

February 2007 Newsletter

A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear members and friends of Zion,

Winter has arrived with our turning the page from December to January. For many, this means snow tubing and sidewalks whitened with fresh blown snow. For an increasing number among us, these sights come with such questions as "Why am I still here and not heading south where the sun is shining and temperatures inviting?" For those of us left behind, the arrival of winter means higher utility bills, more salting and snow plowing, and daily prayers for the boiler! In the midst of all these changing variables, the one constant as a holdover from last December is great support for the life of the church - at worship, with offerings, and through participation in the many activities that have made it on to our church calendar.

February begins with one of our more popular Youth & Family Activities: *snow tubing* for kids of all ages and an overnigher for our older youth. We thank the Romans and the Kays for their leadership in waiting out the unusually pleasant winter weather in northeast Ohio through much of January, while making great plans for a wonderful evening of family fun. Our youth will have an active February with preparations for the Bible Bowl now underway for a Conference Showdown on Sunday, February 25. That Sunday also signals the beginning of our Sunday Evening Lenten Dinners with a Drama. You know the routine by now - dinner at 5:30 p.m., with a thought-provoking Lenten drama beginning at 6:15 p.m. Our first Lenten drama will feature scenes of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, and the Men of Zion will host our dinner.

Speaking about the Men of Zion, we have scheduled a *Chili Cook Off* for Saturday, February 24th. The Lutheran Men in Mission have decided to keep the momentum going from last year, when the Canton-Massillon Conference had a great turnout for their first chili cook off, which Chris Thomas claims we should have won! So, we decided to pack the jury with our own judges this year to make sure the results break our way. We're the hosts. This means that you've got to show up between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to taste the many entrees that have entered the contest, and then judge Zion's the best! Regardless of who wins the first place prize, we'll all win with a great taste of chili and some wonderful fellowship. The whole event serves as a fundraiser to help with the good work being done by Operation Blessing and our partners at the Adullam Christian Fellowship in New Orleans.

In addition to these great opportunities for fellowship and fun, we also note that February brings with it the beginning of Lent with our worship service planned for Ash Wednesday. This special Wednesday evening service is marked with an extended prayer of confession along with the imposition of ashes placed on our foreheads in the form of a cross. The ashes remind us of our mortality and the cross proclaims our hope in Christ's victory over sin and death. Zion's Senior Choir will be there to lead our worship, and the celebration of Holy Communion will direct our focus to the source of our salvation, God's grace given freely through the life of Christ alive within us and among us. Our Lenten journey this year will try to strengthen the connection between what God has given us in Christ and what we can offer God through service. What inspires our giving and our serving? That's a question we'll be examining more closely as our Stewardship Team leads us through a study of *Walking with Jesus*. Well, that's the plan - our plan and God's - as we walk the walk together ... living as Christ's Body ... in Jesus' Name.

In His service, and yours,
Pastor Sherwindt

A WORD OF THANKS FROM STEVE ROSS

By now, I hope that you've all received a copy of Zion's 2006 Photo Directory. If not, please stop by the Church Office and pick one up. It looks great, and we're glad you're a part of it. We're glad you're a part of us.

The love we share as a congregation is Zion's greatest strength. As we have added new members, we felt a directory would be a great tool to help us get to know one another better. Many of our new members' photos are in the directory, and even those whose photos we couldn't get are listed in the roster pages with their address and telephone number. All of us on the Directory Team hope you get a lot of use out of this new pictorial directory.

Here are several tips on how to use the directory:

- take a stroll through the *Activity Pages* and see if you can name the faces and events pictured there;
- take a look at our *Staff Page* to see the people who have served our church and its congregation with such dedication;
- note that our family photos are preceded by our *Membership Covenant* as a sign of our commitment to Zion and to one another;
- peruse the *Our Families* section and you'll find yourself thinking what a good-looking congregation we have;
- if you don't see someone in the *Our Families* section, try looking at the end of the family photographs in a section called *Those Not Available For Pictures*;
- flip through the *Roster* and you'll find the most up-to-date listing information for all of our congregation members and associates;
- please note that there is an added insert in the back that shows *Corrections and Additions*, along with a listing of the area hospitals.

