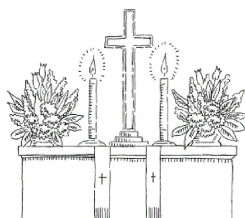


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PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." – John 1:5

A part of my morning routine on Sundays is to check the Chancel to make certain that everything is in place and ready for our 10:00 a.m. worship service. As we now have liquid wax candles on the altar and in the Paschal Candle stand, I need to check the wax level in each candle (unlike our cars, there is no gauge to warn when the level is too low – the flame simply dims!). As I was filling one of the candles one morning, I began to wonder why we still use candles in worship. Once they were a necessity; before the advent of electricity, candles were the primary means of lighting a worship space. But since our sanctuary is well-lit by electric light, candles no longer function in this illuminating role. Why, then, do we still use candles in worship?



I did some online research and discovered that there are many explanations why churches still use candles as a part of their worship life. In some churches, the two candles are identified as the "Epistle" and "Gospel" candles, pointing toward two major sections of the New Testament. Many congregations use two candles on the altar to point out that Jesus was both a human being and God. For still others, it is a reminder of Jesus' statement that *"I am the light of the world"* (John 8:12), reminding us of Jesus' coming into the world and into our lives. While candle light no longer serves a practical function, it is a reminder of the good news that *"what has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."* (John 1:4-5).

One of the most significant uses of candle light in worship is when we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. We light the Paschal Candle, which is a symbol of the light of Christ that shines before God's people at all times; when a child is baptized into the Church which is the Body of

Christ as claimed as a child of God, a small candle is lit from the Paschal Candle flame and presented to the newly-baptized along with the words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount: *"let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."* (Matthew 5:16). As the one who is baptized is called to let the light of Christ shine before others in their daily lives, so are each of us reminded that our baptismal call is also to remember that *"you are the light of the world"* (Matthew 5:14), called to let the light of Christ shine in all that we do as God's holy people.

In some congregations, a lighted candle is carried down the aisle to symbolize that the light of Christ is going forth into the world, a reminder of our call to let our light shine in all we do throughout the week: *"the light is carried out into the world to show that Jesus Christ is for all people everywhere ... this symbolizes the light of Jesus Christ going out into the world where believers are to serve."* (E. Byron Anderson). As Jesus reminds us that *"no one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house"* (Matthew 5:15), the light of Christ that is bestowed on each of us in Holy Baptism is a light that needs to be shared, so that the light of Christ might continue to shine no matter how deep and foreboding the world's darkness may appear.

"This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!"

Our candles do serve an important function in worship – not to give physical light to our worship space, but to stand as a reminder that all who have been baptized into Christ Jesus are bearers of the light of Christ, and that each of us is called to *"let it shine for everyone"* so that all may see the light of Christ and know that the light and life of our Lord and Saviour abide with us always.

"Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!"

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jeff Laustsen



VICAR'S DEVOTIONAL

Greetings - Zion Lutheran Church!
As you might already be aware, I am the new Vicar at Zion. I count it a

tremendous pleasure to have been afforded the opportunity to learn and worship alongside of each and every one of you. I look forward to the coming year and getting to know Zion and the larger Stratford community. Please bear with me as I strive to learn so many new names and faces!

I come from an extremely rural area of New Brunswick that some might suggest has less people than the entire congregation of Zion! I know that Stratford is small in comparison to Toronto, but in comparison with my New Brunswick roots, it is a huge city. I have been somewhat of a professional student for the duration of my 26 years of life. Following high school, I began my university career at a Baptist seminary. This eventually led me to St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick, where I completed a Bachelor’s degree in Religious Studies and Philosophy. Since then, I have obtained a Master’s degree in Religious Studies from Memorial University in Newfoundland and my current internship placement as Vicar is the final phase of my MA in Theology/MDiv program at Martin Lutheran University College.

I have begun to realize that the more I learn, the less I know!

