

A WORD FROM THE PASTOR

What a month, and what a year! November saw some great changes around the church. We began the month with a rush to see what we could do about a major water drainage issue in the parking lot, which led to an emergency Council meeting, an informational Congregational Meeting, and a successful test of the new drainage system recently installed. We also added a few nice finishing touches to our new carpet project with a newly refurbished water fountain and nicely fitted and beautifully painted paneling in the Narthex. These details may not seem like much, but they represent sustained interest, member involvement, and financial support of everything we are doing to celebrate the good stewardship that is alive and well among us.

Repairing the parking lot drain at the southwest corner of the building may not sound like a source of inspiration and celebration, but its solution tapped the specialized gifts of many members, congregational resolve, a little luck with the weather, and a great deal from the right contractor. We have been fortunate these past several years to maintain balanced budgets, with a little left over after paying our bills and honoring our commitments. We decided to tap Zion's past generosity by paying for the drainage project out of that little rainy day fund that had grown with small but steady and successive end-of-the-year surpluses in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. What a great record of giving, and great Council leadership in keeping us on track and in the black during some very difficult years for northeast Ohio.

This record of great giving seems to be falling into place this year, too. We kept you informed about how this year's operating budget showed a significant imbalance with expenses topping income by almost \$14,000 as we ended July. That's about as large a shortfall as we've seen at Zion during the nine years that I've been here. Strong giving in August and September cut that deficit in half to \$7,000; and strong giving in October cut that figure in half again, leaving us with around \$3,500 to make up as we head to the end of the calendar year. All of us are confident that you will make that happen, along with the usual generosity we demonstrate during November and December in reaching out to our neighbors through our Great Turkey Give-away at Thanksgiving and the Advent Giving Tree, which sets the stage for distributing Christmas hams to all the families we serve through our Food Pantry & Clothing Closet.

In addition to these great seasonal opportunities for service, the holiday season also promises to provide some exceptional experiences at worship. The season of Advent dinners and devotions is upon us, with the Men of Zion starting us off with a taste of Christmas ham on the First Sunday in Advent. Jim Fidler will offer the first of what will be two Advent dramas. On the evening of November 28th, Jim portrays John the Baptist in a drama entitled *The Two Faces of John*. On the evening of December 5th, our Senior Choir and Praise Team will take the lead in what should be a truly enjoyable *Service of Lessons & Carols*. Jim Fidler returns on December 12th to portray Joseph in a drama that explores Joseph's views on immaculate conceptions. On the fourth Sunday evening in Advent, Carole Singer will lead us in singing Christmas carols from around the world, with all sorts of musical instruments from around the world, too! The Advent Giving Tree, Christmas dinners for area families, Sunday morning worship, Sunday evening Advent dinners, and dramas, with lots of music and great fun: join us for a series of Sundays that will make it clear what makes this season so special, God's love alive among us.

ZION'S ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

The First Sunday in Advent: Gathering as Families Welcome the New Year

- Sunday, November 28, 8:00 a.m.: Our Traditional Service, with the Senior Choir singing
- Sunday, November 28, 10:30 a.m.: Our Blended Service, led by Zion's Praise Team
- Sunday, November 28, 5:30 p.m.: Our First Advent Dinner hosted by the Men of Zion
- Sunday, November 28, 6:00 p.m.: Let's Begin Right, unveiling our Advent Giving Tree
- Sunday, November 28, 6:15 p.m.: *An Advent Drama: The Two Faces of John the Baptist*

[The First Sunday Evening Advent Service welcomes the arrival of the New Year with a focus on the ministry and message of John the Baptist. Jim Fidler offers a dramatic portrayal of the Baptist entitled *The Two Faces of John*. Plan to join us. You'll be glad you did, and so will we.]

The Second Sunday in Advent: A Traditional Service of Lessons & Carols

- Sunday, December 5, 8:00 a.m.: Our Traditional Service, with the Senior Choir singing
- Sunday, December 5, 10:30 a.m.: Our Blended Service, led by Zion's Praise Team
- Sunday, December 5, 5:10 p.m.: Our Second Advent Dinner hosted by the Senior Choir
- Sunday, December 5, 5:55 p.m.: Our Traditional Service of *Lessons & Carols* at Zion

[Our evening program features the many talents that Zion possesses with our Senior Choir, the Praise Team, and Fred Locker at the organ. Join us for an Evening with Lessons & Carols.]