Putting this directory together was no small task and it took a great effort from many of our members. I would like to express my appreciation to everyone on the *Directory Team* for their willingness to serve and for their dedication to the task: Kay Davis, Cora & Nick Lanzalotta, Annie Lemmo, Darlene Milavickas, Evelyn & Larry Moore, Jayne Schrader, Renee Schrader, Mark Votaw, and special thanks to Brian Walters for his creative graphic design work. Also, I extend a big thank you to Diane Dunphy and to Pastor Sherwindt for their work of support in gathering information and delivering the finished product.

Finally, on behalf of the Directory Team, I would like to thank you and the entire congregation for supporting the development of our new directory, for participating in the church family it depicts and embodies, and your patience in waiting for the finished product. It's beautiful - the directory and our church family.

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

We spent most of our January meeting celebrating the good news of Zion's faith-fulness in 2006. Let's face it, so many things broke in our favor: the weather, your giving, great participation in the activities of the church, and wonderful growth in love and service through grace. The Treasurer's Report, the Worship Ministry Report, the Parish Life Report, Property care, Christian education, Youth programming, mission trips, our website, the Witness team: we enjoyed a great meeting filled with lots of Good News.

Attendance in January was absolutely stellar: Laura Thompson, Carol Rossbach, Jayne Schrader, Dave Palumbo, Cindy Ferry, Steve Ross, Renee Schrader, Bob Lancashire, Sharon Stout, Lorin Beaber, Mary Humbert, Pastor Sherwindt, and our newest member, Betty Tracy.

WALKING WITH JESUS

Every day is a walk with Jesus. We Christians believe life is spent in the presence of our Lord. Therefore, we can talk about every day as a day during which we walk with Jesus. Some days we feel Jesus' presence. Some days we feel quite a distance from Jesus. We boldly proclaim that, regardless of how we feel, Jesus is there. Jesus walks with us every day.

Zion is about to embark upon a four-week journey that we will call *Walking with Jesus*. It is a Stewardship Education pro-gram that begins with worship the weekend of February 24-25. As we consider our financial stewardship over these four weeks, you will be asked to think about your use of money and possessions as a part of your walk with Jesus. This is most appropriate because when Jesus walked this earth with his disciples, he often talked about money and possessions. If money was a part of Jesus' first walk on this earth, it should be a part of our walk with Jesus today.

We believe that everything we have is a trust from God, given to us to care for and manage. What we do with our money is very much a part of our relationship with our Lord. This will be our focus in the coming weeks. For four consecutive Sundays we will read bulletin inserts and hear talks during worship. We will each receive a letter from the Stewardship Team. All of these materials will focus on our walk with Jesus, and how money plays an important part in this walk.

At the completion of the program, all of us will have a better understanding of how Jesus expects us to give of our time, our talents and our possessions. This will allow all of us to prayerfully make our own choices in what we give and how we live.

MORE ABOUT THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

Caring Ministry, Mary Humbert: Zion's Food Pantry and Clothing Closet continue to serve neighbors in need on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of every month. After an active November and December, there was a bit of a lull in January; but we're back to a full schedule with the arrival of February. We continue to work on making sure that our clothing gets distributed to folks who need it. Amvets called, and became of big recipient of our clothing in January.

Parish Life, Bob Lancashire: Sunday Evening Church Coed Volleyball started up again in January. We've got four churches participating - Zion Lutheran and Zion United Church of Christ, along with Grace and Faith United Methodist. It won't be long before you hear rumblings about softball. What do you think, should we have spring training in Florida?

Worship Ministry, Sharon Stout: We were very happy with the support our programs received through the Christmas season. Weekly worship attendance throughout the year has been strong, with the 10:30 a.m. service averaging 104, the 8:00 a.m. service 53, and the 5:00 p.m. Saturday service 25. The Senior Choir has been a great addition to the 8:00 a.m. service. The Praise Team carries the 10:30 a.m. service with grace and style. We've been blessed to have Carole Singer join the rotation with Marilyn and Suzanne on Saturdays.

