

# FEBRUARY 2005 Newsletter

---

## LENT FOCUSES ON GOD'S GIFT OF SACRIFICE, OUR CALL TO SERVICE

*What shall we offer to the Lord for all that God has given us?* Those are the words of Psalm 106:12, found as well in the Lenten form of our offertory canticle at worship. This is the question Lent asks us to consider as we follow Jesus from that mount where he gave his sermon to the cross where he gave his life. Lent lifts up the possibility that we will learn, along with Rick Warren and so many others, that "IT'S NOT ABOUT ME", what I want or what I need. The Christian faith begins with God, with what God has done in Christ, with what God desires for us and for the world. This can be seen clearly on the cross, where The Passion of the Christ offers a powerful portrait of God's love. Lent invites us to think about the depth of God's love, which drove God to the full measure of sacrifice; and more, Lent invites us to ponder the breadth of our need, which somehow required nothing less than the full sacrifice of Christ's life, his body broken and his blood outpoured for us.

And so the question, "*What shall we offer to the Lord for all that God has given us?*" Many Psalms contain the answer to this question many times over. It is not the long faces of sacrifice but the joyous gratitude of service that God desires. Psalm 50 says it best, "I will accept no bull from your house." Again, the burnt offerings of animal sacrifice is not what God desires; rather, a sacrifice of thanksgiving, an attitude of gratitude, the overflow of joy that leads to the disciplines of worship and service. Micah said it this way: "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God most High?" Burnt offerings? Sweet smelling incense? The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8) Jesus simplified this message even further. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart ... and your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39)

Zion will look to honor the season of Lent with the traditions of Ash Wednesday worship, and our Sunday evening Lenten dramas. Ash Wednesday includes the imposition of ashes along with the celebration of Holy Communion. Lent arrives early this year. Ash Wednesday falls on February 9th, with our worship service beginning at 7:00 p.m. In keeping with how we've handled Lent (and Advent) the last couple of years, in addition to our usual set of services on Saturday evening and Sunday morning, we will gather on the Sunday evenings in Lent for dinner at 5:30 p.m., and a Lenten drama at 6:15 p.m. Our home-and-home Lenten series with St. Paul's Catholic Church will occur on the Sundays of February 27 (with St. Paul's as host) and March 6 (here at Zion).

Lent will bring with it many opportunities to reflect on our response to its question, "*What shall we offer to the Lord for all that God has given us?*" In fact, these opportunities begin on the Wednesday prior to Ash Wednesday, when we gather on February 2nd for the once-postponed and now rescheduled Congregational Workshop, which begins at 6:15 p.m. with dinner and the workshop following at 7:00 p.m. We've got a lot on the calendar in February. The strength of the start we enjoy with February will have much to say about what we can expect as we respond to the challenges we will face throughout of the course of 2005.

---

## **WORKSHOP RESCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY,** **FEBRUARY 2**

The response was almost overwhelming. After announcing the news in The Zion Herald, sending letters of invitation to our members and friends, scheduling four separate temple talks on two successive weekends, organizing telephone teams to lock in interest, we had the sense that attendance at our Congregational Workshop was heading well north of 75, which was fabulous for a wintry Wednesday night in January. Well, the weather became a little too wintry, and we had to postpone our Congregational Workshop. It seemed sensible on the morning of January 19th not to risk the harm of injury that could come with sloppy roads and slick sidewalks. Now we'll have to do all over again on February 2nd, only without all the letters and temple talks. I'd like to include some of what Chuck Heller, Carol Rossbach, John Davis, and Chuck Danner had to say with the temple talks they offered at worship on two successive Sundays at Zion, January 9th and 16th:

Chuck Heller broke into our regularly scheduled programming on January 16th with this special announcement: "Church Council and Pastor are keenly aware of the decline in membership experienced by all main line churches over the past 25 years. This is true of Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran (including Zion) and other churches. Pastor and Council have begun to focus on our future.... Council and Pastor have also encouraged parishioners to read *The Purpose-Driven Church*. That book is receiving a great deal of attention from worshipers across the country. Its author acknowledges the book is not the automatic solution to every church's problems, but it contains helpful ideas for consideration.