The Third Sunday in Advent: Joseph's View of the Immaculate Conception

- Sunday, December 12, 8:00 a.m.: Our Traditional Service, with the Senior Choir singing
- Sunday, December 12, 10:30 a.m.: Our Blended Service, led by Zion's Praise Team
- Sunday, December 12, 5:30 p.m.: Our Third Advent Dinner hosted by our Chancel Guild
- Sunday, December 12, 6:15 p.m.: *Drama: Joseph, the Forgotten Father, Tells His Story*

[Jim Fidler offers another Advent drama, telling the Christmas story from Joseph's perspective.]

The Fourth Sunday in Advent: Singing Carols from around the World

- Sunday, December 19, 8:00 a.m.: Our Traditional Service, with the Senior Choir singing
- Sunday, December 19, 10:30 a.m.: Children's Christmas Program: *A Capital CHRISTMAS*
- Sunday, December 19, 5:30 p.m.: Our Fourth Advent Dinner hosted by the Youth of Zion
- Sunday, December 19, 6:15 p.m.: Celebrating *Christmas Carols from around the World!*

[The Children's Program, *A Capital C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S*, is offered at the 10:30 a.m. service.]

Our Christmas Eve Schedule at Zion: Two Services, 6:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

- Friday, December 24, 6:00 p.m.: Our Family-Friendly Service, with special music by the children of Zion, Zion's Praise Team, and our Carol Setting for Holy Communion
- Friday, December 24, 8:00 p.m.: Special Music offered by our many talented members
- Friday, December 24, 8:30 p.m.: Our Traditional Candle-Light Service, with Zion's Senior Choir, along with our special Christmas Carol Setting for Holy Communion

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Jim Fidler called a special meeting of Council to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3. Members in attendance: Juanita Cignetti (Secretary), Dave Palumbo (Treasurer), Mark Votaw (Resource), Chris Thomas (Property), Beth Shaheen (Social Outreach), Dale Jacobs (Worship), Cathy Harvey (Caring), Tina Beaber (Learning), Jim Dansizen (Witness), Vicki Givler (Parish Life), and Pastor Sherwindt. Our primary order of business focused on the need to act to authorize repairs to fix our drainage problem. The Trustees have been looking into a solution to this problem for some time. After receiving several bids, a bid submitted by Bontrager Excavating was recommended. The proposed solution should resolve drainage problem and increase drainage capacity for future use. Under normal circumstances non-budgeted items exceeding \$5,000 would require the approval of a congregational meeting. However, Chapter 12.05a of our Constitution states that "sums in excess of \$5,000 may be expended by the Congregational Council in the event and declared emergency to protect and preserve the physical property of the congregation". Since post-Thanksgiving wintry weather could put this project at risk, Council felt compelled to regard this matter as a project requiring emergency action. The motion to proceed under these conditions was made and seconded by Dale Jacobs and Vicki Givler, passing unanimously. Mark Votaw then offered a motion authorizing payment from small surpluses that resulted from our balanced budgets in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. Dale Jacobs seconded the motion, and it, too, passed unanimously. We thanked the following persons for their work: Chris Thomas, Betty Boettler, John Brokloff, Bob Lancashire, Nick Cignetti, Carl Geib, Gary Horton, John Long, and Lorin Beaber.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Since Dave Palumbo was able to produce a Treasurer's Report for October, we decided to regard our special meeting as an opportunity to conduct our regular monthly business. Our financial facts in October continued the pattern of strong giving that we saw in both August and September. Expenses were rather ordinary, coming in at \$19,762.49, while our income for October was \$22,956.48. This monthly surplus of \$3,193.99 reduced our year-to-date current operating budget deficit to \$3,901.24. While this remains a challenge, we are in a much stronger position now than we were just three months ago. Plus, comparisons with last year show that we have every reason to believe we can balance this budget.

Our remaining business focused on some additional work that needed to be done in modernizing the electric at the parsonage. Jim Dansizen announced the return of the Sunday Brunch Bunch after worship on November 7. Dale Jacobs previewed our schedule of Sunday evening Advent dinners & devotions. Before adjourning with the Lord's Prayer, Council scheduled an Informational Congregational Meeting between the services on Sunday, November 21, to be followed by a cake and coffee reception in Luther Hall.

FINANCIAL FACTS FOR OCTOBER

October Income	22,956.48
October Expenses	<u>19,762.49</u>
October Surplus	3,193.99
Income thru October	207,183.21
Expenses " October	<u>211,084.45</u>
Deficit thru October	(3,901.24)
2010 YTD (Deficit)	(3,901.24)
2009 YTD (Deficit)	(1,295.53)

We thank you for your generous support!

