

## GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR:

May is a month that celebrates some important transitions in the life of our Confirmands, at a time when our congregational family is also getting ready for an important transition. Pages 6 and 7 say more about our eight Confirmands; but all of us know that this rite of passage has traditionally signaled a shift from enjoying the full range of benefits that make childhood so wonderfully and irreplaceably special to our younger members taking responsibility for the faith in which they were baptized and the life of faithfulness to which our Lord calls us. St. Paul described it is somewhat simply – perhaps too simply – in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, when he wrote, “When I was a child, I spoke, thought, and reasoned like a child; but when I became an adult, I left my childish ways behind.” The transition is one that is significantly more gradual, one that builds upon a series of firm foundations; and we never really want to leave the child-in-us behind completely. But the point is well made. Confirmation signals a significant transition.

As a congregation, May brings us a little closer to the transition known as the beginning of the call process. One of the small steps we’re taking in May is responding to the need for office staff to help with the bulletins and newsletters. One of the things we discovered over the course of the first quarter is that the Church Office requires some sophisticated computer skills that rely on a well-practiced grasp of Word, Publisher, and Excel. Casual familiarity with a personal computer leaves us far short of the skills required to function effectively in the office. With that in mind, we reached out to our neighbors at Canton City Lutheran Parish, who offered to share their Office Secretary with us. With Bethel’s departure from their parish, there were changes that left two days a week free for an Office Secretary who possessed the skills and experience we needed. So, working with Carol Rossbach as Vice President (and Convenor of Mutual Ministry), we saw the opportunity and agreed that we should have a conversation with Marie.

Marie Grealis (Gray-less) lives in North Canton, and works at the Canton City Lutheran Parish, where she was hired through *Mancan Professionals*. She added to her skills in the full suite of Microsoft Office programs, with a Bachelors degree from Malone, and an AAB in Office Administration from Stark State College of Technology. Her specific responsibilities with First Lutheran involved preparing the weekly bulletins, producing the monthly newsletter, providing the full range of office organization responsibilities, including posting the offerings when needed! Our conversations confirmed working familiarity with Word, Excel, Publisher, and Outlook, strong organizational skills, excellent interpersonal and communication skills; and we expect that she should be a real asset here in the Church Office, and very much needed as we try to create some office presence here at Communication Central heading into a nine to twelve month transitional period.

We understand that there are many areas needing attention as we think about the call process ahead. It’s good to have time to prepare, although all of us are aware that it is unavoidable that there will be unanticipated gaps in the planning we do. A pastor learns to fill those gaps over the course of fourteen years of working with people he’s come to love, serving a Lord who invites extra effort when it comes to contributing to the cause of his kingdom and the life of our church. We will need all the help we can get as we move into our next chapter of growing in love and service by grace. We invite your help and your prayers as we move forward together in faith.

**CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS**

Our meeting in April the day after the nation’s tax deadline arrived, but Dave Palumbo, whose life as a CPA gets quite wrapped up with these tax deadlines, still provided a Treasurer’s Report that was filled with the good news that made up our first quarter and the month of March. Council members on hand for the meeting were Mark Votaw, Carol Rossbach, Jayne Schrader, Randy Cizek, Ron Tvorik, Heather Hoffman, Todd Elsass, Jim Fidler, Janet Slease, and Pastor Sherwindt. We began at 7:00 p.m., with devotions led by Ron Tvorik, and adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Our financial facts for March resulted in yet another monthly surplus, and a year-to-date surplus of \$516.<sup>50</sup>. Income included Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Winter expenses remained light, and we are saving where we can. We have also benefited from timely Early Bird Giving, as well as a healthy balance in Advanced Giving. These sources of income, along with seasonal giving for Lent and Easter, have added a useful lift to regular offerings. We are in good shape, but stronger giving would be better.

