

# April 2007 Newsletter

## A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear members and friends of Zion,

Cindy Ferry got it exactly right. She opened her first in a series of stewardship letters with some high praise, followed by a cautionary note. *“Zion shined in 2006! The congregation gave generously to support the church and our many good causes. We raised enough to cover the sound system, meet our budget, and end the year with a surplus of \$2,741.67! WOW! We could all enjoy basking in our accomplishments; however, 2007 will, no doubt, give us the opportunity to once again challenge ourselves and re-evaluate our stewardship commitment.”* She was right on target. Our great finish in 2006 has given us a couple of months of basking; and now it's time to take a closer look at the challenges of 2007.

According to our Treasurer's latest tabulations, February added almost \$4,000 to the deficit with which we began the month, leaving us with a year-to-date shortfall of a tad over \$7,250. We've had a whopper of a gas bill, along with some very hefty snow-plowing and salting charges. We're not much worse off than we were last year at about this time. Winter has a way of doing that to church budgets. There's no reason not to remain confident that income and expenses will even out over the course of the first four months. Month-to-month fluctuations can be very erratic. January-through-April provides a better look at how we're doing. Lent reminds us of the cost of discipleship, and Easter offers a taste of the new life that has broken into our world through the victory of Christ's resurrection.

Jesus has a knack for putting everything in perspective. In his first major address on the cost of discipleship, he begins with that now-familiar call, “If any would come after me, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me.” [Mark 8:34] And immediately afterwards he poses a couple of tough questions: “What will it profit us to gain the whole world, but lose our soul?” And then there's this one: “What can a man give in return for his life?” This is the question of the season. Our stewardship awareness program encouraged us to think about the connection between our walk with Jesus and our weekly giving. There can be no doubt that how we give and how we live are important measures of our commitment to God; but far more important than our commitment to God is God's commitment to us. That is the Good News that this season proclaims. What can we give in return for our life? Not nearly enough ... ever! God has done what we could not. God gave His Son in death, that we might find true life in Him.

We are about to enter into the mystery of Holy Week - following Jesus' journey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, listening to him teach about love on Maundy Thursday, watching him live that love as he marches up Golgotha to the Cross, where he gives His life to redeem ours. Nothing we do could compare to what Jesus has done. Nothing we give could ever be enough for what Christ has already given. Holy Week is filled with life-changing reminders of God's great love for us. Three years ago this February a film was made that was met with great controversy, and whatever one thinks of the film's producer, the riveting images cast by *The Passion of the Christ* can pierce through the hardest heart as we move through this holy season of Lent leading to Easter. Whether we see it on film or hear it in church, it is this Passion narrative that forces us to focus on what the gift of grace cost God, and only then, after our eyes are opened to the costly grace of love incarnate hanging on the Cross. can we begin to see what

it might cost us.

In His service, and yours,  
Pastor Sherwindt

---

## **OUR DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE : BRIAN KAY,** **FRIDAY, MARCH 30**

*[With the month of March at its end, I thought it would be a good time to highlight again one of the many exceptional mediations offered in our Daily Lenten Devotional Guide. I ran across a glitch in the publishing process that wound up misplacing a paragraph from Brian Kay's daily devotion for March 30 in the mediation offered by Suzanne Walters on March 1. Both were exceptional, and I cited both in my sermons during Lent. I'd like to share Brian's in its entirety for your enjoyment.]*

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 25:14-30, the parable of the talents. The focus is on the servant who hid the master's talent in the ground. The master responds, "You wicked and slothful servant! You ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. Take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

**MEDITATION:** If someone gave you one-half million dollars what would you do with it? What if it were two and one-half million dollars? Would you say, I don't know but that is the kind of problem I'd like to deal with. Those are apparently the kinds of figures that we are dealing with in the parable of the talents. The Master gave to His servants a sizeable sum of money. The exact amount is immaterial. It is meant to communicate to us that he gave to them a significant trust.

The story is complicated, however, because he did not give it to them to spend as they chose. They were made managers of a franchise. He was the owner. And so in Jesus' parable each of us is a manager of a franchise, which is our life. And Jesus will be coming back to ask for an accounting of what we have done with that life. Giving of our talents still requires time. Giving of our treasures requires the least amount of our time, but we may have a list of dozens of other items that require a great share of our treasures. In our house, we danced around this issue for years, and became quite good in our rationalizing just exactly why we could dedicate only a little of our time and talent to the church. After all, we had other obligations that required our time and attention, and we could only do so much.

