

A WORD FROM THE PASTOR

A look back on 2010 provides cause for celebration. Giving was great. Our people were productive. New ground was broken, and many programs prospered. A new *Community Yard Sale* raised \$1,250 for the Food Pantry & Clothing Closet. The Men of Zion spearheaded our drive for new carpet with a series of prime rib dinner fundraising successes. The Youth of Zion had their most successful Youth Missions Craft Show & Oktoberfest ever. The Women of Zion strengthened our outreach through their involvement with our Comfort Givers, the Clothing Closet, the Food Pantry, the Chancel Guild, while also expanding their support for the Northeastern Ohio Synodical Women's Organization and the Women of the ELCA. The list goes on and on; but the point is basically very simple: praises be to God for the joy that comes with growing in love and service by grace.

We've been through our financial facts before: a budget in the black, in fact, five successive budgets in the black; the renovation of our restrooms; a new sound system; Sanctuary renovations; new carpet in the Narthex, Church Offices, and Main Hallway, a new HV/AC system; and record-breaking benevolence, both in response to the needs of members within the congregation and in response to our need to support ministries beyond our congregation. We have continued our record of generosity with the Northeastern Ohio Synod, while also finding ways to meet the increasing pressures placed on our Food Pantry & Clothing Closet as America's ongoing economic woes affect more and more families in North Canton and Stark County. Calls to ministry have challenged us to reach out in many ways, and we have done much to respond. God has been good to Zion, and our families have been generous.

As many now know, January ended on the sad note of several funerals affecting members of our church family. Helen Edwards lost her sister, Vivian Sickels. Shirley Hertler lost her son, Jeff Hummel. The Le Beau's lost Ellis' younger brother, Dean. While I was waiting in the long line that attended Dean's visitation, I found myself standing right next to Zion's former Pastor Jim Lutz, who was a longtime friend of Dean and Joan, as well as being their Pastor when he served at Zion. As we spoke, I became aware of the fact that we are now just three years away from the celebration of Zion's 200th Anniversary; and twenty-five years ago, it was Pastor Lutz who began 1989 with a yearlong schedule of anniversary celebrations. Something special was scheduled virtually every month to commemorate what was then the grand occasion of Zion's 175th Anniversary.

We'll need to start thinking of what we would like to do when our bicentennial rolls around. Now is a good time to start formalizing our plans with the establishment of a committee to get the ball rolling. I've already received feelers from Zion United Church of Christ, who joined us in jointly celebrating our 175th back in 1989. There's lots to do, and Pastor Lutz reminded me that Zion's members will come up with some great ideas if we open up the process to invite everyone's input. So, get your thinking caps on and start imagining some great things for 2014 when Zion turns 200! Of course, we could use your help in imagining things that will make our 197th a great year, too; and that goes for 198 and 199, as well. We've got a lot to do right now to make sure that we are moving in a direction that will make us healthier and stronger as a witness to the love God calls us to share with the world. 2011 is a year for getting started ... both on the big tasks of planning important anniversaries and on the small things that will make this year a year to remember ... for the good we do ... in Jesus' name.

REACHING OUT IN LOVE

APPLAUSE (*The Repository*, January 3, 2011): On behalf of Siffrin, Inc. and the more than three hundred people our agency serves with developmental disabilities, I would like to thank our community for all of their support and generosity this holiday season. Many of those we serve do not have living family members or much income to help around Thanksgiving and Christmastime. This year, more than fifty Thanksgiving dinners were donated by Zion Lutheran Church's Food Pantry and First Christian Church, and gifts for more than seventy people were provided through Community Christmas, the Dane Foundation, Grace Community Church, and Zion Lutheran Church. As a non-profit organization, Siffrin, Inc. would not be able to provide for this many people alone. It is very comforting that even in the current economy, our community cares enough about our neighbors to lend a helping hand.

Thank you again!
Melanie White, Siffrin, Inc.
Director of Public Relations

Dear Women of Zion,

Thank you for your gift to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio. We are grateful and humbled by your faithful stewardship. Your generosity directly benefits everyone who participates in our ministry. Please take a moment to visit our website for a look at our year-round schedule. You can find us online at www.lomocamps.org. We are blessed in so many ways and appreciate your caring prayers and partnership. Thank you for your gift, which helps to make our ministry possible.

