. No questions.

Old Business: Restroom is finished on first floor. A sign for the door is ordered as well as some items to finish it up. The steeple roof will be completed this upcoming week. Many things went wrong, discussed them and fielded some questions with them all

being answered. The internet for the church and parsonage was changed this week to Lightspeed thru Reedsburg Utilities.



New Business: Jeanne Trachsler will continue second term on the council. Ronda Lehman is going off the council and we are looking for a nomination from the floor for a council member. Ronda Lehman made a nomination for Sally Ladsten to be next on the council. Linda Boettcher seconded the motion. Sally accepted, motion carried. Dana thanked the congregation for all the help throughout the year. We appreciate all of the silent unsung heroes that help this run so smoothly. Zion was discussed regarding some issues. We were asked by their council to possibly reduce their cost-share percent. After discussion for now a motion was made to reduce the cost-share from 65/35% to 80/20%. A motion was made by Sarah Richard and approved by Linda Boettcher to begin new cost-share for 2026. Motion carried. It was mentioned that Zion will be making a clearer announcement to us at the joint meeting in February as to where they are headed. We are in need of volunteers for the Synod Assembly May 15-16th in Janesville.

**(ANNUAL MEETING CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)**

### **(ST JOHN ANNUAL MEETING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)**

Sarah Richard volunteered and Laura Richmond will join her. More roof repair is in need in the next upcoming years. Garage roof is the worst. President Dana Cook will obtain some bids and present at the semi-annual meeting. Cemetery Committee is in need of two members. Lisa Evert and Kathy Balfanz are going off. Cindy Lehman and Linda Boettcher agreed to join the Cemetery Committee. The 2026 Budget was presented, all questions were answered. Dale Yanke made a motion to accept the 2026 budget, Linda Boettcher seconded. Motion carried. President Dana Cook addressed the

congregation for further needs, concerns or wants.

Sarah Cook made a motion to adjourn, Ronda Lehman seconded.

Closed with prayer led by Vicar Jay.

In Peace,



Jeanne Trachsler,  
Secretary

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## **ST JOHN WELCA**

St. John WELCA met January 7 for Bible Study led by Linda Boettcher.

The General Meeting was called to order by Becky Mitchell. Secretary and Treasurers' reports were read and approved. Linda gave the Mission Report. Helen Jaedike reported on the Sunshine activity.

Chili Luncheon is scheduled for March 1. Donation of



items for the bazaar would be appreciated.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Bible Study – February 4  
(1:00pm)

Greeters: Jim & Kathy  
Balfanz

Wash Communionware: Annie  
Wipperfurth & Kimmi  
Schwarz

Ruth Evert,  
Secretary

## ZION ANNUAL MEETING - JANUARY 18, 2026

There were 22 people present for the meeting.

President Todd Thieding called the meeting to order at 1:00 on January 18. Vicar Jay led us in devotion and prayer.

The secretary's report was read. Phyllis Thieding made a motion to accept the report. Richard Knuth made a second.

The treasurer's report was handed out and reviewed. Richard Knuth made a motion to accept it while Brenda Kozlowski seconded it.

Pastor's Report: Jay wanted to review that his schooling has changed a bit—he is in the TEEM program at Wartburg. There will be no noticeable changes—he will just have different paperwork on his end.

### Old Business:

The topic of transfer of church ownership to the cemetery association was addressed. At this time, there are too many questions and unknowns to have this discussion.

### New Business:

Election. The secretary position is up for re-election. Sandy Knuth made a motion to re-elect Sue Strutz as secretary. Phyllis Thieding made a second.

For the time being, Phyllis Schwartz will continue as treasurer. Bob Bergman made a motion to elect Phyllis Schwartz as treasurer. Sandy Knuth seconded it.

It was pointed out that Megan Schulenburg was omitted on the cover page as a council member.

Laurie Ahrensmeyer and Laura Koenig will continue as finance committee members.

Budget. The proposed budget was passed out. Zion is grateful for St. John's support and willingness to reduce the percentage owed. The budget was

passed as presented. Brenda Kozlowski made a motion to accept the budget. Kathy Schwartz made a second.



Church Parcel. A discussion occurred regarding surveying the church parcels. Right now, there are no clear boundaries. Sue Strutz got a quote from Wes Kraemer to survey our 3 parcels at a cost of \$3500. Bob Bergman made a motion to have the property surveyed. Bill Schwartz made a second.

Members commented that we need to make sure the driveway to the cemetery is part of the cemetery parcel. Members also gave the council the ability to choose a surveyor.

