

A publication for the family of Zion Lutheran Church, 202 Erie St., Stratford, ON N5A 2M8

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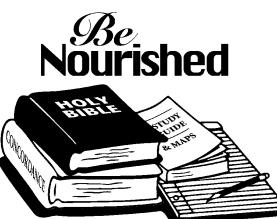
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## PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL

***"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work."*** – 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

I was browsing the stacks of books at a recent used book sale when I came upon a Bible that appeared to be brand-new. Since I use my copies of the Bible so frequently, I'm always in the market for a newer version when my current ones wear out, so I picked it up and began flipping through it to check its condition. As it was in nearly perfect condition, I decided to purchase it; but while I was walking to the checkout table, I glanced inside the front cover and stopped right in my tracks. This Bible had been presented as a Confirmation gift from a local congregation in 2010; whatever the circumstances might have been with that Confirmation or its recipient, it appeared that the Bible had not been used since that day, and now was sitting orphaned at a used book sale. I did purchase that orphaned Bible (it now has a home in my office), but I was saddened that this gift that was meant to be a blessing on the day of this person's Confirmation was never used for its intended purpose.



The Word of God that the Bible proclaims to us is, of course, at the very heart of the life and faith of the Church of Jesus Christ. We gather in worship to hear God's Word, believing that for us it is the very word of eternal life. Our life as a congregation is rooted in the teachings of the Bible; we believe that *"the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments [are] the inspired Word of God, through which God still speaks, and as the only source of the Church's doctrine and the authoritative standard for the faith and life of the church."* (Constitution, Article II, Section 3). When we bring our children to the waters of Holy Baptism, we are charged with the responsibility to *"place in their hands the holy scriptures and nurture them in faith and prayer"* (ELW Holy Baptism), a promise we fulfill both in the learning ministries of our congregation and in our homes where we open God's Word and

share it with our children. Our great heritage as Lutherans is the Word of God which Martin Luther translated into the language of the people so that, as on the day of Pentecost, *"in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."* (Acts 2:11). Luther put the Bible into the people's language so that they might share his incredible love for God's Holy Word:

- "For some years now, I have read through the Bible twice every year. If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of these branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant." (1532).

Yet while the Bible is the central book of our faith, too many copies of God's Word have become orphans – gathering dust on bookshelves, languishing unopened in cabinet drawers, and even finding their way to used book sales. The book that bears to us the very Word of Eternal Life is cast aside, ignored, and rendered unimportant on far too many occasions. At a time when people are yearning for light in the midst of the world's increasing darkness and hope in the midst of growing despair, the Word of God that brings us the light of Christ and the sure and certain hope that nothing *"will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:39). Our hope as Christians is a living hope that is rooted in the living Word of our living Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – but that Word cannot bless us unless we open the pages of our Bibles as we open our hearts and minds to receive that Word which promises to be *"a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."* (Psalm 119:105).

Our goal as Christians must be that no Bible goes orphaned, that no Bible gets left behind, and that no Bible goes unread and unused. So here's my challenge to you: as soon as you're finished reading this article, get up and find a Bible in your home. I'm sure you have one (and if you don't, we can get you one!). Take it off the shelf or out of the drawer and place it in a prominent place in your home. Open it up, and promise yourself you'll open it at least once a day. If you would like a reading guide, there are many available that we can supply. If you'd like to read the Bible with others, we have two Bible Study groups that will resume their weekly meetings this month. Whatever you do, DON'T let any Bible become an orphan!

Karl Barth, one of the greatest theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, was once asked if he could sum up the message of his writings in one sentence. Without hesitation, Barth responded: *"Jesus loves me, this I know; for the Bible tells me so."* May each of us adopt an orphaned Bible so that we too might know that we are God's beloved children – *"for the Bible tells us so!"*

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Jeff Laustsen

## VICAR'S DEVOTIONAL

I was mingling at a party this summer when one of the guests asked me what it is that I do for a living. I told her that I was a Seminary student, and was currently serving a congregation in Stratford. The woman seemed intrigued by this, and began to share some of her fondest memories from back in Sunday school. She told me that she still reads the bible quite often, and had no problem saying a prayer now and then, but didn't feel the need to go to church anymore. She said she didn't believe that a person had to go to church to be a good person.

I couldn't agree more. However, as Christians we don't go to church because we are good people.



We go to church because we are followers of Jesus. It is a way of life that has more to do with who we've been called to become, than with who we think we are. We are told in the Book of Acts, that the first disciples of Jesus would routinely gather together in the temple. And after Jesus ascended into heaven, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). As disciples of Christ, we gather together each week to hear the Word of God and be reformed by it. We are a community of people who share a common hope. A people who are gathered, washed, fed, and taught to pray; trusting in the promise of our Lord, that where two or three of us are gathered in His name, He is there among us (Matt. 18:20).

It is a way that crosses and transforms the very heart of who we are. Gathering together as Christ's Church doesn't make us better than our neighbours, but with the help and love of God, our life together is sure to make us better for our neighbors.