The focus of this parable is the one-talent man. Those who receive five talents and two talents receive the same reward - they were blessed and experienced great joy. But the one-talent man was called wicked, lazy and worthless. Just thinking, why would Jesus use such strong language in addressing this man? Had His servant run off with the master's wife? Had he stolen the money? Had he lied to the master about what he had done? NO. He had maintained the status quo, and for that he was called these names. He had kept the faith. I believe that faithfulness is productivity in light of our opportunities. It evaluates our circumstances and our abilities and says what we have done with them in light of what we could have done.

I believe that this parable reminds me that Jesus does not reward us for showing up. He rewards productivity. As individuals and members of Zion, we are responsible to the Lord of the Church for the marvelous gifts for which He has made us stewards. He has intended that our Church grow, that we be committed to Christian ministry. If we are to continue to fulfill the will of God at Zion, it will take determination on our part as leaders in His Church to say that we will permit nothing to stand in our way. Improvements to the restrooms and the sound

system are excellent examples of our giving congregation at Zion. Growth is not accidental - it is intentional. Let's invest our talents in the life of the church, and be productive with the gifts God has given us.

---

## Church Council News

Zion's Council enjoyed perfect attendance at our February meeting: Laura Thompson, Carol Rossbach, Dave Palumbo, Jayne Schrader, Lorin Beaver, Mary Humbert, Steve Ross, Sharon Stout, Bob Lancashire, Betty Tracy, Cindy Ferry, Renee Schrader, and Pastor Sherwindt. Our first order of business was to review our financial facts for February and January. *Dave Palumbo's Treasurer Report* showed that while income was on track with last year, our expenses have seen some winter-related increases. The year-to-date shortfall grew from \$3,293.27 to \$7,270.01. March and April may help turn things around.

*The Pastor's Report* expressed gratitude for our strong support of the Sunday Evening Lenten Services, with average attendance approaching 90. Pastor reminded us that the breakdown of giving by families in Zion's *Stairway to Healthy Giving* chart was quite normal. The numbers get smaller as the amounts get larger. The more important point is that giving larger amounts is not primarily a matter of income. It is a matter of discipline, which is why growing one step at a time is an effective approach to healthy giving.

Lorin Beaver reported on our Heating System Task Force. We have received three bids aimed at varying degrees of piece-meal improvements to the heating system. We have spent \$8,256.16 on boiler-related repairs since January of last year. Let's not forget that it's a 50+ year-old system. So, look for more information in the months to come as we get closer to making some concrete proposals. Most of our meeting time focused on trying to understand the complexity of our heating system and the character of our boiler-related problems.

---

## MORE COUNCIL NEWS

*Renee Schrader* relayed information about our upcoming edition of Vacation Bible School this summer. The dates selected are July 16-20, and the theme is *Make a Splash with Jesus*. Our Youth & Family ministry has enjoyed some success with snow tubing, the Bible Bowl, Glow Bowling, and the Sunday Evening Lenten Dinner & Drama.

*Sharon Stout* reinforced the good news that Miriam Keating is working out well as our new Nursery Supervisor. Sunday Evening Lenten Services are going well. We look forward to a powerful series of Holy Week services, including the Children's Easter Play on Palm Sunday, a full-meal Seder on Maundy Thursday, a dramatic Tenebrae on Good Friday, the celebration of baptism for Grace McNamara at our Easter Vigil, and the Annual Easter Egg Hunt along with two festival services on Easter Sunday.

*Bob Lancashire* indicated that year four of the North Canton Ministerial Association Coed Softball League continues under his direction. We're looking to expand to 18 teams. The cost will again be \$350 per team.

*Cindy Ferry* provided an update for our low-key stewardship awareness program *Walk With Jesus*. All is proceeding well, with the program ending with a brief survey rather than the usual pledge card.

