

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:

October was every bit as packed full to overflowing with every kind of busyness as promised! Our *Communion Class for Kids* began as scheduled with the first Sunday of the month, and Debbie Fox and Charlie Danner will have more to say about that great experience later in this newsletter. The *Festival of the Reformation* brought out the best of our red here at Zion on Sunday, October 26, and that set the stage for our talking about getting in the black with our *Congregational Meeting* on October 29. The *Proposed Budget for 2009* was assembled and sent, presented and approved with a fall congregational meeting that also served as the occasion for our annual Halloween surprise. Oddly enough, that scheduling mix has turned out to be a great combination. It keeps the scary stuff out of the meeting! We'll say more about these events later in the newsletter. All of this is on top of what consumed the month, which is what is now known as the Annual Youth Missions Craft Show, which occurred inside and outside of the church on the morning, noon, and night of Saturday, October 18. That, too, was as engaging, as enriching, and as exhausting as promised.

Forty tables had been rented to the crafters that join us. Hundreds of German take-out dinners had been prepared. Gift baskets had been assembled. Signs were posted in the yards of members and at busy street corners. Advertising was placed in local newspapers, church newsletters, and bulletin boards everywhere. The floor plan was designed, reconfigured, and then followed. The doors of the church were opened at 7:30 a.m., crafters arrived, and then the community began to filter through Luther and Memorial Halls. All of the planning and the praying, all of the hard work we invested, the arms we twisted, the ears we bent, the fun we had, the frustrations we shared were worth the effort. The crafters were pleased; the kitchen crew was tired; the clean-up crew was finished; and everyone went home. It was finished, and then the counting began. We'll have more to say about that later in this newsletter; but let me say thank you. Thank you to those who rented and visited our craft tables. Thank you to those who bought and donated dinners. Thank you for supporting our youth and our church with your time, your interest, your many dollars, and, of course, your heartfelt love.

We now look forward to an action packed November, which includes All Saints Sunday (on November 2), the responsibility to VOTE (on November 4), Thankoffering Sunday and our lifting up the work of the Women of Zion (on November 9), a celebration of Holy Baptism the next Sunday (on November 16), and then our Dedication Sunday (on November 23), when we will offer our thanks for all the work and workers that have made our Sanctuary Renovation project and the new Heating, Air-Conditioning system a reality. Yes, indeed, that is a full schedule; but that's not all. We are invited to a special Community Thanksgiving Service on Tuesday, November 25, hosted by Trinity Baptist Church on behalf of the North Canton Ministerial Association; and on Sunday, November 30, the season of Advent begins! This means that our Advent Sunday Evening Services begin, featuring great food, home advent wreaths, and a new Advent Devotional Book that we are working on, which we will say more about later in this newsletter. Wow! That's a mouthful, and a monthful, and a life full of the opportunities that will help us grow in our love for God and one another as we join together in the worship we offer and the service God desires through Christ our Lord.

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

Carol Rossbach called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members in attendance were Jayne Schrader, Dave Palumbo, Betty Tracy (Social Outreach), Mark Votaw (Resource), Chris Thomas (Property), Tina Beaber (Learning), Dale Jacobs (Worship) and Pastor Sherwindt.

The September's Treasurer's Report showed continued progress in whittling away at our Operating Budget deficit for 2008. Income exceeded expenses by \$476, and we received an additional \$3,250 for the HVAC system. While support for the Operating Budget isn't quite where we'd like it to be, Total Giving has been nothing short of phenomenal.

We then moved on to the main item on the agenda, approving the Proposed Budget for 2009. The Proposed Budget anticipates that we will fill the openings in our support staff, which means that we plan on hiring a Church Office Secretary and a Choir Director. Zion's *Fall Congregational Meeting*, which is when we discuss and vote on the proposed budget, has been scheduled for Wednesday evening, October 29th, beginning with dinner in Memorial Hall at 6:15 p.m., followed by our meeting in the Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m.

