

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:

He is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Those were the words with which our celebration of Easter began. When you think about it, those were the words with which Easter itself began. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fact from the past that proclaims the fulfillment of God's promise for a world in which life, not death, has the first word and the last. It is all so simple. God created a world in which life is the aim, the end, God's purpose and God's will. According to St. Paul, it was the event of the resurrection that brought all these things into perfect clarity.

The biblical record is clear, and one scholar puts it this way, "For Jesus' contemporaries, the occurrence of the resurrection did not need to be interpreted, because it spoke meaningfully in itself. If such a thing had happened, one could no longer doubt what it meant." In short, the resurrection signaled the arrival of the kingdom of God, while also proclaiming Jesus to be the Christ, God's Son, our Lord. This fact from the past was also a glimpse of the future. Jesus would return as Judge and Redeemer of the world, and his new life of resurrection was a foretaste of the true life that would come with the new heaven and the new earth of new creation.

The New Testament tells us that Jesus was "the first-born from the dead" (Colossians 1:18), "the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1st Corinthians 15:20), "the first-born among many brethren" (Romans 8:29), which means that what happened to Jesus will happen to us! Paul puts it this way: "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, then he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give new life even to our mortal bodies through the Spirit, which has already been given to us and indeed dwells within us." (Romans 8:11)

At Christmas, we said it this way: the divine became human so that the human might become divine. With Good Friday and Easter, it became clear that God bore the full weight of mortality that we might be blessed with the full freedom of God's eternity. That is the promise of Easter, and a glimpse of our future we are given with Jesus' resurrection from the dead. God's love will not be deterred. God's life will not be defeated at the hands of death. God, not death, will have the final word; and that Word is Jesus Christ, risen from the dead and victorious over the grave.

Death can be brutal in its indifference to what is right. Its finality can be shockingly unjust, as when a life is untimely taken or those whom we love had so much more to give. There are moments when, if it weren't already true that God loves us with a love that will never let us go, we would make up that promise and create a God who could make things right and restore all things to a true sense of order. The Good News is that we don't have to make up these promises. We don't have to make up what the Gospel of Jesus Christ has revealed to be the truth about God, the truth about God's love, and the truth about God's life.

The dead will rise, not because we want that to happen, not because we can't face the truth of death's finality, and not because we wish it were so with all our heart. Those whom God loves will rise again because God's love is that powerful a bond, because God's word is that powerful a pledge, because God's life is that powerful a gift. The resurrection is not some random miracle that surprised Jesus and his disciples. It changed the world by opening our lives to the future God intended, a future that arrived with the life our Lord gave on the Cross, the life that left the tomb empty, filling ours with a love that conquers all and a life that never ends!

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

Our meeting in April occurred during the week of April 15, which meant that we had to fight through tax deadlines as we looked back on the hectic schedule of Lent, and ahead to its culmination with Holy Week. Council members on hand for our meeting were Jim Fidler, Susan Heyard, Juanita Cignetti, Jim Dansizen, Cathy Harvey, Mark Votaw, Tina Beaber, Dale Jacobs, Beth Shaheen, and Pastor Sherwindt.

Our financial facts for March were strong enough to turn in our first monthly surplus of the year. Attendance was up and income was strong, while winter backed off a bit and expenses returned to normal. For the year, expenses continue to run higher when compared with last year, while income has remained basically the same. With strong attendance continuing through Holy Week and Easter, it looks like April will continue the trend of another monthly surplus, as we move closer to getting things in balance.

The good news for Zion is that we are entering into one of our stronger quarters, when we are operating on all cylinders in terms of programs, participation, and support. We hope to string together several positive financial reports in the months to come; and with your help we'll do just that!

ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS FOR MARCH

March Income	20,191.34
March Expenses	<u>18,591.81</u>
March Surplus	1,599.53
Income thru March	54,956.24
Expenses thru March	<u>64,369.16</u>
2011 YTD (Deficit)	(9,412.92)
2010 YTD (Deficit)	(6,098.46)

We thank you for your generous support!

