The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
Mount Pleasant, Michigan 48858

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March 2010 Samuel B. Reith & Jonathon J. Bakker, Pastors Volume 46, No.3

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some,
but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10:24-25

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, two months ago I shared with you in this space some observations I have been able to make as a campus pastor. I spoke of things parents and grandparents ought to have in mind when it comes to the upbringing of their children within the church with a vision toward their children's ongoing growth and maturation in the Christian faith. This month I would like to follow up that article by broadening the perspective to what a congregation, as a whole, ought to have in mind when it comes to supporting and encouraging youth to take their faith seriously, continue in the Lutheran church if/when they move away from home, and grow as Christians.

Recent surveys about the tendencies of young people to leave church (and, subsequently, the Christian faith) after high school or confirmation vary a bit over the actual percentage of those who will leave. Just before coming to Zion and Christ The King I saw a survey that indicated 75% of confirmed youth will not be in church by the time they are 22 years old. A more recent survey result shared with us at a circuit pastors' meeting a few months ago put the portion of population with no affiliation to church by the age of 22 (average age of a college graduate) at close to 94%. While they may not be startling figures when we consider the prevailing culture and its attitude toward the Christian faith in general, those numbers serve to remind us that we in the church are not immune to this problem. They ought also to encourage us to seek how we can support our own youth who learn in, live in, and interact with this world every day.

As a campus pastor, I have the privilege of meeting and working with the small portion of the student population that does not follow the trends I mentioned above; who consider their connection to Christ in His church to be the most important thing in their lives. Why do they take their faith so seriously? Why do they wake up on Sunday morning to come to church? Why do they attend Bible studies, go on mission trips, and invite their friends to join them at church? Why do they care about so much about being Lutheran, let alone Christian? The single answer to all of these questions is that the Holy Spirit has worked in them through the Means of Grace to nurture their continued hunger to hear the Word of God and receive his gifts in the Sacraments. This work of the Holy Spirit, however, has not taken place just anywhere – it happens in their home congregations! What begins at baptism is nurtured through Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Lutheran Pre-Schools, Lutheran Elementary and High Schools, Confirmation Instruction, and most importantly, regular exposure to the Means of Grace through preaching, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper. A strong Lutheran identity is, I believe, the most important factor in a young college student remaining Lutheran during and

beyond their college years.

So what is a congregation to do? First, we can thank God for the gifts he has given us in our Lutheran Pre-School, our Sunday School, our Vacation Bible School, and our CCI program – these all serve to cultivate that distinctive gift of the pure Gospel we have in the Lutheran Church through the use of carefully selected Lutheran teachers, curriculums, and materials. Second, we can thank God that parents in our congregation have made the Christian upbringing of their children the priority in their homes and avail themselves and their families of the spiritual and educational programs and services our congregation supports. Third, we can thank God for the campus ministry. The Lutheran students who attend the services and other activities at the chapel are living witnesses to the esteem in which they hold the Lutheran faith; they know firsthand what it is like to be a Christian at a secular university, they are happy to help out with our own youth group, and in many cases they are also members of our congregation, either through adult confirmation, or simply having grown up at Zion and gone to CMU. Lastly, we can give thanks for one another – the members of our congregation support all of these programs with our time, talents, and treasure, but much more than that, we are living witnesses to one another *and to our children* of the common faith we share.

We certainly have much for which to give thanks to God. I cannot overemphasize the fact that bringing up the youth of the congregation in the faith is the work of the whole congregation, and how our efforts are undermined when the whole congregation is not working together for this purpose. It makes a great statement when pastors and parents show and tell the youth of our congregation the importance of the Christian faith and being Lutheran. Those statements are nothing, however, compared to the strength of the witness that is given when children see the same people in church with them, Sunday after Sunday after Sunday, living out what their pastors and parents are showing and telling them. Perhaps the best way to think about it is to think back to when you were growing up in the church. Whom did you see as a role model in your congregation? What did it mean for you to see them there (likely sitting in the same pew!), week in and week out? What would it have meant if they had only been there half the time?

There is certainly no simple solution to the challenges that face the church when it comes to raising up the youth in the faith. We can give thanks to God for the faithful witness of our parents and those who have come before us, and we can resolve to continue to take our faith seriously as we ourselves grow and mature as Christians throughout our lives. God grant strength and courage in the faith to all of us!

To Christ alone be all the glory, forever and ever, Amen.