"Approximately forty of our fellow parishioners have been studying it, chapter by chapter.... That group has come to recognize three fundamental requirements of a healthy church, namely, excellent church programs and activities, a suitable building, good leadership. Pastor and Council have begun to address the last two fundamentals. They are aware that our church home needs to be more tidy, and planning for improvements is underway. They have also begun to examine themselves as leaders to determine how they can become more effective.

"This brings me to my task of reminding you that there will be a workshop on Wednesday, February 2nd. Its purpose is to begin a journey that will lead to a plan of action for Zion's future, and to get your input. The workshop is for both those who have read *The Purpose-Driven Church* and for those who have not; in short the workshop is for you, it is for Zion, and all who care about our future. I ask each of you to attend the workshop, and also to think about Zion's activities and programs. These activities must be valued by people, specifically, by our members, from whom we derive our sustenance.

"I am of the opinion that in order to succeed as a congregation we must be attentive to how we are meeting the needs and expectations of our members. I ask you to be prepared to discuss what you as a member expect to find at Zion. Do our activities and programs provide what you expect? This input will reflect the needs of single adults, young children, teenagers, families with grandchildren, pre-retirement families, families with gray headed people like myself, and families impacted by death or other events. Plan to be at Wednesday's meeting. The dinner begins at 6:15 p.m.; the workshop, at 7:00 p.m. Thank you."

John Davis complemented Chuck's message with an invitation of his own: "Back to the Future! Zion 200! These are not mere slogans but represent a vision.... We invite you, and urge you, to participate in our workshop as we look to create a new beginning at Zion. We

are soon approaching the spring season when God brings back to life all the flowers of the fields. We will celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us join together, then, to participate in the rebirth of Zion Lutheran Church."

On January 9th Carol Rossbach talked about how Rick Warren's work changed her life. Her words remain powerfully inviting as we look ahead to February 2nd. "Summer before last, my daughter Susan contacted me about reading *The Purpose Driven Life* with her.... We shared e-mails some in the beginning, but eventually we stopped. However, later Zion used the book as a basis for discussion in Sunday School, and it changed my life. Discussing the ideas in the book was the key to understanding, even if we didn't agree with all that Rick Warren said. The exchange of ideas is what made it interesting; but as we began the discussion of the book something happened to me. Rick Warren's message is that it's not about me. My purpose in life is God's purpose. I began looking at my life in the light of what God wanted me to do, and prayed for the courage to do it. "I taught school for 30 years and I could easily demonstrate and talk about art to young people. Talking in front of adults was an altogether different story! Even going to the church dinners was uncomfortable. But somehow, by the end of the 40 chapters of *The Purpose Driven Life*, I was helping lead the discussion and participating more actively at Zion. This reminded me of a line in the book, 'God doesn't call the equipped, he equips the called.' In a very small way this is what God did for me.... I feel *The Purpose-Driven Church* can help Zion the way *The Purpose Driven Life* helped me. But, just like the first book, it is only a tool and needs discussion and the exchange of ideas to come alive!"

Finally, in case the reasons given by Chuck, John, and Carol have not yet convinced you that you want to be a part of our Congregational Workshop, Chuck Danner has five more reasons to be here on February 2nd: "First, I love workshops and find that learning about others' thoughts and ideas is very valuable. I'm sure you will find this workshop enjoyable and valuable. Second, we'll have food ahead of the sessions, and Dale Jacobs will have a hand in our menu. Need I say more? Third, throughout our study of *The Purpose-Driven Church*, I have often found myself reflecting on a sermon Pastor gave right after Easter. It included the story of the Holy Huddle, where, after much practice, a team takes the field, huddles endlessly, is penalized over and over, and forfeits the game. The team loved to huddle and came to believe huddling was the game. The message is clear. We all need to break our huddle and become engaged at the line of scrimmage. That's what this workshop is inviting us to do. Fourth, we began a process at our 190th Anniversary celebration in which we all agreed to be a part of Zion's future by learning from our past successes. The workshop will provide all of us the opportunity to gain momentum as we move through the journey from the anniversary celebration to the celebration of Pentecost, which is the day the Church came on fire. Fifth, I think of this as Zion's window of opportunity for becoming a purpose-driven church by the grace of God. Let's not miss it." Indeed. Amen. See you there.