MORE COUNCIL NEWS

Worship Ministry: All of our preparations for Holy Week and Easter were well in hand: choral anthems, special music, a trumpet for Easter, Shirley Horton's viola on Maundy Thursday, soloists, readers, the works. Each service during Holy Week offers its own unique strengths to our worship life. On Palm Sunday, the Sunday School program brings such color and character to our late service, while Pastor's reading of the Passion Narrative at the early service offers a very vivid contrast of the moods that shape this transitional moment in Holy Week. Quiet Communion at Noon on Maundy Thursday isn't so quiet anymore. Between the story of *The Ragman*, special music by Margaret Reichenbach on organ, and visitors from Senior Independence, this service adds a much-needed healing touch to the week, while our evening service ends with the stark symbolism of the Chancel stripped of all color as we prepare for the bleakness of black on Good Friday. The Ecumenical Stations of the Cross at Walsh University brings our community together, while the historic *Tenebrae* brings the message of Christ's death home to all. It all culminates with Easter Sunday: the fragrant lilies, the special music, big hymns, great joy, Holy Communion, pews filled, and so much more. We would like to thank everyone who helped to make this historic season for the church so very meaningful for us: the Sunday School staff and all of our children, Zion's Senior Choir, the Praise Team, our Choir Director, our organists and musicians, the Confirmands and adults who read on Good Friday, acolytes and ushers, the Chancel Guild, assisting ministers, deacons, trustees, the Singing Chef, our Church Office Secretary, and our Pastor. A heartfelt *THANK YOU* is extended to all!

**INVITING ALL WOMEN
(CALLING ALL MEN)**

**OUR NINTH ANNUAL
MOTHER'S DAY
BREAKFAST:**

**SUNDAY, MAY 8TH
BETWEEN THE SERVICES
9:00 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.**

Oven-Warmed Cinnamon Rolls

Breads of All Sorts

The Best of Juices

The Freshest Fruit

The Finest Coffees

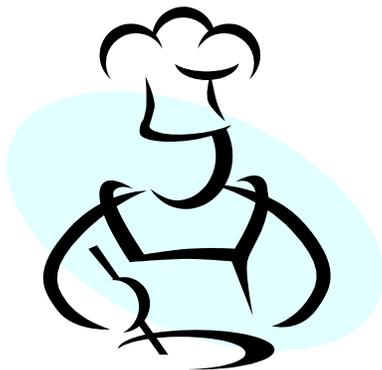
Our Singing Chef's Egg Strata

Our Special Tribute to Moms:

10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Readings by the Youth of Zion



A Treasured Tradition, a Delicious Breakfast, a Treat for All
Created and Designed, Baked and Burnt, by the Men of Zion

MEN OF ZION NEWS

The Men of Zion will meet on our usual night, the first Wednesday of the month, to finalize plans for this year's Mother's Day Breakfast. We will meet for dinner on May 4th, 6:00 p.m., in Luther Hall. All men are invited to join us. Once again, six teams are working on the menu. Dale Jacobs is the Kitchen Team Leader. Chris Thomas is the Set-up Team Leader. Bob Lancashire is the Clean-up Team Leader. Gary Horton is the Breads Team Leader. Steve Dague is the Drinks Team Leader. Garry Leed is the Fruit Salad Team Leader. We're looking for lots of men to join in the work, and hoping that many women will enjoy the result.

We are also working on a bigger program for the morning, with readings from our youth, some singing from our men, plus some special music from the Praise Team, with a few anecdotes thrown in for good measure. You'll enjoy the improvements. One thing we can't improve on is the single, long-stemmed red roses that the Men of Zion give to all the women who join us.

The Men of Zion have set a date for our **Prime Rib Dinner**, which is intended as a fundraiser for the many ministries we support through our congregational life here at Zion. On Saturday evening, June 18, we are inviting wives, children, and significant others to honor **Father's Day** by making reservations for an incredibly delicious prime rib dinner, with baked potatoes, mixed vegetables, salad, dessert, red wine, black coffee, even childcare, and all for the low, low cost of \$20.00 per person. Last year's dinner was a huge success; and we predict an even bigger and better time this year. We're planning to sell a hundred tickets! But we'll need your help ... and your presence ... as we strengthen our ministries by enjoying great food and having great fun at Zion.

PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER

Austin Sherwindt, serving presently in Armenia, will return to Zion for Mother's Day to offer a PowerPoint update on the work he is doing in Armenia with the Peace Corps. Last month's newsletter talked about *B2B*, the border-to-border walk across Armenia to raise awareness about children's health issues. That project is set to take place in June, with fundraising goals accomplished, a wide variety of sponsors in place, and a low-budget promotional campaign that turned out to be quite successful. The Armenian Orthodox Church, the International Red Cross, and community organizations all along the 275-kilometer route from Georgia to Iran are in place for the twelve Peace Corps Volunteers who are getting ready for their marathon walk as you read this article.

When Austin joins us for worship at both services on Mother's Day, he will have three mini-stories to share with us: one recounting the speech he gave at the national Swearing-In Ceremony in Armenia's capital, another recounting his first year in Goris, and a third that introduces a summer camp experience he and his colleagues are organizing to bring together children with and without disabilities to promote inclusive education inside and outside schools. They hope to have 25 children from ages 10 through 16 join in the fun of a summer camp that focuses on themes of teamwork, leadership, and cooperation.

Austin is heading back to the states on May 5, with stops in Boston, here at Zion, and Chicago. He arrives just in time for the Mother's Day Breakfast. So, we decided to put him to work ... both in the kitchen and the Sanctuary! He's prepared with lots of pictures, and he is looking forward to using our fabulous sound system to give us a look at what we're doing in a part of the world that needs our help and appreciates our presence.

JAYNE'S ECOLOGY CORNER

In the March *Herald* I wrote about what *Sustainable Products* and *Sustainability* mean. This month I thought you may want some examples of sustainable products, and I came across some information on flooring. So, if you are considering replacing a floor in your home, you may want to keep this information in mind. Traditional wood flooring isn't sustainable, since it takes 30 to 100 years to grow a tree that can be used for flooring. However, wood such as pine, which comes from fast growing trees, is far more likely to be truly sustainable than a wood such as oak, which comes from an extremely slow-growing tree.

Bamboo is a grass that grows to floor quality in 5 to 7 years, with the next batch of bamboo growing from the same roots – just like the grass in a lawn. The durability and hardness of bamboo flooring make it one of the best materials for use in high traffic areas of the home, even if these include humid and damp environments such as the kitchen and the bathroom. Bamboo resembles wood when made into flooring. It has a hard finish and is of rigid construction. Bamboo is harder so it won't cushion your walk and will reflect noise, much like wood floors do.

Cork, the bark of the cork oak tree, can be harvested, or peeled away, after the tree is 25 years old, and then harvested every 9 to 12 years, without killing the tree. Cork is a perfect choice for busy households that want a quiet floor to take away noise from loud thumping, playing, and jumping. Cork flooring somewhat resembles burl wood, burls being made by a spherical growth of a tree trunk and looking swirly when cut into planks. Cork flooring is a very versatile material, allowing it to be the perfect floor for bathrooms, bedrooms, living rooms and even moist areas such as saunas.

THE BOOK OF FAITH

The Adult Sunday School Class and the Women of the ELCA have been following a similar journey through our study of the Bible. We have been learning about the people of God and discovering more about how this community is able to embrace unbelievable diversity, while maintaining our unity in the spirit of harmony. The diversity of the ancient world was shocked to see that religious differences, tribal loyalties, and even historic hatreds were overcome among folks who gathered at the Lord's table to share in the power of the blood and participate in the life of Christ's body.

The Women of Zion have been following their monthly lessons in *Lutheran Women Today*, while the Adult Sunday School Class has been working its way through the Book of Romans. Either way, the challenge is the same. As Paul says in Romans 12:2, "*Do not be conformed to the ways of the world, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds through the power of the Spirit.*" That's the gospel in a nutshell. The proof of the gospel's power is found in the creation of a new community that bears witness to the kind of life God's grace makes possible if we would but follow the Spirit by trusting love's lead.

