



THE VISITOR FROM ZION

NEWSLETTER OF ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN RAHWAY

APRIL 2015

RAHWAY, NEW JERSEY

VOLUME 65, ISSUE 4

Pastor Pernini's Easter Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

What would life without the resurrection of Jesus Christ be like? I think this is the best way to construct questions about the resurrection. Notice that I did not ask what "death" would be like without the resurrection of Jesus Christ. While I am in some way concerned about life after death I am more interested in how our lives would be different without resurrection. Simply put, if there is no resurrection then when we die that is it! And, if death is our ultimate future then what point would there be to this life? The apostle Paul says as much in 1 Corinthians 15:14, 17-19 "... if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain... If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied." So death without resurrection is just that, death! If death is the end of our story, then what meaning could there be to life?

So, if there is no resurrection, then the life we have is all that there is. Without resurrection there is nothing after death. Death is the end. As horrifying as this may sound I think it is a consideration worth pondering. So what might life be like if death is truly the end? Without resurrection it would seem that our sins would not

matter. More to the point, that we have sinned is of little relevance because without resurrection there also would be no judgment. While this may initially seem like a "good" thing in that we would have license to do whatever we want, it is likely that selfishness would arise out of the nihilism (pointless existence) of a life without resurrection. Egotism and self-interest would be given primacy at the expense of sacrificial love in a world without resurrection. If Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead then the hopes and dreams of this life are concretely framed within the confines of birth and death. Such an existence cannot afford to concern itself with the affairs of those who are less fortunate because this life is all there is. And, if this life is all there is, then it makes sense to concern yourself with yourself and your needs and desires. This is not to say that atheists cannot be "good" people. But rather, it takes a tremendous amount of *trust* that good is tangible for people, atheist or not, to commit themselves to a lifetime of altruism in the face of life's troubles and scarcities. For the Christian, the "good" that is trusted is resurrection, where as for the atheist, trust is in a feeling of social responsibility. When resources are scarce it is unlikely that people can and will rely on their sense of responsibility to others (see for example how communities under stress are the most likely to commit crimes). *(continues on page 2)*

ANNOUNCEMENT:

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

APRIL 12, 2015 AFTER 10:00 AM WORSHIP

There will be a special congregational meeting on April 12, 2015 after worship to ask the congregation to vote on whether to adopt one Sunday service.

If the vote of the majority is negative, we will automatically return to two services with a change of time for the earlier service to 9:00 am and 10:45 am for the later service.

Pastor's Message (continued from page 1)

Whereas, trust in a life beyond this one is more likely to produce people who are more deeply committed to others regardless of societal stressors.

Today there are many who are born into war torn countries and through no fault of their own will live a life that is constantly under threat of violence. Such a life is lived, I suppose, in constant fear. If death is truly the end then he or she born into war would never know peace nor heaven. Without the hope of life eternal what words of hope, if any, could be received by someone whose entire existence is lived in fear of either death from war or death from lack of resources like food and shelter?

What about those born into abject poverty? Self-determination and personal agency are two of America's most prized characteristics of citizenship. As Americans we are expected to be able to pull ourselves up and fight our way out of any circumstance, to "rise above" those things that we are "born into" so to speak. "Social mobility," especially upward mobility, is the bedrock of American "civil religion." That is, without the ability to move upward from one economic class to another then freedom is all but an illusion. According to the Brookings Institute, the United States ranks *last* in developed countries in the category of upward social mobility. Today, the greatest indicator of what type of wealth, or lack there of, that a person will have corresponds to how much or how little wealth a person's parents have/had. So the person born in abject poverty will likely die in abject poverty. Without resurrection there is no hope for such an individual because if there is no resurrection there is no prospect of justice. More: what peace could be found in such a world where your future is laid out before you before you have ever been born? For the rich I suppose the future would be joyous, but for the poor the struggle to avoid social stigma would be matched by the lack the of those essential things that make life livable.

It is hardly prophetic to acknowledge the rampant self-interest, consumerism, and materialism in our world today. Self-interest and materialism go hand in hand with consumerism which drives the global economy. When one takes an honest look at our world today it is apparent that most people live as though this life is all there is and that resurrection is not the future. We have to ask ourselves, "Would consumerism be such a phenomenon as it is if resurrection were part of our story?"

