

Dear Friends in Christ –

*"Ah, land of whirring wings beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, sending ambassadors by the Nile in vessels of papyrus on the waters. Go, you swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth to a people feared near and far." Isaiah 18:1-2*

Well, is Zion ready to send her good will ambassadors to Ethiopia? Are you looking for an adventure and unforgettable experience? Then, come with us on a journey and join those of us who are going to Ethiopia to visit those young girls we have been helping with their education and their families.

We will also visit some historical and fascinating sights. One of those sights we are going to visit is a place called "Axum," the sight of an ancient Ethiopian city. There we will visit remarkable monuments built before the birth of Christ, some still standing, some fallen. The tallest one is thirteen stories high. We will also visit the church of St. Mary of Zion where the original Ark of the Covenant is believed to be residing. Another historical place we will visit is "Lalibela" where in the 12th century, 11 churches were hewn from a huge rock. These churches are built underground and are connected through tunnels. They are considered to be among the wonders of the world. We will visit their treasures and the priests who serve them. We will also visit "Bahar Dar," a city in northwestern Ethiopia built along the shore of Lake Tana. Lake Tana is also the source of Ethiopia's famous river, the Blue Nile. We will visit ancient monasteries on the islands of this lake and the most spectacular waterfall on the river, the Blue Nile Falls. These are just some of the sights we will visit, but there are many more interesting things to see and discover.

So come with us for an exciting two-week journey to east Africa. The estimated cost for airfare and motels is about \$2,500. We will take this trip in mid January 2011, a good time to get away from cold weather and enjoy a visit in the land of 13 months of sunshine. This will also give us a time to save enough money for our trip.

So, keep on feeding your piggy bank until you have enough for your next adventure in life. Good luck!

Pastor Ale

## Easter Worship Schedule

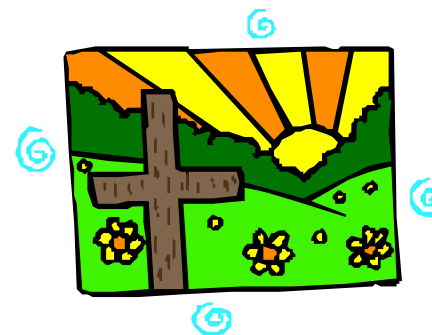
**March 28** - Palm Sunday - Worship Service at 8:30 AM

**March 31** - Supper at 5:30 – Worship and Holy Communion at 6:30

**April 1** - Maundy Thursday – Seder Meal for First Communicants and families at 6:00 – Worship, Holy Communion & First Communion at 7:30

**April 2** - Good Friday Service at 7:30

**April 4** – Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30 - Breakfast at 7:15 – Worship Service and Holy Communion at 8:30





## Zion Lutheran Church Parish Planning Council Minutes February 16, 2010

The Parish Planning Council was called to order by President Connie Hamre at 7:00 P.M. In attendance: Pastor Ale', Russell Rehn, Deb Howe, Sarah Harper, Lyle Paulson, Connie Hamre, Sharon Hoglo, Bonnie Yost, Ginny Armstrong, Amber Holtan, Deb Holtan, Marijo Nabben, Chris Ueland, Penny Nelson, and Karen Thygeson. Roll was answered by stating what we want for our church in the coming year.

Devotions were led by Sharon Hoglo and next month will be given by Marijo Nabben.

Ginny Armstrong moved to nominate Russell Rehn for 3rd Vice-President; seconded and carried.

Russell Rehn moved to accept the secretary's report as printed, seconded and carried. Deb Howe moved to accept the treasurer's report, seconded and filed for audit.



Duane Morey spoke on behalf of the **Call Committee**; he reviewed what had been discussed at their first meeting with a representative from the Synod and what plans are in the near future.

**Stewardship Board:** Sharon Hoglo stated it is time to start thinking about a nominating committee for the boards to be held in June.

**Fellowship Board:** Bonnie Yost reported on the successful February Fling and the farewell gathering for Pastor Gary.

**Evangelism Board:** Deb Holtan reported on the Good Friday vigil.

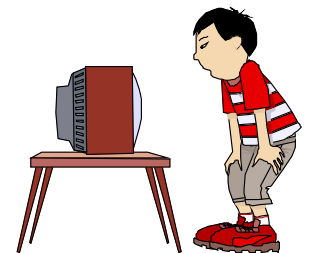
**Board of Christian Education:** Amber Holtan reported the tentative dates set for Vacation Bible School are June 6<sup>th</sup> - June 9<sup>th</sup>. May 9<sup>th</sup> will be the last day of Sunday School until fall.

Penny Nelson thanked Zion for inviting Silver Creek to Pastor Gary's farewell.

**Public Relations Board:** Deb Howe stated they are working on new member folders.

**Youth Board:** Sarah Harper stated they are still short one member on the youth board. Next Sunday there is a ski trip for grades 6-12.

