

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:

What an extraordinarily enjoyable month May turned out to be. The weather was just beautiful, simply spring-like. Well over a hundred geraniums filled our Sanctuary, bringing out the best of Pentecost. The reception of new members on the weekend of Memorial Day offered an occasion to celebrate the growth that continues to greet our faithfulness in mission. The Mother's Day Breakfast celebrated connections old and new at Zion, with the added touch of good food and great fellowship. The first Sunday of May brought the beginning of yet another season of coed softball for Team Zion; and while we continue to await our first victory of the season, the work we've done in organizing this league for the North Canton Ministerial Association is already an accomplishment in service to our neighbors and our community.

These events and accomplishments don't happen without the hard work of faithful members. Bob Lancashire has been a big part of the success we've enjoyed with the North Canton Ministerial Association's Coed Softball League. The Men of Zion, under the leadership of Steve Ross, can take credit for our Seventh Annual Mother's Day Breakfast. All of Zion's members play the key role in welcoming visitors, involving them in our mission, and receiving them as new members. This same community of members is what we celebrate with Confirmation. Debbie Fox, our Christian Education Director, works so diligently recruiting volunteers and coordinating all the behind-the-scenes activities that make Sunday School possible, and always with such selfless dedication. Renee Schrader, our Confirmation Instructor, does a wonderfully superb job of passing along the joy that goes with teaching the faith. It is so clear that she loves the Lord, she loves the church, and she loves our kids. We are so blessed.

Debbie and Renee are the personal faces of our commitment to Confirmation, but there are so many others – parents, teachers, members and friends, here at Zion, throughout the Northeastern Ohio Synod – who are busy organizing opportunities for service, family events for fun, and all with an eye toward learning about God's love for us and our desire to live this love for others. The Nursery, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, mission trips, children's sermons, youth and family events, Easter plays, Halloween parties, Habitat days, passion narratives during Lent, Bible Bowls in February: these programs and activities involve our entire community of faith as we devote ourselves to learning what it means to grow in love and service by grace.

It takes a community of members and friends to accomplish the things that get done week in and week out, year in and year out at Zion. We are so blessed to have so many members who give so generously of themselves, their time, and their treasures. This last point is reinforced through the April Treasurer's Report, which celebrates the good news that we have overcome the winter deficits of January and February with strong giving in March and April. May has continued the strength of Zion's generosity. We have every reason to believe that we will finish the second quarter with the red of Pentecost giving way to the black of a budget in balance. I guess what I am saying is thank you. Thank you, Bob, for your hard work in keeping our Coed Softball League strong. Thank you, Men of Zion, for your great work in hosting the Mother's Day Breakfast. Thank you, Debbie and Renee, for your faithfulness in helping us to teach the faith to a new generation of believers. Thank you, people of Zion, for being such faithful partners in the work of the gospel and the mission of our church.

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

Our May meeting continued the pattern of strong attendance: Carol Rossbach, Jayne Schrader, Dave Palumbo, Betty Tracy, Steve Ross, Mary Humbert, Tina Beaber, Mark Votaw, Dale Jacobs, and Pastor Shewindt. Jim Fidler, Chris Thomas, and Linda Lancashire were absent. Jayne Schrader opened our meeting with a meditation (provided by Carol Rossbach).

In his Treasurer’s Report Dave Palumbo provided the encouraging news that our financial facts for April were again very strong. The celebration of Holy Week and Easter saw strong attendance and generous giving. Income exceeded expenses by \$2,581.46. March and April have accounted for a surplus of \$8,402.69. Since May is a five-Sunday month, we anticipate that this trend will continue. We have year-to-date Operating Budget deficit of (\$4,705.39); however, our running cash balance remains above water because of a \$9,640.20 surplus with which we began the year.

<u>ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS FOR APRIL</u>	
April Income	18,884.89
April Expenses	<u>16,303.43</u>
April Surplus	2,581.46
2009 Carry-over Surplus	9,640.20
Income through April	<u>77,278.85</u>
Total Income	86,919.05
Expenses thru April	<u>81,984.74</u>
2009 YTD Surplus	4,934.31
2008 YTD (Deficit)	(9,679.01)
HV/AC Donations Given	49,120.50
HV/AC Donations: Goal	60,000.00
HV/AC Donations Needed	10,879.50

We thank you for your generous support!

