

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:

No rest for the weary! That's how I experienced the arrival of Lent on Ash Wednesday so early in the year on February 10th. Three-a-days on Sundays began on Valentine's Day. (That's three services a Sunday.) There was hardly any time to appreciate our beautiful Christmas at Zion before Lent set in and its busy schedule took hold. And yet, despite this super-early arrival, we have done quite well in turning the page to Lent. Church Council, in particular, has embraced the challenge of setting the kind of example we'd like to see all of us embrace, with very strong attendance at our Sunday Evening Lenten Dinners and Services. Since Council hosted the first Lenten dinner on February 14th, their strong attendance was not surprising; but that strong support continued the next Sunday when the Chancel Guild hosted the Lenten dinner. It was great to see; and it made quite a difference as all of us had a great time because of surprisingly strong attendance on an otherwise uneventful Sunday evening in the middle of February.

I have made this point several times, but it bears repeating. We stumbled on to our Sunday evening Lenten schedule by necessity. Wednesdays weren't working for us. We were competing with family schedules that were too busy, with school and extra-curriculars filling week nights with more and more activities. So, we tried Sunday evenings instead; and it worked! As a result, we developed a system for adding Lenten services to our schedule that works ... if we work it. The Lenten schedule doesn't work by itself; but if we support the Sunday Evening Dinner & Devotion format, we enjoy significant success with delicious food, great fellowship, simple services that feed the soul, and attendance that can make us feel like we stepped back in time when families used to make the time to honor the season with their presence at worship.

The formula was very simple. When one of our church groups hosts the Lenten dinner, their participation is close to 80 percent. If each group supports the other groups by attending the dinners that others host, we enjoy really great attendance. That's why the Church Council, which enjoyed almost 90 percent participation at the first Lenten dinner, returned with over 90 percent attendance at the second Lenten dinner, which our Chancel Guild hosted. Members of the Chancel Guild were very, very happy to enjoy such a great crowd! If only all of our groups – and all of our members – could learn this lesson and return the favor! While there is a magical quality to being surprised by enjoying the experience of coming out for our Sunday Evening Lenten program, it's not a matter of magic. It's simply doing what we must to enjoy the success we can when we live the mutual support that makes us healthy. It really is that simple.

March is filled with two more opportunities for being surprised by enjoying our Sunday Evening Lenten Dinners and Services. On the Sunday evening of March 6th, the entire Congregation is invited to help us host dinner as we welcome Pastor Karl Biermann as our Special Guest. Pastor Biermann, an Assistant to the Bishop, will help lead us through the call process when it begins in August. We've been focusing all Lent long on different aspects of what it means to be called, and what it means to extend a call; March 6th gives us the opportunity to make a great first impression with our partners on the Synod staff. Make it a point to join us for that evening; and then make it a point to join us again the next Sunday, too. Being healthy is all about living the mutual support that celebrates God's gift of our being a church family. So let's do it!

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

Mark Votaw called our February meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Randy Cizek led devotions by giving the rest of us a heart-shaped box of chocolates! Mmmm, good! Also present were Carol Rossbach, Dave Palumbo, Ron Tvorik, Janet Slease, Jim Fidler, Heather Hoffman, and Pastor Sherwindt. Dale Jacobs, Todd Elsass and Howard Dansizen were unable to join us. We had much to discuss as we looked ahead to the Lenten season, Holy Week, and Easter. Pentecost and Vacation Bible School also came up. It was a busy and productive evening meeting. With a motion to adjourn, we ended our meeting with the Lord’s Prayer at 7:54 p.m.

The Treasurer’s Report provided some very good news about the beneficial effects of a mild winter thus far. Income was, for the most part, pretty ordinary; but expenses were light because of the absence of snow-plowing and salting expenses! We were especially grateful for the additional giving that came in through our Early Bird Giving program. Several of these very generous gifts made quite a difference in turning a very ordinary month into another of our monthly surpluses! Thank you so much!

