



The Mountain Top Messenger

February 2026

Well, here we are February, already the year is accelerating, seems like I just did January's cover last week! As it was once said, time stands still for no one, and I guess that includes me. So, as we move into February, we are only a couple of weeks away from Ash Wednesday and the start of the Lenten season. February 18th is indeed Ash Wednesday, and this year Easter is on April 5th. In talking with the Evangelism committee, the plan is soup and sandwich dinners on Ash Wednesday and then the 4th of March and the 18th of March. More information on that should be available in the upcoming bulletins and elsewhere in this newsletter. I again wanted to take a moment to thank everyone for all of their help and participation during the Christmas season.

I mentioned last month that I was going to dive into the where's and why's of all of our different Colored paraments in the church. So, for lack of anything else at the moment, here we go. We at Zion use a number of different colors throughout the different church seasons. They are White, Red, Green, Purple, and Black. I say these are the colors we use, because there are additional accepted colors in use in the LCMS. The other colors are Gold and Scarlet, and I will speak on them a bit later.

As you all are probably aware the most used color for the liturgical seasons is Green, it is used after Epiphany and Pentecost, they are commonly called ordinary time. The days after Epiphany may include a total of, but, not more than eight Sundays. There are a couple of special days in that season where we may change for day, but then back to Green. The season after Pentecost can last from 22 to 28 Sundays and again there are a few special days in that season where we may change for a single Sunday. The season after Pentecost is also called "the time of the church". It also used to be called the season of the "Green meadow" probably due to the fact that Green was the established color. Green is considered a neutral color, but it is also considered a color of growth. Some churches have multiple sets of Green paraments so that they can rotate them during the long post Pentecostal season.

The next color we are going to look at is , in terms of the church, Blue is a relatively new color, while some churches used Blue all the way back to the eighth century, in the Lutheran Church in America it really didn't start to be used until the 19th and 20th centuries. Some say this was partly due to the Lutheran church in America potentially joining with the Swedish Lutheran church, which was one of those that had been using it since the eighth century. Blue is used for Advent, a time of waiting and watching and the Blue color is to help communicate the message of hope. Blue-the color of the helps convey this message. It is also a reminder that our Christian faith rests on the hope of Christ, who came into history assuming our flesh and he will also return on the last day of time from that same Blue sky into which He ascended long ago.

Purple, perhaps some of you may remember when this was the color for Advent, now however we reserve this color only for the season of Lent. From the day after Ash Wednesday until Maundy Thursday Purple is the color of the season. Purple is a penitential color and therefore appropriate to use during the

season of Lent. The deep, rich color has come to represent somberness and solemnity, penitence, and prayer. In the world in which Jesus lived, Purple was a very cherished and expensive color. The dye used to make the color was painstakingly acquired by massaging the neck of a Mediterranean shellfish that secreted a special fluid. It could therefore only be afforded by the rich and worn most exclusively by royalty. If you remember Jesus, king of the Jews, only wore a Purple robe once, during the time he was mocked and tormented by Pilate's soldiers. The Purple used during this penitential season is a vivid reminder of the contempt and scorn that he endured.

Black is seldom seen during the church year, the calendar only calls for its use twice, Good Friday and Ash Wednesday. There is no mistaking the message that this somber color gives. Black is the absence of light. Good Friday, or Black Friday along with Ash Wednesday, call for sober reflection on the cost of our Redemption. Occasionally not parament is used on Good Friday which is also an acceptable practice.

White, as may have already known or guessed, is the color of purity and completeness. The "great fifty days of Easter" is supported by the use of White. The color White helps us to remember that "though our sins be as Scarlet, they shall be White as snow". Because of Christ's triumph from the grave on East Sunday, we rejoice. His purity before His Father becomes our purity and White reinforces that message of Joy. Besides being the color for Eastertide, whit is the appointed color for festive Sunday, like Christmas and its twelve days, Epiphany, the Baptism of our Lord, Holy Trinity Sunday, All Saints Day. There are also 21 minor festivals and occasions in the church year where it could be used.

