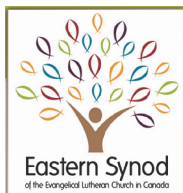


PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL

“Direct us by the light of that Spirit, that we may have a right judgment in all things and rejoice at all times in your peace ...” – Opening of a Synod Assembly, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

During my years on Long Island, I served as an intern supervisor for a former Roman Catholic priest who was in the process of becoming a Lutheran pastor (due in part to his marriage and subsequent parenthood). I worked with him to acquaint him with the Lutheran worship service (which is quite similar to the Roman Catholic mass) as well as other traditions and practices in our Lutheran congregations. While he adapted very well to his new church, the one aspect of life among the Lutherans that surprised him the most was our manner of governance. He had come out of a church that was very hierarchical, with a great deal of power centralized in the bishop's office and also with the local parish pastor. He had never experienced congregational councils that made so many important decisions in the local congregation, and an annual congregational meeting was a completely new experience for him. He was especially impressed when he attended the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly, where both clergy and lay people make important decisions on the life of the church. This new pastor was able to experience an aspect of Lutheran life that we often take for granted: that ours is a church rooted in mutual ministry, in what Martin Luther called the “priesthood of all believers,” in which all Christians *(stand before God, pray for others, intercede with and sacrifice ourselves to God and proclaim the word to one another.)* (Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*).



As our congregation exercises its mutual ministry through the decisions we make in congregational meetings and the service of our Congregational Council, our Eastern Synod also seeks to be faithful to our call to serve our Lord in the ministry we share in our section of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. This month, clergy and lay people from across the synod will gather for our Synod Assembly in Toronto. We will gather to worship as God's people, to hear reports on the areas

of ministry we share, to vote on spending plans and programs for the coming years, and vote on persons who will serve on our behalf between assemblies. This year, the assembly will also vote

on the synod's delegates to next year's national convention in Winnipeg (my name is on the ballot as a clergy candidate). Some of the sessions can be long and tedious, but it is our privilege to share in these decisions and in the ministry into which Christ called us in baptism. As Bishop Jon Anderson of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America proclaimed to his synod in assembly,

- “We gather to celebrate the Good News we know in our Lord Jesus. We gather to celebrate the gift of our living faith and the gift of Christian community that God's Holy Spirit gives. We gather to celebrate that Christ Jesus continues to call us to follow him into his world and into his future.”

I will once again be attending the Eastern Synod Assembly at the end of this month (as a pastor, I have a standing invitation – really an expectation – to attend every assembly). While spending three days at a convention centre near Pearson Airport may not be the most exciting way to spend this time, it is both an opportunity and a privilege to gather as the Church of Jesus Christ in this place so that we might be faithful to our promise to *“serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus.”* May we pray that God will bless our synod as it meets in assembly and as it goes forth to proclaim God's love to all people and to continue to be a synod that serves *“In Mission to Others.”*

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jeff Laustsen

VICAR'S DEVOTIONAL

“A BRIDGE TO THE SACRED”

Now that spring has arrived I have begun walking along the banks of the river once again. Over the winter I had taken to walking through a few of the local neighbourhoods, but with spring's arrival the river beckons.

These walks surprise me with their unassuming beauty. There is something about giving oneself over to the beauty of the ordinary, and the authenticity of the natural world, which brings the immediacy of God into our hearts and our lives. The sacred is in the simple.

Here are a few notes and the resulting reflection made during an early morning walk I took a few days ago:

Mornings are getting brighter, and warmer too...well worth going out and saying hello to the ducks, geese, swans, robins, and red-winged black birds. I think I am becoming a birder. I am learning to



identify which call belongs to which bird. Interesting how the appreciation for such apparently simple things resonates ever-deeper as I age. The sacred mystery of a bird foraging for a nest announces loudly God's creative presence in the world.

As I write this I am reminded of a sentence that I just wrote (and pondered) for my sermon on the Holy Trinity:

"Creativity is the essence of God."