Property Ministry, Lorin Beaber: The Trustees continue to do incredible work with property upkeep. Our biggest challenge presently is the boiler. Two sections have been shut down due to underground leaks. We are looking into alternatives for improving our heating system. The major components of our options include replacing the boiler, replacing the underground water pipes with above ground pipes, moving more of the system to forced air through additional ventilation ducts. We're taking bids now for further discussion later.

Witness Ministry, Steve Ross: The Witness Team meets on the last Wednesday of the month at

6:00 p.m. Its members include Jim Dansizen, Howard Dansizen, Elaine Fidler, Lorraine Weinman, Peter Fenney and Steve. We're looking into advertising with *Our Town* and the *Jackson Observer*.

Resource Ministry, Cindy Ferry: We will begin a four-week Stewardship Education program with the first Sunday in Lent. This program will focus on *Walking with Jesus*, and will be complemented with temple talks during worship, Bible studies during Sunday School, and a Daily Devotional Guide for Lent entitled *Why We Give*. You'll be hearing more about this devotional booklet and educational program in the coming weeks. We know that you'll find our approach engaging.

GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Saturday, February 3rd: Youth & Family Activity - Snow Tubing and more! (5:00 p.m.)

Sunday, February 18th: Our Children's Choir sings at the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Sunday, February 25th: Bible Bowl at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church at 2:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 25th: Youth-led Sunday Evening Lenten Dinner & Drama, 5:30 p.m.

Palm Sunday, April 1st: Our Children's Easter Program at the 10:30 a.m. Service only

ZION'S CHILDREN'S CHOIR CONTINUES

The Children's Choir practices each Sunday from 9:10 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. before Sunday School.

Their schedule for singing through the program year is as follows:

(Please note that February's date has been changed.)

Sunday, February 18th, at the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Sunday, May 13th, Mother's Day, at the 10:30a.m. Worship Service

Sunday, June 10th, at the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

SUNDAY SCHOOL: PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 6

The children are back to our normal choir and Sunday School schedule. As a reminder, the Children's Choir practice begins at 9:10 a.m. in the Choir Room, with Sunday School following at 9:30 a.m. Our Sunday Schoolers continue to study the *Treasure Seekers* curriculum where they always are learning about and looking for the ultimate treasure, God's love. We are also looking ahead to the Easter Program. We will begin our regular practice schedule in March, but the children will be receiving their parts and some instruction at the end of February.

CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION AND THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS

Our Confirmation and High School classes continue to meet each Sunday at 9:15 a.m. Confirmation instruction is for grades 7 & 8 and meets in the Resource Center with Renee Schrader serving as our teacher. The High School class meets in the High School Youth Room, with a team of teachers ready to round up our youth for an unforgettable hour every Sunday. Both of these classes are studying the Gospel of Luke this month as we join together in an effort to help our Bible Bowl Team prepare for their Conference Competition on Sunday, February 25th.

2007 BIBLE BOWL: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Zion's Bible Bowl Team is shaping up for 2007. Led by Wayne Slease, Mary Humbert and Todd Elsass, Team Zion has begun their intensive study of the Gospel of Luke. Team members include, Todd Cizek (Captain), Corey Beaber, Laura Kay, Jon Votaw and Kelly Walters. Other members of our High School and Catechism classes have been helping our team study as well. We are very grateful to them for their support.

Our plan is to schedule Bible Bowl practice each Wednesday - except for the Wednesday of Valentine's Day, February 14th - from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the High School Youth Room through to the afternoon of our competition, which is Sunday, February 25th. We always have lots of snacks on hand, and also some good food, too.

There is still time if anyone would like to join the team. The competition is open to 6th through 12th grade students. Please contact Debbie Fox, or any of the High School Sunday School Leaders, if you are interested. This is a great event and a great way for Zion's youth to come together and learn about God's Word while also having a lot of fun!

We also invite the congregation to join us in supporting team Zion. *The competition will be on Sunday, February 25th at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, which is located at the corner of 55th Street NE and Middlebranch Road.* Registration begins at 2:00 p.m., with the Conference Competition beginning at 2:30 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to come out and support Team Zion! Please join us in wishing Good Luck to our Team Members! We are all very proud of your hard work and dedication!

