

**“Blessed be the Holy Trinity** and the undivided Unity, we will praise and glorify Him because He has shown His mercy upon us. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your Name in all the earth.” With these words we began our observance of the Trinity season, the longest season in the church year. The mystery of the Holy Trinity, that God is Three and One, transcends human understanding. And yet by faith we confess the same. By faith we confess the words of the Athanasian Creed, asserting that we “worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance.” But we do not stop there. We also confess, openly and boldly, that “this is the catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.”

This language, language which excludes from salvation on the basis of wrong belief, is uncomfortable for many. The fallen world would have you believe that whatever a man holds to be true, if he holds it sincerely, is sufficient. But Adam and Eve sincerely held that if they ate of the fruit, they would not surely die. They were wrong. They failed to know and heed God’s Word, the only source of Truth. They were deceived by the author of all lies. And from that slithering source comes sin, and with it all false doctrine and wrong belief.

False doctrine, which is to say incorrect teaching about the one true God, always harms. It can lead even those once given faith into unbelief, and so damnation. It is not enough, and it has never been enough, for Lutherans to make vague and open doctrinal statements. Lutherans confess what we believe specifically, and we condemn contrary teaching. Consider the language of our Confessions: “We believe, teach and confess... We reject and condemn...” (see for example our Epitome, Article I). That’s how Lutherans talk. We do it because Scripture does the same, and compels us to do so. We do it because to do anything else is hateful. There is nothing worse you can do to a man than allow him to perish in false belief, even sincerely held, without telling him the Truth. There is nothing more loving you can do than to tell someone the Truth, that by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ they too might come to a right understanding of the Word of God.

Thanks be to God, that the new birth our Lord promised to Nicodemus, the new birth of Water and the Spirit, works the forgiveness of sins. There, in Holy Baptism, the death and resurrection of Christ, the mercy God has shown upon you, is applied to you. In that new birth, that regeneration, that slaying and making alive again in the Font, the same Spirit of God, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, fills you and works faith in you through the Word. That faith, baptismal faith, confesses God aright.

You are reconciled to God the Father for God the Son’s sake through the work of God the Spirit, and given right faith. And that faith, baptismal faith, hungers for the Gifts that the Lord of the Church gives in each Mass – the Body and Blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of your sins, the Word of God preached and read, the strengthening of your faith, and life everlasting. By His grace, through the only true faith, you too believe and confess “Blessed be the Holy Trinity and the undivided Unity, we will praise and glorify Him

because He has shown His mercy upon us.” May God bless you richly in Christ Jesus this Trinitytide.



**Annual Meeting** - The annual meeting of our congregation was held on Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. The meeting was well attended, and the agenda was quite full. For those of you that attended, this will be a “recap”. For those who were not able to attend, this issue of the Zion Trumpet will serve as a summary of the proceedings of our most important meeting of the year.

**Voting Membership** – Our constitution requires that 10% of the voting members be present for a quorum. Without a quorum, the business of the congregation can not be accomplished. After we were unable to meet in May due to a lack of quorum, our Board of Deacons did the hard work of reviewing the membership list. The Zion constitution requires that a member receive Communion at least once in the previous liturgical year to remain a “member in good standing” (Bylaws article I D.). 90 members were found not to have received Communion in the last liturgical year, and so were moved to “member not in good standing” status according to the constitution. They are thereby not included in the membership count used to determine quorum.

These members have not been “dropped” from the rolls or “stricken”. Every member moved to the “member not in good standing” status has already received a letter from the congregation inviting them back to church. As the members respond to their letters, we will follow up with each member or member family to try to bring them back into active membership. Since many of our “members not in good standing” have home addresses in other states or far-away cities, we will work to effect transfers for those attending LC-MS congregations. Bylaw Article I D allows for discretion on the part of the Board of Deacons in determining membership status. I have every confidence that our Board of Deacons will work diligently with me to insure that every member is handled in accord with Holy Scripture and our constitution.

If you are receiving this newsletter, and you are a Zion member that hasn’t been to Zion for a while, come to church. I’m inviting you. Join us for Mass, Sunday or Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. If you have received a letter from the church about your membership status, or are unsure of your membership status, contact me and I’ll speak with you personally. We want you to continue your active membership at Zion.

