



Zion Lutheran Monthly



December 2010

KEEPING CHRIST-MAS

Here we are, another monthly church newsletter.



What do you want to bet the Pastor's going to write something about how busy we get this time of year, the miracle of either the birth of Christ or the incarnation, the companionship of Christ for people who might be lonely, and the need to keep Christ in Christmas. I'd take that bet, because I want to use this space to write about something different than the usual pre-Christmas Pastor's Newsletter Article.

I want to give you a simple challenge. Two challenges, actually.

Growing up (and by that I mean until I went to seminary), I never went to church on Christmas Day, yet made a big deal about how Christmas was a Christian holiday. "Keep Christ in Christmas," I wittingly told my friends and people who I worried would miss the Christ part of CHRIST-mas. But come December 25th, I did what I feared other people would do: nothing whatsoever to do with Christ. I woke up, headed downstairs, drank coffee (or, before I was 11, milk), and went through the family ritual

of opening stocking presents before moving on to presents under the tree. A big "Christmas Breakfast" and a couple of hours playing with my new toys and voila! Another Christmas in the books. And absolutely no way someone from the outside looking in would know I wanted to keep Christ in CHRIST-mas; I celebrated Christmas the way I feared the reprobate did.



If we claim Christmas (that is, the 25th of December) to be a Christian holiday, we should recognize it in a Christian way. One way (but not the only way) we can do this is to park our cars in front of the church and spend a portion of the Christmas morning hearing God's Word and remembering together the events of that first Christmas Day and offering God our thanks for what He has done for us in sending Christ Jesus

in the flesh. I encourage those of you who want to keep Christ in Christmas to consider attending our Christmas Day service (10:30... on the 25th).

Secondly, I want to draw your attention to our mid-week Advent Services. With so many young families in our congregation, we've bumped back the start-time for these services to 7:00 so that you can be back home and have your children in bed (or deal with them not wanting to be in bed) by 8:00. In order to ease the craziness that it can be to get everyone home from work, practice, various clubs and activities and to church by 7:00 for worship, we will be serving hot, delicious dinners starting at 6:00 in the undercroft (or church basement). The theme of our mid-week Advent Services will be "Forerunners." We'll be focusing on the Old Testament Prophets, John the Baptist, the 72, and Christian Teachers. Because of the nature of these services, please come "as you are." Don't feel the need to wear your Sunday Best on Wednesday evening.

In Christ,
Pastor Duncan

A blessed Advent and Merry Christmas to all! All the best,

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Advent Services:

Wed - Dec 1, 8, 15, 22
Dinner @ 6:00
Service @ 7:00

Advent One:

Old Testament Prophets

Advent Two:

John the Baptist

Advent Three:

The 72

Advent Four:

Christian Teachers

Christmas Program:

Sun - Dec 19
Dinner @ 5:30
Program @ 7:00

Christmas Eve Service:

Fri - Dec 24
Service @ 7:00

Christmas Day Service:

Sat - Dec 25
Service @ 10:30 am

Church, Mission & Synod (CMS) & Plate Finances

As of November 19, 2010, we are estimating \$5,890 cash on hand. All bills through November 20th have been paid. The negative income was due to tuition payment coming in late. We did receive some good news. Our mortgage company reduced our monthly payment by ¼ point. On the flip side, we are seeing some slight increases in the number of the monthly utility bills.



October Income	\$26,051.00
October Expenses	<u>35,497.00</u>
Unfavorable to Income	—\$9,446.00

Continue to pray for Zion that we are able to maintain this positive financial picture throughout the new fiscal church year.

Thanksgiving Offering

The Church Council members agreed to use the Thanksgiving offering to support two local outreach groups: Washington City Missions and Local Campus Ministry. Pastor Andrae, who recently preached at Zion while Pastor McLellan was attending the Eastern District meeting in New York, runs the Campus Ministry program.

Bob Schmidt, Chairman



Notes From the Preschool

Time flies and in its flight there comes the change of season bringing with it the wondrous spirit of Christmas. As the Spirit works in our Christmas celebrations, we want to share what the Lord has done. Just as the shepherds said more than two thousand years ago: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord told us about. When they had seen him, they spread the word that had been told them...The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen." (Luke 2:17,20). Our lives too are changed through His birth, death, and resurrection. Jesus won salvation for us. Our sins are forgiven and we spread the Good News and glory and praise God. Here at the school we are spreading the Good News.