FINANCIAL FACTS FOR SEPTEMBER

September Income	30,157.89
September Expenses	<u>29,681.49</u>
September Surplus	476.40
Income thru September	191,847.80
Surplus entering '08	+3,765.17
Expenses " September	<u>195,926.32</u>
Deficit thru September	(313.35)
2008 YTD (Deficit)	(313.35)
2007 YTD (Deficit)	(785.04)

We thank you for your generous support!

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

We began with a truly exceptional dinner, prepared by Dale Jacobs and Dave Palumbo. We thank the Youth of Zion for providing the delicious pork, some of which became pork schnitzel, with roast pork loins for those who desired an option. Mixed vegetables and Dale's special *loaded* mashed potatoes filled out the menu. Council members were present in force, to help with set-up and clean-up, as well as to contribute to the full array of desserts that graced our dessert buffet. The food was great, and so was the turnout.

We easily met our quorum, and the business part of our congregational gathering was called to order by Carol Rossbach a little after 7:00 p.m. Carole Singer accompanied our hymn. Pastor Sherwindt offered our prayer. The 2009 Proposed Budget was introduced by Mark Votaw, and after a few questions about the details of our Proposed Budget Guidelines, approval followed. The 2009 Budget calls for a very small increase over the 2008 Budget, and if we are fortunate enough to experience some cost savings with our new HVAC system, we may wind up with no real increase. This could be good news, given that so many of us have been taken for quite a roller coaster ride with what is going on with the financial turbulence on Wall Street and Main Street.

We still have some loose ends to deal with when it comes to both the HVAC system and our Sanctuary Renovation project. Jim Fidler and Laura Thompson gave updates on the work and financing of the HVAC system. Pastor Sherwindt offered a few financial facts in talking about the Sanctuary. To date, we have collected \$27,887.92 for the Sanctuary; and we have spent \$25,129.35. We adjourned our meeting right around 8:00 p.m., and closed by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

GOOD NEWS FROM OUR 2008 YOUTH MISSIONS CRAFT SHOW

Thank you to the Youth of Zion and the Sunday School leaders for their help and hard work in getting ready for the 2008 edition of the Youth Missions Craft Show. This year's show was, once again, a great success! A huge *thank you* goes out to Cindy Young, with lots of help from Tim Meister, for organizing and heading up such a great event. The Raffle Baskets created by the Sunday School classes were again a big hit. *Thank you* to our teachers, the youth and their parents for their donations and to all who helped assemble the baskets on Thursday night. We also extend a hearty *thank you* to the Youth of Zion and our youth leaders for making great items for the Youth of Zion Craft Table. The chocolate covered pretzels were a big hit. The neck pillows, the foot stools, and the angels turned out great. Everything turned out beautifully, and, for folks from Zion who are looking for great gift items for the holiday season, we have lots of crafts on display and still for sale in Luther Hall.

We really appreciate all of the hard work that went into preparing for the Craft Show. It's hard to name everyone; but we surely want to extend a great big *thank you* to Cindy Young, Tim Meister, Tina Beaber, Mary Humbert, Renee Schrader, Connie Riffle, Janet Slease, along with Steve and Linda Ross for leading our youth in making these great items. We would also like to thank the members of the congregation who donated items to sell to help raise funds for the youth during the Craft Show. Between the Raffle Baskets, the Youth Craft Tables, the Bake Sale, the purchase and donation of German dinners, just about everybody deserves a great big hug. *Thank you* to Renee, Jayne & Adam Schrader, Tina Beaber, Linda Ross, Mary Humbert, Connie & Melissa Riffle, and Janet Slease, along with the youth who were on hand to take care of the bake sale, our concessions, the raffle baskets, and the youth craft tables the day of the Craft Show! We would also like to thank everyone that helped with set up on Friday and tear down Saturday afternoon. This event takes a large group of committed volunteers, and we are so grateful to everyone for their time and hard work.