You see, life without resurrection is in many ways a life without hope. Without hope many of the things we take for granted - like family, love, future and past - fall apart. All of the things I have just listed rely on resurrection for meaning. For example, what family does not need the hope of forgiveness offered freely through Christ's death and resurrection? What love does not need

the opportunity for renewal which is given possibility in God creating life from death in Jesus' resurrection? What future lies ahead without eternity? What past is looked at honestly that does not need redeeming? It is not that *death* is given meaning by resurrection, but *life* is giving meaning by resurrection! Life and the priorities of the living are framed and given substance by Jesus' resurrection. To be resurrected today means that life eternal with God begins today and not in some distant future nor at the unknowable hour of death. Jesus asks, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" Because we *are* a resurrection people we are free to put the needs of others before our own. Jesus said, "If any want to become my followers, let them *deny themselves* and take up their cross and follow me." On account of resurrection we can patiently decline the trappings of that "new thing" that is being advertised twenty-four hours a day. Nor need we play the commodification game where all aspects of our lives are converted into dollar amounts. Jesus said, "For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?" For the sake of resurrection we can say no to war and violence of any kind because this life is not the end of our story but the beginning. Jesus said, "All who take up the sword will die by the sword." That we are resurrected is cause enough to say with the apostle Paul, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

It is because Jesus Christ was resurrected that the world has been turned upside down. What appears to be an end, death, is but a beginning. What is the cause of dread and despair, suffering and the cross, is the doorway to eternal life. Those who in the eyes of the world seem to be without hope on account of poverty or homelessness are those whom God cares about the most. Those thoughts, words, and deeds which break apart families, friends, and lovers are turned into opportunities for God's forgiveness to mend brokenness that is understood to be irreparable. In all of these instances what appears to be the end, completely broken, and unredeemable are occasions for the Church's resurrection hope to break the bonds of intransigence and despair. Life lived in resurrection hope begins today. Christ is risen!

Grace and peace,
Pastor

UPCOMING EVENTS

Zion's Annual Easter Breakfast

Sunday April 5, 2015 8:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Please join us in the Social Hall! All are welcome!

If anyone would like to help out by donating time, baking talents, or helping with refreshments, please speak to Anita Waldron (732-574-2934) or Katie Finnerty (908-499-4385). Thank you.

Easter Egg Hunt at 9:00 AM

“All God’s Children”

Worship Service for Individuals with Disabilities

Saturday, April 18, 2015 at 2:00 PM

The first worship service for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities will be held on Saturday, April 18, 2015 at 2:00pm. This worship service will offer a Gospel message, prayer, music and singing. Light refreshments and time for fellowship will follow the service. Volunteers are needed to greet and assist with the service. Please join us in welcoming our brothers and sisters at this new and exciting worship service!

The plan is to have this worship service once a month and the future dates will be announced shortly. For more information, contact Jamie Dungey at 908-377-8945.



Congregational Breakfast

Sunday, April 19 at 8:00 AM

Our second congregational breakfast will be held Sunday, April 19 at 8:00 AM in Fellowship Hall.

All are welcome to join in the meal, and you are encouraged to bring friends!

For more information, or if you'd like to help, contact Katie Finnerty (908-499-4385).

WELCA Notes

Edna Syvertsen, WELCA Secretary

At our monthly meeting on March 9th we honored our long time member Marie Jensen. Marie is moving to Johnson City, New York to be near her son.

Our hostesses were Annette Nielsen, Maria Blajsa and Mary Hrindro. We were served a very nice lunch with a beautiful cake for dessert. As we did not meet in February due to bad weather our reports were from January.

We had a discussion of the changes to our Sunday services. It is nice to see our members at the same service and we enjoy the social time after service.

Anita Waldron is asking for assistance with the Easter breakfast such as setting up, cleaning up, and food items for the breakfast. Please let her know if you can help.

Anita's reading was "Praise For His Name," about God's Lamb.

As Marie is leaving Zion we reminisced with her about her life here at Zion. We presented her with a book about New Jersey so that she may share with her new friends many good things about New Jersey.

At our next meeting we will have a program about the Malaria Campaign and the ELCA. World Malaria Day is April 25.

Table & Font

Kathryn Irwin

Last month on Sunday mornings we gathered for an adult education opportunity to talk about "Eucharistic Hospitality." This is the formal term for the question of who we allow to receive communion in our worship service and why. The ELCA has invited its congregations to have this discussion and has asked that after the conversation is had, feedback is shared with the churchwide office.

If you were unable to attend our Sunday morning discussions but would like to put in your "two cents," please email me your thoughts to be included in our congregation's submission to the ELCA. You can reach me at ksirwin@gmail.com.

You can read more at <http://www.elca.org/Resources/Worship> (click on the "Table and Font" tab).

