

October Newsletter

Announcements and updates:

-We are planning for the first in-person worship service at Zion for Sunday, Oct. 25th, barring any unforeseen issues that might arise (e.g.- a second surge of the COVID-19 virus). If you are willing to volunteer to help prepare the sanctuary for this service (e. g. remove cushions and bibles from pews) contact Sara.

-Please join us for worship this Sunday at 10:00 AM. This Sunday's worship service on the Zoom platform continues for those with internet access via computer, tablet, smart phone, or through the livestream of YouTube. Those who choose to may call in to listen from their phone. You can also continue participating in Zion's virtual Sunday 10:00 AM worship service by utilizing the Service of the Word template provided later in this newsletter. Feel free to use the Service of the Word at any time if you aren't able to join us in spirit at 10:00 AM on Sunday.

-To join this Sunday's service, same log-in info as last week:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwvSTBER2lNb1o1Qzd6WGxDdz09> Meeting ID: 843-5484 0714, Password: 022654.

-Or by PHONE, One tap mobile, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654# US (New York)

-If you would prefer to view the service via livestream on our YouTube channel, you can do so by visiting our page at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzOtbCe2z7-bIPvxp62lA>. Thanks, Shawn, for developing this option!

-Your Neighbors held their Chicken barbecue and raised \$1,000. Thank you for your generous support! The Chicken BBQ was a success by many measures. The involvement of all helpers was, as usual, pleasant, and rewarding for everyone. *Sales of dinners was the lowest ever.* There were 86 meals unsold - that's a lot of chicken, potatoes and salad. BUT Your Neighbors took 62 halves with sides to the Rescue Mission and they immediately set them out as quarters for their Saturday meal, meaning 124 hungry people were fed there! That is one success! Then, Your Neighbors sent 24 halves to Mother Marianne's Kitchen in west Utica - meaning another 48 hungry people were fed - another success. It wasn't what Your Neighbors set out to do but it was, in fact, a success.

This week we heard the stories of Jonah and of the day laborers who, despite working different hours, were compensated evenly at day's end. I love the story of Jonah. First, it is short. Second, here is a prophet who, in spite of his consistent efforts to thwart God's call, is incredibly effective at sharing God's message of grace with Nineveh. And after doing so he still doesn't get it. In her sermon on Sunday, Deacon Patsy Glista captured his chorus, that of the day laborers, and our own: "that's not fair". For me, there is great hope here - that even amidst our own reluctance and complaints of "that's not fair" in response to God's grace, God can and does work through our lives to the benefit of our communities. Let's look for those opportunities this week!

Peace,

Kristen Burson and Mark Thompson
Church Council co-presidents

Pentecost 17 September 27, 2020



SERVICE OF THE WORD
GATHERING

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Faithful God,

Have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of ☩ Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. **Amen.**

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are raised with him to new life. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you created us in your image and planted us in a well-watered garden. In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched, and you gave us water from the rock. When we did not know the way, you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters. At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side, and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life. We praise you for your salvation through water, for the water in this font, and for all water everywhere. Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love. Satisfy the thirsty and give us the life only you can give. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn: *Rock of Ages #623, Verses 1 & 2 -Mary Senn*

Vs. 1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee; let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure; cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

Vs. 2 Not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's demands; could my zeal no respite know, could my tears for ever flow, all for sin could not atone; thou must save, and thou alone.

Prayer of the Day

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

THE WORD

First Reading: Exodus 17:1-7

Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-13

Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

Sermon: *Authority Issues -Jennifer DeWeerth*

Last week, if you recall, we heard Jesus' parable of a landowner hiring workers for his vineyard. Here again today, we have a short parable of a landowner who needs laborers in his vineyard. That's where the similarity ends, and the main difference in the story is not really that this time it is two sons who are asked to do the work, rather than larger crews hired throughout the day. The main difference between these stories is *where Jesus tells each story-where in the Gospel of Matthew-in the timeline, and where he is standing physically, geographically.*

The parable Jesus tells about the laborers paid a full day's wages for working just the last hour of the day is the last parable Matthew has Jesus telling before he travels to Jerusalem. The story of the two sons is less than a full chapter later, but two significant events have occurred, two events that change everything: 1) Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, cheered by crowds, and 2) Jesus' "cleansing of the temple," where he overturned the tables of those who were buying and selling inside the temple courtyard.

Within the space of a few verses, "we're not in Kansas anymore," as Dorothy says, and the tornado, the whirlwind, that is Holy Week, is picking up speed. Jesus is no longer talking to crowds by the seashore or from the rural hills. He's in the center of power, Jerusalem. Picture how Jesus is standing in a corner of the temple courtyard, teaching. It's his second day of occupying space in the temple courtyard—he has come back after disrupting activities the day before.

