

September 2008 Newsletter

Greetings From The Pastor:

September is here, but I've got to confess that I don't feel like we are really ready for the new program year to begin. Sure, some might say that we are never really ready for a new year to begin; but this year it's true. We're still in the middle of trying to fill out our support staff at Zion. That's true for the music program and the church office, too. The staffing on hand has kept our worship services strong, but the Senior Choir will have to wait for a choir director to begin its year, as will the children's choir. We have had great support around the church office with our corps of volunteers, but it's time to move beyond transitional interim rotations to something more stable as we think about the position of Church Office Secretary. So, while the new program year is about to begin, with the Pig Roast and Rally Day set for September 7, with Sunday School scheduled to start on September 14, and the Craft Show on the calendar for October 18, we hope to make some fast-paced progress in building up our support staff as we head into a program year that only grows more challenging with each successive month. One thing we can say as we head into September is that the new Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning system has arrived! I marvel at the speed with which we addressed this problem, after putting it off for so long. The funds that were pledged continue to come in at a pace that helps to relieve the burdens of borrowing until the costs of this project are retired next year. The Boiler Task Force has secured a line of credit that will allow us to borrow short-term as we wait for pledged commitments to arrive, and for our stocks in Merrill Lynch to reach a level that would make selling them more attractive. Using the parsonage as collateral, a home-equity line of credit has been established, and the Church Council has made it clear that there will be only one use for the funds available through this line of credit, namely, the short-term use of covering the costs of our new HVAC system. It's great to have the assets that allow us to fund these projects, and it's great to have the discipline that keeps us from relying on these assets. But mostly, it's great to have the generosity of your financial support, because that's really what makes the whole thing work. So, there you have it. We've made phenomenal progress on the building, making needed improvements and necessary upgrades. We have also made phenomenal contributions to the needs we've encountered around us, both near and far. The generosity that overflowed from so many in response to the personal tragedy of our friend and fellow member, Steve Dague, was humbling and inspiring, overwhelming and at the same time right on the mark. The dedication of our Zionees, thirteen missionaries heading to New Orleans for a third consecutive year, with generous gifts of time and treasures given to the Lutheran Disaster Response, speaks volumes of our willingness to share as needs arise. So, we've invested in the building, and that's good. We've responded with help for folks in need, and that's even better. Now we need to turn our attention to mundane matters like our operating budget and the need for staffing to support our goals for ministry. For in the end – and right now, too – we cannot become the healthy congregation that God wants us to be, that we want to be, without investing in the staffing we need to keep our programs strong and our ministry moving forward. That's where our focus needs to be as we head into the new program year and look ahead to 2009

In His service and yours – Pastor Mark Sherwindt

Church Council News:

We were surprised with great attendance for an August meeting. Carol Rossbach, Jim Fidler, Jayne Schrader, Dave Palumbo, Betty Tracy, Dale Jacobs, Tina Beaber, Steve Ross, Linda Lancashire, Mark Votaw, and Pastor Sherwindt were present, with Chris Thomas and Mary Humbert excused. We invited Laura Thompson to provide an update on our financing plan for the new Heating Ventilation and Air-Conditioning system.

As our first order of business, we approved the plan presented by Laura Thompson. We will secure a home equity line of credit using the parsonage as collateral. We have received 73 pledges and one-time gifts through the new boiler pledge drive, totaling \$63,470 over two years. Of that amount, \$41,590 has been pledged for this year, and we have received \$30,398 through August. We expect to receive Whisler's bill for their completed work in September. The job is well ahead of schedule. The asbestos has been removed for \$7,750. The HVAC system has been installed in the Church Offices, Senior Independence, the Sanctuary, Luther Hall and Memorial Hall. Work is presently being done on Zone 3 (Food Pantry, Resource Center, Sacristy, and Nursery). The new boiler is installed, but work remains. The pace of the work has been very impressive, and we thank Chris Thomas for all that he is doing to make that happen. Once all work is completed and the balance is due, Laura will have negotiated our best deal with one of our local banks for a line of credit, which will be used solely to provide a short-term loan to bridge the gap between cash-on-hand and the balance due. We want to wait for the right time in selling stocks in Merrill Lynch, and we need to wait for the two years of pledges to be given to Zion. In short, all is going well and on time.