Images of love abound in the world around us. Love stories are told in movies. Love's magic is often the underlying theme marketed with commercials. Hallmark cards, reality television, online chat rooms, internet connections: it's hard to find our way through the mixed messages and false promises that fill these sites, and more difficult still to figure out what we need to know about what love is and how it works. Believe it or not, that's part of what we're doing on Sunday mornings in studying God's Word. We're looking for love that's true, and it's found in Christ.

MODELS OF LOVE

A Mother's love is something
that no one can explain,
It's made of deep devotion,
of sacrifice and pain,
It is endless and unselfish,
and enduring come what may
For nothing can destroy it
or take that love away.

It is patient and forgiving
when all others are forsaking,
And it never fails or falters
even though the heart is breaking.
It believes beyond believing
when the world around condemns,
And it glows with all the beauty
of the rarest, brightest gems.

It is far beyond defining,
it defies all explanation,
And it still remains a secret
like the mysteries of creation.
A many splendored miracle
we cannot understand
Another wondrous evidence
of God's tender guiding hand.

(written by Helen Steiner Rice)

God took the fragrance of a flower...
The majesty of a tree...
The gentleness of morning dew...
The calm of a quiet sea...
The beauty of the twilight hour...
The soul of a starry night...
The laughter of a rippling brook...
The grace of a bird in flight...
Then God fashioned from these things
A creation like no other;
And when his masterpiece was through
He called it simply - Mother.

(written by Herbert Farnham)

GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL



UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Mother's Day, May 8th: Zion's Mother's Day Breakfast during the Sunday School Hour

Mother's Day, May 8th: Special Program for Mothers from 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, June 5th: The Celebration of Confirmation has been moved ahead to this Sunday!

Sunday, June 12th: The Festival of Pentecost, and we invite everyone to wear red ... again!

July 11 through 15: Vacation Bible School, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

PRE-KINDERGARTEN THRU THE SIXTH GRADE

During May through the first Sunday in June, our Sunday School children will finish up their study of the books of the Bible and traditional Bible stories. There will be no Sunday School on Mother's Day, May 8th, because we will all be enjoying the wonderful Mother's Day Breakfast with our families, hosted by the Men of Zion. This has become a wonderful tradition at Zion, and we appreciate what the Men of Zion do to celebrate the gift God has given us with mothers.

Sunday, June 5th, will be our last day of class for the 2010-11 Sunday School Year. We will have a small celebration that day to mark the end of the great year of lessons and fun we have had. We will take a break from Sunday School for the summer, and start up again in September when we kick off the Sunday School year with Rally Day on Sunday, September 11, 2011. Sunday School classes will begin again on Sunday, September 18th.

THE CHILDREN'S EASTER PROGRAM: *THE GLORIOUS RAINBOW OF EASTER!*

We hope everyone enjoyed this year's Easter program on Palm Sunday. The children did a fantastic job! They showed us the beautiful colors of the rainbow and explained how each color contributed to the Easter Story. At the end, when the colors were arranged to form *the glorious rainbow of Easter*, we saw that the "rainbow" proclaims Christ's victory over death. Between learning what each color symbolized and listening to moving passages of Scripture, the whole congregation saw how each child's color helped proclaim the true meaning of Easter!

We want to thank the children for all of their hard work and dedication in practicing and performing the program. They are a lively and enthusiastic group, as well as a joy to work with! Thank you to the parents for sharing their kids and being flexible with our schedule. A big thank you to everyone: Connie Riffle, Janet Slease, Tina Beaber, Connie Frank, Laura Thompson, Sharon Stout, Nicole Milek, Jayne Schrader, Beth Willis, Brooke Roman, and Kelly Walters, for all your help with this year's program – from practices, to props, to costumes, to snacks and rehearsal! We have a great group of volunteers who are always willing to pitch in! Finally, thank you to Suzanne Walters for her musical accompaniment, and to Brian Walters for the sound system support. It takes a large number of people to make our programs a success and we truly appreciate everyone's support!

