

## PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL

***"We praise you that Christ has poured out his gifts abundantly on the Church, making some apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers, to equip your people for their work of ministry for building up the body of Christ."*** – New Jersey Synod Ordination Service, June 15, 1983.

It was a typically hot and humid New Jersey evening when I was ordained in my home congregation, St. Peter's Lutheran Church in North Plainfield. In the place where my family had worshiped for almost sixty years, I was privileged to be ordained by Bishop Herluf Jensen, surrounded by family, friends, congregational members, as well as people from St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Linden, the congregation I was called to serve. My memories of that evening – besides the heat – include the laying on of hands by the Bishop and my colleagues which were the means through which I was ordained by the Church as a minister of Word and Sacrament, entrusted with *"Christ's authority to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, serving God's people."*

It's hard to believe that 35 years have passed since that memorable evening. My ministry has taken me places I couldn't have imagined as a newly-ordained pastor; I would serve two congregations in New Jersey, and then cross the Hudson River to serve a congregation on Long Island. There was no way that I could have known that night that I would be called north of the border to serve in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada: first in Niagara Falls, and for these past four years here in Stratford. The young man who knelt in the church of his ancestors could not have seen that his service as a pastor would include serving as a conference dean, a member of numerous synod committees, a mentor to newly-ordained pastors, and as an intern supervisor. My years as a pastor have led me into places and experiences I never could have expected.

There have been many challenges throughout these years, as well as moments of joy and gladness. My service as a pastor has taken me away from my family and kept me away from many gatherings and celebrations. Susan and I have moved numerous times, which has involved putting down new roots and established ourselves in communities in which we are looked upon as outsiders. I have failed probably far more than I succeeded and have both experienced disappointment and have been a disappointment to others. There are times when I have worked weeks on end without a day off, which has affected both my physical and spiritual health. But then there are those joyous occasions, when I am privileged to preside at baptisms and weddings, join families in celebrations, and lead God's people in celebrations of joyous seasons such as Christmas and Easter. As our marriage liturgy used to proclaim, I have experienced the joys and sorrows and all that the years bring one called to serve as a pastor.

Through all these experiences and challenges, one aspect of my ministry remains my greatest source of strength and hope: the privilege of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. From the pulpit to the classroom, from hospital bedsides to the living rooms of our homebound members, I have the great honour of sharing God's light and love on a daily basis. It is this central calling that is my constant source of joy, what keeps me going even on my most difficult days. Serving as a bearer of the Word of God that is *"a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119:105) is the most important part of my work, and I pray every day that God will use me as the earthen vessel through which this great gift might be shared with others.

On this milestone anniversary, I give thanks to God for all the people who have guided me, encouraged me, prayed for me, and worked with me in my service as a pastor. For pastors and Sunday School teachers, professors and mentors, colleagues and partners in ministry, I give thanks to God. For the congregations that entrusted the office of pastor to me, I give thanks for their trust and partnership in ministry. For family and friends who continued to love and support me even when I was often absent, I am forever grateful. Above all, for Susan who has been my constant source of love and encouragement throughout this entire journey, I give thanks to God.

The anniversary I celebrate this month is a milestone, not a destination. Where God will lead me and for how long are a mystery; but I am confident that, in the words of St. Paul, *"the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus"*



Christ.” (Philippians 1:6).

Thank you for being my partners in this ministry we share here at Zion!

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Jeff Laustsen



### ANNUAL SPRING BBQ

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> we are having a Farewell and end of Sunday School BBQ. We say farewell to Vicar Jason and his family and conclude the end of another Sunday School year. Enjoy hotdogs, hamburgers, and of course cake, in the Fellowship Hall following the Worship Service.



### SENIORS' BIRTHDAY PARTY!

Calling all 85 year old and plus members! On June 6<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM is Zion's Birthday Party. Come join us for fellowship, food and entertainment. A phone call will be made to everyone who is invited. Hope to see you there!

**+ BAPTISMS +**  
Ella Nicole Morse, daughter of David & Amy  
on May 6.

**+ IN MEMORIAM +**  
Kevin Graul, April 17  
Karin Wessel, April 28  
Gerald Cook, April 30

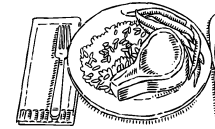
**+ Confirmands 2018 +**  
Meredith Elaine Martha Johnstone  
Kloe Lynn Kollman  
Alyssa Katelynn Podann  
Dani-Lynn Ramseyer  
Blake Gregory Schneider  
Torri-Lynn Mae Wilson



### YOU'RE INVITED TO A CELEBRATION

On Sunday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate Pastor Jeff's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination. We gather in the Fellowship Hall following our Worship Service, for a reception and social time. All are welcome!

### ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS



**Zion Table For Seniors** will be held on Tuesday, June 26 at 12 noon. Luncheon cost is \$12 per person. Please let Doris Bartlett (519-271-9622) or Rita Mueller (519-271-6539) know by **Thursday, June 14 at the latest**, so we can reserve your spot. Our guest speaker will be Bradley

Stone who practices law with the firm Cohen Highley LLP, in London. His area of expertise is Civil Litigation, with a focus on Personal Injury, both from the Plaintiff and Defense perspective. Come and have some fun, fellowship and good food. All are welcome!

### SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



Sunday School has finished now until September. We are in need of a teacher for our 3, 4, & 5 year olds and a teacher for our Grades 1 & 2. If you are a student and you need community hours, consider being a helper in our Sunday School. If interested in being a teacher or helper, please call Paula at 519-273-2174.

