

The Beacon

ZOAR CHURCH PARISH NEWS

A Beacon of Hope on the North Shore



"Sunday Morning Sunrise"

It was the fall of 1944. The allies had stormed Normandy beach earlier that summer. Paris had been liberated. So had Guam in the Pacific. The Ladies Aid were meeting in the basement of Zoar Church once again for sewing and knitting. Though often unsung, their work had been vital in keeping up the spirits



of the congregation. Back in 1906 their efforts had helped fund the first church building and later, after a devastating storm, a new steeple. They'd often sewn and knit as they walked the long distances from one small fisherman's house to the next on their way to the church. Working through the year and then selling their crafts each fall - quilts, hats, mittens and the like - to lumberjacks and fishermen was part of the annual cycle of things. Even after the highway was built. But the quilt pattern they'd so carefully cut and laid out, then sewn together wouldn't get finished in 1944. It would take another 70 years! When it was belatedly quilted by Lois Featherly in 2014, "Sunday Morning Sunrise" would take first place at the Carlton County Fair and give us a surprising fresh look at that all but forgotten fall of 1944 and a tangible reminder of that "great cloud of witnesses" that have gone before us in the faith. Thank you Betty Sloan for bringing this amazing quilt back to Tofte!

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, - Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)



Mihály Munkácsy, Christ before Pilate, 1881

Upcoming Messages

By Pastor Daren Blanck

"The Power of Words"

Over the past two months each Sunday we've looked at how our words matter. We've used Ephesians 4:29 as our guide - *"Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear."* These last two weeks of this series we focus on the **"Half-Truths"** we've probably all heard or said - things that seem true at first glance, but might not convey the fullness of God's love or our witness to the world.

March 5: "God helps those who help themselves"

March 12: "God said it, I believe it, that settles it!"

"The Questions Pilate Asked"

Self-serving bureaucrat? Evil imperialist? Manipulated failure? Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, is one of the most enigmatic figures in the Bible. He's the only other man named in the Apostle's Creed, yet we know next to nothing about him, in fact archeology couldn't verify his existence until the 1960s. It is Pilate who sentences Jesus to the cross, yet in Christian history he seems to have escaped without blame, his symbolic hand washing effectively initiated centuries of anti-semitism.

The confrontation between Jesus and Pilate is brief, yet it is one of the most dramatic moments in the New Testament. In this momentary episode, Pilate hurls questions at Jesus that philosophers have pondered ever since, questions we struggle with in the modern world. Questions of identity, contempt, power, and guilt. Sometimes it seems we share with Pilate the sense that we are living through events beyond our control.

This lent I'd like to introduce you to Pontius Pilate and explore with you **"The Questions Pilate Asked"** that day in Jerusalem more than 2000 years ago. I believe you'll recognize him in someone you know, maybe you'll see aspects of him in the mirror. I think his questions are as relevant today as they were then. As we travel together toward Calvary, I hope we'll discover some answers and realize that asking questions is the beginning of every journey into deeper faith...

March 5: What have you done?

March 12: Have you no answer to make?

March 19: Are you the king of the Jews?

March 28: What is truth?

April 2: Where are you from? (John 19:5-11)

Check out our website for updates and past sermon audio!

East European Mission Network

~ February Mission Project ~

The East European Mission Network (EEMN) was selected by Zoar's leadership team as the mission for February. Founded in 1992, EEMN is an evangelical, pan-Lutheran mission organization that partners primarily with indigenous Lutheran Christians living in former Soviet Bloc nations. The primary passion of EEMN is to introduce the Gospel to people who have never learned about the saving, grace, love, and mercy of God in Christ Jesus and to partner to teach and equip a new generation of Christ-centered leaders committed to building authentic communities in Christ. Two projects that we have been involved in include their summer English Language Camp, and the Ingrian Lutheran Church in Petrozavodsk. Our support of the English Language Camp allows Russian children the opportunity to attend the camp. We recently received an update on the Ingrian Lutheran Church and they are pleased to share with us that their ministry is healthy and growing. They hosted a Christmas party on Christmas Eve day and had 100 children (and their parents) attend! Some of the families have chosen to continue to attend services. The church is extremely thankful for our on-going financial contributions and prayers as they continue to grow their fruitful and faithful ministry.



Mission Project Updates:

Lutheran Indian Ministries - January:

Less than 5 percent of the more than 5 million Native American people in North America know that they are accepted by God and forgiven in Christ. Lutheran Indian Ministries (LIM) proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Native American peoples, disciples Native leaders to share the Gospel with their brothers and sisters, addresses social sufferings in a way that values Native cultures, and envisions a day when all nations walk together in Christian fellowship. LIM serves Native American communities in the Alaskan interior, Hawaii, the Pacific northwest, and the southwestern US. In addition to its other ministries, LIM publishes *Lenten Devotions* that are *available now* in the church entryway.



