

The

Mountaineer

www.mzlc.ca

A Publication of Mount Zion Lutheran Church Volume 6 No. 10 December 2010

Worship during Advent, Christmas & Epiphany at Mount Zion.



Did you know that the Christmas season begins at sunset on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, and ends with Epiphany Day, January 6? These 12 days gave the name for the season as the “Twelve Days of Christmas.”

But worship is more than just those 12 Days – At Mount Zion the Twelve Days of Christmas are part of a larger picture of worship that takes up the tail end of November, all of December and the early part of January. This is book ended by Advent I on one end, and Epiphany Day on the other. There is a time of preparation we call Advent, the mid-week Holden Evening Prayers, the Christmas festive services, and there is the new worship (for Mount Zion) on Epiphany Day itself – instead of, as has been done in the past, moving it to the nearest Sunday.

So, come and be part of the journey from a time of preparation to the giving of the gifts by the wise

men. Here, in brief, is what you can expect to find at worship during these seasons, and the readings that goes with each worship service. Take the time to read the readings for the worship you will be attending. It will be of benefit to you when you hear them read again at worship. Happy worshipping!!!

THE SEASON OF ADVENT

Wednesday Evening Worship

Beginning Wednesday *December 1 and continuing on Dec 8, 15 and 22* we will hold the traditional meditative service of sung Holden Evening Prayer. The service begins at 7:15 and is 30 min in length, mostly sung with a hymn as well. A reading from Holy Scripture and a short reflection by Pr. Krister is part of the worship services as well. We change the chairs around in the worship space to create a smaller worship space which brings an intimacy to the service which enhances the meditative mood.

Sunday Worship

November 28, December 5, 12 and 19. Worship begins with the lighting of the Advent Wreath. The focus of the Pr. Krister’s sermons this year will be on the Old Testament Reading for each Sunday, all of them coming from the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah is the writer in all of Holy Scripture who speaks the most about the coming of the Christ Child. The readings for the worship services are as follows. Advent I (28th) we read chapter 2, verses 1-5, Advent II (5) chapter 11, verses 1-10, Advent III (12) chapter 35, verses 1-10 and Advent IV (19) Chapter 7, verses 10-16.

Add to your Advent Sunday worship experience

You can add to the entire worship experience by attending an **Adult Learning Forum** on the prophet Isaiah. It is held 9:50 am – 10:30 am every Sunday in Advent and is led by **Jackie Nunns**. *You can attend this after the first service or before the second service.* Each Sunday Jackie will speak more about the Scripture text we will use in worship, and dig a little deeper into the texts of the Prophet Isaiah, and you will have a great opportunity to bring new meaning to the season.

German Language Advent & Carols Worship



As is the tradition Mount Zion will hold a German Language Advent and Carol Worship. It is

held on **Tuesday, December 14 at 7:30 pm** and German-speaking persons come from all over the region to be part of this worship. It is an opportunity to hear the story and sing some of the most familiar carols in the German language, followed by a time of fellowship to celebrate the season.

Sunday Church School leading worship

On Advent IV (Dec 19) the 8:45 am worship will be the regular Advent IV worship. However, the **10:45 am worship service** will see an opportunity for the children of the Sunday Church School to lead worship. The Isaiah study will still take place between the two worship services. Worship at the Second Service this day will not be a pageant. Instead, using the familiar liturgical outline we use in our regular worship, the children and youth will tell us the Christmas story as they lead us in worship. The Sacrament of Holy Communion will only be available at the 8:45 am worship this day. (See article **No Applause Please** on page 4)

The week of December 19 - 26

In the world out there, this is the last minute panic time for shopping – or a wonderful opportunity to spend time in worship. **December 19** we light the final candle in the Advent wreath. On **Wednesday the 22nd** we reflect on the words and music of Holden Evening Prayer at 7:15 pm, and then, then there is the Christmas worship.

THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas Eve - December 24

All the three major festivals (Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas) in the life of the Church have a Vigil service the evening before. I bet you have never heard of December 24th referred to as the Vigil of Christmas and chances are that you have never celebrated a Vigil of Pentecost in a Lutheran Congregation. But a Vigil December 24th is and this is when we celebrate the arrival of the Christ Child in our midst.

Christmas Eve at Mount Zion we have three worship opportunities, all telling the familiar Christmas Story from Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 96, Titus 2:11-14 and that oh so very familiar birth narrative from Luke's Gospel (2:1-20) about Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels and a manger. The text is divided up in shorter readings at each service, with short meditations following each reading.

Christmas Eve - December 24 @ 4:00 pm

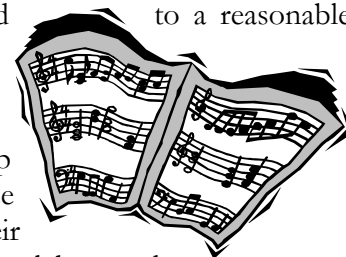
This worship service is aimed at families with smaller children and has been shortened in length to take into consideration the needs of younger children. We will sing familiar carols and there will be a children's time with the pastor as part of the worship service.

Christmas Eve - December 24 @ 7:00 pm

A traditional Service of Lessons and Carols. Come hear the story and sing the songs of the season.

Christmas Eve - December 24 @ 9:00 pm

This worship is an adaptation of the traditional Midnight Mass, moved to a reasonable time in the evening. Again we will hear the story and sing the songs. At this worship the choir will enhance our worship with their voices and we will celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion.



Christmas Day - December 25 @ 10:00 am

Please note the time. We gather to hear the arrival of the Christ Child through a different lens. The readings are not so much about the babe in the manger as it is how Christ takes on our human nature and bring light to this dark world we live in.

Texts for the day are from Isaiah 52:7-10, Psalm 98, Hebrews 1:12 and John 1:1-14.

Sunday, December 26 @ 10:00 am

Please note the time. December 26th is set aside in the church to commemorate the **Festival of St. Stephen, Martyr** and this year it falls on a Sunday which means it takes precedence over regular Sundays. St. Stephen was the first martyr of the church, the one who prayed for his persecutors while they stoned him to death. The readings for the day are 2 Chronicles 24:17-22, Psalm 17:1-9, 15, Acts 6:8-7:2a, 51-60 and Matthew 23:34-39. The Colour of the Day is red and it is a reminder that in the midst of this peaceful season we celebrate the violence of the world is still going on.

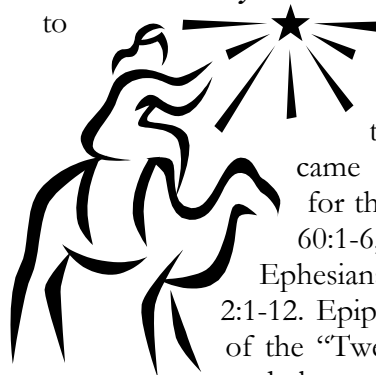
Sunday, January 2, 2011 @ 10:00 am

Please note the time. The first worship of 2011 brings us back to the Christmas Season as we celebrate the Second Sunday of Christmas. We give thanks for the year that was, and look ahead to the year to come through the light of the world, Jesus Christ. The readings for the day are Jeremiah 31:7-14, Psalm 147:12-20, Ephesians 1:3-14, and John 1:10-18.

THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY
Epiphany - the forgotten holiday

Thursday, January 6, 2011 @ 7:30 pm

Please note day and time. We gather for worship to



celebrate this special day in the life of the church. The day when the wise men, or magi, came to baby Jesus. The text for the day comes from Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, Ephesians 3:1-13 and Matthew 2:1-12. Epiphany Day is the last day of the "Twelve Days of Christmas" and always falls on **January 6**, *which*

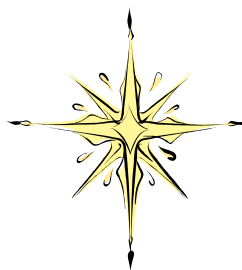
means that there are never 3 wise men in the manger scene.

