

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:

A funny thing happened on my way to Easter. I found myself completely exhausted ... and wonderfully inspired – exhausted by our many services during Holy Week and inspired by the many friends and members who joined in the journey along the way. As many of you already know, I love joining Jesus on his triumphal entry to Jerusalem with our Palm Sunday Parade. Plus, the Children’s Program adds a generous dose of frenetic energy, which captures some of the chaotic excitement that must have shaped the day for those who shared the original experience with Jesus. Things simmered down by Thursday, when prayers for healing with Quiet Communion at Noon turned our focus to a series of powerful services to honor the Great Three Days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter.

Everything started heating up again with our Passover Seder in Luther Hall. Zion’s Singing Chef, with his faithful kitchen crew, prepared yet another delicious dinner to recapture the festive aromas of the historic narrative we know as the Last Supper. The Senior Choir began the evening with an excellent rendition of *The Upper Room*. Dale Jacobs then turned our focus to the questions that would arise with what would transpire in the Garden of Gethsemane. Servers were selected, and our dinner began with *matzah ball soup*, followed by mouth-watering pot roast, chardonnay chicken, asparagus, redskin potatoes, bitter herbs, charoset, and quite a selection of very good wines. If ever there were a way to conceive of the Last Supper, not as a ritualized sacrament of wafers and communion cups, but as real meal celebrating God’s promise of freedom and the story of salvation, we surely have found it with our Passover Seder.

The Good Friday Tenebrae never fails to draw my focus to the central meanings of Holy Week – the Cross, with its lengthening shadows and deepening darkness, the ominous presence of death surrounding Jesus, pressing in upon him to extinguish his light and end his very life. Betrayed by one of his followers, rejected by his own people, denied by his best friend, disappointed by Roman Governor, derided by the criminal next to him, abandoned even by God, the circle of rejection grows wider, with the disciples in disarray, and Jesus’ suffering and death as gruesome as can be imagined ... and endured. *Ah, Holy Jesus, how hast thou offended? O Sacred Head Now Wounded, with grief and shame weighed down. O Sorrow Dread, God’s Son is dead!* Such great hymns, matched with powerful readings, the deepening darkness, the loud strepitus, the meaning of suffering forever transformed from a sign of divine judgment to the promise of God’s presence with us always and forever.

Finally, Easter arrived, with the Sanctuary filled with the sight and scents of beautiful lilies, the bright colors of our renovations everywhere, the tell-tale sounds of Easter singing, beginning with a quiet solo and culminating with joyous strains of *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today, Alleluia!* There is so much about Easter Festival Worship that is exhilarating and inspiring: our Senior Choir, the powerful pipe organ on full display, the pageantry of Resurrection triumph, the excitement of special music, powerful preaching, the comfort of communion, pews filled with people, hearts filled with faith, lives empowered for service! *Now all the vault of heaven resounds in praise of love that still abounds: Christ has triumphed! He is living! Sing, choirs of angels, loud and clear! Repeat their song of glory here: Christ has triumphed! Christ has triumphed! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!* [Lutheran Book of Worship, Hymn #143, verse 1]

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

With this meeting scheduled just two days after the celebration of Easter, we were surprised that so many remembered that the Council had scheduled a meeting, and even more surprised, given that it was the day before the dreaded tax deadline of April 15, that Dave Palumbo was ready with a March Treasurer's Report! Our attendance was impressive: Carol Rossbach, Jim Fidler, Jayne Schrader, Dave Palumbo, Betty Tracy, Steve Ross, Mary Humbert, Mark Votaw, and Pastor Sherwindt.

We also learned from Dave Palumbo that our financial facts for March were very, very strong, although seasonal expenses tried to dampen our cause for celebration. We carried a hefty budget deficit into the month of March, (\$3,468.38). March's Income exceeded expenses by \$5,821.23, leaving us with a year-to-date surplus of \$2,352.85. We are hopeful that April (with the celebration of Easter) and May (with five Sundays) will keep this positive trend moving in the right direction.

ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS FOR MARCH

March Income	25,203.85
March Expenses	<u>19,382.62</u>
March Surplus	5,821.23
Carry-over Surplus	9,640.20
Income thru March	<u>58,393.96</u>
Total Income	68,034.16
Expenses thru March	<u>65,681.31</u>
2009 YTD Surplus	2,352.85
<i>2008 YTD (Deficit)</i>	<i>(3,037.38)</i>
2008 HV/AC Donations	41,361.50
2009 HV/AC Donations	6,664.00
Needed by Year's End	60,000.00

We thank you for your generous support!