SPECIAL FUNDS UPDATE

The HV/AC Fund: We began the HV/AC Fund less than one year ago. Our Congregational Meeting last June set everything in motion; and by the end of August we had secured 73 two-year pledges and one-time gifts totaling \$63,470, which exceeded our target amount of \$60,000.

Of the 73 donors who pledged, 37 have already met their pledge, combining for over \$32,555.50!

Of the remaining 36 donors who have pledged their support, 32 have given some (or most) of their pledge, for an additional \$15,014.00

We are also happy to report that a handful of donors who haven’t pledged, have given over fifteen hundred dollars. We encourage this unplanned, serendipitous generosity! Surprise us some more! In total, we have collected \$49,120.50 to date. The Resource Ministry will send out statements thanking donors for their gifts and pledges.

The New Carpet Fund: The Men of Zion have been the primary movers in creating a fund to help us replace the carpet in the Narthex and the Main Hallway. Luther Hall is also in the mix; but that will require more thought and more money. The Men of Zion have sponsored two events, the Rally Day Pig Roast in September and the Prime Rib Dinner at Christmas, which together have raised \$3,280.80 for this New Carpet Fund.

The Steve Dague Fund: This amazing fund blew our minds as we blew past our original goal to raise \$10,000 to assist with Steve Dague’s recovery from his serious spinal chord injury last February, and went on to raise \$30,000 for this fund. Presently, there is \$4,740.61 on-hand, yet to be distributed. Donations are still invited, and appreciated!

MORE COUNCIL NEWS

Congregational Meeting: Wednesday, June 17 is the date; the election of members to serve on Church Council, with Deacons and Trustees will be our business. We will begin with dinner in Memorial Hall at 6:00 p.m., followed with the Congregational Meeting in the Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. Plan to join us.

Worship Ministry: We have enjoyed a very busy Easter season, and are looking forward to the Senior Choir's *grand finale* Sunday on June 7, which is *Holy Trinity Sunday*. We received news from Megan Meyer that she will make the last Sunday of the choral year her last Sunday with us. We will miss Megan and Mason, and their boys, Ian and Christopher. As we begin the search process again, we are happy to welcome Suzanne Walters back (on an interim basis) in her role as Praise Team leader at the 10:30 a.m. service, beginning on June 14.

Learning Ministry: Our Sunday School will try something "new" this summer, namely, a much needed summer break, which will give our kids and our teachers time to get a little rest as we look forward to planning for the 2009-10 Sunday School year.

Witness Ministry: Steve Ross has been working with Jim Dansizen on inviting the Stark County Prosecutor to Zion for a series of presentations on some safety topics, such as *Neighborhood Watch; Safety for Seniors; Identity Theft; Predatory Scams; Internet Safety; Stranger Dangers for Parents;* and *Stalking – Awareness and Prevention*. Stay tuned for more information as it develops.

Mutual Ministry: Church staff reviews have begun as we begin to get ready for scheduling a series of Finance Ministry Meetings looking ahead to the church's 2010 Operating Budget.

COUNCIL NEWS (CONT'D)

Parish Life Ministry: The North Canton Ministerial Association Coed Softball League began its spring campaign on May 3. Team Zion has yet to win a game, but League Commissioner Bob Lancashire can regard the fourteen teams entered in our fifth season as a great success.

05/03 16-15 loss to Cross Point UM (0-1)
 05/10 *No games scheduled: Mother's Day*
 05/17 20-5 loss to Walsh Team #1 (0-2)
 05/24 *No games scheduled: Memorial Day*
 05/31 Walsh Team #2, 5 p.m. on field #3
 06/07 St. Paul's Team #1, 5 p.m., field #3
 06/14 St. Paul's Team #2, 6 p.m., field #3
 06/21 Church of Lakes, 4 p.m. on field #3
 06/28 Grace UMC, at 5 p.m. on field #3
 07/05 *No games scheduled: Fourth of July*
 07/12 Round Robin Tournament, Week 1
 07/19 Round Robin Tournament, Week 2
 07/26 Round Robin Tournament, Week 3
 08/02 Round Robin Tournament, Week 4

Property Ministry: Our landscaping goals for the outside beds have gotten off to a great start. Carol Rossbach has drawn us a picture (literally) of what we are hoping to do, which is on display in the Narthex; Mary Humbert has organized a schedule, which begins in earnest the day of June 1. Plenty of donations came in with our call for *Red Geraniums & More* for Pentecost: \$445 for geraniums, and \$655 for anything else we would like to purchase. Carol Rossbach, Mary Humbert, Audrey Hartman, Ruth and Verle Elsass have been busy dividing and replanting yuccas and cannas. Carl Geib, Verle Elsass, Steve Ross, and Chris Thomas have been busy removing older, overgrown shrubs. If you would like to lend a helping hand, or donate funds for more plants, your gifts and talents are invited and needed. Thanks for your interest and support.