OUR FINANCIAL FACTS FOR JANUARY	
January’s Income	\$ 22,642.89
January’s Expenses	\$ <u>22,507.93</u>
January’s Surplus	\$ 134.96
Our Accumulated Surplus	\$14,143.23
Advanced Giving for 2016	\$11,641.67
Zion’s Food Pantry Fund	\$ 7,905.87
The Youth of Zion Fund	\$ 8,495.42
The Women of Zion Fund	\$ 2,275.63
Bicentennial Projects Fund	\$12,936.31
<i>We thank you for your generous support!</i>	

MORE COUNCIL NEWS

Property Ministry Update: The parsonage is now ready to test the rental market! We’ve replaced the picture window, and the dishwasher, too! There’s new carpet, a new kitchen light, that generates lots of light, some new curtains in the great room and the living room, newly painted walls, with the hardwood floors cleaned, oiled and waxed, with the outlets checked, and the plumbing inspected and repaired: we are ready for the next step! Our thanks to everyone – for the work you’ve done, the supplies donated, the prayers offered, and the encouragement shared. Now all that we have to do is review the lease and place the listing. While many have helped in many ways, we really need to offer a special *thank you* to Dave & Renee Palumbo for all the hard work they have done. Every project needs its own secret sponsor to see it through to completion. Dave & Renee heard that special call, and helped in ways that will never be seen, except by those who live in the parsonage next.

Worship Ministry Update: Lent has arrived; and that means Lenten dinners every Sunday from February 14 through March 13. We added a new feature last year that we have continued, which is to open up the dinners for more volunteer participation. If you would like to make a crock pot of soup, or prepare chili, or sandwiches, or add a side dish or dessert to the mix, please do! There are Sign-up Sheets in Luther Hall, which invite your attention. Please remember that the entire congregation has been asked to join in as hosts for our Lenten dinner on March 6th. This Lenten format works if we work it. So let’s work it, and say YES to our Lord’s call to honor Lent with our presence at worship and our support of one another.

OUR LENTEN FOOD REVIEW

Church Council took the lead in preparing a light but delicious dinner for our first Sunday evening in Lent. Heather Hoffman served a delicious cream of mushroom soup; Dale Jacobs fixed pulled pork sandwiches that were some kind of sensational; Randy Cizek joined in with a black bean chili that had more than a little zing. Mark Votaw, Jayne Schrader, Ron & Linda Tvorik, Janet Slease, Carol Rossbach all added to the mix; and members of the congregation signed up and lent a hand, and a dish, too. It's true. We intentionally tried to tone things down a bit to recognize the need to sacrifice during Lent; but when all was said and done, our first Lenten dinner was a sumptuous feast ... only to be outdone by what the Chancel Guild hosted on the second Sunday in Lent!

Juanita Cignetti, Betty Tracy, Jane Fairman, Helen Heller, Susan Heyard, Evelyn Moore, Kay Davis, Jane Schrader (again), Carol Rossbach (again), Heather Hoffman (again), the Mileks (again), Laura Thompson (with some delicious clam chowder), Margaret & Clayton Van Scoy (because they were here), Chris Thomas (with an excellent batch of chili), Corky Coulter, Linda Smith, and Darlene Milavickas (with sandwiches that were out-of-this-world delicious: we had it all, and enjoyed everything to the last drop!

We were staying simple because it's Lent; but the Youth of Zion and their families would not allow even the slightest drop off in the quality of our food or the wide variety of our spread: soups, sandwiches, desserts, sides, salads, drinks. You name it; we had it! The Dagues, Foxes, Franks, and Mileks, the Panzarellos, Rhodes, Thompsons and Tvoriks, with help from the Parkomakis, and Church Council, too: our thanks to all!

MORE FROM THE COUNCIL

Resource Ministry: January and February have been pretty mild, for the most part; but still, it was *Early Bird Giving* – just about \$4,000 of it – that lifted us into the black, providing confidence moving forward that timely generosity can continue to keep us ahead of the curve when it comes to meeting our expenses. Council reaffirmed the congregation's decision to move forward with sound system upgrades, with expenditures covered by undesignated memorials and gifts. We continue to consider how best to proceed in finishing up targeted improvements in the kitchen: replacing the kitchen door to the parking lot, installing a three-compartment sink, and a small hot water heater, too. There are ample funds in the Bicentennial Projects Fund to cover these expenses. We continue to eye new carpet options in Luther Hall. All of our various funds enjoy healthy balances, and benefit from your generous support.

Learning Ministry: Our children are leading the way when it comes to reaching out to neighbors in need. In November, it was Sunday School assistance with Zion's *Great Turkey Give-away*. In December, it was our *Advent Giving Tree*. In February, we turned our attention to downtown Canton's *Urban Ark*, as we set our sights on collecting large bath towels to go with personal care items previously collected during Vacation Bible School. In April, we'll need to get ready for Stark County's *Feed the Need Hunger Walk* to raise funds for the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank. On a more traditional note, we plan to celebrate Confirmation on Pentecost, May 15th; and dates for Vacation Bible School this summer are set: July 11 through 15.

GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL



Happy Birthday to:

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, March 13th: Zion's Youth will lead our Lenten Service with Luke's Passion Narrative
Saturday, March 19: Children's Easter Program Dress Rehearsal followed by our Pizza Party
Palm Sunday, March 20: Children's Easter Program during the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
Easter Sunday, March 27: Our Children's Easter Egg Hunt for all ages during Sunday School
Sunday, May 1st: FEED THE NEED HUNGER WALK – We meet at Community Christian Church
Pentecost, May 15th: We celebrate Confirmation ... with 8 Confirmands in the Class of 2016!
Week of July 11 – 15: VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL at Zion Lutheran Church, 9:00 a.m. to Noon

SUNDAY SCHOOL: PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 6

Sunday School classes during March will continue to meet at the regular time, 9:15 a.m. We will have both class time and time to practice for our Easter program. Please join us!

This year's Easter Program – *Prayer, An Act of Love* – will take place on Palm Sunday, March 20th, at the 10:30 a.m. service. During the program, we will meet a family of cousins spending Easter Sunday at Grandma & Grandpa's house. It is a fun and light-hearted program that will share a very important message! We will have dress rehearsal on Saturday, March 19th, which will be followed by a pizza party to celebrate all of the children's hard work. We are looking forward to another great performance by Zion's amazing kids!



THANK YOU ALL FOR A GREAT YOUTH LENTEN DINNER!

Thank you to all of our youth, their families, and our youth leaders for everything you did to help with our Lenten dinner on the Sunday evening of February 28th. We had a great turnout; and the soups, the sloppy joes, and our many desserts were absolutely delicious! Thank you to everyone who made a table-full of fabulous soups. We had a great variety, with chili, wedding soup, Mongolian yak stew, broccoli & cheese soup, potato soup, and vegetable beef soup; and thanks to our great bakers who made so many amazing desserts. Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone, for your donations, your time, and your love for our youth and your love for our church! It really was a great evening.

Zion's Youth will return for action at our Sunday Evening Lenten Service on March 13th. The Men of Zion will host the dinner; but our youth will help us remember the Passion Narrative in the Gospel of Luke. It may seem commonplace to some; but there is no substitute for hearing from "the mouth of babes" the enduring truths of God's supreme love and sacrifice for all.

MORE GREAT NEWS FOR ZION'S YOUTH

THANK YOU FOR A GREAT FEBRUARY SERVICE PROJECT

We want to thank everyone for your support of February's Youth service project. Our goal was to collect fifty bath towels to go along with our soap and wash cloth bundles, and we exceeded that goal by two! We collected fifty-two towels that will be donated to the Urban Ark Ministries to help many in need! We have such an amazing and supportive congregation that always steps up and surpasses expectation with our youth projects! We are so grateful and appreciative!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: JULY 11 – 15

The dates are set! We are currently working on our theme and the details of this year's Vacation Bible School program. We want to give you the dates so that you can mark them down on your calendars. We will need lots of help! So please let Debbie Fox know if you are interested in helping. There will be more information coming in the next few editions of *The Zion Herald!*

AN UPCOMING YOUTH SERVICE PROJECTS FOR MARCH

Our Youth Service Project for March will be assembling snack bags for the Refuge of Hope to pass out at their dinners. We will be collecting the items listed below; and then our youth will assemble these items in snack bags. Snack bags are given to those who attend the Refuge of Hope dinners. Items needed are: 16-ounce bottled waters, granola bars, small boxed raisins, small packets of Craisins, small Slim Jim beef sticks. There will be Sign-up Sheets and a box to collect the items in the Narthex. Thanks for everyone's support.

THE 2016 STARK COUNTY HUNGER WALK

This fund-raising walk benefits all the food distribution sites in the Stark County area that rely on the Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank for the groceries they give out to those in need.

Every penny raised by this walk goes to the Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank. Zion's members and friends are not strangers to the grim news that hunger affects one in seven persons in our communities.

Last year this hunger walk raised \$12,673.37 to benefit the Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank; and Zion contributed over \$2,800 to that total! We can make a difference by participating in this kid-friendly, pet-

friendly walk of 2.1 miles on sidewalks in North Canton. Community Christian Church is again taking the lead in organizing this effort. The date for the walk is Sunday, May 1st.