MORE COUNCIL NEWS

Parish Life Ministry: Linda Lancashire shared the good news that her husband, Bob Lancashire has once again effectively organized the North Canton Ministerial Association's Coed Softball League, and our fifth season is ready to begin. Games start on Sunday, May 3rd. The fee this year is \$325. We are still looking to make sure that we have enough women signed up to play. The schedule for Zion is as follows:

- 05/03 Cross Point UM, 4 p.m. on field #1
- 05/10 *No games scheduled: Mother's Day*
- 05/17 Walsh Team #1, 4 p.m. on field #1
- 05/24 *No games scheduled: Memorial Day*
- 05/31 Walsh Team #2, 5 p.m. on field #3
- 06/07 St. Paul's Team #1, 5 p.m., field #3
- 06/14 St. Paul's Team #2, 6 p.m., field #2
- 06/21 Church of Lakes, 4 p.m. on field #3
- 06/28 Grace UMC, at 5 p.m. on field #3
- 07/05 *No games scheduled: Fourth of July*
- 07/12 Round Robin Tournament, Week 1
- 07/19 Round Robin Tournament, Week 2
- 07/26 Round Robin Tournament, Week 3
- 08/02 Round Robin Tournament, Week 4

We have fourteen teams playing with us this year, with two divisions. Team Zion plays in the division that includes Grace United Methodist Church, Church of the Lakes (UMC), two teams from Walsh University's Campus Ministry, two teams from St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church, and Cross Point United Methodist Church. The other teams that are a part of Division B are Community Christian Church, Trinity United Church of Christ, Northminster Presbyterian Church, Rivertree Christian Church, a third team from St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church, and a third team from the Campus Ministry at Walsh University. It looks like another great job of organizing by Bob Lancashire!

MORE COUNCIL NEWS

Worship Ministry: We extend our thanks to everyone who helped with our Lenten dinners – the Men of Zion, Zion’s Chancel Guild, the Senior Choir & Praise Team, Church Council, and Zion’s Youth. We are especially thankful for our many friends and members who helped lead the services we offered, including Megan Meyer, the Senior Choir, our Praise Team, Mason Meyer, Phil Lehenbauer, Marilyn Espe-Sherwindt, Dale Jacobs, Jim Fidler, Carole Singer, Suzanne Walters, our readers, Zion’s Youth, and so many more. Between the Sunday Evening Services, Palm Sunday, the Children’s Easter Play, our Maundy Thursday Seder, the Good Friday Tenebrae, and our Easter Festival Worship: it was quite a season of services for our worshipping community. Average attendance for our Sunday Evening Lenten Services was 63. Overall attendance for the five Sundays in Lent was 170. Palm Sunday & Easter attendance was 191 & 210.

Property Ministry: While we rejoiced that the heavy heating season is now over, the change of seasons now turns our focus to working outside on the church grounds. Chris Thomas has called for an **Outdoor Workday on Saturday, May 2nd**. What is more, we are looking for lots of help with the landscaping, especially when it comes to having members donate perennials for planting. The plan is to use the tradition of beautifying our Sanctuary for Pentecost by widening our invitation for members to purchase hundreds of plants – geraniums, petunias, day lilies of all sorts – along with donating bulbs, like Cannas and Yuccas. Carol Rossbach and Mary Humbert are taking the lead in helping to coordinate this effort. Look for information in our Sunday bulletins as we move through the month of May. Thanks for your interest and help.

INVITING ALL WOMEN
(CALLING ALL MEN)

OUR SEVENTH ANNUAL
MOTHER'S DAY
BREAKFAST:

SUNDAY, MAY 10TH
BETWEEN THE SERVICES
9:15 A.M. – 10:15 A.M.

