

Zoar Church (LCMC)
PO Box 2098
7239 W. Highway 62
Tofte, MN 55615

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

To: Box Holder

Good News Club Resurrection Play Easter Sunday

“Jesus is the Good, Good News,” so sang the Birch Grove Good News Club kids during their performance on Easter Sunday at Zoar. Their “Resurrection Play” told the story of Jesus rising from the dead. A pancake breakfast courtesy of Gary and Marsha Hansen followed in the Fellowship Hall. Later Pastor Daren asked the congregation to consider three questions: “What does this all mean?” “Do I believe it?” and “What am I going to do about it?” What a great day to celebrate His resurrection, our salvation, and our new life in Christ!



The Beacon

ZOAR CHURCH PARISH NEWS

A Beacon of Hope on the North Shore



- April Sermon Series - ***Stories to Live By:*** ***The Parables of Jesus in Luke***



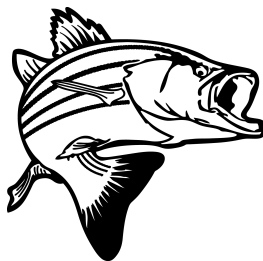
Jesus taught in Parables. These 2000 year old earthly stories with heavenly meanings have real and profound relevance to us today. In this series of Sunday morning messages we'll look at some of the parables that are found only in the gospel of Luke.

If you've heard them before, we'll seek in this series to understand the words of Jesus in a fresh light. If you've never considered the words of Jesus, it will be a great way to begin to understand the heart of the man at the center of Christianity.

- **April 10** "The Meaning of Love - The Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:25-37)
- **April 17** "Exercises in Missing the Point - The Rich Fool" (Luke 12:13-21)
- **April 24** "God's Relentless Love - Lost Sheep, Lost Coins" (Luke 15:1-10)
- **May 1** "The Way Home - The Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11-32)
- **May 8** "Making Life Count - The Rich Man and Lazarus" (Luke 16:19-31)

Fishing Stories

If you have a favorite fishing story you'd be willing to share, I'd love to include it in an upcoming sermon series I'm planning entitled "*Gone Fishin' - The Fishing Stories of the Bible*". Just send it to blanckd@gmail.com or give me a call. (If its a story you can tell on somebody else, its all the better!)



Pastor Daren and Michelle Blanck, Elijah and Sophia,

NOTES FROM PASTOR DAREN **Yearning for Spring**

The warm weather in mid-March got me thinking of spring. I imagined blue skies, warm sunshine, green grass and blooming flowers. Alas, when I woke up on the Saturday before Easter Sunday to snow on the ground my heart sank. I said to Gary Hansen, who was setting up for the pancake breakfast the next day, that I should have known better, I had been told not to expect spring until April on the North Shore. He laughed and said, "April? The last snow fall won't be until the end of May!" For many around the world, Easter Sunday is all about spring, cuddly bunnies and chirping chicks. Perhaps a cold breeze helped remind me once again that the real joy of Easter isn't all of that, it is the resurrection of Jesus. In rising again Jesus proclaimed that he conquered sin death, and the power of the Devil, and that through him we can have eternal life. Now in grateful response we, along with every one of his followers, are sent out on a mission of love for our neighbors, to let His light shine through us. Spring will come, as surely as He lives, and I'm looking forward to a bright one. I pray you are as well.

The Basket by the Door

Just inside the door of Zoar Church a basketful of colorful, hand knitted and crocheted squares catches the eyes of passersby. A short note is attached to each square: "Put me in your pocket, backpack, or purse, in your car, your desk or briefcase. Put me anywhere! Then, when you need a "God Hug" I will be there!"



Written on the back of the note is this passage: Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

How did these small, knitted reminders of God's love and care come to be tucked into a basket on that table next to the church door? Who made them? Can anyone just take one?

Janet Severi Bristow and Victoria Galo attended the Leadership Institute at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut. The two women started the Prayer Shawl ministry in 1998, and since then the ministry has grown to include millions of churches around the world. Shirley Seidel, with the help of Carol Markwell, introduced the Prayer Shawl and Prayer Square ministry to Zoar Church about ten years ago. Women of Zoar and the community have knitted and given away more than one hundred Prayer Shawls, and the basket of Prayer Squares constantly needs refilling.

Often, the women who knit and crochet the Prayer Shawls and Prayer Squares do not know whom their handiwork will bless. They say that they knit prayers into their work; prayers for healing, peace, comfort, thanksgiving and joy. When a Prayer Shawl or Prayer Square is complete, a blessing is said. A card explaining the gift of the shawl, its uses, and the name of the person who made it is included.

Even though the recipient of the gift of a Prayer Shawl or Prayer Square may never meet the person who made it, a spiritual bond is created. The Love of God is passed along to another who, in turn, passes that love on to another, and so the living presence of God's Holy Spirit is known through us. The note attached to the Prayer Square explains, "This little square was made for me to touch and hold each time I pray; its comfort helps to set me free. It calms the night and cheers my day. Someone took the time to care; each stitch is a prayer, a thought of love. As I am blessed by this small square I thank the Lord in Heaven above."