Some Financial Facts:

Next on the agenda was our Treasurer's Report for July, which continued the strong news of June, and anticipated even better news in August. The summer months need to be taken as a whole, since they are typically a weak part of the year from an attendance and offerings perspective. However, the summer seems to be shaping up to be a strong period for Zion, partly because offerings have been generous, but also because expenses have been well under budget. Part of the reason for this is waiting on hiring support staff, and making use of volunteer office help and interim musicians. This has given us time to make up some ground against shortfalls in our operating budget. Between June and July, we made up over \$5,000 against the deficit, leaving it at \$3,650 year-to-date. August is looking even stronger. We should enter September well ahead of last year's pace.

In following the figures provided below, you will see that our year-to-date operating budget deficit, which came in at (\$3,650.25), is \$656.68 better than last year. This may not seem like much, but when you add to this fact the observation that we have collected \$27,343 for the Steve Dague Fund and \$30,398 for the new HVAC system, you can begin to appreciate the good news that our financial facts look very impressive.

ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS FOR JULY

July Income 18,009.03
July Expenses 17,589.85
July Surplus 419.18

Income thru July 146,995.81
Expenses " July 150,646.06
Deficit thru July (3,650.25)
2008 YTD (Deficit) (3,650.25)
2007 YTD (Deficit) (4,306.93)

Council News:Worship:

Worship Ministry: The Search Team (Dale Jacobs, Darlene Milavickas, Brian Walters, Jayne Schrader, Carol Rossbach, and Pastor Sherwindt) continues its work in determining what we need to look for as we head into a new program year. We discussed the results of our Worship Survey, which indicated that we need to continue our discussion with the congregation before making any decisions about changing our worship starting times on Sunday morning. We enjoyed a very healthy response to our survey at our 8:00 a.m. service. Sixty worshippers responded, with many indicating a willingness to start at a later time, but most were not quite as keen on moving the starting time beyond 8:30 a.m. The challenge we face in adjusting our starting times for worship involves determining a time that will maintain the faithful attendance of our members who love an earlier starting time, while trying to grow the Senior Choir, which now sings almost exclusively at the early service, and also attracting new worshippers at an early service. The closer our starting time gets to 9:00 a.m., the more attractive it becomes to potential newcomers; but the further it moves away from 8:30 a.m., the less attractive it is to faithful early service worshippers.

In terms of worship ministry expenses, we authorized the expenditure of just under \$1,600 for the purchase of a new keyboard, with a stand and a few other accessories. The Walters have been willing to donate the use of their keyboard as we got used to the family friendly contemporary service; but the time has come to invest in our own keyboard as we move ahead with the variety of services we presently offer. Undesignated Memorials and Gifts will be used to pay for these items.

Council News:Witness:

Witness Ministry: Steve Ross invited us to look ahead in preparing for our first ever entry at *North Canton's Main Street Festival*, a community event that closes down the corner of Main and Maple from Friday evening through Sunday at dusk, with traffic restricted to pedestrians from Charlotte to Bachtel. As it turned out, we were just one of at least one hundred local organizations celebrating our presence here in our community. Our tent was positioned right in front of the Main Street doors of Zion United Church of Christ, and right next door to the tent display for the Chapel of North Canton.

We provided hospitality teams from Saturday morning at 10 a.m. all day long until 8 p.m., and then again on Sunday from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. We extend our thanks to all of our volunteers, including Steve and Linda Ross, Lorraine Weinman and Mark Votaw, Elaine and Jim Fidler, Jim Dansizen, Pete Fenney, Howard Dansizen, Tina Beaber, along with Corey and Jaret, Linda and Bob Lancashire, Mary Humbert, Becky Aquilo, Darla Dague, her two boys, Eric and Justin, and her mother, Betty Lenz, Barb Achauer, Miriam Keating, along with Marissa and Ronda, Sue Heyard, Evelyn Moore, Charlie Danner, Flo Jensen, Brian Walters, and Pastor Sherwindt.