Oven-Warmed Cinnamon Rolls
Breads of All Sorts
The Best of Juices
The Freshest Fruit
The Finest Coffees
Our Singing Chef's Egg Strata
Our Special Tribute to Moms:
10:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary
10:30 a.m. Worship Service
Readings by the Youth of Zion



A Treasured Tradition, a Delicious Breakfast, a Treat for All
Created and Designed, Baked and Burnt, by the Men of Zion

SYNOD ASSEMBLY IN MAY

The Northeastern Ohio Synod will gather on Saturday, May 16, at the John S. Knight Center in downtown Akron for our every other year one-day Assembly. Our theme this year is *Leadership That's Faithful, Focused, and Fervent*. The Rev. Sherman Hicks, Executive Director, Multicultural Ministries, ELCA, will be our keynote speaker. The primary focus of these one-day Assemblies is to do the nuts-and-bolts business of the Synod: conduct elections, approve the budget, make note of roster changes, worship and pray together.

Bishop Eaton has reported on the need to adjust budget amounts and priorities in light of declining receipts. The broader economic issues that have been felt locally and around the world have also had an effect on our Synod's budget. Endowment Funds, at the Synod level and at Lutheran congregations throughout Ohio, have suffered losses in value and income. Zion was one of twenty-five congregations that participated in the Synod's *Bridge the Budget Gap* challenge; but these extra gifts totaling over \$55,000 could not make up for the damage of difficult economic times. So, adjustments will be made in looking ahead to the 2010-11 Synod Budget, which is a major agenda item at this year's Assembly.

For folks who might be interested, in addition to the \$19,200 that Zion contributed as our Benevolence Support to the Northeastern Ohio Synod in 2008, we also contributed another \$1,000 as part of the Synod's *Bridge the Budget Gap* challenge. Zion takes great pride in its historic support for the work of the wider church. Voting delegates from Zion at this year's Synod Assembly include Pastor Sherwindt, along with our two lay delegates, Carol Rossbach and Charlie Danner.

ODDS N' ENDS AT ZION

An Update on Rick Riffle: Rick spent just about all of April in the Intensive Care Unit at Akron City Hospital battling various infections. With those battles now past, the news of his recovery continues. Various tubes and drains have been removed. Even the cage is no longer needed. Orthopedic specialists from Cleveland MetroHealth confirmed that his hips are ready for rehab! He has now returned to Select Specialty Hospital, which is located on 200 East Market Street (Akron, Ohio, 44308) with all systems *GO* for what we hope will be a sustained path to rehab, recovery, and returning home!

A 2009 Craft Show Update: Zion's Craft Show is now under new management. That new management is Connie Frank, who used April to send out invitations to register. We have already received five registrations, and more arrive every day! We have good reason to believe that we will rent between 70 to 80 tables this year, rather than the 40 tables we've rented in past years, which means we are really going to need all the help and all the helpers we can get. The date for this year's *Youth Missions Craft Show & Oktoberfest* is **Saturday, October 17th**. Our Church Council has agreed to become more involved in helping Connie succeed. Will you join them?

The Joy of Unselfish Giving

*Time is not measured by the years that you live,
but by deeds that you do and joy that you give.
And each day as it comes brings a chance to each one
to love to the fullest, leave nothing undone
that would brighten the life or lighten the load
of some weary traveler lost on life's road.
So what does it matter how long we may live
if as long as we live we unselfishly give?*

Helen Steiner Rice

GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, May 10: Our Mother's Day Breakfast between the Services (No Sunday School)

Sunday, May 10: Children's Choir sings at the 10:30 a.m. Service: *Mother, Gift from God*

Sunday, May 31: Celebration of Confirmation during our 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Sunday, June 7: This is the Last Day of our 2008-09 Sunday School Year: Party On!

July 13th – 17th: Our dates for Vacation Bible School are now set: *Studio Go Game Show*

ZION'S CHILDREN'S CHOIR FROM EASTER TO PENTECOST



Congratulations to the Children's Choir for doing an awesome job with this year's Easter Program, *The Easter Pageant that Almost Wasn't!*

Thanks to Megan Meyer for the great job she is doing with the kids! As a reminder, the Children's Choir practices every Sunday from 9:10 a.m. to 9:25 a.m. in the Choir Room, with children heading to their Sunday

School classes at 9:30 a.m. Please keep in mind that your support is a big part of a strong program. We will feature our children during the Special Program for Mothers right after the Mother's Day Breakfast, and also with the Children's Choir during the 10:30 a.m. Service.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THE SIXTH GRADE

As we make our way through the month of May, the children will continue to learn great Bible stories, and we will also have a few special projects assigned to keep everyone engaged and busy. As always, there will be fun lessons, great crafts, games, and snacks! Don't forget that there will be no Sunday School classes on Mother's Day – May 10th – because we will all be enjoying a wonderful breakfast with our families, an annual tradition that is hosted by the Men of Zion. This has become a wonderful tradition at Zion, taking time to celebrate our mothers, and all the women in our church. The Children's Choir will also sing on Mother's Day during the 10:30 service. They have been working hard on preparing a great song for all mothers. Plan to join us for what promises to be a big day for our congregational family.

