

**GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:**

The afterglow of 2007 continues to sweeten the snowy days of January with the satisfaction that comes with a marvelous sense of accomplishment. We entered December with a substantial operating budget deficit, and started the new year with a nice surplus. There is no doubt that we will need every bit of it. But still, why not enjoy the good news of a job well done? The dust from a busy Christmas season has settled. The full report of our financial facts is now in, and it is spectacular. Total Income for December 2007 exceeded \$32,000! Operating Budget Income was \$28,713.15. Operating Budget expenses for December were \$23,206.85. The result was a surplus for the month of \$5,506.30, and a surplus for the year of \$1,670.03. What is more, this brings our carryover surplus for the last three years to \$3,765.13. This is good news for Zion.

We spent much of the January newsletter singing Zion's praises. Now it is time to move on to Lent, which comes early this year, with Ash Wednesday on February 6, to be exact. The season of light, which is the meaning of Epiphany, now gives way to the long shadows cast by the cross of Christ. There is a price to pay for our falling short, spiritually and morally, in terms of both God's standards and our own. That price is the death of Christ on the cross, and the cross of Christ is the focus of Lent. Lent calls our attention on the need to repent, to repent for past wrongs, to change course, to set our focus on what God desires and demands. I know that many of us grew up with the practice of giving something up for Lent. Unfortunately, we must give up more than a few sweets, more than an extra helping of this or that. We cannot fix what is wrong with us by trimming around the edges of our lives. Our problems are far more radical.

The truth is that we could never give up enough to satisfy God's demands for lives that follow the letter of His law. Our childhood Lenten disciplines fall far short of God's desires that we live the love He freely gives. If our sacrifices, great or small, could make the difference that God's love desires and God's righteousness demands, then God's assessment of the cost of change and the price to be paid turned out to be way, way off. The Scriptures say it a little more directly. If we think a little bit of this and a little bit of that can do the job of undoing the damage caused by our sin, then we call God a liar and Christ died in vain. [1<sup>st</sup> John 1:1-10] No, we will never see what God wants by looking at ourselves. Jesus alone is the one who shows us what God's love looks like. Jesus alone lives the full extent of God's righteousness. Lent is trying to tell us that we need to give up and give in. We need to give up on trying to do it ourselves and give in completely to God's love, Christ's presence, and the Spirit's power.

Here's how David said it thousands of years ago. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me from my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin! You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit." [Psalm 51] That is the focus of Lent. May it be our prayer throughout the season, a prayer that draws us closer to God, and closer to the kind of life we know God wants us to live.

## CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

We spent a good part of January’s meeting celebrating Zion’s faithfulness in 2007: a budget surplus, the reception of fourteen new members: four through baptism (Grace McNamara, Charles Campbell, Aidan and Kendall Brown); six through transfer (Miriam, Marissa and Ronda Keating, Craig Kuehnert, Nick & Juanita Cignetti); two through the affirmation of faith (Frank McKimie, Scott Newcomb), two through confirmation (Ethan Frock and Christian Heller). Three members were called home to heaven (Armand Lenarz, II, Melinda Hertler, Beverly Dansizen). Two members had moved and transferred to their local church (Al & Sue Whitmer). Attendance was perfect: Carol Rossbach, Jim Fidler, Jayne Schrader, Dave Palumbo, Betty Tracy, Mark Votaw, Mary Humbert, Steve Ross, Tina Beaber, Chris Thomas, Bob Lancashire and Pastor Sherwindt.

## MORE COUNCIL NEWS

God has blessed us in 2007, but we will have our challenges in 2008. Advanced Giving, the amount of giving in 2007 that is directed for distribution in 2008, came in at \$13,500 this year, which compares with \$25,000 in 2007. Advanced Giving helps Zion because it allows us to have a pool of cash that we can use to respond to spikes in expenses during the course of the year. It can also be a tax-related strategy that helps our givers to manage their tax deductions in advance. So, some of the giving that was not given in advance at the end of 2007 will be given during the course of 2008. But significant portions of Advanced Giving in 2007 – around \$7,500 – were one-time gifts related to a personal windfall and the sale of stocks given to the church. These gifts will not be replicated in 2008. As a result, we will need to receive that much more through your weekly offerings.