The children are hard at practice learning their songs for Christmas. The Word will be spread in music at our annual Christmas Program to be held on

Thursday, December 16th at 7:00 p.m. Please join us for this special night and enjoy so many of God's beautiful children singing His praise.

We are helping the children experience the joy of giving gifts as well as receiving them. There are so many people hurting this year, not only for physical necessities, but many children and parents are in need of knowing that there are many who love and care about them. We have been collecting much needed food for the Food Bank. We are helping collect sweatshirts for veterans (Christmas Sweats for Vets) as part of Paula Gardner's daughter, Emma's, Cadet Alumni Group. We are joining with the church in purchasing gifts for children on the Angel Tree. There are so many more names on the tree this year.

The children are planning their Christmas parties, making gifts, and enjoying the many stories of Christmas. They wish you all a very special Christ-

mas. We proclaim, Lord God, all history is Yours, all power is Yours, and we are Yours forever. Hail Christ Child, all hail!

The First Christmas

**No tinsel, no carols,
or even snow,
In the little town of Bethlehem
so long ago.**

**No hotel, no home,
no room at all,
Just the warmth of a manger
lowly stall.**

**God gave us this gift!
God gave us His Son!
Now let there be peace and
love for everyone.**

Have a Jesus-filled Christmas season.

In His Service,

Carole Davis, Director

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Laurie Eckels | 5 Benjamin Ackerman | 13 William Collins | 27 Kay Lyn Case |
| 2 John Coyle | 5 Steve Dibert | 13 Susan Stone | 27 Rebekah Quinlan |
| 2 Sharon Oechslein | 5 April Rilius | 17 Bob Haunschild | 28 Allyson Morgan |
| 2 Abigale Morgan | 7 Bill Kammerer | 18 Bob Spotti | 29 Kathleen DeRosa |
| 3 Linda Seibel | 12 Paul Green | 23 Megan Pasquini | 29 Leah Luedeman |
| 3 William (Auggie) Bishop | 12 Michael Oechslein | 23 Adam Elikier | 29 Riese Smidt |
| 5 Dick Wible | 13 Suzanne Ivancza | 24 Adrian Kammerer | 30 Jordan James |



Service Participants for December



Greeters & Acolytes

DATE	TIME	GREETERS	ACOLYTES
December 1	7:00 pm	Wayne & Barb Oechslein	Molly Oelschlager
December 5	8:00 am	Bob & Nancy Spotti	Missy Radovich
	10:30 am	George & Jane Kozak	Mia Case
December 8	7:00 pm	Bob & Diane Schmidt	Joshua Gielarowski
December 12	8:00 am	Jack & Jacque Oelschlager	Sara Vallelunga
	10:30 am	Rose Steranko	Molly Oelschlager
December 15	7:00 pm	Janet & Marian Oelschlager	TBA
December 19	8:00 am	Bob & Shelly James	Anthony Vallelunga
	10:30 am	Jim & Marylou Neill	Mia Case
December 22	7:00 pm	Brent & Marianne Miller, Millie Thielet	TBA
December 24	7:00 pm	Susan & Missy Radovich	TBA
December 25	10:30 am	Joan Kovach	TBA
December 26	8:00 am	Bill & Carole Schrag	Missy Radovich
	10:30 am	Michael & Deborah Sterba	Rachel Klemash
December 31	7:00 pm	Gielarowski Family	Joshua Gielarowski
January 2	8:00 am	Gene & Sharon Koop	Joshua Gielarowski
	10:30 am	Janet Hickey	Ben Ackerman

ELDERS	Bill Bishop & John Gielarowski
ALTAR GUILD	Elsie DallaPiazza, Jean Endler, Mary Hutula
USHERS @ 8:00 am	Bill Becker, Brent Miller, Wayne Oechslein, Larry Zreliak
USHERS @ 10:30 am	Neil Ackerman, Tom Bicusky, Steve Kovach, Jim Neill

If you are unable to participate on the assigned date, please find your own substitute and notify the Church Office (412) 221-4776) of the change.

A Word of Thanks from Rachel Quinlan:

Dear Members of Zion Lutheran Church,

"And my God will meet your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." -Philippians 4:19

Thank You



Thank you so much for your generous check and box of food! The money has been put to great use as I am preparing to attend a Beautiful Feet mission trip at Concordia Austin in a few weeks. I have also been purchasing textbooks and other materials for my future classroom, as it will not be long until I graduate! :) My friends have been enjoying the food as well, especially during these weeks of midterms. It is disappearing quickly! Your kindness is again greatly appreciated. May God continue to bless you as you serve Him. Let us never forget how much He loves us!

