

WORDS FROM THE PASTOR:

July is a month we set aside to celebrate our ministry of Vacation Bible School, and that is exactly what we did this July. We spent the first week of the month worrying about it, the second week finalizing our plans, the third week enjoying it, and the last week basking in the afterglow of a week well spent. God has blessed us with a great group of volunteers, wonderful families to serve, and, of course, the best Vacation Bible School director on the planet with Debbie Fox. This is now the fourteenth consecutive year (wow!) that Debbie has served our congregation in this way; we offer our praise to God and thanks to Debbie – and her entire team of volunteers – for a great week of service in *God's Big Backyard!*

All of the pages of this newsletter – especially pages 5 through 9 – offer proof positive of all the good stuff we enjoyed with the five days of fantastic fun that came together for us during the ministry of outreach we call *Vacation Bible School*. I must admit that no matter how familiar the Bible stories we share during Vacation Bible School are, I always learn a lot about the lessons we feature. This year our focus was on FRIENDS – having them and being one. On Tuesday we followed the friends of the paralytic as they carried their friend to the house where Jesus was staying, lifted him up to the roof, and lowered him down through the ceiling. The paralytic couldn't have done it without them. That's what friends are for. That's what friends are. Jesus saw how blessed this man was; and then he blessed him some more.

On Wednesday, Jesus turned the tables on us with the story of the Good Samaritan. Sure, it's great to have good friends; but it is better to be one. A lawyer wanted to talk about inheritance law, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus wasn't interested in the law. He talked about opening our eyes to see persons in need all around us. Let your eyes be opened, and your heart be moved ... to action. The key question is not who is my neighbor. We need to ask if we are being a good neighbor. The law cannot require the good will of our altruism; but God's love, extended to the undeserving, which includes us, invites us to learn from the love God gives freely and graciously. Be a friend, a true friend. That is the key to true life.

We enjoyed a week of lessons about God's love and God's call that we who have received God's love in countless ways become the eyes of God's seeing the needs of those around us and the hands through which God reaches out and helps our neighbors in need. We saw a whole lot of that going on around here within the walls of our church, as many of our members and friends heard God's call and responded by offering help of their own, help that allowed Debbie to see to it that our week of service in *God's Big Backyard* provided plenty of opportunities for making the connection between faith in God and service to others.

Helping our children understand the importance of faith in God, along with prayer, service, and learning what it means to have a loving heart: these things do not just happen automatically. They happen because communities and families care enough to make room for programs like these, and to support leaders who step forward to help us as we invite our children to become the kind of people God wants us to be. Thank God for leaders like Debbie, for the families who join us, for the volunteers who help, and for our children who help us see the miracles that happen as eyes are opened, hearts are touched, and lives are changed for good in Jesus' name.

JUNE'S BUDGET \$URPLUS

Sure, July's newsletter already shared the good news we celebrated with our July Council meeting, ending the program year on the strong note of a year-to-date budget surplus. We welcomed our newly elected Council members with great financial news, a monthly budget surplus of \$3,993.47, and a year-to-date surplus of \$500.43. President Mark Votaw, called our meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Also present were Brian Milek (Vice President), Carol Rossbach (Council Secretary), Dave Palumbo (Treasurer), Dale Jacobs (Worship), Todd Elsass (Property), Renee Keith (Learning), Heather Hoffman (Parish Life), Jim Fidler (Resource), and Pastor Sherwindt. We kept things brief, to the point, and then adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Financially speaking, Total Income through June is around \$26,000 ahead of last year's levels. This is mostly due to the additional fundraising we have been doing for our bicentennial projects. Through the end of June 2014, Total Giving amounted to \$156,606.54, as compared to \$120,672.54 through June 2013. This is good news about Zion's incredible generosity! Not all of this giving is applied to our Operating Budget. When it comes to measuring our performance relative to the Operating Budget, we still have good news to share. Operating Budget expenses through June amounted to \$120,208.27, while Operating Budget expenses totaled \$119,707.84, leaving us with a \$500.43 year-to-date surplus.