Today, he is just sitting and teaching, but the elite, who have the authority in that space, they come over to him. These are the men in charge of the temple, and they also have some local authority for law and order, because the Romans have, about 100 years earlier, charged them with that power, as a means of managing this provincial capital. Their intent is not in doubt. Today they are ready for him.

Jesus responds to the question from the priests, as he often does, by answering their question with a question. "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?" This question puts the priests in a bind. They know that a denial of the legitimacy of John's baptism will not play well with the crowds, whose support they need, because John remains popular among the people. On the other hand, if they affirm that John's baptism came from heaven, he will ask them why they did not participate in it. What begins as an attack on Jesus quickly becomes an exercise in damage control. They are trapped in their own self-interest; they can only feign ignorance: "We do not know."

There are a lot of authority issues swirling here. There's authority from God, which the chief priests and elders have—their role is set down in the history and scripture of Israel. There's Jesus' implicit claim, attached to the question about John, that his authority comes also from God. But there's also political and social authority. There's the fact that the Romans employ the priests to keep order in the temple area, in exchange for allowing the temple to remain open. There's the authority that the crowds offer Jesus by gathering to listen to him, by having followed the baptism of repentance proclaimed by John, and continued as a movement by Jesus. A crowd, even a ragtag one of tax collectors and women, can be influential, if there are enough of them.

Clearly the big question of this whole scene in the temple is the one of authority. And it started way before Jerusalem, in Nazareth, in Galilee, back at the Jordan river in Judea. Jesus (and John who came before him with baptism of free water) assert the forgiveness of sins through repentance rather than through temple sacrifice. Jesus forgives and heals when people ask, and he pronounces repentance because God's kingdom has come near. This is not, let me be clear, about Judaism versus Christianity. This is about the struggle of all religions and within each religion. It is about the difference between religion that comes with all the bells and whistles but misses the actual repentance and the forgiveness of God and religion that empowers and includes everyone regardless of what they can buy or pay for—religion that demands obedience and adherence through power or religion that engenders trust and loyalty through inspiration and transformation.

When Jesus flips the tables, he calls out a money-managed religion that has become complicit with political power rather than dependent upon trust in the goodness of God. Operating within the temple walls, the priests and elders have lost sight of the God who provided manna and water from a stone in the desert and the prophets who proclaimed freedom for the captives. They preside now over a system that is working for them. But where in this system is there room for the people who surrounded Jesus—the tax collectors, the prostitutes, the blind, and the lame? Where can those people find forgiveness without money changing hands, without the temple, without animal sacrifices, in other words, without the hierarchy and power system that dominates their lives? They don't have uniforms, scrolls, badges, money—all the signs and symbols of authority. All they have is a guy from Nazareth, over there, in the temple courtyard, teaching.

By what authority does Jesus forgive, heal, disobey the Sabbath, and flip over tables? And who gave him this authority? That's the question, right?

Then, why in the world does Jesus answer with the story of the two sons? It just doesn't seem to answer the question, does it? What does authority have to do with what seems like a simple story about whether it is better to be someone who says the right thing but doesn't do the right thing, than someone who says the wrong thing, but actually does what is right?

The answer to that, I think, is that for Matthew, the authority of Jesus comes, not even so much from God, as from the lives of those who follow him. Let me explain. Matthew lays down all his cards in the Sermon on the Mount at the beginning of Jesus' teaching ministry, the basic idea of which is that each person who wishes to enter the kingdom of heaven must not only hear the words of Jesus, *but actually do them*.

Here is how Jesus puts it: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine *and does them* will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain came down and the rivers came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it did not collapse, because its foundation was laid on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and *does not do them* will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain came down and the rivers came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it collapsed, and its fall was great.' And it happened when Jesus finished these words the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because *he was teaching them like one who had authority*, and not like their scribes."

Jesus' final teaching of the sheep and the goats in Matthew is the same: those who give food and water and clothing and welcome and help are those who enter the kingdom of God. For Matthew's Jesus, it is *the doing of God's work, the actual following of Jesus through actions that matters*. *These actions, meeting the righteousness of God, authorize themselves*. Jesus has authority over those who follow him, he has authority over us, because when we hear his message, when we meet him and decide to walk in his ways, we live in a solid house, a house where we can thrive, a house of love.

