

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:

This edition of *The Zion Herald* really does *herald good news*. It is a companion edition to our *Daily Devotional Guide* for Lent. What an extraordinary collection of reflections on growing in faith with family and friends! The inspiration for this devotional guide can be traced to the story and witness of Steve Dague. Steve continues to amaze with the power of his insights into the ways in which God can raise the almost-dead to new life. Steve is not the sort of guy who seeks the spotlight. He is a soft-spoken man, who is comfortable blending into the background. That is a big part of the power of his witness in recounting the strength that God has given him, and the hope that sustains his daily struggle to recover from the almost fatal spinal chord injury he suffered just a little over a year ago. Once Steve responded to the call to offer his meditation for our daily devotional guide, it was clear that there would have to be thirty-nine others joining in this collaborative effort to tell the stories of faith that make Zion come to life.

Council members have offered some eye-opening reflections on what inspires their service. Steve Ross, Mark Votaw, Mary Humbert, Linda Lancashire, Betty Tracy, Dave Palumbo, Dale Jacobs, Carol Rossbach, Jim Fidler (and Elaine, too), Jayne Schrader, Chris Thomas, Tina Beaber: how remarkable that every one has a story to tell that reveals more than a little about themselves and a whole lot about the God we worship and serve through the community we enjoy as Zion Lutheran Church. I have been humbled with pride by the witness this Daily Devotional Guide offers to the love of God that thrives among us in the life we share, the worship we offer, and the service we render. It does not stop with the Council. The Women of Zion, choir members, the Food Pantry Crew, life-long, longer-term, and even newer members offer a great cross section of folks we know who have contributed to this gift that will surely enrich your Lenten journey, your faith in Christ, and our life together.

There are lighthearted moments that will make your smile, and heart-wrenching experiences that will tug on your sympathies, but all with a desire to build your faith in God's presence and your trust in God's faithfulness. Steve Dague's is the first that comes to mind, but there are so many others – Nick and Juanita Cignetti, Shirley Cavender, Blair Woodside, and, of course, if you don't mind laughing out loud, Renee Schrader. I applaud the openness of our contributors; but mostly, I am so deeply grateful for their partnership in this project we call Zion. It will become clear to all as you make your way through the forty days of Lent that there are as many ways to describe the church as there are lives that have found a home in this community we call family. Each of these ways is the path God has used to find us where we are and claim us as His own. That is perhaps the greatest benefit of the gift we have created with our daily devotional guide, the gift of growing in faith as family and friends in a church we are learning to love.

During the process of enjoying each meditation, don't forget that we have, in fact, entered the season of Lent, which features additional opportunities to worship each of the five Sunday evenings in Lent. The Men of Zion, the Chancel Guild, Zion's Senior Choir & Praise Team, our Church Council, and the Youth of Zion (with their parents and leaders) invite you to join us for a light dinner at 5:30 p.m., with exceptional devotions to follow at 6:15 p.m. The fellowship and worship are always more enjoyable when you take the time to join us. Please plan to do just that.

OUR SCHEDULE FOR LENT AND HOLY WEEK

March 1, Sunday	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	Lent 1 , Mark 1:9-15 (Temptation)
March 1, Sunday	5:30 p.m.	Dinner hosted by the Men of Zion
March 1, Sunday	6:15 p.m.	Lenten Renewal at Worship: <i>Taize</i>
March 8, Sunday	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	Lent 2 , Mark 8:31-38 (The Cross)
March 8, Sunday	9:10 a.m.	Children's Easter Play Rehearsal
March 8, Sunday	5:30 p.m.	Dinner hosted by the Chancel Guild
March 8, Sunday	6:15 p.m.	Lenten Renewal at Worship: <i>ELW</i>
March 15, Sunday	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	Lent 3 , John 2:13-22 (The Temple)
March 15, Sunday	9:10 a.m.	Children's Easter Play Rehearsal
March 15, Sunday	5:30 p.m.	Dinner hosted by the Senior Choir
March 15, Sunday	6:15 p.m.	Lenten Renewal at Worship: <i>Taize</i>
March 22, Sunday	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	Lent 4 , John 3:14-21 (God's Love)
March 22, Sunday	9:10 a.m.	Children's Easter Play Rehearsal
March 22, Sunday	5:30 p.m.	Dinner hosted by the Church Council
March 22, Sunday	6:15 p.m.	Lenten Renewal at Worship: <i>ELW</i>
March 29, Sunday	8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	Lent 5 , John 12:20-33 (Resurrection)
March 29, Sunday	9:10 a.m.	Children's Easter Play Rehearsal
March 29, Sunday	9:15 a.m.	The Book of Faith in our Adult Class
March 29, Sunday	5:30 p.m.	Dinner hosted by the Youth of Zion
March 29, Sunday	6:15 p.m.	The Passion Narrative of Saint Mark
April 5, Palm Sunday	8:00 a.m.	Traditional Liturgical Passion Sunday
April 5, Palm Sunday	10:30 a.m.	Zion's Sunday School Easter Program
April 9, Maundy Thursday	12:00 p.m.	Quiet Communion with the Ragman
April 9, Maundy Thursday	7:00 p.m.	Our Traditional Seder (with full meal) <i>We'll need reservations for this one.</i>
April 10, Good Friday	12:00 p.m.	Community Service, Walsh University
April 10, Good Friday	7:30 p.m.	Our Good Friday TENEBRAE at Zion
April 12, Easter Sunday	8:00 a.m.	Easter Sunday Festival Worship
April 12, Easter Sunday	9:15 a.m.	Our Annual Easter Egg Hunt
April 12, Easter Sunday	9:15 a.m.	Sunday School for Adult Class
April 12, Easter Sunday	10:30 a.m.	Easter Sunday Festival Worship

