

The Tower

For Members & Friends of Zion Lutheran Church

December 2015

Please submit news items to tower@zlc-aa.org by the 10th of the preceding month



For more information about Zion's ministries scan this QR code to visit our website.



Calendar Notes

Special Congregational Meeting

A special congregational meeting has been called for Sunday December 6, 2015 in the sanctuary, immediately following the contemporary worship service. The purpose is to review and approve the proposed annual budget for 2016. Please plan to be present and have a voice in stewarding God's resources. Copies of the proposed budget will be available in the office by December 1st.

Bibleland Christmas Program

"Just a Little Christmas"

December 13th at the 11:00 service

Bibleland, JAM and C+C will not meet on December 20th or 27th. Please take this time to worship as a family. We will resume on January 3rd.

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." -
Luke 2:10

Zion Special Seniors Luncheon

Hark the Glad Song

Saturday, December 12, 2015, Noon – 2PM

Suggested Donation: \$8/person

The glad sounds of beautiful music heralding the coming of Christ have long been a hallmark of the Advent and Christmas season. Join us as we sing and explore history and meaning behind twelve familiar carols. Verse after verse, let the message of these wonderful melodies put a joyous song in your heart this Christmas season. Wear Christmas colors and be prepared to sing Christmas carols. Sign up in the Welcome Center on Sunday mornings or call the church office during the week (994-4455). Your guests are always welcome.

Prepare the Royal Highway: A Midweek Series for Advent

Starting on December 2 and continuing through each Wednesday in Advent, Zion's midweek chapel services will move from 10AM to noon. The service is held in Yeager Chapel. Below are the themes we will cover each week. Note there will be no chapel service on December 30.

December 2, Week of Advent 1: Highway Under Construction

How exactly do you prepare a highway for God? A passage from 1 Thessalonians offers a construction blueprint: rejoice, pray, give thanks, hold fast to what is good. In this way, we make a straight path into our hearts for the coming of Christ.

December 9, Week of Advent 2: GPS (God's Positioning System)

What are your expectations for the Messiah? Likely not a tiny child ushering in a new vision of peace. Through the coming of Christ, God repositions and reorients our lives. Are you ready to follow God's new direction?

December 16, Week of Advent 3: Standing at the Crossroads

Decisions, decisions, decisions. Would Zechariah and Elizabeth doubt the angel's message, or prepare for a newborn in their advanced age? Would Joseph quietly dismiss his pregnant betrothed, or accept the responsibility of raising Jesus as his own? When standing at a crossroads, do you also choose the leap of faith?

December 23, Week of Advent 4: Detour Ahead

The unexpected inevitably happens. Angels burst in with news, unplanned pregnancies alter plans, the government demands registration in a distant and overcrowded town. God chooses the most radical detour of all: coming to our world in human form.

Christmas Worship Schedule

Christmas Eve

- 5:00PM Family Service
- 6:45PM Musical Prelude to the 7:30 Worship Service by Zion Musicians
- 7:30PM Traditional Service
- 11:00PM Candlelight Service

Christmas Day: 10AM

Worship Core Ministry

Calling all Musicians

It's a great time to join a music ensemble at Zion! If you would like to be involved, please email Natalie Downs (ndowns@zlc-aa.org).

- **The Rings of the Lord (Handbells)** meets weekly on Thursdays from 6:00-7:30PM in the Sanctuary. We welcome ringers ages high school to adult. No ringing experience necessary, but music reading is a plus.
- **Chancel Choir** meets weekly on Thursdays from 7:30-9:00PM in the Sanctuary. We welcome singers ages high school through adult.

Singers and instrumentalists are also encouraged to provide Special Music throughout our weekly and festival worship services.

Advent and Christmas Eve Music

Do you like to make music, but don't have time to commit to weekly rehearsals? You are invited to join one of our music ensembles this Christmas season! Whether you like to sing in the choir or ring handbells, come join us as we prepare for Advent and Christmas Eve. For more information, please contact Natalie Downs (ndowns@zlc-aa.org).

December Lectionary

- Dec 6** Malachi 3:1-4; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6
Dec 13 Zephaniah 3:14-20; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18
Dec 20 Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45 [45-66]
Dec 24 Isaiah 9:2-7; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]
Dec 25 Isaiah 62:6-12; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:[1-7] 8-30
Dec 27 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

Say It With Flowers

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Observe an anniversary | Praise God |
| In memory of a dear one | In remembrance |
| Honor a friend | Proclaim love |
| Celebrate a birthday | Just want to donate |
| Thank someone special | |

Flowers add beauty to our worship and our lives. If you would like to donate altar flowers for a specific Sunday in 2016, please contact Ruth Huff at 734-665-3273. Please do not delay as dates have already been requested. Also, there are several times during the year when general funding is needed to purchase flowers, such as palms for Palm Sunday and carnations for Mother's Day. Donation envelopes for these purposes are available in the pew racks. Your flower donations are greatly appreciated!



Bring a Bell Sunday January 3rd, 2015

Before you put your Christmas decorations away. . . Keep out those holiday bells!

On January 3rd, Zion will continue the tradition of ringing bells in all three worship services.