I see this; the birds tell me it is true.

I just walked past a goose who is sitting staunchly and proudly on her nest, not 2 feet from the edge of the path. She doesn't seem to mind being so close to the trail as I walk by but when a dog walker goes by, with her super-curious dog, she gets really agitated – neck writhing, beak open, hissing... but she does not budge from her position. Practice for her upcoming role of mother, protecting her young.

There are a few children feeding and petting a gaggle of geese, squealing with delight as the geese protest their advances with loud squawks. There is nothing quite like the laughter of a child.

A woman from the church (out walking her clearly beloved dog) walks by and greets me:

"Hello Vicar Albert," she says.

And we have a brief exchange about mundane, yet somehow important, things in life. Just as she is about to leave she says, "It is all going to work out."

As I walk away I ponder...divine message or happy coincidence? I suppose it all depends on how one views life.

When I get home I come across a quote by James Finley:

"The union with God we are seeking lies in the precious depths of our ordinariness, day by day, day by day, day by day."

Recalling the previous conversation, this suddenly makes a lot of sense – the sacredness of the ordinary. Yes, very true.

A tree company is doing some major pruning on the island. They are now busy tying a rope to a large dead limb that is hanging over the water, and then guiding the rope from the island to the river's edge, ready to pull the limb across once it is cut down.

A little while later as I am walking along the far side of the river I see them now cutting down the limb; it splashes noisily into the water. That will be a difficult tug-of-war to get it up and out of the water. I wonder - perhaps they could have done it more easily in winter when the water is lower and frozen? Isn't this a riddle we shared as children – how do you cut down a tree that is hanging over the water without it getting wet? Wait for winter!

A dad and his young daughter get off their bikes beside a tree and the young girl begins to climb...

"Which branch should I climb daddy?" she asks.

"Whichever one you like," he replies.

"You tell me," she insists.

"Well then, the tall one," he relents...

And off she scurries up the tall branch...smiling coyly as she looks my way, clearly proud of her tree-climbing abilities.

Returning home I discover that a couple of ducks have made a nest under a euonymus shrub in front of my house and there are 3 large eggs in the nest. The two ducks stare at me inscrutably as I walk into my home. Is this my home or am I intruding on theirs?

I think the lessons I am learning about life have to do with living deeply while listening carefully. They have to do with learning to detect the presence of God in the small things, in the simple gestures, and in the natural movement of nature. There is an infinite richness, a hidden wholeness, in the small things of life; it surrounds us and often surprises us in their ordinary beauty.

Once I had returned to my home again, after my walk, I sat at my desk and picked up a book I had been reading. The first sentence I read was a quote written by the poet Rumi. I read it a few times and then smiled to myself – *the garden of the world has no limits*...indeed:

"The garden of the world has no limits except in your mind. Its presence is more beautiful than the stars, with more clarity than the polished mirror of your heart."

Vicar Albert Romkema



SENIORS' BIRTHDAY PARTY!

Calling all 85 year old and plus members! On June 8th at 2 PM is Zion's Birthday Party. Come join us for fellowship, food and entertainment. A phone call will be made to everyone who is invited. Hope to see you there!

ANYONE FOR A WALK?

On June 1, I would like to invite anyone interested to a 4-4.5 km walk around the Avon River.

I propose we begin at 7 PM at Zion's chapel (enough time to get home from work and have dinner). We will begin with a brief liturgy in our chapel. From there we will walk to the river and then

commence a leisurely but steady loop around the north and south shores before returning to Zion.

The purpose is not speed-walking but rather to take in the beauty of Stratford’s river bank and experience the *sacred in the simple* that surrounds us always (see accompanying *Vicar’s reflection*).

No experience is necessary but some basic level of fitness is required. Please wear comfortable clothing and good walking shoes. Dogs are welcome.

If interested, please let me know *in person*, *via email* (albert.romkema@sympatico.ca), or *call the church office* (519-271-8527) and let Terry know you plan to attend.