OUR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS LITURGICAL PAINTINGS

(Designs and Explanations by Carol Rossbach)



AN ADVENT SYMBOL, TRUMPETS:

Throughout history, heralds have announced the coming of a king with the blast of trumpets. They serve the same function in Scripture. For example, trumpets are used to announce the second coming of the Lord, itself a theme of some Advent lessons. “The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16) Compare this with Matthew 24:31 and 1 Corinthians 15:52. In Revelation 8—9, trumpets announce the arrival of the great plagues. Trumpets are also a means for celebrating God’s presence in the temple in Jerusalem. “With trumpets and the sound of the horn, make a joyful

noise before the King, the Lord!” (Psalm 98:6) The exuberant doxology concluding the book of Psalms includes this line: “Praise him with trumpet sound: praise him with lute and harp!” (Psalm 150:3) Thus in Advent the uplifted trumpets can serve both as a call heralding the arrival of the Lord and also as a sign of the joyous festivity found in God’s presence.

AN ADVENT SYMBOL—FOUR CANDLES: No symbol has come to represent the season of Advent more than the Advent wreath. The lighting of a candle for each new week as Advent progresses communicates the time of preparation unfolding and the impending arrival of the birth of Jesus. But the expanding luminosity can signify other important aspects of Advent also. In the northern hemisphere, the season in nature is the time of greatest darkness, the winter solstice. In that context, the gradual spreading of light is a powerful reminder of one of the great themes of the gospel of John, the light of Christ that overcomes the world of darkness. “His life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:4b-5) Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12) As the Advent season progresses, the light increases until at last Christmas with its news of great joy arrives. The four candles can be used to symbolize the spreading of light in darkness, as well as the progression of time through the four weeks of Advent to the birth of Christ.



OUR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS LITURGICAL PAINTINGS

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CHRISTMAS SYMBOL, CANDLE & HOLLY:

The candles are white, the color associated with angels and the birth of Jesus, and spell out the word *Joy*, which describes the season. There are many legends concerning holly. Holly – and its counterpart, ivy – became connected to Christmas through pagan traditions. Several species of holly are evergreen plants, and in just about every European winter celebration tradition, evergreen plants were important – holly, ivy, mistletoe, and coniferous trees (like Christmas trees). They didn't die as the days got shorter and colder; they were a sign, in a dead winter landscape, that life would return. In Christian folklore, the prickly leaves of Christmas holly trees came to be associated with Jesus' crown of thorns, and the red berries were

associated with drops of blood shed for humanity's salvation. The wood from the holly was used for Christ's cross, at least, according to one legend. In fact, some scholars think that the word *holly* is simply a corruption of *holy*, although there is no general consensus on this point.

CHRISTMAS SYMBOL—THE MANGER & STAR: *“And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”* (Luke 2:7) This reference to the manger in Luke is the basis for the traditional belief that Jesus was born in a stable. Stables were often caves with feeding troughs – or mangers – carved into the rock walls. Despite popular Christmas card pictures, the surroundings were dark and dirty. This wasn't the atmosphere Jews expected as the birthplace of the Christ. They thought their promised Messiah would be born in royal surroundings; but God is at work wherever He is needed, even among the poor, in places where it is dark and dirty. The Star (of Bethlehem) refers to the “bright and morning star” of Revelation 22:16, who is Jesus Christ. It signifies the *Star of Bethlehem*, which guided the Magi to Jesus, and, more generally, to the innumerable stars created in Genesis 1:16. “Arise, shine; for your light has come; the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen on you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.” (Isaiah 60:1-3)



GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Saturday, December 18th: Dress Rehearsal for Children's Christmas Program at 10 a.m.

Saturday, December 18th: Youth Pizza Party and Giving Tree Gift wrapping at NOON

Sunday, December 19th: Children's Christmas Program at the 10:30 a.m. service only

Sunday, December 19th: The Youth of Zion host the Sunday Evening Advent Dinner

Friday, December 24th: Zion's children sing at 6 p.m. Christmas Eve Family Service

PRE-K THROUGH THE SIXTH GRADE

During the month of December we will combine our Sunday School lessons with weekly practice for this year's Christmas program. Our plans are to involve all of our youth – including those in our Confirmation and High School classes – with many different roles. We will have speaking parts for those children who are interested, along with other non-speaking roles to round out our program.