Net Income for our Craft Show exceeded last year's success by a long shot! Between the sale of German Dinners, our Concession Stand, and the Bake Sale, we cleared \$2,289.18, while the Craft Show, Raffle Baskets, and Youth Craft Tables raised \$1,533.24. To this amount, we can add the generosity of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, whose gift of \$800 brings our total net income from the 2008 Youth Missions Craft Show to **\$4,622.42**. When we remember that we didn't even have this fundraising event five years ago, it is truly amazing that we have created this incredibly successful tradition. It has not been without a lot of hard work and many hours spent hoping for the best, praying for the strength, and calling lots of folks selling German dinners. The list of persons we need to thank for our success with the German Dinner part of our Craft Show includes the kitchen crew of Dale Jacobs, Mark Votaw, Marilyn Espe-Sherwindt, and Dave Palumbo. Pastor Sherwindt oversaw the sale of German Dinner tickets, and all of our youth, together with their parents, did a great job in adding to the number of dinners sold. Our joyous thanks go out to Ethan Frock, Christian Heller, Laura Kay, Ronda Keating, Ben, Matt & Lauren Mathie, Ashley Porter, Maddie Reffel, Brooke & Taylor Roman, Nicki Ross, and Kelly Walters. Thank you all so much for your amazing support for our amazing youth!

THE BISHOP'S GATHERING

Seven from Zion attended the Bishop's Fall Gathering. Those attending were Pastor Sherwindt, Charlie Danner, Joyce Gibeaut, Linda Lancashire, Edna Smith, Betty Tracy, and Carol Rossbach. We were greeted by people in the parking lot, and in the Narthex, and by the time we reached the Sanctuary, we had been greeted with at least a dozen smiles and lots of information. The theme of the Gathering was *Keys to Sunday Morning Excellence*. The evening began with a model Sunday morning worship (minus the sermon). We used a setting from the *ELW (Evangelical Lutheran Worship)*, and, as most of us were unfamiliar with the service and songs, it gave us a feeling of how a visitor might feel coming to our service. Next followed a light meal, with no tables and very few chairs to mimic a Sunday morning fellowship or coffee hour, and encourage people to mix and greet others. We then returned to the Sanctuary, where Bishop Eaton reflected on the experience, and then we split into three workshops. Joyce and Edna attended *Worship Hospitality*, led by Bishop Eaton. Linda and Betty attended *People Hospitality*, led by Pr. Ron Zoesch (Assistant to the Bishop). Charlie Danner and Carol went to *Property Hospitality*, presented by Pr. Laurie Miller (Assistant to the Bishop). Seen through a visitor's eyes we have sixty seconds to make a first impression. Then, it was back to the Sanctuary, where Bishop Eaton asked for people's input on what they learned. In a few words: Property should be clean and inviting; Hospitality, friendly and welcoming to members as well as visitors; Worship, well-prepared, with variety and simplicity. This Gathering had the largest attendance ever for a Bishop's Gathering, and all agreed that it was an excellent experience.

WATCH OUT FOR ADVENT!

It's hard to imagine, but Advent is right around the corner. In fact, for planning purposes, it's already here. Advent means the arrival of our Sunday Evening Advent dinners, with devotions and a craft to follow. This year, Carol Rossbach has designed a beautiful Advent wreath, which will become the family craft as we open the season on November 30. We will begin with dinner, hosted by the Church Council. The food will be delicious; the craft, very doable for entire families; and our worship service will introduce our Advent Devotional Book, containing reflections offered by fellow members, and inviting us to clear through the clutter of our lives to focus on the reason for the season.

November 30 will be a wonderful evening at Zion, followed by Sunday Evening Advent Programs on December 7, 14, and 21. The Men of Zion will host our dinner on *December 7*, and we will invite our home-grown talents at Zion to shine in our Lessons & Carols service. The Chancel Guild will host our dinner on December 14, with Carol Rossbach designing our family craft, as the evening focuses on the tradition developed around Chrismons. The Youth of Zion, along with their families and leaders, will host our dinner on *December 21*, with the worship service lifting up Christmas carols from around the world.