Pastor Bakker

CPH Offers 'Essential Lutheran Library'

A few months ago I wrote in the newsletter about some of the fine books that have recently been released by Concordia Publishing House. I suggested that Lutherans may wish to expand their 'Lutheran Libraries' by adding volumes such as The Lutheran Study Bible, Treasury of Daily Prayer, Lutheran Service Book, Concordia: The Lutheran Confession, and others to their personal collections. Well, it sounds like others have had the same idea, and now CPH is offering the 'Essential Lutheran Library' as a package available to customers! For $130 (shipping is free!), CPH is offering:

The Lutheran Study Bible - Hardback
Lutheran Service Book - Hardback
Luther's Small Catechism - Hardback
Treasury of Daily Prayer - Softcover
The Lutheran Book of Prayer - Hardback
Reading the Psalms with Luther - Hardback
Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions - Hardback

For more information go to www.cph.org and search for 'essential Lutheran library,' or call the Zion office if you are not comfortable shopping online. We have copies of most of the above books at the chapel and at Zion if you want to see them for yourselves.

Touring Choir from Ft. Wayne Seminary will be at CTK in April

The Kantorei, a 16-voice men's touring choir from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN, will be stopping at Christ The King Lutheran Chapel as part of their Easter tour, and will be singing at a 7:30pm Easter Choral Vespers Service on Wednesday, April 7. This is an excellent opportunity to invite friends, neighbors, and co-workers to our church, especially those who love music! The service will last about an hour, and will be followed by fellowship and refreshments. Just as when we hosted the choir from Wisconsin 3 years ago, we will also need volunteers to host the singers and accompanists. If you are able to do so, please email Pastor Bakker at jbakker@winntel.net or contact either church office and leave a message with one of the secretaries. Please indicate in the message how many beds you have available and whether or not you have any pets. Thank you!

$ Saving Dollars at the Chapel $

It is a great blessing to serve the students at CMU through our campus ministry at Christ The King Lutheran Chapel. Through this campus ministry we have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of college students by sharing Jesus Christ and his forgiving love for them. As a part of our program, we have been offering a weekly home-cooked lunch on Thursdays. This is a time of Christian fellowship and connection, and is one of the more popular events we have at the chapel. It is also one of the more costly things we do at the chapel because most of the time we end up buying the food from GFS or ordering pizza. If you wish to help out with the ministry to CMU students we have at Christ The King, one important way to do so would be to consider volunteering to provide one of these meals. We serve from 15-20 people at these meals. If you are interested or able to help out in this way, or would like to team up with someone else to provide such a meal, please call the chapel office and talk to Pastor, Anne, or Adella. Thank you!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

SUNDAY SCHOOL: The following students received an attendance certificate for completing 13 Sundays in January and February 2010:

NURSERY-KINDERGARTEN

Alton Baily - Nursery

Quentin Couturier - Kindergarten

Gabriel Camp - Kindergarten

Macey Novak - Kindergarten

Thomas Narr - Kindergarten

1st & 2nd

Hunter Geiger - 1st

3rd – 4th

Tyler Claybaugh - 3rd

Caleb Camp - 3rd

5th, 6th, 7th, 8th

Grace Buerkel - 5th

Please contact Julie Courtney at 779-5401 with any questions.

FLOWER POWER The days are getting longer and spring is just around the corner. Bulbs you planted last fall will soon be blooming. Are you thinking of a summer garden? Do you want a splash of color somewhere in your yard? How about a vegetable garden or tomatoes in a pot?

Zion Preschool is offering you FLOWER POWER, a new spring fundraiser just for you. We will also be adding flowers to our beds in the playground area. Everybody loves flowers and vegetables and FLOWER POWER offers 26 exciting choices for Spring 2010, including several healthy and delicious edibles. Orders will ship directly to you at the right time for planting. Order forms are available now. Orders are due March 22, 2010. Want a preview? Visit www.flowerpowerfundraising.com to learn more and see some products. Get ready to order to add some color to your yard or patio.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Monthly Income & Expense Report
through 1 - 31 - 2010

	2010	2009
YTD Budgeted Expenses	$30,009.28	$29,839.00
YTD Actual Expenses	$35,400.44	$29,239.36
YTD Balance	$ 5,391.16	$ 599.64
YTD General Fund Income	$34,631.69	$19,868.62
YTD Actual Expenses	$35,400.44	$29,239.36
YTD Income Less Expense	($ 768.75)	($ 9,370.34)

What Can We Give Him?

We are in a time of focusing on the suffering and humiliation of Christ, culminating in His crucifixion. At that time, many of those who had placed their hopes in Christ were devastated and some deserted Him, but not all. St. Matthew wrote, "Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for His needs." (Matt. 27:55)

Think about that day, the preceding night, and the political circumstances of the time. Easter had not yet occurred; no one really grasped the meaning of Jesus' words regarding His resurrection. The women who watched and sorrowed over Jesus' death gave Him all they had to give – their presence, their care for His needs – going to the tomb with spices to anoint the Savior's body on Easter morning – undeterred by earthquakes or Roman soldiers.

