

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:

July has been a month of celebration for Zion. We've been celebrating your great response to our pledge drive to replace our **H**eating, **V**entilation, and **A**ir-**C**onditioning system. That work has begun, and the Church Offices have had their air-conditioning restored. Asbestos removal in the basement where the old boiler resides is next. Then, it's on with the rest of the system!

Pledges continue to mount, with 71 so far. We're hoping that all of our members will participate and share in the success of this project. The record-breaking numbers say it all: 12 families pledging at the \$1,000 + level, with another 12 families pledging at the \$500+ level, and 21 families pledging at the \$250 level, and another 25 at the \$100 level so far. Your support has been nothing short of amazing. Many of you have front-loaded your pledge, which makes more available sooner rather than later. As a result, of the \$60,000 that we hoped to receive through this pledge drive, you have pledged \$41,530 for this year, and \$21,880 for next year! Like I said, the support we have received says so much about your love for the church and support of one another.

When it comes to celebrating mutual support and a love for the life of the church, we spent much of July preparing for the great success we enjoyed with Vacation Bible School. What a wonderful experience for the kids, and also for our teachers, leaders, helpers, parents, families, and several lucky puppies! We simply cannot say enough for the great job that Debbie Fox does in organizing our effort, overseeing the week, and sustaining an outstanding tradition of community service and congregational fun. Everyday was a new adventure in reaching out to folks in need. We made school kits for North Canton kids. We collected canned goods and household items for the Food Pantry. We offered cash donations and personal service to habitat for Humanity. We raised awareness about the need for recycling, helping around the house, looking out for our friends, along with just trying to become better followers of Jesus.

There's so much more that I could write, and you'll read much more about all the particulars of Vacation Bible School on pages 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of this newsletter. All of this reinforces lots of good news we already know about how richly blessed we are with our community of fellow members who are committed workers in the cause of God's kingdom and the life of our church. What a great group God has assembled around us, and what a wonderful ministry we've been blessed to enjoy. July certainly has been a wonderful month to celebrate the love that flows so freely and faithfully through the heart and hands of this family we call Zion Lutheran Church.

In His service, and yours,
Pastor Mark Sherwindt

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

Our first meeting of the new Council year began with good attendance (Pastor, Carol Rossbach, Jim Fidler, Jayne Schrader, Dave Palumbo, Betty Tracy, Steve Ross, Mary Humbert, Dale Jacobs), and provided some great news to celebrate. We sustained the good news of May's surplus, and added to it by an additional \$5,755.12! We are still running an operating budget deficit for 2008, but it is now significantly less than the deficit we were running this time last year! Halfway through the year, our actual deficit is \$3,113.04, compared to a deficit of \$6,419.38 at the end of June in 2007. That is a real confidence booster.

What makes this remarkable is that, in addition to our 2008 Operating Budget, we have raised \$27,343.51 this year for the Steve Dague Fund, and we have also received in excess of \$24,000 for our new HVAC system! The big reason for this great news is your generosity. Another reason relates to the fact that we have not yet replaced our Church Secretary since Diane's leaving at the end of February. We owe a deep debt of gratitude and a whole lot of thanks to Carol Rossbach, Mabel Kolarik, Helen Alex, Charlie Danner, Betty Tracy, and Vicki Givler for taking turns sitting behind the secretary's desk, answering phones, greeting visitors, putting together bulletins, and making it possible for us to function smoothly and proficiently as we wait for congregational giving to catch up with the needs of the budget.

We have had such good news on so many fronts that we truly feel great about our prospects for over-performing for the rest of the year; but we will need your continuing attention and support to make that happen.

