



Vol. 09

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No. 10

Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel," Phil 1:27

The Philippian Christians were going through a period of difficult time and sadness. They were discouraged when they found out that their spiritual leader Paul wasn't going to be with them any longer because of his imprisonment. They wondered whether or not their congregation remained united and continue to proclaim the good news of God's love.

When Paul found out, he became concerned that the Philippians might feel abandoned in his absence. He didn't want them to think that God only worked through him alone. He wanted to assure them that God would keep on working in their lives even though he couldn't be with them any longer. So he urged them in his letter to continue to stand firm in their faith and proclaim the gospel.

Like the church in Philippi, our church was saddened when it received Pastor Gary's resignation letter because of his illness. Yet we too, can be assured that God who began a good work in this congregation will continue to do it until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. All partnerships we have with our spiritual leaders will eventually come to an end. Pastors who nurture us come and go. But God will continue to remain in our midst and nurture his church with the gospel.

Pastor Gary was such a blessing to Zion. This church was very dear to him. He used to come early in the morning and leave late in the evening, giving his full attention and making sure that what needed to be done was done. As a result this congregation has stayed health and strong.

Thank you Pastor Gary for your many years of leadership and faithful ministry. May you be richly blessed as you have richly blessed us. May God watch over you as you continue to live with some of the challenges you have. Remember that you are in our prayers as we are in your prayers. Have a nice Christmas in your new home.

With gratitude,

Pastor Abe





HERE WE GO A-CAROLING, A CAROLING WE'LL GO Come with Christmas joy to share and join us as we go caroling to Zion's shut-ins. On Sunday, Dec. 13, meet at 4 PM at Zion in the fellowship hall. Dress warm for outdoors. We will return to Zion after for hot chocolate & goodies.



ZLCW will meet Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 2 PM for our Christmas Tea. There will be installation of new officers. Bible Study Leaders will meet at 3 PM.

You are asked to bring 1/2 dozen goodies for the lunch. One person per circle is needed for set up & clean up. This year we are sending our honorary Members a Christmas card.

Plan on attending our Christmas Tea.



ZION'S SHARING GIFTS With winter approaching and the financial need for many, we at Zion would like to share with those people who need warm winter clothing, coats, boots, blankets, and toys, **free of charge**. Many years ago, God gave us the greatest gift of all, His son, Jesus Christ. As we get ready to welcome the infant child, we reach out to those who are going through tough times, extending the love and peace of that First Christmas. This event will be held here at Zion on Saturday, Dec. 12 from 11 AM-2 PM. Items to be donated can be dropped off at Zion on Friday, Dec. 11 from Noon-6 PM in the Fellowship Hall. We ask that items be gently used, clean, and in good condition for a person's own use or for gifts for Christmas. Toys need to be in working order and complete.



REMINDER that any offering for 2009 must be in to the church by noon, Thursday, December 31, or postmarked no later than December 31. Any 2009 offering turned in or postmarked January 1, 2010, or later will go on 2010.

BOARD CHAIRS, TREASURERS, ETC. of organizations — please have your annual report in by January 4, typed and ready for printing. Thank you!



THE HOLIDAY TRAIN will arrive in TRF on Tuesday, Dec. 15, approximately 8 PM, at the Depot/City Hall, marking the 11th year the train has taken to the rails for local food banks with its message of hope and community support. Foods collected by Dec. 9 will be weighed and added to our local total. Food items will still be collected at Zion during the remainder of December. On Dec. 15, supper will be served at the Heritage Center with cookies & hot apple cider served at the Depot. Free will offering at both places plus nonperishable food items will be collected. Mark your calendar!



December is Zion's food shelf month. Grocery carts are located in the narthex or by the northeast door for collecting the food. Thank you for your help.



Editorial Column - Darlene Hulteen

The issue of the Zion's **Letter of Content** has been a highly debated topic of conversation within Zion. On Tuesday, November 17, I presented the following request to the Parish Planning Committee. I prefaced my presentation with the following statement.

"My visit tonight is a result of a discussion at the "Come As You Are" Bible study last week when Pastor Ale asked if I would address the issue of the Letter of Content formulated by Parish Planning and sent to the synod.

However, the views I present tonight are not mine alone. They are shared by congregational members who agreed with the vote last summer that pastors in same sex committed unions could be ordained in the ELCA church and serve its parishes. They are also shared by congregational members who do not agree with the vote at the ELCA National Assembly but are not in agreement with Zion's letter of content. They are also shared by people who could have accepted the Letter of Content if it had been specific to the vote last August and stated pastors in same sex committed relationships will not be called to Zion."