If desired, we could make this into a regular occurrence. Ideas welcome.

All is well,
Vicar Albert



ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS

Zion Table For Seniors: This beloved ministry which promotes fun, food, and friendship takes on a decidedly different “flavour” as our program year comes to a close. We gather on Tuesday, June 28 for a BBQ, here at Zion. Luncheon cost is \$12 per person. Please let Doris Bartlett (519-271-9622) or Beryl Horst (519-276-3501) know by Tuesday, June 14 by noon at the latest, so we can

reserve your spot.


THANK YOUS ARE IN ORDER



A heartfelt thank you to all who donated to the Easter Flower Fund: **Ken & Mary Helen Dale, Rudy & Bea Dighton, the Wayne Faulhafer Family, Doreen Gaul, Richard & Anne Gaul, Barb & Brian Gropp, Tim & Darlene Gropp, Judith Hammond, Bea Huras, Ruth Illman, Beverley & Robert Keutsch, Carl & Gwen Marklevtiz, Ellen Wolfe & Bruce**

Mitchell, Jim & Judy Stanley, Gertha Trieselmann, Don & Eva Wagner, Jean Weir, Noreen Wilker, Wayne & Joanne Young, Elfrieda Zimmermann.

And a very kind thank you to Dianne Mann for purchasing the flowers and decorating the church!



Marjorie Robinson, April 29



Henrik Robert Brenden Cade, son of Samuel & Jessica on May 8.
Ryla Alice Catherine Wilson, daughter of Jody on May 8.

ZION GARAGE SALE



Zion Church is holding a garage sale on Friday, July 8th, beginning at 12 noon. All the proceeds of this sale will be donated to our congregational ministry for our Seniors’ Group. The contributions we are looking for are books, glassware, jewelry, dishes, tools, electrical appliances, sports equipment, toys, games, etc. The convener is Terry Faulhafer who can be reached at our church office 519-271-8527 any weekday morning. Last day for donations, is Monday, July 4th. She has a place to store items and will also arrange pick up, if needed. Thank you for your support of this great cause!

FRIENDSHIP MEAL MINISTRY



Please note: The Friendship Meal, at Zion, will resume in September. This gives our volunteers a well deserved rest. In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding this ministry, please direct them to Sister Jean Widmeyer at srjw@bell.net or 519-273-1810. She’d love to hear from you!

ZION WOMEN OF FAITH

June 6: Board meeting at 7 PM
June 23: 5:30 PM Dinner at Young’s Cottage; 7:30 PM Grand Bend Theatre “Sister Act”



On Thursday, JUNE 23, we will be going to Grand Bend Theatre to see “Sister Act” at 7:30 PM. Cost is \$40 per person. Dinner at Wayne and Joanne Young’s cottage from 5:30 - 6 PM. For tickets call Joanne Young 519-271-3225 or Ellen Wolfe 519-749-5341.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL



The AED (Heart Defibrillator) has been installed at the ground level vestibule off of the Erie Street Entrance. It is located in the North West corner beside the staircase leading up to the Sanctuary. When you are in that area please take note of the locations.

Vicar Albert's internship with Zion has been extended until April 2017 or until he receives a call to his first congregation. The next intern to be assigned to Zion will not be available until April 2017.

Congregational Council has endorsed Andrew Famme as a member in good standing of Zion Lutheran Church. He fulfills the requirements to be an eligible nominee for election as a Youth delegate to the 2017 ELCIC National Convention.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 set the process for developing and enforcing accessibility standards. In 2008, the first law: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service was passed. In 2011, the second law: Integrated Accessibility Standards was passed. We have missed several deadlines which required Zion to do the following:

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures.
2. Establish a training program and train staff and volunteers.
3. Establish a feedback process.

Congregational Council is presently working at putting these requirements in place. In the next few weeks you will find an insert in your bulletin stating the Accessibility Policy that your Council has adopted on behalf of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church.