What to bring:

- Jingle Bells
- Sleigh Bells
- Decorative Bells
- Any bell you have at home

Zion Singers

Zion Singers is a group of singers with daytime availability who come together once a month to prepare and present a program of sacred, fun and seasonal songs to residents at a local nursing care, assisted living, or hospice care facility. Our December 2015 date is: Friday, December 18th at Arbor Hospice. Our rehearsal will be at 12:30PM in Music Room 1 on Level B1, and the performance will be at Arbor Hospice at 2PM.

Music Department Christmas Party Potluck

Do you sing or play an instrument at Zion? Come share fellowship with other musicians at the Music Department Christmas Party Potluck! All musicians at ZLC are invited to attend on Saturday December 19 from 12PM to 1:30PM in Stellhorn Lounge after the Christmas Eve rehearsal. Bring a dish to pass!

Young Discipleship Core Ministry

Family Adventure

We are excited to be offering our third annual Family Advent Event on December 5th from 4—6PM. Similar in format to last year, families will move from station to station to complete different activities, such as crafts and story telling that help us to remember God's greatest Christmas gift, Jesus, throughout the Advent season! You will go home with ways to "countdown to Christmas." We will finish the afternoon with fellowship in Piper Hall as we enjoy sandwiches and chips. Sign-up sheets will be upstairs in Bibleland. We hope you can join us this Advent season!

Thank You and Congratulations

On behalf of the Endowment Board I wanted to acknowledge and thank Tim Helber for his exceptional service tenure on the Zion Endowment Board. Tim has spent the better part of 17 years on the board in various roles most of it as treasurer – easily the most labor intensive office on the board. To put in perspective how long ago that was here are a few reminders from 1997 when Tim started : Bill Clinton was our President, the first Harry Potter book was published, the Michigan football team was on the way to its last national championship and the Dow Jones Industrial Average crossed 7000 pts for the first time in history!

A mere thank you from me isn't enough, so if you see him at church or around town please reach out to him and express your thanks for his dedication to Zion. Here is what his current and former board members had to say about working with him :

"Tim has been a tireless keeper of the accounting functions for the Zion Endowment Board – we thank him and he will be missed."

"Tim has been a dedicated Board member and Treasurer of ZEB. We have so benefited from his time, talents and expertise."

"In my many years serving on the Endowment board, initially as a member and then as chair, I can barely express how thankful I was to have someone with Tim's devotion and professionalism oversee the finances of the Endowment. His consistent attention to operational detail with a ever-present focus on how to best support Zion was simply perfect. Based upon the significant contributions the Endowment has made to the church over time, our confidence in him was well placed. Thanks Tim!"

"He has been the stalwart who carried the Endowment Board Treasurer's yoke for many years. His dedication and record keeping have helped advance the Endowment Fund's records into the digital age."

- Leif Fry

Recently Zion has used the General Memorial Fund to purchase New Communion Vessels for worship and a used grand piano that is now in Stellhorn Lounge. We give thanks for the faithful witness of those who have died. May these items be a constant reminder, calling us to faithfulness and encouraging our participation in mission and ministry here at Zion. We give thanks for all those whose giving made these gifts possible.

November 5, 1995 was Chris LeVasseur's first day on the job working for Zion Lutheran Church. In an age when people change jobs as many as 7 times in their life, it is uncommon to accumulate 20 years of continuous loyal service to an employer.



To Chris we say "thank you!" Thank you for all you have done for us individually and as a congregation. Thank you for being that smiling face with a can-do attitude. Thank you for remaining steadfast in your commitment to Zion Lutheran Church. To God we say, "Thank you for bringing Chris to us and blessing his work efforts among us."

Thank you, thank you, thank you! The Zion congregation has been a huge blessing to the Blavin Scholars and the Foster Children of Washtenaw County. We were able to provide 14 welcome baskets to support those students in the Blavin Scholars program this fall and we are currently collecting gifts for the foster children for Christmas this year. **Because of our congregation's continued support in both of these ministries, the Washtenaw County Foster Care Coalition recently honored Zion at their yearly banquet with the 1st Annual Community Partner of the Year Award.**

This is a great honor and we thank all the members of the congregation who have donated to both of these ministries over the years. A special thank you to Becky Fox and Mary Pearson's small group who headed the Foster Gift Program for 15 years. Also, thank you to Chris Gajar and Allison Ruhlman who are currently heading this ministry and to Kara Kogelman who coordinates the Blavin Scholars.

Many, many thanks to all of the volunteers that have willingly signed up to help prepare and serve meals at PNC. This is a great service to the Center and we are grateful for your participation. We have had several new volunteers join this fall and we hope this will continue into 2016. Most all dates and times are available to sign up for. Prayerfully we ask for your continued service in this partnership with PNC. Thank you again and blessed holidays.

- Mary Pfau and Marianne Rauer

⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

- Isaiah 9:6-7

Congregation Council

October 18, 2015—Highlights

Financial report highlights [more detail on page 9]:

- Cash: Available cash at the end of September was \$47,982. Cash in the operations account as of 10/16/15 is approximately \$53,000. We currently have sufficient cash on hand to last the next few months. We had budgeted \$95,000 from the Endowment Fund for General Operations in 2015. Presently, the Operations Account has only received \$32,000 in July. We are likely to see Operating Cash levels very low at the end of the year without another disbursement to the General Operations account.
- Income: For the month of September, contributions were \$54,973, which was \$1,369 less than what was projected in the budget. This compares to contributions of \$54,299 in September last year. YTD, contributions are \$15,235 less than budgeted, but \$8,943 more than last year at this time.
- Expenses: Overall, we were \$2,393 under budget for the month. In all, we are \$76,851 under budget YTD.
- Building Fund: Contributions to the Down with the Debt fund were \$1,068.93 by 16 givers in September. The minimum principal payment for September was \$2,605.73. There was additional money received in September from a debenture Zion was bequeathed for debt reduction several years ago. The debenture was repaid in installments and the final installment of \$1,314 was received in September. In total, we paid \$2,382.93 additionally toward principal reduction in October. We owe Thrivent \$56,750.17 as of the end of September.
- Attendance and Offering: Year to date attendance is 14,542, compared to 13,856 at this time last year (both numbers include Bibleland). Offering YTD is \$611,200, compared to \$602,257 at this time last year.