THE MEN OF ZION

A *very big thank you* to the Men of Zion for pulling together another *out-of-this-world* delicious edition of the annual Mother's Day Breakfast, complete with their signature touch of a beautiful single red rose given to each of the women in attendance. The menu was world class; the service, filled with love; the event, another huge success that was enjoyed by all.

During the month of May, the Men of Zion were also very active with projects around the church, in the garage at Steve Dague's home, and doing some outside landscaping at Rick & Connie Riffle's. Steve Ross took the lead, and has been joined by Garry Leed, Chris Thomas, Mark Votaw, Lorin Beaber, and Todd Elsass. Many of these same men were a part of our Clean-up Day on May 2. We'd like to thank Steve Ross, Garry Leed, Charlie Danner, Carl Geib, Christopher Thompson, along with his Mom, Laura Thompson, John Brokloff, Verle & Ruth Elsass, Faye Elsass, Audrey Hartman, Betty Tracy, Gary Horton, Carol Rossbach, Chris Thomas, John Mikach and Kevin Kurkowski for all that they did helping us with our Clean-up Day in May.

The Men of Zion will meet in Luther Hall on *the first Wednesday of the month*, which is **June 3**, to get together for dinner at 6:00 p.m. At our May meeting Steve Ross took the lead with a Bible study, opening his Bible to Mark 2, where Jesus healed a paralyzed man and then forgave his sins to prove a point. Steve steered clear of those issues, but found inspiration in the action of the four men who helped their friend get help by carrying him to the house where Jesus was, climbing up to the roof and lowering their friend down through the ceiling. That's what the Men of Zion did in taking time to help our friends, Steve Dague and Rick Riffle. Why not join us to become a part of what happens next?

THE WOMEN OF ZION

Our Summer Bible Study will focus on *Mary: A Woman for All Seasons*, with Session One inviting us to look closely at Luke 1:28 and the Annunciation. The Angel Gabriel greets Mary with the words, "*Good morning! You are beautiful with God's beauty. Beautiful inside and out! God be with you!*" You will enjoy our conversation. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month, which is **June 16, at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall**. Come and join us.

Zion's Comfort Givers meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, *June 11th & 25th*, 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. Please feel free – and invited – to join us.

Our Annual Chancel Guild Luncheon is scheduled for Tuesday, June 9th, in Luther Hall, beginning at Noon. The cost is \$9.00 per person. Our menu looks delicious, with strawberry mandarin orange salad, grilled chicken breast, rolls and butter, coffee and iced tea, with a turtle crepe for dessert.

A Very Big Thank You

To the Men of Zion & our Singing Chef,

A big thank you to each and everyone of you for all your time and effort in preparing a delicious Mother's Day Breakfast. I'm sure everyone enjoyed it as much as I did. The beautiful red roses were a special addition.

*Thanks again,
Evelyn Moore*

Dear Men of Zion,

Thank you for once again preparing such a wonderful Mother's Day Breakfast for all to enjoy. This is an event that everyone looks forward to, and the men do not disappoint. The food and service were great! I've got to say that it is so wonderful to see my son pitch in and help as well. This is a wonderful event led by many great men, and young men, too. Thank you, again, to all for all of your hard work and thoughtfulness!

Debbie Fox

Dear Men of Zion,

Thanks so much for the wonderful Mother's Day breakfast. It was a blessing to have such thoughtful and handsome men serving a delicious breakfast. It was so nice to just relax and enjoy it and be waited on. Thanks also for the beautiful roses.

Jayne Schrader

Dear Men of Zion,

Thank you for the delicious Mother's Day breakfast. It adds a bright spot to our day. It is nice to be remembered in this special way.

Jane Fairman

Dear Men of Zion,

I would like to thank the Men of Zion for a memorable Mother's Day breakfast. Every year, my mother, sister and I look forward to the exceptional breakfast that is made by Dale and his staff. The food is always delicious and the Children's Program is always entertaining. The roses are also an extra special addition to the morning. All of your hard work is very much appreciated. Thank you for giving the women of Zion such a special breakfast.

