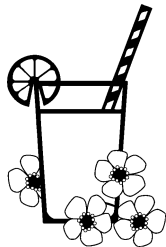


## PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL

***"It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ."*** – Evangelical Lutheran Worship.



There's an old adage that states that the difference between an optimist and a pessimist is whether they see a glass of water as "half-empty" or "half-full." It's the difference between looking at what the glass contains versus what it lacks, looking at the full half on the bottom or the empty half on the top. While it's somewhat simplistic, it does speak of the different viewpoint with which any people look upon their lives and the world around them: are we thankful for what we have or woeful for what we lack?

As we approach Thanksgiving Day this month, we are once again called to give thanks for all of the blessings we have received. We will gather in worship on Thanksgiving Sunday surrounded by signs of the abundant harvest that has been gathered from fields in our area. We will sing our thanks to God for *"all good gifts around us [that] are sent from heaven above,"* joining our voices as one as we *"thank you, Lord, for all your love."* God's Word will call us to *"enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name"* (Psalm 100:4), giving thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ who is *"the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."* (John 6:35). We give thanks on Thanksgiving Day for the same reasons we give thanks every day: for all that God bestows on us *"out of pure, fatherly goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all!"* (Small Catechism).

Yet even in the midst of our Thanksgiving celebrations, it's easy for us to focus on the empty half of the glass, on that we lack or we have lost. It may be relationships that no longer exist or never materialized to meet our expectations. It may be possessions we have lost or were never

able to acquire. It may be dreams that were never realized or plans that only partially succeeded. Even as we give thanks for the blessings we have received, we may also feel loss or frustration over what we no longer have or never had in the first place.

Whether we gather on this Thanksgiving Day to celebrate our abundance or mourn our scarcity, the Word of God calls us to look upon the "glass" – the blessings that God has poured out upon us – not as "half-empty" or "half-full" but ALWAYS FULL, because there is nothing halfway about what God has given to us. All that we have – our lives, our homes, our community, all of the good things we need – are bestowed upon us freely and without reservation by our God who never holds back on blessing us at all times and in all places. Not only does God provide us with all we need for daily living (the "daily bread" of the Lord's Prayer that includes all of the necessities and nourishment for our bodies, including food, drink, shelter, good weather, good government, health, and peace); God proved his love for us by giving his only Son *"so that I may belong to him, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules in eternity. This is most certainly true."* (Small Catechism). For God's people, our glass is never "half-empty" or "half-full"; it is *"from his fullness [that] we have all received, grace upon grace."* (John 1:16). In his article "The Liturgy of Abundance, the Myth of Scarcity," Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann identifies abundance, the "full glass" of God's grace, as the message that is at the heart of the gospel upon which the church's faith is built:

- "The conflict between the narratives of abundance and of scarcity is the defining problem confronting us ... The gospel story of abundance asserts that we originated in the magnificent, inexplicable love of a God who loved the world into generous being. The baptismal service declares that each of us has been miraculously loved into existence by God. And the story of abundance says that our lives will end in God, and that this well-being cannot be taken from us. In the words of St. Paul, neither life nor death nor angels nor principalities nor things – nothing can separate us from God." (*The Christian Century*, March 1999).

Thanksgiving Day calls all of us to offer thanks for the abundance that God bestows upon us at all times and in all seasons, an abundance that keeps our glass full no matter how often we draw upon it. As God's love knows no scarcity, our response is to be as generous, as giving, as beneficent as is the one who gives freely and fully to us. We love because God first loved us; we give thanks because God has given and continues to give us all good gifts; and we in turn give of ourselves, our time, and our possessions so that all may experience the abundance that knows no limits. As our glasses are always full, we in turn seek to make certain that everyone's

glass around us is full as well, so that all may give thanks and praise to “*God, whose giving knows no end.*” (ELW Hymn 678).

Yours in thankfulness,  
Pastor Jeff Laustsen

### WE FACE EACH OTHER

On September 13, I completed my final meeting with the *Candidacy Committee* of the Synod. This is a committee of three whom I have been meeting with since I began my work at the seminary in preparation for my vocation in pastoral ministry.



