

PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL

"In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread ..." – Words of Institution, Holy Communion.

Over the years that I have served as a pastor, I have presided at the Lord's Supper on thousands of occasions. The settings have been very diverse: at the altars of the congregations I have served; at hospital bedsides; in the living rooms and kitchens of homebound members; in retirement home chapels and common rooms; and even on an improvised altar in the woods of our church camps. But no matter the setting, the supper remains the same: the gathering of God's people around the bread and wine which we believe is *"the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and to drink."* (Martin Luther, *Small Catechism*). Whenever and wherever we gather at the Lord's Table, we believe that Christ is truly present with us, blessing us in this present meal even as we are given a *"foretaste of the feast to come"* when our Lord gathers us at the feast table in the heavenly home to which God will gather all God's people, where *"the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken."* (Isaiah 25:8).

On every occasion when we come to the Lord's Table, we are reminded of the day in which Christ gathered for his Last Supper with his disciples, our Saviour took the bread and wine from the Passover Seder table and proclaimed that this was now a new meal, a holy sacrament in which Christ blesses his people with the very body and blood that within hours he would sacrifice on the Cross for sake of all humanity:

- "... the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup

is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." – 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

On Thursday, April 18, we will gather at the Lord's Table *"on the night when he was betrayed,"* a day that is identified on the church calendar as Maundy Thursday, taking its name from the Latin word *mandatum*, from which we get the words "mandate" and "command." It reminds us that a sacrament for Lutherans involves three requirements: the command of Christ (*"do this"*); the earthly elements (bread and wine); and the word of promise (*"this is my body that is for you ... this cup is the new covenant in my blood"*). We gather together on Maundy Thursday in response to our Lord's command for us to *"do this in remembrance of me,"* so that we might remember our Lord's suffering and death for us and for all people and might partake of the meal through which we are given *"strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow."* We come to the Holy Supper in obedience to Christ's command, believing that our Lord knows that we need this holy food to strengthen and nourish our faith as loving parents know what food will provide good nourishment for their children.

- "First, the sacrament is Christ's body and blood in bread and wine, comprehended in the Word. Secondly, the benefit is forgiveness of sins. This includes the need and the benefit. Thirdly, those who believe should come." – Luther, *Sermons on the Catechism*.

While our Lord Jesus Christ invites all people to come and share "the gifts of God for the people of God," we should not look upon Holy Communion as something that is optional for Christians. It is a mandate, a requirement for anyone who seeks to have their faith nurtured and strengthened for the challenges and obstacles that we face in daily life. As he faces his death within hours of instituting this supper, our Lord gives us what we need so that we might believe in him, trust in his gracious love, and go forth strengthened to serve in his name. It was "in the night when he was betrayed" that our Lord Jesus Christ gave us this holy gift; may we be faithful in obediently coming to the Lord's Supper regularly, trusting that the blessings of "forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation" are ours as we partake of the body and blood of Christ, *"given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."*

"Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread."

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jeff Laustsen

VICAR’S DEVOTIONAL

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” – Matthew 11:28-30

I spent a summer visiting small villages in the Andes Mountains. The trip was somewhat relaxing as we drove the winding roads within the comfort of a jeep, but from time to time, we would need to hike the remainder of the journey. Many of the villages were off of the beaten path since the Quechua people mostly commuted via foot trails. At such a high altitude, even the shortest of up-hill journeys felt like a tremendous task.



I remember one journey in particular, when with heavy backpacks, tired bodies, and complaining minds, we were less than half way to our intended destination. None of us knew if we could make it any further down the hill – let alone climb back up the hill to the jeep. We were exhausted, our burdens felt so heavy and the heat of the sun had drained all of our energy. As we sat, not knowing if we could continue on, a group of Quechua people appeared seemingly out of no-where. They quickly recognized our distress, provided us with clean drinking water and began taking our burdening backpacks and boxes upon themselves. With their guidance and assistance, the journey to the village seemed so much easier – and for them, our burdens seemed light.