MORE GOOD NEWS FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ZION

STILL MORE THANK YOU'S FOR LENT, PALM SUNDAY, AND EASTER

Thank you to all of the youth and their families who helped with the Youth Lenten dinner and service on April 10th. A great big thank you goes out to Doug and Lisa Roman for leading the crew in the kitchen for the Youth Lenten Dinner. The chicken and potatoes, along with a wide array of desserts were delicious and enjoyed by all. Also, thank you to all of the youth and their families for contributing food, helping to serve the meal and clean up afterward. We are so lucky to have such a great group of families that are always willing to pitch in and help! We also need to thank all of our youth who participated in the Passion Narrative during service. Everyone did a great job, and we really appreciate their willingness to be a part of our services.

Also, thank you to all of the families who donated candy for the Easter Egg Hunt. We were able to fill over seven hundred eggs this year for our children! Thank you to Christian Heller, Brooke



Roman, Kelly Walters, Tina Beaber, and Sharon Stout for filling the eggs. The Easter Egg Hunt was lots of fun, despite the rainy weather. We were able to hide all of the eggs throughout the church for the children to enjoy. Thank you to Laura Kay and Janet Slease for coming early to hide the eggs, and to Taylor & Brooke Roman, Savannah & Christian Heller, Kevin & Kelly Walters, and Max Jacobs for all of their help during the Easter Hunt and with the younger kids.

WE'VE GOT A DATE (BUT NO THEME) FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

Mark your calendars! Vacation Bible School is scheduled for the week of July 11 through 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. VBS is designed for children from age 5 through to those who have finished the 5th grade. We are still working on this year's theme along with all of the week's great activities. Look for more information next month!

We are in need of volunteers to lead our classes and activities; and, as all of us know, we need many other volunteers to make our VBS a great success. If you are interested, contact Debbie Fox at 330-966-2433. Please remember that if you are not able to volunteer during the actual week of Vacation Bible School (July 11—15), there are still many other ways to help. In June, we will put out donation cans for gifts of cash, along with sign up sheets for food and supplies that are needed for the week. Please watch the News Page in the Sunday bulletin for our scheduling work days when you can help do the preparatory work for VBS. We truly appreciate the support that Zion's family always gives to make this summer tradition a great event!

WE'VE GOT A DATE FOR THE CRAFT SHOW, AND REGISTRATIONS, TOO!

The *Youth Missions Craft Show & Oktoberfest* is on the calendar for **Saturday, October 22nd**, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Based on last year's success, we are looking forward to renting more than 70 craft tables. Connie Frank was very pleased with the feedback we received from our crafters last year, and we are looking for ways to build on the great reputation that we've established in taking care of crafters and generating interest and foot traffic. Great job! Let's keep it up. If you know of crafters who might want to rent a table at our Craft Show, give us a call, or check out our website for all the latest information on what will be our ***Eighth Annual Youth Missions Craft Show & Oktoberfest***, which is set for **Saturday, October 22nd**.

THE WOMEN OF ZION

The People of God: Unity in the Midst of Diversity turns to a focus on witnessing and evangelism. Our theme verse is Acts 1:8. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, and beyond, to the ends of the earth.” There are some who think that worship is the key. Others focus on service. Growing in grace is another way of understanding what’s central to Christian living. In the beginning, witnessing to the love of God alive within and at work among us was what led to the explosion of growth we call the birth of the church. You are invited to join the Women of Zion in their monthly Bible study on **Tuesday, May 17th**, at 9:30 a.m. in the Resource Center.

Zion’s Comfort Givers meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, which will be May 12 & 26, at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall. You are invited to join us. You’ll be surprised by how comfortable it can be and how much fun it will be to sew with us.

The Chancel Guild would like to thank the Le Beau family for graciously giving new fair linen and a linen Corporal cover for the Lord’s Table in memory of Anna Mae Le Beau. The fair linen is symbolic of the cloth in which Christ’s body was wrapped for burial. The corporal is a protective cover over the fair linen. The Communion vessels are placed on it for the elements to be consecrated. Thanks also to Kay Davis for the four new Pall covers for the wine chalice. The pall is a stiffened square card covered with white linen, usually embroidered with a cross, or some other appropriate symbol. Kay has given them in honor, and in memory of past Chancel Guild presidents. These loving and meaningful gifts are appreciated by the Chancel Guild members.