In Our Rock and Our Redeemer,
Rachel Quinlan



Aidan Jacob Dibert, born on October 2, 2010, was welcomed into our congregation through infant baptism on Sunday, November 21st.



Aidan with his proud parents, Steve Dibert and Janet Walleck.

Where Was Pastor?



A couple of weeks ago, I was out of town at a Collegial Event for the Pastoral Leadership Institute. The Pastoral Leadership Institute, or PLI, is a synodically endorsed and supported 4-year program designed to give selected Pastors training in the areas of ministry not emphasized in the Seminary. 2011 begins my last year in PLI.

Organizational leadership, missional emphasis, and time management (for lack of a better term) have been the areas we have studied so far. Each year, the participants in PLI have three events they attend.

The major event is a 4-5 day conference, hosted by a large LCMS congregation. All of the PLI classes attend this conference together. There are pre- and post-conference readings and papers that are required. The conference is an intensive learning opportunity, with lectures and seminars lasting 10-14 hours every day.

The second annual event is for the PLI small groups. The small group I am in is made up of 6 pastors. We enjoy each other's company and wisdom more than any of us thought we would. We covet our small group conference and the conversations that take place more than anything else! The small group travels to an LCMS congregation and spends 3-4 days learning from the church staff and lay-leadership what they are doing, what works and what needs improvement. There is also a good amount of "collegial time."

The third annual event is also for the PLI small groups. The third event exposes the PLI students to auxiliary ministries provided by the LCMS to its church workers. Grace Place (Pastoral Retreat and Refreshment) and TCN (Transforming Churches Network) have been the highlights of this event. A couple of weeks ago, I was at the TCN event, which was held in a multi-ethnic setting in Queens, NY, where we got to see how our denomination does ministry in an inner-city environment.

Wives of PLI students are invited to the major event. There is also an annual event only for the wives. It has been very encouraging to see how PLI pays attention to the Pastors' wives, providing them opportunities for fellowship and learning!

The last event in PLI is a 2-week mission trip to anywhere in the world. I'm looking forward to this for many reasons. One of them is that I will be able to start a relationship with an international mission that we (Zion Lutheran) will be able to work with for the long haul! This could be an amazing opportunity for Zion to see what God is doing in another part of the world and be used by God in spreading the gospel in that part of the world!

And so, to summarize what has become a very long, wordy explanation of why I wasn't in church a couple of weeks ago, I ask for your prayers as I enter my final year with PLI. I hope that what I learn at the conferences and in conversation with my friends and brother pastors will have a positive impact on Zion and her ministries. If what is learned at PLI doesn't translate into fruitfulness in the congregation, what's the point?

-Pastor Duncan



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



Sunday, December 19th

The Interaction Committee and the Sunday School teachers are combining their Christmas celebrations this year for one BIG evening for the entire family.

This year's dinner will be catered and served under the direction of the Interaction Committee beginning at 5:30 p.m. We are asking families to bring a finger dessert to share. Your desserts will be enjoyed with homemade punch after the Sunday School program.

MENU

- Ham
- Chicken Romano
- Scalloped Potatoes
- Green Beans Almandine
- Tossed Salad
- Dinner Rolls
- Beverages

At the end of the dinner, everyone will be asked to move into the church for the Sunday School program which will begin around 7:00 p.m. After the program, the desserts, punch, and fellowship will be enjoyed by all in the parish hall.

The cost of the dinner is \$8.50 per adult and \$3.50 per child ages 4-11. Children under 4 are free. Please pay for your dinner(s) with your reservation form below. Checks should be made payable to Zion Lutheran Church with "Christmas Party" on the memo line. Any additional "free-will" donations will be gratefully accepted as these dinner charges do not cover our costs.

The planning committee is working very hard to make this a pleasurable evening for **EVERY-ONE** in the congregation. We are looking forward to a BIG turnout, so see you at the **ALL CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTY** on December 19th.

Reservation Form

We (I) will be attending the ALL CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTY on December 19th.

Number of attendees age 12 and up @ \$8.50 _____

Number of attendees age 4-11 @ \$3.50 _____

Number of attendees age 3 and under _____

Cash or check enclosed Amount: _____

Family name: _____

Please return this form to the box marked "Church Christmas Party" in the narthex.

December 2010



Dear Brothers and Sisters of Zion,

Once again we begin a new church year. As we enter into the season of Advent, we begin the preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ, our Savior. It is a joyful season, when we focus on giving to others because we have been given so much, including our forgiveness of sins and salvation.