Pr. Jim Updates:

- With the resignation of Pr. Mike Walters, Pr. Jim will have to prioritize his schedule to meet the needs of the congregation. He will be contacting each core ministry to determine the main items each group is working with and he can have his input. He will not be able to attend each committee meeting.
- Chris LeVasseur has had his work schedule changed because of the resignation of the part-time weekend custodian. The job has been posted.
- Adult discipleship is asking for guidance during the vacancy of the Welcome Minister.
- Lord of Light Church wants to meet with Council to discuss the possibility of what it might look like to share a paid staff member.

Invoices/Reimbursements:

Building & Grounds has approved an invoice from Altech for repair of individual air conditioning units in the amount of \$10,760.27; this repair was not anticipated and so, not budgeted. Council approved payment of the invoice.

In a separate matter, Council approved reimbursement of a congregation member for \$5462.15 for furniture for the church.

Announcements/Updates:

- Stephen Ministry: Mary Ardner has resigned from Stephen's Ministry.
- Personnel: Working on the new personnel manual, job descriptions and salary enhancement policy. Also, looking at a staff absenteeism policy.
- Need to form a committee for staffing for Adult Discipleship and possibly other ministries.
- Nominating Committee: A list of all people who need to be replaced on the various committees was provided. Council will begin the process of finding replacements for those who choose to not return. Connie McComb and Christine Karshin will move forward with the work of the Nominating Committee.

October 20, 2015—Highlights

Request for Formation of Solar Energy Task Force:

Bryan Weinert requests Council's approval to form a solar energy task force, for the purpose of exploring options for solar and other types of renewable energy for Zion. Bryan has discussed the idea with Buildings and Grounds; they suggested the next step was to get Council's buy-in, then set up a task force to investigate it and report their findings. The task force would research the overall economics of solar and potentially other sustainable energy options, including the up-front costs, payback periods, and maintenance costs; determine what structural issues need to be considered; and explore the range of size and cost to determine the optimal size and capacity for solar installation at Zion. The task force would come back to Council by spring 2016 with additional information and recommendations. It was suggested that someone from B&G could be on the task force. Council approved.

Crop Walk:

We had 20 walkers from Zion and raised over \$7200. We chose Peace Neighborhood Center as the local agency to support, so they will receive 25% of the \$7200. Zion Youth Director Roger Santini was helpful and supportive of the Crop Walk by encouraging youth participation and fundraising. Mission Core Ministry made up the difference (\$600) in the youth's target of \$2500.

Project Grow Garden:

The quality of soil was thought to be so poor that it seemed we wouldn't be able to pursue this idea, but Zion

Congregation Council (cont.)

members have been persistent. A \$6000 investment would have to be made to improve the soil. We could also get leaf drops at Zion's option to amend soil. The question of liability was brought up, and we will need to look into the answer (e.g., is there a hold-harmless clause/condition). The source of the funding was also discussed. Thrivent could be a potential source. Council approved that we pursue the Project Grow garden idea as described in the proposal and contingent on finding funding and verification of adequate liability insurance.

Proposal for Weather-Shield Window:

One of the sanctuary windows is leaking, and part of its wood frame has dry-rotted. Insurance won't cover this. The window has to be replaced as it is allowing bees and water to enter the sanctuary in its present state. The window needs to match the others, and B&G proposes getting it from the same company. It will cost \$6802.90 to construct it; additional funds will be needed for installation costs. B&G proposes using capital reserve funds. Council approved.

Pastor Jim Update/Filling Zion's Pastoral Needs:

For interim or part time pastor, we need to determine what role we need filled and what we can afford. Pr. Jim met with Pr. Hendricks at Lord of Light, and Pr. Hendricks is willing to help.

We will need to form a new call committee for an associate pastor. Pr. Jim would want a clause in the associate's position description that says when Pr. Jim leaves, the associate's call is over also.

Pr. Jim and Council discussed which core ministries are and should be the focus of his time. The two core ministries specifically highlighted for the senior pastor are Worship Core Ministry and Adult Discipleship; Pr. Jim also thinks Member Caring is important. Pr. Jim will support this ministry between meetings; other Council members will be present at meetings. Pr. Jim is concerned about member caring visits during the holiday season.

What role could an interim pastor play? This pastor could preach once a month, help with home and hospital visits. All the welcome pastor responsibilities -- such as new member classes, baptisms, provision of coffee & cookies, provision of visitor packets, contacting visitors who signed the guest book, scheduling nursery coverage, liaison with parish nurses and Stephen ministry -- need attention. The Welcome Core Ministry team needs more people; Pr. Jim to send email to key people who volunteer for Welcome.