Sunday School Coordinator  
Paula McNaughton

### ZION GARAGE SALE



Zion Church is holding a garage sale on Friday, July 7th, beginning at 12 noon. All the proceeds of this sale will be donated to our congregational ministry for our Seniors' Group. The contributions we are looking for are books, glassware, jewelry, dishes, tools, working electrical appliances, sports equipment, toys, games, etc. The convener is Terry Faulhafer who can be reached at our church office 519-271-8527 any weekday morning. Last day for donations, is **Friday, June 29<sup>th</sup>**.

She has a place to store items and will also arrange pick up, if needed. Thank you for your support of this great cause!

## FRIENDSHIP MEAL MINISTRY



Please note: The Friendship Meal, at Zion, will resume in September. This gives our volunteers a well deserved rest. In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding this ministry, please direct them to Sister Jean Widmeyer at [srjw@bell.net](mailto:srjw@bell.net) or 519-273-1810. She'd love to hear

from you!

## ZION WOMEN OF FAITH

### 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Women of Faith



**120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Women of Faith** are collecting gently used or new quilts and blankets for adults, children and babies. Instructions for Hygiene Kits or an envelope for a donation towards projects are on the table at the back of the church. Please put donations in **black container** under the table. Thank you for your kind response.

Annual Dinner & Theatre outing at Grand Bend on Wednesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. Dinner at 5:30 PM; Play at 7:30 PM.

## JOIN US ON A BUS TRIP TO THE HURON COUNTY PLAYHOUSE



GET ON BOARD!

DATE: **Tuesday, July 24**

COST: \$110.00 - includes bus, lunch, and ticket to a performance of **"Canada 151"**

The bus will depart Zion's parking lot at 10:45 AM: lunch at Aunt Gussies in Grand Bend and a matinee performance of **"CANADA 151"**; returning to Stratford at approximately 5:45 PM. "CANADA 151" is a comedy full of music, dancing, humour and of course, some

biting political satire. There will be a sign up sheet at the back of the church. Everyone is welcome. A final count is needed by Sunday, June 17. If additional information is required, please call Liz Bomasuit at 519-272-0254.

## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



The Congregational Life Committee is hosting a BBQ on Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> after the morning service to wish Vicar Jason and his family Farewell and Godspeed as well as the conclusion of our Sunday School year.

The Council members were informed by the Property Committee that during the recent wind storm the main roof on the south side of the church lost some shingles and also resulted in many shingles being raised. The Property Committee is looking at options to repair the damage or to consider installing a new steel roof. More details to follow.

The Worship and Music Committee, in response to the Bridgebuilder process, recommended to the Council to launch an 8:30 a.m. Sunday Communion Service in the Gastmeier Chapel. Details for the service still need to be formulated, however, we do know that the service will be approximately 40 minutes in length and will commence in early September. The service will take place over a 6 month trial basis with an evaluation after that time. The Congregational Council approved the recommendation from the Worship and Music Committee.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee has been meeting with 3 Architects as it pertains to the lift.

A motion was made and subsequently approved by the Council members to accept Megan Famme as the Youth Delegate for the 2019 ELCIC Convention.

An amendment to the Policy on Addressing Issues and Concerns in the Congregation was suggested, namely, to add the following "A member also has the choice to present their issue or concern at a monthly Congregational Council Meeting, in person. Just inform the chairperson of the Congregational Council of your wishes and the issue or concern will be included on the Agenda of the next meeting." In this way, a member has the option of either writing a letter or appearing in person at a Council Meeting. The motion to proceed

with this suggestion was approved.

A request was received from the City to Stratford to lease from June 1<sup>st</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup> our parking lot across from the church for the purpose of staff vehicles parking there Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Council members approved allowing the City to rent the space, upon negotiating a rental fee, as well as the condition that in case of a mid-week funeral service at the church, the City will be advised not to use the parking lot for the day in question, the same procedure as was followed a number of years ago when the City of Stratford rented our parking lot.

### STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT



We all know that money can't buy happiness. Rather, happiness comes from being content with what we have and feeling like we are making a difference in the world. It has been suggested that we can put our children on the path to a happy and successful life by teaching them how to use and manage money so that it brings them contentment, fills their needs and allows them to help others.

Financial experts suggest that children should be taught to divide their allowance into three or four sections – to spend, to save, to invest and to donate. **Spending** covers basic needs and wants. **Saving** teaches patience and planning. **Investing** looks to the future. **Donating** gives children the opportunity to share their good fortune with those less fortunate.

Our Lord calls each of us to share what we have. He tells us, **“Much will be required of the person entrusted with much and even more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.”** Luke 12:48 Children who learn to give away a portion of their financial blessings not only are following the Lord’s command but they also begin to discover that sharing their good fortune can be very rewarding.

However, we do need to remember that raising a generous child is a challenge in a society that constantly teaches children to want more and more things for themselves. One of the key factors in teaching children to be generous is to let them see you giving. After all,

children mimic what they **see**, not what they **hear**. Food for thought!

### JUNE 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	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Readers	Usher Captains	Counting Captains
June 3	Darlene Illman & Stephen Fischer	David & Sheila Wittig	Anne Cooper	Brian Wilker	Ellen Wolfe
June 10	N/A	Wayne & Joanne Young	Stephen Fischer	Brian Wilker	Lynnette McLeod
June 17	Linda Springer & Ed Illman	Wayne & Dianne Yundt	Mary-Lou Drown	Fritz Steigmeier	Lynnette McLeod
June 24	N/A	Gerry & Janet Ahrens	Dianne Hiller	Fritz Steigmeier	Paul Hansen