MORE COUNCIL NEWS

Parish Life Ministry: Team Zion's Coed Softball Squad has had a tough season, but fared well. The results are listed below:

- 05/04 Team Zion beat St. Paul (White)
- 05/11 *No games scheduled: Mother's Day*
- 05/18 Team Zion lost to Cross Point UM
- 05/25 *No games scheduled: Memorial Day*
- 06/01 Team Zion lost to Northminster
- 06/08 Team Zion tied Faith UM Church
- 06/15 Team Zion lost to Walsh Team #1
- 06/22 Rain: Game rescheduled for 07/13
- 06/29 Rain: Game rescheduled for 07/20
- 07/06 *No games scheduled: Fourth of July*
- 07/13 Team Zion lost to Church of the Lakes
- 07/20 Team Zion beat St. Paul Blue Team
- 07/27 Round Robin Tournament, Week 1
- 08/03 Round Robin Tournament, Week 2

We offer our thanks to Bob Lancashire for the great job he has done as Commissioner of the North Canton Ministerial Association Coed Softball League, and also for the great job he has done with Team Zion. We won 2, lost 4, and tied 1. May you have the best of luck through the Round Robin Tournament!

ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS FOR JUNE

June Income	\$ 21,912.70
June Expenses	<u>\$ 16,157.58</u>
June's Surplus	\$ 5,755.12
Income through June	\$127,164.16
Expenses through June	<u>\$130,277.20</u>
2008 YTD Deficit	(\$ 3,113.04)
2007 YTD Deficit	(\$ 6,419.38)

<i>Zion's 2008 Extra Special Giving Report</i>	
<i>The Steve Dague Fund</i>	\$ 27,343.51
<i>HVAC (given to date)</i>	\$ 24,120.00

We thank you for your generous support!

MAIN STREET FESTIVAL

Zion's Witness Team has decided to join the fun of a North Canton tradition, the 12th annual **MAIN STREET FESTIVAL**, a fun event with lots of activities for everyone, which is scheduled for the weekend of August 16—17. In honor of the occasion, the *Square of the City* will be closed to motorists from 5:00 p.m. on Friday through to 7:00 p.m. on Sunday. There will be live entertainment, food vendors, arts, crafts, a car show, children's activities, and a host of North Canton organizations celebrating the good news of how great it is to be a part of the North Canton community!

Zion will be one of those organizations this year, and in honor of our first visit to this local tradition we have pulled out all the stops and are planning to distribute all sorts of stuff, like Zion pencils and Zion pads, with mini-beach balls, balloons, candy, and even washable tattoos. It should be great fun, and we'll need lots of help from our Zion family to help us spread the good news of our presence to all the folks who are lucky enough to meet us! We will need volunteers to host our booth in two-hour intervals on Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

CONFERENCE NEWS, TOO!

Our *Canton-Massillon Conference* has experienced some great news with several congregations recently celebrating the Rite of Installation for new pastoral leadership. St. Jacob's Lutheran Church, our neighbor in North Canton, on 1460 State Street NE, welcomed the Rev. Leah Schafer as their Pastor on July 20th. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Massillon welcomed the Rev. Chip Belanga as their Pastor on July 27th. We extend our heartfelt hopes and prayers that these sister congregations flourish and thrive with the rich possibilities for mission and ministry that God makes possible for a people vigilant to serve.

Did anyone see that recent announcement about six sister congregations in the city of Canton looking to work more cooperatively together? Bethel Lutheran Church, First Lutheran Church, Martin Luther Lutheran Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, Zion Lutheran Church, and Iglesia Luterana la Trinidad formed a covenant "to develop a strategy for Canton City Lutheran churches that will facilitate better stewardship and more effective ministry." Initial conversations began to look at the feasibility of sharing office space, staff, or ministries in ways that would maximize service to others without duplicating costs.

A *Strategy Team*, made up of pastors and lay leaders from each of the six congregations, along with a representative from the Northeastern Ohio Synod, will bring forth recommendations for action. The final decision for proceeding rests with each congregation. A *Joint Activities Task Force* has also been created to help create the connections that will foster an expanding sense of communication, camaraderie, and cooperation. We wish them only the best.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

This year an awesome group of kids joined us in *God's Big Backyard* for a week of service at Vacation Bible School, which was July 21 – 25. We had sixty-eight children registered this year, averaging about sixty-two children a day. Our kids experienced a wide variety of activities during the week, including great lessons, music, crafts, games, an obstacle course, delicious food, many community service projects, and our Big Backyard Celebration.