Red is a power color, it is scheduled for use only twice each year, the day of Pentecost and Reformation Sunday. The color Red communicate the motif of strength, strength and power as of the Holy Spirit. Red is a compelling festive color, so it also serves well as a traditional color for the heroic martyrs of the church. In the Lutheran Service Book (Hymnal) you can find a list of the sixteen martyr festivals, and it recommends Red as the appropriate color. Red can also be used for festive occasions such as dedications, anniversaries of a congregation or its physical church, celebrations of the office of public ministry, installation, ordination, confirmation.

As I mentioned at the beginning there are two other colors that can be used and they are Gold and Scarlet. Gold is an optional color for Easter Sunday, and it can also be used for the last Sunday of the Church year when that day is observed as Christ the King Sunday. Scarlet, which can also be a vivid Red or orange is used in some congregations for Holy Week, from Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday. The color stands in contrast to the traditional Red that we mentioned above. Scarlet is a color anciently associated with the passion.the color of blood.

And there you have it, there is a lot of additional information about the colors, and their how's and why's and how longs. However, I think the above will address and answer most questions, if you do have any questions regarding anything above, please let me know, I would be happy to discuss further or find additional answers.

On a closing note, June and I will be on vacation from February 3, until February 18, as always, I am always available by cell. Pastor Steve Hyvonen will be conducting services both here at Zion and at Immanuel Little Girls Point on February 15th Transfiguration Sunday. I hope to see you all at the Ash Wednesday service on February 18th at 6:00pm, oh and don't forget soup and sandwich at 5:00.

And now, may the Lord bless you and keep you, may He make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, may He look upon you with favor and give you peace.

God Bless you all,

Pastor Rick

Sunday Worship Service 9:00am live streamed
Wednesday Evening Service 6:00pm
Sunday School - 1st – 7th grade Sunday 8:45am (Sept.-May)
Bible Studies
Sunday 10:15am Monday 10:00am (Sept.-May)

Pastor Rick Williams - 715-209-0479

Office Hours: M /T/Th 9-5 Wed. 12-8 Fri. off

Please call ahead if you need to speak with Pastor.

Office Secretary Lynn Ladd 715-682-6075 Office Hours M/T/Wed 8:30-2:30
Days and times may change.

Church President: John Pruss 715-292-4825 **Head Elder:** Darryl Warren 715-492-0488

Little Friends of Jesus Child Care Center: 715-682-5185

LFOJ Administrator: Desiree Niemann 715-682-6075

LFOJ Director: Tressa Groom 715-682-6075

Website www.zionashland.org **E-mail** secretary@zionlutheranashland.com

PRAYERS for

Homebound, Assisted Living, Nursing Home

Those who aren't able to attend common worship that they would find comfort knowing that the Lord is with them.

*Arlene Zimmerman
Violet Basina*

PRAYERS FOR PROTECTION

For our full-time troops and public servants, for travel, missionaries, and for peace and protection for families.

*David Wright
Jordan Thimm
Andrew Pruss*

PRAYERS FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

For good test results, treatment, positive thinking, healing, and comfort during cancer treatments, for those suffering from addiction, mental illness and for healing, strength, comfort, and peace for family we pray for:

Brad Prill	Vi Basina	James Fletcher
Harold Larson	Linda Stenroos	Don Pocernich
Tim Erickson	Patty Hmielewski	Pam Ekholm
Don Pocernich	Jamie Klema	Keith Tveit
Rick Kallio	Cheryl Hildebrandt	Mary Dahl
Mike Trimble	Molly Colgrove	Linda Parrish
Chuck Sandor	Dwayne Lynch	Tom Anderson
Octavia Pearce	Kevin Heggie	Larry Hildebrandt
Cindy Lazorik	Tracy Thompson	Bonnie Jansehski
Camden & Brooks	<u>Balmer Karen</u>	Wayne Casey Chuck

And those in our hearts

Dear Lord, "We come to You today with heavy hearts, as we lift up those who are in need of prayer. We ask that You would bring healing and restoration to their body, mind, and spirit" Amen.

**The Book of Job:
Blessed be the Name of the Lord**

One of the Bible's greatest wisdom books is the book of Job. This Lent we are going to explore this magnificent composition that is numbered among some of the greatest literature of all time. **Nine sermons will help us dig deeply into Job's central message and supporting truths**, while six Sunday Morning Adult Bible Classes will further address the book's major topics and themes.