Thinking ahead, Sunday, June 7th, will be our last day of class for the 2008-09 Sunday School Year. We make it a point to have a really fun time in celebrating another great year of Christian Education at Zion. You might be surprised to hear that we are approaching this summer a little different from past summers. We will take a break from Summer Sunday School, and the Children's Choir, too. Breaks can help revitalize staff and students alike. We will start up again in September when we kick off the Sunday School year with Rally Day on Sunday, September 13, 2009. Classes will start up again on Sunday, September 20th.

MORE GOOD NEWS FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ZION

THE CHILDREN'S EASTER PROGRAM AND OUR EASTER EGG HUNT

The Children's Easter Program, *The Easter Pageant That Almost Wasn't*, was once again a truly wonderful performance by Zion's children! The kids did an outstanding job! Amid colorful characters – including the Easter Bunny, butterflies, a fashionista, the Wisemen – auditioning for parts in the *Easter Spectacular* under the direction of Mr. D and his assistant Grace, the children uncovered the true meaning of Easter, namely, *Jesus is Alive in All of Us!*

First of all, we want to thank the children for all of their hard work and dedication to this year's program. We had a great time working on the play. Secondly, we would like to thank all of our parents for sharing your children, and for your flexibility with all of our scheduling. We have an amazingly wonderful group! Thank you, too, to Megan Meyer for leading the children in learning the music. Thank you's around to all of our Sunday School staff for their help during the rehearsals! Mary Humbert, Janet Slease, Corlene Coulter and Vicki Givler: we truly appreciate all of your time and dedication to our children, not only for this year's Easter Program, but for everything you do! Finally, a big THANK YOU goes out to Marilyn Espe-Sherwindt for playing the keyboard during the program, to Brian Walters for helping with the sound system, and to Kelly Walters and Darla Dague for helping with the dress rehearsal. We have a great group of people who make our programs such a great success!

We would also like to thank everyone for their help with the Easter Egg Hunt this year! We appreciate all the candy donations from our families, and we thank the High School class, their leaders, and Connie Frank for filling the eggs. We hid about five hundred eggs this year, and the kids had a great time filling their baskets. It was a beautiful Easter morning and the children had a great time with the Easter Egg Hunt, the snacks, and our Easter Trivia game as we celebrated the great news that *Jesus is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed! Alleluia!* We are so very lucky to have such great parents and such a great Sunday School Staff. I would also like to thank the older youth for partnering with our youngest children to help them during the Easter Egg hunt!

WE'VE GOT A DATE FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

Mark your calendars! Vacation Bible School is scheduled for the week of July 13 through 17, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The kids will spend a week at the *Studio Go Game Show*, where they will experience real teamwork, real service, and real fun. The daily themes will be: **Go Lead**, **Go Risk**, **Go Tell**, **Go Obey** and **Go Serve**. There will be music, games, and lessons along with food, crafts and service projects, of course. The kids will meet some great characters – Wade Winalot, Coach Armstrong, Professor Wordsmart, and Cooper, our canine friend returns from last year! This year we are in great need of volunteers to lead our classes and activities in addition to the many other volunteers that we always need to make our VBS a success. If you are interested, please contact Debbie Fox at 330-966-2433. If you are not able to volunteer during VBS week, there are still many other ways to help out. Later this month, we will put out donation cans, sign up sheets for food and supplies needed for the week and work days to do all of the prep work for VBS. We truly appreciate the support Zion's family always gives for this great event.



THANK YOU'S AND MORE

Dear Pastor Sherwindt and people of Zion,
Thank you for including your friends from Stewart Avenue Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh on your mailing list. I read your *Daily Devotional Guide* with tears of joy. What a wonderful, positive ministry Zion must have. I think it is inspirational – to others – for members to give testimony of their love for their congregation. We feel a certain humble pride as we think back to the year you and Marilyn spent as our Vicar. God bless you, and the ministry you share with Zion.

Peggy Terrick

Dear friends at Zion,

Thank you for sending us your *Devotional Guide* for Lent. We very much enjoyed it, and the memories that bind us to Zion. With the closing of Martin Luther, we are now getting ready to move to California.