Those Quechua men and women were able to take our heavy burdens and give us rest. God offers to do the same for us. When the journey of life feels long and when burdens of worry and fear weigh us down, God is there, with open arms, waiting and wanting to give us rest and renewal to continue onward. The trouble is that it can sometimes be difficult to let these burdens go – how often do we cling onto worry and fear that we need not carry alone?

As we enter into a new month and into the season of spring, it is my hope that we will allow ourselves to cast our burdens onto the one who cares for us, onto the omnipotently strong and powerful arms of the one who walks with us – along every step of the journey. May we find rest in the gentle and humble love of Christ and may our journey be filled with that same love and compassion toward one another.

Have a blessed April,
Vicar Jonah

MAUNDY THURSDAY POTLUCK SUPPER

On the night before he was crucified Jesus ate a Passover meal with his disciples. During the meal Jesus told his disciples, “A new commandment I give you: Love one another as I have loved you.”

On Thursday, April 18, at 5:30 pm, members of Zion will gather in the social hall to eat a meal together. All are invited. Following the meal we will gather in the sanctuary for a service of Holy Communion and the stripping of the altar in preparation for Good Friday.

- Please keep these things in mind.
- 1. Please bring a casserole, salad or dessert to share.
 - 2. Please bring your own dishes and cutlery.
 - 3. Worship will follow at 7:30 pm.

Sponsored by the Worship and Music Committee



“More Than A Roof” Fundraising Campaign

At the Congregational Information Meeting on Sunday, March 31, 2019, following the morning worship service, the following information was shared with the members in attendance.

As most of us already know, the wind damage this past May precipitated the roof replacement, due to the damage sustained from the wind storm on the south side of the main church roof.

The Property Committee advised that three quotes were obtained to replace the roof on the main church building with a steel roof. A steel roof was selected for its longevity. The quote chosen by the Property Committee is Superior Steel Roofing Systems of Guelph in the amount of \$67,000.00 including H.S.T.

The Finance Committee received this quote from the Property Committee and after discussion, recommended that the funding for the cost of the steel roof be as follows:

H.S.T. Reimbursement	\$ 5,400.00
Internal Ministry	\$10,000.00
Donation To-Date	\$ 3,500.00
Estimate Insurance Claim	\$10,330.00*
Memorial Fund	\$19,770.00

Fundraising	<u>\$18,000.00</u>
Total	\$67,000.00

*If the insurance claim final amount is different, the difference will be adjusted via the Memorial Fund.

The Property Committee and Finance Committee recommendations were presented at the Congregational Council Meeting on February 20, 2019 for final approval. Both recommendations were formally approved.

The title “More Than A Roof” Fundraising Campaign clearly states our goals for this campaign. Yes, we do need to raise \$18,000.00 from our members which is approximately 25% of the overall cost of the steel roof, but it is more. Yes, we do need your donations for this worthy cause, however, we also want to involve as many persons as possible through our various fundraising events, as another method in raising these much needed funds. Specific details of these fundraising events will be unveiled over the coming weeks.

The tentative date for commencing the installation of the new steel roof is during the month of June 2019.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



On Easter Sunday April 21st we will not be having Sunday School so our teachers and helpers can celebrate Easter as a family. We will have a craft Sunday on April 28th for our 3, 4, 5-year old’s and Grade 1 & 2. On Sunday May 5th our grades 3, 4, 5, & 6 will have their craft Sunday. Susan Laustsen has been busy working on a craft for all our grades.

Sunday School Coordinator
Paula McNaughton

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 14. Thank you kindly!

ZION WOMEN OF FAITH



We have been busy planning and organizing the Zion Easter Breakfast again this year. By the end of March you will see posters with details. We ask that you sign up for this in order to give us an idea of numbers. There will be a sign up sheet at the back of the church. This event was very successful last year and we look forward to much the same response this year.

Along with our Easter Planning, we are asking for donations for the Flower Committee.

Our next Women of Faith General Meeting is Wednesday, April 24th at 7:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Our planners for this meeting decided it is time we have some light hearted fun! They have arranged for Cathy Vollet to show us some Line Dancing Steps. Come out and join the fun even if you have two left feet like me! All are welcome...men and women!