A lesson to be learned from these women is that the gift of our presence and compassion for others are gifts acceptable to our Savior. We who are on the other side of the Tomb have the benefit of knowing the end of the story, and the end is Victory! In response to the love and sacrifice of our Savior, we give ourselves to be used and to serve as He chooses.

"Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or needing clothes and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and go to visit You?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.'" (Matt 25:37-40)

Memorial Gifts:

Bill Maeder
Mel Coyne
Dale & JoAnn Gust
Wayne & Karyn Kiefer
Rod & Nancy Dent
Ron & Kathleen Huber
Alan & Janice Block
Roger & Sally Cole
Joyce Carter

The **January Mission of the Month**, Lutherans for Life, received $211.00.

March Mission of the Month

LCMS Armed Forces Ministry

MISSION AND PURPOSE STATEMENT

In 1862, Rev. Friedrich W. Richmann volunteered to serve the 58th Regiment of the Ohio Volunteers in the American Civil War. By doing so, he became The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod's first military chaplain. The world has changed dramatically since then, and so has our nation's armed forces. But the ministry initiated by Richmann is one that still holds great purpose in serving the many special needs of United States military personnel serving around the world.

Men and women serving in the United States armed forces face times of separation from their families, homes, and churches. There is also stress from frequent moves, fear of combat, and loneliness.

To support military personnel as they provide for our nation's defense, the LCMS established Ministry to the Armed Forces to: provide military chaplains to serve on the field; provide chaplains for veteran's hospitals; maintain records of pastoral acts; work with pastors and civilian congregations to provide for the spiritual welfare of their members in uniform; and to provide spiritual resources to LCMS members serving in the armed forces through a "Ministry-by-Mail Program."

Pastor's Corner

Notes from the Pastor's Desk

Nehemiah 2:18 "They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work."

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are among the least well known in scripture. We read from the book of Nehemiah only once during the three-year cycle of Sunday lessons. These two books detail the return of the children of Israel from their captivity in Babylon. The book of Ezra covers the return of the first of the exiles and their 20 year effort in rebuilding the temple. The book of Nehemiah tells of the reconstruction of the walls of the city of Jerusalem. This was a project that was completed more than 70 years after the temple was finished.

These building projects were a struggle for the returning exiles. The people who had settled the land in their absence discouraged them. Changes in the administration of Persia brought about work stoppages. The people were busy reestablishing their homes and businesses. With the temple finished they had assumed the responsibility for the support of the temple and her priests. The people lost sight of the necessity of completing the project. Nehemiah understood that God's people needed both the temple and the city wall to be at ease in the land of their fathers. He sought permission from King Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem and complete the task of securing the city and the temple. He returned to Judea to rally the people to complete their work.

He said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace. I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king has said to me." (Neh. 2:17-18) "They replied, 'Let us start rebuilding.' So they began this good work."

This last month we completed an important task. We were able to retire the mortgage on the first phase of our building project. God blessed us mightily during a year that posed great financial challenges for our country, our state and our congregation. While we were able to pay off a mortgage, our envelope offerings did not keep pace with our expenses in the congregation. Again we were blessed in that this substantial shortfall was covered by the contributions that we had been able to save during the past few years.

At this writing we are holding our own financially. All budgets have been frozen for the coming year and all of our boards are doing their best to be good stewards of the contributions we receive from our members. At the same time, our members were generous in their response to the unprecedented disaster in Haiti. Now we must finish the project.

Planning for Phase II – a dedicated sanctuary – is underway. One of our stained glass windows has been reworked and is on display in the narthex. Nine more of the windows should be ready very soon. They will be professionally crated for storage in the room that serves as our temporary sacristy. Later this spring we will be contacting all of our members to invite them to make a pledge toward this final phase of the project.

As this year progresses we pray that God would bless our economy with a measure of recovery. We pray that those seeking work might find it. We pray that God would bless our stewardship efforts so that we can go forward with the work that he has given us to do through our congregation and Christ The King Chapel.

The people of Nehemiah's day faced a challenge – finishing the walls of Jerusalem. "They replied, 'Let us start rebuilding.' So they began this good work." We still face a challenge, being faithful stewards in a difficult economy. Let it also be said of us, "So they began this good work."

Sunday Morning Bible Study

This month we will conclude our study of the book of Revelation. Join us as we confront the end times as they are revealed to St. John.

Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Our monthly Men's Breakfast Bible Study will take place on Saturday, March 20, at 8:00 a.m. Class meets at Zion. This month we continue a study provided by the Lutheran Hour Ministries entitled "Enlarging the Harvest". Please make your plans now to attend.