Roger might pick up half of confirmation classes.

Council agreed that a new task force is needed to think ahead about staffing needs, develop a clear definition for the roles of the interim pastor, consider Pr. Hendricks's proposal. Lorin will chair this task force, and Council discussed it should include Pr. Jim, Margie, Vickie, possibly also Bob Thompson and Nick, and include someone from Personnel.

A contractor has been retained to assess our communication needs. He will be doing a survey of how we're doing communication and making a recommendation about communication and web design.

Have You Been Called to Serve?

The Nominating Committee is seeking individuals to fill positions for Congregation Council and for Core Ministry and Support Team leaders. These positions are elected by written ballot at the annual meeting in February 2016; terms begin on April 1. The following positions will be up for election in 2016:

Congregation/Council President

Congregation/Council Vice-President

Co-leaders for:

Worship Core Ministry

Young Discipleship Core Ministry

IT Support Team

Personnel Support Team

Welcome Core Ministry

Member Caring Core Ministry

Financial Stewardship Support Team

Adult Discipleship Core Ministry

Mission Core Ministry

Building & Grounds Support Team

Serving as a leader of Zion is a faith-building experience; it provides opportunities to create and innovate, to serve others, to become a strong disciple of Christ, and to do God's work. If you feel called to serve in any of these positions, please pray about it and feel free to speak to current leaders or Pastor Jim. If you do find yourself called to serve, please contact the Nominating Committee leads, Connie McComb (cmccomb0822@comcast.net) or Christine Karshin (ckarshin@emich.edu)

*² "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."
- Micah 5:2*

Adult Discipleship Core Ministry

Classes in Adult Education At Zion

Adult Discipleship focus in **December** will be on Advent preparation for Christmas. There will be no formal classes, but we will be available in the lounge to help with the ELCA Good Gifts program.

January classes begin on Jan 17. Ann Hollenbeck will tell us about the Grimke sisters, subjects of a recent bestseller called "The Invention of Wings" by Sue Monk Kidd. Much of the Grimkes' story is historically based: Kidd has fleshed out mountains of research — facts, figures, dates, letters, and articles — into a first person account. Sarah and Angelina were at the forefront of the abolitionist and women's rights movements at a time when their family and community were deeply committed to slavery.

On January 24, Bernadette Quist will help us think about one of Pope Francis' favorite 20th century American Catholic women, Dorothy Day. Francis cited the importance of Dorothy Day, a journalist whose conversion propelled her to found the Catholic Worker movement and advocate for the poor. Quote: *I have long since come to believe that people never mean half of what they say, and that it is best to disregard their talk and judge only their actions.*

On January 31, Avis Ellingrod will deal with the life of Harriet Tubman. Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in 1822. She became an abolitionist, humanitarian, and, during the American Civil War, a Union spy. After she escaped, Tubman made some thirteen missions to rescue approximately seventy enslaved family and friends, using the network of anti-slavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad.

On February 7, Layale Weinert will take us to a look at writer Madeleine L'Engle: American writer best known for young-adult fiction, particularly the Newbery Medal-winning *A Wrinkle in Time* and its sequels: *A Wind in the Door*, *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*, *Many Waters*, and *An Acceptable Time*. Her works reflect both her Christian faith and her strong interest in modern science. Writing on divine punishment she said "I cannot believe that God wants punishment to go on interminably any more than does a loving parent. The entire purpose of loving punishment is to teach, and it lasts only as long as is needed for the lesson. And the lesson is always love."

In **February and March** we will be thinking about women of faith in our own lives and community and we will ask you to think about sharing your own stories of faithful women.

Men's Retreat

Gentlemen! It is time once again to add the Washtenaw Men's Retreat to your calendar. Our presenter this year will be our own Pastor James Debner. The topic has not been finalized, but whatever the topic, the weekend is certain to be interesting, relaxing, prayerful, and fun. This will be a great chance for you to get better acquainted with Zion's pastor and with one another in an informal and welcoming setting. Please join us! God loves you, and so do we.

The retreat this year will be held at the Weber Center in Adrian, Michigan, January 29 - 31, Friday evening through Sunday mid-morning. The cost for a single room for 2 nights and 4 meals is \$160; if you are unable to afford the full amount, partial and full scholarships are available. Sign up at the Welcome Desk at Zion, or by contacting this year's coordinator Steve Johgart, stevej1@mac.com or 734-904-4936.

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

- Luke 1:26-33, 39-45

From Pastor Jim

Stable Time

The frantic hurry has begun; Black Friday and Cyber Monday have come and gone. Sometimes when our lives become so hectic, frenzied, difficult and messy we feel God has abandoned us to the forces of fate, evil or despair. It is during these messy times that God's presence hovers near to us. For Christians, "stable" moments aren't those few days when calm briefly descends upon our world. Our true "stable times" are when we look around and see that however unpredictable, unmanageable and unimaginable our mess, the message is there even more. At Christmas, the mess is the message.

Jesus was born in a stable -- a small, cramped, congested, messy place. A new born baby was out-of-place, out-of-sync amid the dusty animals, the mucky straw, and the spilled grain. But the mess is the message of Christmas. There is no stable, no place in our world or in our lives that is too poor, too remote, too outcast, too "other," too messy, that God cannot be found and formed in us.