MORE YOUTH NEWS FOR FEBRUARY AND BEYOND

On *Saturday, February 3rd*, we'll have our long-awaited Youth & Family Snow Tubing event! We will meet at church at 5:00 p.m. and have pizza before we leave. Then, we'll leave for Brandywine, hoping to be there by 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$15 per person and that will allow us to tube during the 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. session. (Participants must be at least 7 years old and 48 inches tall to tube.) It will be an evening of wonderful fun for all. This event is for all of our congregational families and youth. Friends are also welcome. Any children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, and there are waiver and permission forms that will need to be signed for each of the persons who will be snow tubing. After tubing we will return to church, where our youth (in grades 7 through 12) are invited to stay for an overnigher at the church. There will be games, movies and more food to enjoy throughout the evening and into the morning!

As we look ahead to the Lenten season which begins with Ash Wednesday on February 21st, we will again organize the season around our Sunday Evening Lenten Dinners and a Drama, with our dinners beginning at 5:30 p.m., and the drama set for 6:15 p.m. The Youth of Zion, along with their parents and our Youth Leaders will host the dinner and drama on the evening of *Sunday, March 25th*. Please mark your calendars, and details for dinner and the service will be passed along as we get closer to March 25th.

THE WOMEN OF ZION

Our *monthly Bible study* continues with a focus on *Hope in God in Times of Suffering*. This month's session will focus on the Good News that comes with the name Emmanuel, namely, *God With Us Always*. This means that God is present and active in the world and in our lives, even - and especially - during tough times. The question we will deal with is how we can discern God's presence, and more, how we can share it, directly and by example, with those who are hurting. You are always welcome. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month, February 20, in Luther Hall, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Please join us.

Don't forget that *Zion's Comfort Givers* continue to meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, *February 8 and 22*, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall. We enjoy coffee, conversation, and being filled with the feeling of knowing that we are helping others through the good that we do.

Zion's Prayer Chain continues to grow and change with the changes that come with time and through exposure to new leadership. First English Lutheran Church in Mansfield has hosted a Mid-Ohio Prayer Ministry Seminar for our Northeastern Ohio Synod for seven years now. On March 2-3, the 7th Annual Prayer Ministry Seminar will gather around the theme of *The Presence Based Church*, and listen as keynote speaker, the Rev. Dr. Terry Teykl, offers insights into *Becoming a Church after God's Own Heart*. Pastor Teykl is the author of several books on prayer, including *The Presence Based Church*. Please contact Ginny Rhodes (330-354-6543), or Pastor Sherwindt (330-499-3909) with your interest in attending. We are hoping to register

interested participants by Monday, February 26th.

MORE THANK YOU'S

Dear Friends at Zion,

I just wanted to thank you for your cards and prayers following my heart surgery. I am doing much better. God is good. Al and I miss seeing you folks.

Christian love,
Sue Whitmer

Dear Zion Friends,

I would like to thank my church family and friends for the prayers, cards and expressions of sympathy at the death of my brother, Richard Shumaker.

In Christian love,
Betty Tracy

To our family of friends at Zion,

We wish to thank everyone who helped us to celebrate Fred's 90th birthday and our 50th wedding anniversary at the reception held in Luther Hall at the church on December 9th. We also appreciate all the cards and best wishes that we received.

Carolyn and Fred Elsass

FEBRUARY SENIOR BIRTHDAYS



Happy Birthday to:

Edna Fischer	February 12
Atlee Fall	February 24
Catherine Elsass	February 24

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Anniversary to:

Art & Helen Edwards	February 14
Chris & Peg Thomas	February 28

ODDS 'N ENDS FOR KIDS

Valentines of every size and description adorn store windows and other places of business this time of year. The holiday has become a time for love to be enthroned as a virtue, with the heart symbolizing the love of our lives. But the heart symbolizes more than love. It symbolizes life

itself. Without the heart, our bodies cannot survive. In 1 Samuel 16:7, we are told that God does not see as mortals see; we are impressed by outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. Samuel was looking for a king, and while David was small in stature by human measure, his heart was great, and that's God's measure. Love looks deeper than outward appearances, and we can thank God for that. Don't be swayed by mere valentines - have a heart!