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

We continued our pattern of perfect attendance: Carol Rossbach, Jim Fidler, Jayne Schrader, Dave Palumbo, Tina Beaber, Steve Ross, Betty Tracy, Linda Lancashire, Dale Jacobs, Mary Humbert, Mark Votaw, Chris Thomas, and Pastor Sherwindt. We also continued our pattern of meetings that are brief, on point, and over.

Pastor Sherwindt introduced our approach to this year's Lenten season, with something new and different along with the touch of the old and familiar. We will be learning some new music on Sunday evenings, the music of Taize, and some canticles from the new Lutheran hymnal, Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Jim Fidler will reacquaint us with one of our now famous Lenten dramas on March 22, and the Youth of Zion will reprise their role as narrators of the passion narrative of Mark on March 29. We thanked our hosts in advance for the delicious meals we can expect to share during Lent keeping in mind that the Seder returns this year on Maundy Thursday, which mean our opportunity to enjoy yet another uncommonly good common meal together!

ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS: JANUARY

Carryover 2008 Surplus	+9,640.20
Income for January	17,466.08
Expenses in January	<u>22,271.16</u>
January's Ending Balance	+4,835.12

January was a month where our income was average, and expenses from heating bills and snow-plowing and salting have remained very high, with the result that we started the year by drawing down on the 2009 carryover surplus from last year.

We thank you for your generous support!

MORE COUNCIL NEWS

Betty Tracy, Social Outreach Ministry Elder, reported that she had participated in auditing the financial records for the Food Pantry for 2008, with everything in order, and another year of successful service to our neighbors and community accounted for.

Mary Humbert, Caring Ministry Elder, reported that the Clothing Closet continues to complement the needs that are met through our Food Pantry. The needs of area families are great, and increasing, as economic times worsen. We are thankful for the many volunteers that join us faithfully on the first and third Tuesdays, and for the donations that come in during the week and through the offerings.

Steve Ross, Witness Ministry, reported that the Witness Team, with leadership offered by Howard Dansizen, has been looking for ways to make the posting of information on our website easier and faster. FYI: We post monthly newsletters and weekly sermons, along with the usual website fare – monthly calendars, worship times, service days. We encourage you to check out our website at www.zionevangelicallutheran church.org

Linda Lancashire, Parish Life Ministry Elder, shared the great news that her husband Bob Lancashire will be serving as the North Canton Ministerial Association Coed Softball League Commissioner for his fourth year running. Thank you, Bob!

Chris Thomas, Property Ministry Elder, continues to keep his troops focused on such projects as fire safety, tree trimming, parsonage oversight, some remaining duct work related to the HV/AC system, along with the task of arranging for some touch up repairs to the cast of characters that make up our Christmas/Epiphany Nativity scene.

COUNCIL NEWS (CONT'D)

Jim Fidler, Mutual Ministry Convenor in his role as Vice-President, reported that we now have a full complement of Mutual Ministry members – Blair Woodside, Kay Davis, Brian Milek, and Linda Ross, along with *ex officio* members, Carol Rossbach (President) and Pastor Sherwindt. Jim is also the head of our Nominating Committee, and is working on recruiting members to serve as Council members, Deacons, and Trustees as open seats need to be filled with our next election at the Congregational Meeting in June.