We all suffer—personally and privately. We also suffer in more public ways. A husband loses a job. A child gets divorced. A parent dies. And now, thanks to the media, we are able to see and experience more and more of the world's catastrophes and suffering. **We need the book of Job, now, more than ever.**

Martin Luther asserted that **"Job is magnificent and sublime as no book of Scripture."** Others have called Job "the Shakespeare of the Bible." Yet the early Christian scholar Jerome perhaps put it best when he called **the book of Job an "eel,"** since the more one tries to contain it, the slipperier it becomes! The purpose of our Lenten emphasis is to learn how to apply Job to our lives, so that the book becomes less like an eel and more like a loving companion through life's dark valleys. Preaching plans are as follows:

The Sunday Morning Bible Class will be exploring the Book of Job during Lent.

**The Book of Job:
Blessed be the Name of the Lord!**

Ash Wednesday, "Flying Blind" (Job 1:1–12)

Lent 1, "Sweet Surrender" (Job 1:13–21)

Lent 2, "Learning to Lament" (Job 3:1–26)

Lent 3, "It is Enough" (Job 14:1–14)

Lent 4, "Understanding How it all Works Together" (Job 23:1–17)

Lent 5, "God Speaks in the Storm" (Job 38:1–11)

Palm Sunday, "On Earth is not his Equal!" (Job 41:20–34)

Good Friday, "Tearing Down the Spite House" (Job 42:7–9)

The Resurrection of Our Lord, "I Know that My Redeemer Lives!" (Job 19:23–26)

Soup and Sandwich Dinners on Feb. 18th, Ash Wednesday,

March 4th and March 18th at 5:00pm

18th Evangelism & Potluck

4th Altar Guild

11th Trustees and Elders



**Soup &
Sandwich Supper**

My (Not So) Secret Admirer

By Michael Thompson from *Edmund, Oklahoma*

"Michael Thompson, you have flowers in the office," screeched a voice over the intercom as I sat in Miss Eidschun's seventh grade English class that Valentine's Day. I frowned, confused. It was a tradition at our school for guys to send flowers to the office for their girlfriends. Girls paraded through the halls with their bouquets, so classmates knew that someone thought they were special. No one sent flowers to the school office for guys.

The classroom had erupted with laughter. I blushed as I slid out of my desk and headed down the hall. In the office, the principal smiled broadly. "Looks like you have a special someone, Michael."

Mortified but also curious, I grabbed the bud vase with two red carnations. Alone in the hall, I read the card:

