

The Tower Call

Vol. 47 No. 2

The Newsletter of Zion United Church of Christ

February 2008

From the Ram's Den

I want to repeat here the theme I emphasized in my part of the pastors' "state of the church" sermon on Annual Meeting Sunday. I want to be sure it gets to all of you who missed that day, and I don't mind at all repeating it for those of you who were there.

On the first of May we will mark five years of service by your pastoral team. When Lynn, Dave and I began, I remember explaining to Elsa and to others who knew the medical model: "It's like I'm the head of the department and I have three residents." One of those residents has "graduated from residency" and gone on to do his own service in his own "practice." Dave and Lynn have stayed here at Zion. While their faithfulness to our ministry might suggest to some that they needed to be continued in advanced training, that is not the case. By last Summer it was clear to me that both Lynn and Dave had "graduated" from residency. They had become fully qualified professional practitioners. They have continued to be ready to learn, but that is not a sign of their being beginners. I have long since learned that it is one of the key marks of a real professional. The quality of their service here provides the other essential mark of a real professional – competence.

Now if you or I were to try this line on them, they would probably show embarrassment and start belittling their accomplishments. The old fashioned name for that kind of behavior is humility. That's not a sign of a real professional, but it is a sign of a genuine human being. In fact, their "denial" would very possibly be stated humorously. I take that as another sign of genuine humanity, at least the kind we like to be around. Certainly, we have often shared humor among us in staff meetings – and elsewhere.

Still another way they would try to avoid our praise would be some comment on along the lines of "It is just one more sign that God is still speaking." And that points to the most important reality about them. They are real Christians. Their spirituality is genuine, filling their presence. They know that their gifts are gifts from God. They know that the good

things that have been happening to Zion Church are gifts from God. They know that our challenges for the future are gifts from God.

Their devotion shows in many ways. Those of you who receive our email prayers will often have seen it shining through their comments on needs for which we've been asked to pray. I have seen it as well when they have personally been hit hard by one of the difficult times of life.

Norm Kansfield has been meeting with us regularly for the last few months. In a conversation between Norm and me about good things that have developed in Zion, I said I saw Lynn and Dave as gifts from God. To which, Norm commented: "You are really fortunate in the colleagues God has sent you."

So, it is time to recognize pleasant reality and celebrate. Lynn and Dave have "graduated" from their residency. They are full-fledged practitioners of the pastoral arts. I just thank God that they are committed to continuing to practice them here at Zion.

Bill Ramsden

Lenten Sermon Series

At pastoral staff meeting recently, we were reviewing our plans for worship in the coming weeks and looking at the possibility of sharing a Lenten study series with two other congregations. We decided to carry that a step forward and look at the Scripture passages assigned for the Sundays of Lent. I suggested that each of us look at the texts for the Sunday(s) we would preach and see what reached out to grab us as God still speaking.

The result was our recognition that we really had a sermon series on our hands. This note is to share our thought and preliminary plan with you, so you can play around with the ideas yourself and come even more prepared to join in worship and the act of preaching (it's true: the listener is an active participant in all good preaching).

Our theme is "The Ways We Come to Christ." It works out as follows:

February 10, *Testing*

(Matt 4:1-11, Dave preaching)
 Feb 17, *Sneaking*
 (John 3:1-17, Bill preaching)
 Feb 24, *Stumbling*
 (John 4:5-42, Bill preaching)
 March 1, *Unseeing*
 (John 9:1-41, Lynn preaching)
 March 8, *Dying*
 (John 11:1-45, Norm preaching)
 March 15 (Palm Sunday), *Marching*
 (Matt 21:1-11, Bill preaching)
 March 23 (Easter), *Weeping*
 (John 20:1-18, Bill preaching)

Ash Wednesday

Our Music and Worship Committee has chosen to try something a bit different for Ash Wednesday this year. We will have two separate services for the distribution of ashes. One will be held at 11:00 am and the other at 7:00 pm. Each service will be very informal consisting of prayers, scripture readings and placing of ashes for those who choose to receive them. The committee thought that a time of quiet reflection with the option of receiving ashes could be very powerful and meaningful. We hope you'll consider attending one of the services on Wednesday February 6th 2008.