It's okay if we struggle a bit. There are two sons in the story and neither one was perfect, but it's the one who turns around, repents of his earlier behavior, and actually does what his father wants him to do, who Jesus says will enter the kingdom of God ahead of the one who was all talk, no action, who did not actually do the work of his father.

I believe that a bunch of people in the corner of a courtyard met someone who changed them, changed their way of thinking about the world, changed their hearts, and changed history. If the priests want to know where Jesus' authority came from, it came from there. Jesus has authority in our lives because, when we meet him, he changes us. He forgives us and heals us in ways we could not have imagined. He asks us to follow him, and we put one foot in front of the other and we go into the field. His authority is from heaven, *and it finds its home here on earth*, in our cracked open and healed hearts, our forgiven bodies, and then also in our refusal to comply with systems of injustice, our work feeding, clothing, tending the sick, and welcoming the excluded. We authorize all that he has done when we continue to do what he did. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

ANTHEM: Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord -Hudson/Wilhelmi

Prayers of Intercession

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

In all the world, give your church unity. Inspire all the baptized with the mind of Christ. Where the church is powerful and where it struggles, shape us with humility and obedience so that your love may be at work in us. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your Son took on all of bodily life in our world, even to death. Preserve and keep your creation, O God. Mend and redeem places that are polluted and damaged, so that all of creation confesses you as Lord. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.** Turn the nations toward life. Where our ways are unfair, give us new hearts and new spirits. Where sin permeates our cultures and institutions, change our minds and teach us to trust your authority. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit. Defend the lives and welfare of children who are abused or neglected, hungry or exploited, bullied or lonely. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Listen to the cries of your people waiting patiently for your healing hand and comforting Spirit especially: those who suffer with chronic pain and all cancer patients, Pr. Mary Etta, Gail, continued prayers for Claudia and Fran, Sara, prayers for Beverly- whose son recently died and husband is near death, Edie Marie, Suzee, prayers for Michael Gilleece and family, as well as the doctors involved, as Michael goes through surgery next week, the Nelson family, Your Neighbors clients, prayers for Ashley's baby, and Theresa, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Thanksgiving at the Table

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us unto the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: *The Lord Now Sends Us Forth #538 (with repeat)* *Mary Senn*

Vs. 1 The Lord now sends us forth with hands to serve and give, to make all of the earth a better place to live. The angels are not sent into our world of pain to do what we were meant to do in Jesus' name; that falls to you and me and all who are made free. Help us, O Lord, we pray, to do your will today. (Repeat.)

Blessing

Mothering God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Remember the poor. **Thanks be to God.**

Thank you for being with us.

**WELCOME
BACK!!**

We are so excited to welcome you back into the sanctuary for an in-person worship service on Sunday, October 25th at 10 AM!!

ZION ENDOWMENT FUND ANNUAL DISTRIBUTION FOR 2020

Zion's Endowment Fund has approximately \$15,300 available for distribution in 2020. One fourth of the total distribution will go to each of the following categories:

- (1) Community outreach programs
- (2) Special ministries of Zion
- (3) Missions of the ELCA
- (4) Zion Capital Projects

To be considered for a grant, submit a Zion Lutheran Church Grant Application Form describing your organization and what the funds will be used for to:

Zion Lutheran Church
630 French Rd
New Hartford, NY 13413
Attn: Endowment Distribution
Or send via email to office@zionluth.com.

The Grant Application form is available from the church office. There is a link to the form in the Endowment Fund article on the church web site at: <http://www.zionlutheranny.org/Zions-Permanent-Funds>
Deadline for receipt of the form is November 1, 2020. All applications will be considered at the November 2020 Endowment Committee meeting. Recipients will be notified in writing and checks will be sent in late November/early December 2020.

ZION ENDOWMENT FUND OVERVIEW

Zion's Endowment Fund was established in 1985 for the purpose of enhancing the mission outreach of Zion Lutheran Church apart from the general operations of the congregation. The Fund welcomes gifts from Zion and Utica community members. Gifts can consist of memorials, bequests in wills, charitable remainder and other trusts, charitable gift annuities, assignment of life insurance and transfer of property, such as cash, stocks, bonds, or real estate. To-date, most gifts have been from bequests in wills. Planned giving is one method of providing end of life gifting of one's wealth to the Zion Endowment Fund.

YEARLY DISTRIBUTIONS

The Endowment Fund by-laws require that yearly distributions be made from the Fund. The distributions are divided among the following: one-quarter each to; community outreach, missions of the ELCA, special ministries of Zion Lutheran Church and Zion capital projects. The Endowment Fund Committee makes recommendations to the Church Council and Zion's congregation concerning the charitable distributions. Some past recipients include; Community Food Bank, Your Neighbors, Family Nurturing Center, Canstruction, Lutheran Homes Foundation, Vanderkamp, KEYS Program and Foothills Rural Community Ministry.