The Advent season at Zion offers a series of exceptional dinners, along with devotions that will keep our hearts focused on the reason for the season and our lives grounded in the love that this season celebrates, God's love in Christ, the babe born in the manger way back when, and alive among us now. We will offer two *Christmas Eve* services, a family service at 6:00 p.m., and our candle-light service, which begins with special music at 8:00 p.m.

GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- Sunday, November 2:** Celebration of Certificates with the Completion of Communion Class
Sunday, November 9: Children's Christmas Program Practice begins during Sunday School
Sunday, November 16: Youth Thanksgiving Service Event for all ages during Sunday School
Sunday, November 23: Youth Thanksgiving Food Scavenger Hunt after the 10:30 a.m. Service
Saturday, December 13: Dress Rehearsal for Children's Christmas Program and a Pizza Party!
Sunday, December 14: Zion's Children's Christmas Program at the 10:30 a.m. service (only)
Sunday, December 21: Youth, Parents, and Leaders host our Sunday Evening Advent Service

PRE-K THROUGH THE SIXTH GRADE

The month of November will be dedicated to our Children's Christmas Program and service projects for Thanksgiving. On Sunday, November 2, the kids will decorate the Thanksgiving bags that we will fill later this month to help our Food Pantry. Then on Sunday, November 9, the children will begin practicing for this year's Christmas program. This year's program is called *Beyond Christmas*, a program that tells the traditional Christmas story, and then takes us beyond it. There are plenty of speaking roles for all who are interested. We also have important roles for those who do not want a speaking part. The children will meet in their classrooms at 9:15 a.m. and have both lessons and play practice. This is a great time of the year for Zion's Sunday School children. The kids have a lot of fun and learn the true meaning of Christmas. As has become our custom, the Christmas Program will be performed on Sunday, December 14, at the 10:30 a.m. service (only).



ZION'S COMMUNION CLASS FOR KIDS

This year's Communion Class for children who are not yet confirmed had a great turn out! All of our children were eager to learn about the gifts of God's grace that are shared with our receiving the bread and the wine of Holy Communion. Charlie Danner taught our 1st through 6th graders, while Debbie Fox and Miriam Keating worked with our Pre-K and Kindergarten children. You can read more about this on the next page, where Charlie Danner describes what we experienced during this year's four Sunday sessions. Our children will receive *Certificates of Completion* at the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, November 2, which is All Saints Sunday.



MORE GREAT NEWS FOR ZION'S YOUTH

LEARNING ABOUT THE MEANS OF GRACE (AS TOLD BY CHARLIE DANNER)

God shows his love to us through the Word and Sacraments. When we ask what is required of us to know we are ready to receive the body and blood, our answer is this – simply a believing heart. This, then, opens the door to discussing a believing heart as a faithful heart, a loving heart, a forgiving heart, all the while remembering that we have Jesus in our hearts to be with us. Our students were receptive, respectful, and responsible. Thanks to the helpers and special thanks to parents for entrusting us with your children for these sessions. Our Communion Class is just one step in an ongoing journey of learning, loving, and responding to what God is doing for us with his amazing grace. We are very proud as a church family of everyone who participated: Grant Beaver, Christopher Thompson, Marcus Rhodes, Weston Milek, Casey Walters, Jeremy Fox, Justin Dague, Cassie Frank, Mallory Rhodes, Summer Heller, Kat Milek, Brooke Stout, Christian Henderson, Zach Mathie, Eric Dague, Jaret Beaver, Nathan Fox, Carley Frank, Lya Milek, Brandon Stout, Natalie Henderson, Max Jacobs, Savannah Heller, and Kevin Walters. God's blessings to all!