This year's lessons were all about serving God by serving others. Each day Pastor Sherwindt introduced the day's lesson, and the children saw a short video clip about a child who put the day's service theme into practice. These clips inspired all of us to think of the possibilities for serving others and how easy it could be. They also helped the children to see other kids their age doing service work that was both fulfilling and fun, even though it may have been scary and uncomfortable at first.

Monday the children learned about **servicing their family** through the story of Miriam who took care of her baby brother, Moses. On Tuesday they learned about **servicing friends** through the story of the four men who carried their paralyzed friend to Jesus to be healed. Wednesday they learned about **servicing neighbors** through the story of the good Samaritan who helped a neighbor that was hurt when no one else would. On Thursday they learned about **servicing their community** through the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector, and his transformation after spending time with Jesus. Finally on Friday, they learned about **servicing Jesus** through the story of Peter and John who served Jesus by showing His power and love to others. Thanks be to God for such wonderful lessons! The children lived and learned about serving others and Jesus all week long with all that they did both at Vacation Bible School and at home!

We also tried something new this year. The children created a prayer chain throughout the week with the goal of having the chain stretch the length of the Sanctuary. We easily achieved this goal by Thursday, and then surpassed it. The prayer chain stretches from the choir pews all the way out into the Narthex. How amazing! This prayer chain includes the names of family, friends, and neighbors, community places, and offers ideas on how the children can serve Jesus. Each child added at least one link to the chain every day. It was so amazing to hear the children pray throughout the week and to know they were thinking of others they could pray for every day.

We were very blessed to have two special guests, who spoke to the children during the week. Beth Tonsky, from Habitat for Humanity, joined us on Wednesday and spoke to the children about Habitat and how they can serve their community by praying for and helping others. The children presented Beth with thank you cards, and one of our *God's Big Backyard* T-shirts to show their appreciation. Thursday, DARE Officer Mike Foltz from the North Canton Police Department talked about serving the community, offering lots of great ideas on how they can serve their neighbors in North Canton. As a thank you, the children presented Officer Mike with thank you cards and new stuffed animals to be kept in the police cruisers for children who are scared or hurt. We are very grateful to both speakers for taking the time to share such important information with the kids. The kids had a great time and learned so much!



MORE GOOD NEWS ABOUT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

We had an awesome group of teachers and assistants in *God's Great Big Backyard* this year. They put in a lot of time and hard work to make this year's program such a success. I am so grateful to them for the amazing job that they did! The children had such a great time and loved their leaders! As always, music was one of the highlights of VBS thanks to Suzanne Walters. She did an amazing job with the kids teaching them the songs, motions and dancing. She put together a wonderful program for the Ice Cream Social, which our parents, family and friends truly enjoyed. The children really enjoyed this year's music. It was fun and the songs had such great meaning. I am sure they will be singing and dancing to these songs for a long time!

Our crafts were once again outstanding thanks to the creativity, patience, organization and flexibility of Connie Frank and Linda Ross. They also had a great group of helpers throughout the week that pitched in wherever needed. The week's climax is always the Thursday evening Family Program and Ice Cream Social, which was sponsored by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, and this year's program was great by all accounts. I want to say a special thank you to Tina Beaber for leading the remarks for the evening in my absence. I am very, very grateful! The kids did a great job singing and the ice cream was great! Thanks to Jayne Schrader and Janet Slease for taking care of the kitchen for the Ice Cream Social. Then, it was on to Friday and our Big Backyard Celebration, which included carnival games, the big water slide and slip & slide, water balloons, squirt the leader, other water activities, cookie decorating and a pizza party. It was a perfect ending to celebrate a great week of service and all the kids' hard work!