Tina Beaber, Learning Ministry Elder, was looking forward to shopping for Vacation Bible School curriculum, as the Christian Education Committee anticipates another successful year in summer programming. We are thankful for the energy that Megan Meyer brings to our Children's Choir, which had its debut in February with a rousing rendition of *Take a Ride in My Father's Car!*

Dale Jacobs, Worship Ministry Elder, invited all of us to hop on board for a busy Lenten season, with the introduction of new music during our devotional services, and a tasty menu of soups and sandwiches anchoring our light dinners on Sunday evenings. *The key ingredient* to a series of successful Sunday evening Lenten programs is *mutual support*.

Mark Votaw, Resource Ministry Elder, let us know that South Carolina is calling as a good destination for our Youth Mission Trip this summer. Sounds great! Also, due to difficulties in banking, the stock market, and the economy, we have arranged for short-term bridge loans from members to cover costs related to our HV/AC system as we wait for pledges to become donations and for a better time to sell some of the equities we hold in our Merrill Lynch account.

A RICK RIFFLE UPDATE

Connie, Melissa, and Chad, along with members of Rick's family continue to make the daily drive to Cleveland, which Rick is slowly but surely making progress in his recovery from the industrial accident at the Timken Company that landed him in the hospital back on Sunday, January 18th. Rick was operating a remote-controlled crane when a loading platform filled with steel tubing collapsed, causing serious internal and external injuries to his abdominal area and upper thigh. He was rushed from Aultman to Akron General Medical Center, and then moved from Akron to the Cleveland Metro Health System because of their specialized surgical team for dealing with reconstructive surgeries involving his hips and upper thigh.

The early days of Rick's recovery, which dealt with survival, involved heavy doses of pain medication due to ventilators, stabilizing braces, and the need to sterilize external wounds. More recently, following a rather complicated surgery for relocating several abdominal muscles in his upper thigh, Rick began to become more responsive to the many persons who have been visiting him over the course of the past month. There have been more and more subtle signs of responding with appreciation to what the doctors have been able to accomplish, to the gentle touch of loved ones sitting by his side, and even to an episode or two of *Home Improvements!* He will soon get to move from Surgical Intensive Care to the trauma wing on the eleventh floor.

You can receive daily updates on Rick's improvements online by going to the website www.CaringBridge.org and typing in the name **rickriffle** (all small case, no spaces) where you are asked to "enter website name".

GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, March 8: Children's Easter Program Practice during Sunday School at 9:10 a.m.

Sunday, March 15: Children's Easter Program Practice during Sunday School at 9:10 a.m.

Sunday, March 22: Children's Easter Program Practice during Sunday School at 9:10 a.m.

Sunday, March 22: The Children's Choir Sings during the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Sunday, March 29: Children's Easter Program Practice during Sunday School at 9:10 a.m.

Sunday, March 29: Youth of Zion host our Lenten Dinner and lead our Lenten Service

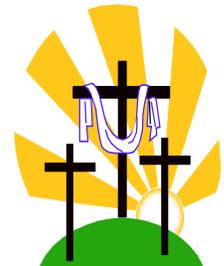
Saturday, April 4: Children's Easter Program Dress Rehearsal in the morning at 11:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday, April 5: Children's Easter Program during the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Easter Sunday, April 12: Our Children's Easter Egg Hunt for all ages during Sunday School

SUNDAY SCHOOL: PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 6

The month of March will be devoted to our preparation for Easter. We will practice for the Children's Easter Program, *The Easter Pageant that Almost Wasn't*, during the Sunday School hour the entire month of March. The program is about a play director who struggles to put on a pageant telling the Easter Story. We will see the Easter bunny, a butterfly, and even the Three Wise Men. It is a fun program for the children to tell the Easter Story in new way! There will also be some short lessons about Easter, along with some Easter crafts!



Practice begins at 9:10 a.m. in the Choir Room, and includes rehearsal of parts and learning the music for the play. The children will perform the program on Palm Sunday, April 5th, at the 10:30 a.m. Service only. We will have a Dress Rehearsal on Saturday, April 4th, at 11:00 a.m. Dress Rehearsal will be followed by a Pizza Party to celebrate all of the children's hard work. We are looking forward to another great performance by Zion's amazing kids!



Also, we will have our Children's Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday, April 12th, during Sunday School. Children of all ages are invited to go on an Easter Egg Hunt. They will hunt for eggs all over the church and outside, too (if the weather permits). Please have your children bring their Easter Baskets on Easter morning, and we will meet in the Narthex at 9:15 a.m.

A FINAL ACME RECEIPTS REMINDER

Thank you to everyone for bringing in your Acme receipts. We really appreciate your support! We are in the process of tallying the receipts and will report what we earned for the youth next month. The program has ended for this school year and will start again in the fall. Thank you!