OUR NEXT YOUTH & FAMILY EVENT AT ZION

We are actively working on our Thanksgiving Service Project during the Sunday School hour. We are inviting our Sunday School kids to work on a project that supports Zion's Food Pantry. They will be making specially decorated Thanksgiving bags, in which the Food Pantry Crew will this deliver year's holiday meals. So, we will have a special youth event during Sunday School on **November 16** to fill these bags for our Food Pantry families. We will have juice and donuts to start with, and then get to work filling the bags for our friends at the Siffrin House. Please be sure to join us during Sunday School, and remember, this event is for all of Zion's Youth, Pre-K through High School. Next up is our food scavenger hunt in the neighborhoods around Zion, which is scheduled for Sunday, November 23. We will have lunch immediately following the second service, and then put our teams together to head out into the neighborhood. The hunt will be for items that are greatly needed by our Food Pantry. We are always in need of extra adults who are willing to help with this very worthwhile activity. Again, this event is also for all of Zion's youth, Pre-K through High School.

NEWS FROM THIS YEAR'S YOUTH HALLOWEEN COSTUME PARTY

The Halloween Party we scheduled on the evening of the Congregational Meeting was a whole lot of fun this year. We're not sure which is scarier, the costume party or the budget meeting! We had twenty-one children dressed in awesome costumes, and there was such a great variety represented. We extend a big thank you to everyone who helped make the party such a great success – especially the party volunteers: Connie & Melissa Riffle, Janet Slease, Connie & Jeff Frank, Miriam Keating, Brooke & Taylor Roman, Laura Kay, and Nicole Ross! Your help was awesome. There was great food, great crafts, creative pumpkin decorating, and fun games. A terrific time was had by all! We would also like to thank everyone who donated items for the party, and especially those who helped us *Trick or Treat* at the end! We truly appreciate everyone's time and donations.



THE WOMEN OF ZION

BLANKET SUNDAY was a great success, at least when measure by how beautiful the Sanctuary looked with the many colored quilts draping the pews and filling the Chancel on October 5. Then, with the help of Verle Elsass and Garry Leed, the Women of Zion were able to pack up their 64 quilts, 19 blankets, 78 school kits and 64 health kits, and get them delivered to Jerusalem Lutheran Church in Seville on Saturday, October 11, where they became part of a larger shipment headed to such places as Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Mali, Peru, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Ukraine, and Zambia. Thanks for caring, and for helping.

The Women of Zion will celebrate their annual **THANKOFFERING SERVICE** on the Sunday of **November 9**. This is an opportunity to lift up the ministry of women in the ELCA, and to honor the work done by women's organizations in congregations all over the country, including our own. *Love Offering* envelopes will be made available in the bulletin on Thankoffering Sunday.

Women *and men* are invited to show their thanks with an offering of support for the work of the Women of Zion and the Women of the ELCA. That's Sunday, November 9!

The monthly Women's Bible Study meets on Tuesday, November 18, with our focus on the hidden hand of God's wisdom revealed in the story of Ruth and Naomi. Last month it was Ruth's *chesed* (extravagant loving loyalty) that saved the day for Naomi and opened a joyous future for Boaz. God will use Ruth and Boaz to create a new link in the story of salvation, which will lead through David to Jesus, the Christ born of Mary in Bethlehem. Loving Lord, continue to open the eyes of our hearts to see the adventures to which your Spirit invites us ... in Jesus' name. Amen

THANK YOU'S AND MORE

Dear friends and members of Zion,

My deepest appreciation for the many cards received from members, which expressed thoughts, prayers, and sympathies for my Dad's passing. And thank you for all of the condolences offered at church. Each one means a lot. Marcia, Laurie, Bill, and I also want to express our heartfelt gratitude for Pastor's planning and leading a meaningful service in memory of Dad.

Garry Leed

The LeBeau family invites you to –

AN OPEN HOUSE AT THE CHURCH
Sunday, November 23, 2:00—4:00 p.m.

**AS WE CELEBRATE THE
65TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF
ELLIS & ANNA MAE LEBEAU**

[Please, no presents, just your presence!]