The Resurrection—Living in Hope

Maria Blajsa

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3

Some of the saddest words in the Bible are: "But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel," spoken by the travelers on the road to Emmaus. They were with Jesus, but did not know it because he had not yet revealed himself to them in the bread. They despaired because the man who had raised so many hopes with his miracles and holy teachings had been killed. Their hope had died with Jesus on the cross.

Sometimes the work of the church feels hopeless. Finances are a struggle, attendance is sparse, it is difficult to put together any kind of successful function, and a few members never run out of reasons to criticize. We hope that church life will be an uplifting experience of joy and unity. We hope things will be easier. But that kind of hope dies when our sinner sides show up for church as often as our saintly sides.

Fortunately, by God's grace, we have a deeper hope that sustains us in disappointment and failure. Through the water of Baptism we are permanently connected to a hope that lives no matter what the world does to try to kill it. The deepest truth of our life together is the certainty that God has already won the victory over death and hopelessness. Living and working in that hope equips us to do the work of the church. We are called to build a bridge from the hopelessness of death, mistrust and judgment to the living hopefulness of joy, mercy and peace. That bridge is built from the bricks that God gives us to structure the life of faith: regular worship, Bible study, daily prayer, acts of love for the neighbor, holy listening to one another, and a selfless hospitality that welcomes every person as a gift from God.

We cannot build that bridge alone. God gives us the tools, guides our hands, and fills our hearts as we work. God has given us a living hope that has the power to transform the world with love and gather all people to Jesus Christ. By God's grace we are saved from despair and freed to serve in hopefulness.

ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH APRIL 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	MARCH S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	MAY S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 7:00pm Property	2 <i>Maundy Thursday</i> 10:00am Sewing Group 7:30pm Worship	3 <i>Good Friday</i> 7:30pm Worship	4 7:00am Property Work Day -9:00am 5:00pm Easter Vigil Worship
5 <i>Resurrection of our Lord</i> 8:30am Easter Breakfast 9:00am Sunday School Egg Hunt 9:15am Worship 10:30am Worship	6	7 6:00pm Evangelism 6:30pm Youth & Family 7:30pm Bible Study	8 6:00pm Finance	9 7:30pm Worship	10 1:00pm 2 nd Friday Cupcakes -2:00pm	11
12 <i>2nd Sunday of Easter</i> 9:45am Sunday School 10:00am Worship 11:15am Special Congregational Meeting	13 12:30pm WELCA 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	14 6:00pm Stewardship 7:30pm Bible Study	15	16 10:00am Sewing Group 7:30pm Congregation Council	17	18 2:00pm All God's Children worship service 5:00pm Worship
19 <i>3rd Sunday of Easter</i> 8:00am Congregational Breakfast Worship times TBD – Call Church Office for more information	20	21 7:30pm Bible Study	22	23	24	25 5:00pm Worship
26 <i>4th Sunday of Easter</i> Worship times TBD – Call Church Office for more information	27	28	29	30 10:00am Sewing Group 6:00pm Op. Warm Heart appreciation dinner		

APRIL 2015 SERVER SCHEDULE



DATE	WORSHIP ASSISTANT	COUNTERS
April 4		
April 5	Kathryn Irwin	John Blajsa Maria Blajsa
April 11		
April 12	Barbara Brown	Bob Shackleton Kevin Engstrom
April 18	Herman Renkevans	
April 19	Nancy Jean Wallace	Bill Hoepfel Peg Hoepfel
April 25	Lee Thor	
April 26	Linda Cenci	Annette Nielsen Donna Murphy

April Altar Guild: Charlene Lesinski, Carley Lesinski

If you are interested in participating in worship leadership as a worship assistant, please contact Vi Stebner (732-382-2514).

April Celebrations

Birthdays

- 8 Natalie Ford
- 11 Michael Sakala, Jr.
- 17 Brianna Thor
- 18 Ann Titone
- 18 Jeff Roos
- 19 Anita Waldron
- 22 Cori Battenhausen
- 25 Barbara Weingarten
- 30 Paul Matthew Monte

Wedding Anniversaries

- 3 Carolyn & Peter Konopi
- 22 Peg & Bill Hoepfel
- 22 Barbara & Kevin Brown

Baptismal Anniversaries

- 2 David Healey
- 6 Zoey Bacon
- 8 Margaret Felver
- 8 Edna Syvertsen
- 12 Cathy Jones
- 14 Natalie Ford
- 19 Kristen Konopi
- 22 Jacob Lucash
- 23 Nancy Jean Wallace
- 25 Lauren Bixler
- 28 Danielle Giarrizzo