### **ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS: DECEMBER**

December Income	28,713.15
December Expenses	<u>23,206.85</u>
<b>December Surplus</b>	<b>+ 5,506.30</b>
2007 Income for the year	235,033.44
2007 Expenses for the year	<u>233,363.41</u>
<b>2007 Surplus for the Year</b>	<b>1,670.03</b>
<i>2006 Surplus for the Year</i>	<i>2,095.14</i>
Sanctuary Renovation Fund	30,674.67
2007 Benevolence Support	35,894.68
Average Worship Attendance	174
Baptized Membership Growth	+ 7
Confirmed Membership Growth	+ 3
Baptized Membership – 2007	464
Confirmed Membership 2007	383

***We thank you for your generous support!***

Another serious stewardship consideration for 2008 will be meeting the need for a new boiler system. We are entering the final stages of our decision-making process. We have realized that we are not talking about the next fifty years, as with our present system, since systems are not made to work efficiently for that length of time. We will have a plan that addresses our heating and air-conditioning needs for the next twenty-five years. The cost will be substantial; and while we will not fund this through the Operating Budget, the same folks who support our budget will be asked to support our plan to pay for this investment in our building. Look for more information about this matter in the months to come. Before too long, Council will be scheduling a Congregation Meeting to discuss proposals for beginning the project and paying for it.

## **A LOOK AHEAD TO OUR LENTEN SCHEDULE AT ZION**

<b>February 6, Wednesday</b>	7:00 p.m.	<b>Ash Wednesday Worship Service</b> <i>“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”</i>
Our worship includes an extended Rite of Confession, the Imposition of Ashes, special music from the Senior Choir, and the Celebration of Holy Communion.		
<b>February 10, Sunday</b>	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	<b>Lent 1</b> , Adam & Eve in the Garden
<b>February 10, Sunday,</b>	5:30 p.m.	Dinner hosted by the Men of Zion
<b>February 10, Sunday</b>	6:15 p.m.	Lenten Drama & Special Music
<b>February 17, Sunday</b>	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	<b>Lent 2</b> , Abraham and God’s Promise
<b>February 17, Sunday,</b>	5:30 p.m.	Dinner hosted by the Chancel Guild
<b>February 17, Sunday</b>	6:15 p.m.	Lenten Drama & Special Music
<b>February 24, Sunday</b>	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	<b>Lent 3</b> , Living Water in the Desert
<b>February 24, Sunday,</b>	5:30 p.m.	Dinner hosted by the Senior Choir
<b>February 24, Sunday</b>	6:15 p.m.	Lenten Drama & Special Music
<b>March 2, Sunday</b>	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	<b>Lent 4</b> , Are We Blind to God’s Love?
<b>March 2, Sunday,</b>	5:30 p.m.	Dinner hosted by the Church Council
<b>March 2, Sunday</b>	6:15 p.m.	We are host to St. Paul’s this evening
<b>March 9, Sunday</b>	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	<b>Lent 5</b> , Holy Week will soon arrive
<b>March 9, Sunday,</b>	5:30 p.m.	Dinner hosted by the Youth of Zion
<b>March 9, Sunday</b>	6:15 p.m.	The Passion Narrative of St. Matthew

### **LENT IS LEARNING TO SEE NOTHING . . . EXCEPT JESUS ONLY**

Prior to the arrival of Lent with Ash Wednesday on February 6<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate *the Festival of the Transfiguration on February 3<sup>rd</sup>*. With the birth of baby Jesus in the manger at Bethlehem, Matthew introduced God through the intimately personal name of *Emmanuel*, which means *God is with us*. On the Festival of the Transfiguration we will encounter a God who startles us by taking a form that is totally, and fearsomely, other.

The First Lesson [Exodus 24:12, 15-18] situates us atop Mt. Sinai, where God appears in a cloud containing a consuming fire. The Gospel Lesson [Matthew 17:1-9] places Jesus atop another mountain, where the Father came in another cloud, which transformed Jesus’ face and clothes. The law and the prophets appeared alongside of Jesus in the persons of Moses and Elijah. Great fear came over the disciples. With Jesus’ touch, their fears were dispersed. When they looked up, they saw nothing, except Jesus only.