OUTREACH AND HABITAT

WELCOME HOME CELEBRATION! Habitat for Humanity of Greater Stark and Carroll Counties has planned a huge celebration to dedicate 14 homes recently built here in our area: nine in Canton, four in Massillon, and one in Carroll County. Many churches have been involved in the massive building effort, including Zion, who worked with Israel Lutheran Church of Paris on the home in Carroll County and the Jerome Newman home on South High in Canton. The youth of Zion took the lead in July, and then again in September, to offer some on-hands help with the building process. Our Vacation Bible Schoolers also got in on the generosity by donating \$500 to support the good work of Habitat for Humanity.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has committed \$100,000,000 over a period of ten years to assist Habitat with their ministry. The congregations of our Canton-Massillon Conference have been very active in making use of these funds to build homes locally in our backyard. Our own Jayne Schrader is the Office Manager of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Stark and Carroll Counties, and she will attest to the great work our Lutheran congregations are doing in leading the way in this battle to make housing affordable.

Jayne also joins in inviting you to come to the *Welcome Home Celebration* on Thursday, November 6, 2008, when we gather in the St. Stephen Martyr Lutheran Church Family Life Center at 7:00 p.m. to ask the Lord's blessing on the fourteen families who have been blessed with newly built homes. Zion in North Canton, Advent in Uniontown, Israel in Paris, Holy Trinity on Middlebranch, and St. Stephen Martyr are among the many who have made this evening possible. Join us.

THE FOOD PANTRY, TOO

It has been often thought that our Food Pantry at our current level is sufficient to fulfill the hunger needs that we serve. Each year the congregation guarantees at least \$3,600 for the pantry, and we receive \$2,400 a year from the Stark County Hunger Task Force. With that money we provide food for approximately one hundred families. This figures out to be about \$5.00 per month per family. The math is simple: if your family can get by each month on \$5.00, then we have enough money to feed those who seek our assistance. Let's face it, we all spend more than \$5.00 for each meal, let alone for each month!

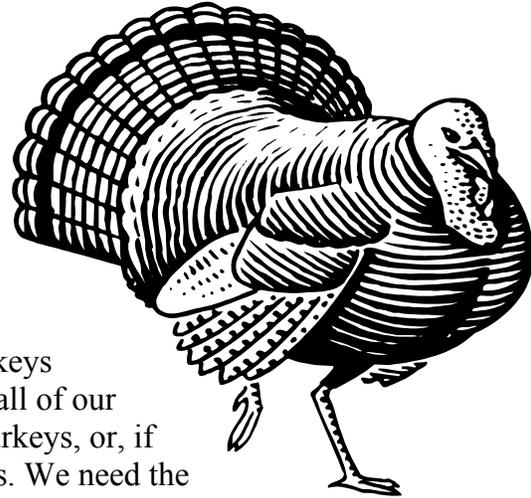
Seven years ago, we could purchase a lot for the buck. It was even possible to create meals on the food pantry budget. But that is now a thing of the past. We have gone from providing one pound of butter twice a month, to two sticks per month. Our toilet paper, once given out in four-packs, is now given out only one roll at a time. There are no more jars of jelly. We now hand out little restaurant size packets. Protein is very, very hard to find at a cost effective price. USDA juice once was a free item at the Akron Canton Food Bank. Now we have to pay for it.

Many families in our community are hurting, and we are hurting with them; but with more than seven years of experience under our belts, with our faith in God and your support, the faithful crew who staffs our Food Pantry will continue to do this important work. You remember what our Lord said, "Inasmuch as you have done it for the least, the lost, and the lowly, you have done it to me."

With that said, we really have to talk turkey! (Please see the next page for all the details.)

THANKSGIVING MEANS TURKEYS AND A COMMUNITY SERVICE

We're looking for a few good turkeys - not the human kind, but the poultry kind!



Please help us achieve our goal of providing 77 turkeys so that we can offer a full Thanksgiving dinner for all of our food pantry families. You are welcome to donate turkeys, or, if you prefer, cash so that we can purchase the turkeys. We need the turkeys and the cash donations to be in place by November 9. That will give us the time we need to make sure that our pantry clients receive the gifts we have for them. We also are lacking in the stuffing department. If each family could bring in just one box of turkey stuffing, that would be grand. Remember, money and stuffing are due by November 9th.

