

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." 1 Corinthians. 1:18

No one fully understands the mystery of the cross. It sounds foolish to proclaim the center of our faith to be a man who suffered death on the cross as a common criminal. After all, there is nothing magnificent or glorious about the cross. In fact, the cross is a symbol of agony and torment. It is a symbol of death. Why then do we Christians adore the cross rather than despise it?

The fact is that the cross of Christ is different. There is something special about that cross. It was Jesus the Son of God who suffered and died on it in order to redeem us. That is why the cross of Christ holds a special place in our hearts. For us it is a symbol of love and freedom.

In Ethiopia where I came from, there is a big holiday known as "Maskal." Maskal means cross. On that holiday, we commemorate the finding of the true cross on which Jesus died, by St. Helena, the wife of Constantine the Great. On that day huge bonfires are set all over the country. This celebration is very much like July 4th here. After going and watching the lighting of bonfires in our towns and cities, we go home and light our own. Almost every home does that. Then we sing a song as we walk around it that says some thing like this "Cross, cross, in which we have redemption and salvation. Thanks be to God who redeemed us and kept us safe with the power of the cross."

Yes, the cross is a symbol of our redemption. We are set free from the power of sin, death, and the devil. That is why we lift high the cross of Christ like the statues of our liberty.

Every time we think of our freedom in this land, we think of those who paid a great price. In the same way, every time we think of our spiritual freedom, we think of Jesus who died for our sins and set us free from the bondage of sin, death and Satan. So the cross is like our statue of liberty, a symbol of our freedom.

Thanks be to God who loved us so much and sent his son to die for our sin on the cross. Amen!

Pastor Ale

Zion's Budget Report For January – February 2009

Expenses for January and February of 2009 were \$67,008, exceeding income of \$59,610 for a deficit of \$7,398.

Easter Worship

5th Wednesday of Lent - April 1

5:30 Supper - Rebekah Circle - Beef Stew

6:30 Worship - Conversations by the Cross - The Two Thieves

Palm Sunday - April 5

8:30 Worship with Holy Communion

10:00 Worship Silver Creek

10:30 Worship with Holy Communion

6th Wednesday of Lent - April 8

5:30 Supper - Elizabeth Circle - Tater Tot Hotdish

6:30 Worship/Holy Communion - Conversations by the Cross

Maundy Thursday - April 9

6:00 Seder Meal

7:30 Worship 1st Communion

Good Friday - April 10

7:30 Worship

Easter Sunday - April 12

6:30 Sunrise Service

7:15 Breakfast

8:30 Worship

10:00 Silver Creek Worship

10:30 Worship

Stewardship Message

Proverbs 3:9-10 – “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops; then you barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wines.”

Proverbs 22:1 – “A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver and gold.”

Proverbs 22:9 – “A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.”

Lenten Prayer

Dear God

For all the times I've said, "Please."
And then said, "Do it now."
For all the times I've cried for help
And then questioned, "How?"
For all the times I cursed or swore
And sinned against Your name,
For all the times I've crossed Your way
And felt no guilt or shame,
For all the times I'm filled with doubt
That you are really true,
For all the times I've hurt someone
And cared not what you'd do,
For all the times and endless more
In this strange life I live,
I ask of you just one thing more,
Dear Lord, Forgive.

John Hulteen



**Zion Lutheran Church
Parish Planning Council Minutes
March 24, 2009**

Acting President Judy Melby called the meeting to order. Attending: Pastor Gary, Pastor Ale' Tulu, Deb Holtan, Duane Morey, Connie Peoples, Winton Forsberg, Lyle Paulson, Bonnie Yost, Amber Holtan, Acting Youth Director Roberta Kalsnes, Kristin Hanson, Jodi Bergman, and Jane Schaumburg.

Pastor Ale led devotions.

Secretary's Report: Connie moved to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2009 meeting. Bonnie seconded the motion, which carried.

Treasurer's report: The treasurer's report was presented by Winton. He reported that as of February 28, 2009 we have a \$7,398 deficit. Duane moved to accept the report as printed. Amber seconded the motion, which carried.

Board Reports: Duane reported that they are looking for members of the congregation to attend the Faithfully Fit Program and Living Well Workshops in Fargo. Interested persons should contact Sandy Knutson.