Sincerely, in Christ,
Penny Christensen,
Executive Director

MORE NEWS FROM ZION

Women's Monthly Bible Study: We continue our study of *The People of God: Unity in the Midst of Diversity*. February's lesson focuses on race and culture, with Acts 10:34-35 as our theme verse. "Peter began to speak to them, 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.'" This will provide a great opportunity to learn about the long history of our call to share the good news of Jesus Christ with all the world. Please join us in the Resource Center when we meet on Tuesday, February 15th, at 9:30 a.m. All are welcome.

Zion's Comfort Givers: Despite interruptions caused by snow and cold, we are determined to stick to our regular schedule of meeting on the second and fourth Thursdays, February 10 and 24, in Luther Hall, at 9:30 a.m. We enjoy coffee, conversation, and being filled with the feeling of knowing that we are helping others through the good that we do.

The Men of Zion: With little to do until the month of March arrives, we have decided to wait and meet on March 2nd, when we will meet for dinner at 6:00 p.m. in Luther Hall. We will be the first to host a Lenten dinner, which will be the First Sunday in Lent on March 13th. Our partners at *Lutheran Men in Mission* have asked us to host another edition of their *Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner* on Tuesday, March 15th. And don't forget the Canton-Massillon Conference Winter Fellowship and Prayer Breakfast, which is going to be hosted by Israel Lutheran Church in Paris, Ohio on the morning of Saturday, February 19th, beginning with a delicious breakfast at 9:00 a.m. Call Bernie Bresson with any questions (330-704-3449), or just email him at lm6bres@gmail.com.

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

Our January Council Meeting was a great celebration of accomplishment as we looked back with thanks upon 2010. Our giving in December, and throughout the year, a budget in balance, benevolence that exceeded all targets, property projects that found funding: all signs of the power of God’s love alive among us! Jim Fidler called us to order, and Dave Palumbo opened our meeting with prayer at 7:00 p.m. Also in attendance were Juanita Cignetti, Dale Jacobs, Cathy Harvey, Chris Thomas, Beth Shaheen, Mark Votaw, and Pastor Sherwindt. Jim Dansizen, Vicki Givler, Susan Heyard, and Tina Beaber were unable to attend.

The Treasurer’s Report documented the good news of 2010: Total Income in December that exceeded our goal of \$25,000; and a surplus for the month that was large enough to allow us to end the year with a positive balance of \$312.97 in the black. Six successive monthly surpluses of \$4,510.89 in August, \$1,845.46 in September, \$3,193.99 in October, \$743.72 in November, and \$3,470.49 in December allowed us to turn a deficit of \$13,451.58 in July into a \$312.97 surplus as 2010 came to a successful close.

ZION'S DECEMBER FINANCIAL FACTS

December Income	\$ 35,783.33
December Expenses	<u>\$ 32,312.84</u>
December Surplus	\$ 3,470.49
Income thru December	\$265,661.59
Expenses " December	<u>\$265,348.62</u>
Surplus thru December	\$ 312.97
Our 2010 YTD Surplus	\$ 312.97
Our Accumulated Surplus	\$ 5,566.74

We thank you for your generous support!

JAYNE'S ECOLOGY CORNER

Living Green means learning how to become educated on products that affect our health and the health of our planet. As I look into projects in my home, I am going to try to keep the products I use *Green Products*. I am planning on painting my kitchen soon, and I heard of *low-VOC* and *no-VOC* paint, which is a *Green Product*, but I wasn’t sure about what made it a *Green Product*. I found the following information on *Eartheasy.com*.

Indoor air is three times more polluted than outdoor air, and according to the EPA, is considered one of the top five hazards to human health. Who would have known! Paints and finishes are among the leading causes that make indoor air a hazard. Paints and finishes release low-level toxic emissions into the air for years after application. The source of these toxins is a variety of *volatile organic compounds* (VOCs) which, until recently, were essential to the performance of the paint. VOCs are a group of chemicals that vaporize easily and bring gas pollutants into the home from a variety of sources. Since indoor paints are usually applied in an occupied space, that means people are more likely to be exposed to VOCs from the paint, for up to six months after application.

Environmental regulations and consumer demand have led to the development of low-VOC and no-VOC paints and finishes. Most paint manufacturers now produce non-VOC varieties of paint. These new paints are durable, cost-effective, and less harmful to human and environmental health. Low and no VOC paint is not deemed Hazardous Waste. It is water-based, so it’s easy to cleanup with soap and warm water. Low VOC paints will still emit an odor until dry. Go green! It’s good for you, and good for the planet, too!

GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, February 6th: The 2011 Souper Bowl of Caring featuring Shoes & Clothes for Kids

Sunday, February 13th: Remembering the life, death, and lasting witness of Saint Valentine

Sunday, March 6th: Our *Farewell to Alleluia* signals the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, March 9th: Lent begins with the Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday

Saturday, April 16th: Dress Rehearsal for the Children's Easter Program and a Pizza Party, too

Sunday, April 17th: The Children's Easter Program is set for Palm Sunday at the 10:30 service

Sunday, April 24th: Our Annual Children's Easter Egg Hunt for all ages during Sunday School

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES: PRE-K THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

Sunday School will continue its normal schedule during February. As a reminder, Sunday School begins at 9:15 a.m. each Sunday and ends at 10:15 a.m. Our two older classes will continue their study of the Books of the Bible, while our youngest class will continue learning great Bible stories. There is much fun and learning for all with great lessons, crafts, puzzles, games and snacks. You are invited and welcome to join us!

THE 2011 SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Zion's youth are participating in the 2011 Souper Bowl of Caring. This is a great project that over 260,000 young people across the nation participated in last year to help end hunger and poverty in their communities. Last year over \$10 million was raised. What an amazing act of caring! Zion's youth will be collecting money and nonperishable food items through Sunday, February 6th. There is a collection can in the Narthex outside the Church Office, and our youth will be available to collect money and food before and after both services through February 6th. We appreciate all of your support so far and look forward to everyone's generosity and support of Zion's youth and this project. All food collected at Zion for the 2011 Souper Bowl of Caring campaign will go to Zion's Food Pantry. All money raised will be used by our youth to shop for shoes and clothing for children that will be given to the charity called *Shoes & Clothes for Kids*. Thank you to Tina Beaber and our youth for all of their enthusiasm in organizing and carrying out such a worthwhile project, and thanks to everyone for your support.

A FINAL CALL FOR ACME RECEIPTS

Thank you for turning in your Acme receipts. The last date for receipts will be February 19, 2011. We will get credit for all receipts that are dated between September 25, 2010 and February 19, 2011 that show a *community cash back* amount at the bottom of the receipt. Please bring in all of your receipts no later than Sunday, February 27, 2011.

ZION'S LITURGICAL PAINTINGS: WORD AND SACRAMENT

(Designs and Explanations by Carol Rossbach)



A LUTHERAN CLASSIC—GOD'S WORD:

Scrolls, ancient manuscripts, and books are commonly believed to contain significant knowledge and are therefore symbols of wisdom. Foremost among Christian sacred writings are the four Gospels because they contain the story and teaching of Jesus. The Bible, which contains these Gospels, therefore signifies Jesus as God's Word to people. The Bible is also the symbol of the power of the gospel, of the proclaimed and read Word, of the presence of Jesus, and of the commission to evangelize the world. In other words, Jesus is God's Word made flesh, and the Bible is God's Word in print and proclamation. God's Word is how we encounter God's grace and God's will.

The sword denotes might. From might comes authority for making judgments. A two-edged sword stresses judgment and is meant to lift up Jesus as the ultimate judge over life and death. Jesus carries out his task through the Word, both Law and Gospel, the two edges of the sword.

ANOTHER LUTHERAN CLASSIC—THE SACRAMENTS: Word and Sacrament identify where it is that God reveals the truth of His grace and the power of His love, visibly for us to see and audibly for us to hear. Even as we hear of God's grace in the Word of the Bible, we see God's love in the bread and wine. His body was broken and his blood outpoured in the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. There on the Cross we see how in Christ God loves us and how in Jesus we should love God. In *The Small Catechism*, Martin Luther describes the benefits received in the Sacrament of Holy Communion: "forgiveness of sins, life and salvation." Luther asks, "How can eating and drinking do all this?" And this is his answer: "It is not eating and drinking that does this, but the words, *given and shed for you for the remission of sins*. These words, along with eating and drinking, are the main thing in the sacrament. And whoever believes these words has exactly what they say, forgiveness of sins." For the individual believer, the words, "for you," are absolutely crucial. Only by believing them can we really know the benefits God lavishes upon us through this gift.