Epiphany Day, January 6 is a Feast Day in the life of the church and, just as Christmas Eve/Day, Good Friday/Easter, should be celebrated in the church whenever in the week the day falls on. So in the New Year - on January 6, 2011, we will do just

that at Mount Zion. Come join us and look at the star leading the way.

Epiphany is the star pointing the way toward the light of the world. However, it is not just the wise men who had the epiphany. We do too. Epiphany is the call for us to have new insights into this light of the world. In these new insights we find room to grow in our faith and in our mission as God's people. **Epiphany Day** is an important day in the life of the faithful. Let's not pass it over simply because it is too close to Christmas, or because it doesn't fall on a Sunday.

Christmas Greeting



In our midst there is a light shining, light that brings hope, joy, peace, and grace.

This is the Christ child whose birth we gather to celebrate at Christmas.

In this celebration, allow me to wish you and yours the presence of the peace of God in your lives.

May the light that shines the way for you in the year to come bring health, happiness, and much joy.

Pr. Krister

No Applause, Please

Sunday School Children to lead worship

Have you ever heard the expression, faith is “caught”, more than it’s “taught”? The best way for children to know what faith is all about is to be part of the community that laughs together, cries together, eats together, and worships together – a community that lives and shares its faith with all.

When a child is baptized, we promise to be active in nurturing their faith. And we are also nurtured in our own faith by their presence, trust, and fresh points of view. Worship is one of the basic ways in which people are formed in their faith, and children learn to worship by worshipping. This is very important - we all know that children learn best by doing.

On Sunday, Dec 19 the children of the Sunday School, assisted by members of the Confirmation class, will be leading worship at the 10:45 am service. The Christmas story will come to life for them (and us) as they act out the drama of the familiar story in a new way. They will lead the prayers, read scripture, and speak the blessing.

This will not be a performance - it will be worship for all of us, led by our children. I ask that you refrain from applauding. You will have lots of time after the service to express your appreciation. And if mistakes are made, please do not embarrass the children by laughing. We want our children to learn to worship, and to learn to assist in leading worship.

Thanks for your support.

Jackie Nunns

Service Notes



From the Service Committee

Gifts from the Heart

Through this program you can give gifts representing the work of Canadian Lutheran World Relief to friends and family. There are nearly 30 choices, ranging from a fishnet at \$15 to a pair of goats at \$75 to a well at \$1750!

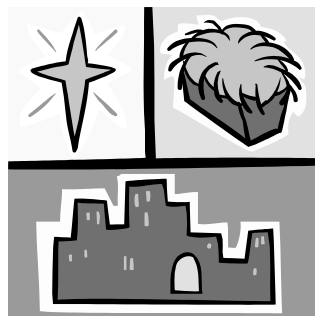
A *Gifts from the Heart* catalogue was included in last month's issue of the Mountaineer, and can be found online at www.clwr.org You can order by mail using the form in the catalogue, or online, or by telephone at 1.800.661.2597 Orders must be received prior to December 6 if you would like to have gift cards in time for Christmas giving.

Food Vouchers

Please consider making a donation for food vouchers in your offering envelopes. Many people call the church or come and ask the Pastors for help with food. Our policy at Mount Zion is to provide them with Food Vouchers to grocery stores instead of money. A Food Voucher fund is a part of our benevolence giving. A few people give occasionally to this fund but there are many more people asking for help than we have vouchers for. Lately the fund has been very low. With Christmas coming we expect an increase of people needing help. Thank you for considering helping the hungry in our community in this way.

Food Drive Thank You

Thank you for your wonderful support of the Food Drive held in October. Mount Zion donated 170 pounds of food and \$920 in cash. For each \$1 the Food Bank is able to distribute over \$8 worth of emergency food. They were very grateful for our response. THANK YOU!



