

Dear Friends in Christ –

“How shall I repay the Lord for all the good things he has done for me?” Psalm 116:10

Well, Christmas has come and gone; now it is time to sit down and write those thank you letters to those who showered us with their gifts. At a moment like this sometimes one can have difficulties on how to go about and express gratitude. I remember what happened in my first year in the ministry when my family and I received lots of Christmas greetings filled with gifts. We were overwhelmed with the kindness and generosity of the people. Then we began wondering how to show our appreciation, and I came up with this crazy idea.



I said to my wife, “Why don’t we buy some kind of gift and give to those who gave us,” and I suggested buying fruit baskets and delivering them ourselves. We went to our local supermarket and bought a lot of fruit baskets and began our door-to-door delivery. Then, as we began to more and more small and large gifts, we began to wonder where to draw the line. Besides that, our local supermarket began to run out of the kind and size of fruit baskets that we were giving.

We drove to Grand Forks and bought more baskets until our parsonage basement looked like a distribution center for fruit baskets. But the dilemma was still who to give and who to leave out. In desperation I called my friend Pastor Phil Blom and asked for his advice on how to get out of this mess.

Phil laughed for a moment and then said to me, “Ale, you are their pastor; the people give to you because they want to express their appreciation for your ministry; they don’t expect you to return the favor. Your thank you letter is enough for them.”

Oh, what a relief to hear that. With that we abandoned our mission and wrote a simple thank you letter.

The best gift we all have ever received at Christmas is the gift of Jesus Christ who came to give us eternal life.

The Bible says, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son.”

Now what we need to ask ourselves is how we can respond to God’s gift of love. Is there a time when you got overwhelmed with God’s greatest gift and asked yourself like the psalmist, “Hoe shall I repay for all that God has done for me?” The truth is that God doesn’t need anything in return. His gift for us is a free gift with no strings attached. All He wants is that we be His loving children and enjoy His gift with no strings attached. All He wants is that we be His loving children and enjoy His gift with gratitude. Thanks be to God for His Christmas gift.

Happy New Year
Pastor Ale

BIG CHANGE –

Not really, just a change in the time of Men's Friday Breakfast

ZION MEN: Starting January 8th Men's Friday Breakfast will be at 7:00 A.M. We hope to see more of you there! Our numbers have been dwindling, and we would like to see some new faces there.

President's Corner:

Connie Hamre



"God doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies the called." I am extremely humbled and enthusiastic about becoming your president of the Zion Lutheran Church congregation. I am asking for your prayers, and input, so I may be able to do the best possible job for our church. Zion is a great church, with a fantastic Christian family. As we all know, there are many issues before us. In the coming days, and months, we will be prayerfully working to seek God's guidance and direction. As a friend is fond of saying, "God can move mountains, and he expects us all to bring shovels". We all have different gifts to share. Sharing our talents, time, and uniqueness. Let us all reach out, to one other and is examples of God's love. We can do it and come through even more blessed.

As we go through the Christmas season, we see the reason for the season within our church and in our community. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only son for us." Can we do any less? Let us remember to be a friend and give the gift of kindness to each other. We can celebrate our similarities and respect our differences. But most of all, we can celebrate our love for Jesus Christ, our Lord! Letting our hearts free, our light shine, and have a song in our hearts for him and others.

God Bless you, one and all.

Connie Hamre

My grandson was visiting one day when he asked ,
"Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?" I mentally polished my halo, while I asked, "No, how are we alike?"
"You're both old," he replied

The Spirit of Giving

The Spirit of Giving event was a huge success for everyone! The response for donations was amazing, people from Zion and beyond kept bringing more and more items on Friday, December 11th and the helpers were busy getting the items sorted and laid out on tables. We received several toys, puzzles, books and stuffed animals, as well as the clothing, winter jackets, hats, mittens, boots and shoes, bedding, Christmas and household decorations, etc.

This Spirit of Giving at Zion worked in conjunction with the Christmas of Pennington County project so both programs would be successful. All of the new items (unopened and tags intact) were donated for gifts to the Christmas of Pennington County project.

Saturday morning brought a few of us to the Church @ 7:00 a.m. to get ready, coffee was made and Christmas carols were being played. It was a slow start and a cold morning; however, several people did come to the Spirit of Giving event that was held from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. People could not believe our Church collected all of the items in only one day and got everything ready as quick as we did.

Many people commented that things were tough this year so their children and family members were not getting any Christmas presents. When our special guests saw the many items they were welcome to have, many were gathering items for gifts, and you could truly feel the Spirit of Giving in our Lord's work. There were several thank you's and Merry Christmas greetings being exchanged as well as many smiles and even some tears from our fellow brothers and sisters that are suffering due to illness, loss of employment, possibly homelessness, etc during this time.

A few people commented they did not belong to a Church, this gave the perfect opportunity for a special invitation for them to join us for services at Zion, that everyone is welcome to worship with us.

We believe 3/4 of what was donated found new homes on December 12th. The rest of the donations will go to the Northern Lights Bookstore here in town or to the Mission or Dakota Boy's Ranch in Grand Forks.

Thank you to everyone involved with this event!



**Zion Lutheran Church
Parish Planning Council Minutes
December 15, 2009**

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

Devotions were led by Ginny Armstrong and next month will be given by Chris Ueland.

Secretary's Report: Bonnie moved to accept the secretary's report, seconded and carried.

Treasurer's Report: Ginny reported it looked more favorable that we would meet our budget goals this year. She reported pledges are down this year. Marijo moved to accept the 2010 budget as presented, seconded and carried.