LENT TOGETHER: A Time of Study, Fellowship and Worship

This unique opportunity to grow in our walk with our Lord is a joint venture by St. John's Lutheran Church, Zion United Church of Christ and Christ Episcopal Church.

FORMAT: meeting weekly in St. John's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall (9 North Ninth Street) Wednesday evenings - February 13, 20, 27 and March 5 and 12 - from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. The atmosphere will definitely be informal as we sit in 'pews' consisting of round tables, over coffee, juice, cookies and cake! Bible study time will be followed by worship with a short homily, family prayer and some of those lovely evening hymns we don't often get to sing!

LEADERS: will be pastors from the three churches: Gail Kees (St. John's); Beth Haynes and Charles Rice (Christ Episcopal); Bill Ramsden, Norm Cansfield, Lynn Breedy and Dave Berryman (Zion U.C.C.)

THEME: *Outsiders In - the Meaning of Jesus in Matthew.* The following passages will be studied:

February 13 Matthew 8:5-13: healing of the Centurion's servant
 February Matthew 9:18-26: healing of the woman with the flow of blood; raising of the ruler's daughter
 February 27 Matthew 12:9-14: healing on the Sabbath
 March 5 Matthew 15:21-28: healing of Canaanite woman's daughter
 March 12 Matthew 27:32-44: Simon of Cyrene at the crucifixion

STITCHES FOR GOD: Needlewoman Agnes Webb has, for many years, offered a Lenten class with the above title. This year, participants may choose from 1) a counted cross stitch sampler of the Doxology or 2) a 3-part counted cross stitch version of the Nativity scene. Participants will need to pay for materials and decide which project they wish to undertake at the first meeting or by calling St. John's (421-8520). This needlework circle will meet at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday mornings during Lent (Feb. 12, 19, 26 and March 4 and 11) in St. John's Church Library. Those who work during the day may still order a kit and complete on their own. Happy stitching!

Doing Theology Together

Several of you have asked, "What does a Resident Theologian do?" Or, for that matter, what does *any* theologian do? A theologian is a person who thinks about God, and who seeks to help others think about God. The Bible is the book that God has given to the church to help the church understand what God is like and what God wants for us and from us. But the Bible is not written in the way that we are used to books being written. It doesn't say to us, "This is what God is like." Instead, the Bible tells us stories about God and God's interaction with people, over the course of long centuries of time. It gives us a bit of information about God here, and another bit of information about God there. The first job of a theologian, then, is to track those bits of information, and to connect them, just as we used to connect the dots to reveal the outline of a picture. This allows us to say specific things about God – such as "God is, above all else, gracious." A theologian then helps others understand what the picture means, and teaches others how to go about connecting the dots themselves.

Norman Kansfield, Resident Theologian

Lynn's Lines...

- Another joy! *Liz and Jim* will again be grandparents! Congratulations *Seth and Carissa!*
- *Cody* is home from Afghanistan and *Linda and Larry* are very happy.
- Thanks to the *bulletin board brigade* of *Nancy and Fay!*
- Breakfast at Brownie's....Were *Dave's* "glasses steamed" up or was he "just in a fog?"
- Missing the meeting, *Norm*, is one thing, but not sending the donuts is another.
- Happy birthday *Barb D.!* Now just what number is this one???
- The *Keepers* at *Cranes!!!* And...*Dave* is now recovering at home!
- Congrats to *Cori* for winning an art award at ESU for her drawing of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Sorry *Barb*, the cheeseheads came awfully close and now with Brett retiring, you can root for the Eagles!
- *Cassie* is 18!!!

Terri Miles and **Mike Wetmore** will reprise their roles in A.R. Gurney's - World - Famous - Two - Person Play **Love Letters** at the **Shawnee Playhouse on Friday February 15th, 2008 at 8 p.m.** For further information call the playhouse at **570 421 -5093** or see Mike. A performance of "Love Letters" is the Ultimate Valentine's Day experience!

By the time you get this edition of the Tower call, football season will be over and yes, we can start thinking Spring training and the Phils!!!

Thank You Notes

TO: Everyone at Zion, including the children of the Sunday School,

You all have been very supportive through out my Marine Corps career. I just want to say thank you for all the prayers and letters that you sent. You have helped to keep God by my side through everything I do. You also help me maintain a positive attitude even through some really tough time. And most important to me is that you continue to help and pray for my family in my absence. For that I appreciate everyone at Zion and accept you as family, as I have since I was little. I hope you are all doing well and I can't wait until my return home so I can come thank everyone of you in person. You

have no idea how much the simplest prayer makes life over here so much better.