This year's program is called *A Capital C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S*. We will go on an alphabetical journey to tell the wonderful Christmas Story. We are looking forward to a great program, along with the great lessons that our children will continue to learn during the Sunday School Hour.

As usual, the Christmas Program will be performed at the 10:30 a.m. worship service (only) on Sunday, December 19th. We will have dress rehearsal, our traditional Christmas Pizza Party, and our annual wrapping of the Giving Tree gifts on Saturday, December 18th, all starting at 10 a.m. We hope to be finished around 1:30 p.m. Mark your calendars, and thanks for your support.

A FEW WORDS OF THANKS TO OUR YOUTH AT ZION

Thank you to all of our youth for the great job they did decorating this year's Thanksgiving bags for some of the Siffrin homes in our community. On Sunday, November 15th, the youth from ages 3 to 18 decorated thirty-four grocery bags for this project, and then helped to fill those bags with all the extras that go into Thanksgiving dinner. We had a great service event that day with all of the usual suspects, namely, food, fun and fellowship.

When all was said and done, Zion's Food Pantry gave away more than ninety-nine turkeys with all the trimmings to area families in need. A big thank you goes out to the pantry crew and our youth leaders, too. We would also like to thank our Sunday School families for donating all of the *Quick Bread* mixes that were placed in the bags.

A big thank you also goes out to the Pantry Crew and our youth leaders for their help as well! We are so grateful for everyone's support, and we are very proud of our youth for their willingness to offer this wonderful service to others in need!

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

MORE GREAT NEWS FOR ZION'S YOUTH

CHRISTMAS IS A SEASON OF GIVING

The Youth of Zion will again sponsor our Advent Giving Tree this Christmas season for several families in our community who are in need. The Advent Giving Tree, which is located in the Narthex, has tags with gift suggestions for these families. We are also hoping to help all of the families we serve through our Food Pantry by giving them all the fixings for a delicious Christmas dinner. So, we have placed tags on the tree inviting a \$25 donation to help pay for the food we provide for Christmas dinners.



We also want our families to have some stocking stuffers for Christmas, and we have filled some gift envelopes with money-saving Hungry Howie's Pizza Coupons. These are the gift that keeps on giving, allowing our families to save up to \$110 with their purchases of pizza throughout the new year. Each gift envelope is \$10, and we ask that you make all checks payable to Zion Lutheran Church.

Please take one or more of these tags, purchase the item, and bring the gift, **unwrapped**, with the tag attached, to church by Friday, December 17th. Our older youth will be getting together on Saturday, December 18th, at Noon, after the Christmas play rehearsal, to have pizza and then to wrap the Giving Tree gifts so they can be delivered to the families before Christmas day.

Please help our youth help these families have a Merry Christmas and feel God's love through this great service project. We thank you for the all your support! Our church family is a truly wonderful family of loving and giving people. This especially rings true during the holiday season. We are so grateful for everything that everyone does!

MORE GREAT YOUTH NEWS: ADVENT DINNER ON DECEMBER 19

Advent has arrived along with our wonderful Advent dinners and services. On Sunday, December 19th, the youth will host the Advent dinner and service. We are planning a pasta dinner, finished off with lots of great desserts; and we will be contacting the youth and their families about donating items for dinner, helping to set up, serve and tear down for that dinner. This is always a great dinner and we appreciate everyone's help to make it happen!

The evening service on December 19th features a family favorite at Zion, Carole Singer's celebration of *Christmas Carols from around the World*, when she brings her incredible collection of musical instruments from around the world and invites everyone to become a member of our holiday orchestra, equipping all who are present with the instrument of their choice so that all can join in the fun of making a joyful noise unto the Lord!



Zion's Sunday School Staff would like to wish all of our families a very Merry Christmas and a Peaceful and Happy New Year!



FOOD PANTRY IN THE SPOTLIGHT AT THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Community Christian Church was host to this year's Community Thanksgiving Service for the North Canton Ministerial Association, and the Stark County Hunger Task Force (SCHTF) was again the recipient of the offering. Leaders from all of our North Canton churches were on hand, as was Mayor David Held, who read the Presidential Proclamation for Thanksgiving. When it came time to talk about what we would be doing with the offering to be received, our own Shirley Cavender was called upon to address the worshipping community. She helped all of us to understand both the needs we meet throughout the year and the blessings that come with reaching out to neighbors who can use some assistance in battling the ill effects of our difficult economy in northeast Ohio. I thought you would enjoy reading what Shirley said:

“Did you know that the Stark County Hunger Task Force has twenty-eight pantries throughout Stark County? We feed 15,000 people a month, all year long. The SCHTF provides each pantry with a small monthly allowance; but the bulk of our resources come from food and cash donations given by the congregations and communities surrounding each pantry. As a member of the SCHTF, each pantry can purchase food from the Akron Canton Regional Food Bank. Although the food is available at greatly reduced prices, it is not free.