How Did We Get Here?

by Jeff Harris

Several weeks ago, the Mountaineer's editors approached me, as a past chair of the finance committee, about writing an article regarding the congregation's financial situation. There has been much talk of our deficit lately, they explained, and we think the congregation finds itself asking questions - yes, we have a deficit, but when was it that we started down this path? Is it a cumulative problem, resulting from a shortfall every month, or have there been some larger than expected expenses?

Well, the editors can be a convincing bunch; so here you have it: my take on the background of the current financial situation.

Let's begin with what a deficit is. In financial terms, a deficit occurs when more money is spent than is earned during a given period of time. When this happens, one might draw upon savings, sell some other assets to create cash, or borrow to pay for the overspending.

Sometimes, a deficit cannot be avoided, and might not even be a bad thing. Think of replacing the furnace in your home. As a result of this large, one-time cost, your expenses for the year may have exceeded your income; and you may have used some savings or borrowed a bit to make up the difference. But hey, it beats freezing, doesn't happen every year; and you could reduce your ongoing heating costs from now on with a more efficient furnace (a saving you can use to replenish your nest egg or pay off debt).

However, if deficits become an annual occurrence, the result of routinely spending more than is earned, you can see that at some point, savings will eventually run out, other assets will be exhausted, and debt can begin to grow. Unchecked, a dangerous spiral can ensue.

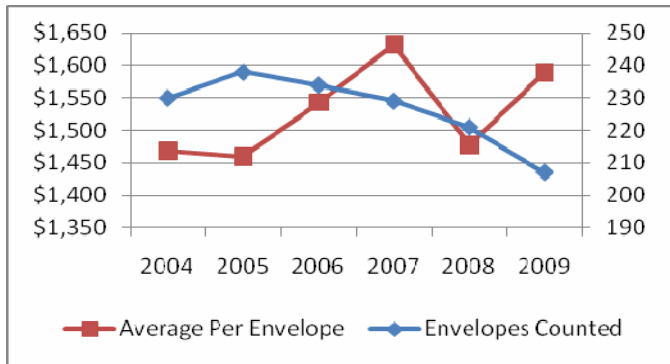
My research for this article included looking at Mount Zion's annual financials for the past several years. Here's some of what I found.

An operating deficit emerged most recently at Mount Zion in 2009. Before then, the congregation recorded an annual surplus each year dating back to 2004. Aside from a slight dip in 2005, annual spending rose gradually with inflation from 2004 to 2007. Expenses fell significantly during 2008 while the congregation had only one full time pastor, but then returned to normal the year after and have continued a slow rise this year. It is important to note that although spending has increased over time, it has always been in line with what was budgeted and approved by the congregation; and there haven't really been any large, unanticipated expenses.



Income is a different story. From 2004 through 2007 income was not only above expenses, but grew steadily. Income dropped substantially in 2008, but expenses fell further, and a deficit was avoided. Unlike spending, however, income did not spike back up in 2009. In fact, annual income has grown only marginally since 2008, and is likely to remain below 2004 levels even in 2010 - six years later. As a result, barring a dramatic turn of events this December, Mount Zion is headed for a second straight operating deficit this year.

In addition to income and expenses, I also examined historical data about the number of offering envelopes counted each year, and the average annual amount of income received from each envelope.



Periodically, the members of Mount Zion have been encouraged and challenged to find the means to increase our level of financial support, to help keep pace with the increasing costs of maintaining our various ministries. There is evidence these efforts have probably had some effect. Although there have been fluctuations, the average amount of income received from each envelope (or family giving unit) has risen from \$1,469 in 2004, to \$1,589 in 2009. Not a huge increase, you might say, perhaps not enough of an increase even (it hasn't kept pace with the rate of inflation); but growth nonetheless during a period when economic situations for many have been challenging.