Our kitchen crew was led by Darlene Milavickas, who, along with a great group of people, gave us a great menu that the children loved! We also had a traveling popsicle-and-ice-cream cart each day that the children anxiously waited for! Each treat was 25 cents, and the ice cream money added to our offering, which was directed to help Habitat for Humanity and Zion's Food Pantry. Zion's Vacation Bible School is such a great success because of the contributions and commitments of all involved – the staff, the children, their families, and the congregation. Thank you to everyone who donated supplies, food, money and time! The following is a list of staff and volunteers who were invaluable to me. Many did more than the category they're listed in, and everyone was willing to help wherever they were needed! Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Our God's Big Backyard Staff:

VBS Director: Debbie Fox

VBS Teachers:

Pre-School Teacher: Anna Sherwindt, assisted by Kelly Walters

K & 1st Grade Teacher: Tina Beaber

2nd & 3rd Grade Teacher: Connie Riffle

4th to 6th Grade Teacher: Renee Schrader, assisted by Corey Beaber

VBS Music Director: Suzanne Walters



STILL MORE GOOD NEWS ABOUT GOD'S BIG BACKYARD!

VBS Kitchen Leader: Darlene Milavickas, and her **Incredible Crew**, which included Barb Achauer, Gary & Shirley Horton, Mary Humbert, Dave Palumbo, Cheryl Roman, Jayne Schrader, Ann Semple, Sharon Stout, Chris & Peg Thomas, and Laura Thompson

VBS Crafts: Connie Frank, Linda Ross, Carol Rossbach, Cheryl Roman

Outdoor Games: Christian Heller & Brooke Roman

Zion's Quilters: Kay Davis, Ruth Elsass, Helen Edwards, Joyce Gibeaut, Helen Heller, Pat Stayer, Linda Wilson, Betty Tracy

Youth Helpers: Corey Beaber, Michelle Cohen, Sam Deremer, Christian Heller, Laura Kay, Lauren Mathie, Matt Mathie, Lya Milek, Maddie Reffel, Brooke Roman, Taylor Roman, Dana Roman, Nicole Ross, Brandon Stout, Kelly Walters

Other Volunteers: Melissa Riffle, Janet Slease, Jeff Frank, Doug Roman, Dean Fox, Annie Forsyth, Tammi Fisher

Community Service Project: Amy Mathie, Julie Todich, Susan Forsyth

Registration: Vicki Givler & Cheryl Roman

Photo DVD: Kelly & Brian Walters

Newsletter: Lisa Roman

Decorations: Carol Rossbach, Mary Humbert, Betty Tracy, Mabel Kolarik

Ice Cream Social: Janet Slease & Jayne Schrader

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, sponsors of our Ice Cream Social & Matching Funds

Items for the Kids: Mercy Medical Center

This year was once again truly amazing! Because of the above-mentioned people, our program was a great success. Zion is very blessed with a great group of volunteers who make our Vacation Bible School program one of the best! Everyone's flexibility, time commitment and hard work are invaluable! I could not do it without everyone's help and support, and for that I am grateful from the bottom of my heart!

Thank you again to all involved,
Debbie Fox, VBS Chairperson

SERVICE PROJECTS IN GOD'S BIG BACKYARD, PART 1

This year the children were involved with many service projects during Vacation Bible School, since our theme was about serving God by serving others. We had a very enthusiastic, caring, generous, and loving group this year, which made our service projects a great success! Thank you to everyone for your support of all our projects. We practiced service with our daily offerings, by collecting food, through making comforters, and in all sorts of other ways, too.



DAILY OFFERINGS: The boys and girls had a contest to see who could collect the most money during the week. All week they filled up jars and, by week's end, collected \$445.01! The girls collected a total of \$221.33 for the week, and the boys collected \$223.68. This money, along with additional Matching Funds from Thrivent and the money collected from the Ice Cream Cart during the week, will be donated to Habitat for Humanity, and to Zion's Food Pantry & Clothing Closet. What a great job by the kids!



FOOD PANTRY: The children also brought in food items to fill our "Food Wagon" in Luther Hall. These items will go to Zion's Food Pantry to provide help for families in need in our community. The "Food Wagon" was filled and overflowing by week's end! We extend a great big thank you to everyone for your support!



