

PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL

"O Lord, let this day be a day of rejoicing to all who confess Thee. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen." – Prayer on the Day of Confirmation of a Child, *Lutheran Book of Prayer*.

One of the books that has been on my office shelf for as long as I've been a pastor is the *Lutheran Book of Prayer* that was given to me on the day of my Confirmation by the Lutheran Church Women of my home congregation. It's not a book that I use very often (as you can see from above, it includes traditional language that is somewhat archaic), but it brings back fond memories of that warm June afternoon. Inside the book, I keep a photograph of my parents and me standing in the driveway of my childhood home, with me wearing both my Confirmation robe and one of the worst haircuts ever. I treasure this book for the memories it conveys of that day when I celebrated my Confirmation with my family and with the congregation in which I was raised in the faith.

Many of us have special memories of the day of our Confirmation. One of the most popular places in our building is the hallway where the photographs of our Confirmation Classes from 1926 to the present day are hung; it is common to see persons looking for their own class picture as well as those of parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles. Stories are shared about fellow class members, the pastor who led the class, and the day when this class was confirmed. The day of our Confirmation remains a special occasion in many of our lives, the memories of which remain with us as long as we live.



On Sunday, May 15, a new Confirmation Class will take their place on this wall of remembrance as nine of our young people affirm their baptismal vows and promise to *"continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism"* (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*). In the Lutheran tradition, Confirmation is not a stand-alone sacrament but is connected to the Sacrament of Holy

Baptism, in which parents and godparents brought their children to receive this gift and promised to nurture them in the Christian faith *"so that your children may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace."* After a period of instruction in the basics of our faith, these young people now assume the responsibility of being faithful stewards of the gifts with which God has entrusted them, so that they will *"proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth."* We pray that God will *"stir up in them the gift of your Holy Spirit"* so that their Confirmation might not be only a cherished memory but a source of strength and blessing for all of their lives.

Confirmation is a day of celebration – for confirmands, for their families, and for all of the congregation. It is a day when as the people of God we *"promise to support these sisters and brothers and pray for them in their life in Christ."* It is a day when we remember the day of our Confirmation and the promises we made to be faithful to the covenant promises that made us children of God and members of the church which is the Body of Christ. It is a day when we both witness the commitment of this year's Confirmation Class and an opportunity to recommit ourselves to living faithfully as God's people, so that *"together we will give thanks and praise to God and proclaim the good news to all the world."*

I look forward to gathering together as a congregation this Pentecost Sunday to celebrate Confirmation with our young people, with their families and friends, and with all of the church which was called together through Baptism and empowered by the Holy Spirit *"to proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."* (1 Peter 2:9). May this be a Confirmation Sunday that will be memorable to all of us for what we celebrate on this day and for what it will mean to us in all of our days!

Your fellow servant,
Pastor Jeff Laustsen

VICAR'S DEVOTIONAL

"SPRING HAS ARRIVED"

With the arrival of spring there is so much beauty around – all our senses join in this celebration of a new season. There are *smells* of warm earth that send spirits soaring; there

are *colours* of flowers and budding trees that have not been seen for months; and the sacred *sounds* of spring birds who now forage busily for materials to build their nests seem akin to a great symphony.



The season of spring is an astounding season of re-birth, growth, and also of hope that is spoken in the relentless newness that we know will arrive each year in April. It is a reminder that all of life passes through cycles of birth, death and then rebirth.

Not to overly sugar-coat spring, it can also be a muddy, dirty, messy season. When Anne and I walk across a valley to get to the woods near her home, the puddles are so wet and deep that they can suck the boots right off your feet. For brief moments I long for the solidity of ice which prevents soaking feet...but not for too long; that belongs to another season, not to spring. The joy of spring is just too strong to be diminished by a few puddles.

As I survey the birthing of new grasses, flowers, and foliage on top of the old I remember that the word “humus” (the decaying organic matter that feeds the growth of spring root systems) actually becomes the root for the word “humility”. This seems somehow appropriate; creating new life by feeding on the giving way of the old is a humble process - shedding one form for the beginning of another. I suppose in some ways this is a good metaphor of life in Christ. We leave our old selves behind in favour of the new; lives of service, love, community, and hope. God uses death of an old way of live to be the stimulus (the humus) for re-birth. Spring arrives in our lives as well.

A few weeks ago I was driving between Stratford and Kitchener. It was the day after an ice storm had hit the city. There were numerous branches down and lots of ice sticking to branches of trees. I was so struck by the sacredness of the sight that I pulled over to the side of the road and wrote this poem. Happy spring to you all!