THANK YOU’S AND MORE

Dear friends at Zion Lutheran,

Thank you for the beautiful service to celebrate Mabel’s life. Thank you, as well, for your love, your prayers, and the lunch you provided our family.

*God bless you,
The Mabel Snyder Family*

The meaning of the word **MOTHER**:

M is for the million things she gave me,
O means that she's never growing old,
T is for the tears she shed to save me,
H is for her heart of purest gold;
E is for her eyes, with love-light shining,
R means right, and right she'll always be,
 Put them all together, they spell **MOTHER**,
 A word that means the world to me.

SOME MEETINGS IN MAY

The Northeastern Ohio Synod will gather on **Friday and Saturday, May 13-14** at the John S. Knight Center in Akron for our annual Assembly. This year's theme is *Building Community in the 21st Century*. The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Albert Starr, ELCA Director for African Descent Ministries. Once again, Zion's voting delegates will be Pastor Sherwindt, Carol Rossbach, and Chuck Danner. The focus of the Assembly deals with nuts-and-bolts business of the Synod. We will conduct elections, approve the budget, make note of roster changes, worship and pray together. One of the things we typically celebrate at these Assemblies is the strong support Zion offers to the wider church. During this past year, we donated \$20,040 to the Northeastern Ohio Synod, and an additional \$15,560 to ministries such as our Food Pantry & Clothing Closet, ELCA Disaster Relief, the Souper Bowl, Lutheran World Relief, the Advent Giving Tree, the Steve Dague Fund, and other efforts of reaching out with God's love near and far. We will offer our Synod Assembly report during Sunday School on May 15th.

Due to a late Easter and a long winter, our Annual Meeting at the end of May has been pushed into the beginning of June. This is the one that meets mid-year to elect persons to serve on Council and with our Deacons and Trustees. No date has yet been set; however, Church Council will take responsibility for serving our dinner, which, of course, promises to be another excursion into dining excellence, which is the norm here at Zion. Other than the election, there are no special concerns requiring our attention at this mid-year meeting. In the meantime, it looks like the Trustees have scheduled a **Spring Clean-up Day** for **Saturday, May 21**. Save that date!

MORE OUTREACH NEWS

On Tuesday, April 12th, Betty Tracy, Edna Smith, and Joyce Gibeaut attended this year's edition of the **Canton-Massillon Cluster Women's Spring Retreat**, which combined with the Southern Cluster and met at Grace Lutheran Church in Dover. There were about 90 women in attendance. Pastor Donald Rice, formerly the Chaplain at St. Luke's Lutheran Community, and now the Pastor at Grace in Dover, led opening devotions. Our Bible Study was led by Deaconess Judy Hoshek, an Assistant to Bishop Eaton here in the Northeastern Ohio Synod, with its focus on forgiveness. The morning went perfectly, followed by a delicious lunch, featuring chicken salad, some tasty fruit, and an angel food cake dessert. Our offering supported the food pantry at Grace, with a love offering directed to the Northeastern Ohio Synod.

It's time to start thinking about **Health Kits and School Kits**. A look at last year's report shows that **Lutheran World Relief** was active distributing these resources all around the globe. In addition to regular spots like India, Haiti, the Congo, and Indonesia, health kits and school kits also made it into Austin's backyard, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. Actually, just in case you're interested, they're not called health kits anymore. We'll refer to them as personal care kits. School kits are still school kits. There are a few more guidelines in place now that these resources have become a staple throughout the world. First, only give new items when assembling these kits. Since they are used by persons that differ when it comes to religious background, ethnic heritage, and national origin, we are now asked to steer clear of overtly religious, patriotic, or military symbolism. This new sensitivity applies to quilts as well as our packaging of school and personal care kits.

GOOD NEWS FROM ZION'S FOOD PANTRY ... AND MORE!

