

The Messenger

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

December 2014



Christmas strikes a chord in many people as either being the best or worst time of the year. Not many stay in the middle for either it is a beautiful holiday or it is too stressful and costly with bad weather dumped in for bad icing on a very cold cake. Part of the challenge of the season besides the costs and the competing faith issues revolves around what people dream up as the perfect Christmas. One of my favorite Christmas movies, "Christmas Vacation", focuses on that theme. No matter what they try something goes wrong, and everyone gets upset. In our own lives, reality often intrudes on our Christmas dreams, and then we are left feeling shortchanged or even angry.

Yet Christ's birth gives us an answer to those feelings. Much like Christmas vacation and life in general, everything seems to go wrong from an unexpected pregnancy to a forced trip in the latter stages of pregnancy to not having a decent place to stay. We can only imagine what an exhausted Mary and Joseph thought about God and people in general when they trudged off to give birth in a barn after an arduous journey. The promise certainly did not seem to match the situation on the ground.

Soon however a cry broke through the animal noises, and angels appeared to terrify some shepherds. The situation that appeared at best difficult and at worst hopeless got a shot of hope and joy. Mary safely delivered Jesus, and the shepherds praised their Lord and told everyone about this new shining light of hope and joy. In true fashion, life and the world in general intervened a couple years later when the wise men talked to Herod and Herod responded by killing all the boys under the age of 3 in Bethlehem. Once again the promise seemed to be in danger of being erased before Jesus could even say one sermon.

That danger is one that we are familiar with in our individual lives and our life as the family at Zion Lutheran Church. We struggle to have faith, but curveballs are thrown at us all too frequently.

Many times we can identify more with the exhausted Mary and Joseph struggling to find a place to stay than we can with angels singing and wise man bringing gifts. The reality is though we dream of a stress free life and argument free family gatherings not even baby Jesus had a perfect Christmas or an easy life. The promise is that we will and have received courage, faith, perseverance and hope to stand fast even in the face of Herod. Families, even church families, disagree but one thing is greater than everything else and that is God's promise continually being fulfilled in a baby's birth, a man's death, baptism, communion and Christian fellowship. When the waves get higher, we cling to the promise ever more tightly, and we cling together. The opportunity to encourage each other is ever present, and is an act of God's grace that we have each other to walk with in times like these.

Go forth into Advent and Christmas knowing that the saints before us and with us currently continue to be with us! Life may not always meet our dreams, but God's grace exceeds not only are dreams but what we deserve. The baby does not die until the appointed time, and then he comes back for us! Live like Jesus is alive, and that it is a blessing to be in fellowship with other Christians, both at Zion and in other churches! Amen.

Pastor Joe





Women of Zion, as disciples of Christ, are called to grow in faith, discover and use our gifts, and serve in our communities at home and throughout the world.

Women in the Bible

The Young Girl Who Answered, "Let it be."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord: let it be with me according to your word."

When Mary was a teenager betrothed to a man named Joseph, the angel Gabriel announced to her that she had been chosen by God to give birth to the promised Messiah. Mary responded with simple faith, "Let it be." With those words, she accepted this privileged role, knowing that doing so could bring her unmerited shame. In a day when a charge of promiscuity could get a young woman stoned, Mary responded with faith and obedience to the news that God had selected her to bear a child who would be the Son of God.

Mary valued her commitment to God far above others' opinions. Rather than hesitate to accept the angel's commission because of what others might think or do, with no hesitation she chose God's will. "Let it be with me according to your word."

Despite her youth, Mary willingly surrendered her life, her future, and her own dreams to God when she said "I am the Lord's servant," and "May it be as you have said." Mary shows great courage and faith in her willingness to follow God- whatever he would ask of her.

From Mary we learn that no matter who you are, the Lord can use you. No matter what problems you face, the Lord is with you. No matter what He has promised, the Lord can and will do it. All we need to do is to answer God as Mary did, "Here I am....let it be.