The miracle remains the same for us today. The point is not so much that Jesus changes before their eyes, taking upon himself God’s radical otherness, but that we are changed to focus on Jesus only. Look carefully, and you will see how Jesus changes God’s radical otherness into the personal presence of God’s gracious love. His presence among us transforms our many fears into the single-minded joy that comes with knowing that God is with us.

## **LEARNING TO SEE NOTHING . . . EXCEPT JESUS ONLY (CONT'D)**

*Our readings on February 10<sup>th</sup>* leave no doubt that Lent has arrived. Our First Lesson [Genesis 2:15-17; and 3:1-7] introduces us to the fall. God's command identifies the guidance and limits that God provides. Adam entertains the tempter's questions, and then begins the now-familiar art of excuse-making. That's a pattern we have mastered. With the Gospel [Matthew 4: 1-11], the tempter returns with three temptations, each beginning with the words, "If you are the Son of God..." Each time Jesus dismisses him with the clear witness of God's Word, revealing the true nature of temptation, namely, creating distance and doubt between what we read in God's Word and what we imagine God's will to be. We can be awfully creative in imagining a rather wide gap between the two, and "awful" is the right word. The gap we create between what God desires and what we do is often lamentable.

"If only Adam hadn't sinned," we sometimes think, "then we would still be in paradise." The Second Lesson [Romans 5:12-19] reminds us that this speculation is pointless. We have all sinned. Paul tells us that just as sin entered through one man (Adam), so also God's grace and mercy have come into our lives through the One man, Jesus. Usually, the word *but* is a sign that we are looking for some wiggle room around the law and its limits; but with salvation there is a *but* that is pure gift. That's what Paul is saying with the Second Lesson: "*But* the gift of God's grace is not like the trespass." The gift of God's grace overcomes all the effects of sin by giving us eternal life. Forget about your creative excuse-making. Trust God's grace instead.

*According to our readings on February 17<sup>th</sup>* the record in Genesis 12:1-4a is clear. God made the offer of a promise to Abraham without qualification. The promise is given. Abraham doesn't need to earn it; he just needs to trust it. Paul reinforces this simple formula in Romans 4: 1-5 by proclaiming that Abraham's faith was his righteousness. Faith came before any actions. Faith was the response that rightly located the crucial ingredient – God's initiative, God's love, God's grace. Those who share Abraham's faith are his descendants.

Until faith comes, fear reigns. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. "What if someone sees me?" Our Lord had piqued his interest, speaking about being born again, and promising that "whoever believes . . . has eternal life." Are there questions in your mind that keep you from trusting the Savior? He has no reservations about his love for you. Why not discard your doubts, and trust in him completely?

*With our readings on February 24<sup>th</sup>* we learn about the connection between water and life. The Israelites in Exodus 17:1-7 were fresh from slavery in Egypt, and yet when they found themselves wandering without water in the desert, they couldn't stop their complaining. They may have been slaves when they were in Egypt, but at least they had water to drink. They were about to stone Moses for leading them into a desert, when God directed Moses to strike the Rock of Horeb, from which fresh water flowed. They were about to use stones for evil, but God used the Rock for good. Jesus does Moses one better in John 4:5-42, by providing living water to a Samaritan woman by the well. This water changed her life! When Paul was filled with this living water, he discovered the power to rejoice in all things, even in suffering. What will it be for us? Are we prone to complain, or empowered to rejoice?

## **GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL**

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

**Sunday, February 3:** The Youth of Zion participate in their “Souper Bowl” of Caring

**Saturday, February 9:** Family & Youth Event - Snow Tubing at Polar Blast Park

**Saturday, February 9:** Older Youth Grades 7 thru 12 – Overnighter after Snow Tubing

**Sunday, February 10:** Children’s Easter Program Practice begins during Sunday School

**Sunday, March 9:** Youth of Zion host our Lenten Dinner and lead in our Lenten Service

**Saturday, March 15:** Children’s Easter Program Dress Rehearsal in the morning at 10:00 a.m.

**Palm Sunday, March 16:** Children’s Easter Program during the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

**Easter Sunday, March 23:** Our Children’s Easter Egg Hunt for all ages during Sunday School

### **ZION’S CHILDREN’S CHOIR GIVES WAY TO EASTER PREPARATIONS**

Due to the early arrival of Lent and the scheduling of Easter Program Rehearsals during the Sunday School Hour, we have shortened the Children’s Choir season. A hectic schedule at work, along with all sorts of scheduling pressures at home and here at the church have led our Children’s Choir Director (also our Senior Choir Director, our Praise Team Director, and our Music Director) to take another look at just how much time there is in a week. In the meantime, we are turning our attention to Lent, and preparations for the Children’s Easter Program.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL: PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 6**