<b>ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS FOR MARCH</b>	
March Income	25,245.16
March Expenses	<u>24,972.21</u>
<b>March Surplus</b>	<b>272.95</b>
Income through March	64,887.55
Expenses through March	<u>64,371.05</u>
<b>2016 YTD Surplus</b>	<b>516.50</b>
Our Food Pantry Fund	\$7,760.75
Bicentennial Gifts Fund	\$8,609.14
Zion’s Youth Fund	\$8,702.55
2016 Advanced Giving	\$8,000.00
<b><i>We thank you for your generous support!</i></b>	

**MORE COUNCIL NEWS**

***What about an Interim Pastor?*** Mark Votaw led a couple of discussions during the Sunday School hour on April 3 and 10, which invited input on Council’s thinking about the kind of commitment we would like to see with an Interim Pastor. The Interim Pastor cannot, by design, become our next Pastor. The Interim Pastor’s job is to help prepare us for our next chapter ... as a transitional not a permanent resource. Bishop Allende will help us by suggesting the names of various pastors who could be of help. It will be our responsibility to talk to possible Interim Pastors, establish terms, and do the hiring.

Zion has had Interim Pastors before – Pastors Bob Brigham, Ron Jefferson, and Tom Baumgardner, just to name a few. Once again, we are looking for more than a Sunday morning presence. We would like a presence during the week, to talk with members, to provide some office oversight, to be involved with visitation at hospitals and with shut-ins, and to be available for consultation with members and leaders. It seems like something on the order of 25 hours a week could serve us well. Bishop Allende will attend our Council Meeting in May; and we hope to begin the conversation that tries to have an Interim Pastor in place when we celebrate our *End-of-the-Summer Party* on the Sunday of Labor Day Weekend, which is September 4<sup>th</sup> this year.

Pastor Sherwindt is set to retire at the end of July. The Sundays in August are already filled with supply pastors. The calendar for May is focused on Confirmation, and June is taken up with three weddings! We hope to remain focused on keeping everything moving forward so that we enter this next transitional phase as smoothly as possible.

## **MOTHER'S DAY & MORE**

Due to the fact that we have been moving forward with bicentennial improvements to the kitchen, with plans to replace an older, outdated sink with a new three-compartment sink, while also adding a small hot water to the mix, ***this year's edition of the Mother's Day Breakfast has been cancelled.*** The Men of Zion look forward to finding new ways to celebrate the women of Zion – and our kitchen improvements – once the work is completed. Stay tuned for more news.

Speaking about work left over from our bicentennial anniversary, we are moving forward with our plans for ***new carpet in Luther Hall.*** Back in 2010, we installed new carpet in the Main Hallway, Narthex, and Church Office. The new carpet looks good and has held up well. So, we are going to finish that job by extending it into Luther Hall. The installation date is set for Tuesday and Wednesday, May 24 & 25. We need help removing the old carpet and getting the floor ready for the new carpet. Please let Pastor know of your willingness to help.

***Stamp Out Hunger,*** the 2016 edition of the National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive is set for Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>. As a satellite of the Stark County Hunger Task Force, our food pantry will share in the food collected by our local post office, and we will need help with transporting our share from the post office to our food pantry. Contact Cathy Harvey with your interest.

***And Don't Forget Mulch Day at Zion!*** Every year, right around the Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend, which is May 28<sup>th</sup>, we try to round up interest – and volunteers – to help with spreading ten yards of mulch around the church and our landscaping beds.