The meeting went well. We spoke about my call to ministry, my years at seminary, and now my year here at Zion. I must say that I had nothing to say but gushing gratitude for my time at Zion. The way I was welcomed into your church, into your homes and into your community. Yes, so much gratitude.

After the meeting I was endorsed to receive what is called the *Bishop’s Exam*. The first portion of this is a *written examination* which I received on September 13 and will have until October 21 to complete; and the second part of the exam is an *oral examination* which will occur on October 27 in front of an examining committee. After this I will find out within 48 hours whether I have been endorsed for ordination. Assuming all goes well, the *call* process may begin after this.

It all seems to have gone by so quickly.

-----

The other day I was in the Inuit Gallery in Stratford, a place I visit often. I found a card there that I bought for Anne. It was a card of a painting by the artist Michael Robinson that depicted a canoe with two occupants facing each other while traveling down a river – the one was paddling while the other was collecting fish. The card struck me as a metaphor of our lives together, and the unknown that is tomorrow. It is a real journey we are on, with ups and owns - we support each other as we are able, but we also have disagreements, and sometimes we need to forgive each other. In other words, it is community. All the while though, we continue to move forward, down the river together, facing each other. Our journeys are connected to the end.

I wrote the following poem to go with the card.

### We Face Each Other

There is a future we are moving toward  
It is unknown  
We wonder about it  
We even fear it  
Hoping to understand it before it arrives

Tomorrow is hidden  
But there is nothing to fear  
Tomorrow is also a gift  
That we share

We face each other  
As a source of light  
Day by Day

We face each other  
We discover God

Vicar Albert Romkema



### THANKSGIVING AT ZION

Thanksgiving Sunday is October 9 and, as is custom, it will be a wonderful worship celebration as we gather in gratitude around Word and Sacrament. What better way to mark Thanksgiving than by turning our hearts to God with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

As in other years, we would like to enhance our celebration by asking for donations to help in the church decorations which are traditional at Thanksgiving. Can you help? Donations of preserves, fruits, vegetables and flowers would be appreciated as decor in celebration of this special event. You may take the items you loaned after the service. Items remaining on Tuesday, will be given to the House of Blessing. Decorating will take place Friday, October 7 at 10 AM. Please leave your contributions at Zion on Thursday or before 10 AM on Friday. Thank you for your generosity.

# STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

How do you think about stewardship in your life and in the life of your church?

You are the steward of all that God has given you. Faithful stewardship is about making life choices and arranging priorities in our lives.

Our giving to God through the life of our church, whether it is time, talent, or material wealth, is and ought to be a grateful response to God, the giver of every good gift, for all of the many blessings bestowed upon us.

In giving from our life and labours to God through our life as a church community, we hope and seek to be Christ’s hands and heart in the world.

Giving back to God is a very important aspect of our Christian discipleship and witness. As we travel our pathway through life, may each one of us be guided by a generous heart in response to our many blessings.



The first two verses of the hymn “We Give Thee But Thine Own” shares the theme of this Stewardship Thought.

**We give thee but thine own, what e’er the gift may be;  
All that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord from thee.  
May we thy bounties thus as stewards true receive,  
And gladly, as thou blessest us, to thee our first fruits give.**



**Ken MacDonald & Jeanette Lamb** on October 8.  
**Jeffrey Johnston & Jennifer Smith** on October 29.



**Kendra Johanna Collins**, daughter of Richard & Jennifer on August 29.

# ZION CHOIR ANNUAL FALL FUNDRAISER



On Sunday, October 16, at 2 PM, the Zion community will be celebrating the fall season with our annual CLWR Fundraiser. This is a relaxed afternoon of variety, fun and fellowship, raising funds for Canadian Lutheran World Relief. The event will be led by the Zion Choir and will include the Teutonia Choir and other contributions from the community. Please plan on coming. The outreach undertaken by the CLWR, on behalf of all Lutherans in Canada, is a wonderful aspect of our church and allows us to reach out to the world around us, both near and far. We ask God’s blessings on our efforts.