We continue to invite your contributions to our special bicentennial property projects. We have our kitchen improvements and the parking lot overhangs left to do, which are a bit more expensive than many of us thought. Your generosity is appreciated and invited.

BICENTENNIAL FUNDRAISER

It seems like summer has just begun; but we are already thinking of our *End-of-the-Summer Party!* Part of why we're thinking about it now is because the *Great Grill Off* features extraordinarily delicious food, and it's always nice to think of extraordinarily delicious food! We are also thinking about the *End-of-the-Summer Party* because it is going to be our last fundraiser for the great bicentennial season we enjoyed from March through June. We spared no expense in making sure we honored the significance of celebrating two hundred years of growing in love and service by grace. It was great to see former pastors and their families. It was great to connect with former interns, sons of the congregation, former interim pastors, and many, many more familiar faces.

In covering these expenses, we raised some funds through the sale of bicentennial plates, bicentennial ornaments, and even bicentennial T-shirts. We raised a bundle with our two prime rib dinners. We still have around \$1,750 in expenses that we would like to retire with funds raised through our *End-of-the-Summer Party*. The men who contribute their culinary skills at this Great Grill Off donate the expenses they incur, and the rest of us purchase and donate tickets to say THANKS for the great food we'll enjoy and THANKS for the opportunity to support our mission as a congregational family.

The date we have in mind for our *End-of-the-Summer Party* is Sunday, August 31st, which is the Sunday of Labor Day Weekend. This is a weekend that lends itself to enjoying a great time, while eating great food, and raising all the money we need to put our bicentennial to rest!

A THANK YOU TO ZION

Dear Friends at Zion Lutheran Church,

The Stark County Hunger Task Force thanks you, along with Zion United Church of Christ and the North Canton Cemetery for your generous donation of \$911 to the mission of fighting hunger in Stark County.

Today, one in six Stark County residents struggle with food insecurity, which is, as a Google search will explain in a neat little white box, the regular or extended state of “being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.” It is a reality marked by frequent worry about how to afford the food they need for their families.

Thank you for challenging that reality with your donation, which will help place up to 6,377 pounds of food onto shelves in more than 30 pantries across Stark County. For the 27,000 Stark County residents we serve each month, who find themselves hungry and unsure of what to do about it, access to adequate food does not address physical hunger – it nourishes hope.

That hope is the reason your generosity is valuable beyond words. Without the support of partners like you, none of our programs would be possible. We invite you to continue fighting local hunger with us; and we thank you for the good work your pantry does.

Again, we thank you for your support and partnership in the fight against hunger in Stark County. Only together we can win.

*Sincerest regards,
Amy Weisbrod
Executive Director
Stark County Hunger Task Force
Fighting Hunger since 1981*

**IT'S A GREAT WAY TO
END THE SUMMER:
ZION'S "END OF THE
SUMMER" PARTY!**

**LABOR DAY WEEKEND
SUNDAY AFTERNOON
(IT'S EARLY THIS YEAR)
AUGUST 31st, 2014**

**WE'VE MASTERED THE PLAN
WORSHIP: 8 am & 10:30 am**

**SNACKS at 12:30 p.m.
FOOD at 1:00 p.m.
Clean-up at 3:30 p.m.**

Pulled Pork, Beef, Chicken,
Fish, Shrimp, and More
Hot Dogs, Hamburgers
Baked Beans, Cole Slaw
Lots of Great Desserts



Good Fun, Great Food, Fabulous Fellowship
A Fun Way to Raise Funds for a Good Cause

GREAT NEWS ABOUT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
A FABULOUS WEEK IN GOD'S BIG BACKYARD
WHERE KIDS HAVE A BLAST SERVING JESUS!



This year an awesome group of kids joined us in *God's Big Backyard* for a week of service at Vacation Bible School, July 21st through 25th. We had thirty-nine children registered this year, averaging about thirty-seven children each day. The children experienced a wide variety of activities during the week with great lessons, music, crafts, games, delicious snacks, many service projects, and our *big backyard bash*. This year's lessons were all about serving God by serving others; and each day Pastor Sherwindt introduced the daily lesson and the theme to start off our morning.