The walk begins at 3:00 p.m. But there are always a lot of *pre-walk activities*, which include such things as live music, special guests, local dignitaries, water, snacks, and much, much more. Registration begins at 1:00 p.m. The walk is at 3:00 p.m. An Interfaith Soup Social follows the walk at 4:00 p.m. Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 1st. Plan to walk; bring your dog; and make sure to support our walkers with a generous donation. All of the money goes to a good cause, an award-winning food bank that has been a great partner of ours for fourteen years.

FEED THE NEED
Stark County Hunger Walk
May 1st, 2016

OUR LENTEN REFLECTIONS

We have been taking advantage of Lent to ask some questions about the call process, and, in particular, what it means to be called by God to serve in the ministry of the church. We have heard two sermons a Sunday, one in the morning and another in the evening, on February 14, 21, and 28, addressing such topics as God's call to Jesus, to the Apostle Paul, and to Martin Luther.

As I reflect on these sermons, "what I liked about looking back on the call of Jesus in Luke is that the Jesus in Luke makes sure that we open our hearts and use all our strength to seek justice for the poor and love for our neighbor. His long sermons are always about learning to share more and hoard less, to trust more and worry less, to marvel more at the wonders of God's grace and focus less on the many ways in which we don't think we have enough to meet our neighbor's needs and fulfill God's law of love.

"What I liked about the call of Paul is that we think his seeing the light on the road to Damascus was about a *eureka* moment that went off in his mind; but what made the difference for Paul was what he saw in the life of the church. What God created with the community of believers who found power in the blood and new life in the body never ceased to amaze Paul, and to instruct him in what God's grace makes possible and what practicing Christ's love makes real. Yes, I would like us to be the kind of community that changed Paul's life, and changes lives still; but that's not my call alone. That's our call together."

These Lenten sermons have raised interesting points about what it means to call a pastor and what God is calling Zion to do and to be. Make it a point to join the conversation. It really is important that *all of us* participate.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER

Our Lenten Services have enjoyed some new liturgies in the mornings, and the familiar sounds of organ in the evenings. Natasha Musaelayan has been gracious enough to join us again for our traditional liturgical service at 8:00 a.m.; and we have asked that she lead us on piano as we enjoy the "Bread of Life" setting in *With One Voice*. The canticles are beautiful, easy to sing, and, with the choir's leadership, it feels like we've been singing this setting for years. Our evening services have featured organ accompaniment for a service we've often used at our evening services, namely, the Service of Evening Prayer. We've added a hymn-sing beginning to these services, which has been nicely received. Our old friend, and former organist, Margaret Reichenbach, has led our services in February. Sarah Kaufman, an old friend of Pastor Sherwindt, formerly the organist at what was St. John/St. Paul Lutheran Church in Akron, will provide organ accompaniment for our evening services in March.

The Sundays in Lent lead, of course, to Holy Week, which culminates with the celebration of Easter. Our Holy Week will look much the same as it always does, beginning with our *Palm Sunday Parade* at the 8:00 a.m. service on Palm Sunday, and featuring the *Children's Easter Play* at the 10:30 a.m. service. Holy Thursday draws our focus to the *Institution of the Lord's Supper*, and our Lord's commandment that we love one another. Good Friday features two services, an *Ecumenical Stations of the Cross Service* at Walsh University at Noon, and our *Traditional Tenebrae* at Zion at 7:30 p.m. We will remain in waiting mode until Sunday morning, when *Alleluia* returns to the worship life of Christians celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord. Join us for Easter Festival Worship at 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m., and for the Easter Egg Hunt at 9:15 a.m.

THE WOMEN OF ZION

Christian Citizenship 101, Being of One Mind: Session 3 continues with one of the many iconic passages in Paul's writing, this one in Philippians 2.6: "Have this mind among you, which is yours in Christ Jesus." This represents an early Christian insight into the upside down nature of Christian discipleship. Following Jesus means imitating the radical, self-emptying love of a Lord, "who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard his divine status as a privilege, but emptied himself, becoming a servant, and becoming obedient, even to the point of giving himself in death on the Cross for us."

This is why Paul encourages fellow believers to "look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." (Philippians 2:4) One of the signs that Philippian Christians were blessed with the mind of Christ was the generosity they displayed in supporting the work of the gospel outside of the walls of their own congregation. Paul was deeply grateful for the love his Philippian partners show him with their financial gifts.

Not everything was peaches 'n cream; Paul was concerned with "enemies of the gospel" (Philippians 3:18), the identity of which is not entirely certain. But the point is the same. As we make sure that we are of one mind with the mind of Christ, our faith is secure, our confidence strong, and God's faithfulness is the source of true life. As Paul says, "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal with my eyes on the prize" – which is "citizenship in the commonwealth of heaven." (Philippians 3:13-14, 20)

Our monthly women's Bible study will meet **Tuesday, March 15th**, in the Resource Room, beginning at 9:30 a.m. We'll see you there!