---

## **Great News From The ZION SUNDAY SCHOOL**

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Sunday, January 30: Sunday School Choir sings at 10:30 a.m. Service**  
**Thursday, February 10: Sunday School Spring Cleaning at 7:00 p.m.**

**Sunday, February 13: Easter Program practice begins during Sunday School**  
**Sunday, February 13: Bible Bowl Competition at St. Jacobs Lutheran Church**  
**Palm Sunday, March 20: Children's Easter Program 10:30 a.m. Service Only**  
**Easter Sunday, March 27: Children's Easter Egg Hunt during Sunday School**

As February approaches, we have a very busy schedule through Easter! Our Catechism and High School classes will be preparing for and competing in this year's Bible Bowl. They are studying the Book of Matthew. Bible Bowl will take place at St. Jacob's Lutheran Church on Sunday February 13th. We know our team will make Zion proud. We look forward to everyone's encouragement and support for our team!

Our younger youth will start practicing for this year's Easter Program - "Wake Up, Jerusalem!" This story is about the anchors on Jerusalem's morning news show who are trying to uncover the truth about Jesus' missing body from the tomb. It is a new and fun way for the children to learn about and tell the Easter Story. Practice will begin on February 13th during Sunday School. We will practice during Sunday School each Sunday through March 13th. The children's Program will be performed on Sunday, March 20th (Palm Sunday) at the 10:30 a.m. Service only! We thank you in advance for your support as we try something new with our children's program. We will also have regular, shortened Sunday School lessons on two Sundays in February.

We are planning a Spring Cleaning session for our Sunday School rooms on Thursday, February 10th at 7:00 p.m. Any parents or members of the congregation are invited to help us clean up our room and organize all of our supplies. Any help is always greatly appreciated!

Finally, there will be no Sunday School Choir during the months of February and March due to our focus on the children's Easter Program. The children will resume practice on Sunday, April 3rd, at 9:10 a.m. in the Sanctuary with Dale Jacobs! We would like to thank Dale for his commitment and time to our kids!

---

## **Congregational News**

The SUNDAY EVENING LENTEN SERIES returns, with our first Lenten dinner hosted by the Chancel Guild on February 13th, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Dinner is followed by the first of five Lenten dramas. These dramas are the anchor of our Lenten devotions. Our cast of characters continues to grow, and we anticipate another strong season of Lenten productions from Zion's resident thespians. The Men of Zion will host our dinner on the Second Sunday in Lent, February 20th. Our partners from St. Paul's Catholic Church will host us on the evening of February 27th. St. Paul's joins us the following Sunday, with Church Council preparing our dinner on March 6th. The Youth of Zion, their parents, and our youth leaders will host dinner and lead worship on the Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 13th.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on March 20th. The Sunday School's Easter Play will be presented at the 10:30 a.m. service, with our other two weekend services following the

regular order of worship for Passion Sunday. On Maundy Thursday we will offer our Service for Healing with Communion at Noon, and our version of a Seder Meal at 7:00 p.m. The Good Friday Tenebrae is set for 7:00 p.m. on Friday, our Easter Vigil on Saturday at 5:00 p.m., and our Easter Festival Worship at 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. on Sunday.

---

## **Odds and Ends at Zion**

**THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARY OF ST. LUKE'S:** Now is the time of year when the Women's Auxiliary of the St. Luke's Lutheran Community seeks to acknowledge membership through an annual In-Gathering. Please put your \$1.00 donation, or whatever amount you care to give, in an envelope with your name on it; and then give it to Betty Tracy, Ruth Elsass, or Helen Alex (in the Church Office). Any one of these women will be happy to see to it that St. Luke's receives your gift. Thank you very much.