QUILT SQUARES: In what has become a wonderful tradition for Vacation Bible School and Zion, our children once again spent a good part of their day turning out some beautifully designed quilt squares. For your information, this year marked the thirtieth year that the Women of Zion have been sewing these beautiful quilts. Zion's Comfort Givers, also known as our quilters, were able to sew eleven beautiful quilts from the squares that the children created. Nine of these quilts will be sent to Lutheran World Relief to help families in need across the globe.

By the way, Rachel Dornhecker, a student in Miss Anna's class, was the lucky winner of this year's quilt raffle, and she "wore" her quilt home after the Ice Cream Social! Congratulations to Rachel, and, on a personal note, thanks to the children and to Zion's quilters for all of your hard work! The other quilt was given to VBS Director, Debbie Fox, as a gift from the quilters, the VBS staff, and the children. Thank you so much for a wonderful and thoughtful gift. I will enjoy my beautiful quilt as a reminder of the wonderful years we've had at Vacation Bible School, along with treasuring my own children's art work forever. And while we're on personal notes, Pastor Sherwindt thanks all the kids for helping to celebrate his birthday ... with cards, and songs, and lots and lots of delicious birthday cake! Thank you to all!

SERVICE PROJECTS in GOD'S BIG BACKYARD, Part 2



DAILY PROJECTS: The children also worked on special projects throughout the week to help reinforce what it means to serve their family, friends, neighbors, community and Jesus. In addition to the projects listed above, the kids brought in supplies sufficient to make twenty School Kits for our pantry families. They brought in items for Health Kits, which the Women of Zion will put together for Lutheran World Relief, and they also decorated tote bags for these kits. Miss Renee's class joined Senior Independence one afternoon for a game of Glory, which is Bible Bingo.



The kids also made charity banks out of recycled plastic bottles. They labeled these banks with a charity they chose, and will fill the banks with loose change and then donate the money they save to their chosen charity once the bank is full. Not only are they serving others by helping a charity, they are learning about the importance of recycling and are helping to save the earth, a precious gift from God. Finally, the kids made grocery tote bags to help with recycling and saving the earth. They were asked to help with the groceries by taking their reusable grocery tote each time their family goes shopping, not only serving their family but also their community. What a great job done by all throughout the week!



SERVICE HANDS: The children were sent home each day with ideas on how to serve their family on Monday, friends on Tuesday, neighbors on Wednesday, community on Thursday, and Jesus on Friday. They were asked to do at least one thing each day at home. When they returned the next day, they received a *servicing hand*, which they put their name on along with what they did. These hands were placed on their class's service tree bulletin board. By the week's end, our trees were full of service hand leaves. The children did a fabulous job with this project and were so enthusiastic to serve! Thanks be to God for such wonderful work!

Thank you, again and again, to everyone for your support of all our projects! The week was truly a week of service – to family, friends, neighbors, community, and Jesus – and we made great strides in all that we achieved. You could see God's love at work everywhere you turned! Cans of food, generous offerings, school kits, health kits, quilts, tote bags, charity banks, lessons learned, Bible stories remembered: What more can we say, except thank you. Thank you to all!

Thank You to All!



GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, August 24: This is the Last Sunday of Summer Sunday School

Sunday, August 31: Our Labor Day Weekend Break: No Sunday School

Sunday, September 7: Get Ready for Rally Day, and then the Pig Roast!

Sunday, September 14: The 2008-09 Sunday School Year Begins Today!

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ALL AGES: PRE-K THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

We will continue to work on our service projects throughout the month of August during the Sunday School hour. The children have discussed the many ways they can serve God. Their activities have included decorating cakes for Father's Day, making cards for the shut-ins, cleaning up the church grounds, and much more. We still have several more projects that will offer great service opportunities for the kids, and every week will be a great follow-through on our theme of service at Vacation Bible School. The last Sunday for Summer Sunday School will be August 24. We'll take August 31 off, since it's Labor Day Weekend. Join us this month as we continue to enjoy learning about the importance of serving God by helping and serving others.