We will devote most of February to the Children’s Easter Program and the Easter Story. We will practice during the Sunday School Hour, from 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., starting Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup>. There will be no Choir Practice during the months of February and March. The children will perform the Easter Program on Palm Sunday, which is March 16<sup>th</sup>, during the 10:30 a.m. service only. This year’s program will be *Harriet’s Easter Hunt*. It is a wonderful story about a little girl who goes in search of the meaning of Easter. There are lots of speaking and non-speaking parts for all of our Sunday School children. We are looking forward to another fantastic program.

### **WHAT ABOUT THE BIBLE BOWL THIS YEAR?**

This year’s Bible Bowl will be new and exciting at Zion! Our plan is to have an adult team and youth team that will compete against each other on Sunday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, at Zion. The teams will study the Book of Matthew. It will be a great way to learn God’s Word and share in fellowship! Of course, this will be a fun and friendly competition too! Please see Pastor Sherwindt, Debbie Fox or Tina Beaver with your interest in joining one of Zion’s Bible Bowl teams!

## **MORE GOOD NEWS FOR THE YOUTH OF ZION**

### **GET READY FOR THE 2008 SOUPER BOWL**

The Youth of Zion are getting excited about the Souper Bowl, a great tradition that offers a wonderful opportunity for caring as America gets ready for the Super Bowl, with the New England Patriots taking on the New York Giants on Sunday, February 3rd. The Youth of Zion will be collecting both cash and canned foods. The food will go to our Food Pantry, and the cash will go to a charity called *Shoes & Clothes for Kids*. The nice part about this charity is that our Youth will get to go shopping for the stuff that our cash allows us to donate the Cleveland-based charity *Shoes & Clothes for Kids*.

Last year's efforts with the Souper Bowl of Caring received donations in excess of \$8,133,768 – of which \$826,191 came from the efforts of 2,256 local youth groups in ELCA congregations! This year will be even better, since we're participating in it! Here is what Sue Edison-Swift, communication director for our ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Relief, had to say about the Souper Bowl, "I don't know much about football, but I do know that Souper Bowl contributions will make a life-saving difference, and that many of the youth in our church will experience the life-changing joy of caring for neighbors in need."

Members of our Youth Ministry agree. Look for our Souper Bowl signs, for our Youth, and for your invitation to help us help others in need. Collections will end on Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>. The youth are doing a great job already, with the Souper Bowl Cans collecting almost \$300 toward our efforts to care about others in need. Thank you to Tina Beaber and to Zion's Youth for all of their hard work, and thanks to everyone at Zion for your generous support!

### **MORE YOUTH NEWS FOR FEBRUARY AND BEYOND**

On Saturday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, we will be having our Youth & Family Snow Tubing Party at Brandywine's new *Polar Blast Park*. The new park is larger than three football fields! The cost for two hours of tubing will be \$18 per person, and \$10 for kids five and under. *We plan to meet at church at 4:00 p.m. for pizza, and then leave for snow tubing.* This event is for all of Zion's families and youth. Friends are also welcome. Any and all children ages 10 and under must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. There are waiver and permission forms that will need to be signed for each person that will be tubing, right beside the sign up sheets. Please take one for each person in your party and have them completed when you arrive at church for the event. After snow tubing we will return to Zion, and our older youth in grades 7 through 12 are invited to stay for an overnigher at the church. There will be games, movies, and more food for all to enjoy throughout the evening and into the morning!