**PLEASE NOTE THIS IMPORTANT CHANGE:** After more than thirty years of handling and ordering the Chancel Flowers, Gert Meyer has decided to step down. We thank her for her many years of service. As of April 1st, Susan Heyard will be taking over these duties. You can reach her at 330-499-9858.

**CONGREGATIONAL CONGRATULATIONS** to Darrel and Beth Singer of Chesterland, Oregon on the birth of Julianna Grace Singer, born December 23, 2004. Proud grandparents are Ron & Carole Singer.

To the People of Zion,  
Thanks to all who remembered me on my 96th birthday. I received fifty-one cards from everyone. It was wonderful!

Yours in Christ,  
Ruth Brigham

To the Food Pantry of Zion Lutheran,  
Thank you so much for the help you have given me. It is appreciated very much. May God bless you through the coming year.

Madge Conarey

A couple of months ago we let you know that when the North Canton Ministerial Association gathered at St. Paul's Catholic Church for worship on Thanksgiving Eve, they made our Food Pantry, as the official North Canton distribution site for the Stark County Hunger Task Force, the recipient of their offering that evening. That offering turned out to be a gift of \$544.00, a timely gift that was both greatly needed and richly deserved by the volunteers who touch the lives of many in need through this ministry of Christian love. Our thanks to the people of Trinity Baptist, Community Christian, Grace United Methodist, Faith United Methodist, Congregational United Church of Christ, Zion United Church of Christ, Zion Lutheran Church, St. Paul's Catholic Church, Greentown United Methodist, the Mt.

**Pleasant Church of the Brethren, and Northminster Presbyterian.**

**While we're talking about churches that form our North Canton Ministerial Association, we might as well mention our Coed Volleyball League, which is starting up again after a holiday hiatus. Bob Lancashire has been very instrumental in getting this activity started, and in getting it started up again with the arrival of the new year. We meet in Zion's gym on Sunday evenings, with the following churches represented: Zion Lutheran, Zion UCC, Faith United Methodist, Grace United Methodist, Northminster Presbyterian, St. Paul's Catholic, with the hope that Trinity Baptist will soon take the court. Our own Zion has had a great turnout, and we are thrilled to be using our gym for such an enjoyable community service. The schedule will change once Lent begins; but why not come out and join us for a wonderful evening of healthy fun.**

---

## **STEWARDSHIP IN 2005**

**ADVANCED GIVING AND YOUR GIVING: How do we reach the targets we've set with the 2005 Budget? The 15% down-payment of \$33,000 was a very good beginning, but it was only a beginning. Our 2005 Budget calls for Zion's friends and members to raise about \$183,000 through our regular offerings. We receive additional income through our rental agreements and special gifts; but the bulk of the income we need must come through our regular offerings, which we hope will total \$183,000 in 2005.**

**As noted above, a small number of givers, not even a handful, have given their full share in advance. That's why it is called Advanced Giving. Yes, the giving of this small number of families was substantial - \$33,000.00 - and for that we are thankful. However, the story of the widow's mite has always made it clear that Jesus is not as impressed by those who give large sums as gave just a small amount, but Jesus singled her out for all of holy history because she gave all that she had. (Mark 12:44) That is the kind of stewardship that will enable us to reach our goals, and to exceed them.**

**Our success with Advanced Giving this year was not intended to let the rest of us off the hook, but to inspire us to join in their efforts of encouragement by exceeding what even we thought we could give in support of the work of ministry we do through Zion. It is certainly good to know that we begin each month with a \$2,750.00 down-payment on our month's needs; but that still leaves an additional \$12,500.00 that must come from the generosity of our members, from you and your regular offerings. We can do it, but it will take your caring and your sharing to make it so. Join the TEAM, because Together Everyone Accomplishes More!**

---

## **February Anniversaries & Senior Birthdays**

### **ANNIVERSARIES FOR FEBRUARY**

**February 14 Art & Helen Edwards  
February 18 Chris & Peg Thomas**

### **FEBRUARY SENIOR BIRTHDAYS**

**February 15 Lucille Snyder  
February 23 Pauline Fehn  
February 24 Atlee Fall  
February 24 Catherine Elsass**

#### *A Note to Our Readers:*

**If you would like your anniversary information included in The Zion Herald, just let the church office know by calling Helen Alex, 330-499-3909.**