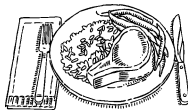
Submitted by Ellen Wolfe, WOF Chairperson

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. The Friendship Meal will be Friday, April 26 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 Sister Jean Widmeyer (519-273-6810).

ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS



Zion Table For Seniors and program will be on Tuesday, April 23 at 12 noon. We are privileged to have Rick Orr with us, who co-owns Orr Insurance along with his brother Jeff. Rick is chair of the Stratford Parks Board and a great grandson of R. Thomas Orr, the man responsible for developing the Park system, that the citizens of Stratford are able to enjoy today. Please let Doris Bartlett (519-271-9622) or Rita Mueller (519-271-6539) know by noon, Tuesday, April 16 if you will be attending. Lunch cost is only \$12.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHTS TO PONDER ON THIS WEEK

Stewardship is not a destination, it is a process.



Stewardship is the Christian’s management of lifestyle which results in generous giving of time, talent and treasure.

Time is a precious commodity and we have a limited number of days, hours and minutes. Ephesians 5: 15-16 advises “Be careful how you live and not as unwise but as wise.” In other words, live every day and use every opportunity expressly for His glory and purpose.

The value of a gift is not determined by its amount but by the spirit in which it is given.

To be grateful is to recognize the love of God in everything He has given us – and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His Love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from Him.

and lastly.....

God’s work done in God’s way will never lack for funds. Generosity is contagious. God never promised to meet our budget, only our needs.

SAVE THE DATE



Please join us June 9 at 10:00 AM for our outdoor Sunday Service at Upper Queens Park Bandshell. Pastor Jeff will lead our Service.

There is some seating in front of the Bandshell but please bring your lawn chairs. Lunch of hamburgers and hotdogs will be served afterwards. Drinks will be provided with a potluck dessert table. Please sign up at the back of the Church if you will be able to attend and if you can bring a dessert.

Please contact your Congregational Life committee members if you have any questions.

APRIL 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
Apr 7	Barb Higgins & Stephen Fischer	Wayne & Barb Higgins	Lynnette McLeod	Darrell Renecker	Liz Bomasuit
Apr 14	N/A	Ed & Darlene Illman	Nancy Schaff	Brian Wilker	Liz Bomasuit
Apr 18	Liz Bomasuit & Darlene Illman	Tim & Susan Iredale	Mary-Lou Drown	Darrell Renecker	N/A
Apr 19	N/A	Paul & Janet Jeffery	Dr. Jo Knackstedt	Brian Wilker	N/A
Apr 21	Fritz Steigmeier & Linda Springer	Mervyn & Joyce Dietz	Marilyn Wells	Fritz Steigmeier	N/A
Apr 28	N/A	Robert & Beverley Keutsch	Liz Bomasuit	Fritz Steigmeier	Alison Johnston

“MORE THAN A ROOF”

Campaign

Fundraising Events For April **All Proceeds for “More Than A Roof”**

Sunday, April 7 - “Soupfer Sunday” - We invite you to enjoy a “take-home container” of homemade soup, which has been generously prepared by the Congregational Life Committee. There will be a basket with a suggested donation of \$3.00 per container.

Also, starting April 7: “Snack Corner Begins” – Every Sunday, various pastries and sweets will be available during Coffee Hour. There will be a free-will donation jar available.

Sunday, April 28: “Mother’s Day Candy Gram” – Starting on Sunday, April 28, you will have the opportunity to purchase a “Candy Gram” to send to a special mother or lady in our congregation. With each Candy Gram, the recipient will receive a Mother’s Day chocolate in addition to a personalized note. Candy Grams can be delivered anonymously or as a signed Mother’s Day Gift.

Sunday, April 14 & 28 – These Sunday’s are designated for our Sunday School children to collect your campaign envelopes. Look for the children before the service, they will be standing with our greeters.

Every 4th Sunday – Will be “Spare Change Sunday”

We thank you for helping out with our “More Than A Roof” Campaign

Watch for more Fundraising Events to come in May.