We also want to thank all of our members and friends who stopped by our tent to lift our spirits and keep us company during the two-day festival. The weather was absolutely perfect, and we had a great time witnessing for Zion. We passed out mini-beach balls with Zion stickers, wash-away tattoos, Zion pencils, pads, brochures, newsletters, and little booklets describing who Lutherans are and what Martin Luther did. It was fun and informative at the same time. Thanks to all!

More Council News:

Learning Ministry: Tina Beaber spoke about an upcoming meeting with Debbie Fox and Steve Ross to put together a youth calendar of events that will run through the 2008-09 program year. We applauded the youth-led effort back on Saturday, July 26th, to paint the interior of the Habitat home that Lutheran congregations in the Canton-Massillon Conference are helping to construct (with the help of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans). We have been invited back by our partners at Israel Lutheran Church in Paris (and Habitat for Humanity for Greater Stark and Carroll Counties) to help with one of our Habitat homes in Minerva on September 27. Finally, we offered our thanks and praise for the VBS effort led by Debbie Fox. A final look at the finances saw us raise a total of \$2,549 to cover all expenses related to this wonderful ministry. \$500 was raised through our local Thrivent team. Between the daily offerings, the ice cream wagon, and our quilt raffle, the VBS family generated \$991. Members of our church family donated another \$537. We tapped the Youth Fund for the final \$521.

Speaking about the Youth Fund, the 2009 Youth Missions Craft Show is on the calendar for Saturday, October 18th, which also means that our delicious German take-out dinners are also on the menu for what should be a great day for the Youth of Zion, and everyone who loves incredible German food. Through August we have received nine reservations for craft show tables. Our goal is forty. So, if you are interested in reserving some space, or know of crafters who might be, please spread the good news. An eight-foot table rents for \$30.00. Set up begins at 8:00 a.m. on October 18th, and the Craft Show runs from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Our German take-out dinners will be on sale from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Men Of Zion:

Zion's Congregational Pig Roast is on for Sunday, September 7th. This is the event that announces the kickoff to the new Sunday School year, the new choral year, and another program year of good fun, great food, and unforgettable fellowship. Y'all come now, and invite your friends and neighbors. There will be plenty for everyone. Once again, the Men of Zion are organized into teams, with five team leaders and plenty of men randomly assigned to each team. Our team leaders are Steve Ross (set-up, games, and general over-sight), Mark Votaw (the dunk tank), Dale Jacobs (kitchen crew), Jim Fidler (clean-up), and Charlie Danner (the drinks team).

The Men of Zion will take care of the main menu, which consists of roast pork, pork loins, chicken, hotdogs, potato salad, cole slaw, and baked beans. We've also drafted Betty Tracy to help organize folks to bring desserts, salads, and snacks. Debbie Fox is already on-board

organizing games for the kids. *Dunk the Pastor for Good* is back, along with getting our chance to dunk Debbie Fox, Steve Ross, Mark Votaw, Lorin Beaver, a few special guests and some surprises, too. We'll also take the time to honor the *Zioneers* with new T-shirts, and distribute VBS checks to Zion's Food Pantry & Clothing Closet, as well as Habitat for Humanity of Greater Stark and Carroll Counties. So, there's lots going on, and we know you'll have a whole lotta fun. So, make sure you join us.

Our next *Men of Zion* meeting is **Wednesday, September 3, 6:00 p.m.**, in Luther Hall, when we will put the finishing touches on our plans for what is shaping up to be an unbelievably delicious Hawaiian Luau & Congregational Pig Roast. As usual, there will be great food on hand at our Wednesday meeting, and all men are encouraged to attend.

Great News From Zion's Sunday School

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, September 7: NO SUNDAY SCHOOL scheduled for the Rally Day Pig Roast

Sunday, September 14: The 2008-09 Sunday School Year begins today at 9:15 a.m.