---

## **The Youth of Zion**

### **A WORD OF THANKS FROM THE YOUTH OF ZION ABOUT THE WINTER GATHERING**

**"We, the youth group, would like to thank the congregation for supporting and sending us to the Winter Gathering. The Lutheran Youth Organization Winter Gathering was not only fun and interesting, but also very spiritual. Eighteen of us from Zion attended and had a great time together and meeting new people.**

**"The Winter Gathering included many activities that allowed us to interact with other Lutherans from Ohio. The first night we attended a mixer and met some of the other young adults. This mixer really set the tone for the entire trip. It got everyone in the mood to worship, praise God and have fun.**

**"Throughout the weekend Bob Lenz spoke to us several times. He was an amazing speaker because he didn't bore us with bible verses, but applied them to life in a humorous way. Bob could keep us entertained for hours. I think all of us thoroughly enjoyed listening to him.**

**"We also attended workshops on Saturday. We all attended two workshops of our choice. There were many to choose from including information about mission trips to South Africa, meeting Bob Lenz, open discussions, and many more. The rest of Saturday was spent sleeping, attending a lecture, and then a dance later that night. As everyone knows, Lutherans are great dancers.**

**"During the course of the weekend each youth group had to choose two delegates to represent their church at a luncheon. Annie Forsyth and I were the delegates from Zion. During this meeting we enjoyed a delicious lunch and voted for 2005's LYO committee. Being a voter was a very important duty. It was important to choose the best candidate for**

the job and I think we accomplished that. Annie is President and I'm the Vice president...just kidding. Actually we didn't know who was elected, and we probably won't ever see them again. But we're sure they will do a great job.

"The LYO Gathering was so much fun. On behalf of our entire group, I'd like to thank the congregation once again, and I would also like to thank all of the adults that went with us, too. We had so much fun and I hope we can attend next year with an even bigger group."

Respectfully submitted by Anna Sherwindt  
Presented at worship on Sunday, January 23

[Zion's group included Wayne Slease, Todd Elsass, Patsy Poulton, Adam Schrader, and Melanie Slease (as adult counselors), along with Corey Beaber, Todd Cizek, Becca Coulter (who brought a friend), Annie Forsyth, Chloe Horger, Chad Riffle, Matt Ross, Nicole Ross (who brought a friend), Anna Sherwindt, Matt Slease, and Chase Weinman.]

---

## The Food Pantry

It has been so hard to get off of the holiday food merry-go-round. For a while we lived, breathed, and dreamt about food, much more than our usual norm. But thanks to you, the good people of Zion, Margaret and I were able to ride that merry-go-round, around and around and around again. We are so pleased with the continuing outreach here at Zion. We hope you will continue supporting this much-needed ministry.

It has come to our attention that there is a certain concern as to the quality of cars being driven by some of the food pantry clients. There should be no concern with the quality of the vehicles our clients drive on pantry day, for the newest type of pantry clients are now the MIDDLE CLASS. With all the job eliminations in our area, it is completely understandable why we have seen the increase in newer autos in our parking lot.

A most exciting part of the pantry has finally come to light, that is, that we now have full time volunteers. YIPPEE! Thank you, thank you, thank you. You have literally lifted some of the weight off of our shoulders and back. God does work in mysterious ways!

The Food of the Month for February is cake mixes with already prepared icing or icing in a box. Also, we are in desperate need of large sized brown grocery bags.

If you are at all interested in outreach on a more expanded level, why not volunteer your time: no skills are required. You could possibly assist the Special Olympic Basketball Skills group every Saturday morning at South Gate School. (The only thing you have to lose is your heart). If that doesn't float your boat, then the Stark County Hunger Task Force is looking for people to be ticket-takers and ushers at the Canton Civic Center for all events. The coolest part about volunteering is that you meet folks from all over and you get to see the shows for free. (If you can walk, count and know your ABC's you can do it.) The Civic Center is paying the Hunger Task Force to man the shows. The money is then put back into the community through its pantries. Two great opportunities to reach out! Upcoming events at the Civic Center include: February 5. Toughman; February 18. Montgomery Gentry;

March 16, Styx and REO Speedwagon; April 8-9-10, Sesame Street; May 8, Bill Engval.  
Please call Shirley to volunteer.