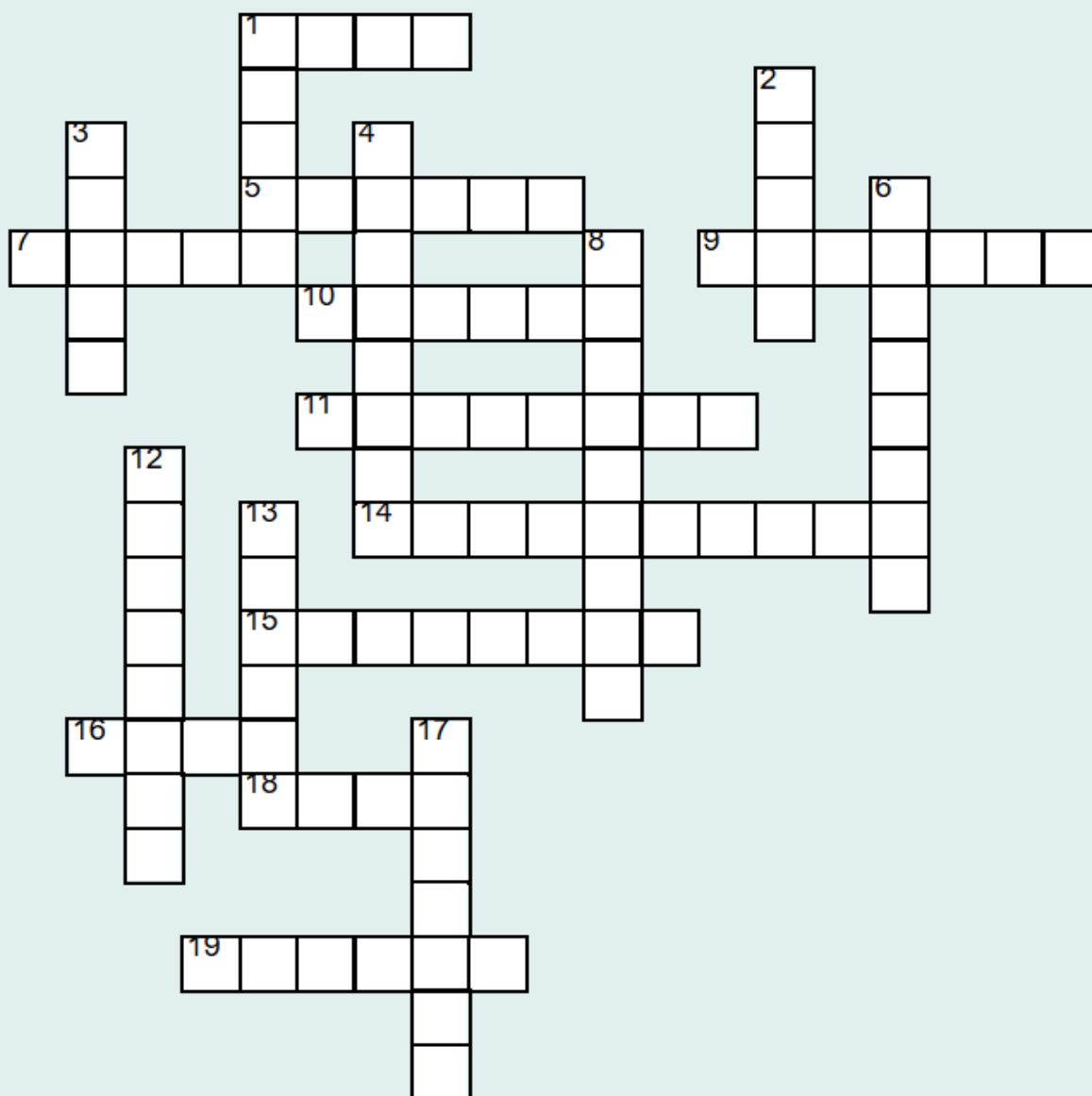
"With Love, Your Secret Admirer." I had to admit it felt good, even if the circumstances were unique. But who could it be?

All day, friends speculated on which girls they thought might like me, but no one admitted to sending me flowers. I figured my secret admirer would remain just that—a secret.

After dinner, the phone rang—Nana was calling. I'd always been close to my grandmother, who attended every one of my football games, hollering "Get 'em, Michael!" when I went in for a tackle. Nana wished me a happy Valentine's Day and asked me about school and practice. Finally, she said mischievously, "I heard you have a secret admirer."

Nana! I should have known all along! She was my biggest fan—my not so secret admirer.

The Transfiguration Luke 9:28-36



Departure
Elijah
Father
Fire
Glory
Heavens
James
John
Lightening
Listen
Livecoal
Marriage
Moses
Mountain
Name
Peter
Sapphire
Seraphs
Shelters
Temple

The Transfiguration of Jesus

J	S	W	O	R	L	D	J	O	H	N	A	M	I
W	O	O	K	N	A	S	H	E	L	T	E	R	S
A	H	H	N	D	A	Z	Z	L	I	N	G	M	R
H	C	I	F	R	I	G	H	T	E	N	E	D	O
L	A	L	T	C	L	N	R	E	R	E	T	E	P
I	V	J	O	E	E	I	C	J	L	E	T	E	N
J	O	J	I	U	B	K	A	S	E	S	O	M	E
J	I	U	I	L	D	L	I	S	L	S	N	H	N
A	C	L	O	D	E	A	E	D	D	N	U	H	E
M	E	H	P	I	M	T	V	A	E	A	D	S	I
E	R	C	L	O	T	H	E	S	C	E	E	D	H
S	M	O	U	N	T	A	I	N	T	H	A	N	D
R	D	G	C	E	E	R	H	T	H	H	D	E	E
A	P	P	E	A	R	E	D	R	R	A	B	B	I

MAN
BLEACH
TALKING
SON
CLOTHES
SHELTERS
JAMES
DAZZLING
VOICE
FRIGHTENED
RISEN
JESUS
RABBI
DEAD
ELIJAH
MOUNTAIN
JOHN
PETER
WORLD
MOSES
WHITE
APPEARED
CLOUD
THREE