Thrivent Choice Dollars

Thrivent Choice lets eligible Thrivent members recommend where they feel Thrivent should distribute some of its annual outreach funding by choosing from thousands of enrolled churches and nonprofits, including Zoar Lutheran Church. Thank you to the members and friends of Zoar Church who have chosen to direct their 2016 Thrivent Choice Dollars to Zoar. Your gift helps us to continue to carry out our missions and ministries in the local community, on the North Shore, and around the world. *(continued on right...)*

Little Sower's School, Haiti - December:

In January we received an update from Waterside Global Missions (WGM) regarding the work that they are doing at Little Sowers School in Port Au Prince, Haiti. Our special offerings from December, including our Christmas Eve offering, went to WGM to help provide meals to the children that attend Little Sowers. More often than not, the meal that they receive from the school is the only meal that they will eat that day. Rev. Jonathon Kosec, the lead Pastor at Waterside Church and WGM shared: "Our school director, Jonas wanted me to make sure I thank you all for the wonderful gift. I want to thank you personally as well. It is rare I see a congregation like Zoar who is willing to give away it's Christmas Eve offering to anyone other than themselves. It is an incredibly missional idea. Thanks again for such an awareness of kingdom work as a congregation." If you would like to learn more about WGM and their mission work, you can visit their website at <http://waterside.me>.



Galen Johnson, The Seed Company - April:

Zoar supports Galen Johnson of the Seed Company in his Bible translation work in Africa. Galen was home for his father-in-law Paul Olfelt's funeral in January. Paul was a frequent summer friend of Zoar church, along with his wife Helen and their family. Galen will be returning soon to the Democratic Republic of Congo where he is working with 5 language groups developing a Bible translation project. Galen says, "What is exciting is that the regional churches will be covering the management of these projects. We will help train their translators and equip them with needed technical equipment (computers, printer, etc.), but the translators will be under the church. This has the potential of revolutionizing Bible translation projects with the goal of 'A translation project started in every language that needs one by 2025.'" Galen's prayer request: "January 15th marked the massacre in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and the anniversary of the abduction of missionaries Dr. Ken and Jocelyn Elliott from their home in Djibo. Jocelyn was released a few weeks later. Ken remains in captivity and marked his 84th birthday wherever he is being held. Jocelyn asks us to 'pray for a strengthening of wills for those that are in a position to act, a softening of hearts of those holding Ken, a miraculous release, and for the Lord's glory to be known in all.'"



("Thrivent Choice Dollars" Continued...) We have been so blessed by Thrivent Choice Dollar contributions. If you would like to continue directing your Thrivent Choice Dollars to Zoar, please notify Thrivent by March 31st. If you haven't yet participated in Thrivent Choice but would like to learn more about participating in it, visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice. Or, you can contact your Thrivent representative.

A Life Well-Lived

By Marsha Hansen

Recently, one of our dear "seasoned saints", Eileen Netland Hall, went to be with her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Only God knows the number of lives this faithful lady impacted in her 93 years of life. A wealth of information about her amazing life was shared at her home-going celebration at Zoar Lutheran Church last Sunday, and at the fellowship meal that followed, at the Schroeder Town Hall. My heart was so full at the end of the day, with stories of her generous and welcoming spirit, her love of God, His Word, and prayer. People told of her industrious nature and her determination and perseverance in the face of adversity, her humility and love for people--qualities I had witnessed firsthand in Eileen.

I thought back to when Eileen and I first became acquainted.

She and husband Swen were living in a rather small house located near where the Tofte Post Office now stands. They had already borne 11 of their 13 children, so it was a very busy household. I was a young mother with two little ones. I didn't really know many people in Tofte at that time, so I was very happy when Eileen invited me to come over for coffee



What I encountered that day was truly amazing. Although it was a typically busy day of washing, cooking and cleaning, Eileen had taken the time and care to set a beautiful table for our coffee time. The long family table had a pretty tablecloth, and it was set with delicate china cups and saucers. She had made some sweets to accompany our coffee and conversation. She looked as if she had nothing else in the world to do but to sit and enjoy our time together. How could this possibly be? I wondered. Through the years, I learned that this was so typical of Eileen--she really savored her guests. When she was with you, she was really with you, not a million miles away in her thoughts, but truly engaged in the conversation. She was fully present. When I left for home that day, I felt very special because Eileen had taken time, quality time, with me. That day was the beginning of a long friendship.