*Sincerely,
Janet Slease*

Dear Men of Zion,

Thank you for honoring us mothers on Mother's Day with the delicious breakfast that you prepared and all the special attention you paid to us.

Our resident chef, Dale Jacobs, along with his entire staff, as usual, cooked a fantastic meal, and I am sure we all felt very special. I know I did.

This was another time when the congregation could get together in fellowship, and our turnout for the breakfast and the service showed that the congregation of Zion Lutheran is a family.

Thanks again to the Men of Zion, to Steve Ross for organizing the breakfast, and to all the participants – the Sunday School, the Children's Choir, the Senior Choir, the Youth of Zion – in the Mother's Day Program.

*Yours in Christ,
Juanita Cignetti*

to the Men of Zion

Dear Gentlemen of Zion,

What can I say? **Thank you** must be the word that I will use. It was wonderful that you made another tasty breakfast for Mother's Day. All appreciated your thoughtfulness and kindness again. God bless all.

Helen Heller

To the Men of Zion,

I want to write a note to you all to thank you for the wonderful celebration you presented to the ladies of our church on Mother's Day. Thank you for the delicious food and all of your time in preparing, serving, and cleaning up, too. The single long-stemmed red rose was thoughtful and beautiful. You are all special to me.

*God bless,
Carole Singer*

Dear Men of Zion,

Thank you so much for the tasty Mother's Day Breakfast you made for us. I enjoyed it. The favorite part for me was the beautiful long-stemmed red rose you gave each lady. It has beautifully graced my kitchen all week.

*Thanks again,
Susan Geib*

To the Men of Zion,

Thank you for all your thoughtful planning, preparation, serving, and the many details that went into the delicious Mother's Day breakfast. It was a wonderful treat for everyone in attendance. You are all a blessing to Zion.

Joy Benton

Dear Men of Zion,

I would like to extend a big THANK YOU to the Men of Zion for the wonderful breakfast they prepared and served to honor mothers on Mother's Day. Everything was outstanding and very delicious, too.

Edna Fischer

To the Men of Zion,

A big thank you to the Men of Zion for the tremendous Mother's Day Breakfast made and served by you. Each year, I look forward to being there to enjoy your warm hospitality, the delicious food, and seeing the wonderful people of Zion. I also think back to all the familiar faces I no longer see – John, Chuck, Fred, and so many more. I know that John would be so pleased to know and see that this tradition is still moving forward, since it began seven years ago under his leadership, as he worked so hard to bring the Men of Zion back to life as an active serving group in the church. Last, but not least, thanks for the beautiful red rose also. It's a great touch.

*In Christian love,
Kay Davis*

Dear Pastor and Men of Zion,

In the Bible we read about love. All of you men showed us love by the delicious breakfast you served. Thank you! You made our Mother's Day wonderful!

*The Peace of the Lord be with you.
The Women's Bible Study
Patty Stayer, Betty Tracy, Helen Heller
Mabel Kolarik, Carole Singer
Juanita Cignetti, and Carol Rossbach*

GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Monday, June 1: It's our first Vacation Bible School Planning Meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 7: It's the last day of the 2008-09 Sunday School Year: Let's Party On!

Sunday, June 14: Our desire to experiment with a Summer Break begins this Sunday!

Sunday, June 21: It's a Good Time to Celebrate Father's Day at Zion: Plan to Join Us!

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

Sunday, June 7th, will wrap up this Sunday School Year! We have had a great year of lessons, an awesome Christmas Program and Easter Program, and a lot of fun learning about God's Word and His amazing love. Thank you to our Sunday School teachers and staff. You have done a great job this year! We truly appreciate your dedication to the children of Zion. This year's staff includes some great teachers and caring Christians: Corlene Coulter, Vicki Givler, Mary Humbert, Connie Riffle, and Janet Slease.

We also want to extend our thanks to Megan Meyer for leading Zion's Children's Choir through the last half of this Sunday School year. We really appreciate all of her hard work, and the involvement of our kids, too. What a great job by all!

We will be taking a break this summer from Sunday School. I repeat: there will be no Sunday School classes this summer. We will start up again in September with Rally Day on Sunday, September 13, 2009. Our formal Sunday School classes will begin on Sunday, September 20th.

THANK YOU'S TO THE CATECHISM AND HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

We would like to congratulate Lauren Mathie on her Confirmation with the celebration of Pentecost. We are so proud of her commitment to our two-year study, and for all of her hard work. The Zion family is truly blessed with Lauren's stepping forward to affirm her Baptism. We pray that she will be richly blessed with the gifts of the Spirit and the blessings of faith.