Winter's Decline

The frozen rain of yesterday's storm
Rests on the tops of trees
Whose boughs bend precariously
Under the weight of the heavy ice

And yet the trees sparkle
As if unperturbed
Under the shimmering light of the early morning sun

The sun's spring warmth is too potent
Too penetrating
For ice to last
And so it slowly melts away
Under the crackling creaks of protest
While birds sing joyfully from the gallery

It is as if the angels themselves
Were pushing back the cold –
It is time for winter to recede

I revel in this warmth

Gradually
Steadily
I feel the cold disentangling itself
From the marrow of my bones

Ah, the warmth of the sun
Invigorating
Sacred

All of life proclaims it...
Spring has arrived!
Spring has arrived!
Spring has arrived!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL



In February of 2015 the Women of Faith requested that Congregational Council investigate the possibility of installing a dishwasher. At the February 11, 2015 Congregational Council meeting a Motion was made to proceed with investigations to purchase and install a dishwasher, including any costs for associated kitchen renovations, plumbing, and electrical. Since the plumbers would be on site for the kitchen renovations, it was also recommended that the 7 washrooms be upgraded at the same time. Many meetings, discussions and consultations followed and the Property Committee obtained quotes from various local contractors. At a Special Congregational Council meeting held on April 10, 2016, a Motion was made to accept the report and quotes for washroom and kitchen renovations as presented by the Property Committee and to advise the Endowment Fund Committee that Zion Congregational Council wishes to proceed with the renovations. Subsequently, a Special Endowment Committee meeting was held on April 13, 2016 to consider the recommendation from the Congregational Council. After discussion, a motion was made to accept the report and quotes for kitchen and wash renovations along with recommending a financing proposal to the congregation. A Special Congregational Meeting has been called for Sunday, May 1, 2016, following the Church Service, to approve the recommendation of the Endowment Fund Committee. We hope that as many members as possible will attend the meeting on May 1st. It has been a great many years since any upgrades were made to the kitchen or the washrooms. We suggest that members visit the washrooms throughout the Church and also the kitchen to see the need for the upgrades.

As soon as weather permits Congregational Council has arranged for the painting of safety strips on the edges of the long cement steps at the front of the Church to improve visibility.

Producing a Mission Statement or Purpose Statement is a process led by Congregational Council and includes involvement by the Congregation. Time is being allotted at each of our monthly meetings for discussion and reflection. Mission Statements from several neighbouring Churches as well as the book "Living Lutherans Renewing Your Congregation" will be used as resources to help with the process.

ZION WOMEN OF FAITH

May 2: Board meeting at 7 PM

May 25: 7:30 PM WOF meeting

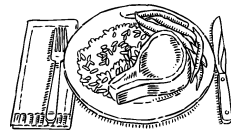
Coming Up: On Thursday, June 23 will be going to Grand Bend Theatre to see "Sister Act" at 7:30 PM. Cost is \$40 per person. Dinner at Wayne and Joanne Young's cottage from 5:30-6 PM. For tickets call Joanne Young 519-271-3225 or Ellen Wolfe 519-749-5341.



FRIENDSHIP MEAL

Our Friendship Meal continues to serve people in need in our community. Our May gathering is Friday, May 27 at 5 PM. The people who come to our meal are a blessing and so are the people who volunteer. We need our volunteers to share their blessing of time and service. Please call Sister Jean Widmeyer (519-273-6810).

ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS



Our next gathering of Zion Table For Seniors, our ministry which promotes fun, food, and friendship, takes place on Tuesday, May 24 at 12 noon. Please let Doris Bartlett (519-271-9622) or Beryl Horst (519-276-3501) know by noon, Monday, May 16 if you can attend. Lunch cost is only \$12. Our after dinner entertainment will be a musical group.



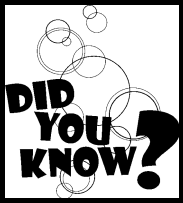
Doug Hansen, March 26
Don Yundt, April 16
Wayne Hinz, April 18

MAY 2016 VOLUNTEERS

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

Date	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Readers	Usher Captains	Counting Captains
May 1	Verne Hammer & Judith Hammond	Robert & Beverley Keutsch	Bruce Sippel	Darrell Renecker	Kevin Tuer
May 8	N/A	Mike & Liz Bomasuit	Linda Springer	Brian Wilker	Kevin Tuer
May 15	Linda Springer & Darlene Illman	Gerry & Janet Ahrens	Fritz Steigmeier	Brian Wilker	N/A
May 22	N/A	Brad & Sherri Beatty	Bill Sylvester	Fritz Steigmeier	Liz Forrest
May 29	Rob Leifso & Barb Higgins	Scott & Janice Beirness	Joanne Wallace	Fritz Steigmeier	Liz Forrest

ENDOWMENT FUND 101



As we continue our series of submissions from the Endowment Fund Committee to our monthly ZIONEWS edition, to-date we have shared information on what exactly is an Endowment Fund, the financial benefits to Zion Church of our Endowment Fund, as well as the financial benefit to the broader church and our local community under Local, National and International categories.

In this submission, we will discuss the main points that govern the actions of the members on the Endowment Fund Committee. It is to be remembered that the guiding principle of the Committee members is to ensure they comply at all times to the stated wishes of the donor through their Last Will and Testament along with the Bylaws established by the congregation.

In simple terms, the last Will and Testament is the document that in the end governs all decisions, since these decisions form the guidelines of the Bequest. The Bylaws of the Endowment Fund cover a myriad of topics such as the makeup of the Committee, investment policy, distribution of income policy, reporting procedures policy, policy to amend a particular Bylaw, to name but just a few. Once again, it is these Bylaws that also guide the Committee members in making their decisions.

In our next submission, we will supply information that specifically applies to the many different points in the Bylaws that govern the Zion Lutheran Church Endowment Fund.