Serve Family

On Monday we focused on *Serving Family*. The lesson was from Exodus 2:1-10, which is the story of Miriam, a young girl who served her family by watching over her baby brother Moses, as he floated in a basket along the Nile River. Because Miriam spoke up, their family was reunited in the Pharaoh's palace. God blessed Miriam's service to her family, and God will bless ours. God placed us in families so that we can love and care for one another in the same way that He loves and cares for us.

Serve Friends

On Tuesday we focused on *Serving Friends*. The lesson was from Mark 2:1-12, which is the story of a man who couldn't walk, but had four very special friends. When Jesus came to town, they carried their friend to see Jesus, even going so far as to open up a hole in the rooftop of the house so their friend could be healed! Jesus rewarded their friendship and faith by healing the man, who picked up his mat and walked home. God blessed the four men's service to their friend, and God will bless our friendships, too. Friends are yet another way God loves and cares for us. God wants us to show that same mutual love and care with our friends.

Serve Neighbors

On Wednesday we focused on *Serving Neighbors*. The lesson was from Luke 10:25-37, which is a story Jesus told to help a man understand that everyone has value in God's eyes. The story of the Good Samaritan helps us understand that everyone is our neighbor, regardless of where we live, what we look like, or how different we are from others. God wants us to reach out and serve the hurting people around us. God wants us to open our eyes and our hearts, to extend a helping hand, and more if that's what's needed. God blessed the Good Samaritan's efforts and God will bless ours! God wants us to love and serve our neighbors!

Serve Community

On Thursday we focused on *Serving Community*. The lesson was from Luke 19:1-10, which is a story about

Zacchaeus, a small man who made a big change.

Zacchaeus was a hated tax collector who cheated people out of their hard-earned money. But when he met Jesus, Zacchaeus had a change of heart. He gladly repaid the money he owed the

MORE GOOD NEWS ABOUT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (CONT'D)

people in his community – and then some! God blessed Zacchaeus' willingness to reach out to the people around him, and God will bless us as we reach out to others, too! Communities are more than just groups of houses. They are people who come together with something in common – hobbies, interests, responsibilities, loyalties, and so much more. People in communities care for one another, take responsibility for one another, and serve one another. This lesson came to life with the story of Zacchaeus' change of heart, which led him to change his life.



Finally, on Friday we focused on *Serving Jesus*. The lesson was from Acts 3:1-19, which is the story of Peter and John's encounter with a beggar who was unable to walk. The man asked Peter and John for money, not knowing all Peter and John really had to offer him. Peter healed the man in the name of Jesus, and then told everyone who would listen the good news of Jesus Christ. God blessed Peter and John as they served others in His name, and God will bless us. When we serve others in Jesus' name, we are not only giving Him the credit and the glory, we are pointing others to Him – offering them real hope in addition to meeting their immediate physical needs. As we serve those around us, we are also serving Jesus.

We had an awesome group of Backyard Leaders in God's Big Backyard this year, with Carley Frank and Nathan Fox (teachers), and Max Schroeter and Chloe Snodgrass (helpers), Connie Riffle (teacher), and Mallory Rhodes & Emma Shaheen (helpers), Carol Rossbach and Janet Slease (teachers), and Cassie Frank (helper), and Renee Keith (teacher), Tia Riffle (helper). They put in a lot of time and hard work to make this year's program such a success. I am so grateful to them for the amazing job that they did! The children learned so much and had a great time thanks to these teachers!



As always, music was one of the highlights of VBS thanks to Kelly Walters. She did an amazing job with the kids – teaching them the songs, motions and dancing. She put together a wonderful program for the Ice Cream Social, which parents, family and friends enjoyed. The children really enjoyed this year's music. The motions were fun and the songs had such great meaning. I am sure they will be singing and dancing to these songs for a long time! Thanks, Kelly!