---

## **SO, YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT THE BOILER?**

When it comes to talking about Zion's heating systems, note the plural reference in systems. We have two basic heating systems - a newer overhead water-pump-like system that sits on the roof near the gym, and an older boiler system that is located in the basement. Whenever questions of major concerns about our heating system arise, we are talking about the older boiler system in the basement. It is original with this building, which makes it over fifty years old. This boiler system has six zones, each controlled by its own thermostat, with most of the pipes in this hot-water heating system above ground, but a significant system of underground water pipes, too. Now before going any further, I must confess that it has taken me years to understand how complicated this system is. I was much happier when I walked around oblivious to the many thermostats that mysteriously controlled the miracle of heat at Zion. As I've been forced to learn more about this system, I can say that the word controlled may be an overstatement. Thinking of heat as a miracle may be closer to reality. It is a miracle that our boiler still works, for the most part. It's a miracle that we've made it through another winter, sort of. It's a miracle that heating bills and boiler repairs haven't driven us to despair, well, more of us to despair.

The thermostat for Zone #1 is located near the coat-rack heading into Luther Hall. This zone heats Luther Hall and the kitchen. The thermostat for Zone #2 is located in the Sunday School Office, which is next to the Pastor's Office, which is next to what is now the Clothing Closet. These are the rooms heated in Zone #2. The thermostat for Zone #3 is located in the Nursery. This zone heats the Nursery, the Resource Center, the Food Pantry, and a good part of the Main Hallway. The thermostat for Zone #4 is located in the Church Office. This zone heats the Secretary's Office, the Work Room, and the Restrooms in the Main Hallway. The thermostat for Zone #5 is located in the Sanctuary, and heats the Sanctuary. Zone #6 refers to that large part of the church where the Bixler Pre-School, our Sunday School rooms and Senior Independence reside. There are actually several thermostats in this zone. This zone was added to the system with renovations to the church that were completed in the 1970's.

Pretty simple, huh? In some respects the system is not all that hard to understand. As a theologian and pastor, I must admit that the good thing about the boiler system is that it serves as living proof that faith and knowledge need to be at odds. The fact of the matter is that the more we know about the boiler system, the more faith we need that God is good and will be gracious. The boiler and its water pipes are old, with a lot of rust and corrosion working its way through the entire system. Sometimes the rust and corrosion is above ground. When pipes burst or leaks develop, the problems can be easily seen and fixed. But when pipes burst or leaks in the underground system, they cannot be easily seen, nor readily fixed.

Oops, I think that I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's end our first lesson in faith with the basic description that our boiler system has six zones. It is of first importance that we (kind of) understand how our heating system lays out. Next month we'll talk more about the problems we've encountered, both with the pipes that circulate the hot water and with the boiler itself. So, take a deep breath, exhale, and, if you haven't already begun, now's a good time to start praying.

---

## **Great News from Zion's Sunday School**

---

## **UPCOMING EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**Saturday, March 31: Dress Rehearsal for Children's Easter Program (time to be announced)**

**Sunday, April 1: Palm Sunday - Children's Easter Program at 10:30 a.m. Service only**

**Sunday, April 8: Easter - Children's Easter Egg Hunt during Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.**

**Week of June 9-16: Our dates for the Mission Trip to New Orleans, Part 2**

**Week of July 16-20: Vacation Bible School at Zion, from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

### **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:**

**Sunday, May 13, at the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service**

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

### **Sunday School: Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6**

**The Children's Easter Program, *The Littlest Donkey*, will be performed on Palm Sunday, April 1, at the 10:30 a.m. service only. We will see the Easter Story unfold through the eyes of a group of stable mates including donkeys, dogs, cats, mice, sheep and a rooster. Our dress rehearsal is set for Saturday, March 31, at 10:00 a.m., which is followed by a pizza party to celebrate the children's hard work. We hoped to be finished by 1:15 p.m.**

**The children have worked very hard this year and we are very proud of them. We know you will enjoy the program as much as we enjoy working with these great kids! Thank you to everyone for your support!**

**We will resume our normal schedule on Sunday, April 15, with the Children's Choir set to practice at 9:10 a.m., and Sunday School to follow beginning at 9:30 a.m. The children will begin their study of the Ten Commandments. [Just for the record, our older Sunday School groups, Confirmation (in the Resource Center), the High School Class (in the Youth Room), and our Adult Class 9In Luther Hall) begin their sessions at 9:15 a.m.]**