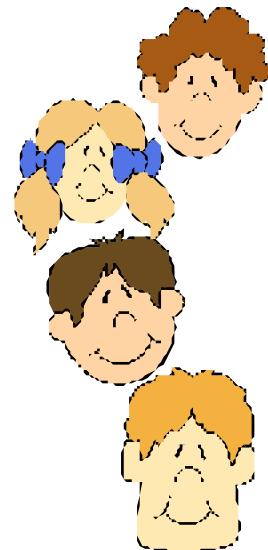
Properties Board: Lyle Paulson reported the Christmas tree had been put up and they had been busy with snow removal.

Stewardship Board: Sharon Hoglo reviewed the breakdown of the \$3000 budgeted line item for Lutheran Social Services.

Personnel: Employees salaries and evaluations were discussed.

Fellowship Board: Bonnie Yost reported the books are done for Sharing Servants. February 14th will be February Fling.

Evangelism Board: Deb Holtan reported the use of sign-up sheets in the narthex of the church.



Youth Board: Sarah reported on the December activities that the Jr. and Sr. groups had been participating in. There was also a discussion of how to complete paying for the balance of last year's National Youth gathering.

New Business: Bonnie Yost moved to serve a brunch after the annual meeting on January 24th; seconded and carried. Sharon Hoglo moved for Marijo to serve as 2nd Vice President; seconded and carried. Chris Ueland moved 2nd Vice President Marijo Nabben to serve as 1st Vice President; seconded and carried. Sharon Hoglo moved for Chris Ueland to serve as 2nd Vice President; seconded and carried.

Pastor Ale' reminded us that a call committee must be elected to seek a Senior Pastor; must be six voting members from the congregation. Since Silver Creek shares our pastor, they will have one person on the committee for a total of a 7-person committee.

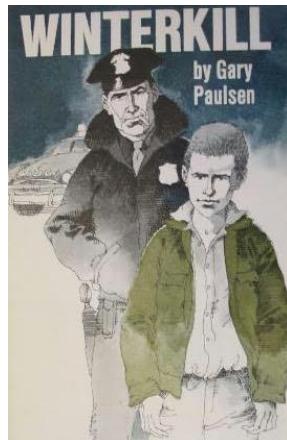
Pastor Ale' will be on vacation from December 26th thru January 2nd.

A reminder was given that all board annual reports are due into the office to Dilene by January 4th.

Ginny moved to adjourn at 8:40 P.M. followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Next Parish Council Meeting will be January 19th at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted: Karen Thygeson, Secretary



The Reading Room

Read!!
Your brains get hungry too.

Christmas is over. Shopping lists are complete. Presents are unwrapped. And I didn't get my book – again! For years I have searched for a copy of the book *Winterkill* by Gary Paulsen.

I fell in love with the works of Gary Paulsen when I was teaching junior high English, books like *Hatchet*, the story of a thirteen-year-old boy who is forced to survive alone in the Canadian woods after a plane crash and *Woodsong*, Paulsen's adventures training sled dogs on Clear Water Lake and in the woods north of Leonard, MN, a book based upon days and nights running dogs, first for trapping and then for the most grueling race in the world, the Iditarod, a 1,200-mile sled dog race into the Arctic Circle,

It is for *Winterkill*, however, that I have searched. Written in 1977 the novel is a powerful story of a semi-delinquent boy befriended by a hard-bitten cop named Duda in a small Minnesota town. The setting, however, isn't just any small Minnesota town. The backdrop of *Winterkill* is Thief River Falls, and the story, full of characters from Thief River's past, is based on reality.

The book is now out of print. I borrowed a copy several years ago from a TRF classmate of Gary Paulsen's and read it to my family on a trip to Minneapolis. I tried to borrow the book from the TRF Northwest Regional Library a couple of years ago, but its only copy had been checked out and never returned.

I am sure many of you remember the tale-telling Paulsen, who in the mid 1950's earned money setting pins at the bowling alley and gained his love for reading from a local librarian when he stopped in the library on his cold winter walks home from the bowling alley.

I am taking advantage of my job as editor of the *Herald* and asking that if any of you have a copy of *Winterkill* and are willing to sell it, please call me. But before you do that, READ IT!

Cook's Corner

Just Like the Real Playdough (so they say)

1 cup flour	½ cup salt
1 cup water	2 tablespoons vanilla
1 tablespoon oil	food coloring
1 tablespoon powdered alum	



Mix all dry ingredients. Add oil and water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until reaching the consistency of mashed potatoes. Remove from heat and add vanilla and food coloring. Divide into balls and work in color by kneading the playdough.

Oatmeal Playdough

1 cup flour	1 cup water
2 cups oatmeal	

Gradually add water to flour and oatmeal in bowl. Knead until mixed (this playdough is sticky, but unique in texture.) Model as with clay.

Tip: Add cornmeal or coffee grounds in small quantity for texture.

Nutty Butter Playdough

1 cup peanut butter	1 cup honey
1 cup powdered milk	1 cup oatmeal

Mix together and play.

Kool-Aid Playdough

2 1/2 to 3 cups flour	3 tablespoons corn oil
2 cups boiling water with 1 package Kool-aid	½ cup salt
3 tablespoons corn oil	1 tablespoon alum

Mix ingredients and knead with flour (may take up to 1 extra cup). Use more if the dough draws moisture in high humidity. Keeps well, has a nice fragrance and is very colorful and very flexible.