To: Parish Planning Committee

Date: Tuesday, November 17, 2009

Presented by: Darlene Hulteen, - Member of Zion Lutheran Church

Below are three statements from the congregation of Zion.

1. The first, printed weekly in the worship bulletin, is a welcome to our church. "**Zion's Evangelism Board says a special welcome to you this morning and may you be fed spiritually during this time of worship.**" This statement is meant to invite and make all people comfortable in our church body, members and non-members alike.
2. The second, printed in our weekly bulletin, lists Pastors Gary and Ale as ordained pastors. It also lists all congregational members as ministers. This is based on the Scripture 1 Peter 2:9, "**But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people belonging to God.....**" This statement calls us to a responsibility, part of which is to fulfill the first statement, to welcome all into our fellowship.
3. The third statement, also taken from our Sunday bulletin and/or minutes of the October 20 Parish Planning meeting, is the letter of content which is to be sent or has been sent to the synod regarding the "gay issue" vote at the National ELCA Assembly in August. "**A motion was made and rescinded by Jim Dalager that a letter of content be sent to the Synod stating Zion Lutheran Church of Thief**

River Falls will not be calling or accepting any gay pastor. Chris Ueland moved that a letter of content be sent to the Synod stating Zion Lutheran Church of Thief River Falls will not be calling or accepting any gay pastor or any pastor that supports the gay issue that was passed at National. Motion seconded and carried."

While I do not agree with the letter of content as proposed by Jim Dalager that we not call a gay pastor, nor do I feel it was necessary to officially make this statement, I can live with it. **I believe it is imperative that we "agree to disagree" and continue our work in Zion, hopefully within the framework of the ELCA.**

What I do have a problem with and so do other congregational members, both those who agree with the vote and those who don't, is the part of the statement which reads, **"..... any pastor that supports the gay issue that was passed at National."**

If I am a priest/minister to Zion's congregation and I believe that what was decided at the ELCA Synod Assembly last August was the Christian, compassionate choice, does this mean that I too as a minister in the congregation am not welcome? When I read the letter of content in the Sunday bulletin, I felt alienated, hurt and unwelcome. It told me, as it did others that believe as I do, that our beliefs are unacceptable.

Does this statement make the gay and lesbian members of Zion feel welcome? Is this the image we want to exhibit within our congregation, that we can't hold opinions different from those of the Parish Planning Committee? Is this the image that we want to give to the community? Does it make us a welcoming congregation?

I believe that an action as important as the letter of content that affects all the people of Zion should have been presented to the congregation and the pastors before it was submitted to the synod. What I am asking you tonight on behalf of those who support the ELCA decision as well as those that do not agree with the letter of content is to rethink the amendment and the amendment only and to remove it from the letter of content. If the letter of content has already been sent to the synod, I am asking you to contact the synod and rephrase the letter of content eliminating the amendment **"..... any pastor that supports the gay issue that was passed at National."**

After hearing from several parishioners after the Parish Planning meeting on November 17, I would like to amend my request on behalf of those parishioners that if Parish Planning feels it needs to submit a Letter of Content that it remain specific to the vote last August, be reviewed by the pastor and presented to the congregation for submission.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Members of Zion,

I have searched through every Bible I have here in my home and the word homosexual was not used until the Revised Standard Version. Even in the RSV the word is not listed at the back with all the other words and where to find them in the Bible.--like the people who wrote the RSV must not have thought it too important.

I firmly believe that we as human beings are created by God in His image. However, some are born with disabilities: Physical (without limbs, etc), Mental (Down Syndrome, etc.), and Sexual (Gays). We do not point fingers at the first two and call them "sinners." Why do we feel we can do it with the third group?

Our Baptism service says, " We are born children of a fallen humanity; but in Baptism we are reborn children of God and inheritors of eternal life." It does not say "all except gays." OK-- so people say it is "in the Bible." The only verse I can find that says homosexuals are sinners is 1st Corinthians 6:10. But in that same verse it lists about 5 "other sins" including adultery. In Matthew 5:32 it says, "Any person who divorces his spouse for any other reason than infidelity is an adulterer." Look at our divorce rate and only a small percentage is for infidelity. Why don't we then point our fingers at them and call them "sinners"--but we just shrug and say, "Too bad."