A Report written by Shirley Cavender

This July will mark our 10th year directing Zion's Food Pantry and fulfilling one of the needs of our neighbors. Ten years ago North Canton and surrounding cities were under the misguided impression that there was no hunger in North Canton. Unfortunately, due to the reality of hunger's presence almost everywhere, we have proven the naysayers wrong. With help from surrounding churches, Zion's members, a great Pantry Crew, a supportive Pastor, and the Stark County Hunger Task Force, we are able to meet the increasing needs of those desiring help.

In a similar way, I have been confronted with the denials from a community whose own are suffering in silence, not from hunger, but from neurobiological brain disorders, or, as it once was referred to, mental illness. One in five people will suffer from this disease at sometime in their life. The illness need no longer be considered a death sentence by our society. There is remission and recovery. Unfortunately, not only are the patients ostracized, but their caregivers (parents, husbands, wives, and adult children with older parents) are also left to handle their fears and worries by themselves. No hallmark cards are sent, nor dinners left on your doorstep as you deal with the impact of this illness. Caregivers feel so isolated because their own family and friends generally do not recognize this neurobiological brain disorder as a disease.

Here at Zion, Becky Aquilo, Charlie and I have valuable firsthand knowledge of what a family goes through when a loved one is diagnosed with this disease. If it were cancer, heart disease or some genetic disease, the doors of support would have swung wide open. Years before Becky discovered NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, she was struggling in a sea of information with no cohesion. With NAMI growing at a state-to-state level, she was introduced to their *Family-to-Family* education class. This class gave her the tools she needed to deal not only with her loved one, but also with her loneliness in being a caregiver. With Becky's guidance we, too, became aware of NAMI. We enrolled in the 12 week *Family-to-Family* class and began to take control of our lives. While attending the NAMI monthly meetings we soon realized that we were not alone in this fight. It was so awesome to sit in a room with 30-plus caregivers who knew exactly what we were going through. They, too, were seeking solace. The networking and camaraderie gave us the strength to save our child and ourselves.

Becky, Charlie and I signed up to attend a *facilitator training class* last fall, which was to be offered in the spring of 2011. We just returned from attending the two-day training session, and all of us are now certified through NAMI to be facilitators for support groups for those caring for a loved one with a neurobiological brain disorder. With Zion's approval and Pastor's support, we will be holding the family support group meetings at Zion. We will begin in June on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, meeting from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. We will continue this monthly schedule throughout the year. Please tell your family and friends two things, that we are talking about mental illness and that caregivers no longer have to face it alone; and please pray for all of us as we fight to break the stigma of this disease. Our family support group is open to all members of our community, not just members of Zion. All of us can help; and this is an area where our help is needed, and invited.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF HELEN EDWARDS

(August 28, 1932 – April 1, 2011)

Helen was loved and liked a whole lot. She had a great sense of humor, and you couldn't find a better friend or a better member. She will be sorely missed. Death brings with it shock, surprise, and sadness; and that's the case with Helen's passing, even though she struggled with death's inevitability for quite a while. Art and Ralph will attest to how grim the outlook became with a new set of prognoses. She was nothing short of heroic as she battled to keep her declining health at bay. But late last week, Helen's worsening outlook became even worse still.

"Inoperable" was the word used this time, and the time frame involved proved far shorter than any anticipated. Art and Ralph talked with Helen about what lay ahead. They stepped out for a moment to talk with the medical team, and when they returned, God had called Helen home, and she gladly responded. We can hear her saying, "Here I am, Lord. Take me. Take me."

If ever there were a song that captured Helen's spirit, I think this Blue Book classic is it. "Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will keep your people in my heart." (*With One Voice*, #752) Pre-dialysis, Ralph will confirm that there were many nights when Helen heard those voices in the night, as a sign of her need for dialysis; but over her life-time, there was never any doubt that she was open to hearing God's call, responding with a faithful YES! Here I am, Lord. In life it was "Send me." In death, it was "Take me." The Apostle Paul captures the continuity perfectly in Romans: "We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves; whether in life, or whether in death, whether the Lord is sending us, or taking us, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14:7-8) Helen trusted God with her life and now with her death. She has been, is now, and ever will be in God's hands.