Continuing in Need of Prayer

Therese Bear	Ted Meadowcroft	Lee Thor
Ursula Lochner	Ellie Ringled	Kathy Ward
Carol Meadowcroft	Ryan Roos	Charlotte Zygo

Abby ----- friend of Marcia Eversley
 Joe Alol ----- friend of Luann Albanese
 Clara Andrews ----- friends of Edna Syvertsen
 Debbie Beer ----- cousin of Cheryl Piccard
 Joe Bera ----- brother of Yogi Bera
 Andrew Born, USMarine ----- nephew of Doug Born
 Robin Brown ----- friend of Lee Thor
 Holly Brown ----- friend of Cheryl Piccard
 Carl Christensen ----- friend of Patrick Sawler
 Richard DeNero ----- friend of Cheryl Piccard
 Helen Deppe ----- sister of Gert Shackleton
 Robert Deppe ----- nephew of Gert Shackleton
 Mari Favire ----- friend of Cheryl Piccard
 Ira Glover ----- friends of Marcia Eversley
 Patricia Grant ----- friend of Cheryl Piccard
 Charles Gritschke ----- nephew of Helen Gehring
 Elanore Hintenach ----- mother of Tommy Hintenach
 Dennis Hoover ----- friend of Gert & Bert Shackleton
 Meg Keller ----- daughter-in-law of Grace Keller
 Marilyn Kelly
 Frieda Konopi ----- mother-in-law of Carolyn Konopi
 Bernie Long ----- friend of Therese & Yogi Bera
 Amy Martin ----- friend of Zion
 Devon Matthews ----- friend of Cheryl Piccard
 James McCabe ----- cousin of Cheryl Piccard
 Barbara McDarby ----- friend Yogi & Therese Bera
 Ginny Mentzel ----- sister of Natalie Ford
 Dori Miller ----- friend of Therese Bera
 Daniel Nietzold ----- son of Kathy Ward
 Michael Nicols ----- friend of Yogi & Therese Bera
 Monica & John O'Brien ----- friends of Luann Albanese
 George Policastro ----- friend of Therese & Yogi Bera
 Rita Reddington ----- mother of Carolyn Konopi
 Maria Ros ----- mother of Fr. Sal Ros
 Marianne Sabol ----- cousin of Therese Bera
 Francis Sawler ----- father of Patrick Sawler
 Helen Spillar ----- friend of Gert & Bert Shackleton
 Susan Trail ----- friend of Therese & Yogi Bera
 Hugh Wallace ----- husband of Nancy Jean Wallace
 Gary Webb ----- brother-in-law of Cheryl Piccard

We pray for our members at a distance and those unable to join us at worship:

Gloria Anderson	Grace Keller	Helen Rokos
Nettie Baser	Alexander Kitsakos	Richard Sillen
Dot Cole	Harry McDowell	Henry Thoden
Margaret Felver	Bill Marbach	John Thompson
Arlene Hasbrouck	Henry Meyer	Dorothy Zehrer

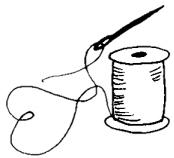
SECOND FRIDAY CUPCAKES

Thanks to all who contributed cupcakes that were delivered to Second Presbyterian Church on Friday, March 13: Marcia Eversley, Edna Syvertsen, Cathy Jones, Donna Murphy & Annette Nielsen. Thanks to Roseanne Tremarco for delivering them. Anyone may contribute. They are much appreciated. Thank you very much also to all the anonymous people who contributed plastic bags or paper products or their prayers! All of this is much appreciated.

The next opportunity to help with this faithful mission is **Friday, April 10th**. Please drop off a batch of 24 cupcakes **between 1:00 and 2:00 PM** at the Parish Office or call the office for a special arrangement.



SEWING GROUP



The sewing group meets on the first and third (sometimes the fifth) Thursday of each month in the Education Building. Our next meeting times are **April 2nd, 16th, and 30th at 10:00 AM**.

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

Our next meeting is on **Monday, April 13th at 12:30 PM**.

ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild is looking for additional people to serve for one month a year. Call the church office to sign up.



VISITOR NEWS

Visitor submissions should be emailed to the church office (secy@zionlutherannj.net). If you do not have access to the internet you may still submit a hard copy. Please keep us up to date on your events. The deadline is the third Sunday, which is **March 15th**. Remember: if at all possible, please email your news.

MEDICAL SUPPLY CLOSET

If you would like to borrow walkers, crutches, canes, etc., please call the church office.