## **SYNOD NEWS & EVENTS**

***2016 Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly*** is set for Friday and Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, at the John S. Knight Center in Akron. This year's theme is *We Are Church for the Sake of the World*. The Rev. Kevin Strickland, an Assistant to our ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, with oversight for worship, will be our ELCA Churchwide representative. The 2-day assembly begins with a continental breakfast on Friday at 7:40 a.m. Worship is an integral part of who we are as Lutherans. We open our business with a celebration of the Eucharist at 8:40 a.m., and end the day with Evening Prayer at 4:45 p.m. Saturday begins with Morning Prayer at 8:20 a.m., with our Closing Eucharist beginning at 11:25 a.m. Most of our business is fairly routine – reports, elections, and budget-related matters. Several workshops will focus on Hunger, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio, Reclaiming the “S” Word, Talking Together as Christians Cross-Culturally, and creating opportunities for Shared Ministry. Pastor Sherwindt, Ron Tvorik, and Miriam Keating will serve as Zion's voting delegates.

***The Annual Bishop's Prayer Service*** takes place this year on Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, which is also the National Day of Prayer, as well as the day we celebrate the Ascension of Our Lord. Bethlehem Lutheran Church (on 3740 Mayfield Road in Cleveland) will host this service at 7:00 p.m. The theme for this year's prayer service is drawn from Psalm 121: “I Will Lift My Eyes to the Hills: From Where Does My Help Come?” FYI: The National Day of Prayer was established by a joint resolution of Congress, and signed into law by President Harry Truman in 1952. It is a day that calls all of us to reflect on the need for repentance and renewal.

## GREAT NEWS FROM ZION'S SUNDAY SCHOOL



**Happy Birthday to:**

### **UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**Sunday, May 1st:** The FEED THE NEED Stark County Hunger Walk, with registration at 2 p.m.

**Wednesday, May 11th:** Confirmation Dinner at Carrabba's – Meet at the Church at 5:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 15th:** The FESTIVAL OF PENTECOST and the RITE OF CONFIRMATION: Wear Red!

**Sunday, May 22nd:** The Last Sunday of the 2015-2016 Sunday School Year: Let's have fun!

**The Week of July 11–15:** This is the week we'll celebrate VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AT ZION!

**Sunday, September 4th:** We kick off a new program year with our End-of-the-Summer Party!

### **FROM KINDERGARTEN TO HIGH SCHOOL**

We will be finishing up this Sunday School year in May. We will have regular lessons on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and the 15<sup>th</sup>. Our last day for Sunday School classes will be May 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will have a short lesson, and then a YEAR-END CELEBRATION planned for all of our youth that day! We hope everyone will join us! We will take a break this summer from Sunday School for all of our youth. We will start the new Sunday School year in September when we kick things off with Rally Day!



A very big thank you goes out to our Sunday School teachers and staff. We truly appreciate your time and dedication to the children of Zion. This year's staff includes some great teachers and helpers: Corlene Coulter, Vicki Givler, Miriam Keating, Chrissy Parkomaki, Connie Riffle, and Janet Slease. It is such an awesome group of volunteers that our kids truly enjoy!

Also, many thanks to Renee Keith for teaching the Catechism class this year. The kids really enjoy their time during Catechism because of the great job Renee always does! Finally, a big THANK YOU to Laura Thompson for leading the High School Class this year. We very much appreciate her flexibility and her willingness to help! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you to all!

### **2016 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AT ZION**

This year Vacation Bible School will follow the pattern we enjoyed last year, meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Monday through Thursday, and 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Friday. We would like to invite you to join us at *Deep Sea Discovery* where the kids will live and learn that "God is with me wherever I go". It will be a great adventure with awesome lessons, music, crafts, games and more! Next month's newsletter will have many more details about the week!

We, of course, need many volunteers for VBS – from preparations to help with teaching, crafts, leading outdoor games, and service projects during VBS week. If you are interested in helping, please let Debbie Fox know at 330-966-2433, or [dfox521@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dfox521@sbcglobal.net).