Saturday, September 27: Zion's Youth are invited to work with Habitat for Humanity

Saturday, October 18: 2009 Youth Missions Fall Craft Show, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Rally Day and Our Hawaiian Luau & Pig Roast:

Rally Day is scheduled for Sunday, September 7. This is going to be a great day filled with fun and fellowship! Our 8:00 a.m. service will start at the regular time; but our later service will begin at Noon, and might be outside in the pavilion, depending on the weather. There will be no Sunday School during the Sunday School Hour. Plan to be here at Noon, when we start with worship at 12:00 p.m., followed by fun, activities, and the Dunk Tank at 1:00 p.m., which will be the kick-off for our ***Third Annual Hawaiian Luau & Pig Roast***, with plans to eat beginning at 2:00 p.m. There are many activities planned for the day, including the dunk tank, relay races, games, face painting, volleyball, limbo contests, corn hole, hula hoop contests, crafts and more.

We will see you on September 7th as we kick off the new Sunday School year and have an awesome day! We are calling all of Zion's older youth to help out with this event, along with anyone else who might be interested. We will need helpers to lead our games and activities. We will set up at 11:00 a.m., and start our carnival games at 1:00 p.m. Any help that you can give during these times is greatly appreciated.

Zion's New Sunday School Year:

We are always looking for volunteers to help with teaching and leading our Sunday School classes, all the way from Pre-Kindergarten through the High School class. If you are interested in being a teacher, a classroom helper, or a substitute for these positions, please contact Debbie Fox at 330-966-2433. No doubt about it! This is such a rewarding and enjoyable opportunity to share God's love and His Word with Zion's Youth that you will be glad that you made that call!

Pre-K Through the Sixth Grade:

We are looking for volunteers to help with teaching and leading our Sunday School classes from Pre-K through High School. If you are interested in being a teacher, a classroom helper, or a substitute for these positions, please contact Debbie Fox at 330-966-2433. It is such a rewarding and enjoyable opportunity to share God's love and His Word with Zion's Youth!

This year's teachers will include Connie Riffle, Janet Slease, Mary Humbert, Vicki Givler, and Courlene Coulter. We are trying something different with our class groupings this year in hopes of giving the children a great environment to learn God's word, enjoy their friends at Zion, and have fun. We are looking forward to a year full of fun and learning. See you on September 14th.

More Great News For Zion's Youth:

Confirmation Instruction and the High School Class:

Our Confirmation class will start again on Sunday, September 16, at 9:15 a.m. in the Resource Center. This class is for all 7th and 8th graders. Renee Schrader will again lead our Confirmation program. We will be studying the Hear We Stand Confirmation program. We've got a good class, a fabulous instructor, and we're looking forward to another great year.

Our High School class will also start Sunday, September 14, at 9:15 am. Tina Beaber will lead this class with a curriculum of interesting and relevant topics for this group, along with the help of Steve and Linda Ross. They will also explore opportunities for service work throughout the year. We are very grateful for the time and dedication of our leaders and encourage all of our High Schoolers to join them each Sunday morning for an important – and fun – life experience.

Fall Oktoberfest Youth Missions Craft Show News:

The Youth Missions Craft Show will be here before we know it, so we are planning to start working on the youth's projects this month. We will again put together raffle baskets for each of the Sunday School classes. We will assign each class their theme on Sunday, September 14, and would like all items to be donated for the baskets by Sunday, September 28. Tickets for these baskets will go on sale the first Sunday of October. We will also start working on the craft projects that the youth will sell at the Craft Show.

Just in case you were wondering, the Youth Missions Craft Show will take place on Saturday, October 18, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This is a great event at Zion that helps our youth program, and we need lots of help to make it a success. There will be sign-up sheets in Luther Hall in late September for volunteers, bake sale items and other food we will need. We encourage everyone to help out if possible. We really appreciate your support of Zion's youth!