I invite you to join in worshiping God at Zion Lutheran this Christmas. Bring a friend, a neighbor or a family member who may need to hear the message God sent and continues to send in Jesus. Christmas worship services at Zion Lutheran Church include:

- Christmas Eve:
 - ◇ 5:00PM Family Service
 - ◇ 6:45PM Musical Prelude
 - ◇ 7:30PM Traditional Service
 - ◇ 11:00PM Candlelight Service
- Christmas Day: 10:00AM
- Please note there will be one service on Sunday December 27 at 10:00AM.

As Christmas approaches, we will all find ourselves at wit's end, running out of time, out of patience, out of money, out of ideas. Don't be fooled into thinking that God cannot draw close to your life, to your heart, just because your schedule seems "too busy" for Christmas. If your life is hovering near overload, you could be on the very cusp of experiencing genuine "stable time" in your life. Open up to it, exalt in it, and be willing to let God love and care for you. I pray you may experience a very Blessed Christmas.

Break-In at Zion

On the weekend of November 15 two suspects (who have been apprehended) broke into Zion's building and took several items, including some of the cards and letters written to Pastor Mike and his family. Some of the letters were found in Eberwhite Woods opened and laying on the ground. The police are holding these letters as evidence. If you gave a letter before Sunday November 15, we urge you to rewrite your letter and return it to the Welcome Center or church office.

Boundaries of Pastoral Work

Please be aware that Pr. Mike's resignation makes him unable to return to Zion to perform any pastoral function (funerals, weddings, worship services). This is not a choice but part of the boundaries established by the ELCA between pastors and parishioners in called covenants.

¹In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

- Luke 2:1-12

Mission Core Ministry

Friends In Deed Update

[Ed. Note: Another in a continuing series about local, national and international missions supported by Mission Core Ministry.]

For the past several years, I have worked along-side several other Zion members to pick-up and deliver furniture to those in need in Washtenaw County in support of a non-profit organization located in Ypsilanti called Friends In Deed. Friends In Deed is one of many organizations supported by our Zion Mission Core Ministry (hence, you support them too). I'd like to simply share with you just a bit of information about Friends In Deed and why I have chosen to participate with them in serving those in and around my home and church.



Friends In Deed (FID) is a small non-profit organization started in 1983 with a large, noble goal to identify the gaps in social services in Washtenaw County and fill them. FID is well known for its efforts to satisfy furniture and appliance needs for those in need, as well as its annual bed drive to provide hundreds of beds to those without any. I have personally worked with other Zion members for many years picking up and delivering furniture as a volunteer. We routinely gather at the FID warehouse early on a Saturday morning with a short list of pick-ups and deliveries. FID provides the truck and we provide the "muscle." A sofa here, a bed and bed frame there, a chair (or two), sometimes lamps, dressers, stoves, TV's, end tables, we have collected and delivered them all. It rarely takes long and the donors are usually very thankful that someone came to their house to pick up their used but still-good "stuff" that they have replaced or simply no longer need. Yet to those who have little or nothing, this "stuff" is grand, perfect and deeply, deeply appreciated.

However, FID does more than provide furniture. They also provide utility bill assistance during winter months and even some nominal assistance with prescription payments or medical needs for those without insurance. They distribute donated cars to families who are in need of transportation get to jobs or medical appointments. FID does not sell these donated cars to give money to clients; they give them the cars. Typically in November or December, FID launches their annual bed drive campaign (in partnership with VanWinkle Mattress Company, which donates beds at cost and provides additional beds as a match for donations received on Giving Tuesday—December 1) as well as their general annual appeal for community support. As you might imagine, FID often cannot meet all needs but with the help of the many generous donors and churches, FID is making a difference in our community.

While I have been fortunate to lend a helping hand on behalf of FID, please know that through your giving at Zion, you too are supporting FID. Through your support of FID, I can tell you that you are bringing relief and joy to our brothers and sisters, our neighbors who often have little.

If you would like to be more involved with FID, please feel free to reach out to me or look up FID on the web (www.friendsindeed.info). Thank you for support and for sharing your extra, old stuff!

- Bob Thompson

ELCA Good Gifts Program - - Zion's WATER WELL Project - -

This Advent season, Zion Lutheran Church is supporting the ELCA Good Gifts program by raising funds to purchase a **WELL** for a village in Africa. We are asking you to consider designating your ELCA gift toward a **WATER WELL**. The cost of a **WELL** is \$2,500, so we will have to, as a congregation, support this project!

Facts for discussion:

- 1 out of 4 people in the world drink unclean water.
- Clean water is one of the most powerful ways to change the world.
- Each **WELL** can provide 500 families with clean, safer drinking water.
- Sanitation improves with available water resulting in less illness and a reduction in deaths due to health related issues.
- A **WELL** in a village eliminates women and children spending the majority of each day fetching water from long distances. This gives them time to go to school, work and spend time as a family.



The Giving Fair continues through December 20 in Stellhorn Lounge.

Final 2015 SERRV Handcraft Sale

Sunday Dec 6, 9AM—12:30PM

SERRV Stockroom B-1 Level

Here it is...your last chance to find a special handcrafted gift for yourself or for your loved ones. Join us in the SERRV stockroom on Sunday Dec 6 where you will find scarves, jewelry, crèche sets, ornaments, accessories for your home, food items and much more! Your purchase will give hardworking artisans in South Africa, Vietnam, India, Palestine, the Philippines and a dozen other countries the means to provide a livelihood and build a better life for their families. Hope to see you there!