## THE WOMEN OF ZION

*Canton-Massillon Cluster Spring Gathering:* We met at St. John Lutheran Church in Canal Fulton, with coffee served at 9 a.m. Attending from Zion were Joyce Gibeaut, Juanita Cignetti, and Betty Tracy. We enjoyed a Bible study about seeds, sowers, and reaping a bountiful harvest, which focused on 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:6-15. Janet Kurtz, a certified Master Gardener, made the Bible study very interesting because she knew so much about how maximizing the potential of soil actually works! It was a wonderful morning, a nice break from our normal routine, and very uplifting. We were happy to offer support for ministries like OASIS in Akron and Canton, St. John's SALT Box ministry, St. Luke's Lutheran Community, and the Northeastern Ohio Synod Women's Organization.

***Mary and Elizabeth, Sisters across the Generations:*** Our challenge in May is to turn our focus to building new multi-generational relationships. Mary was barely of child-bearing age, while Elizabeth had reached an age when conventional thinking was that she was well beyond child-bearing age. Yet, they are joined together in the story of salvation, and together they shared the kind of mutual support that enabled both to fulfill God's call to service. This Bible study about Mary and Elizabeth gives us an opportunity to talk as sisters within and across generations. Our roles differ; but all of us have been or will be called to believe in God acting in us and through us in a variety of ways. Our hope is to unlock the secret to providing mutual support as we grow in love and service by grace. Join the Women of Zion on **Tuesday, May 17**, in the Resource Center at 9:30 a.m.

## MORE WOMEN'S NEWS

***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. *Many hands make work light.* Please consider joining us as we enjoy coffee, conversation, and the satisfaction of knowing that we're helping others through the good that we do. You are encouraged to join us.

In the spirit of Mary and Elizabeth, and this month's focus on trying to build new multi-generational relationships, we invite more of our younger women to help with the work of ***Zion's Chancel Guild***. Many of us have gotten older over the years; but that doesn't mean that you have to be older to join in the work of the Chancel Guild. Most of us were, in fact, much younger when we started helping with this part of our worship ministry. Let Betty Tracy or Carol Rossbach know of your interest in helping. We'd love to find a way to include you in what we do.

Speaking of Carol Rossbach and Betty Tracy, COLORING is back! We're talking about making the connection between our love of art and our understanding of truth. We are combining the enjoyment that comes through coloring with the satisfaction we feel when we are at peace; and coloring is soothing. Our quest for the peace that God promises can take many forms. We can read books, meditate on the Scriptures, pray in quiet, get out and do some good in the world, and we can enjoy the glimpse of God that art provides. In June we will schedule another coloring session, and then combine it with some Bible study. Our focus will be on the gifts of the Spirit. We will meet in the evening, since we think that this may provide a more inclusive opportunity.

## **MANY THANKS & MORE**

Every month at our Church Council Meetings, Ron Tvorik, as our Caring Ministry Elder, loves reporting on the good work that he sees being done with the ministry of Zion's Food Pantry & Clothing Closet. These are smooth-running and well-oiled machines, with faithful volunteers who offer their time and talents with interest, energy, and great joy. In addition to what we see on the first and third Tuesdays of every month, there is much that we don't see, which makes a huge difference in how well these ministries function.

As a ministry that connects with hunger-related agencies that are both public and private, with county, state, and federal help, Zion's Food Pantry participates in all sorts of reviews insuring compliance with state and federal rules and regulations. Some of these reviews involve sensitivity to Civil Rights and knowledge of food safety; but many involve matters of record-keeping and financial integrity. Here's a letter Cathy Harvey recently received following yet another of the many reviews she helps to process in her role as Director of our Food Pantry:

*Dear Cathy,*

Thank you for providing your "Eligibility to Take Home Food" forms to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks for the March 2016 review of the December 2015 and February 2016 TEFAP forms. We are pleased to inform you that your agency was found to be 100% compliant.

Please remember that you must maintain these forms for five years plus the current year. Congratulations and keep up the good work. Thank you for all you do to help end hunger in Ohio.

*Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director  
Ohio Association of Foodbanks*

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Sunday, May 1:** *Feed the Need* Stark County Hunger Walk, Community Christian Church, with registration at 2:00 p.m.