It has been the tradition of Zion to take a collection for a Christmas gift for Pastor and Staff to show our appreciation for their efforts throughout the year. Please find enclosed two envelopes, one for Pastor and one for Staff, where you can contribute a free will offering toward their Christmas gift. A box will be put in the Narthex, where you can deposit the envelopes up until December 24th. These envelopes will be collected and the amount for the Staff will be distributed between Darren, Rhonda and Paula. In the envelope marked Staff please insert cash only. In the envelope marked Pastor insert either cash or a check made out to Pastor McLellan.

The Board of Elders wishes you a Blessed and Merry Christmas. On behalf of the congregation, we thank you for your generosity in donating toward the Christmas gift for Pastor and the Staff.

Sincerely,

The Board of Elders

JUMONVILLE!



YOUTH GROUP ADVENTURE

23 youth and chaperones left Zion Lutheran Church the evening of November 19th for Camp Jumonville (located just outside of Uniontown). Not knowing what was in store for them, these 23 people embarked on the first youth trip organized by Zion Lutheran Church in 25 years!

After a campfire and s'mores on Friday night, the group spent the lion's share of Saturday participating in "team building" activities. Devotions punctuated the action. These devotions focused on the ability of teenagers to do more at this point in their lives than they think they can, what Scripture says about being a teenager, and what unique roles men and women play in the Kingdom.



After a devotion and lunch on Sunday, the group headed into the woods, to the high-elements challenge course for the "King Swing." This appropriately-named apparatus was used to hoist anyone brave enough to give it a try 45' in the air before releasing them to swing freely over terra firma.

The group returned to Zion Lutheran Church on Sunday evening, tired, but thankful for the opportunity to grow closer to each other and to the Lord.



A big THANK YOU to the chaperones who gave up their weekend to serve on this retreat! AND a big THANK YOU to Zion Lutheran Church, who funded a good portion of this retreat from the "Youth Budget." The future for the youth group at Zion looks promising!

-Pastor Duncan

From the Parsonage.

A big THANK YOU to all the volunteers who came out for the Work Day on November 20th! The grounds around the parsonage look great. We are so thankful for the work that was done to make the area around our home look good.

Next time we'll try not to schedule a youth retreat at the same time and help out with the clean-up. Thanks again!

-Pastor Duncan and Alissa



Zion Lutheran Church

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The Rev. Duncan McLellan



Youth News



YOUTH BOWLING - Saturday, December 4th at AMF Lanes in Mt. Lebanon from 3:00 to 5:00. The cost of \$15.00 includes bowling, shoe rental, pizza, and soft drinks.

It is a busy season for the **SUNDAY SCHOOL** as they gear up for their Christmas Program on Sunday, December 19th. For those involved, please mark your calendars with the following schedule:

- Sat, Dec 11: PRACTICE 10:30-12
PIZZA & CRAFTS 12-1
- Sun, Dec 12: SING @ 10:30 SERVICE
- Sat, Dec 18: PIZZA 11:30-12
DRESS REHEARSAL 12-1:30
COUNTRY MEADOWS 2-3
- Sun, Dec 19: SING @ 10:30 SERVICE
CHRISTMAS DINNER 5:30
CHRISTMAS PROGRAM (after dinner)



Don't forget to turn in your participation & permission forms.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



FOOD BANK

Collection for this month's Bridgeville Area Food Bank drive is Sunday, December 12. The "item of the month" is hot drinks. This would include coffee, tea, hot chocolate/cocoa, etc. You are also welcome to help at the Food Bank every third Saturday of the month between 7:45 and 12:00 at Bethany Presbyterian Church.

Choose an angel gift tag from the tree in the back of the church. Each tag is marked with an age and size for clothing. For those tags which only have a child's age and gender, the gift should be a toy. Bring in an unwrapped gift (costing around \$20.00) with the gift tag attached by Sunday, December 12.

ANGEL TREE

POINSETTIA ORDERS

Order poinsettias to decorate the church on Christmas Eve. They can be purchased to remember special loved ones. You may take the poinsettias home after the Christmas Eve Service. Each poinsettia is \$6.25. Place your order in the box on the narthex desk.

If you are interested in being a part of Zion Lutheran's email or phone prayer chains, please contact the church office at 412-221-4776 or secretary@zlcb.org to sign up.

EMAIL & PHONE PRAYER CHAIN

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Our monthly newsletter is now available online at zlcb.org. Inform the church office of your email address in order to receive the newsletter via the cyber highway. Let's save money and trees!