### **Zion's Annual Easter Egg Hunt**

**We will have our traditional Easter Egg Hunt for children of all ages on the morning of Easter Sunday, April 8th, during the Sunday School hour, from 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. Each child should bring an Easter Basket to collect their eggs. We're hoping to go outside, weather permitting. We look forward to seeing you there!**

---

## **GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL, PART 2**

### **AN ACME RECEIPTS REMINDER**

**The last date for receipts is April 7, 2006. We are still collecting these receipts to help raise funds for our youth. *This year we will receive cash back credit for receipts dated September 17, 2006 through April 7, 2006.* There are collection jars in Memorial Hall and by the coffee on Sunday mornings and outside the Church Office. Please save your receipts and drop them off by Easter Sunday, which is April 8th. Thank you for your support of our youth!**

### **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AT ZION**

Mark your calendars! Vacation Bible School is scheduled for the week of July 16th through the 20th, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Join us as we *Take the Plunge* and make a splash with Jesus! We will be going on a water park adventure and plunging into five splash points about Jesus' love: obedience, worship, courage, faith and service! It will be a great week of fun, fellowship and learning.

As always, we will need plenty of volunteers to make our Vacation Bible School a success. If you are available and interested, please contact Debbie Fox at 330-966-2433. If you are not available during that week, there will still be many other ways to help out. Watch for more information during the next couple of months. We truly appreciate the support Zion's family always gives for this great event!

### ZION'S MISSION TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS

Everything is coming together for our follow-up Mission Trip to New Orleans. The dates are set: June 9 through 16. The destination is the Adullam Christian Fellowship in Saint Bernard Parish. Plan for a stopover on the way down (Saturday night) and the way back (Friday night) at First Lutheran Church in Nashville, Tennessee. That is the halfway point between North Canton and New Orleans.

The cost will be \$50 per person, with a maximum cost of \$100 per family. Friends of members are invited. Mark Votaw will offer a PowerPoint Presentation about last year's experience during the Sunday School hour in Luther Hall, from 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., on *Sunday, April 22nd*.

Additionally, we will have a meeting for interested persons after the late service in the Resource Center (at Noon) on the following *Sunday, April 29th*.

We have heard from Pastor Randy Millet and his family, and they are looking forward to our arrival. We have had serious interest from St. John Lutheran Church in Canal Fulton, and it looks like they will have a group of missionaries joining us this year.

---

## THE WOMEN OF ZION

*Our monthly Bible study* meets the third Tuesday of every month, which is April 17, when we will focus on the theme *Let Us Pray*. God knows that communication is key to a healthy relationship. Prayer is God's gift to us, and when we speak and hear, listen and respond, we are changed and so is the world. Our Scripture guide is Proverbs 15:8, which tells us that *the prayer of the upright is the Lord's delight*. You are always welcome. We meet in Luther Hall, beginning at 9:30 a.m. We'll look for you on Tuesday, April 17th.

Don't forget that *Zion's Comfort Givers* continue to meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, April 12 and 26, 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 Chancel Guild* enjoyed their time spent polishing the brass and silver in March. Our next work day is planned for Tuesday, May 8th, when we will focus on repairing some of our hymnals. While we're planning ahead, mark Tuesday, June 12th, on your calendar, when we will meet at the Waterford for lunch at Noon.

*Zion's Prayer Ministry*: Pastor Sherwindt, Ann Semple, and Ginny Rhodes attended the Seventh Annual Prayer Ministry Seminar at First English Lutheran Church in Mansfield. Terry Teykl was a very funny and delightful speaker. All of us received copies of his book and workbook, *The Presence Based Church*. We've left a copy of these materials in the Resource Center. We continue to wonder whether there might be interest in creating a Prayer Room at Zion. Please let Ann Semple or Ginny Rhodes know of any interest or questions you might have in this

regard.

---

## ZION'S FOOD PANTRY

*Walking with Jesus:* Over the years Zion's Food Pantry Crew has walked very far with Jesus, so far, in fact, that we have fed over 17,000 men, women, and children. Holy Cow! That is quite an accomplishment for such a small pantry! Walking with Jesus can be so rewarding on one foot and so tiring on the other, but knowing that we are doing his work keeps us walking.