RALLY DAY AT ZION WILL BE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

We will kick off Zion's new Sunday School year with our Rally Day Celebration on the first Sunday in September, which is September 7, at 9:15 a.m. during the Sunday School hour. Rally Day is a great day for Zion. There will be snacks and fun activities planned for the kids! After our 10:30 a.m. worship service, the Men of Zion have committed to hosting our Third Annual Hawaiian Luau and Pig Roast. It will be a great day of fun and fellowship for all. Make sure to look for more delicious details about the Rally Day Pig Roast in next month's newsletter! Once Rally Day is behind us, look for the 2008-09 Sunday School Year to start the next Sunday, on September 14, between the services. (P.S. We know that the Worship Ministry announced their intention to distribute a survey on the mornings of August 3 and 10, dealing with worship times and when to start them; but this survey won't affect the start-up of our Sunday School year.)

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

We have enjoyed some great participation sharing the leadership roles between Carol Rossbach, Nick Cignetti, Elaine & Jim Fidler, Charlie Danner, and Laura Thompson. That format continues into August, with Elaine Fidler leading our discussion on August 3rd, and Nick Cignetti leading us on August 10th. Elaine will help us focus on our Lutheran understanding of faith and good works with a session entitled *Claimed 24/7*. Nick will help us figure out what it means to be *Listening for God*. It's hard to be still in a world over-saturated with chronic busy-ness. We need to find a way to listen to that interior silence that mystics and monks have talked about through the centuries. From there, it's on to listening to what Steven Goodwin, George Barna, and Rick Warren are saying through books like *Catching the Next Wave*. Pastor Sherwindt was doing research on this while driving along the coastlines of Scotland (in May) and Maine (in July), and along with some slides, he's brought back some questions about what it means to catch the next wave and ride it into a healthy and vibrant future for our church family here at Zion. *Catching the wave* was an image Rick Warren used to describe how success in church growth often relies on factors out of our control, like finding a wave that will last, and having the good luck to ride it successfully. Church growth and congregational health are related, but different in very significant ways. Growth often depends on factors out of our control, while we can foster habits and practices that make us healthy whether or not we're growing. The Adult Sunday School Class will take a couple of Sundays in August to explore the difference, while we continue to assess how well we're doing in doing those things that makes us well, healthier, as God's people.

THE WOMEN OF ZION

The Comfort Givers met during the week of Vacation Bible School, and did a great job organizing scores of quilt squares designed by our VBS kids into eleven beautiful quilts, nine of which will become a part of Blanket Sunday in October, one given to the raffle winner, and the other given in appreciation for all that Debbie Fox did for VBS. We would like to thank all of Zion's Quilters for their hard work and faithfulness. It makes a difference having the whole community involved in Vacation Bible School, and it's clear that our Comfort Givers look forward to the fun this collaborative connection affords.

Come to the Waters: the Women's Summer Bible study concludes with water as our focus and the theme, *Living Water, Walking Wet*. Through our study of baptism and how the sacraments shape our lives, we are finding ways to affirm and celebrate our baptism every day. Join us on Tuesday, August 19, at 9:30 a.m., when we gather in Luther Hall for lively discussion and good fellowship.

The Women of Zion thank you in advance for your support of their drive to provide Lutheran World Relief with more Health Kits and School Kits this year. The drive culminates this fall; but, with back-to-school sales already beginning, we thought that it would be good to remind you of what we need. **HEALTH KITS** include hand towels, combs, nail files, bars of soap, toothbrushes, and 3/4 inch band-aids. **SCHOOL KITS** include spiral notebooks, blunt scissors, 12-inch and metric rulers, 2 1/2 inch erasers, unsharpened pencils with erasers, pencil sharpeners, crayons (box of 8), colored construction paper, 12 X 14 inch bags with handles. Any assistance will be appreciated by the Women of Zion, Lutheran World Relief, and children around the world.

THE MEN OF ZION

The Men of Zion had a very busy July, with our monthly meeting on Wednesday, July 2, the Lutheran Men in Mission Golf Outing & Seminary Fundraiser on Saturday, July 12, and Volunteer Service Day at Habitat for Humanity on Saturday, July 26. Dinner was great, as usual, with the slight twist of paying tribute Fred Elsass. It turns out that there were some leftovers from the luncheon that followed Fred's Celebration of Life Service the day before, which served up real nicely for our meeting on Wednesday!