We are now accepting Cash Donations or the Actual Frozen Bird!

When it comes to Thanksgiving, we not only serve our pantry clients, but also all the Siffrin homes in Stark County! Siffrin homes are group homes for individuals with mental or physical limitations. Our goal for Thanksgiving is **seventy-seven 12-pound turkeys**. The turkeys are just a part of what we supply through the ministry of our Food Pantry. Every family is handed bags filled with stuffing, potatoes, vegetables, cranberries, applesauce, noodles, muffins, pies, and something to drink. We know that with your help, and God's, we will achieve our goal.

We extend a great big Zion Food Pantry *THANK YOU* to our partners at **Community Christian Church**, who have been very generous in their support of the ministry we offer through the Food Pantry. The *Koinonia Fellowship* from Community Christian has been offering a \$50.00 monthly donation to help with our expenses. Then, during the Main Street Festival, Community Christian pledged the profits from their concession stand to Zion's Food Pantry. That gift amounted to \$571.55! Isn't that incredible! What a wonderful gift with which to start this busy Thanksgiving season. Thank you so much! In truth, many of our sister congregations in the North Canton Ministerial Association lend a helping hand to Zion's Food Pantry & Clothing Closet. Northminister Presbyterian Church is faithful with their donations of food and cash. Trinity Baptist remembers our Food Pantry with food drives regularly. St. Paul's Catholic Church involves their youth in food scavenger hunts, and our Community Thanksgiving Service has made the Stark County Hunger Task Force the recipient of our offering almost every year.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF DR. ROBERT LEED

August 4, 1916 – October 14, 2008

I have been Zion's Pastor for going on seven years now, which is plenty of time to get to know our many members. I knew Bob Leed as a long-time faithful member of our community at Zion; but, in all honesty, I can't say that I knew him well. Sure, he was already well into his eighties when I arrived, with his better half already called home to heaven; and it wasn't all that long before his move to the Waterford, and then St. Luke's, made his visits to Zion less frequent. But I've got to tell you that far more important than what I didn't know about Dr. Leed is what I've learned through the love that was so apparent in the memories that Garry and Bill shared with me earlier this week. Sure, their stories were great fun to listen to, but their warmth and love were so tangible you could feel it, get infected by it. What a testimony to a man's presence in the world, to inspire such deep-seated and unfettered affection. Far more important than what I didn't know about this wonderful man is what all of you clearly did, and the reverent respect and heartfelt love he inspired and valued. That has been so evident in the stories you've told, the bond that you share, and the memories that all of you hold priceless.

Who cannot love the story of Bob's dog Snoopy, the smartest dog that ever lived, sort of, at least by Bob's measure, and smart enough to shape a life, his master's life, to devote what turned out to be the length of ninety-two years to the service of Snoopy's friends, and ours. That was one smart dog, and your Dad – and grand-dad, great grand-dad – was one good man, with lots of friends, some with two legs and others with four. What a life, a humble life, to be sure, not filled with dreams that were set too high to reach, or expectations that were too demanding to satisfy, or ideas that thought too much of himself. His feet knew where the ground was. His heart knew how to love and his hands knew how to help. Sometimes the key to life is that simple. Life's challenges can be hard, our obstacles many, the solutions we seek complicated, and the burdens we bear real; but Bob had a way of cutting to the chase, making the world better, and holding those he loved close.

When I was talking with Bill and Garry earlier this week, Bill drew my attention to the Proverbs, where pithy one-liners are hammers hitting the nail on its head, a form of wisdom that Bob loved, and Garry captured with some of his comments earlier in the service. "Dad, why do some people do all the work, while others just tell them what to do and make a lot more money?" "Because you're paid for what you know, not for what you do." And what Bob knew was spelled out right there in Proverbs 12: "Those who love knowledge seek discipline; but those who hate to be rebuked are stupid." Bill will recall this one: "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise; those who walk with fools find more of the same." (13:20) Here is a proverb that we all value: "Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live, but those consumed with evil perish." (11:19) Bob knew what it meant to be steadfast in doing the right thing, and that's what God desires.