HISTORY OF GIFTS RECEIVED AND DISTRIBUTIONS

In the thirty-five years of its existence, the Endowment Fund has received gifts and bequests of about \$200,000. Over this same period, distributions from the Fund now exceed \$280,000. The Endowment Fund expects to distribute approximately \$15,300 this year.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUND ARE WELCOME

Contributions to the Zion Endowment Fund need not be just in the form of bequests in wills or trusts. Cash or checks, in any amount, in memory of a loved one or in honor of someone special, would be appropriate and welcomed. Our hopes and expectations are that additional gifts, coupled with Fund earnings, will cause the Fund value to increase so that Zion may play an ever-larger part in fulfilling its mission in the world. Your endowment gift would be a part of that process.

Given to the Glory of God

In Memory of:	To:	Given by:
Janet Burton	Memorial Fund	Linda Bennett
Janet Burton	Roof Fund	Bob & Bonnie Loomis
Rev. Paul Joslyn	Building Fund	Don & Wanda Gregory
George Thompson	Roof Fund	Bob & Bonnie Loomis
George Thompson	Building Fund	Laurel McCurdy
George Thompson	Roof Fund	Laura Hilt
George Thompson	Your Neighbors	Lois McAllister
Randy Richards	Building Fund	Laurel McCurdy
Randy Richards	World Hunger	Linda Bennett
Janet Burton	Memorial Fund	Donna Cardillo
Janet Burton	Memorial Fund	Anne Boutilier
In Honor of:	To:	Given by:
Mae Parker	Building Fund	Don & Wanda Gregory
Jack Henke	Building Fund	Don & Wanda Gregory

October Birthday's

Happy Birthday from your Zion family!!

Kathryn Kuhr	1	Betty Schieble	11	Rusty Pentland	21
David Stevens	4	Jeanne Gymburch	12	Jacky Marscher	21
Kerstin Soykan	4	Curtis Pulliam	16	Isabel Silva	22
Fran King	5	Timothy Owens	18	Emily Sowers	23
David Meneses	8	Jim Smith	18	John Dowd	25
Wendy Barrett	11	Mary Senn	21	Sandra Russell	26
John Inserra	11	Megan Free	21	Abigail LaFave	30

	August 2020 Treasurer's Report			
	August 2020	Year to Date	Budget	Over/Under Budget
Income				
Giving	\$ 18,869.41	\$ 107,106.78	\$ 128,557.65	\$ (21,450.87)
Other Income	\$ 1,668.27	\$ 19,129.51	\$ 22,900.45	\$ (3,770.94)
Total Income	\$ 20,537.68	\$ 126,236.29	\$ 151,458.10	\$ (25,221.81)
Total Expense	\$ 8,404.58	\$ 105,540.39	\$ 173,665.59	\$ (68,125.20)
Net Income	\$ 12,133.10	\$ 20,695.90	\$ (22,207.49)	\$ 42,903.39

Special Announcements

Update: There will be a graveside service for Janet Burton on Saturday, October 3rd at Forest Hill Cemetery on Oneida St. in Utica. The family will be meeting at the gate at 10:15 AM, with the service beginning at 10:30 AM. The family would be pleased to see Janet's Zion family there.



Thank you

We received a generous gift from David Meneses on behalf of his Dad, Oscar W. Meneses. As Dave said: He wanted to give something to Zion to help his church family. Zion was very special to him in so many ways, not the least being, how welcoming the congregation was to him and his "beloved" Dorothy and family. As you know, Dad "Ozzie" was always a pretty straight forward guy and told me he wanted his gift to help with Zion's church needs.

Sincerely,
Dave Meneses



Book Group: Monday, Sept. 28th (weather date Sept. 30th) and Monday, Oct. 5th (weather date Oct. 7th) from 2-3:30 PM. You are invited to join an outdoor in-person book group looking at the novel: "The Book of Longings" by Sue Monk Kidd. The group will meet outside under a pavilion at Jim & Kim Marscher's home (8361 Woods Highway, New Hartford). **We can only accommodate 10 people. Please call or text Kim at 315-794-6233 or email at kmarscher@yahoo.com.** If attending, please bring your favorite drink and a pillow for your chair! We look forward to seeing you and reading together.

Congratulations to the Lambe family on the birth of Bob & Linda's grandson, Robert Jameson!!