If God Never Answered

*If God never answered a prayer that I raise
would it still be worth it to give Him my praise?
If He never granted reply to my prayers
would I know that He loves me, know that He cares?
If all of my wishes were finally denied,
no matter how loudly or often I cried,
Would it still be worth it to bow at His throne,
to give Him my trust, to serve Him alone?
Oh, yes! It is worth it to seek God above,
to bask in His presence, to treasure His love.
He's done all that's needed to make me His own.
Jesus died for my sin—He's made His love known.
If God never answered a single request,
my time spent with Him would still be the best.
The moments of heart-to-heart joy that we share
are precious. And yet, God does answer prayer.*

~ Marsha Hansen

Bible Study: Moving to Tuesdays

The weekly Bible study at Zoar is moving from Thursdays to Tuesdays at 10:00 AM! During the month of April we will be looking closely at the parables of Jesus found in the Gospel of Luke. Open to everyone in the community.

Youth and Family Nights

Game Night, Amazing Grace, Worship & Praise,

Game night will be April 3 this month. On April 10 and 24 we will be watching parts 1 and 2 of the film "Amazing Grace" about William Wilberforce, a man of Christian conviction who against all odds nearly single handedly brought an end to the British slave trade. On April 17 Dave Gustafson will once again lead us on guitar in Praise and Worship, featuring some of the latest contemporary Christian music in an informal setting. All youth and family night activities are on Sunday evening at 4:30 PM. Open to youth and families from 1 to 99.

Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ April Learning Opportunities

Turning the Tide: Sat. April 16

How can small churches be effective at connecting and engaging with millennials? What does it mean to be a missional congregation? This workshop addresses challenges and opportunities facing the church today. *Held at New Life Lutheran Church, Duluth, MN.*

Becoming Missionaries at Home: Sat. April 30

Each summer the North Shore is the host to more than 100 international workers. Learn how to better fulfill the Great Commission in our community. *Held at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Rochester, MN.*

Contact Pastor Daren for more details and to share a ride to either of these free conferences.

Gathering Room "Makeover"

Join Michelle Blanck and Liz Wagner in sprucing up the "Gathering Room" on Zoar Church's main floor. Formerly the pastor's study, the gathering room is now a great place for Bible study, to hold prayer group meetings, and visit after worship services. Housing Zoar's library of faith based books and films, it's also a great place to read or watch a movie. The gathering room is available to community groups as well! Michelle and Liz plan to paint the walls and choose new carpeting - but they will need a few volunteers. The work is planned for sometime during the the last week of April or the first week of May. They would also be interested in the donation of a rocking chair so the gathering room can function as a nursery room during worship services. If you have a rocking chair or would be willing to help with the project, please call the church office at 663-7925. If you are interested in using the Gathering Room for a community group meeting email the church office. This project is made possible by an Action Team grant from Thrivent Financial. Several other smaller projects were approved at the congregational meeting in early March. If you are interested in taking one on as a Thrivent Action Team leader, let us know!

"The Beacon" Going Monthly

We're also going electronic! While residents in Tofte and Schroeder will still receive **The Beacon** by mail, those of you who live outside the Tofte-Schroeder area can receive an electronic issue of **The Beacon** each month by sending us your email address. Or, if you prefer, we will gladly send a paper copy of **The Beacon** to you. Just send a request for a paper copy along with your mailing address to: *Zoar Church, P.O. Box 2098, Tofte, MN 55615*. Look for the back issues of the newsletter on our web site www.zoarchurch.org.

Zoar's Leadership Team

What we are working on ...

There are several projects in the works starting with the church's water filtration system. We are working with a local specialist who has evaluated our system needs and presented a cost estimation for purchase and installation of upgrades to the current system. A grant application has been submitted to the Minnesota Health Department (MHD) to help with the cost associated with the upgrade.

The Trustees are also working on plans for repairing trim and fascia on the exterior of the building to get ready for repainting this summer. Pin-pointing the "perfect" paint color for the siding can be a challenge. We welcome input from the community and congregation to get it right. In addition the team is working on plans for changes to our Bell Tower. This project is still in the planning stages for design approval by the Tofte Town Board. Talks are ongoing with local trades people in efforts to establish a budget for the project with hopes that the project can be funded through memorial designated funds and possible grants.

The leadership team has voted to host a Summer 5-Day Club August 8-12 in cooperation with Child Evangelism Fellowship and Churches in Silver Bay. The cost for Zoar's participation would be the food for 1 meal each day for the high school aged club leaders. If you would like more information on this program please contact Pastor Daren.

The Leadership Team meets every 3rd Sunday of the Month. If you would like to learn more about leadership at Zoar Church, please feel free to contact a team member.

April Mission Support Project

The Seed Company - Galen Johnson

God's Word is life giving: by it the oppressed are liberated, the lost are reconciled. Yet, one billion people are still without Bibles that they can read in their own languages.

This month Zoar will again be supporting Galen Johnson with "The Seed Company," a Bible translation ministry. In his latest email, Galen wrote: "Recently a large truck ended its four day trek over difficult roads with its precious shipment of 10,000 New Testaments. These Mayogo Scriptures are for a people who turn to Christ through His Word; alive and active, presented for the first time in their mother tongue.

"I love my calling! It has been more than five years since God opened The Seed Company door for me to continue ministry in central Africa. Please remember that I need your prayers for my safety and effectiveness. Discernment and courage are what I ask."