God bless you all,

Matt Serfass, PFC 2111/USMC

We would like to thank our Church family for the many visits, cards, prayers, telephone calls and "goodies" during my 24 day hospitalization. I especially want to thank "Pastor Bill" for his 20 some visits, the communion he served me and wonderful discussions and also Pastors Dave and Lynn for their visits.

We also want to thank everyone for the calls Edna received offering help.

Zion people care about one another, we must not let it slip away. It is part of the adhesive that binds us together.

Your thoughtfulness certainly helped with my recuperation.

Thank you Zion.

David Crane

Bellows From The Belfry

The bells for All Saints Day were a huge success in November. The bats raised over \$100.00. Thank you to everyone for all their support. A special "Thank You" to JoEllen Berryman for the beautiful job she did putting everything together. In November, the bats got together at the Dierolf's house to bake 8 pumpkin pies for the Harvest Home baskets. By the time they were done, we had 16 pumpkin pie. Four of the pies went in the baskets, one went home with each of the bats, and 4 were donated to the Linger lunch the next day. Who would have thought they would have enjoyed it so much. Some of the money we raised selling the bells was used to purchase the supplies to make the pies. Thank you to the Dierolf family for their hospitality.

The bats took a hiatus for most of the month of December. It's a very busy month for everyone and many of the youth were involved in the Children's Christmas Eve Service. Also, the bats helped assemble and distribute "The Story of the Candy Cane" treats at the end of the service. In January, the bats are selling 6" hoagies for Superbowl Sunday. The cost of the hoagies is \$4.00. Choices include Italian, turkey or ham with either provolone or American cheese. We will be selling the hoagies through January 27, 2007. All orders and money are due by January 27, 2007. The hoagies will be available for pick up on Sunday,

February 3, 2007. If anyone would like to order, order forms can be found in the bulletins or sign-up sheets are in fellowship hall. If anyone has any questions, please contact Debbie Mancuso. Overall, the bats have had a wonderful year and are looking forward to 2008.

Women's Guild

Need a birthday gift? Hostess gift?? Or just need to replace those old dish cloths?? The Women's Guild can help! They always have on sale dish cloths, vanilla and knives. Please see any member to make a purchase.

Greetings from Our 2008 Budget

Hello again. I'm trying to get used to talking to you all each month.

This month gives me an obvious starting point. What else can I say?!

That starting point is the great beginning for my year. You do know how to make a budget feel good. Your regular envelope giving is what keeps us moving forward. So I have to say, "Thank you."

You heard me fussing last month about possible problems from things beyond our control. Well, we've avoided one of them for the time being, anyway. We can be thankful that January spared us from weather cancellations. Your giving didn't have to double up to compensate (as it did in December); it just sailed right through.

I'm afraid I can't say that about the squeeze on our personal budgets. If recession hadn't been the big economic worry last month, I'd go on about inflation. In short, we really are facing higher costs for the basic things of our lives – to say nothing of the special things. Zion is facing those pressures, too. Our treasurer figured that we spent \$74.00 per day on heating in December. There is another increase in my pay responsibilities that was within Zion's control; but the need to take it on was not really a spiritual option for your leaders. As you affirmed in your vote at the Annual Meeting, we owe it to ourselves and our staff to provide 5% annual increases. And in the case of Lynn and Dave, we need to start moving what we pay up to match the time they in fact give. That is a spiritually necessary increase in budget, but that doesn't stop me from being concerned about finding a matching increase in the income I receive.

So I'll pass on what seems to me to be a "neat idea." I overheard it at a Finance Committee meeting. I think they were planning to say something at the Annual Meeting, so this may not come to you as a new idea. But I think it is a good one.

One of the counters had noticed in the process of recording the contributions that a couple of Zion's

people seemed to be adding a dollar to their weekly offering each week. Now, that may have been what they put on their personal faith promise card, but one dollar more than a round number sure looked like adding a special little something.