The Annual Golf Outing at Raintree Country Club in Uniontown proved to be a great day for golf, along with a delicious steak dinner, and prizes galore for all participants. Zion was once again very well represented, with the Rosses, the Cizeks, and the Walters on hand to join in the fun. Our own Todd Cizek was among the best golfers on the course, at least for that one hole where he won the *closest to the hole* award. Way to go, Todd! Dick Spall is a key to organizing this fun fundraiser, and he extends his thanks to the Men of Zion for their strong support for this annual event.

Our next regular meeting is on the calendar for Wednesday, August 6, when we will talk about our plans for the much-heralded, long-celebrated, third annual Congregational Pig Roast! The big question this year is whether we will roast the pig ourselves, which would involve committing ourselves to an overnight vigil with the pig roasting. Sound like something that you would like to do? Join us for dinner on August 6th as we talk about such things as all-nighters, side-dishes, desserts, Rally Day games for all ages, and what about entertainment and fund-raising? Zion's Pig Roast will be Sunday, September 7. Put it on your calendar now. It's going to be grrrrreat!

HABITAT VOLUNTEER DAY

What a great week at Vacation Bible School, and what a wonderful carry over on Saturday, with our hands on service with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Stark and Carroll Counties. There were twenty of us who helped with the interior painting at what will soon be Jerome Newman's home. We also prepared break-time treats and lunch for the volunteers who were working at the Habitat home next door. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has made quite a commitment through our Lutheran churches to Habitat homes in our area, and Saturday, July 26th, was our opportunity to make our mark as Lutherans (and Thrivent members) in action. We would like to thank Steve Ross for all the organizing that he did in getting our group together, and we would also like to thank everyone during the week at VBS who helped raise awareness and interest in the work we are doing with Habitat for Humanity. Our thanks to Steve & Linda Ross, Nicki Ross, Christian Heller, Laura Kay, Taylor and Brooke Roman, Dave & Amy Mathie, along with Ben, Matt, and Lauren, Charlie Danner, Garry Leed, Erica Popp, Leroy Humphreys, Bob & Linda Lancashire, and John Long. Even Pastor Sherwindt was willing to step in some paint and create havoc on the job site! Really, it was a great group that had lots of fun, while doing a whole lot of good in the process. There's still work to do on Jerome Newman's home, with trim work inside, landscaping outside, carpet installation, and all sorts of incidentals; but we are making progress. There is a standing invitation to help with the Habitat homes that Thrivent and our sister Lutheran churches are sponsoring. Plus, there's always a need for folks who will prepare lunch for the volunteers. See Steve Ross or Pastor Sherwindt with your interest.

THANK YOU'S TO ZION

Dear Missioners from Zion Lutheran,

Thank you for your generous donation of \$1,500.00 to the Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response in Louisiana. You are making a difference in the lives of thousands who were affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Each day we see the light of hope growing along the Gulf Coast because of individuals and groups like you who have generously supported relief efforts underway throughout this region.

There is still much work to be done and many families to impact through the love of Jesus Christ. Monetary contributions, as well as in-kind donations are still in great demand to enable us to continue to assist homeowners through the efforts of our staff and volunteers. Please continue to keep our volunteers, staff, and the homeowners we serve in your prayers. God bless you for your generous support.

Your congregation should be so proud of your group. What a great bunch of committed volunteers. We're so glad you came.

*Yours in Christ,
Katie Huener, Manager
LSS Disaster Response
Bethlehem Volunteer Center*

Dear Zion Lutheran Church,

It has been a while, but I would like to thank you for the Benefit Concert you had for Steve Dague. It was such a wonderful idea. The dessert reception afterwards was delightful, too. No one knows why such a horrible thing like this had to happen. Steve continues to improve with therapy. The road has been a long and bumpy one. But with the support and love of family and friends, we will get through this.