Financial Stewardship News

Summary of Income and Expenses YTD Through September 30, 2015

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Income	2015	2015	2015	2014
Contributions	\$ 626,436	\$ 611,200	\$ (15,235)	\$ 602,257
Board Income	1,739	1,613	(126)	1,983
Other Income	8,438	7,785	(652)	8,018
Bequests	15,000	-	(15,000)	-
Dedicated Funds	20,250	21,035	785	11,255
Endowment Fund	71,250	32,000	(39,250)	95,000
Total Income	\$ 743,113	\$ 673,634	\$ (69,479)	\$ 718,512
Expenses				
Council	\$ 4,275	\$ 5,817	\$ 1,542	\$ 4,221
Pastor's Office	95,935	94,497	(1,438)	24,934
Adult Discipleship	55,982	21,555	(34,427)	64,241
Young Discipleship	72,706	72,350	(355)	67,910
Worship Ministry	108,434	70,727	(37,707)	100,674
Missions Ministry	72,859	72,859	-	72,050
Member Caring Ministry	5,699	4,779	(919)	4,544
Welcome Ministry	84,469	83,706	(763)	86,889
Building & Grounds	146,880	156,220	9,340	145,959
Administration	145,567	140,965	(4,602)	136,962
Debt Service	41,144	33,622	(7,521)	41,102
Total Expenses	\$ 833,948	\$ 757,096	\$ (76,851)	\$ 749,485
Net Income				
(Expenses)	\$ (90,835)	\$ (83,463)	\$ 7,372	\$ (30,973)

YTD Attendance and Offering

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>%</u>
Attendance (YTD)	12,603	12,128	475	3.9%
-Including Bibleland	14,542	13,856	686	5.0%
Offering (YTD)	\$611,200	\$ 602,257	\$ 8,944	1.5%
Offering per Person	\$ 48.50	\$ 49.66	\$ (1.16)	-2.3%

Cash and Investments

Petty Cash	\$ 200
Operations Checking	47,782
Dedicated Fund Checking	68,011
Expansion & Renovation DF	28,060
Money Market account	150,869
Subtotal	294,922
Dedicated Funds Receivable	437
Dedicated Funds Payable	(247,377)
Unrestricted Cash	\$ 47,982

Endowment Fund	\$2,504,157
\$ 51,970 above restricted balance	

Loans

United Bank & Trust - Line of Credit	\$ -
Member loans	\$ 205,000
Thrivent Mortgage	\$ 56,750
Total	\$ 261,750

Did You Know?

Did you know that you can donate shares of appreciated stock to the Zion Endowment Fund and you will receive a tax deduction on the full amount, and the church will not have to pay capital gains tax on the appreciation?

Did you know that you can donate a required minimum distribution (RMD) from your IRA and you (and Zion) would not have to pay income tax on the distribution?

Please see an Endowment board member if you have questions or interest.

End-of-Year Contributions

As the year draws to a close, please review the following information regarding charitable contributions:

1. Charitable contributions must be claimed in the year in which they are delivered. If you intend to deduct your contribution from your 2015 taxes, it must be received by Zion before the office closes at 1PM December 31, 2015.
2. The value of personal services are never deductible as a charitable contribution.
3. Un-reimbursed expenses incurred in performing services on behalf of the church may be deductible as a contribution.
4. If you intend to claim charitable contributions, do not file your Federal Income Tax return until you have received a statement from the non-profit organization to whom you donated. The statement must itemize the contributions and verify that no goods or services have been received in return for the donation.
5. If you make a non-cash contribution of property to the church valued at \$500 or more, IRS form 8283 must also be completed. Non-cash gifts over \$5,000 must include an appraisal by a qualified appraiser.

Synod / LSSM News

News from Lutheran Social Services of Michigan (LSSM)

Lutheran Social Services of Michigan (LSSM), which is one of the largest faith-based social services agencies in the country, provides support to a large range of needy clients in Michigan. LSSM programs focus on adoption, foster care, refugee settlement, home care, disability assistance, and senior care ranging from residences to memory care. Sadly, even this large range of programs cannot help all those in need, and LSSM is constantly trying to develop new programs and expand its services.

This requires funds that are not directly tied to specific services and that's one place that we church members come in. Through our donations of time, items and money, we provide LSSM with the extra funds needed to grow. Each month, we try to give you information on LSSM programs and ways you can help. This month's feature is on *personal and household items for LSSM*.

LSSM operates a wide range of homes and other facilities that help people in transition, including refugees, teens leaving foster care, homeless families, and women leaving prison. The items that are needed include toiletries (toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, soap), paper goods (toilet paper, paper towels, and sanitary napkins), small household and kitchen items (wooden spoons, measuring cups, dish towels, reading lamps); baby items (diapers, bottles, and formula); personal items (undergarments all sizes); paint by number kits, small hook rug kits, crochet hooks, yarn, knitting needles. These items are shared with refugees, residents of Wayne County Family Center, Heartline, Neighborhood House, HUD Housing, and persons with disability homes. If you can help, please contact Delilah Miller at LSSM at dmill1@LSSM.org.