Jesus had this straight-forward directness in mind when in Matthew 25, he describes the final judgment not as a test we need to pass based on how well we memorized sets of facts, or how impressive we can be in parsing the finer points of philosophical puzzles or theological truths. The criteria God uses to separate the sheep from the goats are thoroughly practical. "Have you seen those in need that I've placed before you, and have you tried to help?" It's as simple as that. "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty, and gave you food and drink? When did we see you naked or in need, and come to your aid?" The Lord responds, "Truly, I tell you, inasmuch as you did it to the least and the lost and the lowly, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF ALEENE MAE HEIST

October 12, 1913 – October 15, 2008

Aleene Heist led a storied life, a life that was bigger than most might imagine, a Texas-sized life for a nurse who hailed from Butler, Pennsylvania. Aleene lived much of her life in Texas, working alongside Dr. Denton Cooley, who, with the slightly more famous and much more controversial Dr. Michael DeBakey in the 1960s, pioneered open-heart artery by-pass surgical techniques, which we now take for granted as standard practice for medical care, with quintuple by-pass recipients now leaving the hospital by the fourth day after surgery! Aleene was a nurse at the Texas Heart Institute, which was associated with St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston, Texas, where this chapter in medical miracles began. What a life, to be there at the beginning. These historical narratives look a lot different, a lot messier, when you're right there with patients dying, doctor's squabbling, and institutions competing for the glory of bigger headlines and more dollars. Aleene wasn't concerned about those parts of the story, but she was indeed proud of the work that she was privileged to share as a front-line care-giver in a revolution of unimagined progress in the world of medical care.

Aleene was a meticulous woman with a mind for details. She also had a mind for remembering important dates, and three, in particular, stand out. First, there was April 11, 1915, her baptismal birthday, which occurred at St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Butler, Pennsylvania, a day she thought more important than her actual birthday on October 12, 1913. Another date that stands out in the narrative of memories was August 10, 1949, which is the day she arrived in Dallas, Texas. Dallas was kind of cold and unresponsive; but Houston greeted her with open arms and great opportunities. In April of 1956, at the age of forty-three, she walked on to the campus of a complex that would come to include a Shriner's Burn Center, City Hospital, Lutheran Hospital, the now world-renown M.D. Anderson Cancer Clinic, and, of course, the Heart Institute at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, where upon reporting for work she was greeted by none other than Dr. Denton Cooley, whose first words to her were, "We have been busy making history today!"

Aleene created a book of memories while a resident at the Waterford. One of those recollections included some comments about her brother's death back in 1983. Because of the work he did and the role he played in this community as a high school band director, five hundred-plus persons were in attendance during the calling hours. In fact, she writes that "the community stopped the football game so people could come to calling hours." Imagine that! Well, we're not stopping any football games tonight, and there aren't quite five hundred of us gathered here in the chapel at St. Luke's; but Aleene's fondest wish has been fulfilled, her hope and prayer that she made a difference for the good. She will indeed be remembered, as she desired, for being a child of God, baptized on April 11, 1915; and she'll be remembered for being a Christian, personally and professionally, for being faithful, loving, gracious, and a friend, a dependable friend, and a helping friend. She will be remembered for being a friend to others in need of care, to the patients she cared for, for families thousands of miles away receiving comforters through the loving hands of quilters and the work of Lutheran World Relief, and folks in our communities receiving food and assistance through the efforts of congregations operating food pantries and clothing closets all over the country.

Aleene's life has been etched forever in the heart of God and will be preserved through the life-giving love that is ours in Christ, a love that Aleene knew and trusted all of her days, a love that now has the last word, a word of faithfulness promising life everlasting ... in Jesus' name. Amen