Family Man

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers from Blanco, Texas

My heart pounded as I checked my makeup in the mirror. I was [going on a date](#). Not just any date, though. A *Valentine's Day* date. It had been four years since my divorce, and though I'd dated some during that time, none of those relationships had panned out—until James. He was the meat cutter at our local grocery store and had a handsome face and a big heart. I'd been so excited to introduce him to my teenage daughter, Lindsey. She, on the other hand, wasn't exactly thrilled to be meeting him. The doorbell chimed, and I heard my daughter shouting, "Mom, he's here!" from the other end of the house. Lord, I fretted, *please let this go well*.

Hurrying down the hall, I gasped when I opened the door to find James, his arms laden with gift bags, cards, candy, flowers and balloons. "Here you go," he said, handing me a bag and a bouquet. "These are for you. Happy Valentine's Day." He followed me into the kitchen. "All this for me?" I reached for a vase for the flowers. "Not exactly." James turned to Lindsey, who was watching us from the doorway. "These," he said, holding out another gift bag and the balloons, "are for you." Lindsey smiled. Right then, I knew that this would go well indeed. Because James cared not only for my heart but for my daughter's too. Fifteen years—and counting—of marriage later, he still does

Unscramble Lent

1. PaSnd mylau _____
2. dMahyuTad nrysu _____
3. vPossrea _____
4. entL _____
5. yHkeelo W _____
6. IdaSt uoHygar _____
7. ruTmidu _____
8. F oroidGady _____
9. W yydnepdeaSs _____
10. osf ydtayr _____
11. yWssAdene hda _____
12. daytSransEeu _____

Find 10 differences



LENT PRAYER

Loving God, I bring before You a heart that longs to be made right again. I repent of attitudes and actions that have distanced me from Your will. You have said, “*Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God*” (Joel 2:13). Teach me true repentance that leads to lasting change. Let my life honor You in sincerity.

VALENTINE'S DAY MAZE





JANUARY LFOJ NEWSLETTER

Dear parents and guardians,

Welcome to a new year at LFOJ! We are excited to make more memories with you all! Thank you for making this center what it is.

As with any business, there may be changes coming this year. We will keep you up-to-date on these changes and how they may impact the center and the families.

January 2nd was National Cream Puff day! January 25th is National Opposite Day!

Totville News: Greetings from the Infant Room!

Our main Bible stories this month were: How God made the World, The man who was too little, Noah's Big Boat, and The Bright Star and the Three Visitors. The children enjoy the action songs that we sing. Even though they usually don't sing along, they are learning the actions that go with the songs.

Up until just recently, we have enjoyed the mild January weather. We have been getting outside when the temperature allows. It's a challenge for

-Denise and Nikki

some of the children to get around in the snow, so they've been riding in a sled a lot of the time.

We are continuing to work on counting, colors, sharing, and taking turns. The older children are practicing using open top cups and asking to be excused from the table. There is never a dull moment in our room. They keep us busy and on our toes.

"He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes." -Psalm 147:16

Toddler Titbits: We've had a busy month in the Toddler Room. We welcomed a new friend named Eleanor, and the class has been so kind and patient with her. She has made many loving friends, and we are so happy she is with us~!

Unfortunately, the weather hasn't been so kind, so we've had quite a few days where we weren't able to get outside. Thanks to Lyla's family, who donated some of their indoor play foam blocks. We've been making obstacle courses to get our energy out.

February we will continue to stay warm, active, and busy! We will focus on kindness, love, acceptance, and friendship all month because it is so important! Happy's Valentine's Day!

-Jane, Michelle, and Lael

Learner Lane: Our themes this month have included the New Year, snow, winter clothing, winter play, and arctic animals!

We read about the Story of Creation, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Lot, Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac.

We have started the New Year off with a bang down here in the Learner room! We are off to a fresh start with a new rearranged classroom and goals to work toward!

Next month, we will be doing our annual Valentine's Day exchange. I will be sending out a message in the next couple of weeks with more information.