MORE GOOD NEWS FOR THE YOUTH OF ZION

OUR YOUTH LENTEN DINNER AND SERVICE IS MARCH 29

The Youth will be hosting the Lent Service and dinner on Sunday, March 29th, at 5:30 p.m. That means that we will have to set up in the afternoon, and recruit parents and youth leaders to help with planning the menu and preparing the food. Our youth and their families will be serving a wonderful meal, and, of course, fabulous desserts. During the service, we will be adding special touches to our highly talented rendering of the Passion narrative from the Gospel of Mark. We will be contacting our youth and their families with details about dinner and to assign parts for our dramatic reading during the service.

WE'VE GOT A THEME AND A PROGRAM FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

We have chosen our theme for this year's VBS. The kids will spend a week at the *Studio Go Game Show*, where they will experience real teamwork, real service, and real fun. We have not yet chosen the dates for Vacation Bible School, as we are still checking everyone's calendars. As soon as we set the date, we will let you know. As always, we will need plenty of volunteers to make our VBS a success. If you are interested, please contact Debbie Fox at 330-966-2433. If you are not able to volunteer during the week of Vacation Bible School as a teacher, helper, aid, in the kitchen, with the crafts, the music, or whatever, there are still many other ways to help out. Starting in May, we will put out donation cans and sign up sheets for food and supplies that are needed for the week, with mention of work days to do all of the prep work for VBS. We truly appreciate the support Zion's family always gives for this great event!

THE WOMEN OF ZION

“The king loved Esther more than all the other women.” (Esther 2:17) Welcome to the book of Esther. Session 7 is entitled Esther: Two Queens in Persia. This book is longer than Daniel’s six chapters, and the book of Ruth, too. Like Ruth, Esther acts heroically out of loving loyalty to save her people. Her actions saved the family line of Elimelech, and led to the birth of King David. God is at work, although in hidden, behind-the-scenes ways, so hidden, in fact, that God is never mentioned in the book of Esther! All women in Zion are welcome (and encouraged) to join us in Luther Hall on Tuesday, March 17, to begin our celebration of St. Patrick’s Day with our monthly **Women’s Bible Study**.

Zion’s Comfort Givers meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, *March 12 & 26*, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall. We enjoy coffee, conversation, and being filled with the feeling of knowing that we are helping others through the good that we do.

The **Chancel Guild** is on the schedule to host our Sunday Evening Lenten Dinner on March 8, with plans to serve an exceptional selection of soups, along with all sorts of breads, and a huge selection of outstanding desserts.

THANKS TO OUR WOMEN

Dear WELCA friends at Zion Lutheran,

Thank you for your Christmas gift to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio. We are grateful and humbled by your faithful stewardship of God’s gifts. Camps are simple places where God’s love touches people gently. We offer a living Christian community to thousands of people where the love of Jesus is freely shared. Your generous partnership with this ministry helps us provide a time and place apart for thousands of people. Your gift makes a difference to so many people. Thanks.

*Penny Christiansen
Executive Director*

Dear Comfort Givers,

Agatha and I would like to extend our sincere appreciation for all the hours of service that were put into mending our family quilt. With the quilt being completed, my wife and I can look forward to handing it down to our great-granddaughter. We are so appreciative of all that you did, and want to give special thanks to Betty Tracy and Helen Heller for this beautiful quilt.

*Best regards,
Joseph E. Reiserer*

To our family and friends at Zion,

“Kindness is a gift of the heart. Friendship is a bond of the soul. Forgotten moments are never forgotten.” Thank you for sharing in the celebration of our 50th Anniversary. We would like you to know how grateful we are to everyone who made our Anniversary Open House such a success. All the cards we received were very nice. We have been reading them over and over. Thank you all.

*All our love,
Art & Helen Edwards*

THANKS FROM OUR BISHOP

Dear Pastor and People of Zion,

The economy is in a slump, gas prices are high, things are tight, and yet in spite of it all you have stepped out in faith and helped to close the synod budget gap. I am deeply grateful for your support and for the courage you have shown in not giving in to the culture of fear and scarcity so prevalent today.

Your gift of \$1,000.00, together with the response of other congregations, brings the *Close the Budget Gap* total to \$51,145.19. Your faithfulness makes it possible for our synod to honor the commitments we made to our ministry partners – to our camps and campus ministries, to our social ministries and chaplains, to our seminary and colleges. Thank you.