**Minutes** – The full minutes of our annual meeting will be distributed in a future edition of the Trumpet. What I will provide below is a summary of the meeting.

**Pastor’s Report** – My full report is a matter of record, and is available from the church office if you would like it. Since my installation on January 4, 2009 A.✠ D. we have achieved many important things. Adult Bible class, Sunday School, daily Matins, and every Wednesday Mass have all resumed. Our men’s and women’s groups are meeting regularly. I have met with each board or committee, in some cases several times. I have

been visiting our homebound members each month, and each homebound member is receiving a sermon and a bulletin every week by mail. Many improvements have been made to our facilities. These include repairs, cleaning and painting in the Rectory, new lighting in the Chapel, and new lighting in the Christus Court. Great improvements have been made to our Zion website. Among them are the creation of a virtual “tour”, a slideshow of snapshots of the church. We also added a sermon database, so every sermon preached at Zion can be accessed, read, and printed. Similarly, we have created an online database of theological papers and Bible studies I have written over the years. These, like all of our web site resources, are available to anyone who has a computer and internet connection. Our website has experienced a flurry of activity, with increased use from all over the world.

All of these projects and accomplishments were achieved working with and through the appropriate boards and committees of our congregation, and would not have been possible without them. To them I extend my heartfelt thanks.

While I enumerated several other accomplishments at the meeting, I would like to focus now on Zion’s future. I proposed four major initiatives for the coming year: the St. Michael Liturgical conference, an outreach to the Hispanic community around the church, a mission trip to the Dominican Republic, and a Vicar for the 2010/11 school year from our Fort Wayne seminary. Each initiative was overwhelmingly approved by the congregation at the meeting. I will discuss each of these in more detail below.

**Board of Deacons** – The Deacons reported on their work over the last six months. I would like to extend my thanks to the Board of Deacons for their willingness to work so well with me since I came to Zion.

**Budget** – At the annual meeting, the 2009/10 budget was distributed and approved by unanimous vote.

**Summer Bible Camp** – The Board for Parish Education announced the 2009 Zion Summer Bible Camp – “Christ, the Living Water”. It will be held from 9:00 a.m. until noon, June 22-26. Please encourage children you know to attend. For more information contact the church office.

**District Convention Delegate** – The 2009 convention of the English District will be held June 18-20 at Hale’s Corners, Wisconsin (a suburb of Milwaukee). I will attend as Zion’s Pastoral delegate. At the meeting Gregory Gramzow was elected to represent the congregation as the voting lay delegate.

**Thrivent Congregational Representatives** – Jessica Chavez and Darwin Terry were elected as our Zion Thrivent congregational representatives. Thrivent has graciously made available funding to support the continued work of Zion. Importantly, if you are a Zion member and do not live inside the city of Detroit, please contact the Thrivent home office to change how you are “listed.” Funds are allocated by member to the area of your residence. To benefit Zion, please ask to be “listed” in the Eastern Wayne County

Chapter. You can do this by calling (800) 847-4836 and asking for the “fraternal department”. This will increase the funds available to Zion in the future.

**St. Michael Liturgical Conference** – The St. Michael Liturgical Conference will return to Zion this year after being hosted for three years at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne. Thanks to Redeemer, and to her Pastor Fr. David Petersen, for continuing the conference.

Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup> is the date for the conference this year. The focus will be the *Triduum Sacrum*, the three holy days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Kent Burreson, Dean of Chapel and Associate Professor at our St. Louis Seminary. Sectional presenters include Fr. Burnell Eckhardt, editor of *Gottesdienst* and Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church of Kewanee, Ill; Fr. Richard Zeile, Pastor of St. John Lutheran Church in Taylor, and past Associate Pastor of Zion; Fr. Eric Forss, Pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Howell, and editor of *Portals of Prayer*, and me, Fr. Braden. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m., the Mass will be held at 9:00. Fr. David Petersen will preach, the Rt. Rev. David Stechholz, Bishop of the English District, will preside, I will celebrate.

At the voters assembly several of you signed up to help with the conference. If you did not sign up, but would like to help, contact the church office.