ZION'S LITURGICAL PAINTINGS: BAPTISM AND PRAYER

(Designs and Explanations by Carol Rossbach)



HOLY BAPTISM—THE DOVE AND WATER:

Here the sacrament of Holy Baptism is represented by the dove and water. A clear connection between water, represented by waves, and the Spirit, represented by the dove, is found in John 3:5, where Jesus says, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Water implies cleansing, as in Titus 3:5, which refers to “the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit.” Romans 6:3-4 even seems to suggest drowning: “All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were buried with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” Baptism is a celebrative event

that has meaning for every day of our lives. Each day we are cleansed and renewed; each day we are empowered by the Spirit. Baptism is a gift of grace which, though individually received, unites us to the whole Christian family whom the Spirit makes one: “There is one body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)

THE GIFT OF PRAYER—THE DOVE AND HANDS: Paul provides a profound description of life in the Spirit, including the Spirit’s role in prayer: “All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:14-17). To think that the Spirit is helping us each time we call upon God as his children is indeed amazing. Paul’s words are a great comfort for all who struggle with prayer:

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.... The Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:26-27). The powerful role of the Spirit in prayer is symbolized here by the dove. The hands are lifted up in the traditional receptive posture of prayer.



A SPECIAL THANK YOU

I am writing to extend a big thank you to all of our church musicians, beginning with Phil Lehenbauer. Phil is a fabulous organist! He plays with style and musicianship. His hymn arrangements are so interesting, and some are his own compositions. His preludes, offertories, and postludes are outstanding and outstandingly presented.

Moving on to Fred Locker: what a wonderful and knowledgeable vocal conductor! His anthem choices have lots of variety, and he conducts rehearsals with patience, precision, and a sense of humor. Fred is such a resource for Jackson High School, Stark County, and for Zion. We are so blessed to have him.

And how about the Walters family! How many families do any of us know who are so committed to their church, which is our church! We see their involvement everywhere: with our renovation projects, whether it's rebuilding restrooms, designing sound systems, or beautifying our Sanctuary, with our music programs, whether singing in the Senior Choir, volunteering with the Children's Choir, or leading our efforts with the Praise Team. Their singing and leading enhances all of our worship services.

Speaking of the Praise Team, the commitment each member displays is phenomenal, both in terms of hours of rehearsal and presence at worship. Bless you – Darlene, Marilyn, Kelly, Beth, Brian, Dale, Matt, and Suzanne. What a great team and a wonderful blend of voices and selections. To our Senior Choir, you wonderful men and women, coming faithfully to rehearsals and services, some from as far away as Alliance, we value you all and everything you do.

I have visited lots of churches and have

THANK YOU'S AND MORE

Dear Pastor Sherwindt,

A dear Thank You to all who made mother's last day at Zion a special blessing. A very special thanks to Pastor Sherwindt for everything! Thanks so much to Dale Jacobs for singing *Amazing Grace*! Mother always thought he sounded amazing when he sang that song! Thanks to all the members who prepared such a delicious lunch! And a dear thank you to Ruth & Verle Elsass for all that they did for Mother.

*God's blessings to all,
Sandra Carrion and the Whalen family*

listened to lots of musicians, and I can emphatically say that our Zion Church is so blessed to have such a wonderful team of dedicated people who lovingly give of their time and talents to bless the Lord. Music is certainly a marvelous gift from God. Thank you all for sharing.

Blessings – Carole Singer

[Editor's Note: We can surely include Carole Singer in this list of musicians to be thanked for their willingness to contribute so very generously to the worship we offer and the music we enjoy. Carole has led an annual Sunday Evening Advent Service featuring Christmas carols from around the world, along with musical instruments from just about everyone on earth! Plus, she is always so generous in offering her talents on piano in any setting whenever asked. She and her husband Ron bring the same spirit of partnership to Zion that she has noted so beautifully in offering her thanks to others. We surely have been blessed. Thanks be to God.

HEARTFELT THANKS FROM THE FENNEY FAMILY

We just wanted to say thank you to all of you for being such wonderful loving people. Our Dad was very happy to be a member of this church and talked about many of you with fondness. We know he kept busy with Church Council and committee meetings, helping with various projects, and even doing some writing from time to time for seasonal devotionals. To those of you who were able to attend the service, thank you for all the kind words, and thank you, as well, for sharing such delicious food afterwards. It was above and beyond what any of us expected. So thank you for that. It was wonderful to spend time with all of you. The time we shared together sure went quickly.

We want to thank you for your kind words, caring gestures, and loving memorials. For those who weren't able to attend the service, we thank you for your thoughts and prayers. You are all a part of what made Zion the church our Dad loved so much. We are so glad that he was able to have such a wonderful church family. We know that he felt very comfortable at Zion. Zion was a church and a community that managed to keep both of our parents as members of a happy family, which says a lot! As the Pastor shared in his sermon at the funeral service, we moved around a lot when we were young. So we were members of many churches. But even after Dad retired, he chose to stay in North Canton and at Zion. On occasion we heard Mom and Dad talk of moving back to Minnesota; but it's clear that they never seriously considered it.