At last May's Synod Assembly I announced my decision not to cut the budget, but instead to move forward into God's future of adventure and abundance. Your support is making that vision a reality. Thank you for your partnership in the gospel.

*Sincerely,
Elizabeth A. Eaton, Bishop
Northeastern Ohio Synod*

[The 2007 Churchwide Assembly approved the work of a Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding, recommending that Bishop Mark Hanson meet with each synodical bishop to talk about his or her personal stewardship; synod bishops would then meet with pastors, and pastors would meet with parishioners. Bishop Eaton met with Bishop Hanson and found that she appreciated the opportunity to discuss her stewardship. She will meet with pastors in the Canton-Massillon Conference at St. Stephen Martyr Lutheran Church on Tuesday, March 31.]

LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION

You are invited to celebrate St. Patrick's Day right here at Zion, where the ***Lutheran Men in Mission*** will host an Irish feast of **CORNED BEEF & CABBAGE** in Luther and Memorial Halls from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Carryout is available. The price per dinner is \$7.00 for adults, and \$3.50 for children (ages 3 – 12). Make it a point to join us for some delicious food, prepared with love, all for a good cause. For more information, feel free to contact Dick Spall at 330-499-7369.

If our St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef dinner has just whet your appetite, you will love what is coming next. Come one, come all, to the ***Fourth Annual Great Chili Cookoff***, sponsored by Lutheran Men in Mission at St. John Lutheran Church, which is located at 316 Market Street in Canal Fulton. This is a lunch-time event, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., on Saturday, March 28th. The cost is \$5.00 per person, and each person becomes a judge to determine the 2009 Winner of the Great Chili Cookoff. Zion will have several entries, as we try to recapture the crown that Dale Jacobs won two years ago. Make it a point to come and join us. Again, the chili will be great, and the proceeds will help support the ministry that St. John's is now able to do through their new Mission Facility. Call Tom Hardgrove at 330-854-2535 for more information.

AN OLD IRISH BLESSING

*May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.*

THE BOOK OF FAITH, 1

The *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (ELCA) is actively encouraging all members to improve their Biblical literacy. There are lots of resources available to congregations to encourage their members to increase in their knowledge and understanding of the scriptures. Our youth have been participating in the *Bible Bowl* for decades. That's one way to improve our knowledge of the Bible. But beyond the game show experience, what many are looking for is a disciplined, daily walk with the Lord who speaks to us through the Word of God.

“The Bible,” writes Stanley Olson (Division of Ministry, ELCA), “is astonishingly powerful. The Bible changes this sin-filled world. Through the Bible, God engages us with demands that judge us. Through it God engages us with promise, forgiveness, and hope, setting us free to love and serve. Through the Bible, God draws us to trust, to faith in the good news of Jesus Christ. Through the Bible, the Spirit of God *calls, gathers, enlightens and makes holy* the entire people of God.” Luther and Lutherans have been saying this since, well, since Luther wrote our Small Catechism (1529).

The *Book of Faith Initiative*, embraced by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, “envisions the whole church becoming more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered, and sent by the Word.” This means that we want our churches to become communities that understand the role the Bible has played in making us who we are, even as we also grow to understand that the community of the church makes the Bible what it is. We've got a lot of ground to cover, and we would like you to become a part of the *Book of Faith Initiative* here at Zion.

THE BOOK OF FAITH, 2

Here are a few things that Lutherans need to know about the Bible, according to Dr. Mark Allan Powell (Trinity Lutheran Seminary) in *Opening the Book of Faith: Lutheran Insights for Bible Study* (Augsburg/Fortress, 2008):

- Lutherans believe that the Bible is more than a book that says what God wants to say; it reveals Christ to us, drawing us into a living relationship with Jesus.
- Lutherans believe that the Bible opens the very heart of God to us, whose love actually and really transforms us.
- Lutherans believe that when it comes to understanding where the Bible comes from, only a two-fold answer will do. The Bible comes from God as God's Word, and the Bible comes from the Church as Holy Scripture.
- Lutherans believe that as the Word of God, the Bible proclaims law and gospel. We cannot be satisfied with only law or only gospel. We need to hear the law and the gospel.
- Lutherans believe that Old and New Testaments reveal Jesus Christ to us, both together, inseparable, as promise and fulfillment, law and gospel, grace and community.
- Lutherans read the Bible, believe the Bible, love the Bible; but we also try to understand the Bible. Lutherans do not believe in proof-texting; we believe in the principle of using Scripture to interpret Scripture to guard against “using” God's Word as a means to our ends.

*So, please join us in the Adult Sunday School Class between the services in Luther Hall at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday morning, **March 29th.***