That's a different way to "adopt a budget." Adding a dollar each week is not likely to be a financial problem for anyone, and the added \$50.00 apiece if each of us did that all year would make a huge difference for me. Think about it. Better yet, try it for a few weeks. If you do, I think you'll find it's made no problem for your personal budget and you'll feel extra good about doing a little extra to help your church.

Seems to me, a suggestion like that is really like taking a gift to a party. It's a way of saying thanks. And, as usual, that's what I mostly want to say to you: Thank you.

February Ministries

Date	Hospitality/ Greeter	Usher	Counter	Reader	Coffee Social	Nursery	Acolyte & Bell Ringer	Communion
Feb 3	Nina Woodling Nancy Armitage Vern Moyer	Bill Schmidt Mike Altemose	Jean Moyer, Leslie Berger, Barb VanNortwick	Ed Flory	Linda Bailey Amy Snyder	Lori Rike	Bethany Bachelder	Doug Hilyard Tony Trunzo Sherry Swisher
Feb 10	Brenda Mitstifer Carol Underwood Virginia Bachelder	Brenda Mitstifer Carol Underwood	Keith Dierolf, Maryann Reed, Liz Ruckel	Kathy Walton	Jean Miller Irene Smith	Dawn Walp	Alex Reincke	
Feb 17	Sherry Swisher Donna Deutsch Karen Trunzo	Donna Deutsch Karen Trunzo	Sherry Swisher, Jean Miller, Karen Ezzo	Scott Walp	Linger Lunch	Becky Weirich	Jesse Mancuso	
Feb 24	Linda Bailey Dawn Walp Candice Davis	Ray Davis Tony Trunzo	Barb Dierolf, Linda Bailey, JoEllen Berryman	Keith Dierolf	Dawn Walp Barbara VanNortwick	Wanda DeYong	Nathaniel Bachelder	

November Attendance and Weekly Offerings
Budget needs per week: \$2390.00

Date	Last Year	This Year	Reg Env.	Other	Total
1-6	95	104	2256.00	6626.0	8882.00
1-13	101	118	1903.00	721.00	2624.00
1-20	96	104	3167.00	369.00	3532.00
1-27	110				

Zion United Church of Christ Committees

Public Relations Irene Smith

Christian Education Virginia Bachelder (chair), Staff: Lynn

Building Tony Trunzo (chair), Barbara VanNortwick (secretary), Mike Altemose, Bill Schmidt, Bill Swisher, Dick Ezzo, Mark Kelly, Erick Weirich, Ray Davis, Vern Moyer, Staff: Dave

Endowment Rob Miller (chair), Jean Moyer, Liz Ruckel, Doug Hilyard (consultant), Staff:

Finance Jean Moyer (chair), Keith Dierolf, Dot Hilyard, Joyce Weishaupt, Floyd LaBarre, Fay Perri, Ed Flory Staff: Bill

Music and Worship Elaine Shuey, Gail Stevens (chair), Arlene Altemose, Jim Ruckel, Karen Trunzo, Bill Swisher, Sherry Spolski, Staff: Lynn.

Nominating Arlene Altemose, Liz Ruckel, Keith Dierolf, Staff: Lynn and Bill

Pastor Parish Relations Amy Snyder (chair), Dave Crane, Maryann Reed, Scott Walp, Mike Wetmore, Staff: Bill

Church Growth Committee: Brenda Mitstifer (Chair), Linda Bailey (secretary), Larry Bailey, Jim Ruckel, Sherry Swisher, Irene Smith, Nina Woodling, Pam Reincke, Bill Ramsden, Dave Berryman, Lynn Breedy

Youth Committee: JoEllen Berryman, Barbara Dierolf, Dawn Walp, Becky Weirich, Deb Mancuso, Staff: Lynn

Decorating Committee: JoEllen Berryman, Jan Campbell, Deb Mancuso, Gail Flory, Maryann Reed, Liz Ruckel

Bulletin Boards: Fay Perri, Nancy Armitage

February 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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AA Groups at Zion: 6:30am – Main St. Group 10:00am– Eye Opener Group 8:00pm – S’burg Group

Bible Study Group meets Tuesday at 10:30am. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday.