*Thank you once again,
Marlene Richards*

MORE THANKS TO ZION

CHURCH DIRECTORY CHANGES

We extend our congratulations to Adam & Lauren (Cavender) Greenwell on the birth of their son, **Bailey Charles Greenwell**, whom they welcomed into their lives early in the morning on Thursday, July 17.

AUGUST SENIOR BIRTHDAYS

- August 1 Barb Achauer
- August 4 Cora Lanzalotta
- August 4 Robert Leed
- August 7 Juanita Bathol
- August 9 Larry Moore
- August 10 Kay Davis
- August 10 Chris Thomas
- August 16 Mary John
- August 23 Earl Bathol
- August 23 Dick Smith
- August 25 Betty Dague
- August 28 Helen Edwards
- August 29 Jane Hirschman

ANNIVERSARIES IN AUGUST

- August 29 Dan & Linda Wilson
- August 30 Jerry & Jane Hirschman
- August 31 Dick & Doris Spall

LET'S CATCH THE NEXT WAVE: GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

The Search Team for our new Music Director has taken a look at a book entitled *Catching the Next Wave*, published by Augsburg/Fortress Press, and aimed at Lutheran churches like ours – congregations that look to the past for our peak in membership and attendance at worship. In our case, the year was 1981, when Zion had over 1,000 members and more than 350 in average attendance at weekly worship. Wow! That was quite a wave we rode with Pastors Ruth and Meuschke through the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. When will we catch the next wave? We still enjoy the benefit of a great location. This zone north of Canton and south of Akron has attracted quite a few churches with growth on their mind. Established mainline churches like ours haven't seen the great influx of the unchurched in our pews, as, say, First Christian has, or Faith Family Church hopes to, but suburban residential growth continues, and opportunities abound.

In 2004, after a series of cottage meetings and congregational discussions, we set some goals for ourselves, including goals for worship attendance. We called it the 30-60-90 plan, with our goal of averaging 30 worshippers at our evening service, 60 at our early service on Sunday, and 90 at the later Sunday morning service. In 2006, we had an average of 182 worshippers at our three weekend services. In other words, we reached our goal, with average attendance better than 90 at our 10:30 a.m. family-friendly service led by Zion's Praise Team. Our other two services still need some work, as we found it more difficult to get attendance at the healthier levels we envisioned; but together, our weekend services created a package that helped overall attendance improve. Instead of extending our gains from 2006, 2007 showed a slight decline to average weekly attendance to 174. Now the question is whether we will set our sights to 190 or 160.

Catching the Next Wave cites the work of George Barna in talking about the challenges facing congregations like ours. Here's what Barna says about "the sobering news" facing "plateaued" congregations like Zion: "When a church takes a nosedive in attendance or membership, it generally does not make a comeback. The typical experience seems to be that, once a church loses its momentum, the most probable outcome is . . . stabilization at a much smaller size." [*Catching the Next Wave* (1999), p. 22; citing George Barna, *Turnaround Churches and How to Overcome Barriers to Growth and Bring New Life to an Established Church* (1993), p. 17] In comparison with 1981, we have stabilized at a much smaller level; but over the past six years we have been trying to turn that around, and the good news is that our location still invites growth.

One of the ideas we have been thinking about in terms of improving attendance at our early Sunday morning service involves moving back the starting time from 8:00 a.m. During this past year, we used the Senior Choir exclusively in the role of singing at the early service. Their presence was welcomed, and brought great strength to our worship. However, our Senior Choir began to shrink, due in part to the early starting time. The truth is that, community-wide, 8:00 a.m. is no longer the preferable starting time for an early service. Early services now start anywhere from 8:30 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. Our Search Team has devised a questionnaire to determine how open our worshippers are to a time change for the early service. We are not committing to a time change, just opening the dialogue, which includes everyone involved in Christian Education. Our goal is not to alienate the long-time faithful of our early service. We simply want to find out what the ideal time is where we keep all of our early service worshippers, and yet add from liturgy lovers at the 10:30 a.m. service. We hope that you'll keep these various objectives in mind as we survey our worshippers at Zion.