Your brother in Christ,  
Vicar Jason



## BIBLE STUDY CLASSES RETURN IN SEPTEMBER

As we renew our devotion to the Bible and the Word of God that it proclaims to us, we invite you to join one (or both) of our regular Bible Study classes as we explore and discuss God's Word and what it is means for us:

- Our Monday Bible Study Class meets at 7:00 p.m. beginning on **Monday September 18**. Our focus this year will be "**The Bible's Hidden Gems**," books of Scripture that are not

included in our Sunday lectionary readings and are rarely studied. Among the books of Scripture that we will be studying are First and Second Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, Nahum and Obadiah, and the Second and Third Letters of John.

- Our Thursday Bible Study Class meets at 12:00 noon beginning on **Thursday, September 21**. We will be exploring **The Acts of the Apostles**, the second volume of St. Luke the Evangelist's account of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the life and ministry of the early Church. Coffee is provided, and class members are invited to bring their lunch.

For further information, please contact Pastor Jeff at [laustsen311@gmail.com](mailto:laustsen311@gmail.com).

## ZION CHOIR NEWS



To mark the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation, the Zion Choir will be hosting Hymn Sing Concert on October 22 at 2:30 PM at Zion.

Please come and enjoy this afternoon of commemoration. Part concert, and part hymn sing, we will explore together some of the music of our rich cultural heritage. We look forward to a wonderful time together.

Lynne Hopcraft, Choir Director



## RALLY SUNDAY

A much loved tradition, at Zion, returns on Sunday, September 10, as our congregation gathers for Rally Sunday which marks the beginning of another program year for the congregation. On this Sunday, our 2017-2018 Sunday School teachers and helpers will be installed for their ministry of service and teaching.



## ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS

Zion Table For Seniors, a beloved ministry at Zion promoting fun, food, and friendship, returns on Tuesday, September 26 at 12 noon. Cost is only \$12. Please call Doris Bartlett 271-9622 or Rita Mueller 271-6539 to sign up by **Tuesday, September 19, 10 AM**.

## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Fellow Members of Zion:

It is both natural and inevitable that congregations, regardless of their history or denomination, experience challenges and change. In some instances, congregations get stuck in unhelpful patterns of dealing with their challenges and they need help to find new ways of living and working together. I believe that over the course of many years as we have encountered both challenges and change, we have developed unhelpful patterns that need to be dealt with in an intentional and meaningful manner.

After much conversation and careful consideration, Congregational Council has decided to enroll in a program called Bridgebuilder. Bridgebuilder is a six-step process to help congregations make necessary decisions for healthy functioning and carrying out their mission and ministry. The program will be facilitated by Rev. Ritta Hepomaki, an Assistant to Bishop Pryse and a trained Bridgebuilder facilitator. The process, which takes several months to complete, involves a combination of teaching, listening, and asking questions in an effort to help the leaders to hear, understand and take action within the congregation. It is not Rev. Ritta's role to give answers or recommendations. Instead, she will equip the congregation with techniques to help us collectively face our challenges in new ways. *"Give a person a fish and they eat for a day. Teach that person to fish and they will eat for a lifetime."*

Part of the process involves selecting 20 people, at random, from the congregation to be interviewed by Rev. Ritta. If you are not selected but would like to speak with Rev. Ritta, you will also have that opportunity. At this point, we anticipate interviews starting in mid-September. The process also involves a Learning Event which is scheduled for mid-October. Upon completion of the face to face interviews, an Action Report will be created and presented to an Action Planning Committee. It is the Action Planning Committee's responsibility to work with Council to put the plan into action.

We will provide more details as we move forward. Our intent is to start the process in earnest in September. In the interim, we will be reaching out to recruit a few volunteers to take a leadership role to help us through this process.

As difficult as this process may be, I truly believe that we as a congregation and Church will reap benefits from this program that will equip us to better serve God's mission as a whole. Please give prayerful consideration of your involvement if you are asked to serve.

Kevin Tuer,  
Chairperson, On behalf of Zion Congregational Council



## STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Stewardship is about realizing how gifted one is and then properly using all the gifts – our time, talent and treasure – in the right proportion. The core of stewardship is gratitude – a gratitude that overflows into giving as a way of thankfulness for all that God has given us. For some people, when they hear the word "stewardship," they immediately think "it's all about the money." But stewardship is not a "program" or a "campaign." Stewardship is a "way of life" – where we start to look at everything good as a gift from God. Stewardship is about "giving back." It's about offering up our grateful hearts to God.

*"How shall I repay the Lord for all the good things God has done for me?" Psalm 116:12*



Prayer Shawl Ministry

## PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will resume meeting every Monday in the Parlour, starting **Monday, September 11** from 2-4 PM.

Come join us for knitting, crocheting, friendship or learning how to knit. We gladly accept any donations of wool. These lap blankets and shawls will be donated to patients at home, in hospitals or nursing homes.

You are also invited to take a lap blanket for a loved one in need of comfort. All are welcome! For more information, please contact Gerda (Geri) Bornath at 519-513-5400.