I also ask the question, "Who is the ELCA?" The ELCA to me is Bishop Hanson, the Chicago office staff, Zion, Redeemer, Trinity, Silver Creek, etc. We did not vote--it was the voting delegates from all over the United States. We can't control how they vote--we don't even know for sure how our own Synod delegates voted. How then can we say "the ELCA voted".

PEACE -- in the name of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ.
Gladys Hallstrom

Dear Members of Zion,

It was with mixed emotions that I resigned as president of the Parish Planning Council. I enjoyed working with the boards and council members and I sincerely hoped I could help, in some way, the congregation, as we are going through some rough water. However, in light of the situation of the ELCA, I cannot serve as President and be neutral on this situation. Homosexuals should be as welcome in our church as any one else, that is not the issue and no one is saying they are not welcome, it is the committed relationship without celibacy. When the Bible speaks of something that is wrong; it is wrong. And yes, there is forgiveness, and there is a part of chemistry that makes people the way they are. I also believe that what God makes is good, but He puts limitations/rules on what we can or cannot do. Celibacy is one thing; committed relationship is another. The ELCA has opened doors for a flood of other issues to be presented down the road. A pedophile is also a chemical imbalance, are we going to allow that as a teacher of our children or a pastor of our church? Are we now saying that fornication is acceptable?

At spring assembly a ELCA pastor stood up and addressed the group and thought the Old Testament should be omitted from the Bible; by who's authority? God? God's word is law...not for way back when, but for all time. We cannot pick and choose. We cannot do a wrong to make a right.

When Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge, God didn't tell them it was okay and not to do it again, they paid the consequence. We can be thankful God sent His son and has mellowed in His decisions or we would all be pillars of salt.

I'm no theologian by any means, but I believe in God and His word and I will stand my ground on what/how he wants us to live. Have I ever sinned? Daily. Am I forgiven? Instantly, if I am sincere and ask to be, it's not automatic. Am I superior? No, I'm trying to live the life that God has intended for me, I want my grandchildren to grow up in a country that honors God and the Bible and doesn't break under pressures of the world today.

There are many people that have shunned me due to my beliefs and that is your choice. I am not budging from my beliefs nor am I leaving Zion.

The council has not split the church; the ELCA has, or better yet, the people that were chosen to attend the National Convention. This should never have been a church issue. Instead of vote your conscience, maybe it should be, vote what God says is right.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve on the council; I will continue to pray for the leaders in our church and for the congregation as we strive to resolve the issue. I hope that you will continue to pray for me. God is good, don't fight Him, listen to Him, keep His word.

My best to Connie Peoples Hamre as she steps in to fill the position of President.

God be with you always,
Judy Melby

**Zion Lutheran Church
Worship Board Minutes
November 3, 2009**

Members: Pastor Tulu, Pastor Johnson, June Swanson, Chris Ueland, Kristi Rood, Van Swanson, Judy Melby, Connie Peoples, Junelle Hoffer

Devotions: Chris

Old Business: Ideas for Bible studies, possibly after each service during coffee hour, have a Bible study. Sarah is ready for her Children's Sermons, she will speak on the Sundays that we do not have communion. The Worship Band will play on the first Sunday of every month.

Feedback on once service: a lot of positive feedback, some state it is hard to find parking spot, it was brought up that maybe the first row of parking could be reserved for handicapped. It was also mentioned we need more van drivers.

Pastoral assistance for service needs – we will all try to do our part
Chris and Pastor Ale will look into a theme for Advent.

June made a motion that the 2010 budget be same as 2009, Kristi 2nd, motion carried.
Accolytes will be changed to 5 times a year, possibly having 10:30 sign up do the 8:30 service
Meeting adjourned and closed with the Lord's Prayer.



Zion Lutheran Church Parish Planning Council Minutes November 17, 2009

The Parish Planning Council was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by President, Judy Melby. In attendance: Judy Melby, Pastor Ale', Denny Minks, Connie Hamre, Ginny Armstrong, Sharon Hoglo, Deb Holtan, Marijo Nabben, Amber Holten, Deb Howe, Sarah Harper, Chari Mills, Chris Ueland, Bonnie Yost, Lyle Paulson, Jim Dalager and Karen Thygeson.

Devotions were led by Bonnie Yost and next month will be given by Ginny Armstrong.

After correcting Sarah Harpers name in the last minutes (was typed Sarah Parker), Motion by Marijo Nabben to accept the minutes as corrected, seconded and carried.

President Judy welcomed Penny Nelson from the Silver Creek church.