We would also like to thank Renee Schrader for teaching the Catechism class this year. She once again did a fabulous job, and received very high praise from Lauren! What can we say except that we appreciate Renee for all of the support she offers through her many roles at Zion!

Finally, thank you to our High School Sunday School leader, Tina Beaber, and her helpers, Linda & Steve Ross. Thank you for all you do with our kids. We appreciate your support and dedication. There were great projects, lessons and discussions that were very important to our High Schoolers' spiritual growth as members of Zion

STUDIO GO GAME SHOW: JULY 13—17

Our plans are coming together. We still have lots of slots that are open for volunteers. We still need a whole lot of help. We need teachers and leaders, help in the kitchen and help with the crafts, help with the music, and more youth volunteers than we presently have. In other words, we need you ... no kidding ... this summer! Please consider taking the time to help make this year's Vacation Bible School a fabulous week for our kids. The days are set: Monday through Friday, July 13—17, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Five full days and five fun days!

The stage will be ready for this year's program, *Studio Go Game Show*, where everyone involved will experience real teamwork, real service, and real fun. The daily themes for this year's Vacation Bible School will be: **Go Lead**, **Go Risk**, **Go Tell**, **Go Obey** and **Go Serve**. There will be music, games, and lessons along with food, crafts and service projects, of course. The kids will meet some great characters – Wade Winalot, Coach Armstrong, Professor Wordsmart, and Cooper, our canine friend, who returns from last year!

We have planned a week filled with great Bible stories and activities that will prove to be a lot of fun for everyone involved – not to mention the great learning experience! We will have lots of fun with music again this year, and the kids will also work on great crafts and participate in strong team building activities during the week. As always, we will have our Family Night with the Children's Program on Thursday evening, followed by our Ice Cream Social. The week will end with a game show celebration, including water activities, lots of games, and even more fun! Let there be no doubters. We are all believers when it comes to what will surely be a great week for our kids, staff, and parents, as we learn and experience how important it is to serve God and others at the *Studio Go Game Show*!

There will be many great service projects again this year, a wonderful and meaningful tradition at Zion's VBS programs. Some of these projects will include quilt squares, school kits, our daily offering contest, and collecting food items for our Food Pantry. This year the VBS children will help us choose the charities that will receive the offering we collect during the week. Now hear this: families in Zion's congregation can also help donate items for these service projects. Lists of needed items will be available later this month. It's all about service, serving God by serving one another.

Registration forms and general information can be picked up in the Church Office starting Sunday, June 7th. Vacation Bible School is designed for children ages 5 through those who have completed the sixth grade. We are always happy to have our older youth come back and volunteer to help during the week. And here's some good news. Once your registration form is completed and turned in, you'll receive this year's music CD. So register early!

If you are interested in helping out, please contact Debbie Fox at 330-966-2433. If you are not available during the week of Vacation Bible School (July 13—17), there are still many other ways to help out. Donation cans are out now, and you can begin to look for sign-up sheets for baked goods, food and supplies later this month. Watch the bulletins for work days through June and July to help us clean up and prepare for our VBS week. We appreciate the support Zion's family gives for this great event, and we look forward to your joining in the fun!

STUDIO GO GAME SHOW: JULY 13—17

Our plans are coming together. We still have lots of slots that are open for volunteers. We still need a whole lot of help. We need teachers and leaders, help in the kitchen and help with the crafts, help with the music, and more youth volunteers than we presently have. In other words, we need you ... no kidding ... this summer! Please consider taking the time to help make this year's Vacation Bible School a fabulous week for our kids. The days are set: Monday through Friday, July 13—17, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The stage will be ready for this year's program, *Studio Go Game Show*, where everyone involved will experience real teamwork, real service, and real fun. The daily themes will be: **Go** Lead, **Go** Risk, **Go** Tell, **Go** Obey and **Go** Serve. There will be music, games, and lessons along with food, crafts and service projects, of course. The kids will meet some great characters – Wade Winalot, Coach Armstrong, Professor Wordsmart, and Cooper, our canine friend, who returns from last year!