Wishing you all a happy and blessed 2026!
Hanna and Kate

UPDATES: As a reminder, we charge a weekly rate based on expected attendance. You are being charged for your child's spot at the center. This means that we do not credit when your child does not attend, unless you are full time and want to use days from the one week of credits that you get per year.

God Bless, Tressa Groom Director Desirer Niemann Administrator

(continued on next page)

COOK'S CORNER

Breakfast Casserole with Potatoes and Eggs

Ingredients:

- 2 medium potatoes cubed
- 6 eggs
- 1 small eggplant peeled and cubed
- 1 can 15 oz Black Beans drained
- 1 medium onion sliced
- 1 bell pepper diced (any color, I used orange)
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 4 garlic cloves chopped
- ¾ teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- ¾ teaspoon **kosher salt**
- 4 tablespoon olive oil

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 F.
2. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
3. Mix all of the ingredients in a large mixing bowl then spread equally on your baking sheet.
4. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until the potato cubes are soft.
5. Take the baking sheet out of the oven and make 6 wells using a spoon. Crack an egg into each well.

Return to the oven and bake for an additional 6 to 8 minutes. Egg yolks will harden quickly, do not overcook if you like them runny.

LFOJ WISH LIST/NEEDS

Monthly:

Regular paper towel and/or Tri Fold paper towel
Toilet Paper
Fragrance Free Baby Wipes
Kleenex (facial tissue)
Hand soap (unscented, antibacterial)
Great value brand canned fruits in juice (not syrup)
Natural peanut butter
Parent's choice gentle baby formula (must be iron-fortified)
Beech nut baby food

Ragu spaghetti sauce
Prego alfredo sauce
All natural ketchup (no high fructose corn syrup)
Tomato soup
Graham crackers
Vanilla wafers
Elbow noodles
Foam Tumbling mats
Quart Double Ziplock bags
Gallon Double Ziplock bags
Thin Pretzel sticks
Robot Vacuum (self-emptying)
Plexiglass picture board (kid friendly)
Cordless Vacuum



Check-Out Romance

“I met my husband while I was working in a science library. He came in every week to read the latest journals and eventually decided to take out the librarian instead of the books. After a year and a half of dating, he showed up at the library and started rummaging through my desk. I asked what he was looking for, but he didn’t answer. Finally, he unearthed one of the rubber stamps I used to identify reference books. ‘Since I couldn’t find the right engagement ring,’ he said, ‘this will have to do,’ and he firmly stamped my hand. Across my knuckles, in capital letters, it read NOT FOR CIRCULATION.” — *Contributed by Ruth E. Chodrow*

THE STORY OF JOB

Spot 8 differences between the two pictures.



January/February Mission of the Month “Souper” Bowl Sunday



During the months of January and February we will be collecting Soup and other non-perishable items for the BRICK. Drop off your items in the narthex. Monetary donations also accepted, make your checks out to “The BRICK”.



February

2026

SUN MON TUES WED THURS FRI SAT

Elder: February
[8 Scott]
[18 JohnS]

[1 Doug]
[11 Andy]
[22 Scott]

[4 Randy]
[15 JohnP]
[25 Doug]

Altar Guild – Eleanor Munson Jane Hauser	February 715-682-8155 715-779-5298
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8:45am Sunday School
9:00am Worship Service
9:30am Confirmation
10:15am Bible Study
2:00pm LGP

10:00am Bible Study
5:30pm Council Mtg.
Dartball Bye

6:00pm Worship Service

Pastor and June on vacation and to the Annual BPM Conference in Phoenix → →

8 9 10 11 12 13 14

9:00am Worship Service

7:00pm Dartball 7pm vs. Summit 2

1:00pm Sewing Circle

6:00pm Worship Service



→ →

15 16 17 18 19 20 21

8:45am Sunday School
9:00am Worship Service
9:30am Confirmation

7:00pm Dartball 7pm At Messiah

1:00pm Hospice Group Gathering
ASH WENDSDAY
5:00pm Soup & Sandwich
6:00pm Worship Service

9:00am Winkel

→ → → → → → →

22 23 24 25 26 27 28

8:45am Sunday School
9:00am Worship Service
9:30am Confirmation
10:15am Bible Study

10:00am Bible Study
7:00pm Dartball 7pm Methodist

1:00pm Sewing Circle

6:00pm Worship Service

1:30pm Northern Lights