This has been a very difficult time for all of us, as Dad's death was quite unexpected. We're still not over the shock of it. Dad will be truly missed. Right now we're a bit overwhelmed with all that we have to do to clean out Dad's house, and then try to sell it. We also adopted Dad's dog *Nutmeg* temporarily. We really love her, but two dogs are a bit much for us. So we are looking for a nice home for *Nutmeg*. Although we are hoping that the process of getting things ready for sale goes quickly, a large part of us will be gone with those things because they are the last we have of both our parents. Still, it is time to live with all the good memories, without having to worry about all of the other things.

We will have fond memories of Zion, and we wanted everyone to know that we are very grateful to all of you for being an important part of our Dad's life. He was aging a bit this past year, but he always wanted to get to church regardless of how he felt. We are glad that he was able to live out his life in his own home, with his very special dog, with neighbors as friends, and a church family that cared about him. Please cherish what God has given you with the gift of your church family. Life can be very difficult at times. I know that you have had many of these times. It helps to have others at your side to lean on and get comfort from.

Again, thank you, and God bless all of you each and every day.

The Stephanie Alexander Family
Stephanie, Chris, Zachary, and Joshua
571 Aqueduct Street,
Akron, Ohio 44303

The Steven Fenney Family
Steven, Vicki, and Megan
5587 Bright Timber Landing Drive
Spring, Texas 77386

IN LOVING MEMORY OF ROSE MARIE RAPP

July 23, 1929 – January 9, 2011

The circumstances that greeted us as the new year began could not have been more horrifying. No one could have written a script that elicited any more alarm or concern as the shock that gathered the family together in the emergency room and then the intensive care units at Aultman Hospital on New Year's Day. There was no catching up with our feelings, or the thoughts rushing through our minds, as panic replaced peace at every turn. The pressure did nothing but build, as children had to anticipate decisions they approached with dread, decisions about life and death, needing to be addressed long after death seemed to have established the upper hand in a struggle that caught everyone flat-footed and powerless. The only good news that lined the dark cloud of Rose Marie's dimming prognosis was the stable peace that came upon her during the week she stayed in the ICU and then the Palliative Care Unit at Aultman Hospital. Nothing could have been more gracious than the time God gave to assure us that all matters of life and death are ultimately in His hands. When God called this woman we love home on the evening of January 9, we were all ready to accept her leaving us, knowing that she was where God wanted her to be, that she was embraced by the loving care of a gracious God, whose faithfulness could be trusted to secure her place with the angels in eternity.

We celebrate the life of your mother, grandmother, aunt, sister, and friend on a day that begins a long weekend that marks our nation's first of many holidays remembering one of our fallen heroes, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. History may shine a bigger spotlight on the lives of some rather than others, but that is precisely our reason for celebrating the life and witness of this woman we love, because in her own unremarkable way, as Jim so endearingly remembered, she opened our eyes to what is truly remarkable, inspiring us with her love to believe that God is love, opening our eyes with vision to see that God is leading the way as He calls us to serve in whatever way we can. Rose Marie was a beautiful woman, who in her own quiet way encouraged us to cling to the hope that sustains us, to walk with the Lord who stands beside us, to make the difference we can by loving those who are close, supporting those who are near, and caring for everyone we can in whatever way we're able. All of us have stories we could share about the quiet way in which Rose Marie went about the business of doing God's business. It never involved much fanfare, but made the point, nonetheless, that God loves us all, and calls us all to serve, each in his or her own way.

That's the remarkable truth of the Gospel, namely, that God isn't waiting for us to be remarkable before visiting us with His presence, filling our lives with His love, and calling us to share the love that's in us with those who need it. For however big a spotlight the world might shine on some, however tall some may stand in their own stature, God has made it clear in Christ that it is His grace that makes us great. It is His love that makes us strong. It is His faithfulness that opens our future to an eternity that is filled with a life and a love that never ends. As we read the gospels, we discover that Jesus shunned the limelight, and he turned away from pomp and circumstance, so that he could show us that God takes His place among the meek, inviting the smiling interest of little children, extending God's hand to those who need it, and God's help to the *unremarkable* who become *remarkable* because they are called and empowered to become instruments of the remarkable love and peace of God.