					1 AA 6 & 10AM	2 AA 10:00 AM
3 Worship with Communion 10:30 Coffee Hour 11:30 Children’s Choir 11:30	4 AA 6 & 10AM Debt. Ann Noon TOPS 5:30 Keepers 7:00	5 AA 6 & 10AM AA 8:00PM	6 AA 6 & 10AM Music & Worship 6:00 <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	7 AA 6 & 10AM Bell Choir 6:00 Adam’s Rib, 6:45 Debt. Ann. 7:00 Choir 7:30	8 AA 6 & 10AM	9 AA 10:00 AM
10 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour 11:30 Children’s Choir 11:30 Church Growth 12noon	11 AA 6 & 10AM Debt. Ann Noon TOPS 5:30 Keepers 7:00 Finance Committee 7:00	12 AA 6 & 10AM AA 8:00PM Bible Group 10:30am Consistory 7:00	13 AA 6 & 10AM Lenten Program 6:30pm	14 AA 6 & 10AM Bell Choir 6:00 Debt. Ann. 7:00 Choir 7:30	15 AA 6 & 10AM	16 AA 10:00 AM
17 Worship 10:30 Linger Lunch 11:30 Children’s Choir 11:30	18 AA 6 & 10AM Debt. Ann Noon TOPS 5:30 Keepers 7:00	19 AA 6 & 10AM AA 8:00PM	20 AA 6 & 10AM Lenten Program 6:30pm	21 AA 6 & 10AM Bell Choir 6:00 Adam’s Rib, 6:45 Debt. Ann. 7:00 Choir 7:30	22 AA 6 & 10AM	23 AA 10AM
24 Worship 10:30 Coffee Hour 11:30 Children’s Choir 11:30	25 AA 6 & 10AM Debt. Ann Noon TOPS 5:30 Keepers 7:00	26 AA 6 & 10AM AA 8:00PM Bible Group 10:30am	27 AA 6 & 10AM Lenten Program 6:30pm	28 AA 6 & 10AM Debt. Ann. 7:00 Bell Choir 6:00 Choir 7:30	29 AA 6 & 10AM	

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

2-2	<i>Leslie Berger</i>	2-14	<i>Richard Ezzo</i>
2-3	<i>Karen Ezzo</i>	2-18	<i>Norene Rosso</i>
2-7	<i>Libby Nonnemacher</i>	2-21	<i>Timothy Ruckel</i>
2-10	<i>Kristine Weber</i>	2-23	<i>Lori Bentzoni</i>
2-11	<i>Nora Cilurso</i>	2-25	<i>Irene Smith</i>
2-11	<i>Sharon Swisher</i>	2-25	<i>Stuart Bailey</i>
2-11	<i>John Donovan</i>		

Special People: If anyone knows of any others, please place their name along with their address in the Secretary's mailbox and the list will be printed in the next Tower Call. Then you can remember them with a card.

Hillcrest Retirement Village

6000 Running Valley Rd, Stroudsburg, PA 18360 - Helen Keller

Stroud Manor

Brown Street, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301- Florence LaBar

Pocono Lutheran Village

Brown Street, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301 - Dorothy Phillips, Gerry Nonnemacher

Milford Manor

2200 Milford Road, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301 – Barbara Gilpin

Pleasant Valley Manor

Shirley Williams, however, all her mail is going to her son's address:

Kim Williams, PO Box 876, Pocono Summit 18346

Grace Park

Main Street, Stroudsburg - Ethel & Ronnie Dickisson

Betty Lightner, c/o Linda Horvath, RD 7, Box 7333, Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Larry Ashton, 475 Mt. Nebo Rd., E. Stroudsburg, PA 18301

Elizabeth Smith, 1055 W. Main St., Apt. 404, Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Betty Warner, 772 Bryant Street, Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Glendyr Jones, c/o Masonic Home of NJ, S-324, 902 Jacksonville Rd., Burlington, NJ 08016-3896

Zion United Church of Christ Consistory

President	Arlene Altemose
Vice President	Brenda Mitstifer
Secretary	Liz Ruckel
Members	Arlene Altemose, Nora Cilurso, Liz & Jim Ruckel, Jean Moyer, Karen Trunzo, Barbara VanNortwick, Brenda Mitstifer, Michael Rosso, Ed Flory, Mark Kelly
Pastoral Staff	Bill Ramsden; <i>Senior Pastor</i> , Dave Berryman, Lynn Breedy, <i>Associate Pastors</i> , Norman Kansfield, <i>Theologian in Residence</i>