

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

“Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Thy judgments O Lord!” *Psalm 97:8*

The 97<sup>th</sup> Psalm is a Psalm of rejoicing and praise. The magnificence of the creation is extolled, and yet this miracle is eclipsed by the grace of God in His salvation of fallen man. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. And yet this righteousness, this very justice, He makes yours by faith in Jesus Christ. The Second Person of the Holy Trinity, through whom all things were made, became a Man to save fallen men. The Author of Life Himself willingly died that your sins be removed. The Crucified One took up His life again, that you might be declared righteous and just before God. So Zion hears and is glad! The redeemed, the sons and daughters of God, rejoice because of His judgments! Therefore, beloved of God, “Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His Holy Name.” *Psalm 97:12*

It is with great joy and humility that I greet you as the Pastor of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Detroit. In my short time here at Zion I have been overwhelmed with the graciousness and warmth of the welcome you have extended to me and to my family. I thank you for the many prayers offered on our behalf, and for the genuine kindnesses shown to us in our first few weeks.

While we are still stepping over boxes at home and in my study at Zion, we are gradually getting unpacked. Each day our new house seems more like home, and the basement of the parsonage looks more and more like a Pastor’s study. I have already had the opportunity to meet many of you, and to visit some of you in your homes. If I have not had the chance to meet you, I hope you will feel welcome to call the church or to stop by the Study to introduce yourself. I do plan to visit as many of our members as possible, but I expect that home visits will probably have to wait until after Holy Week to allow me to focus on the many Masses between now and then.

I would like to draw your attention to the following items:

**Daily Matins** – The Office of Matins is prayed every day at 8:45 a.m. in the Chapel. All Zion members and guests are welcome. Matins is not prayed on Fridays, or on days when there is Mass.

**Wednesday Mass** – We have resumed every Wednesday Mass in the Chapel. Mass is spoken at 10:00 a.m. each Wednesday. Please consider joining us! For Lent the Wednesday Mass will be held in the Church.

**Private Confession and Absolution** – is available anytime by appointment. Additionally, Fr. Braden will be available Saturday mornings after Matins for private confession and absolution. Please avail yourself of this salutary rite.

**Bible Study** – We have also resumed Bible Study every Sunday at 11:30 a.m. We are studying the Epistle of St. Paul to the Church in Rome. We began our study with an overview of the life of St. Paul, from his birth to the third Missionary Journey. We have begun our study of Chapter 1. All Zion members and guests are invited to attend. Until we are able to begin Sunday School again, we also invite all the children to join us in Bible Class.

**Zion Men’s Confessional Study Group** – A group of Zion men interested in studying the writings of Martin Luther and the Lutheran Confessions is forming. Father Braden will lead the study. The first writings we will study are Luther’s *Concerning the Order of Public Worship* (1523) and *An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg* (1523). As we read what Luther writes about the Mass he left our church, we will compare his Mass and comments on public worship to the Zion Ordo. I have already had several men indicate they would like to join. If you desire to study with us, please call the church office. Watch for information on the meeting times/dates in the bulletin.

**Zion Women’s Group** – Several of the women of the congregation mentioned that they would like to begin a ladies’ group. This group would also study Scripture or the writings of the Lutheran Confessors. Father Braden will lead the study. All Zion ladies are welcome to join. If you would like to be part of the group, contact the church office.

I sincerely hope that you will join us for these opportunities to receive God’s gifts and to grow in your knowledge of the Scriptures and the Confessions.

I have already met formally with the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees. Several other boards are planning meetings at this writing. If your board or committee has not met with me, please call the church office to schedule a time for a meeting. Before the end of February I would like to have met with all of Zion’s boards and committees.

There have been several updates to our Zion website. If you haven’t seen it recently, go to <http://www.ziondetroit.org> and check it out. I recently posted a short autobiographical sketch so that our members could learn a little more about me. Soon I hope to have a sermon archive established, where all the sermons I preach are available for our members and friends.

Included in this newsletter is my new contact information. I provide this so that you can reach me when you need me. If you have need of Pastoral care, please call or email me. Also, attached to this newsletter is a calendar of upcoming Services and events at Zion. Please take a moment to read the calendar, and join us as often as possible.

“He preserves the souls of His saints, He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” *Psalm 97:10, 11*