More telling, perhaps, is an almost uninterrupted decline in the number of envelopes counted – our best proxy for the number of family units giving to Mount Zion on a regular basis. The number of envelopes counted has fallen each year since 2005; from 238 then, to 207 last year. In short, it appears fewer families are giving to Mount Zion on a regular basis each year.

So, to answer the editors' original questions, it looks to me like our congregation started down this path in 2008. The numbers I looked at suggest to me this is a cumulative, ongoing problem - the congregation's normal operating expenses are surpassing our income most months – the bad kind of deficit. Fortunately, to this point we've had savings to draw upon and support our spending; but this cannot persist indefinitely. We haven't consumed all our savings yet, and we have other assets that could be tapped; but relying on these is not a long term fix.

At this point in the article you may be expecting answers and ideas about what should be done about

our predicament. Sorry ... the editors didn't ask for that, and it is not within the scope of this article.

I will offer this though, from professional experience. Do I think the situation is hopeless? Not at all; but it will require some tough (contentious, even) decisions, a plan, and the commitment to follow through. A pattern of deficits can be reversed - but it's not likely to be easy, I'm afraid.

Member Jeff Harris is a past chair of Mount Zion's Finance Committee and a professional financial planner.

We appreciate your feedback and comments. Please send them to gastmeier@rogers.com

CURRENT ACCOUNT UPDATE
As of November 1, 2010

Current Account

	2010	2009
Income	\$232,272.00	\$200,582.00
Expenses	\$268,069.00	\$231,476.00
Balance	\$ -35,797.00	\$-30,894.00

Thank You, Thank You!

The congregation has responded tremendously to the appeals to help reduce the deficit. **THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!**

The Mountaineer
Mount Zion Lutheran Church
29 Westmount Road, South Waterloo, On N2L 2K4
Phone/Fax (519) 886-5820 e-mail: mtzion@mzlc.ca
www.mzlc.ca

Pastors: Rev Tanya Ramer., Rev. Krister Ulmanis
Editorial Committee: Dennis Eaton, Karen Gastmeier, Jim Widdecombe, Tim Ehrlich, Gerry Roeder, Dave Heldman

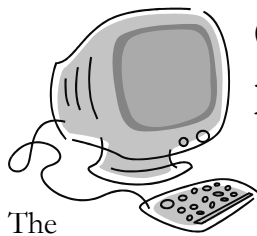
Please note that the January issue will be available January 9
Deadline for January issue,
December 28, 2010
Please send your comments, ideas and updates to
[**gastmeier@rogers.com**](mailto:gastmeier@rogers.com)

Open Sesame Update

Some of you already know that the playground fence facing the church parking lot was vandalized on Tuesday, October 26th at approximately 2:00 am. Jay Fencing was contacted for a quote to repair the fence. Thanks to the quick action by Eric Schroeder of Jay Fencing, it was repaired by them on Friday, October 29th. It was a costly repair but we were charged \$300.00 less than the original quote.

Open Sesame's Christmas Party on Dec. 6th is fast approaching. A Big Thank You to Helen Krueger, a former Open Sesame volunteer, for her financial support which enables our teacher Kathleen Cote to buy gifts for the children from Scholars Choice. And, once again the Finch family will be providing each child with a Christmas bear, in memory of their daughter Amanda.

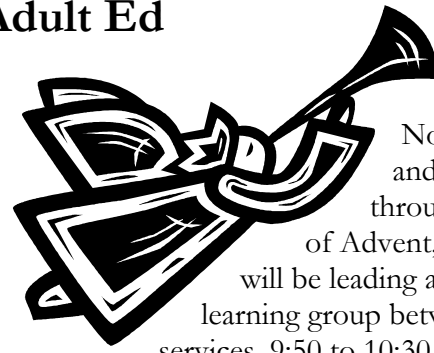
We also thank each of you who continue to support Open Sesame with your gifts of time, money and purchase of grocery cards. May you have a Blessed Christmas.