## ZION WOMEN OF FAITH

Mark your calendar with these dates.

### Dates to Remember:

**Executive Meeting, Tuesday, September 12 at 7 PM, Board Room**

**Monthly Meeting, Wednesday, September 27 at 7:30 PM** Guest Speaker: Vicar Jason. All ladies welcome.



Special thank you to Judy Hammond who coordinated the annual Seniors 85<sup>th</sup> and over birthday party. Thanks also to her helpers, Ardaht Michaeli, Mary Ann Hamacher, Linda Bundscho, Marilyn Sylvester, and Irene Ehgoetz. 33 seniors attended.

Entertainment was supplied by Tom Milady with his guitar and a sing along was enjoyed by all. Thank you so much for your time and effort in making this so special for our seniors.

The dinner and theatre evening on June 28 in Grand Bend was enjoyed by 27 members and spouses.

Thank you to Bev Keutsch, Elsie Dahm, Joanne Cosstick, Wendy Hansen, Rita Mueller, Janet Ahrens, Ellen Wolfe and Joyce Dietz for all your help in hosting the reception following the ordination service June 2, which was an honour for Zion to host.

Thank you to Irene Ehgoetz who recently made the covers to protect our newly restored candelabras. Please remember to wear white gloves when handling the brass.

Hope everyone had an enjoyable summer.

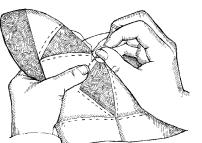
Joanne Young, President of WOF

### + IN MEMORIAM +

Brenda Schmidt, July 11

John Haynes, July 19

Eric McFadden, July 29



QUILTING GROUP

## ZION QUILTERS

Another beloved group at Zion, affectionately known as the "Quilting Queens," are our quilters who meet on Wednesday mornings from 9 AM to 1:30 PM in our Parlour. Quilting, once a lost art, has become fashionable again. It is a craft enhancing the beauty in God's creation. Our quilting group always welcomes new members, be you experienced or a novice wanting to learn the art of quilting or doing tied quilts for CLWR and for local needs. If you can't stay all morning, not to worry. A couple of hours is just fine. Your presence is what is appreciated. Quilting begins on Wednesday, September 13. Please call Irene Ehgoetz at 519-271-8878 for information, or if you have a quilt you would like quilted.

## NEW VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ZION MEALS ON WHEELS



We are currently seeking new volunteers to join our very dedicated Zion Meals on Wheels team. Through 'One Care,' Zion's team delivers meals to clients four times a year. This wonderful service helps individuals to remain in their own home. Clients are most appreciative of our help. If you would like more information, please contact me at 519-271-3187. **P.S. We are currently short of volunteers, due to unforeseen circumstances. PLEASE, help us with this much needed volunteer service. If you can help out just one or two times a year that would be greatly appreciated by our clients and our co-ordinator Heather Wickenheiser. PLEASE give her a call today. Thank you!**

Heather Wickenheiser  
Co-Ordinator Zion Meals On Wheels

## NEW CO-ORDINATORS NEEDED



We are currently in need of co-ordinators. Kim Drake, is retiring from co-ordinating Coffee Hour after many years of great service. Heather Wickenheiser is also retiring from service as co-ordinator of Meals On Wheels. These opportunities are a wonderful way to serve your church and community. If you can help with one of these positions, please call the church office at 519-271-8527.

## FRIENDSHIP MEAL MINISTRY

The Friendship Meal will be held on Friday, September 29



### Community Meal

Preparation and serving a Friendship Meal is a ministry that involves many members and friends of Zion, adults and youth. Your help in this ministry is appreciated. Help is needed in cooking, setting tables, serving and cleanup. Preparation begins at 1 PM, but volunteers are invited to come to the kitchen, as your schedules permit.

If you want to be involved in the Friendship Meal, please speak to Sister Jean or call her at 273-6810. The Friendship Meal staff will be glad to hear from you.

## BOOK LAUNCH

Lisa Hutchison has written a compelling book about the extraordinary life of her parents. It has been published and will be available world wide in the fall in hardcover, softcover and e-reader. An official book launch will take place on September 21 at the Stratford General Hospital. All funds from the sale will go towards a new CT scanner. Watch for more information in various news and social medias. Come and support your hospital!

## SEPTEMBER VOLUNTEERS

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

DATE	COMMUNION ASSISTANTS	GREETERS	READERS	USHER CAPTAINS	COUNTING CAPTAINS
Sept 3	Ed Illman & Linda Springer	Vicar Jason & Cristina Ashby	Vicar Jason Ashby	Wayne Yundt	Kevin Tuer
Sept 10	N/A	Bob & Heather Wickenheiser	Dr. Jo Knackstedt	Wayne Yundt	Kevin Tuer
Sept 17	Liz Bomasuit & Marilyn Sylvester	David & Sheila Wittig	Marg Lamont	Jerry Terhaerdt	Elizabeth Forrest
Sept 24	N/A	Wayne & Joanne Young	Lynnette McLeod	Jerry Terhaerdt	Elizabeth Forrest