**Church Properties Board:** Lyle Paulson stated they have been working with Sjoberg Cable Service regarding the poor reception the last couple of Sunday broadcasts have been. Soap dispensers have been installed and a light has been installed in the outside awning helping light the parking lot.



**Worship Board:** Chris Ueland reminded us of the Bible study held on Thursdays at 2 P.M. Looking for readers for Wednesday services.

Pastor Ale' stated March 7th, Pathways meeting will be held at Zion. Lenten Services are beginning. John Matz will be the speaker this coming Wednesday as well as Sunday the 21st.

A discussion was held regarding holding church at 9:00 A.M.; since we are sharing our pastor with Silver Creek; it was decided to leave it at 8:30 A.M. at this time because we only have one pastor. Hiring an interim minister was also discussed and will be on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

Leonard Geske was a guest at the meeting; speaking his concern as to where the money will be going that Zion submits to the ELCA. President Connie Hamre stated that ELCA donations will be on next month's agenda for further discussion.

Bonnie Yost moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 P.M. followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Next Parish Council meeting will be March 16, 2010, at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted: Karen Thygeson, Secretary

**Dear Family Members of Zion and Silver Creek -**

There are no words to adequately describe how grateful I am for the wonderful celebration of God's Grace and the life He gave us together at Zion and Silver Creek for the last 18 years.

Thank you also for the wonderful day we experienced with you on February 7. It was a truly memorable day which we will never forget. Your generous gifts, your inspiring messages of HOPE and LOVE, and your combined prayers will long sustain me in the years to come.

May God continually bless your congregation.

In Christ ~ Pastor Gary & Diane Johnson and family

**Dear Zion -**

I cannot find enough words to express my appreciation for last Sunday's recognition of my 20 years as Zion's Visitation Pastor. It was all so wonderful: devotions, choir, presentations, cards, gifts of money and the brunch.

Thank you again.

Pastor Henry Moyer



## PLEASE Return

Would the person who took a red baseball cap with an embroidered Eagle from the shelf above the coat rack on Sunday, February 21, please return it. It was given to me by my daughter and has special meaning to me. Thank you.

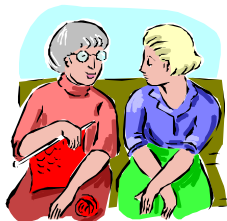
## Van Drivers Needed



We really need van drivers and substitutes for Sunday mornings. Please contact Galen Clow at 681-2182.

## Parish Nurse

Hours - Mondays - 3:00-4:30



## Women of Zion

Tuesday, March 9  
12:00 Noon



## Pathways Annual Meeting

Zion Lutheran Church - TRF  
March 7 at 2:30 – Registration at 2:00



**President's Corner:**  
Connie Hamre

The month of February was filled with many special moments for our church family. We recognized two of the people that were part, of the foundation of our parish. And it was truly a pleasure to do so. I would like to send out a big THANK YOU to all that made these events possible. These people who worked to make it so good and special. I would also like to acknowledge all the people that attended these programs, to help us show these men how important they are to us.

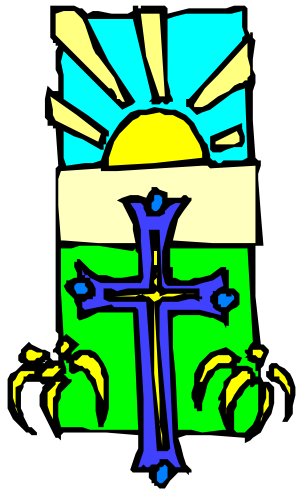
The February Fling was a wonderful time to have fellowship with others and have a great meal-one of my favorite things. The Trinity Trio was a fantastic finishing touch to the evening. Congratulations on another successful fling.

Ash Wednesday with the start of Lent brought Wednesday night services for the soul, and the Ladies Aide making the meals to nourish our bodies.

The Call Committee has begun their work in finding us a new Senior Pastor. The job is huge and will affect the direction our church will take in the future. Please keep them in your prayers.

Looking forward to Easter, and the celebration of our Lord. "HE HAS RISEN." He has paid for our sins on the cross and has come back to overcome death. He did it for you and me. He did it so that his Father could show us the depth of his love for all mankind. Let us all reflect on this season and savor God's love.

Courage in Christ,  
Connie Hamre. Pres



## The Manger and the Cross

By John Hulteen

As I write this, we have completed the Christmas season. While I prefer the translation of the Revised Standard Edition of the Bible, I do insist on reading the birth story of Jesus from the King James Version. Why? The words in the second chapter of Luke in the KJV are much more poetic.

What a wonderful story. A baby born and lying in a manger. Apparently Joseph forgot to call the local motel for reservations. Not an ordinary baby in that manger, but a baby that had the shepherds leave their sheep to come see him. The angels, not one or two, but a multitude singing from the heavens welcoming this baby. A star shown over the barn leading wise men to this baby. We love this baby; we adore this Christ child.

And almost as quickly as we close the book on the birth story, we see this baby, this Jesus now grown, standing before Pontius Pilate accused of heresy. Pilate, the ever politician doesn't know what to do. There seems to be no justifiable reason to find Jesus guilty. Pilate decides to send the problem to Herod, his supervisor. "Let Herod do his job; he gets better pay than I do."

Herod, however, recognizes that if he makes a mistake and condemns Jesus, his political career is over. So back to Pilate. Suddenly Pilate has a great idea, "Let the crowd choose," sort of a Tea Party thing. He takes Barabas and Jesus and asks the crowd which one should be freed. The crowd shouts, "Barabas!" Then the crowd pointing to Jesus shouts, "Crucify him."

We now stand at the foot of the cross. This baby Jesus that we adored, seemingly only moments ago, now hangs nailed to the cross. We cry; we agonize. We presume this to be the beginning and the end. Later we realize that this is only the beginning.

What about the thirty plus years between the birth and death of the baby born those many years ago? Let us look to the Gospels for some answers. We'll not look to the Old Testament. We'll not refer to the writings of Paul or James or study the Book of revelation.

We will stay with the Gospels. Here we find Jesus now thirty-three years old talking to a group of people. He says, "I was hungry and you fed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was in prison and you comforted me."

The crown shouts, “We never saw you before.”

Then these wonderful, meaningful words, “Whatsoever you do to me, you also do to those who are hungry, homeless, maladjusted.” Jesus – ever the advocate for the poor.

Again, Jesus is talking about someone who has two coats. Jesus says, “Give one of your coats to the person who has none.” (Allow me a bit of leeway here.) We might have said, “If you work as hard as I do, you could buy your own coat,” or perhaps we might have said, “There is a mission down the street. I hear that people give money and such to them. They may be able to give you a coat.”

Not Jesus, he was pretty firm in saying, “Give that person your extra coat.”

How about the farmer, the one whose buildings were full of grain? His new crop was about to be harvested. It was apparently a bumper crop. He would almost have a corner on the food market.

He said, “I will build more storage. Then I can keep the crop until the price is really high.”

Jesus touched him on the shoulder and said, “Check the obituaries appearing in tomorrow’s *The Roman Gazette*.” So much for greed and covetousness.

A rich young man came to see Jesus. He asked, “What must I do to be saved?”

Jesus answered, “Sell everything you have and give all the money to the poor.” Talk about redistribution of the wealth! That seems more than any of us could agree to.

We often marvel at the very wealthy who give large amounts of money to charities. We would all agree that that is a good thing. Jesus tells a short story about a poor widow who searched and found a penny and gave it to the poor. Jesus said, “She gave out of her poverty.” The wealthy give out their surplus.

Jesus was surely a strange fellow. He walked among the people; he loved the neighborhood. In the many miracles he performed, he always involved everyone. Remember the feeding of the multitudes? He didn’t tell the disciples to check as they gave the fish and the bread to the crowd to see if there were any alcoholics, any smokers, anyone whose sexual preference was different than the norm. He simply said, “Give food to all the people.”

As I read from the four Gospels that tell all about what Jesus said and did, I suddenly feel a connection with this Jesus person, even as I find it very difficult to follow his teachings. He certainly challenges me to try.

We have come a long way from the manger, from the angels singing over Bethlehem. We have heard Jesus say as He was hanging, nailed to the cross, “Father, forgive them.”

Yes, we have touched the manger. We have cried at the cross. Now let us listen to His teachings from the Gospels.

## **The Least of These**

**By John Hulteen**

**Near Bethlehem, by a sprawling hill  
where sheep and shepherd trod,  
a grove of trees was growing  
in the hard and rocky sod.**

**A lowly scrubby cedar grew  
on a rocky, hilly crest.  
Almost alone it struggled  
shunned, it seemed, by all the rest.**

Further down along the slope  
a majestic aspen grew.  
with trunk so straight and limb so strong  
and leaves with sunshine hue.

The cedar's limbs were gnarled and bent  
in an ugly, twisted way.  
The aspen, on the other hand,  
grew more beautiful each day.

When thus perchance a farmer came  
from Bethlehem near by.  
To cut a pole to fix his barn,  
the cedar caught his eye.

“Why cut a a great magnificent tree  
to fix a broken manger,”  
The farmer said, as he swung his axe.  
The cedar fell to the stranger.

Some time has passed, as time will do  
and then one winter's night,  
Mary and Joseph came to sleep  
in this stable void of light.

The aspen, so the story goes,  
in spiteful hatred grew.  
“I am the greatest tree on earth,”  
it said each day anew.

The aspen grew and flourished  
for thirty years or more.  
And then it fell to Caesar's axe.  
From its boughs no eagles soar.

Time in centuries soon would pass.  
The trees no gone - no loss.  
The lowly cedar became a crib.  
And the aspen became the cross.