In addition to studying, I have spent the last decade working as a handyman and landscaper. Working these types of jobs grew out of my Christian desire to help people. I quickly realized that rural New Brunswick was filled with people who needed help with the little things that large contracting companies were not willing to do. Long story short, these realizations led to a journey of learning, visiting, and serving the needs of the community. Likewise, it has shaped my approach to ministry. I believe that God calls us to love and take care of one another. As Galatians 5 suggests, we are called to serve one another in love.

I understand my role, as your new Vicar, to be an adventure of learning and servanthood. I am excited to serve and to share the gospel message of love alongside of you. I pray that the grace of God and the love of Jesus Christ will direct our steps as we seek to serve and love all who cross our path.

I look forward to learning more about each of you as we serve the Lord together.

Many Blessings,
Vicar - Jonah Bruce



THANKSGIVING AT ZION

Thanksgiving Sunday is October 7 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. Decorating will take place Friday, October 5 at 10 AM. Please leave your contributions at Zion on Thursday or before 10 AM on Friday. Thank you for your generosity.



CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Change in Council Member – The Council at their June Meeting accepted the resignation of Ron Deichert. Tim Gropp agreed to fill his outstanding term.

Bridgebuilder Program Up-Date - The 8:30 a.m. Chapel Service commenced the first Sunday in September and is being held on a trial basis. Mr. Paul, the Minister of Music, has re-introduced the Sunday School music program along with changes in the worship style. Congregational Council Meeting Minutes are now being made available on three Bulletin Boards throughout the church building. In addition, the list of the Council Members and the Committees they are responsible for are now posted on these same three Bulletin Boards. It was suggested that the policy on conduct by members at church meetings be included as a reminder, in future Newsletters. Sunday School reporting and young families are two important outstanding items that still need to be addressed at future meetings.

Congregational Life Committee – The bus trip to the theatre in Grand Bend was enjoyed by all in attendance. The Committee members hosted the Rally Sunday lunch which was well attended. The expenses were covered by the freewill donations.....thank you. A potluck lunch and games afternoon in January, 2019 is being planned.

Property Committee – A return visit by the Company that installed the Fire Suppression System has been scheduled to address the noise within the hood area. The roof replacement is a work

in progress. Quotes are still being obtained. The tentative plan is that the work will be scheduled for next spring/summer. Minor repairs will be made to the roof on the south side of the building this fall, where the wind damage occurred, to ensure no leakage over the winter months.

Worship & Music Committee – Mr. Paul shared his vision at a recent meeting of the Committee which is invite/involve/engage. A change is being made to the communion services. The 1st Sunday of the month will be communion at the rail. An usher will now be assigned the responsibility of assisting members at the steps leading to the communion rail. The second communion service of the month will be conducted as continuous communion.

Accessibility Advisory Committee – Meetings with architects are still taking place. It was suggested that a member of the Congregational Council should be a member of this Committee. Tom Cosstick volunteered to fill this important role.

Parking Lot Rental – It was confirmed that Zion Church signed an Agreement with the City of Stratford to rent our parking lot, across from the church, between Monday and Friday from May 15th to October 31st, 2018. If a funeral service is held at the church midweek, we are able to give the City 24 hour notice to vacate the parking lot for the day in question. Also, the City of Stratford has requested a new contract to rent our parking lot from June 1st to October 31st, 2019.

+ IN MEMORIAM +

Susanna Robinson on August 24.