The years progressed, and our friendship and fellowship grew as I learned more and more from and about this beautiful lady. She told me so many stories about her growing-up years on Maple Hill and her many life experience, and how God was her strength.. Several times, she talked about the traumatic loss of the Erickson family home to fire. As it turned out, fire was to touch Eileen's life more than once.

I don't remember the year, but I can still picture the night of the fire at the Netland home. It was a bitterly cold night, probably in January. The temperature was 25-30 degrees below zero and the wind was blowing fiercely. A fire had started in one of the bedrooms that had a space heater running. The sky was lit up with flames all around the little house, and even from our house up on what is now Bayview Drive, we could see fireballs flying up into the air. It was a truly frightening occasion. The firefighters were having a terrible time trying to extinguish the flames because the hoses kept freezing. Those brave men continued to work all night long, mostly to keep the fire from spreading. The Netland home was a total loss. The good news was that no lives were lost. Miraculously, Swen, who had been recently incapacitated by ill health, was out of the home and recuperating at the Veterans' Hospital.

The next morning, a Sunday, where was Eileen? Why, in church, of course! What a witness that was to all of us, as we saw her praising the Lord, in spite of the loss of almost all of their earthly goods! Believe it or not, the family experienced yet another fire, at another homesite.

But there was another, more important type of fire in Eileen's life. A little flame was placed by God in Eileen's heart when as a young girl she received Jesus as her Savior. Eileen and her father had gone together to an evangelistic meeting in the Grand Marais area. That day, the Holy Spirit prompted both of them to open their hearts to the Savior. Through the years, God fanned that flame and made it grow so that it warmed and gave light and life to Eileen, and also to those whose lives she touched. She learned to know and love God and people more and more.



In 1972, a new dimension came to Eileen's life. That was the year that an evangelist named Herbert Mjorud came to Zoar to present a week of Bible teaching. Pastor Mjorud's main message focused on the Holy Spirit, and how His fire cleanses, refines, tempers, and empowers lives surrendered to Him. He said we need to be filled with, immersed in, and led by this third Person of the Trinity. People were hungry to learn more and many came to the meetings, from up and down the North Shore. By the end of the week, many people were beginning a deeper walk with the Lord, including Eileen. The precious fire of the Holy Spirit continued to burn brightly in Eileen's life, enabling her to live fully, to love deeply, to share God's love and Word, and to have victory in adversity. The Bible tells us to make sure that our spiritual lamps stay lit, that they are continually filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit. We are the containers for God's light and love, God's fire. Jesus wants to see that fire burning when he comes for us. Eileen knew that, and I believe she met Him with her lamp burning brightly.

Zoar Church (LCMC)
PO Box 2098
7239 W. Highway 61
Tofte, MN 55615

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Tofte, MN
Permit No. 1

To: Box Holder

Community Soup Suppers Wednesdays at 5:30 PM

Come and grab a hot bowl of soup **Wednesday evenings!** The soup supper is a great way to get out of the house during these dark, cold months and join fellow community members for a delicious meal, great conversation and a song or two! Everyone is welcome so please bring your friends and family. The soup is served from 5:30pm until 7pm. The meal is provided at no cost by friends and members of Zoar Church. Special Note: On March 1 we will observe Ash Wednesday as part of our devotion time at 6:00.

Blood Drive: Tuesday February 28

The bloodmobile will be at Zoar on Tuesday from 2:30 pm until 6:00pm. If you would like to donate, please call Carla at 663-0179 to schedule your appointment.

Weekly Schedule at Zoar Church

Sunday Worship at Zoar Church: 9:30 am. Join us!
Sola Sunday School for Youth & Adults: 8:00 am.
Good News Club for kids ages 6-11 - Wed: 3:15 pm-
Birch Grove Community Center
Community Soup Supper - Wed: 5:30-7:00 pm.
Bible Study - Thurs: 10:00 am. Open to all.



Spaghetti Dinner

Date: Saturday, February 25, 2017

Time: 5 pm – 7 pm

Place: Birch Grove School

Cost: Suggested Donation of \$10/adult

Raffle

1 ticket \$5.00 or 3 for \$10.00

One night stay at **Caribou Highlands**
Includes: Dinner for two at **Moguls**

Two Lift tickets to **Lutsen Mountains**

\$75 Gift Certificate to **Sue's Hair Etc.**

\$100 Cash

Tickets available at the Cook County Auditor's Office
The Holiday Station in Tofte, and at Zoar Church in Tofte
All proceeds from Dinner and tickets go to Angie