Our crafts were also outstanding, thanks to the creativity, patience, organization, and flexibility of Connie Frank, Cheryl Roman and Carol Rossbach. They had a great group of helpers, led by Natalie Henderson, who pitched in wherever needed. This year's craft room included crafts and service projects like quilt squares, bug magnet keepers, painted t-shirts, prayer pails, and service banks. The finished products were great! Thank you to Connie, Cheryl, Carol, and Natalie!

MORE GOOD NEWS ABOUT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (CONT'D)

Thank you to the crew that led our outdoor games all week – Eric Dague and Christian Henderson. They also had help from our 7th grade volunteers – Justin Dague, Jeremy Fox, Ben Mohler, Marcus Rhodes, and Casey Walters. The kids loved going outside to play a variety of games and activities that included relay races, an obstacle course, neighbor freeze tag, and much, much more. The games and activities encouraged teamwork, which reinforced the daily themes with the decisions the children needed to make while outside.



Darlene Milavickas headed up our snacks all week, and our lunch crew on Friday. We appreciate all she did to keep the kids full and hydrated while they were with us. We had a traveling popsicle and ice cream cart each day that the children could hardly wait for during their outdoor rotation! Thanks to Darlene Milavickas and Vicki Givler for making all the trips with the cart to the pavilion throughout the week. We also shared ice cream treats with our friends in Senior Independence throughout the week.



This year we were blessed to have a special speaker from the Stark County Humane Society, Assistant Director Jackie Godbey, who brought two new friends for us to meet. Jackie joined us on Thursday and spent thirty minutes with each class talking about the Humane Society, with lots of great information about how to take care of pets and how kids can help out at the Humane Society.

She brought a puppy named *Bullseye* and a kitten, and these special guests received a lot of love and attention from the children. It was really a great experience for all of us. Our group of 7th grade volunteers were inspired to bring in some items from the Humane Society's Summer Wish List for Jackie to take back with her. We are grateful to Jackie for joining us, and grateful to Jim Fidler, too, for arranging her visit!



We finished the week with Family Night and the Ice Cream Social on Thursday evening and our Big Backyard Bash on Friday. Thursday night's program was a great success by all accounts. The kids did a great job singing and dancing, the highlight video was enjoyed by all, and the ice cream was a delicious end to the evening! Thanks to Janet Slease, Darlene Milavickas, and Laura Thompson for taking care of the kitchen for the Ice Cream Social.

Friday's *Big Backyard Bash* was a beautiful sunny day here at Zion. It included carnival games, the big water slide and slip & slide, water balloons, water games, a pizza party, ice cream, and

our VBS Store, where the kids cashed in their tickets that they earned all week for prizes. It was a perfect ending to celebrate a great week of service and all the kids' hard work!

OUR DAILY SERVICE PROJECTS IN GOD'S BIG BACKYARD

We wouldn't be telling the whole story of VBS without talking about service projects in *God's Big Backyard*. Our children were involved with many service projects during VBS ... because our week in *God's Big Backyard* is all about service! We lived the idea of serving God by serving others. We had a very enthusiastic, caring, generous and loving group of kids, which made our projects a great success! Thank you to everyone for your support of all our projects.

DAILY OFFERING – The boys and girls had a contest to see who could collect the most money during the week. All week long they filled up jars and collected a total of \$386.89! The girls collected \$139.51 for the week, and the boys \$247.38. This money will be divided between the Stark County Humane Society and Zion's Food Pantry. We stressed each day that our contest was a friendly one and there really were no winners or losers, only the great work they did in serving others. What a great job was done by the kids! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

ZION'S FOOD PANTRY – The children brought in food items to fill our *Food Wagon* in Luther Hall. These items will go to Zion's Food Pantry to help families in need in our community! This year we gave the kids a "Food Pantry Challenge" to help collect items that our pantry considers staples. Tuesday was *CEREAL DAY*, Wednesday was *SPAGHETTI SAUCE DAY*, Thursday was *CANNED FRUIT DAY* and Friday was *PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY DAY*. The kids met and exceeded this challenge; they served their neighbors and community so generously! The *Food Wagon* was filled to overflowing by week's end! Again, thanks to everyone for your support!