Lenten Schedule

March Midweek Services

Mar. 3 Services - 4:30 p.m. at Zion, 7:30 p.m. at CTK

Mar. 10 Services - 4:30 p.m. at Zion, 7:30 p.m. at CTK

Mar. 17 Services - 4:30 p.m. at Zion, 7:30 p.m. at CTK

Mar. 24 Services - 4:30 p.m. at Zion, 7:30 p.m. at CTK

Soup suppers will be held from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. at Zion

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, March 28 - Divine Service
8:00 a.m. at Zion. 10:45 a.m. at CTK

Maundy Thursday, April 1 - Holy Communion
4:30 p.m. at Zion, 7:30 p.m. at CTK

Good Friday, April 2
1:00 p.m. at Zion, 3:00 p.m. at CTK

Easter Sunday, April 4
7:00 a.m. at Zion, 10:45 a.m. at CTK

The youth will be serving breakfast following the 7:00 a.m. Service at Zion

YOUTH

JR/SR YOUTH: It's that time again! Time to prepare for the **Easter Breakfast**! We will meet at Zion at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 3rd and set up for the breakfast. Then on Sunday we will each have duties to make the event go as smoothly as possible. Hope to see ALL YOUTH grades 4 - 12 on Saturday & Sunday, April 3rd & April 4th.

EASTER BREAKFAST: All are invited to join the youth for breakfast on Easter Sunday following the 7:00 a.m. worship service. This breakfast is a fund-raiser for the youth with a free will offering taken. The youth do all the work, but do ask for donations from the congregation for food items. There is a sign-up sheet at Zion and CTK. We thank you for your support.

BOARD OF FAMILY LIFE

Friday Fun Night

TIRED OF WINTER? Spring is arriving at Friday Fun Night, March 5th, 6:30 p.m. at Zion! There will be games for all ages. We will also be enjoying favorite summer foods – BBQ pork, cole slaw, and ice cream! Feel free to bring a favorite game or snack to share. Bermuda shorts and flip flops are optional. There will be no Friday Fun Night in April.

Yard Sale: It has been a few years since our last sale, so we are planning a **Yard Sale Fund Raiser** this summer. All proceeds will go to the New Sanctuary. It is tentatively scheduled for August 21. So start boxing up those items you want to contribute. We will have transportation available to pick up items that you are unable to deliver to the church. If you have any questions about Family Life activities or suggestions for future events, please talk to any board member: Linda Hanley, Brandi Bucholz, Krista Claybaugh, Diane Prenkert, or Ann Reith.

Thank you Pastor Reith for your hospital visit and Pastor Bakker and Pastor Reith for your encouraging words and prayers these past few months. Friends, thank you for your prayers, cards, telephone calls, encouraging words and hugs. All were very much appreciated. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Kay Karlson

Easter Flowers

There is a sign-up sheet on both bulletin boards for purchasing potted flowers to put on the altar for Easter at Zion and CTK. The prices are listed on the forms. Money may be put in a marked envelope in the offering plate or brought to the office.

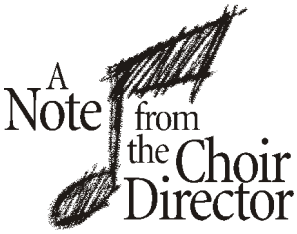
The building committee will meet on Tuesday, March 2 at 7:00 p.m. at Zion.

We praise the woodworking ability of Dan Milan! Thank you for the new **bookcases** created for the library. Nice Work!

Thank you to everyone who helped with the potluck dinner for the presidential visit of Rev. David Maier. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by all members in the church family. To the men who cooked the lasagna: it was great!

GREETERS NEEDED

Please consider being a greeter. We are in need of people to greet at both the 8:00 a.m. and the 10:45 a.m. services. All you need is a smile and a handshake to do the job. (Now who can't do that?) Please let Claudia Schimmelmann at 866-2512 if you can help.



INVITATION TO JOIN

Zion's Choir will be singing the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah for Easter Sunday. We would like to invite members of our congregation who are familiar with this work and have sung it with church, school or community choirs in prior years to join us in singing on Easter. We'll be singing after the Epistle lesson in both services. We would request that you come to rehearse the "Hallelujah Chorus" on Wednesday evenings at 6:50 p.m. Our regular choir rehearsal begins at 6:20 during Lent, so we will save the Hallelujah Chorus for the end of the rehearsal, and dismiss at 7:10 p.m. so that members can get to the chapel for the 7:30 Lenten service if they desire. If you have thought about joining Zion's choir and would like to attend rehearsals, please feel welcome. After Easter, we will begin rehearsals at 6:45 p.m. Our singing schedule will run through the end of May. Our choir is especially in need of altos at this time, but all voices are welcome! Please speak to Mitzi Chaffer or one of our choir members if you'd like more information.