**Hispanic Outreach** – I have been pleasantly surprised at the large number of Spanish speakers that live and work near the church. I have an opportunity almost daily to speak Spanish with them as I pass them on the sidewalk, talk to them on the phone, or greet them as our neighbors. It is my hope to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to this growing group, and to invite them to join Zion. In order to do so, I have asked for a group of members willing to support me in beginning an Hispanic Outreach. This may include English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. It will certainly include a Spanish language Service. If you did not sign up to help, but would like to, contact the church office.

**Dominican Republic trip** – As I have written before, I travel each year to assist our foreign missionaries in the Pastoral development of nationals to strengthen our churches in other countries. For the last three years I’ve traveled to Venezuela. Each year I’ve taken teams of members with me to do service projects in support of our churches there. I have been invited to go to the Dominican Republic in January to teach a group of new seminarians who are preparing for Calls into the Office of the Holy Ministry. It is my hope that a team of members from Zion will accompany me. Service projects usually range from light construction and painting to teaching English. If you are interested in a one or two week trip this January (the dates are not yet set), contact the church office.

**Vicar** – A Vicar is a seminarist who has achieved at least two years of full-time Seminary education, and is prepared for an academic year of hands-on training in the congregation. At my request the voters assembly approved a Vicar for the 2010/11 school year, and the funding necessary for his salary, benefits, and housing. Vicars are paid a modest salary.

Benefits for a Vicar are very affordable because he remains a full-time student and is eligible for coverage through our Seminary. For Zion, housing is very affordable because he can live in our Rectory. Still, the congregation approved a substantial expenditure to allow Zion to request a Vicar to begin next June.

By requesting a Vicar, Zion is really making a gift to our church. We are as a congregation sponsoring the most critical part of Pastoral preparation – hands on training in the field. I will keep you posted on this as we approach the Vicarage assignments next spring.

**Sign Up** – For each initiative I mentioned above (Dominican Republic trip, St. Michael conference, and Hispanic Outreach) there is a sign-up sheet for members interested in helping. At the meeting a good number of members signed up for each project. If you would like to add your name to the list, call the church office.

**Undercroft Renovation** – The renovation of the undercroft was approved and funded previously. We expect that work will begin shortly, in order to allow the undercroft to be dedicated before the Voyager Academy students return in the fall. The trustees already have plans, and the materials (flooring, paint, countertops, etc.) have been selected. The renovation will include a new cedar room that will insure safe storage for our liturgical vestments. The kitchen will be redone. The historic lighting will be preserved, but some new additional lighting will be added. This will provide a greatly improved room for our weekly Adult Bible class, as well as renovated meeting space for our St. Michael conference and other congregational events. Many thanks to the Trustees for their stewardship of this project!

**Informational Meetings** – A request was made at the voters assembly for periodic informational meetings so that the congregation was aware of what is going on at Zion. I am glad to do this. At the meeting I suggested that every few months we begin the Adult Bible class with an informational meeting. I welcome all of our boards and committees to report on their work. Watch the bulletin for the date of our first informational meeting.

**It was a busy meeting** - We achieved a lot, thanks be to God. I was thankful for the large turn-out, and for the way that we all interacted as brothers and sisters in Christ. We didn't agree on everything, but the work of the congregation was accomplished. Our discussion was future oriented, and very upbeat. As Pastor, it was a real pleasure to see.

**Liturgical Calendar** – Attached to this newsletter you will find a liturgical calendar for the balance of this year.

**Other initiatives** – At this writing I am working with our Altar Guild to purchase a full set of vestments to match our “tapestry” frontal. The vestments that we use for Eastertide were ruined several years ago. For this most important of liturgical seasons a good set of vestments is appropriate. We have received fabric samples from Almy, and are working to place an order for a cope, chasuble, dalmatic, tunicle, burse and veil to match, with appropriate stoles and maniples. The Altar Guild has also identified a seamstress with

experience in liturgical vestments. She has just repaired our violet vestment set, replaced the clasp on our violet cope, and repaired the white chasuble with changeable orphrey used in our Chapel.

**Pastor's vacation** – I will be gone for a week beginning Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. Pr. Joel Baseley of Emmanuel, Dearborn, will preach and celebrate at Mass on Sunday, June 29<sup>th</sup>. There will be no Adult Bible class on June 29<sup>th</sup>. There will be no Wednesday Mass on July 1<sup>st</sup>. I will be back in town late on Saturday July 4<sup>th</sup>. During my vacation, contact the church office for emergent Pastoral issues.



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