**Thursday, May 5:** Bishop Allende's Annual Prayer Service on *Ascension Day*, 7 p.m.

**Saturday, May 9:** *Stamp Out Hunger*, the Annual Letter Carriers' Food Drive.

**Sunday, May 10:** *Happy Mother's Day*; and remember that the Mother's Day Breakfast at Zion has been put on hold this year.

**Wednesday, May 11:** Our *Confirmation Dinner* at Carrabba's! We will meet at the church at 5:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 15:** The Festival of Pentecost and the Rite of Confirmation at 10:30 a.m. Order geraniums, and WEAR RED!

**Tuesday, May 17:** Bishop Abraham Allende joins us at the May Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

**Saturday, May 28:** Mulching at Zion, 8:30 a.m.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF ROBERT "BOB" LANCASHIRE

(February 2, 1937 – April 10, 2016)

Bob Lancashire was a good man, and a great friend, who just stood out in so many ways, mastering the basics in life and love, in living and serving, giving of himself in every way he could, while trusting our Lord to show him how he could make the difference God desired, the difference others needed, to pick up our game and our spirits in doing the Lord's work and serving a good and gracious God. *Courage, fortitude, strength under pressure, calm in the storm*: these are a few of my favorite words and phrases when I think about what Bob brought to this church and to our ministry of growing in love and service by grace. He was a man who stood his ground, and would help you stand yours if he could. If he could, he would; and he did whatever you needed, as well as he could, for as long as he could. It wasn't just here at church; it was at home and at work, with friends and family. He was a rock when it came to reliability, offering conscientious attention to detail and outcomes, mastering the little things, not too proud to hit a single to keep things going, but capable of hitting it out of the park, on the ball field and in life.

We all know that it was sad and difficult watching aging take its toll over the past few years. The spirit was still willing, and Bob was never all that weak; but we are creatures of flesh and blood inextricably enmeshed in the battles that come with the curse of mortality, where death and dying strut their stuff through the everyday ways that chip away at the lives of those we love. In the Gospel of John, Jesus reminds us that he came to give us life, life in abundance! (John 10:10) But death is always there ready to take what it can like a thief and a robber, stealing our strengths, robbing us in time of memories that help make us who we are, robbing us of the life we learned to love, and stealing away our loved ones, sometimes gradually, or suddenly, shocking us, almost without warning. These last few years haven't been easy; but throughout this Easter season our Lord has been assuring us that death will not have the last word in life!

With the resurrection on Easter Sunday, Jesus tells us that life – his life in us and through us – is victorious over death, over the curse that comes with dying, and the decline that comes with aging. With the resurrection on Easter Sunday, Jesus tells us that life – his life in us and through us – is victorious over death, over the curse that comes with dying, and the decline that comes with aging. "I will raise you up on eagle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of my hand." (*With One Voice*, Song #779, *On Eagle's Wings*) This is God's promise, and our future. The diminished capacities that aging can inflict are defeated by the Lord of life, who will destroy death itself as the final enemy of all that God desires, the future God promises and delivers through Christ our Lord.

We knew and loved a man whom God had blessed with many talents, all of which he used to serve God and love us. If there were two gifts in his tool kit, he used them both to make life better. His talents were many. His life was spent maximizing the benefit of these God-given gifts – loving life, having fun, serving God, and standing strong, joining in, sharing freely, trusting boldly, and mastering the strengths and subtleties of faithfulness, in word and deed, through good times and bad, offering unwavering support, with a "you can count on me" loyalty, and the kind of friendship you don't find often, the kind of friendship you treasure forever. In the end, Matthew sums it up best. "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in ways great and small. Enter into the joy of your Lord" – the joy of true life, with all your gifts restored and expanded, with God's many blessings poured out, pressed down, packed in, and overflowing in abundance. That's the life God promised, the life that's ours, now and forever, in Jesus' name. Amen