“The Zion Lutheran Church Food Pantry has been a member of the SCHTF for eleven years. I have been the Co-Director of Zion's Food Pantry for just over nine years, and a board member of the SCHTF for eight years. During the past nine years the clientele that we serve through the Food Pantry has evolved. It started with the classic generational cluster – grandmother, daughter, granddaughter, and grandchildren. Then it began to include laid-off workers, and more and more senior citizens. Lately, the laid-off work force has re-emerged as a big part of the challenge to feed the families we serve in North Canton.

“The families we serve are not a static group. Recently I received a call from a former client of our pantry. She informed me that they could not have pulled through their crisis without our help. It has been three years since she last visited our food pantry, and now she finds herself in a position to give back. She is employed by KFC on Portage Avenue in a supervisory position. Her plan of action has been to devise an on-going campaign where a discount coupon is handed out to every customer who comes to the restaurant with a donation of a recently purchased non-perishable item. That food is given to our food pantry, and the customer enjoys a discount on their next KFC purchase.

“The truth of the matter is that finding decent food and enough of it is not easy. Usually, when it's time to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas, our shelves are full because lots of folks are thinking of people in need. Lately, it's been different. Because of the on-going recession, many people have less, and our cupboards at Zion's Food Pantry are almost bare. The gesture from our former client is very timely; and her story is not an isolated gesture of giving back. These miracles happen all the time. It's part of the reason we do what we do: that, and God's call to feed the hungry and help people around us who are in need. If there is one thing that I'd like all of us to remember as we get ready to gather our offering this evening, it is simply this: while Thanksgiving is a season of great generosity, hunger is not seasonal. It happens all year long. Thank you for helping us to help folks who need our help, and yours, all year long.”

THE WOMEN OF ZION

The date for the *Chancel Guild Christmas Dinner* is set for Tuesday, **December 14**. Our hostesses this year are Helen Heller and Kay Davis. The cost is \$ 12.00 per person. The evening's Social Hour begins at 5:30 p.m., with dinner served at 6:00 p.m. While the menu will contain some surprises, we are sure that everything will be delicious, and that everyone who joins us will have a great time. Please let Helen Heller know of your desire to join us by Sunday, December 5.

Following a successful collection of quilts, blankets, school kits, and health kits on Blanket Sunday, *Zion's Comfort Givers* are back at it, with plans to meet on the second Thursday in Luther Hall at 9:30 a.m. The conversation is lively, the work fun, and the good we do makes a lasting difference for families all over the world. You are invited to join us anytime; but if you choose the morning of **December 9th** in Luther Hall, you'll find us – Kay Davis, Ruth Elsass, Susan Geib, Joyce Gibeaut, Helen Heller, Betty Lenz, Carol Snyder, Pat Stayer, Betty Tracy, and Linda Wilson – sewing in Luther Hall.

The women of Zion meet for their *monthly Bible study* on **Tuesday, December 21st**, in Luther Hall at 9:30 a.m. Our study of *The People of God: Unity in the Midst of Diversity* continues with our focus on gifts of the Spirit. Our principle text is found in 1st Corinthians 12:1-11. The Apostle Paul had a dynamic understanding of the power of the Spirit to transform our lives, and an even more dynamic understanding of the presence of the church to transform our world. Each of us is more than a number on a roll. We are living membranes intimately connected to the life of Christ's Body. Our gifts build up the body; they strengthen the unity we share in Christ. Let's learn how to use them that way.

THANK YOU'S AND MORE

Dear Food Pantry Crew,

Thank you so much for all of your hard work and generosity. I am always amazed at the incredible amount of food donated through your pantry each year. This food helps so many of the people we support who would otherwise not be able to afford a Thanksgiving meal. Thanks again to you and all the volunteers who make it happen.

*Melanie White, Director
Marketing and Public Relations
Siffrin Residential Association, Inc.*

From All of Us to
Each and Every
One of You:
We Wish You a
Very Merry
Christmas
and a Happy
New Year, too!

