

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

Website: www.zionstratford.com

Email: zionlc@golden.net

PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL

"O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever." – Psalm 136:1.



Since the beginning of the Covid pandemic, Bishop Michael Pryse has regularly hosted Zoom gatherings for rostered leaders of the Eastern Synod. At first, these sessions gave our bishop an opportunity to connect with and support pastors, deacons, and other synodical and congregational leaders as we navigated through all the uncertainties and challenges that the pandemic presented. As the restrictions eased and we were able to return to in-person gatherings and resume other ministries that had been placed on hold, Bishop Pryse continued to offer these gatherings on Zoom as a way to stay connected with leaders across our far-flung synod territory. I have attended all these gatherings and have found them a tremendous source of strength and support, and I am thankful to Bishop Pryse and the synod staff for taking the time to make these events possible.

In the last few sessions, Bishop Pryse has sent out a discussion topic in advance that governs our conversations. As we approach our annual celebration of Thanksgiving Sunday this month, the bishop's topic was most appropriate: *"Are you practicing gratitude and appreciation and how do you do it?"* When I first read this question, I must admit that I was somewhat confused; I try to be conscious of the many reasons for which I should be grateful and appreciative of the many blessings I have received over the years. I try to be generous in giving thanks to others for their kindness and assistance; I seek to offer appreciation for the contributions of others to my life, the life of our congregation, and the life of our community; and I regularly include petitions of thanksgiving in the prayers I offer in a variety of contexts. But the question of whether I am *practicing* gratitude is one that stumped me; how do I practice being grateful for the blessings I have received, and how do I practice appreciation for the gifts that God continues to bestow on me and all of God's people?

Thanksgiving is a season when we are called to give thanks to God for the many blessings we have received out of God's gracious, steadfast love. It is a thanksgiving for the abundant harvest, reminding us that *"all good gifts around us are sent from heaven above; so thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all his love."* It is a time when we gather with family, friends, and loved ones for Thanksgiving dinner, a feast in which we give thanks for the gift of family and the love that binds us together. It is a time when we gather as God's people in worship to continue the giving of thanks that are central to our worship in all seasons, knowing that *"it is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that at all times and in all seasons we offer thanks and praise to you, O God our Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (ELW Holy Communion). We give thanks in all seasons because *"the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."* (Lamentations 3:22-23).

We have been taught by God's Holy Word how to offer our thanksgivings in prayer; but to *practice* thanksgiving seems to imply that gratitude and appreciation involve more than our words, but also the way in which we live in gratitude to God and to other people. It means living each day so that our deeds are a reflection of the gratitude we have for all that God has given us; we love because God first loved us, we give to others as God has given to us, and we serve God's people as our Lord Jesus Christ came *"not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45). It means that we respond to all the gifts that God continues to shower upon us' *"out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all"* by committing ourselves each day to *"thank and praise, serve and obey him."* (Small Catechism). It means that as the Church of Jesus Christ that has been entrusted with the precious gift of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we strive each day, in all that we say and all that we do, to be *"the servant church ... a caring church that longs to be a partner in Christ's sacrifice, and clothed in Christ's humanity."* (ELW Hymn 729). It means that our thanksgiving will also be manifested as *thanksgiving*, endeavoring to practice gratitude and appreciation for all God has given to us by being a vessel through which these blessings may be shared with others.

- "Gratitude is complicated. Feelings of dependence – and interdependence – can be both elusive and resisted, mostly because they are caught up with soul-crushing ideas of obligation and debt. But if gratitude is mutual reliance upon (instead of payback for) shared gifts, we awaken to a profound awareness of our interdependence. Dependence may enslave the soul, but interdependence frees us." – Diana Butler Bass.

As we prepare for our celebrations of Thanksgiving this month – in our homes, our congregation, and our community – may we strive to be a people who both offer thanks and embody that thanks in all our words and deeds. May our thanksgiving become *thanksgiving*,

practicing our gratitude and appreciation to God and to those who bear God's gifts to us by being living witnesses to the transformation power of the God to whom we give thanks each day, our Lord *"whose steadfast love endures forever."*

Yours in thanksgiving,
Pastor Jeff Laustsen

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

**THERE WILL BE NO SUNDAY SCHOOL ON THANKSGIVING SUNDAY,
OCTOBER 8, 2023.**



The Sunday School children will be singing some Thanksgiving songs in church on Sunday, October 15, 2023.

Please remember that Sunday School ends at 11:15 A.M. We ask that parents/guardians wait until that time before coming for your children.

Paula McNaughton
Sunday School Coordinator

PHOTO DIRECTORY REMINDER



As you may have heard, a new Photo Directory is being completed this year!

Pictures will be taken between November 14th and November 18th.

If you have not yet called to book your appointment, please call the office 519-271-8527 and Jane will be happy to book you in.

There is no cost to have your picture taken for the Photo Directory and all members who have their picture taken will receive a free pictorial directory. Members do have the opportunity to purchase pictures, if they so desire, but it is not a requirement.

If anyone is unable to have their picture taken for the directory, a picture can be submitted to be inserted in the directory at a cost of \$15.00 plus applicable taxes. However, there are restrictions on the size and type of picture you may submit so it is important to contact Jane to receive specific details in this regard.

It is our hope that our members will participate in building our community and that you **respond prior to October 16th with your preferred appointment time.**



DANA ADELLE ROBERTS

Daughter of

William Scott Robinson

&

Deborah Lynn nee Roberts

Was Baptized on Saturday, September 30, 2023



In memory of ...

LOIS SELTZER

+August 30, 2023

WAYNE LEMON

+September 12, 2023

FUTURE NEWSLETTERS



In order to assist with our postage expenses, we are asking that if you are able to receive the Newsletter via email instead of via mail, could you please provide us with an up-to-date email address. Thank you!

MUSIC NOTES



In addition to the choir returning to our services, October will offer some highlights. On Thanksgiving Sunday (October 8th) the anthem will be a duet sung by Susan Laustsen and Barbara Fulton. We will also have all of our musicians there that day.

The next Sunday (October 15th) the anthem will be another original piece composed by our Minister of Music, Paul. The text Paul has set to music is a Thanksgiving poem by 19th century American poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**'SINGING IN A CHOIR IS AN
ABSOLUTELY UNIQUE EXPERIENCE. IT IS
ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS
IN THE WORLD. WHERE ELSE DO YOU
HAVE EVERYONE DOING THE SAME
THING AT THE SAME TIME WITHOUT
THE USE OF SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND
FOR A GREATER PURPOSE, AND NO ONE
IS SITTING ON THE BENCH?'**

IAN LOEPPKY



October Volunteers

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

Date	Greeters	Readers	Usher Captains	Altar Guild	Counting Captains
Oct. 1	Jim & Judy Stanley	Aline Kouhi- Klemencic	Jerry Terhaerd	Shirley Whittaker	Dianne Yundt
Oct. 8 Thanksgiving	Gerry & Janet Ahrens	Isabel Cook	Brian Coe	Irene Ehgoetz	NO COUNTERS
Oct. 15	Robert & Beverley Keutsch	Murray Scholl	Darrell Renecker	Sister Jean	Bill Hoffard
Oct. 22	Mervyn Dietz	Aline Kouhi- Klemencic	Tom Cosstick	Ellen Wolfe	Bill Hoffard
Oct. 29	Tom & Joanne Cosstick	Stephen Fischer	Jerry Terhaerd	Carmen Beck	Jan Bennewitz

**We're
thankful
for you!**



“THANK YOU” to our Volunteers for giving of
your time!

Worship would not be the same without you!!