Time is Running Out!!

Purchase some Famous Shaker Weekend Soup

The Women of Zion are once again selling jars of their Shaker Weekend Soup Mix. Orders are being taken now! Look for a sign-up sheet in the Great Hall or contact Thelma Martin if you would like to purchase a few jars. The jars sell for \$10.00 each and make wonderful Christmas gifts. Orders will be taken until the end of January.

Women of Zion Executive Board Meeting November 10, 2014

- *The following is a brief summary of the November Women of Zion Executive Board Meeting.*
- Treasurer's Report: Lori Rehm reported balance on hand is \$4,037.72. At the Fall Fellowship Dinner, \$319.00 was received for the dinner and \$256.50 from baked goods sale. Expenses for the month included \$116.53 for soup ingredients and \$185.42 for supplies for Fellowship Dinner.
- Thelma Martin reported that 60 meals + 10 carryout meals were served at the Fellowship Dinner. 32 jars of soup have been sold and her committee will meet to make more jars.
- During the month of November, the Women of Zion have also served the confirmation reception, helped serve cake on Reformation Sunday, and helped with Veteran's Day Potluck.
- Board discussed Thanksgiving gifts for shut-ins. Various concerns were discussed, and it was decided that this year, Thanksgiving cards would be sent.
- Joan Boling provided an up-date on pill bottle collection. Gail Heitz volunteered to take the bottles directly to Matthew 25.
- Board voted to donate \$1000.00 towards the purchase of the outdoor sign at Zion.
- It was decided to move the scheduled December General Women's meeting from Sunday, December 14th to Monday, December 1st. It I hoped that this will increase attendance and avoid conflicts with Sunday evening church and Bible study. Gayle Ford, Robin Kaelin, and Helen Timmer are the hostesses for this meeting and will do all the planning. Pizza, salad, and drinks will be supplied.

Thankoffering

The Women of Zion conducted the Thankoffering Service on Sunday, November 16th. Thank you to Anita Snyder for organizing this service and also thank you to all the women of Zion who helped with the ushering and readings at those services.

The service included the ingathering of the donations in the Thankoffering boxes. This year one-half of the donations will be sent to the national organization of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the other half will stay at Zion. A total of \$916.28 has been collected at this time.





Pill Bottle Update

The Women of Zion has a committee that is responsible for the collection and delivery of pill bottles. Anita Snyder, with the help of Joan Boling, is the chairperson of this committee. Joan recently contacted Matthew 25 Ministries and provided this update at our November Board Meeting.

Where do the pill bottles go? The pill bottles that we collect are taken to Trinity Episcopal Church who then deliver them to Matthew 25 Ministries. The bottles are then shipped to countries that do not speak English.

What bottles will they accept? All plastic bottles are accepted, both prescription and over the counter bottles. No glass or metal containers are accepted.

Do I need to remove labels? Remove labels is possible for security purposes. If label cannot be removed – use a black permanent marker to cross out your name and any pertinent information. When put to use a new label is placed on top of your old label.

How many do they need? They are regulated as to how many bottles can be shipped at a time. The rest of the bottles are ground up and the plastic is recycled. They do receive some money from the recycling.

Should I include a coin in each bottle? When this project originally started, they had asked for coins to help with shipment costs. They have now partnered with other organizations to help offset shipment costs. But of course, if you want to continue including coins they will be accepted.

A Call for Help!

The executive board needs to fill two positions for the coming year: Mission-Community and Vice-President. Ideally, we would like to have two people share Mission-Community, and would also like to add another member to both Mission-Growth and Mission-Action.

The Women of Zion Executive Board works as a team, sharing the workload of each office. Board meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of each month as needed. (This past year, the board met only 9 of the 12 months.) Meetings rarely last longer than one hour.

If you are interested in becoming part of Zion's Women Executive board and would like to know more, please contact a board member: Gail Heitz, Joan Cunningham, Joan Boling, Lori Rehm, Anita Snyder, or Thelma Martin. We would be happy to tell you more about the various work that we do for the church and the community.

BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB

The Book of the Month Club will meet on Tuesday, December 2 to discuss *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* by Nadia Hashimi.

In Kabul, 2007, with a drug-addicted father and no brothers, Rahima and her sisters can only sporadically attend school, and can rarely leave the house. Their only hope lies in the ancient custom of bacha posh, which allows young Rahime to dress and be treated as a boy until she is of marriageable age. As a son, she can attend school, go to the market, and chaperone her older sisters.

Then on January 6 we come together and have dinner and a movie at Zion. I'll make barbecue and everyone can bring sides. We'll watch *Marjorie Morningstar*, which is a book we read earlier this year.

Everyone is invited to join us for either of these events at 6:30 in Zion's lounge. We love having new people.



TAILS FROM GOD

As part of the Tails From God ministry, Zion has a recycling program to benefit the Animal Friends Humane Society. Simply bring in your used printer cartridges, cell phones, toner cartridges, PDAs and MP3 players and put them in the recycling box in the great hall. They will be packaged and shipped to eCycle Group (www.ecyclegroup.com) and the money given to the Animal Friends Humane Society. This is a wonderful opportunity to be good stewards of God's creation by protecting the environment and the abused and neglected animals in Butler County. If you have questions, please contact Karen Conklin at 513-889-7770.

There is also a box in the great hall for donations to Animal Friends Humane Society. Clorox bleach, powdered laundry soap, all sizes heavy garbage bags, AAA Duracell or Energizer batteries, and first class postage stamps are always on the "wish list." Any questions, call Karen Conklin at 513-889-7770.





Zion Adult Fellowship December 2014



The winter chill has come in with a fury and truly
"It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas"

Plans for the holidays are in motion and our busy schedules are starting to consume our every thought. So, let's take an evening to enjoy the company of our church family and friends.

October 11th: Euchre and Appetizer night was a great success! WE hope to see the return of the 5th Saturday of the month Euchre starting in the new year.

THANK YOU Thelma and Ann!



November 8th: Valley Vineyards was a great fun night of Zion members and their friends joining together for good food and wine. Sandy and Ingrid are such wonderful hosts.

THANK YOU Ingrid and Sandy for a GREAT night.

December 13th We will be at the Neiderman Christmas Walk .

This will be an ALL CHURCH event.

Hosts: Helen and John Timmer



Considering how busy everyone is at this time of year let's take one night to be with family and friends at a church activity. Niederman Christmas Farm is a free walk-through Christmas Display. Visitors can enjoy tens of thousands of lights that illuminate the path, set your mood listening to Christmas music as you view life-size nativity and several Biblical scenes telling the real story of Christmas and finish the night with Hot Cocoa.

For more details check your weekly bulletin, the website, Facebook, The Messenger or call Julia in the office. Sign-up in the Great Hall.

January The 2015 ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF
and Adult Fellowship sign-up.

Hosts: Julia and Joe Sears



So, start thinking of some ideas for events you'd like to host in 2015!!

For more details check your weekly bulletin, the website, Facebook, The Messenger or call Julia in the office. Sign-up in the Great Hall.

If you haven't joined us for an activity, PLEASE COME AND JOIN US we'd love to have you!

If you have questions feel free to contact us:

Kathy Frye PH: 868-7179 email: pilgrimspride1@live.com

Or contact Julia in the office for information.



MISSIONARY CORNER

“What if my parents won’t give me their blessing on my relationship with my boyfriend because he’s a Christian?” “Would you pray for healing for those of us who have had bad relationships in the past?” These are just a couple of the things mentioned during a young women’s Bible study that has been happening on Wednesday afternoons at the BUAP University.