Other News

Faces of Faith

The **Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County** present its fifth annual "**FACES OF FAITH**" program as part of Religious Freedom Day observances. This year's focus will be on the stories of clergy and other designated religious leaders from the following traditions: Baha'i, Catholic Christianity, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Hinduism, Interfaith, Islam, Judaism, Protestant Christianity, Sikhism, Unitarian Universalism, Unity and Zen Buddhism. Participants will have the opportunity to listen in small groups to at least three presenters. It's like going to the library and reading a book! For more information, go to www.irtwc.org or email gbrides@umich.edu.

Date: Sunday, January 17, 2016

Time: 4-6PM

Location: Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W. Liberty, AA



Information Technology Committee

The Zion IT group needs your help! We need volunteers with computer, digital, network or other IT knowledge or experience to join us. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Bob Thompson at (734) 677-0159 or mutant@umich.edu.

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

—Luke 2:13-20

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 1

12:00 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
7:00 PM Life's Lessons Book Club/Stellhorn Lounge

Wednesday, December 2

10:00 AM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
10:45 AM Staff Meeting/Pastor's Office
12:00 PM Advent Prayer Time/Yeager Chapel
6:00 PM Family Matters Group/Creation Station
6:00 PM Way of Life/Omega Room
6:45 PM Praise Band Rehearsal/Sanctuary
7:30 PM Al-Anon Meeting/The Gathering
7:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous/Piper Hall
7:30 PM Al-a-Teen Meeting/Alpha Room

Thursday, December 3

7:00 AM Men's ChristCare/Sunday Spot
12:00 PM Thursday Ladies Cards/Stellhorn Lounge
1:00 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
1:30 PM The Bible/Bible Study/Omega Room
6:00 PM Rings of the Lord Rehearsal/Sanctuary
7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal/Sanctuary

Friday, December 4

9:00 AM Samaritan Counseling Board Meeting/The Gathering
12:30 PM Women's Friday Bridge/Stellhorn Lounge

Saturday, December 5

Sunday, December 6

8:15 AM Traditional Worship/Sanctuary
9:00 AM Giving Fair/Stellhorn Lounge
9:30 AM Bibleland/2nd Floor
9:30 AM C+C/Omega Room
9:30 AM JAM/Youth Room
9:30 AM Blended Worship/Sanctuary
11:00 AM Contemporary Worship/Sanctuary
11:00 AM Korean Baptist Church/Yeager Chapel

Monday, December 7

6:30 AM Men's ChristCare/Sunday Spot
11:30 AM Women's Monday Bridge/Stellhorn Lounge
1:30 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Meeting
6:00 PM Prayer Team Meeting/Omega Room
7:00 PM Ruth's Small Group/Stellhorn Lounge

Tuesday, December 8

9:00 AM Good Thyme Garden Club/The Gathering
12:00 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
2:00 PM IDAP Meeting/Omega Room
7:00 PM Five Miles More Rehearsal/Sanctuary
7:15 PM Building & Grounds Meeting/Creation Station

Wednesday, December 9

10:00 AM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
12:00 PM Advent Prayer Time/Yeager Chapel
6:00 PM Family Matters Group/Creation Station
6:00 PM The Way of Life/Omega Room
6:45 PM Praise Band Rehearsal/Sanctuary
7:30 PM Al-Anon Meeting/The Gathering
7:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous/Piper Hall
7:30 PM Al-a-teen Meeting/Alpha Room

Thursday, December 10

7:00 AM Men's ChristCare/Sunday Spot
9:00 AM Activity Day/Piper Hall
9:15 AM Mom's Bible Study/Omega Room
11:30 AM Nurses Luncheon/Webers
1:00 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
1:30 PM The Bible/Omega Room
6:00 PM Rings of the Lord/Sanctuary
7:00 PM Mission Core Ministry/Pastor's Office
7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal/Sanctuary

Friday, December 11

9:00 AM Samaritan Counseling Brd. Meeting/The Gathering
2:00 PM Senior Luncheon Setup/Kitchen & Hall
5:30 PM Bibleland Christmas Rehearsal/Sanctuary

Saturday, December 12

12:00 PM Senior Luncheon/Kitchen & Hall

Sunday, December 13

8:15 AM Traditional Worship/Sanctuary
9:00 AM Giving Fair/Stellhorn Lounge
9:30 AM Blended Worship/Sanctuary
11:00 AM Bibleland Christmas Program/Sanctuary
11:00 AM Korean Baptist Church/Yeager Chapel
4:00 PM HS Christmas Party/Youth Room

Monday, December 14

6:30 AM Men's ChristCare/Sunday Spot
1:30 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
7:00 PM Kesler Small Group/Alpha Room
7:00 PM Weber's Small Group/Stellhorn Lounge

Tuesday, December 15

12:00 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
7:00 PM Council Meeting/The Gathering

Wednesday, December 16

10:00 AM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
12:00 PM Advent Prayer Time/Yeager Chapel
6:00 PM Family Matters Group/Creation Station
6:00 PM Way of Life/Omega Room
6:30 PM Knit 2 Together/Stellhorn Lounge
6:45 PM Praise Band Rehearsal/Sanctuary
7:30 PM Al-Anon Meeting/The Gathering
7:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous/Piper Hall
7:30 PM Al-a-teen Meeting/Alpha Room

Thursday, December 17

7:00 AM Men's ChristCare/Sunday Spot
9:00 AM Sarah's Circle Stellhorn Lounge
1:00 PM Ruth's Circle/Stellhorn Lounge
1:30 PM The Bible/Omega Room
6:00 PM Rings of the Lord Rehearsal/Sanctuary
7:00 PM Adult Discipleship/Omega Room
7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal/Sanctuary