Bless all of you,  
Shirley and Margaret  
330-494-5392 or 330-854-5236

## **The Clothing Closet**

Life is good for Zion's CLOTHING CLOSET, too. Karen Kirk's health has been a bit of a question mark since November. She has been in and out of a couple of hospitals a couple of times, without much luck in getting her out and around again. So, we issued the call, and a roomful of helpers responded, helping us to open the Clothing Closet in time to distribute some winter clothing, and much, much more. Our thanks to Helen Alex, Shirley Cavender, Betty Tracy, Candace Cavender, Alicia Rohr, Flo Jensen, Chuck Danner, and Lyn Todich

---

## **Remembering with Nancey - Peace and Pieces From Nancy Meuschke**

[This month's edition concludes our four-part series of memories that came from a recent letter that Nancy Meuschke wrote to the Women of Zion as we were preparing to celebrate our 190th Anniversary. Pastor Kurt and Nancy Meuschke served Zion from 1968 to 1984.]

We were involved in bussing in North Canton. Darrell and Danielle were in the first classes at Northwood. All the rest of the kids in the neighborhood went to Orchard Hill. On one retreat at Atwood swimming was always on the schedule, and Pastor Meuschke always swam with the kids. This was a BIG event, to swim or not to swim? It was the first time, out of the shadow of our home, that the surgery tracks would be seen! The kids saw, understood, and shared what he wasn't able to share with many. And what a WOW it was!

The ladies luncheon group was begun. They wanted fellowship, sharing of new recipes and Bible Study. Many close friendships developed. The new gym restrooms were great. Even though "shower curtains weren't needed", we pushed Pastor over every night at 10:00 p.m. and poured water over him and refreshed him. I just cleaned up and then rolled him back home in a blanket. Receptions for Pastor's 25th ordination, Dane's ordination, the retirement farewell, and the baptism dinner after the twins were baptized by their grandfather, were all highlights! Thank you. Do you know that the evening before the farewell, two trustees came to see if he would reconsider, and just direct and stay? It was a very necessary retirement; he had been given 6 months to live! Of course, no doctor, test, or treatment can decide that. and God gave him more to do and blessed me with time to

**prepare. I was prepared, but not ready.**

**Pastor was the first non-Catholic clergy to preach in the Catholic Church. The priest came to Zion. We did dedication of the YMCA, the library, City Hall, the additions and building of churches in North Canton, welcome's and farewell's for clergy, activities at the high school, little league teams, cheerleaders, and plays at the Cultural Center. Pastor was the Chaplain of the police department. He went on raids with them as a witness, Sunday services at St. Luke's, Meal-on-Wheels program, migrant programs at Hartville, and the list goes on.**

**I know there's another book in me, but I've laughed and cried enough. I'm sorry I didn't list everyone, but these came to mind P.D.Q. Many of you are in our home today - cross stitch pictures from Sue Everhart and Charlotte Carle, water colors and dried flower arrangements with Millie's name on them. nativities from the Hellers (a different one every year), Wava Sharp did a small one for trailer-size, The Night into Egypt, Evelyn Moore's first piece of porcelain, many holiday ceramic pieces, the water color of the church given to us from the Women of the Church, and their pewter candle sticks for Pastor's 25th ordination. Yes, I still have my Hummel I brought back from the Luther League Convention in Texas. My \$12.50 piece is worth several hundred now! Eat your hearts out! Beautiful plates adorn a wall. They were Christmas from Sandbrinks each year we were together at Zion. I'll close with the stitched piece made by Darlene [Milavickas], which refers to a prayer that Pastor wrote:**

**"May God be very near you and lovingly impart His peace, His strength, His courage,  
To abide in your heart today, tomorrow and forever." [The Rev. Kurt Meuschke]**

---