QUILT SQUARES – The children designed beautiful quilt squares again this year. This is one of our favorite traditions at VBS; and it really resonated with this year's theme of service, especially serving our neighbors ... because our neighbors are everyone, not just the person who lives close to us! Zion's quilters were able to sew nine beautiful quilts from the squares the children and VBS staff created. Eight of these quilts will be sent through Lutheran World Relief to help those in need across the globe. Alayna Morris, a student in Miss Renee's class, was the lucky winner of this year's quilt raffle. Congratulations, Alayna; and thanks to the children, our staff, and Zion's awesome quilters for all of your hard work!

OTHER PROJECTS – The children worked on special projects throughout the week, projects that stressed our daily themes of serving our family, friends, neighbors, community, and Jesus. In addition to the projects listed above, all of our kids brought in *school supplies* to help with the upcoming school year for the families we serve through our food pantry. Miss Renee's class joined Senior Independence on Wednesday morning for a game of *Glory Bible Bingo*. On

Thursday the children made *prayer pails* to remind them to pray every day. Inside the pails were sticks with the names of people or wishes for things like peace in the world. The kids can pull these sticks out each day to help them to remember to pray for the people named on the sticks or for the hopes they identified. The kids made *service banks* on Friday. They can label these banks with any charity they choose, fill the banks with loose change, and then donate the saved money to their chosen charity once the bank is full. The banks have the words “*I will serve Jesus*” on them to remind them to serve God by serving others. What a great job was done by everyone throughout this entire week, which was very well spent in *God’s Big Backyard!*

SERVICE PROJECTS IN GOD’S BIG BACKYARD (CONT’D)

HELPING HANDS – The children were given “homework” every day. They were sent home with ideas about how to serve their family on Monday, their friends on Tuesday, their neighbors on Wednesday, their community on Thursday, and our Lord Jesus on Friday. They were asked to do at least one thing each day at home. When they returned the next day, they received a paper *helping hand*, which became theirs when they put their name on it. These hands were placed on our service fence in the Sanctuary or on our service tree on our bulletin boards. By the end of the week, our fence and tree were filled with *helping hands*. The children did a fabulous job with this project and were so enthusiastic to serve! Thanks be to God for such wonderful work!

YOUTH GROUP SERVICE – We tried something new this year with our 7th grade helpers. This group of kids went on two service field trips during the VBS week. Pastor Sherwindt, Cathy Harvey, and Steve Dague were our leaders and drivers. They took our youth on visits to Northminster Presbyterian Church, Community Christian Church, and the Stark County Hunger Task Force on Tuesday, and then to the Akron Canton Regional Foodbank on Wednesday, all with the idea of showing our youth the many groups and organizations that help us as we try to help others here in our community. *God’s Big Backyard* is a big place, with lots of helpers who want to help as we find new ways to love God by serving others.



OUR VOLUNTEER STAFF AND LEADERS IN GOD'S BIG BACKYARD

Zion's *Vacation Bible School* is a great success because of the contributions and commitments of all involved – the staff, the children, their families, and the congregation. Thank you to everyone who donated supplies, food, money, time, and talents! The following is a list of staff and volunteers who were invaluable to me and Zion. Many of them did more than just the one category in which they are listed. Everyone was willing to help out wherever they were needed! So, with deep gratitude and heartfelt appreciation: Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Director: Debbie Fox



Teachers: Carley Frank, Nathan Fox; Connie Riffle; Carol Rossbach, Janet Slease; Renee Keith

Music: Kelly Walters

Crafts & Service: Connie Frank, Cheryl Roman, Carol Rossbach



Outdoor Games: Eric Dague, Christian Henderson

Snacks & Ice Cream Cart: Darlene Milavickas

Quilters: Kay Davis, Sue Geib, Joyce Gibeaut, Helen Heller, Donna Roan, Carol Snyder, Pat Stayer, Betty Tracy, Kay Reiss, Kathy Fueger