Friday, December 18

12:30 PM Zion Singers/Music Room #1

Saturday, December 19

10:00 AM Christmas Eve Music Rehearsal/Sanctuary
12:00 PM Music Department Potluck/Stellhorn Lounge

Sunday, December 20

8:15 AM Traditional Worship/Sanctuary
9:00 AM Giving Fair/Stellhorn Lounge
9:30 AM Blended Worship/Sanctuary
11:00 AM Contemporary Worship/Sanctuary
11:00 AM Korean Baptist Church/Yeager Chapel

Monday, December 21

6:30 AM Men's ChristCare/Sunday Spot
1:30 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
7:00 PM Ruth's Small Group/Stellhorn Lounge

Tuesday, December 22

12:00 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
6:30 PM Worship Core Ministry/Pastor's Office
7:00 PM Five Miles More Rehearsal/Sanctuary

Wednesday, December 23

10:00 AM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
12:00 PM Advent Prayer Time/Yeager Chapel
6:00 PM Family Matters Group/Creation Station
6:00 PM The Way of Life/Omega Room
6:45 PM Praise Band Rehearsal/Sanctuary
7:30 PM Al-Anon Meeting/The Gathering
7:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous/Piper Hall
7:30 PM Al-a-teen Meeting/Alpha Room

Thursday, December 24

7:00 AM Men's ChristCare/Sunday Spot
12:00 PM *Office Closed until Monday December 28*
5:00 PM Family Christmas Worship/Sanctuary
7:30 PM Christmas Eve Worship/Sanctuary
11:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship/Sanctuary

Friday, December 25

10:00 AM Christmas Day Worship/Sanctuary

Saturday, December 26

Sunday, December 27

10:00 AM Blended Worship/Sanctuary
11:00 AM Korean Baptist Worship/Yeager Chapel

Monday, December 28

6:30 AM Men's ChristCare/Sunday Spot
9:30 AM God's Gardeners/Stellhorn Lounge
1:30 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
7:00 PM Kesler Small Group/Alpha Room
7:00 PM Weber's Small Group/Stellhorn Lounge

Tuesday, December 29

12:00 PM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office

Wednesday, December 30

10:00 AM Prayer Time/Yeager Chapel
10:00 AM Samaritan Counseling/Counseling Office
6:00 PM Family Matters Group/Creation Station
6:00 PM The Way of Life/Omega Room
6:45 PM Praise Band Rehearsal/Sanctuary
7:30 PM Al-Anon Meeting/The Gathering
7:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous/Piper Hall
7:30 PM Al-a-teen Meeting/Alpha Room

Thursday, December 31

7:00 AM Men's ChristCare/Sunday Spot
12:00 PM *Office Closed until Monday January 4*

The Tower

Zion Lutheran Church
1501 West Liberty
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

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Ann Arbor, Michigan

Return Service Requested

Date Sensitive Material
Please Deliver by
December 1, 2015

November Life Passages at Zion

BAPTISMS:

WEDDINGS:

FUNERALS: *June Anderson*

NEW MEMBERS:

Elected Ministry Leaders

Congregation Council

President: Margie Reynolds (margiereynolds@comcast.net)
Vice-Pres: Lorin Cartwright (cartwrl@gmail.com)
Secretary: Laura Berry (berry.laura@gmail.com)
Treasurer: Bob Bertrand (bobbertrand@yahoo.com)
At Large: Christine Karshin (ckarshin@emich.edu)
Nick Kogleman (nkogelman@gmail.com)
Vickie Matthews (vickiematthews@comcast.net)
Connie McComb (cmccomb0822@comcast.net)
Mark Warwashana (whellieman@gmail.com)
Bob Thompson (mutant@umich.edu)

Core Ministries

Worship: Dale Eckart, Holli Bertram
Welcome: Chris Karpinnen, Joanne Dence
Adult Discipleship: Sonja Page, Felicia Leipzig
Young Discipleship: Tom Clifford, Ken Utsunomiya
Caring: Dianne Daily, Laura Girbach
Missions: Mark Gunderson, Layale Weinert

Support Ministries

Personnel: Diane Hunt, Dave Werner
Building & Grounds: Bill Lehmann, Jim Love
Financial Stewardship: Nick Rogers, Lisa Rombes
IT: Ray Vanderbok, David Anderson

Staff

Senior Pastor	James Debner
Welcome Pastor	<i>Vacant</i>
Director, Adult Discipleship	<i>Vacant</i>
Finance Manager	David Beck
Office Administrator	Diane Rinehart
Director, Young Discipleship	Roger Santini
Bibleland Coordinator	Nina Johnson
VBS Coordinator	Jessica Rudy
Director of Choirs & Special Music	Natalie Downs
Organist	Elgin Clingaman
Contemporary Worship Leader	Alison Hendricks
Sound Operator	Tyler Dence
Worship Media Coordinator	Eddie VanRiper
Resident Custodian	Chris LeVasseur
Weekend Custodian	Max Wojewski
Wedding Coordinator	<i>Vacant</i>
Nursery Coordinator	Kaili Dence, Deborah Fagan

Email addresses for staff may be found at our website:

www.zlc-aa.org.

Office phone 994-4455