Zion's "Youth Spotlight Pages" Are Back By Popular Demand!:

Please help your children fill out the **Youth Spotlight Form**, which is included in the newsletter this month. If you have more than one child, additional copies of this form are available in the Church Office, or from Debbie Fox. We will have plenty of copies available on Rally Day! We

would like forms for all of Zion's children from ages one through eighteen. We will resume our *Spotlight Page* with the October edition of *The Zion Herald*. The truth is that our Zion church family really looks forward to reading and learning about our amazing youth! So, please, return the completed forms to Debbie Fox by Sunday, September 21. It's a big part of what we do.

The Women of Zion:

The monthly Bible study for the Women of Zion meets on the third *Tuesday, September 16*, when we will start a three-month Bible study of the story of Ruth and Naomi. The key verse for our first session is Ruth 1.16: "Ruth said, 'Entreat me not to leave, or to return from following after you: for where you go, there I will go; and where you live, there I will live. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.'"

Often the story of Ruth is portrayed as a simple romance, a quaint love story involving a beautiful young woman and a prominent handsome man whose marriage results in the birth of a son who will become an ancestor to David and, eventually, to Jesus. In our three sessions on the book of Ruth, we will see that this marvelously written story is much more. For instance, the language in which Ruth was originally written is Hebrew, which is a playful, open-ended language that delights in ambiguity and double meanings. Throughout our study we will highlight nuances and word plays that help make the story entertaining to read and inviting to ponder.

We invite all of Zion's women to join us on Tuesday, September 16, in Luther Hall. You will enjoy the fellowship, and we'll enjoy the company. Our study begins with the following prayer: "Gracious God, you invite us to be a part of the journey of your people traveling together on our way. As we enter the journeys of Naomi and Ruth, we pray that your Spirit will enliven our own journeys as your loved and loving daughters and sons. Grant us grace to sense in our own lives your loving kindness toward us even as you equip us to live in loving loyalty with one another. This we pray in the name and by the power of the One who journeys with us every step of the way, even to the end of the age. Amen"

Adult Sunday School:

Catching the Next Wave is the topic of discussion for our adult Sunday School class. The author, Steven Goodwin, is a Lutheran pastor, who was serving an ELCA congregation outside of Seattle when he wrote this book. He found himself serving in one of almost 3,500 congregations in the ELCA, which, despite being located in an area that could grow, was actually declining. In other words, the demographics were good, and other congregations in the area were growing, but not the one he was serving. It's one thing to decline in a location where most other churches are also declining, and where the changing demographics make growth almost impossible. But why do churches continue to decline when they can grow? What sustains the process of long-term decline? *Catching the Next Wave* asks these questions, in the context of being a congregation that turned it around. The image of the wave was drawn from Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, where the point was to reinforce the importance of looking to God for the answer ... to our questions and to our prayers. Here's how

Chuck Danner put it back in 2005, when we were taking a closer look at how to grow. “Rick Warren uses an example comparing what surfers do with how churches grow. Surfers look for the big wave. They don’t themselves make the wave, but their role is to recognize a big wave and ride it to success. Likewise, our role as part of the body of Christ is to recognize the waves God sends us, knowing that these waves are made by God, not by us. I believe God is sending Zion a very big wave right now, a wave that can lead to a stronger, healthier, and growing church. Now is our time to catch the wave.” Don’t you agree? Why not join us on Sunday mornings between the services in Luther Hall. You’ll be glad you did; and so will we.

Thank You's To Zion:

Dear volunteers at the Food Pantry,

I thank you on behalf of my family for your gifts of time and donations of food. My income is Social Security, and doesn’t keep up with the increases of our expenses. We really enjoyed the fresh fruit and vegetables. May God bless all of you for your work.

Thank you,
Jessie Zarlengo

Anniversaries In September

September 3	John & Virginia Long
September 3	Drew & Beth Heller
September 7	Bill & Peggy Leed
September 20	Calvin & Mary Shunk
September 21	Sam & Beth Shaheen
September 22	Jim & Betty Boettler
September 30	Doug & Lisa Roman

September Senior Birthdays

September 4	Mike Babich
September 6	Jan Meyer
September 6	Carol Rossbach
September 11	Shirley Horton
September 30	Sue Everhart

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. HEALTH KITS include hand towels, combs, nail-files, bars of soap, toothbrushes, and 3/4 inch band-aids. SCHOOL KITS include spiral notebooks (*and we really do need spiral notebooks*), blunt scissors, 12-inch and metric rulers, 2 ½ 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.