Darlene Hulteen presented a letter of concern to the council. After hearing and reading this letter, a discussion was held in regards to the letter. The Council thoughtfully restated its' intent of its letter of content. The letter was constructed under a time constraint due to a deadline. The letter of content was structured in regards to the ordained pastors issue. We did not intend this statement to reflect on our congregational family. We are all a family of God. Chris Ueland shared the results of the surveys that had been submitted regarding our future with the ELCA.

The Personnel Committee, which consists of the President, 1st Vice President, Stewardship Chairman, Lay Minister Chairman, Church Properties Chairman and the treasurer recommended that due to our financial balance, we not send any money to the ELCA until we are in a better financial standing. Sharon Hoglo discussed what money has already been sent to the ELCA this year. Lyle Paulson moved to recind any payments to the ELCA through the end of 2009, seconded, discussed and carried.

Connie Hamre read a letter of resignation from President Judy Melby. Ginny Armstrong moved to accept her resignation, seconded and carried.

Connie Hamre read a letter of resignation from Denny Minks; Chris Ueland moved to accept the resignation, seconded and carried.

Treasurer, Ginny Armstrong stated we are working in a deficit. Pledges are down from a year ago. Sharon Hoglo moved to accept the treasurers report, seconded and carried. Sharon Hoglo stated a letter will be going out soon stating our financial position.

Amber Holtan reported Operation Christmas boxes are due this coming Sunday.

Deb Howe reported Mary Ann Lofberg is joining their board.

Chari Mills reminded us that Flapjacks for Faith will be this coming Sunday.

Sarah Harper reported they are working on the 70+ dinner coming up and also the NW MN synod junior high gathering in Alexandria on November 20-21st.

Chris Ueland reported he had heard positive feedback on only having one service this Winter.

The Parish Fellowship books will be coming in December.

Lyle Paulson reported clocks had been ordered and received for the Sunday school rooms. The Christmas trees would be going up next week.

Jim Dalager reported we had accepted new members into the church last Sunday. Meals in a basket are available for anyone coming out of the hospital.

Ginny Armstrong moved to accept Pastor Gary's resignation, seconded and carried. Chris Ueland moved to use a pastor on call as needed instead of hiring a interim pastor; seconded and carried.

We will need a Call Committee of 6 voting members. If interested in volunteering, please call the church office.

Ginny Armstrong moved to accept our 1st Vice President, Connie Hamre as President of the Parish Planning Council; seconded and carried.

Jim Dalager moved to hold the annual meeting on January 24, 2010; seconded and carried.

We will be having recognition dinners for Pastor Moyer and Pastor Gary. Details will be coming later.

Zion's Spirit of Giving; please drop off your items on December 11th from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. at the church. We are in need of good Winter clothing articles and toys to be distributed to needy families.

Pastor Ale' reported the Thanksgiving Eve Service will be held at Trinity Lutheran church at 7:00 P.M. The choir will be a joint choir from three churches; Zion, Trinity and Redeemer.

Bonnie Yost moved to adjourn the meeting followed by the Lord's Prayer. Next Parish Council Meeting will be December 15 at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted: Karen Thygeson, Secretary

Sunday School Program

December 13 – 10:30

Choir Concert

December 20 – 10:30

Stewardship Board

Members of Zion: As we approach the holiday season, let us not forget the "real" meaning of Christmas; God's gift of his Son to us. Let us not forget, also, to include Him on our Christmas List" when sopping for gifts for friends and relatives. Zion has a special need in order to meet its budget by the end of 2001. As of October 31, we are about \$40,000 in the "RED" and will need about \$95,000 in November and December to meet our obligations. Please consider a gift to Zion that "keeps on giving" by funding our Youth Program, Worship Services, Music, Counseling, Building upkeep and utilities, Van, Visitations, and other programs as well as our support of bible amps, missions, world hunger, etc.

We ask for your support and prayers as we begin the new year.

Your Stewardship Board

Boy Scout Breakfast

On Sunday, December 6, 2009, members of Zion Lutheran's Troop 59 Boy Scouts will be holding a special breakfast at 9:30 a.m. to raise money for three boys attending the National Boy Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill Naval Base in the state of Virginia this coming June. Cody Wolter, grade 11, Garret Tadych, grade 9 and Hunter Haubrich, grade 8 will be attending this celebration of 100 years of Boy Scouting in the U.S.A., with over 37,000 scouts from all over the country in attendance. The boys will have the unique opportunity to spend time with the Navy Seals and will experience such things such as rappelling, kayaking, and scuba diving as well as participating in various hands-on merit badge demonstrations designed to develop their leadership skills. The jamboree is truly an experience of a lifetime. For more information: <http://www.bsajamboree.org/>. Free will offering.