We have planned a week filled with great Bible stories and activities that will prove to be a lot of fun for everyone involved – not to mention the great learning experience! We will have lots of fun with music again this year, and the kids will also work on great crafts and participate in strong team building activities during the week. As always, we will have our Family Night with the Children's Program on Thursday evening, followed by our Ice Cream Social. The week will end with a game show celebration, including water activities, lots of games, and even more fun! Let there be no doubters. We are all believers when it comes to what will surely be a great week for our kids, staff, and parents, as we learn and experience how important it is to serve God and others at the *Studio Go Game Show*!

There will be many great service projects again this year, a wonderful and meaningful tradition at Zion's VBS programs. Some of these projects will include quilt squares, school kits, our daily offering contest, and collecting food items for our Food Pantry. This year the VBS children will help us choose the charities that will receive the offering we collect during the week. Now hear this: families in Zion's congregation can also help donate items for these service projects. Lists of needed items will be available later this month. It's all about service, serving God by serving one another.

Registration forms and general information can be picked up in the Church Office starting Sunday, June 7th. Vacation Bible School is designed for children ages 5 through those who have completed the sixth grade. We are always happy to have our older youth come back and volunteer to help during the week. And here's some good news. Once your registration form is completed and turned in, you'll receive this year's music CD. So register early! If you are interested in helping out, please contact Debbie Fox at 330-966-2433. If you are not available during the week of Vacation Bible School (July 13—17), there are still many other ways to help out. Donation cans are out now, and you can begin to look for sign-up sheets for baked goods, food and supplies later this month. Watch the bulletins for work days through June and July to help us clean up and prepare for our VBS week. We appreciate the support Zion's family gives for this great event, and we look forward to your joining in the fun!

NORTHEASTERN OHIO SYNOD ASSEMBLY, MAY 16

(Report submitted by Carol Rossbach)

On Saturday, May 16, Pastor Sherwindt, Steve Ross and I were the delegates to the Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly, held at the J.S. Knight Center in Akron. The theme of this assembly was *Leadership That's Faithful, Focused, and Fervent*. There were 546 delegates registered. The day started at 7:30 a.m. with registration and a continental breakfast. Bishop Elizabeth Eaton presided at our opening liturgy. In her sermon, Bishop Eaton spoke about Matthias, the disciple chosen to replace Judas Iscariot, and how little is known about him; but he stepped up to the task. She said discipleship is not an easy task, and we should be prepared to "perspire" for the Lord. People who spend time talking about *the good old days* can be discouraging to others. Who would want to worship with a bunch of depressed people? Our golden days are now. Let's spend our days giving ourselves away. Lutheran evangelism, which typically consists of the attitude *if they want us they know where to find us*, will need to change if we hope to experience those good old days again.

Our order of business first focused on nominations for Synod Council. Then Bishop Eaton gave the Bishop's report. (1) She regretfully announced that although 30 congregations raised \$50,000 in the move to close the budget gap, in this poor economy, it was not enough. So, cuts had to be made. (2) She talked about her trips to South Africa and the Holy Land. She told about visiting Christmas Lutheran Church in Jerusalem. It is contained in a walled-in enclosure of four-square miles, and most of the neighbors are Muslims; but they were the safest there of any place because the church had started a university and other training facilities, and none of the Muslims wanted to destroy that. These Lutheran facilities are the second largest employers in Palestine. Given their precarious situation they were able to serve and grow. (3) Eighty-two congregations have signed up to be a *Book of Faith* congregation, which is a commitment to becoming fluent in the first language of faith, the language of scripture. (4) Bishop Eaton spoke about the movement towards cooperative ministries. The days of a single pastor and congregation may be over for many locations. We need to work together to see what we can accomplish. She reminded us our church is not about the building. It's about Jesus.

The keynote speaker was Pastor Sherman Hicks, Executive Director of Multicultural Ministries of the ELCA. He brought us video greetings from Bishop Mark Hanson, who said that in these difficult times we should not give in to fear. The Cross lies at the intersection of fear and hope. Pastor Hicks then spoke about upcoming Churchwide Assembly, meeting in Minneapolis in August, where we will be voting on full communion with the United Methodist Church, which has already approved the move. We are now in full communion with five churches bodies: the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church, and the Moravian Church. This does not mean we are the same, but we are one in the mission ministry of proclaiming the Gospel. We will also be voting on a social statement on Human Sexuality. We passed two resolutions, one on *Listening and Prayerful Communications*, and another asking us to go on record *Against Violence and Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*. We took some time to hear the Treasurer's report, to pass the 2010-11 Synod Budget, to elect representatives, to honor retirees, and to install the newly elected representatives to Synod Council. It was a very full day