Dr. Joseph and Barbara Cain

THE WOMEN OF ZION

Unexpected Heroes! The study of Esther concludes with our being surprised by some unexpected heroes in the story of salvation. We have learned about *hesed*, *heroic action*, and *the hidden hand of God* during this year's study of the wisdom stories of Ruth, Daniel, and Esther. **Hesed** is the Hebrew word for loving-kindness, loyalty, and steadfast love. **Heroic action** is one path that wise people sometimes take in seeking to obey God and help others. However, God's presence in our world is not always clear and self-evident, which often requires that we look for the **hidden hand of God** working in and through the lives of ordinary people.

Please feel free to join the Women of Zion in their monthly Bible study, which meets on **Tuesday, May 19, at 9:30 a.m.** in Luther Hall. We invite you to think about how God might be calling us to *loyalty* that goes to unexpected depths in our own lives, how God may be calling us to *heroic actions* as we live out our discipleship and faith, and where we might see the *hidden hand of God* in our lives and how we are called to live when God's presence is hidden from us. Session Nine celebrates a timely reversal of fortune, where the threat of destruction and death is turned into the joy of victory and the blessing of peace. The conversation is lively; the coffee will be ready; and we'll keep a seat warm, anticipating your decision to join us.

Zion's Comfort Givers meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, which will be May 14 & 28, at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall. We enjoy coffee, conversation, and the satisfaction that comes with knowing that we are helping others through the good that we do. You are invited to join us. You'll be surprised by how comfortable it can be and how much fun it will be to sew with us.

CANTON-MASSILLON CLUSTER: WOMEN'S SPRING RETREAT

A Report written by Carol Rossbach

On Wednesday, April 29th, Betty Tracy and I attended the Canton-Massillon Cluster Women's Spring Retreat at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Massillon. There were about 60 women in attendance. After coffee and registration we were welcomed by Amy White, President of the Canton-Massillon Cluster of the Women of the ELCA. We then sang a hymn, one of several during the meeting, which was led by Margaret Reichenbach on the keyboard. (It is always great to see Margaret, a former organist at Zion; and Margaret is always happy to see folks from her former church family at Zion.)

A Bible Study was led by Dr. Patty Long, a Professor on the faculty at Malone College, and also a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The Bible study was entitled *Living By Faith*. Drawing from Ephesians 2:8-9, Dr. Long discussed how faith is a gift from God. She also cited Luke 12:22-28, as a passage that tells us not to worry, that God takes care of all his creatures.

Dr. Long drew from the story of the life of Elizabeth Elliott, which was recounted in a book entitled *A Pass Through Suffering*. Mrs. Elliot was the wife of a missionary to Ecuador, who served in the 1950's. Her husband was one in a party of four who were killed by the natives they tried to help. When asked earlier why he would choose to go to a dangerous place, he said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Dr. Long talked about coming to faith with examples of her own journey. She said that the choices we make reveal the extent to which our faith informs and influences our life. Do we choose our will or His? Is it my life or His? She talked about suffering. Her definition of suffering is this: *having what you don't want and wanting what you don't have*.

Referring to *1 Peter 1:3-9*, she talked about hope, and the fact that part of God's plan is for us to suffer, to have trials in order for us to grow. Sparing our children any trials and pain in life is not loving them more; it is loving them less. Our children need the trials of life in order to mature. Then, with our focus on *Romans 8:28*, we learned that *all things work together for good*. She encouraged us to call the ordinary problems of life "blessed inconveniences." We cannot know what good these *blessed inconveniences* will bring; we just need prayer ... and God's peace ... and the courage and discipline and trust to leave it to him.

After a delicious lunch of chicken salad, veggies & dip, grapes, chips and a delicious dessert, we gathered to hear Beth Tonsky, a colleague of our Jayne Schrader, who works at *Habitat for Humanity for Greater Stark & Carroll Counties*. Beth talked about growing up in a very small town, recounting how she came to her ministry. She was also very informative, reporting that they have five homes in progress, two of which are in Massillon. There have been fifteen homes built locally. Habitat homes are not "given" to the people; they must pay for them. The cost of a house is \$58,000, and payments are \$350 per month. We also learned that *Habitat for Humanity* tithes, contributing 10% of local income to build homes outside of the United States.