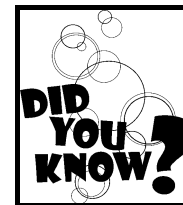
An Accessibility Advisory Committee will be put in place as soon as possible after the Accessibility Policy is established.

The renovation of the Family Washroom located by the Fellowship Hall will meet the requirements for a fully accessible washroom.

JUNE 2016 VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers assist with our Sunday morning worship services. Listed below are those who serve in June as a reminder and as a thank you for serving.

Date	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Readers	Usher Captains	Counting Captains
June 5	Fritz Steigmeier & Marilyn Sylvester	Don & Connie Campbell	Ian Watson	Steve Lamont	Linda Weitzel
June 12	N/A	Brian & Sharyl Coe	Linda Weitzel	Steve Lamont	Linda Weitzel
June 19	Sister Jean Widmeyer & Linda Weitzel	Gerald & Isabel Cook	Nancy White	Ed Illman	Andrew Ehgoetz
June 26	N/A	Ron & Deb Deichert	Isabel Cook	Ed Illman	Andrew Ehgoetz



ENDOWMENT FUND 101

As you may remember, last month we discussed the main points that govern the actions of the members on the Endowment Fund Committee, namely the Last Will and Testament of the donor. In this submission, we will share different policies that make up the Bylaws of the Endowment Fund. As was also mentioned last month, there are a myriad of topics that make up the Bylaws.

Firstly, under the Bylaws, the purpose of the Endowment Fund is to extend the local, national and international mission outreach of Zion Lutheran Church apart from the general operation of the congregation. The income from the Endowment fund shall be used for these extraordinary mission efforts and not be used for the annual operating budge of the congregation except in a situation of extreme financial difficulty, said difficulty to be determined only by the congregation at a duly called Congregational Meeting. All principal amounts will be retained and only the income expended.

Secondly, the committee consists of five members, all of whom shall be voting members of Zion Lutheran Church, Stratford. The term is for three years and no member shall serve

more than two consecutive three year terms. At the Annual Meeting each year, the congregation will elect the necessary number for a term of three years. The Pastor will be a member ex-officio with voice and vote. The Chairperson of the Congregational Council shall be an advisory member with voice and vote. The Committee also has an advisory member with voice but no vote.

Thirdly, the income from the Endowment Fund is distributed annually. The annual income is divided equally between internal ministry and external ministry. Internal ministry would be defined as ministry done by and for the membership of Zion Lutheran Church. External ministry would be for ministry to people locally, nationally, and internationally. The second Bequest from the Wilhemine U. Pauli and Carl F. Pauli Estate contained directions with regard to the usage of the original principal plus 25% of each year's realized net income. The restrictions are as follows: (a) that no part of the original principal is to be spent or loaned to any other organization. (b) Twenty-five percent of the annual income from these funds be reinvested in the fund to prevent erosion of the fund by inflation. (c) Seventy-five percent of the annual income be disbursed in accordance with the policy of this fund for distribution of the annual net income.

Fourthly, any amendment to this Bylaw which will change, alter or amend the purpose for which the fund was established shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the Annual Meeting of the congregation or a Special Meeting called specifically for the purpose of amending this Bylaw.

In addition to the Bylaws, we also have an Investment Policy between the Endowment Fund and the investor of the funds, namely RBC Dominion Securities. Simply stated, the Investment Policy Statement is a written document that expresses our personal investment objectives and helps guide the structure and composition of the investment portfolio. It provides the fundamental framework for managing the investment portfolio, plus a process for making decisions, reporting progress and reviewing our objectives on a regular basis. The Endowment Fund consists of 85% fixed income securities and 15% stocks and stock funds. Within these two funds, additional investment guidelines form part of the Investment Policy. Lastly, it is to be remembered that the primary objective of the Investment Policy is to generate income on a conservative basis and to safely preserve capital.