On this walk with Jesus, the Food Pantry Crew has developed into an awesome team consisting of around a dozen individuals that are of all ages and ability. While walking with Jesus we have not only learned a lot about our own strengths, weaknesses, and sense of humor, but we have also learned a lot about those who walk alongside of us.

Every Tuesday all of us look forward to working with one another. Please feel free to come and join us as we continue our walk with Jesus.

Peace be with you, Shirley Cavender

*P.S. Don't forget about our Big Easter Give-away, when we give hams and Easter dinner fixins to our Food Pantry families on April 3.*

---

## MARCH SENIOR BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to:

Mary Jane Hawkins

April 9

Helen Ballentine

April 11

Ruth Storch

April 21

Charlie Danner

April 22

---

## MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Anniversary to:

Robert & Susan Heyard

April 5

Clarence & Vicki Givler

April 16

Chris & Melanie Whalen

April 20

Rich & Deborah Weikel

April 22

Neal & Cathy Kodish

April 26

---

## THE MEN OF ZION

The Men of Zion enjoyed basking in the glory of our successful Chili Cook Off, while feasting on some good food and some great fellowship in Luther Hall during the dinner hour on March 7. We also decided to take a little extra credit for our exceptional hosting of the First Sunday Evening Lenten dinner back on February 25.

Our next meeting is set for *April 4, the first Wednesday in April*, right during Holy Week. The food will be great, and the sense of camaraderie fantastic! The main topic for conversation at our April meeting will be the Mother's Day Breakfast. We've gained quite a reputation for serving the best Mother's Day fare anywhere. So, we will need all the help that all the Men of Zion can offer. Please make it a point to join us.

Lutheran Men in Mission have invited us back to *Second Annual Seminary Scholarship Golf Outing on July 14*, at Raintree Country Club. Last year's effort raised five \$500 scholarships for Seminary Students from our Northeastern Ohio Synod. We feel that this is a good way to support men and women from northeast Ohio who, having sensed God's call to ministry, have begun the process of preparing for service. But mostly, it's a way to have fun, win prizes, enjoy a great meal, and spend time on a golf course.

We've got a good number of men who will be joining the group of missionaries heading south to New Orleans in June. We hope that more men will decide to join us this year. It will be great fun, deeply gratifying, and quite an eye-opener for folks who are wondering why it's taking so long to recover from the hurricane season of 2005. One look, close-up and personal, and, no doubt about it, you will see the need and clearly understand.

---

## MANY, MANY THANKS

Our Sunday Evening Lenten Programs were awesome, in every respect - the dinners, the dramas, congregational support, and the leadership offered by our ministries and auxiliary groups. The dinners - hosted by the Men of Zion, the Chancel Guild, our Senior Choir, the Church Council, and the Youth of Zion - served up some delicious fare, and our dramas offered a full range of delight. The Men of Zion joined in our comedy tribute to Zion's 2007 Bible Bowlers. Jim Fidler wowed the congregation into complete silence with his portrayal of Pontius Pilate. Dale Jacobs served up a stirring rendition of Judas, after helping to stir up a delicious rendition of his orange-mustard-glazed ham. With our partners from St. Paul's joining us on the weekend of St. Patrick's Day, Dave Palumbo took the lead in preparing Pasta ala Devitis, with choices galore, and desserts everywhere. Sydney Campanaro blessed us with a moving portrayal of Mary, the Mother of our Lord, Faith at the Cross. Finally, it was the Youth of Zion, with their parents and leaders. Doug Roman took the lead in the kitchen; Debbie Fox doled out the costumes, and the Youth of Zion offered their best dramatic reading of the passion narrative yet - with Todd Cizek as Jesus, Corey Beaber as Peter, Wayne Slease as Judas, Steve Ross & Debbie Fox as Pilate & Procula, six exceptional narrators (Nicki Ross, Michelle Cohen, Taylor Roman, Ronda Keating, Brooke Roman, Kelly Walters), and a complete cast of characters (Anthony Keaveny, Christian Heller, Carley Frank, Savannah Heller, Natalie Henderson, Nathan Fox, Josh Keaveny, Eric Dague, Rachel Keaveny, Kevin Walters, Jaret Beaber, Brandon Stout, Linda Ross, Beth Heller, Mark Votaw, with special thanks to Suzanne Walters and Peter Fenney. What a great season of dinners and dramas!

---