Youth Service Leaders: Pastor Sherwindt, Steve Dague, Cathy Harvey

Youth Helpers: Logan Corbit, Justin Dague, Jeremy Fox, Cassie Frank, Natalie Henderson, Ben Mohler, Mallory Rhodes, Marcus Rhodes, Tia Riffle, Max Schroeter, Emma Shaheen, Chloe Snodgrass, Casey Walters

Other Volunteers: Corlene Coulter, Chuck Danner, Jeff Frank, Dean Fox, Bob Lancashire, John Rhodes, Melissa Riffle, Don Roan, Brooke Roman, Chris Thomas

Special Speaker: Jackie Godbey, Assistant Director of the Stark County Humane Society

Registration: Vicki Givler

DVD: Kelly Walters



Newsletter: Lisa Roman, Debbie Fox

Ice Cream Social: Darlene Milavickas, Janet Slease, Laura Thompson



This year was truly amazing! Because of the people listed above, our program was a great success. Zion is very blessed with a great group of volunteers who make our VBS program one of the best! Everyone's flexibility, time commitment, and hard work are invaluable! I could not do it without everyone's help and support, and for that I am grateful from the bottom of my heart! Thank you again to all involved!



Debbie Fox, VBS Director
(From 2002 through 2014)



HERE'S SOME GOOD NEWS ABOUT ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Happy Birthday to:



UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, August 31: Our *End-of-the-Summer Party*, a Great Grill-off: Everyone's Invited
Sunday, September 7: *Rally Day* marks the beginning of yet another Sunday School Year
Sunday, September 14: The *2014-15 Sunday School Year* begins with classes for all ages!

SUNDAY SCHOOL REMINDER FOR PRE-K THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

We are taking a break this summer from Sunday School. There are no Sunday School classes for Pre-K through High School this summer. We will start up again in September when we kick off the Sunday School year with Rally Day on Sunday, September 7th, 2014 and classes will start up again on Sunday, September 14th.

DON'T FORGET OUR RALLY DAY KICK-OFF TO A GREAT YEAR!

Rally Day at Zion will be Sunday, September 7th. This is going to be a great event filled with fun and fellowship! Rally Day will start for our youth between services in the gym at 9:15 a.m. There will be carnival games, a scavenger hunt, refreshments, face-painting, and lots more for our Sunday School kids and their families.

We will have lots of information to give the parents, along with the necessary forms for Sunday School ... and refreshments, too. We will look for you at 9:15 a.m. on September 7th as we get ready for a great party and anticipate the new Sunday School year!

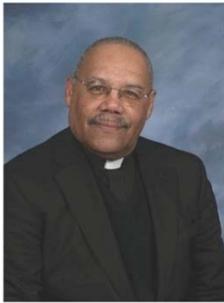
We are asking all of Zion's older youth (7th through 12th grade) to help with this event, along with anyone else who might be interested in lending a hand. We need helpers to set up and to lead our games and activities. Set up will begin at 8:30 a.m. The games begin at 9:15 a.m. Any help that you can offer is greatly appreciated; and thank you in advance!



ONE FINAL THOUGHT: THANK YOU TO EVERYONE FOR VBS!

Thank you again to everyone for your support of all our service projects during Vacation Bible School! The week once again continued the great tradition of service at Zion's VBS, and we made great strides in all we achieved. We could see God's love at work everywhere we turned! There's just no substitute for that. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you, again!

A LETTER TO OUR SYNOD FROM BISHOP-ELECT ABRAHAM ALLENDE



On the day of Pentecost, Scripture tells us the Holy Spirit came from heaven like the “rush of a violent wind.” Afterwards, the disciples who were in that room were never the same. As I think back to the events that took place at our Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly in mid-May, I resonate strongly with that image. Your election of me as your bishop came in as bewildering and unpredictable a form as it did to the disciples that day. But just as the disciples did not cower in fear; so, too, must we move ahead with the task of the call that you affirmed.