Lyle reported that once all materials are received the work will begin on the handicap accessible bathroom remodeling.

Bonnie reported that New Member Sunday will be held on April 26, 2009.

Kristin highlighted some of the youth activities.

Jodi mentioned that the Zion's website has been redesigned and links are being reviewed and revised as needed.

Deb reported that plans are being made for an Easter Prayer Vigil with details to be worked out.

Amber said that VBS dates are set for June 7th through June 10th with the times to be determined.

Pastor Ale' reported that First Communion Classes will start on March 22, 2009. Ale' also read highlights from a letter sent by the Food for the Poor Organization requesting financial support and to visit Zion. After much discussion, Kristin made a motion for Ale' to contact them and report that as of now Zion has a number of projects and we are unable to help at this time. Bonnie seconded the motion, which carried.

Winton suggested that the Public Relations Board contact the Times to do a story about Zion's sponsorship of the Ethiopian girls.

Ale requested that Zion pay the one time fee of \$75 to utilize the ND Synod Duane moved to pay the fee and Winton seconded the motion, which carried.

Old Business: The John Lubitz family offered to take all the old hymnals and told us they will be going to a mission.

New Business: A topic at the Church Wide Assembly on August 17-23 will be Human Sexuality. Ale' will contact the Synod to ask if someone would visit Zion to facilitate a discussion on this topic.

We are looking for Zion Members to attend the Synod Assembly on May 15th and 16th in Moorhead. Please contact the church office if you are interested in serving in this capacity.

Gary will schedule a meeting to meet with Silver Creek in regards to the contract they hold with us.

There are a number of youth signed up for Bible Camps. Winton moved to use funds from the Good Faith Fund to supplement the money from ZLCW; which will result in half of each camper's fees being paid. Duane seconded the motion, which carried.

We are looking for members of Zion to serve on the nominating committee. The nominating committee consists of two member of Parish Planning whose terms are expiring, four members of Zion and Pastor Gary.

Gary asked if we could purchase a small communion table. Funds will be used from the Memorial Fund.

Berta reported that a checklist was created to follow during Lenten Supper cleanup. The last Flapjacks for Faith will be April 19. Youth are working on the final details of the Sunrise Service and Easter breakfast. There will be a youth fundraiser car wash on May 16 at the Two Guy's Garage. Another Schwan's fundraiser will be held on May 16.

Zion's building use will be reviewed at the April Parish Planning meeting.

The next Parish Planning will be held on April 21, 2009.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Schaumburg, Secretary

The Reading Room

Read!!
Your brains get hungry too.

One snowy afternoon I was searching Zion's library shelves for a book to read, something that was relevant in 2009, something that not only would I enjoy, but so would you parishioners of Zion Lutheran Church. There were several volumes of Jannette Oke's Christian romance novels and several devotionals with eye-catching titles.

Both my eyes and my fingers ran along the spines of the hundreds of books on the shelves. The heavy mylar coverings were smooth and protected the colorful new covers. Then my hands touched a rough, ragged surface. The book I found in my hands was sun bleached red, unattractive with loose strings in the corners. The title – *The Silver Chalice*, by Thomas B. Costain, a book I had read as a sophomore in high school.

The Silver Chalice recounts the story of Basil, a young silversmith, who is commissioned by the apostle Luke to fashion a holder for the cup Jesus used at the Last Supper. It was the best-selling fiction title of 1953 and made into a film starring Paul Newman.

Costain tells his tale, set with a backdrop of the early Christian struggle in the years immediately after the crucifixion. Beginning in Antioch, it follows a boy named Ambrose who is sold by his father to a wealthy merchant Ignatius who adopts him and changes his name to Basil. The story follows Basil's artistic talents and temperament until his father's death. Rather than his adoptive son inheriting Ignatius' wealth, his greedy brother Linus disputes the adoption, bribes judge and witnesses, and sells Basil into slavery. Virtually imprisoned, Basil creates lovely jewelry until Luke pays off his owner and takes Basil to Jerusalem to Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy Christian merchant. Joseph who is elderly and failing wants Basil to create a frame that has the faces of the apostles to hold the silver chalice that Jesus drank from at the Last Supper.