DONATEABLE ITEMS

CAMPBELLS SOUP LABELS for Navajo Lutheran Mission, Rock Point, AZ



Please save your Campbell's Soup Labels proofs of purchases! The labels are used to purchase vehicles for the Mission and are very valuable, as in the past they have been able to redeem these points in exchange for four 15-passenger vans (worth 1.5 million labels each!), and two 7-passenger mini vans for employee use. Although Campbell's no longer has the 15-passenger vans, the Mission is still able to purchase smaller vans and educational equipment, such as overhead projectors, computers, and playground equipment.

The Campbell's Soup program will only be accepting the bar code portion from the labels. Instead of saving the labels from Campbell's, Swanson's, V8, Prego, and Franco American products, they now just require that the UPC (bar code) insignia be sent. (Any bar code whose number begins with 51 or 14 or any with the Labels for Education will qualify). If the bar code has dotted lines around or near it, cut on the lines.

For more information, see <http://www.nelm.org/support-the-mission.php>

SODA CAN TABS for children in need



Save the tabs from your soda cans. The saved tabs will be sent to Florida in gallon milk jugs. Each jug will provide \$100 worth of free medical care to children in need.

A box is in the back of our worship space labeled "Can Tabs." For more information call Carley Lesinski at 732-388-9044.

USED EYEGLASSES for the Lion's Club program



Please bring them to Zion and put them in the box in the back of our worship space. Many thanks!

For more information, see <http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/how-we-serve/sight/eyeglass-recycling.php>

Notes from Our Brothers and Sisters

To the Congregation of Zion Evangelical Church,

On behalf of the entire family of Lee Thor, we would like to take the opportunity to extend our most heartfelt "Thank You" for your kind thoughts, well-wishes and prayers.

To think we almost lost my sister is gut-wrenching. However, through the strength of prayer and God's will, she is recovering nicely.

We truly believe in the power of prayer. We have seen the results, the rewards, first hand on a few occasions. And from experience, I can tell you of the feeling of peace and knowing everything will be okay, even though the situation does not look promising from the "outside," in my heart I knew. That was the power of prayer.

So, in closing, I, and my whole family, wish to thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts. Keep those prayers coming, God is listening!

Sincerely,

Sue Weigman (Lee's sister)

*Get-well notes may be sent to **Lee Thor** at: 1065 Madison Avenue, Rahway, NJ 07065*

Dear Anita & Zion Sunday School Children,

Thank you for the many holiday cards you have been sending. I enjoy reading them – especially when one is far away from Zion.

Peace,

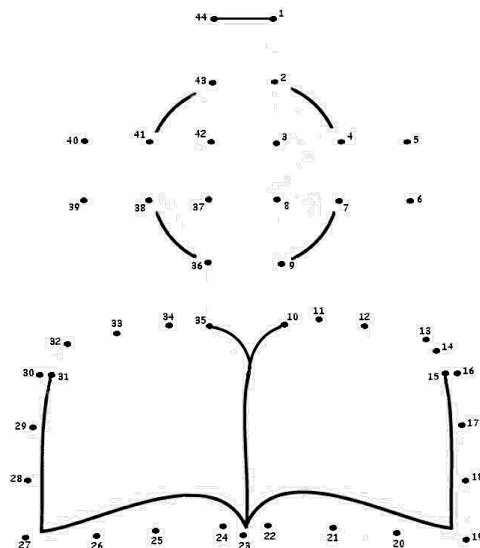
Margaret Felver

800 W. Oakton St Rm 369C
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

Our sister **Marie Jensen** has moved.

Her new address is:

282 Deyo Hill Road, Apt. 1134
Johnson City, NY 13790



Zion Lutheran Church
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Rahway, NJ 07065

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Holy week schedule

Palm Sunday Weekend, March 28-29

Saturday at 5:00 PM & Sunday at 10:00 AM
Worship with Holy Communion

Maundy Thursday, April 2.... 7:30 PM

Good Friday, April 3 7:30 PM

Easter Vigil, April 4 5:00 PM

Easter Sunday, April 5

9:15 AM & 10:30 AM

Worship with Holy Communion

ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

New Jersey Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

215 Elm Avenue, Rahway, NJ 07065-3220

Phone: 732-388-1815

Fax: 732-574-2559

Web page: www.zionlutherannj.net

E-Mail: secy@zionlutherannj.net

Saturday Worship at 5:00 PM

Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM

Holy Days as Announced

The Parish Staff

Ministers: The People of Zion Church

The Rev. Carmine Pernini, *Pastor*

Patricia Ogarek, *Parish Secretary*

Dr. Brian F. Dallow, *Director of Music*

Frank, *Sexton*

Mr. Kevin Brown, *Congregation President*

LOVE GOD, LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR, TELL THE WORLD!

APRIL 2015