As the reality begins to set in I look ahead to the formidable challenges. There is, at the outset, the issue of staff reconfiguration. [Judy Wise, Executive Secretary to the Bishop, and Judy Hoshek, Assistant to the Bishop, both longtime members of the Synod staff, have announced their decisions to retire.] As I write these few paragraphs, I have only begun to evaluate staff positions with the goal in mind to arrive at some decisions by early August. From there, we will forge ahead, sustained by the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the groundwork that has been laid by those who have held this office before me, namely, Bishops Eaton and Miller. I do want to thank Bishop Miller especially for the steady hand with which he has led the transition process during the interim and prepared the synod to welcome me as your new bishop.

I also look forward to the joys of the office. I want to visit our congregations, to engage in conversation, to get to know you better, and to walk alongside you as we build and develop relationships. In the same manner I encourage you to become more familiar with the synod office and the work of the dedicated people who are here to serve you in Jesus’ name. It has often been said before but it bears repeating – we’re all in this together.

I do caution you that all of us are broken and imperfect – and I include myself among those – despite what your expectation may be of me as your bishop. If there is a complaint, an annoyance, even a compliment or two, please feel confident in approaching me or one of the members of the bishop’s staff. Your concern will be treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality.

So as I navigate, with God’s help, through this as of yet uncharted adventure into which we are now headed, I ask your prayers. Pray that God will use all of us in some way to accomplish God’s purposes and build up the body of Christ here in Northeastern Ohio. We each have gifts that are of value to God. In spite of our shortcomings, those gifts from God equip us for the work of ministry. I pledge to you that I will put forth my most faithful effort with the abilities that God’s Spirit has given me.

May God watch over all of us as, together, we begin this journey forward in faith.

Abraham Allende, Bishop-Elect

[Bishop-Elect Allende’s Service of Installation to the Office of Bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod is set for Saturday, September 13th, 2:00 p.m., at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Akron.]

THE WOMEN OF ZION

The Comfort Givers met during the week of Vacation Bible School, and did a great job organizing scores of quilt squares designed by our VBS kids into nine beautiful quilts, eight of which will become a part of Blanket Sunday in October. One of the quilts was given to our raffle winner, Alayna Morris.

We would like to thank *Zion's Comfort Givers* for their hard work: Betty Tracy, Kay Davis, Kathy Fueger, Helen Heller, Sue Geib, Joyce Gibeaut, Kay Reiss, Donna Roan, Carol Snyder, and Patty Stayer. It makes a difference having the whole community involved in Vacation Bible School; and it's clear that our women look forward to the fun this collaborative connection affords. They'll be taking the month of August off, and will return to their regular schedule in September.

The Women of Zion host a monthly Bible study, which meets on the third Tuesday, August 19th. The theme of this summer study remains on women who have served as models of faith. After focusing on Mary and Elizabeth in previous months, August places the focus on Lydia. In Acts 16:11-15 we meet both Lydia and the group of women with whom she gathers down by the river as Paul and his companion encounter them there. With her baptism by the river, Lydia continues the miracle that caught Paul's eye and changed his life. Lydia embodies how barriers gave way to the unity that was found in the body of Christ. Lydia was a Gentile, not particularly rich, and a woman. She was not a member of a preferred group; but through baptism, she became a citizen of God's kingdom, and as a disciple of Jesus, she changed the church for good! Join us for our Bible study on August 19th, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall. You'll be glad you did; and so will we.

THANK YOU'S & MORE

Dear Pastor Sherwindt and friends at Zion,

We would like to thank you for including the two of us in the wonderful celebratory events of Zion Lutheran's 200th Anniversary: a long party at that! It was a pleasure to meet and visit with others who came to rejoice, to relive special times of the past and hear of the good things going on now. And, to be gifted with special – and delicious – remembrances of the festivities was certainly appreciated. It was a time we shall carry with us into the future and recall with gladness.

We sincerely wish for you and the people of Zion Lutheran Congregation continued blessings in the days ahead and many more years of faithful service to God in discipleship, as the Spirit leads you to see it. Again, our sincere thanks to you, to you all.