At the beginning of the semester I met with students Jessica and Anita to share about a desire I had for a women’s study to start. I was praying that they’d share my burden because I had no idea how I would have the time now with Dari to prepare to lead the study every week on my own....not to mention I still had a few weeks left of maternity leave. They liked the idea and we all agreed to think and pray about it before we got back together again. The next time we met Anita shared what could only be a move of God amongst the girls she hangs out with. They were all talking one day that they wanted to have a girls’ Bible study. That same day they came up with the topics they’d cover the rest of the semester and divided up the weeks between them all to lead! They asked if I could come as an older woman to give input. I couldn’t have planned this out better myself! God knew how busy I’d be as a new mom and being able to get to know and minister to these young women without much preparation from home was a blessing for me, Dari and them! **Please pray for these young women, that they would continue to choose the things of God over the things of this world. Pray also for me, that I would be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as I go about my days and that God would continue to show me ways that ministry and mommyhood naturally overlap.**

As you pray for us, here are a few more specifics to lift up:

- Last month we mentioned the college students that have been missing since September. Because of this students all over the country are acting out and trying to get the government’s attention. Things are getting tense. Robberies are happening, roads are being closed off and more. Please pray that the students are still alive and are found. Pray against the corruption in the government, the War on Drugs and the mafia-like situation. Pray that there would be hope for the young people in Mexico and

that this and all circumstances will draw them to The Lord. (For more details friend us on Facebook and look on our wall: JoseandChristy Sanchez)

- We’ve recently been given some opportunities to minister to men with addictions and teenagers with a history of abuse. Please pray for open doors to share the gospel and wisdom in the meantime while “religious” messages are restricted. Pray specifically for the government appointed director at the teen home, that God would soften her heart and that she’d know that only through Jesus will true healing take place in the kids’ lives.

Thanks! We can’t imagine trying to minister here without a team of people and churches like you, who is on their knees with us and giving to help make an eternal difference. We so appreciate and thank God for you. We hope you have a wonderful Christmas!

Love in Christ,

Christy Sanchez (for Jose Luis and Dari too!)



ZION SENIORS

The Young at Heart, a social group for those 55 and over, will be eating lunch at Neal’s Barbecue on Third Street in Hamilton on Tuesday, January 27. We’ll meet at the restaurant at 11:15. Please sign the sheet in the great hall if you would like to go along on this outing.

We encourage all our seniors or almost seniors to go along for these fun outings. It gives you a chance to get to know your fellow church members.



POINSETTIAS NEED TO BE ORDERED as soon as possible. They will be used in our sanctuary for Christmas services and may be taken home following the 10:30 service on Christmas Eve. The cost is \$8.00 and checks may be made out to Zion Lutheran Church.

Name _____

How Many Red _____ White _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

HELP FIGHT HUNGER IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

The Open Door Food Pantry has again been selected by the Meijer Store on the west side of Hamilton to be the beneficiary of their upcoming Simply Give Campaign, which began Sunday, November 2 and runs through Saturday, January 3. This will be the third year that the Open Door Food Pantry has been selected to receive funds from the event.

Help us in the fight against hunger. Your \$10 donation will be turned into a Meijer gift card and given to the Open Door Food Pantry. All cards purchased at the Meijer Hamilton West Store from Sunday, November 2 thru Saturday, January 3 will receive at least a \$10 matching gift from Meijer's, so that each \$10 you give results in \$20 for the Open Door Food Pantry.

In each of the previous campaigns, supporters of The Open Door Food Pantry set new records for this store, raising over \$2,930 in 2012, and \$3,710 in 2013. Over \$3,500 of this total represents matching funds provided by the Meijer Company, so this campaign is a very effective way to multiply the donor's gifts. These funds were used to purchase 200 turkeys and other items for the Thanksgiving meals provided to our clients, as well as to purchase items which are not often donated like infant food and diapers.

The Open Door Food Pantry has been serving needy families in the Butler County area since 1981. Services are provided without regard for race, creed, or national origin. We strive to help individuals and families on an emergency basis. Criteria for assistance include income and other factors. We use the Virtual Case Management Software which is shared with other food pantries in the area to help insure that real needs are being met.