THE MEN OF ZION, TOO

The Men of Zion will host our Lenten dinner on **the Sunday Evening of March 13th**. With St. Patrick's Day just four days ahead, Dale Jacobs, formerly of the *Irish Exchange* on Massillon Road, directed us toward the idea of enjoying delicious corned beef Rubeen sandwiches, along with a wide array of soups, stews, chilis, sides, and desserts. No one is ever disappointed with the food that the Men of Zion serve; and while we hope to honor the theme of *light* dinners during Lent, March 13th will be a strong culmination to a very strong season of light – but delicious – Lenten dinners. We also expect the Lenten Service to contain some surprises that will add to our enjoyment of worship. All men are invited to join in our effort; and all members are invited to enjoy the food we serve.

Zion's Thursday Morning Retirees Club, which has been less active in February than usual, will return to their Thursday morning schedule under Carl Geib's lead. We are very grateful for the work they do to keep our property well maintained. We thank Carl, Richard Biggerstaff, Clarence Givler, Verle Elsass, John Brokloff, and Bob Lancashire for their dedication to our Lord and our church. If you would like to be a part of this camaraderie, just join in. It's that simple.

Congratulations to Tom & Mandy Votaw on the birth of their healthy first-born, Joshua James, back on February 12th; and congrats to the proud grandparents, too!

Zion's Comfort Givers meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, which in March will be the 10th and the 24th. Consider joining us as we enjoy coffee, conversation, and the feeling of knowing that we're helping others in need through the good that we do. We meet in Luther Hall, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

THANK YOUS AND MORE

To my church family and friends,

Thank you, Pastor Sherwindt, for your visits, prayers, caring, and for Holy Communion here in our home for Sue. She always enjoyed stopping by your office just to talk.... Thank you for conducting Sue’s graveside funeral service and for helping to arrange for the funeral luncheon that followed. It was just the right mix of celebration and remembrance.

*Shalom,
Carl Geib*

To my church family and friends,

Thank you, Pastor, for your calls, and thank you, members of Zion, for your cards and calls, too. I would also like to extend a special thank you to Darlene and Lou Milavickas for their loving care. Hope to see you soon!

*In Christian love,
Juanita Bathol*

Dear friends at Zion Lutheran Church,

Donors like you are the reason the Stark County Hunger Task Force can proudly say that we have been fighting local hunger for 35 years. Please come and see the impact of your donation first-hand at our Emergency Food Pantry at the Goodwill Community Campus on March 8th, at 12:00 p.m.

*Your hunger fighters,
Amy Weisbrod*

MARCH SENIOR BIRTHDAYS

- March 17 Dan Wilson
- March 22 Corlene Coulter
- March 29 Len Swartz
- March 31 Betty Boettler

ANNIVERSARIES IN MARCH

- March 16 Eileen & Orrin Bose
- March 20 Sue & Al Whitmer
- March 21 Gail & Joe Vogt

SOME DATES TO REMEMBER

Sunday, March 6th, at 5:30 p.m.: We host the Rev. Karl Biermann, the Assistant to Bishop Allende who will assist us with the call process when it begins in August. Pastor Biermann will join us for dinner at 5:30 p.m., and then serve as our Guest Speaker at the Lenten Service, which begins at 6:15 p.m. We’ve heard it said that *you only get one chance to make a good first impression*. Please join us so that we can make the kind of impression that bodes well for a call process that leads to a healthy next chapter for Zion.

Tuesday, May 17th, at 7:00 p.m.: Bishop Abraham Allende of the Northeastern Ohio Synod will join us at our May Council Meeting. The date has been changed to May 17th to mesh with the Bishop’s busy schedule. Bishop Allende will want to make sure that we know, up-close and personal, his heartfelt desire serve as our partner in ministry. He has also asked that we invite him to join us for worship this fall, after the call process begins.

On **Thursday, March 17**, the world remembers Saint Patrick of Ireland with food and drink, with songs and parades. The faithful everywhere remember this gifted saint; and we remember him with his words of prayer:

“I arise today with God’s strength to steer me, God’s might to uphold me, God’s wisdom to guide me, God’s hand to guard me, God’s shield to protect me...”

“I arise today with Christ as my shield: Christ with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ in the hearts of all who think of me, Christ in the mouth of all who speak of me.”