*In peace,
Carol Darcy, Chris Kirven*

AUGUST SENIOR BIRTHDAYS

August 1	Barb Achauer
August 3	Jeannie Forsyth
August 7	Juanita Bathol
August 9	Larry Moore
August 10	Kay Davis
August 10	Chris Thomas
August 13	Richard Zumkehr
August 16	Mary John
August 19	Richard Biggerstaff
August 23	Earl Bathol
August 23	Dick Smith
August 29	Jane Hirschman

ANNIVERSARIES IN AUGUST

August 10	Bill & Jeannie Forsyth
August 17	Ron & Carole Singer
August 18	Dave & Amy Mathie
August 29	Dan & Linda Wilson
August 29	Earl & Juanita Bathol

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JAMES H. BOETTLER

(August 18, 1928 – July 17, 2014)

(Jim Boettler was a quiet man, who inspired trust and confidence because of his interest in others, his conscientiousness at work, and his commitment to make our community and our world better. He graduated from North Canton High School in 1946, earned his degree in Chemical Engineering at Kent State University, served in the US Navy (on active duty and in the reserves), worked for and then retired from the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company. There was much I could have said about Jim as a straightforward man who had mastered the simple virtues in life; but during my funeral sermon I was moved to focus more on the sense of shock we shared when God called Jim home.)

It was just four days ago last Thursday when we gathered in a room at Aultman Hospital. Jim had been in the hospital several weeks prior with cellulitis, which is dangerous, but treatable and beatable if you get ahead of it with antibiotics, which the medical team did; then they transferred him over to Nobles Pond for physical therapy, so that Jim could regain the strength that he had lost while he was in the hospital. Everything was moving along as expected, then slowed a bit, which led Nobles Pond to send him back to Aultman last weekend because they thought something else might be wrong, which it wasn't. By the time last Wednesday rolled around, the papers were being drawn up to get him on his way back to Nobles Pond. I don't want to minimize the concern. After all, Jim was eighty-five; but he had no history of chronic health problems, and things were moving in the right direction. On Thursday morning early, between 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., Jim had a heart episode, which wasn't really about his heart; but it weakened his heart, which never got back to where it needed to be. By Noon Jim passed away. It was a shock. There were a few hours when we were able to resist the inevitable with prayer and hope. That was good; but what a shock!

Betty Boettler and her daughter Beth were there in the room, with Sam, their children, and Sam's mother. Beth is married to Sam Shaheen, who comes from the Orthodox side of Eastern Christianity. When it comes to understanding the law of sin and death, the Orthodox of Eastern Christianity differ from Catholics in Western Christianity, which is where Lutherans are located. In fact, we are on the same wave length with Roman Catholics when it comes to understanding sin as related primarily to issues of morality rather than to the curse of our mortality. You can see this connection by simply reading the prayer of confession we use on Sundays. We have sinned *in thought, word, and deed*. We have sinned by *what we've done*, and by *what we've left undone*. We have not loved God or our neighbors as we ought. The focus is clearly on deeds, on what we do.

But in that hospital room at Aultman, it wasn't deeds that were on our mind. We had just been punched in the gut with this unwelcomed encounter with the power of death. Death is not a bad thought. It needs no words. There is nothing we can do to free ourselves from the curse of our mortality. The decisive sign of sin for Orthodoxy is our mortality. Mortality is in our bones. It defines our existence as creatures of flesh and blood; it goes to our very core of our being. We are in bondage to mortality, and we cannot free ourselves, period. Our bondage to sin is bigger than our deeds and misdeeds. It transcends our ability to beat it. It infects every aspect of who we are. "O wretched man that I am," Paul writes in Romans 7:24, "who will save me from this body of death?" Then he answers his question: "Thanks be to God, who has given us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (7:25) God has done what we could not. God has freed us from the power of sin and death. We can do nothing to change the curse of our mortality; but give thanks to God, because of the good news that everything has changed through the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord.