

ZIONNEWS

MARCH 2012

A publication for the family of Zion Lutheran Church

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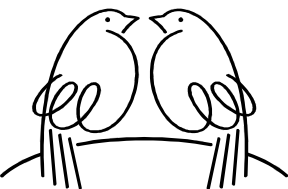
PASTOR’S DEVOTIONAL

“Time To Contemplate God’s Great Love For Us”

One of Garrison Keillor’s classic stories about the absurd genuineness and at times genuine absurdity of contemporary religious life, concerns the touring evangelist who brings her “Gospel Birds” show to Lake Wobegon. The show features a re-enactment of the Noah’s ark story, in which birds, dressed up as other animals enter the ark two by two. After this, four parakeets play on tiny bells the hymn: “I sing because I’m happy/I sing because I’m free/for His eye is on the sparrow/And I know he watches me.”

The evangelist then asks the congregation, “with every eye closed and every head bowed, to sit and contemplate God’s great love for us in our lives. And when one of our birds lands on your shoulder, I want you, if you feel that blessing in your heart, to stand up where you are.”

Keillor goes on:



“Well the Lutherans of Lake Wobegon are kind of a reserved bunch. They have closed their eyes and bowed their heads in church before but it lent a certain excitement to meditating knowing that in a moment a bird would land on your shoulder, and wondering which one it might be. So they were a little nervous, and some people were peeking. But when they got down to the business of meditating, and their eyes were closed and their heads were bowed, and yes, as they say and thought, thoughts did come to their mind of divine providence in their lives, of a great love that seemed to abide in the world and that upheld them and supported them as if by invisible hands and more than that, a presence of grace in the world, that lifts all of us up. And as they sat and meditated, one by one each of them felt a slight weight on the shoulder, as if someone tapped them, and then they did feel blessed. And one by one they stood up where they were, until everyone was standing, it was a stunning moment. And they all felt very touched by this, not only touched but filled by the miraculous event.”

There may not be any performing birds to offer you, nor any avian special effects, but

as we enter the season of Lent, let me encourage you to take the opportunity to reflect on the enormity of God’s love for us and that love in our lives. Like the Lutherans of Lake Wobegon, we Lutherans of Stratford and Perth County tend to be a reserved bunch. The very thought of taking time to contemplate our relationship with God is enough to make some a little nervous. But here’s the thing. As we journey through Lent, we might just have some thoughts come to mind of God’s providence in our lives. We just might! We might just gain some deeper insights into the God who supports and upholds us every day of our lives. We just might!

Lent is a yearly invitation to enter into worship, prayer, and the study of our faith story more intentionally than perhaps ever before. For those whose lives are already crammed with activities and responsibilities, this invitation may seem like just one more thing to try and fit into an already exhausting schedule. And that may be true. Lent, however, should not be seen as an added burden, but rather as an opportunity to put ourselves in a space where we might be touched and indeed filled by the miraculous event which comes at the end of the journey.

The season of Lent is upon us. The invitation to contemplate God’s great goodness is yours to accept. Make this Lent a significant season in your life. You may not have a bird land on your shoulder but you will feel a blessing to your heart. That much I promise you.

A blessed Lent to you all!

Rev. Douglas Reble
Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church

VICAR’S DEVOTIONAL

“Giving Up Digital Media to Pray, Read, Worship, Study, Serve, Give and Tell”

“Answer me when I call, O God of my right! You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.” (Psalm 4:1 (NRSV))

If, when you hear the term “Facebook” you picture a large coffee table photo book of different faces, this newsletter article is not likely for you. If I told you, “I just tweeted someone,” and you immediately picture me dressed as Big Bird from Sesame Street this newsletter article is not likely for you. If the term “blackberry” makes your



mouth water for pie, someone you suspect might have understood this first paragraph. If it helps let them know there is a digital copy of this newsletter on our website.

Our world has changed, we do not communicate the same way we used to. When was the last time you received a hand written letter in the mail. The last person you wished a happy birthday, how did you do it? I will admit that I just posted a quick message on their wall. (If you didn't understand that last sentence, please return to paragraph one). We can lament the loss of more personal forms of engagement and we should, but if you were to study the Psalms of lament you would realize that lament is more than grief. When you express your pain before God you enter an honest and meaningful relationship with God which then allows you to see what God is doing in the world and helps carry us forward into the future.

So if digital media is our future, and it seems apparent that the rest of the Stratford community has come to that realization maybe we should move beyond lamenting the old and see how God is already working within the new.

What is unique about digital media is that no matter what you do with it, be it a comment on facebook, a quick tweet to a friend, or a picture embedded in a blog article, it is there for all time. You may think you can delete, but if it left your personal electronic device for even a second – you can be sure there is a digital permanent copy of it, somewhere in the world. Perhaps we should be aware, a careless indication could do damage in the future. As an example, more and more employers are already checking the facebook profiles of job candidates.

As our world changes the Good News of Jesus can only become more powerful. We can use digital media to tell the story of the gift of grace in Christ. Tweet of God who has declared all of us loved and blessed, forgiven and reconciled. Blog that our slate (digital and otherwise) is wiped clean before God.

TTYL,
Vicar Steve

WEDNESDAY LENTEN SERVICES



Our journey to the cross takes on a new format this year. This Lenten season we gather in the chapel on Wednesday evenings, at 7:30 PM, to hear and reflect on the word of God in a new way. Each evening we begin with a 10-15 minute DVD reflection by Pastor Rob Bell called Nooma. The name nooma comes from a phonetic spelling of the Greek word pneuma meaning "wind," "spirit," or "breath." Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will guide our personal reflection and journey to the cross. After the DVD reflections, we will

use Night Prayer (Compline), the liturgy in our hymn book, which is about 30 minutes long. A beautiful liturgy of words spoken and sung. Compline is an ancient practice of the church which offers a time to acknowledge both the gifts and failings of each day, and we commend ourselves and the whole world into God's hands as night comes.

DINNER THEATRE

In response to popular demand, the Congregational Life Committee is organizing a trip to The Black Forest Inn, 1872 Sawmill Road, Conestogo, Ontario, on Friday, March 30 for "British Beat 66," which includes music from The Beatles, Dave Clark Five and other bands from the British Invasion. The cost of dinner and show is \$59.93/person (\$52.95 plus \$6.88 tax). The three course meal includes appetizer, main course of Prime Rib, Chicken, Haddock or Schnitzel and dessert. Doors open at 6:30 PM. We will car pool



from the church parking lot and plan to leave at 6 PM. Full payment is needed by Sunday, March 18th. For further information or to register, please contact Linda Weitzel at 519-655-2855 or linda.weitzel@parkslivestock.com. We need at least 20 people for this special price. For more information on The Black Forest Inn shows and menus, etc., go to <http://www.blackforestrestaurant.ca/Showplace.html>. Please join us for an evening of fun, fellowship, and an opportunity to get to know members of the Zion family better!

WEBSITE MANAGER NEEDED

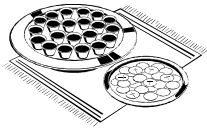


We have a unique volunteer opportunity, at Zion, which you can do from the comfort of your home and the click of a mouse. As you know, Zion now has a website at www.zionstratford.com. It has been well-used by members of our congregation and the wider community, near and far, who aren't members. It is a welcome addition to our ministry. Vicar Steve Hoffard has served as our manager but by the summer he will be off serving his first congregation. We need someone to replace him. Steve tells us that it takes an average of 15 minutes of his time a week, so the time commitment isn't large. We just need someone who knows what they are doing.

For more information or to say yes, please contact Joanne Wallace at jwallace@wightman.ca or 519-273-5097 or Steve Hoffard at steve.hoffard@gmail.com or 519-276-8393.

COMMUNION IN LENT

One of the best ways to celebrate and experience the crucified and risen Christ during Lent is to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. In March we will celebrate Holy



Communion on Sundays, March 4 and 18. Our monthly chapel service with Holy Communion takes place on Wednesday, March 28 at 1:30 PM. This appeals to our seniors and others who find the stairs to the church or a full hour long service difficult to manage.

If you are unable to come to church in Lent to receive Holy Communion, because of sickness or some other life circumstance and you still wish to receive it, don't hesitate to call Pastor Doug or Vicar Steve at the church. They will make every effort to bring it to your home.

ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS

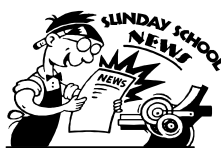


Our next gathering of Zion Table For Seniors, our ministry which promotes fun, food, and friendship, takes place on Tuesday, March 27 at 12 noon. Please let Doris Bartlett (519-271-9622) or Phyllis Jeffery (519-271-3668) know by Tuesday, March 20 if you can attend. Lunch cost is only \$10.

Our after dinner presenter is Lynda Weston, Spiritual Care Co-ordinator at Spruce Lodge Long Term Care Facility, here in Stratford. All are welcome!

SUNDAY SCHOOL SNIP-ITS

Thank you ever so much for your great support at the Sunday School Bake Sale, held between the services, on February 12. We are very pleased that \$285 was raised and all of it will be donated to Canadian Lutheran World Relief. Thank you one and all!



Please note that our Sunday School children will be serving as greeters and readers, at the 9 AM service, on Sunday, March 4. Also note that there will be no Sunday School on Easter Sunday, April 8 so the teachers and children can worship with their families. Sunday, April 22 will be parent visitation day in our Sunday School.

Jan and Mary-Lou

FRIENDSHIP MEAL



Our Friendship Meal continues to serve people in need in our community. We are now serving around 100 people a month which unfortunately indicates that things are difficult for some people. Our next Friendship Meal is Friday, March 30 at 5 PM. Volunteers are needed to prepare, cook, serve, and clean-up. That could mean you and you are welcome to help out. Indeed, we need you! Questions? Please call Ingrid Fraser (519-271-4382) or Pastor Robert Hutchison (519-271-5808).

EASTER FLOWERS



As is our custom, at Zion, donations will be accepted so the Women of Faith group can purchase flowers and decorate the church for our Easter celebrations. Please write "Easter Flowers" and your name on a separate envelope and place it on the offering plate or bring it to the church office any weekday morning.

Donations will be accepted up to Palm Sunday, April 1. Thank you kindly!

CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS 2012



For this year, the following responsibilities have been assigned to Church Council members by election and appointment. They are: Chairperson: Cathy McCord; Vice-Chairperson & Worship & Music: Rob Leifso; Secretary & Congregational Life: Liz Bomasuit; Treasurer: Marg Lamont; Worship & Music: Brian Stever; Congregational Life: Rob Illman, Joanne Wallace; Finance: Steve Arand, Bill Hoffard, Audrey Miller; Property: Wendy Holman, Sherry Malcho, Bruce Sippel.

Feel free to contact them with concerns or questions, if they arise. In the meantime, please pray for these brothers and sisters in Christ. May the Holy Spirit guide them as they undertake their ministry of leadership, insight, and oversight.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED



Other ways to serve your congregation is to sit on one of our four standing committees. They are Congregational Life, Worship & Music, Property, and Finance. Currently the Congregational Life Committee could use a new member or two but you would be welcome to join any of the others. Typically, the committee meet only 3-4 times a year for 1 ½ hours or so. When St. Paul writes: "God loves a cheerful giver," he is not just referring to the gift of our financial treasures but our gift of time as well. Prayerfully consider this. To say yes or to ask questions, please contact any Church Council member or Pastor Doug at zionlc@golden.net or 519-271-8527. You are needed!

LIKE TO SING?

One of the blessings of our Zion Church life is our Zion Choir which inspires us every time they sing. The members of the choir would like you to know that all are welcome – even if you can't attend every practice. The Zion Choir is putting out a general request



for more members, particularly men. Being part of a church choir is a personally enriching experience and a wonderful way to serve your church and wider community. Ask any member, they'll agree. Questions? Contact Lynne Hopcraft, our gifted and very approachable Choir Director at hopcrafttutoring@yahoo.com or 519-274-3120.

P.S. Zion Choir practises on Thursday evenings from 7:30 PM to 9 PM.

ZION SPRING HIKE



The Congregational Life Committee has planned a spring hike to take place on Saturday, April 21. The purpose of the hike is two fold. One, to promote fun and friendship among our congregation. Two, to celebrate God's creation in a most beautiful time of year.

This is what you need to know. We leave from the church parking lot at 8 AM and travel one hour to Hilton Falls on the Bruce Trail. Hike leader is Richard Reble (yes, Pastor Doug's brother) who has walked the complete Bruce Trail three times. After a pleasant hike of 3 hours or so, we head to our own Lutheran Camp Edgewood, which is nearby, for lunch and a beverage. Cost is \$15 per person. We'll be home by suppertime. You need good walking shoes for an easy to moderate trail, drinking water or snack if you need them.

A sign-up sheet will be at the back of the church from Sunday, March 26 - April 15. We will car pool so please indicate if you can drive and how many seatbelts you have. Questions? Speak with Pastor Doug at zionlc@golden.net or 519-271-8527 or in person of course.

In Memoriam

Joan Gibson, Feb 4

MARCH 2012 VOLUNTEERS

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

Date	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Readers	Usher Captains	Counting Captains
Mar 4	9 Darlene Illman 11 Sister Anne Keffer	9 Torri-Lynn Wilson & Hailey Illman 11 Sharyn Cheney	9 Sunday School 11 Jake Hemstock	9 Wayne Hinz 11 Irvin Riehl	Bruce Sippel
Mar 11	N/A	9 Ed & Darlene Illman 11 Judy Laliberte	9 Linda Weitzel 11 Beryl Horst	9 Jerry Terhaerd 11 Mike Bomasuit	Bill Hoffard
Mar 18	9 Rob Leifso 11 Stephen Fischer	9 Andrew & Lindsey Ehgoetz 11 Marten & Dianne Mann	9 Marilyn Sylvester 11 Sharyn Cheney	9 Jerry Terhaerd 11 Mike Bomasuit	Bill Hoffard
Mar 25	N/A	9 Robert & Beverly Keutsch 11 Doug & Lorelee McNaughton	9 Joanne Wallace 11 Sister Anne Keffer	9 Tom Cosstick 11 Fritz Steigmeier	Wendy Holman

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: MARCH 2

This year St. James' Anglican Church hosts the annual World Day of Prayer Service on Friday, March 2 at 11 AM.

WORLD

Day of

PRAYER

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together the first Friday of March to observe a common day of prayer each year. Through World Day of Prayer, women affirm their faith in Jesus Christ and become aware of the whole world; are enriched by the faith experience of Christians of other countries and cultures; share the burdens of other people and pray with them and for them; become aware of their own talents and use them in the service of God's world. Prayer and action are inseparable and both have immeasurable influence in the world.

This year’s program is entitled “Let Justice Prevail” and is written by the women of Malaysia. This is a community service so please know all are welcome. Women and, of course, men too.



A LAY SPIRITUAL RETREAT

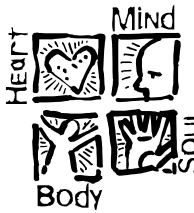
This year’s lay spiritual retreat, an Eastern Synod event takes place once again, at the Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls from Friday evening, March 30 to Sunday afternoon, April 1. The cost is \$215 per person which includes room and food costs. The spiritual directors, this year, are our own Bishop Michael Pryse of our Eastern Synod and Debbie Lou Ludolph, Eastern Synod Worship Ministry Director. This year’s focus will be on living more consciously to have a deeper relationship with God and all of creation

All lay persons are welcome to attend this time of community, conversation, contemplation, worship, and renewal. Information and registrations are available at: www.easternsynod.org or you can contact registrar Prijna Gingrich at 519-208-5652 or anp.gingrich@rogers.com

GIFTS THAT LAST

Before the American humorist Mark Twain became a famous writer, he went out west to the Nevada territory with his brother and tried his hand at mining gold and silver in the wilderness. Twain and his friends endured the stings of scorpions, the extremes of weather, the pangs of hunger, and the dangers of marauders, because the idea of finding riches like gold and silver made them overlook these hardships. Some of the stories he wrote later made fun of what he and others put up with because of their desire to get rich quick.

Faith in gold and silver led Twain to invest his cash reserves in many mines in the surrounding area. He became a millionaire on paper, but as he later admitted, it all turned out to be worthless paper.



People are always ready to believe in some new get-rich-quick scheme. And they’re ready to act on it. How firm is our belief in something really eternal? Jesus spent time in a wilderness inhabited by creatures and marauders every bit as dangerous as those Mark Twain faced. Jesus too came out of his experience in the desert with a belief in riches, but these were true riches. Jesus went forth from his experience calling on people to believe in the good news.

How many of us are willing to really invest in the true riches, the eternal riches, of God’s good will for all humanity? Are we as ready as those treasure hunters of long ago to sink our cash, our energy, and our wills into what is more than just a get-rich-quick scheme? Reflect for a moment on where you have poured your energies and then consider, here at the start of Lent, who calls you, and what sacrifices you are willing to endure for something lasting

P.S. Listed below is how you blessed others through Zion Church in 2011:

\$5,000 and over - (4) 9	\$2,500 - \$5,000 - (17) 20
\$1,000 - \$2,500 - (91) 93	\$750 - \$1,000 - (40) 37
\$500 - \$750 - (73) 62	\$300 - \$500 - (44) 44
\$100 - \$300 - (83) 70	\$0 - \$100 - (95) 130

Number in brackets = numbers for 2010

Above is the distribution of gifts given to Zion in 2011. Please notice the breakdown of these givings. Is it possible that you can move up to the next category? Prayerfully reflect on this and don’t forget these words from St. Paul where he writes: “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

CALL TO SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Over the past couple of years, National Bishop Susan Johnson, has been encouraging a call for spiritual renewal and deeper discipleship within our church, which includes regular attendance at worship, daily prayer and scripture reading, involvement in a program of study, regular service in the community (not just the congregation), regular and proportional giving similar to the understanding of the tithe found in scripture, and commitment to sharing the good news with those around us, beginning with our family and friends. A simplified list of this call to deeper discipleship includes: Worship, Pray, Study, Serve, Give, Read, and Tell

This month, we focus on the word “Prayer,” one of the Lenten disciplines. Remember, don’t over do it. It’s just like a physical exercise program. Start with one or two practices and make them a habit before you take the next step.

PRAY
We are called to daily prayer. Whether this is an area you are completely comfortable with or something you have struggled with, the following are some

ideas on how to include daily prayer in your life – and get you walking and talking in the right direction. Remember, there is no one way to pray, nor is there any one time to pray. Pray whenever and however you feel comfortable. Try one or more of these ideas and if it doesn't work for you, try something else!

- ✚ Set aside a bit of time each day (either as little or as much time as you would like) and devote that time to prayer. It may seem hard to do at first but after a while you will look forward to this time to focus on your prayer life.
- ✚ If you don't already pray at meals, consider starting this as a tradition. Don't know where to start? Try "Jump Start your Prayer Life." (archive.elca.org/prayer/resources/jump.html)
- ✚ Try also returning thanks at the end of a meal with something like *O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.* (Psalm 136:1).
- ✚ Pray together with your family. One person could offer a prayer each time you are together or you could have everyone offer a petition or prayer so that everyone feels included.
- ✚ Use a bell or chime, a candle or other tangible signs of calling yourself or your family to brief times of prayer in the home, especially with children.
- ✚ Pray silently when you're riding on the bus or waiting for an appointment. Or pray out loud while walking on the treadmill or going on a nature walk.
- ✚ Check out the ELCIC on Facebook and use the prayers that are offered in the regular status updates. Offer up your own prayers on that page as well.
- ✚ Talk to others about their prayer life. They may offer their own thoughts and suggestions for how they engage in prayer.
- ✚ Use *Eternity For Today* (or a similar daily devotion resource) that includes a short portion of scripture and a written prayer.
- ✚ Purchase a family copy of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and use the prayers found on pages 64-87. Use the Daily Prayer orders or portions of them found on pages 295-331, and especially the Responsive Prayer which can be found on pages 328-331.
- ✚ Use the prayers posted on the British Columbia Synod website. (bcsynod.org/prayers.html)
- ✚ Make a list of your community's leaders (i.e. councillors, mayors, school trustees, etc.) and pray for them at least once a week.
- ✚ Pray while you commute to work (but don't close your eyes if you are the driver).
- ✚ Walk a labyrinth or use a finger labyrinth. Prayer labyrinths are used to facilitate prayer and/or meditation. (labyrinth.org.ulc/historypage1.html)
- ✚ Try a form of meditative prayer like Lectio Divina. (osb.org/lectio/about.html)
- ✚ Start a spiritual or gratitude journal and commit to writing in it daily. (Ehow.com/how_2244020_keep-prayer-journalkeep-prayer-journal.html)
- ✚ Write letters to God as a form of prayer.

- ✚ Offer to pray for others when you feel they could use a prayer. You'd be surprised how often this will be a welcome gesture.
- ✚ Commit to gather weekly, or at least regularly, with a group of people from your congregation or among friends or family to meet and pray for people and circumstances. Send a note to the people that you pray for.
- ✚ Read *Different People, Different Prayers*, a resource from Jackie Nuns.

ZION CHURCH BULLETIN BOARD

The following items have come into our church office over these last few days. We share them with you for your information and possible response.



1. **Free Income Tax Clinic:** An income tax clinic for low income persons and couples will be offered by local accounting companies on Tuesday, March 20. To participate in the clinic, income restrictions are \$16,000 or less for singles and \$26,000 or less for couples. Appointments must be made in advance. To register call Hazel Sneddon in the City of Stratford Social Services Department at 519-271-3773 ext. 256, Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM.
2. **Post-Secondary Scholarship Funds:** Application forms are now available for our young people enrolling in a post-secondary institution for 2012-2013. You may pick application forms up from our church office or by going to www.easternsynod.org/resourcescategory.php Deadline to apply is May 14, 2012. Criteria includes financial need, academic achievement, dedicated participation in church and community, personality, vocational promise.
3. **Diabetes, Sodium & Fat, Oh My!:** Join dietician and editor of the new Canada's 250 Essential Diabetes Recipes Cookbook, Sharon Zeiler and learn about high blood pressure and cholesterol with tips on prevention and management; how to read product labels and make healthier food choices at home and on the go; ways to reduce salt and fat in your diet without sacrificing taste and much more. This session is free and is broadcast live via video-conferencing. It takes place on Thursday, March 22 from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at the Stratford General Hospital. For more information or to register, call 519-673-1630 x223, by March 19, 2012. This event is sponsored by the Canadian Diabetes Association.