170th Anniversary Celebration. The plan will involve a potluck and will occur in July or August. Richard and Sandi will take care of contacting previous ministers.

January/February. Question was raised about why Zion was not having church in January/February. It was a council decision based on attendance and expenses. Sue Strutz said that maybe council got it wrong with their decision. She made a motion to take a ballot vote to see if members wanted to have church. Brenda Kozlowski made a second.

The results of the ballot vote—12 people voted for “no” church while 7 people voted “yes” to having church. Zion will not have church until February 22.

It was suggested that a monthly update of Zion's finances be made public.

Adjourned—Dan Koenig made a motion to adjourn while Kathy Schwartz made a second.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Sue Strutz,  
Secretary

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ZION COUNCIL MEETING - JANUARY 11, 2026

Present: Todd, Larry, Sue, Phyllis, Dan and Megan

Todd called the meeting to order at 1 PM on January 11.

The secretary's report was read. Dan made a motion to approve it, while Larry made a second.

The treasurer's report was handed out and put on file for audit.

MerryAnn Hanusa and Kathy Schwartz will be auditing the books in the coming week.

Old Business:

Discussed luncheon for the annual meeting.

So far no one has come forward to take over the treasurer's position. Phyllis is still holding out hope that someone will come forward.

New Business:

Ushering schedule handed out.

Call list will remain the same.

Discussed the annual meeting and came up with an agenda.

Sandy Thieding will continue on as custodian for the upcoming year.

Dan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Phyllis made a second. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.



Sue Strutz,  
Secretary

## **Why do we use ashes on Ash Wednesday?**

Ashes remind us of God's condemnation of sin, as God said to Adam, "Dust you are and to dust you shall return: (Genesis 3:19)

Ashes suggest cleansing and renewal. We receive ashes in the form of the cross, the same symbol placed on our bodies with water in our baptism.

Ashes remind us of the shortness of human life, for it is said as we are buried into the ground, "We commit this body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." (ELW. P 294)

## Pastoral Acts:

January 5th: Funeral of Janet Laukant at Zion

**New church  
contact number  
1 (616) 581-4425**

**Save the Date for the 2026 SCSW  
Synod Assembly!** Mark your calendars!  
The 2026 SCSW Synod Assembly is May  
15 and 16, 2026 at the Woodman's Center  
in Janesville, WI. The Assembly will  
open on the evening of Friday, May 15  
and will continue through the day on  
Saturday, May 16. Planning is underway  
and more details, including registration  
information, will be shared soon.

### **St. John members:**

We have MANY boxes of offering envelopes  
available. Please ask if they're not on the  
credenza. Just be sure to write your name  
on the envelope as the number on file might  
not match your name. Thank you.

### **Messenger Deadline**

The Third Thursday . . . The March issue  
deadline is Thursday, February 19. Contact the  
Messenger by e-mail at [sjznewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sjznewsletter@gmail.com)  
or send by mail to 249 Holly Court, Prairie du Sac,  
WI 53578. Thank you.

## February Birthdays

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| <b>1</b>  | Linda Yanke<br>Cindy Lehman                     |
| <b>3</b>  | Allan Yanke<br>Laurie Ahrensmeyer<br>Megan Haag |
| <b>6</b>  | Ares Haag                                       |
| <b>8</b>  | Merry Ann Hanusa<br>Harley Wiese<br>Lucy Zick   |
| <b>9</b>  | Edith Wiese                                     |
| <b>12</b> | Ann Wipperfurth<br>David Rischmueller           |
| <b>13</b> | Marshall Mitchell                               |
| <b>14</b> | Jeanette Emer<br>Jennifer Evert                 |
| <b>18</b> | Matthew Trachsler                               |
| <b>19</b> | James Albers<br>Phyllis Thieding                |
| <b>22</b> | Brenda Kozlowski                                |
| <b>23</b> | Dustin Mielke                                   |
| <b>24</b> | Marian Bindl                                    |
| <b>27</b> | Dena Yanke                                      |

# St. John~Zion Lutheran Churches

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## Mark Your Calendars

### Calendar

Important Dates for February

**February 1, 2026**

NOISY offering

**February 8, 2026**

Souper Bowl

**February 9, 2026**

Joint Council at Zion 7:00

**February 18, 2026**

St. John Ash Wednesday Service  
6:30 pm

**February 19, 2026**

Deadline for March issue  
of the Messenger

### WELCA Chili Luncheon

March 1, 2026. 11:30 to 2:30

There are sign up sheets in the narthex  
for food donations and to work.

Donations of baked goods, and crafts  
for the bazaar would be appreciated.