+ WEDDING +

Ryan Berry & Sara Fink, September 22

+ BAPTISMS +

Hayden Ronald William Cade, son of Samuel & Jessica on September 9.
Brody Russell Collins, son Richard & Jennifer on September 23.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT



“They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they can take hold of the life that really is life.” 1 Timothy 6: 18-19

From the church’s beginning, the concept of living simply, generosity, and stewardship were present and intertwined. When the Spirit fell on Pentecost, the Christians immediately started sharing what they had with each other and with others in need. Like those first Christians, generosity naturally happens in our lives when we realize that we are to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

Generosity and love are complementary gifts from God. Love cannot be forced or legislated, but must be provoked by a love of our neighbour. We need to remember that Jesus was not afraid to reach out and touch the poor and marginalized. Likewise, he invites us to tear down the walls that separate us from the suffering in the world today. However, living simply and living in community have become increasing countercultural in our society today. We receive constant messages to be financially and socially independent. If as Christians we want to live simply, we need to surround ourselves with a community of good mentors, teachers and examples. Like a living fire, we can benefit from the stirring of coals in community to keep our generosity alive and strong against the cultural messages we receive.

As you worship today and throughout this week, think about how you and our congregation can live more simply, and more generously. How is God calling you to reach out to your community with loving generosity?

ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS



Zion Table For Seniors will be held on Tuesday, October 24, at 12 noon. Our speaker will be Vicar Jonah Bruce. Please let Doris Bartlett (519-271-9622) or Rita Mueller (519-271-6539) know by 10 AM, Tuesday, October 17, if you can attend. Cost is \$12.



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

The children have been busy learning songs under the direction of Mr. Paul. There will be no Sunday School on October 7, which is Thanksgiving Sunday. We will once again be having a Craft Sunday with Susan Laustsen guiding us on Sunday, October 28. Questions? Contact Paula McNaughton , superintendent, at 519-273-2174.

WOF CELEBRATING 120 YEARS

WOF Executive Meeting; Thursday, October 11 at 10 AM
WOF Meeting; Wednesday, October 24 at 7:30 PM; All are welcome.

October 14th - a dedication service to bless CLWR Collection before sending off to Winnipeg for distribution. So far we have 125 quilts and blankets; 122 girls dresses; 70 pairs of shorts; 53 hats and 20 hygiene kits.



Reformation Sunday, October 28 at 11:30 AM lunch will be served by WOF. Sausage on bun, sauerkraut, salad, pie. Tickets will be available from Ellen Wolfe 519-749-5341, Joanne Young 519-271-3225, Darlene Illman 519-271-0996 or the church office. Cost Adults, \$10; children 6-12, \$5 and under 5, free.

85 and over Birthday Party - Thanks to Judith Hammond for organizing this special event. 20 seniors enjoyed cake and ice cream and entertainment by Tom Melady. Also, thanks to her helpers, Mary Ann Hamacher, Ardath Michaeli and Irene Ehgoetz.

Please note: Shut in baskets will be packed on Saturday, December 8th and the Annual Christmas dinner will be Sunday, December 9th.



Community Meal

ZION'S FRIENDSHIP MEAL

The Friendship Meals for residents of our community has begun a new season. We believe Jesus' word that preparing and serving food for our guests is like preparing and serving a meal for Jesus Himself. We have opportunities for the people of Zion to serve our Lord and the people of Stratford in this ministry. All are welcome to come and help as your time schedule and stamina dictate. The Friendship Meal can accommodate your needs. Volunteers are needed to peel potatoes and vegetables, set tables, serve food, do dishes, and clean up the hall after the event. Our work begins around 1 PM on the day of the Friendship Meal and concludes around 7 PM. You can participate in part of the event or the whole event, as you are able. Zion thanks you for your participation in the this important parish ministry.

If you would like to participate in this exciting ministry or have any questions, please contact Sister Jean Widmeyer at 519-273-6810.

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. 7	Linda Springer & Fritz Steigmeier	Mervyn & Joyce Dietz	Linda Springer	Fritz Steigmeier	N/A
Oct. 14	N/A	Robert & Beverley Keutsch	Stephen Fischer	Fritz Steigmeier	Liz Bomasuit
Oct. 21	N/A	Steve & Marg Lamont	Susan Iredale	Steve Lamont	Alison Johnston
Oct. 28	Linda Springer & Linda Weitzel	WOF Ladies	Mary-Lou Drown	Steve Lamont	Alison Johnston