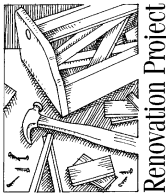
Lynne Hopcraft, Choir Director

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Monthly Congregational Council meetings will resume on Wednesday, September 21.

We will be continuing our discussions in preparation for developing a Mission Statement/Purpose Statement to present to the Congregation.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to meet monthly. Training for staff and usher captains is being scheduled. Recommendations have been provided for the new accessible washroom.



**Renovation Project** The kitchen and washroom renovation workers encountered some initial problems that required more work than anticipated and have delayed the project by a few weeks. The problems are being rectified and the project is once again progressing very well. Painting in the washrooms is almost complete and flooring has been installed in the education wing. The plumbing will be next. The kitchen electrical wiring and gas lines have been completed and the drywall is being installed. For both kitchen and washrooms we have completed the removal of the old and are now happily moving to the installation of the new.

## ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS

Zion Table For Seniors will be held on Tuesday, October 25, **at the Army, Navy & Air Force Hall, 151 Lorne Ave., East** at 12 noon. Please let Doris Bartlett ( 271-9622) or Beryl Horst (276-3501)

know by Monday, October 17 if you can attend. Cost is \$12. Entertainment Bill Lindner and friends.

ZION WOMEN OF FAITH

Mark your calendar with these dates



**Executive Meeting:** Tuesday, October 4 at 7 PM in the boardroom  
**Monthly Meeting:** Wednesday, October 26 at 7:30 PM. Meeting will be held in Church Parlour.

Zion Women of Faith welcome all ladies to our monthly meeting.

Eternity for Today - Would you like to receive this devotional booklet at home? Call Linda Springer (519-273-2093) if you would like to subscribe to this very inspiring devotional booklet. She is waiting to hear from you.

ZION’S FRIENDSHIP MEAL



Zion will host a Friendship Meal on Friday, September 30 at 5 PM. Because the kitchen renovation is not completed, the meal will be prepared and served at **St. Paul’s Anglican Church, Waterloo and Douro Streets**. We are grateful to our brothers and sisters at St. Paul’s for their hospitality to us.

The Friendship Meal is an important outreach ministry of Zion. All members of Zion and friends are invited to participate in this ministry of feeding the people of Stratford. Help is needed in peeling vegetables, cooking, setting tables, shopping, serving, and cleanup. Helpers are invited to come and work, as your schedule permits.

If you would like to volunteer, show up at St. Paul’s at 1 PM on Friday, ready to work. If you have questions, please call Sister Jean at 519-273-6810.

**P.S. Commissioning of Friendship Meal Staff:** St. Paul tells us that there are many ministries in the life of the Church. All of the ministries work to the glory of God and the well-being of God’s people. The staff of the Friendship Meal will be commissioned into that ministry on **Sunday, October 2** during the service. Carrying out this ministry is possible only when many members of Zion give of their time and talents.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT AS OF AUGUST 31, 2016

CURRENT FUND:



Total Income from all sources is at only 52.25% of Budget (to meet budgeted expenses to August 31, 2016, it should be at 66.67%)

Total Expenses are at 64.21% of Budget

The Deficit in the Current Fund as of August 31, 2016 is -\$48,140.26

OCTOBER VOLUNTEERS

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

DATE	COMMUNION ASSISTANTS	GREETERS	READERS	USHER CAPTAINS	COUNTING CAPTAINS
Oct. 2	N/A	Allan & Lorraine Skowby	Kurt Gough	Steve Lamont	Paul Hansen
Oct. 9	Fritz Steigmeier & Marilyn Sylvester	Klaus & Linda Springer	Marilyn Sylvester	Ed Illman	Kevin Tuer
Oct. 16	N/A	Fritz Steigmeier	Doug Peterman	Ed Illman	Kevin Tuer
Oct. 23	N/A	Jim & Judy Stanley	Nancy Schaff	Wayne Yundt	Liz Forrest
Oct. 30	Linda Weitzel & Sister Jean Widmeyer	Marten & Dianne Mann	Ian Watson	Wayne Yundt	Liz Forrest