Because of this faith that we share, there is a joyous strain in the sadness we feel. This is a joy that is grounded in the Good News that God is faithful. His Word of promise is true, and that promise is that *because He lives, we, too, shall live*. This is the promise of Easter ... because the Resurrection we celebrate with the Good News is fact. Sure, it's about faith; but Paul wants us to be clear that before it becomes a question of faith for us, it is a matter of fact for Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord. Jesus is alive, and because He lives, we, too, shall live. This hope is not based on our wishing for a happy ending. Our hope for "more" beyond the grave is grounded in the promise given with God's Word. Jesus tells us plainly in John 10: "I have come that you may have true life." In John 14 he tells us more: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He is our way to heaven, the truth of God's faithfulness, and the reality of life's reign forever.

As one of our great Easter hymn proclaims, "The strife is o'er, the battle is done. Now is the victor's triumph won, with a song of praise that has just begun!" Helen sang those songs of praise in life, and she'll sing them with us forever – not because we wish it were true, but because God has given His Word in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord. God's word is true and can be trusted because God is faithful: faithful to His Word and faithful to His love. The Book of Revelation tells us that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. What this will look like is still a mystery, but this we know: love will be its premise and life its promise, because the power of life and the power of love have been given to Christ our Lord, who shares it with us ... freely and graciously ... in Jesus' name. Amen

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MABEL SNYDER

(March 21, 1919 – April 13, 2011)

In 2009, Mabel's mediation in our Lenten devotional book was featured on her ninetieth birthday. I introduced her mediation in that devotional: "There is not a ministry offered here at Zion that Mabel has not at one time or another assisted with as a faithful member of our church family. Pastors have come and gone; and all of them [including this one] have known Mabel as a faithful, hard-working, soft-spoken, and supportive partner in the ministries we've pursued. Choir directors have come and gone, and her favorite was always 'the one we're singing with now.'" Characteristic of Mabel's way in the world, she wrote, "I have not asked for much, and demanded even less. But I have received far more than I could ever have imagined." Now that was vintage Mabel Snyder.

There was nothing that would have brought greater joy to Mabel than entering the doors of Zion, walking down the center aisle to Holy Communion, singing God's praises with Zion's faithful. That vision of blessing for Mabel actually came true last year when Todd Elsass surprised us by bringing Mabel to church one Sunday. How she beamed! It was unforgettable for Mabel and for us. For Mabel, loving this church was sweeter than life itself, because life at Zion embodied her connection with God's love and God's people. None would deny that Mabel did not strive to be a complicated woman; and all would agree that she learned the simple truth of simply living the connection between our hope for true life that awaits us in heaven and the faithfulness that guides the contribution we seek to make here and now in the life of the church.

During the course of my thirty-plus years of ministry as a Lutheran pastor, I found Mabel Snyder to be a one-of-a-kind blessing in my life as a pastor and in the life of our church. She never tired of tending to the little things to make sure that the church and the fellow servants she assisted knew that their efforts were supported and appreciated. When I would visit Bill with communion at their home, I could always count on Mabel's freshly baked cookies with coffee. When our evangelism team decided to create a 48-hour home visit follow-up response to visitors at Zion, she supplied the cookies that were the gift we left to thank folks for visiting with us. When volunteers were needed to assist with Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, the women's monthly Bible study, our various circles, whatever the group, its ministry, and needs, Mabel was there to quietly lend a hand and offer her help and support.

We are grateful for the gift God gave us. We are thankful for the love she shared, the work she did, the witness she offered, and the light that shined through her. I will always think of Mabel when I sing the hymn with which we opened this morning's service, *Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling*. This voice is always calling and Mabel always found a way to serve. Mabel was not one for saying, 'I told you so.' She never insisted on her own way. She would never presume to instruct us in what we should do. But when it came to serving our Lord and his church, she showed us how it's done. It's found in verse 4 of our Opening Hymn. "Let none hear you idly saying, 'There is nothing I can do', while the multitudes are dying and the Master calls for you. Take the task he gives you gladly; let his work your pleasure be. Answer quickly when he calls you, 'Here am I. Send me. Send me!'" That's the woman Mabel was and that's the woman she will be forever because of the love that's ours and the promise God gives, in Jesus' name. Amen