Cook's Corner

Before I hear any negative comments from outraged Scandinavians about my lutefisk mirth, let me assure you that I am the only one at my Christmas Eve table that dons a white dishtowel bib, slathers mashed potatoes, lutefisk and melted butter on the biggest piece of lese on the plate, rolls it into a twelve inch tube and relishes every second of the layers of Christmas fare as well as the lutefisk aftertaste. It remains the best memory of the year.

Did You Know?

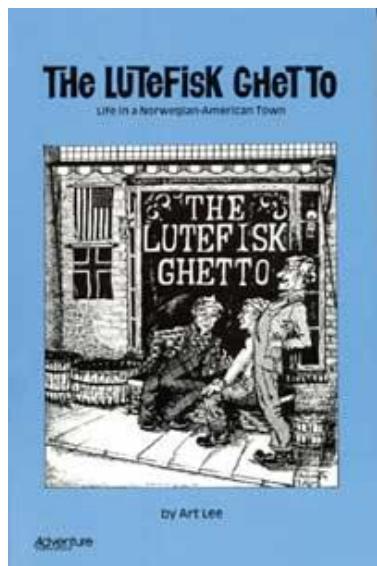
- that Ole and Lena discovered a family of raccoons under their front porch? The raccoons became very destructive and messy. Ole and Lena tried everything to get rid of them. One day Lars told them, "Put some lutefisk under the porch, then. Raccoons don't like lutefisk, and they will leave."
- A week later Ole and Lena complained to Lars, "Well, we tried the lutefisk trick. The raccoons went away, but now we've got a family of Norwegians living under our house!"
- that you must NOT cook lutefisk in aluminum vessels as it will darken the kettle?
- there is a town in Minnesota named Madison, after Madison, Wisconsin, that is called the Lutefisk capital of the world?
- that thanks to the freezing facilities of today it would be possible to eat lutefisk all the year round?
- that you can make your own lutefisk?
- that Olsen Fish Company in Minneapolis have a Lutefisk Hotline in case you need help and directions on how to cook the fish: 1-800-882-0212?

The Reading Room

**Read!!
Your brains get hungry too.**

Did you grow up in small town mid-America in the '40's-'50's? Do you remember "going to town" on Saturday night and finding the best parking place on main street and watching the world go by?

Art Lee taught American history for over thirty years at BSC, from 1963-1998. One of my biggest regrets while attending Bemidji State College was that I never enrolled in any of his classes.



Lutefisk Ghetto

Life in a Norwegian American Town

By Art Lee

Art Lee's most well known book began as a project to educate his students about life in a small town at the end of World War II. It turned into one of the most popular Scandinavian-American books around. The Lutefisk Ghetto is a funny yet enlightening account of all phases of life in 1940's-1950-s Scandinavia, Wisconsin.

His interest in things Scandinavian came naturally, having been born, raised and schooled in a Norwegian-American town named Scandinavia, in central Wisconsin; also three of his four grandparents were emigrants from Norway. Art Lee and his wife Judy have three children and four grandchildren; they make their summer home in Bemidji and winter in Arizona.

Welcome, New Members

Brieger, Joe and Heather, Evan -----964-5899
517 Broadway Ave N, PO Box 276, St. Hilaire

Frokjer, Greg and Jan-----681-2246
1243 Edgewood Drive, Thief River Falls

Gibson, Chryssi, Zander Olson -----681-7091
14816 137th Ave NE, Thief River Falls

Kruta, Kelly and Lani, Kaiden, Hanna -----681-2244
616 Horace Ave N, Thief River Falls

Lubitz, David and Michelle-----681-7102
909 Tindolph Ave S, Thief River Falls

Minks, Denny and Joannie-----681-2914
215 Kneale Ave S, Thief River Falls

Minks, Brian-----681-2914
215 Kneale Ave S, Thief River Falls

Peterson, Paul and Becky, Megan -----681-1763
17081 152nd St NE, Thief River Falls

Philipp, Harriet-----681-2863
20261 190th Ave NE, Thief River Falls

Podenski, Tara, Wyatt -----684-0637
1004 Horace Ave N, Thief River Falls

Pontow, Doris-----681-5474
704 8th St E, Thief River Falls