Canton City Churches:

The news is unfolding very quickly for the covenant agreement that has brought our Canton City Lutheran Churches into a closer relationship of mutual support and shared ministries. It was just a matter of weeks ago when Trinity Lutheran Church said goodbye to their pastor of two year, Pr. Darlene Grega. Pastor George Keeler of First Lutheran is planning to retire. There are interim plans and proposals in the works. Pastor Tim Muse from Martin Luther Lutheran Church and Pastor Darla Ann Kratzer from Bethel Lutheran Church are working to bridge the gaps left by departing staff. Pastor Muse described these days as exciting times for Canton City Lutheran Churches. Pastor Kratzer put it this way: *“Because of the departure of Pastor Darlene Grega of Trinity, and the impending retirement of Pastor George Keeler of First, some of the possibilities for sharing pastoral and secretarial staff will be put into practice on a trial basis.”* Trinity will move its one worship service to 9:00 a.m., and Martin Luther will move their Sunday service to 10:30 a.m. Pastors Keeler, Kratzer, and Muse will share the responsibility of presiding at Trinity's 9:00 a.m. service, and all three pastors will take turns presiding and preaching at one another's services, which will allow the congregations to get a better feel for common challenges they face, and the gifts God has given to address these challenges together. Pr. Kratzer ends by saying, *“I ask that you not make any assumptions during this time of discovery and learning.”* Proposals will be specified and votes taken in charting their course ahead. *“It is my hope that you will find this sharing of pastors leads to more energy, variety, and joy in our congregations and among our clergy.”* God is doing a new thing with our Canton City Lutheran Churches. Our hopes and prayers are with them.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MARJORIE WOODSIDE

June 18, 1921 – August 7, 2008

It was a series of unfortunate events, occurring just a year prior to the celebration of their golden wedding anniversary, when what was at the time an inexplicable circulatory anomaly caused Marge to black out at just the wrong time, causing her to fall in just the wrong way and to land at just the wrong angle, leading to a fracture of the wrong vertebrae, and leaving Marge paralyzed from the neck down. No matter what the doctors did, they were unable to make Marge better. They didn't think that she would last the weekend, and then the week, and then the month, then six months. It was, in fact, sixteen years later, faithfully surrounded by family and friends, and lovingly cared for by her husband of sixty-five years, that Marge, whose survival was a medical miracle, truly, a life for the record books, finished her course on earth to take her place in the home our Lord has prepared in heaven. You might think that these last sixteen years were all about the wonders of modern medical technology, which assisted and made possible Marge's every breath. But, in fact, hers is a love story that offers a lasting tribute to love's power and love's promise that two shall become as one, which is exactly what happened for Blair and Marge. What love lived and thrived in this marriage, and in the home and family their love

crested and sustained! What kept Marge going, engaged, open to the blessings of life that filled these last sixteen years? It was this love....

Of course, Marge's life didn't begin sixteen years ago. What is more, these last sixteen years did not define the life and measure of the woman. It should be obvious that it was the preceding seventy-one years that formed the character that made her life her own, and enabled her to claim her life after the fall, and make it tell her story, the story of Marjorie Mary Garthwaite Woodside, wife and mother, homemaker and sportswoman, a natural beauty with a loving smile, and determination that could win hearts, form lives, and change the world for good one task at a time. I loved hearing stories about the Garthwaite boys who loved sports, and football, and the Canton Bulldogs. I loved hearing about Marge's trek halfway across the country to Amarillo, Texas, where Blair and Marge tied the knot, while service to their country called, and Blair prepared for his role as a young lieutenant in the Air Force, and Marge came home to prepare for the eventual arrival of their first son, Blair the third, the first of four boys, including, of course, Bruce, Brian, and Brent, all Marge's pride and joy.... The loves that were cultivated during those seventy-one years leading up to their forty-ninth wedding anniversary in 1992 gave definition and meaning to these past sixteen years.