We are also hoping to plan a *family bowling event* in March similar to the great time we had last year, with one exception, no injuries for the Keatings! We had a great turnout, as well as a great time last year. We hope to do the same this year! Look for more details in next month's newsletter. Finally, we are looking ahead to the Lenten season, which begins with Ash Wednesday on February 6<sup>th</sup>. We will again be scheduling our Sunday Evening Lenten dinners and dramas, with the *Youth Lenten Dinner and Drama* is set for Sunday evening, March 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **THE WOMEN OF ZION**

The Women of the ELCA introduce ***Bold Women's Day!*** Lutheran women who act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ are everywhere and come from all walks of life. Some are homemakers and caregivers. Others are professionals with careers. Most volunteer many hours for both their church and community. Some are bold in conspicuous and visible ways, while others are bold in quiet yet strong ways. ***Bold Women's Day*** celebrates all the Lutheran women and the many and diverse ways in which they act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. Watch for its inaugural edition here at Zion on Sunday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

*"Blessed are the merciful; for they will receive mercy."* [Matthew 5:7] Session 6 of our study on the beatitudes continues with a focus on *Mercy Made Real: Disciples as Forgiven Forgivers*. This lesson identifies three aspects of forgiveness: repenting and being forgiven; remembering and being remembered; reconciling and being reconciled. As we work through the meaning of these dynamic duos, we will discover new ways of making the connection between accepting God's forgiveness and sharing it with others. Please plan to join us for our Bible study, which is scheduled for Tuesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall.

Don't forget that ***Zion's Comfort Givers*** continue to meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, *February 14 & 28*, 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.

The ***Chancel Guild*** will host our Sunday Evening Lenten Dinner on February 17<sup>th</sup>.

## **THANK YOU'S TO ZION**

*Dear Pastor Sherwindt and members of Zion,*  
I'm glad I belong to a great family of God, and also blessed with my own caring and loving family, especially Nick! I am thankful for your visits, beautiful cards, prayers and Chancel flowers. No wonder I am healing so well. May God continue to bless you and our congregation.

*In Christian love,  
Corky Lanzalotta*

*Dear Pastor Mark and Members of Zion,*

On behalf of the St. Luke Lutheran Community, I would like to thank you for your generosity in donating a dozen poinsettias to the residents of our community in North Canton. We truly appreciate your support of our ministry for senior adults. As we grow in years and become wiser, may we never forget the seeds of kindness and consideration that you have sown. Thank you again for your thoughtfulness. May God bestow blessings upon you just as you have blessed the lives you've touched here at St. Luke's.

*Kenneth C. Sippola,  
Development Director  
St. Luke Foundation*

## ODDS 'N ENDS OF INTEREST

Have you made your *New Year's Resolutions* to get fitter? Great! Now plan to get your marriage in better shape, too, because that takes daily exercise as well. Oprah recently featured World-wide Marriage Encounter Weekends as a wonderful way to strengthen listening skills as married couples. Lutheran Marriage Encounter is private, personal, practical, and pleasing to God. There's a weekend coming up right after Easter, on March 28—30 in Columbus, Ohio. If you are interested in finding out more, Bob & Linda Lancashire will be happy to fill you in.

**Random Thoughts about Love:** "My heart overflows with love, fashioned in courtship, planted in marriage, blossoming in children, a love that has been pruned by life's realities and strengthened by life's trials, a love that has grown because the responsibility and freedom to give and to receive has been shared, a love that continues to seek its Source in the sunshine of God's love – for it is there that we find our reason for being and our reason for loving."

— Peggy Ferrell

**We extend our congratulations** to Sean and Rachel Hilson upon hearing news of the timely birth of their healthy baby boy, **Joshua Paul Hilson**, born just before the end of the year on December 29, 2007. Everyone in the Hilson household has welcomed Joshua with open arms. God's richest blessings to all.

**We extend our sympathies** to longtime friend, Ray Gopp, whose beloved wife of 72 years, Martha Aileen, was called home to heaven on January 17, 2008. The Gopps have lived in Seminole, Florida for 30 years, but their time with Zion was productive and active. Martha enjoyed great health during her ninety-three years of life among us, with declining health and restricted mobility during this past year.

## MEN OF ZION HIGHLIGHTS

The *Men of Zion* have a very busy month with the arrival of February. We will host the very first **Sunday Evening Lenten Dinner on February 10<sup>th</sup>**. The Singing Chef has begun to imagine a wonderfully delicious menu, but we will all have to pull together to make sure everything comes together. The Men of Zion are also scheduled for an encore performance of their singing prowess at the first Lenten worship service of the season. You will not want to miss our powerful rendition of "*Go Down, Moses, Let My People Go!*" Please be prepared to say YES when Steve Ross calls asking for your help and participation.