THE MEN OF ZION

The *Men of Zion* began the New Year with regularly scheduled meeting on the first Wednesday of the month, January 3rd. Two special guests joined us, Jamie Savarin and Dick Spall. We had a great turnout of men from Zion, and talked a lot about some upcoming events. The **BIG EVENT** on the calendar is the Lutheran Men in Mission **CHILI COOK OFF / LUNCH**, which is set to go on Saturday, February 24th, with our Zion Lutheran Church serving as host.

This means that we get to choose who benefits from the funds that are raised, and the Men of Zion have selected our partners in New Orleans, Operation Blessing at the Adullam Christian Fellowship. The needs are great, and the greatest need is the sustained support of communities like ours. The other benefit of hosting this event is that we increase our chances of winning with the best chili, because we will provide the most tasters - that means you! We plead with you to come out and support us on February 24th. You'll be glad you did, and so will we ... and so will the recipients of food and clothing at Operation Blessing in New Orleans.

Speaking of New Orleans, we have begun to address the specifics of a second Mission Trip to New Orleans this upcoming June. We've had continuing interest in heading south again, and it looks like the week of June 9 - 16 offers the best chance for eliciting interest from our youth and adults. There is still a good deal of flexibility as we think ahead to a follow-up work week.

Between the fundraising we completed with our "Dunk the Pastor for Good" Rally Day fun and our upcoming Chili Cook Off fund-raiser, we hope to bring with us a rather nice sized check, along with a lot of good will and our well-known commitment to hard work.

AN UPDATE ON NEW ORLEANS FROM JAYNE SCHRADER

I recently had the opportunity to travel to New Orleans with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Canton to help build homes with the New Orleans affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. As our group of one-hundred-and-one people traveled south to New Orleans, ready to help rebuild the city, our first glimpse of the destructive force of Katrina was visible in Mississippi. We passed a "graveyard" of hundreds of FEMA trailers, not knowing whether they had been already used or were waiting to be called to serve a family displaced from their home by the hurricane. We also began to see what would become very familiar to us all, the blue-tarped roofs of homes still waiting to be repaired.

It was dark when we arrived in St. Bernard Parish, the place we would call home for the next four days. As we drove through the streets and headed to *Camp Hope*, our eyes were all looking out the bus windows at the amount of damage still haunting neighborhood after neighborhood. None of us were prepared for the devastation we saw every day as we traveled mile after mile to our job sites. Neighborhoods were abandoned that once were alive with family and friends. Most of the businesses, restaurants and strip malls were still sagging with walls crumbled, windows broken and roofs gone.

Camp Hope is an elementary school that had seven feet of floodwater in it, destroying the inside. It is now used to house volunteers there to help out in some way. When we arrived, there was

no heat, no hot water, septic problems, no smoke alarms and many dangerous electrical problems and unsafe conditions. We all met together and decided that our mission in New Orleans was to not only help rebuild homes, but make *Camp Hope* a safer (and warmer) place for future groups. The temperature had dropped the week we were there from their usual 60 - 70 degree days to a high of about 48 degrees during the day and about 37 over night. With no heat in the building, I looked forward to crawling into my sleeping bag (after checking it for critters) at night just to get warm. The second day we finally had hot water and could take showers, thanks to three of our volunteers that had traveled with us who worked all day to discover the problem and get it fixed. By Thursday, the furnace was fixed and we had heat in the main part of the school, but not our sleeping areas.

Each day some of us would stay back and help with the many tasks that needed to be done at Camp Hope, and the rest would go build homes. Our first day out to the site, the Easter Egg Colors of the new homes being built by volunteers in partnership with New Orleans Habitat for Humanity provided a stark contrast to the homes left behind after the flood waters receded. During the week our group worked on about 15 homes that were anywhere from framing to punch list items. We worked in Musicians Village and the Lower 9th Ward. For every home that had been torn down and a new Habitat house was going up, there were at least ten times as many that were still barely standing, waiting.

We were not certain what to expect when we arrived but all of us went away feeling that we were there for a purpose - God's purpose. We made an impact. It will take people doing whatever they can and whenever they can, to pour life back in to the city of New Orleans. As one Partner Family expressed, "Thank you for building my home. Thank you for giving us hope." We are all richer for the experience and all of us have a new appreciation for the many blessings we have here at home.