A great irony and profound truth is that by inviting the care she received from those she loved, she formed and influenced her boys more than she could ever have hoped with all her active effort as loving mom, active caregiver, ever-present shoulder to lean on and support to rely on. This is, of course, one of the great ironies and profound truths of the Gospel, too. We like to think of God as the preeminent actor in the universe, the all-powerful creator, who called creation into being with a word, whose Spirit moved over the face of the waters, bringing forth order from chaos, giving form and breathing life into everything that exists. God is active, preeminent, victorious, omnipotent, omniscient, and everywhere present as God and Lord. But in Christ, it is the Passion that identifies God's love definitively and decisively. The Passion, as the root word indicates, refers to God in the passive mode, with God bearing our burdens and suffering the pain our sin often inflicts. According to the Gospel, that is what turns out to reveal the full breadth of God's glory, the true nature of God's being, the perfect portrait of God's love. There on the Cross through the Passion, God displays what it means to be our Redeemer and Lord. It isn't always in the active mode that we learn the most about God, about love, or about us; and that's what Marge Woodside helped teach us.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF CORA MAE LANZALOTTA

August 4, 1921 – August 30, 2008

Cora Lanzalotta was a beautiful, vivacious woman who loved life, enjoyed it, bringing great joy to the lives of those whom she loved and those who loved her. Corky is one of those unique persons for whom it could be said that life begins at 80, when she married Nick, or that life begins at 70, when she sank her first hole-in-one, or life begins at 60, when she began a new life with Don Sykes, or life begins at 50, when her love for art emerged and found full expression through her many water colors and beautiful paintings, or life begins at 40, or at 30, or at 20, with each turn forming another chapter in a long, full, varied, and wonderful life. Whether it was as president of her high school class, graduate from business school, newly wed with Art Deibel, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, Corky's love for life lit up every room she entered.

When Jesus tells us that he came that we might have life filled with abundance, we need look no farther than Cora Lanzalotta to see what life filled with abundance looks like. We thank God for her life among us. She was truly blessed, and a blessing to every one of us.

Corky became a member of Zion with her family in 1958, and has remained a member ever since. She represents the best of times for Zion, as we grew through the tenures of Pastors Ruth and Meuschke to become a church with over 1,000 members, a mega-church before there were mega-churches! She recounts with pride and reverence (in her self-written obituary) how she served as a Sunday School teacher, as both teacher and superintendent of Vacation Bible School, as a member for twenty-five years of the Altar Guild, serving with the Women's Circle and on the Evangelism Committee. That's quite a connection; and, having known Cora, I can understand why the church grew as well as it did, with that life-loving, upbeat, win 'em with a smile, gem of a woman, whose love of life was truly infectious. Yes, Corky shared in Zion's golden age, and if those rural hills of Dundee, Ohio strike us as a rough place to begin her journey, then Cora Lanzalotta was a diamond in that rough, whose life has been a celebration of her unwavering faith in God's unwavering love.

Corky wanted Romans 5:1-5 to be read at her Service of Christian Burial, and it is clear why these words had so much meaning for her. They take us into the depths of human suffering, offering confidence that God will not let us down, nor ever let us go. *"Therefore, since we are justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to the grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing in the glory of God. More than that, we even rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us."* We all know that there is no necessary or logical connection between the suffering we endure and the formation of hope and character. Suffering is just as likely to break us down as build us up. When we think about the burdens that Corky bore this past year, with her torn ligaments and broken bones in her ankle, together with the cancer that caused her rapid decline and death, we cannot help but marvel at the buoyant spirit that sustained her, giving way to a strength that showed the difference faith can make, demonstrating in living color the miracle of how her suffering was shaped by character, giving way to hope, which did not disappoint, because it was so clearly evident that God was present, in the peace she never relinquished. When I think of Cora, I will remember the words she wrote in her obituary and the picture that is painted in the first verse in the hymn she selected as our hymn of the day: *"When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou has taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul."* Amen