Old computers, printers and Scanners

The Working Centre in downtown Kitchener refurbishes computers and printers and resells/gives them to families who cannot afford store prices. Even old equipment that is no longer working is useful for parts. Call Dennis Eaton at 884-2745 for pickup or if you'd like to deliver it yourself let me give you a guided tour of the Working Centre and you can see where your donations go.

Adult Ed



Beginning Sunday November 28, and continuing through the Sundays of Advent, Jackie Nunns will be leading an adult learning group between the services, 9:50 to 10:30 am. The theme is "**Great Expectations: Studies in Isaiah**". Each week we will be studying and reflecting on the reading from the book of Isaiah that is used in worship on that day. For more information, call Jackie at 519-885-6821. Everyone is welcome!

Sacraments & Seasons

Baptisms:

The Baptism of *Dylan Witt Griggs*, son of Bradley and Amanda, was held on November 14, 2010

The baptism of *Emma Sophia Ramer*, daughter of Matthew and Tanya, was held on November 21, 2010.

Funerals:

The funeral of *Arwid Kebbel* was held on November 9, 2010 at Mt Zion

A vase full of fun!

Join Robb Wilson on
Wednesday, December 8
At Mount Zion and make your own
fabulous Christmas Table arrangement



Robb will provide all materials, instructions and a vase full of fun.

Bring scissors, clippers and your imagination and take home a table arrangement that will last until Christmas.

Cost is \$50 per person, email Robb to register
wilson_robb@hotmail.com



Caring Connections

by Betty Behm , Parish Nurse

Your health is one of the most important gifts you possess. It isn't until a crisis occurs that we take the time to consider the range of health facilities available in our community.

As many already know, our two hospitals provide excellent health care, but the focus is uniquely different in each facility. It is important to know which services are provided for in which facility so you can access the best care available care for the symptoms you are experiencing.

Grand River Hospital, as one of Ontario's largest community hospitals, with approximately 500 beds, provides excellent patient-centered care to the over 760,000 residents of Waterloo Region and Wellington County. Through innovation and collaboration, Grand River Hospital has become a leader in the provision of patient care programs for our community, within available resources. These programs include an integrated cancer program, regional critical care center, renal care, child birth and children services, mental health and addiction services, medical and surgical services, complex and continuing care and diagnostics. Grand River Hospital provides these services at the Freeport Site, the Kitchener-Waterloo Site, the Grand River Regional Cancer Centre and several satellite clinics throughout the region.

St. Mary's General Hospital is home to the Regional Cardiac Care Centre (RCCC) for Waterloo-Wellington. In addition, the centre accepts referrals from Perth County, Grey-Bruce, Huron, Brant, and Oxford Counties as well as Haldimand-Norfolk.

Their expert health care team provides a full range of cardiac services.

Simply put, if you are experiencing chest pain, shortness of breath, numbness and tingling in arms. GO Directly to St. Mary's Hospital.

If your child is ill, or you are experiencing difficulty during pregnancy, or require intervention for mental health concerns go to Grand River K-W.

*And for your
spiritual wellbeing,
I highly recommend
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And for your spiritual wellbeing, I highly recommend regular attendance at worship services, fellowship, prayer and meditation and spending time reading and reflecting on spiritual things.

Wishing you and your families a health-filled and blessed Christmas Season.

Mount Zion Receives Gift of Defibrillator

It is with much excitement and great pleasure that we received our new Automated External Defibrillator (AED), a gift from the Ziegler family in memory of Carole's mother, Florence Kreutzkamp. It is fitting that we receive this gift, which can potentially save lives, in memory of a woman who was so actively engaged in life, living and in service to others. We share Mrs. Kreutzkamp's favourite Bible verse and say indeed, ***"This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!"***

To Carole and Lloyd Ziegler and their family we say thank you for your generosity.

A date will be set early in the new year for those wishing to receive training in the use of the AED. The machine is easy to use and actually talks you through the procedure. I anticipate everyone will want to receive this training to be prepared in case of a sudden cardiac event! Please let Betty know if you are interested.