Our regular monthly meeting will need to be set back one week, since the first Wednesday of the month is Ash Wednesday, and we will want to join the congregation in worship at 7:00 p.m. as Ash Wednesday begins the forty days of Lent with the Imposition of Ashes, special music offered by Zion's Senior Choir, and the celebration of Holy Communion. So, with this in mind, we will meet for dinner on the following **Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>**, in Luther Hall, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

**Lutheran Men in Mission** invite the Men of Zion to drive to Zion Lutheran Church, which is located at 702 Raff Road SW, on the morning of Saturday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, for the Annual Men's Winter Breakfast. A delicious breakfast will be served. There will be great fellowship, good conversation, and guest speakers sharing their stories of ministry. Everything begins at 8 a.m. Please contact Jamie Savarin with your interest in attending at [jsavarin@aol.com](mailto:jsavarin@aol.com) or call Jamie at 330-323-4212. We haven't yet heard the details about the *Third Annual Great Chili Cook Off*, but we are sure to find out a good deal more at this Annual Men's Winter Breakfast.

## **IN LOVING MEMORY OF CATHERINE ELSASS**

I was not the Pastor at Zion who knew Catherine the best, or the longest, or when Catherine's involvements were at their height, or when her needs were their greatest. I wasn't there when her first born didn't survive, or when Anna Marie was untimely taken, and then not long thereafter Ray, Jr. was taken, too. These are wounds that never heal. I wasn't there with Catherine, but God was, and what is more, she knew that God was present. She trusted God's love, and she relied upon God's faithfulness.... Ninety-seven years, ten months, twenty days: a long, full, and faithful life, blessed with great health, a clear mind, a willing spirit and a loving family. While she wasn't anxious to go, she knew that her journey was reaching its end, and thoroughly enjoyed that one last family reunion God had given her as a personal gift of sorts. No regrets, a stiff upper lip, a tissue in tow, right by her sleeve, always grateful for every little gesture of love and helpfulness: that's Catherine Elsass. God has blessed us with Catherine, who always felt she was the one blessed.

There's a poem that Catherine loved, which captures a good part of the essence of this woman. She wanted us to read it at her funeral service. "I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one. I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when the day is done. I'd like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways, of happy times and brightly sunny days. I'd like the tears of those who grieve to dry before the sun ... of happy memories that I leave behind when the day is done." *After Glow* was Catherine's poetry choice. But there's another poem that I thought of when I thought of Catherine Elsass. It's a classic American mixture of rugged grit and lasting love. It is a poem by Carl Sandburg, *Hope is a Tattered Flag*. I love it because it focuses our attention on enduring images that drive and sustain the human spirit, with down-to-earth tones of real life experience.

"Hope is a tattered flag and a dream of time. Hope is a heart spun word: the rainbow, the shadbush in white, the evening star inviolable over Appalachian coal mines, the shimmer of northern lights across the bitter winter night, the blue hills beyond the smoke of steel mills, birds that go on singing to their mates in peace, in war, in peace .... Hope is the horseshoe over the door, the luck piece in the pocket, the kiss and comforting laugh and resolve – Hope is an echo that ties itself yonder ... the spring grass showing itself where least expected, the rolling fluff of white clouds on a changeable sky, the broadcast of strings from Japan, bells from Moscow ... children singing chorals of the Christ child, Bach being broadcast in Bethlehem, PA ... tall sky scrapers, the hands of strong men, the Salvation Army singing God loves us...."

This poem captures the clash of transitions – from old to new, from the Great Depression to the New Deal, from one generation to the next, from the old world across the sea to the new sounds of children singing. Catherine knew these worlds. She knew the roaring twenties and the Great Depression, the war and post-war periods, and everything that followed. I think she would have liked this poem. I love it. I love the way it uses down-to-earth images to get us to think about what hope looks like. For us, hope is a new heaven and a new earth coming down from above as a gift from God, where death is no more and tears are wiped away. It is a grand and glorious hope, and it lives on in the faces of fellow saints like Catherine Elsass. It is etched into the wrinkles that help to define her face and delineate the contours of her life, reminding us that real faith doesn't just smell the roses in fantasy gardens. Real faith figures out how to endure the thorns, and that's what Catherine's faith helped her to do. That's what faith helps us to do. Faith can look tattered and worn, but it is precisely these traits that show that it's been tested and true.

