
The Zion Messenger

November 2018

November 1 – Trustees

Men's Club

November 3 – Every One His

Witness Seminar

November 7 - Evangelism

November 8 – Shipmates

November 10 – Dinner Auction

November 12 – Administrative

Council

November 21 – Glenwood

Thanksgiving Eve Worship

November 22 – Thanksgiving

November 27 – Parish Education

November 28 – Heritage Health

November 29 – Alumni & Friends

**“WE STINK AT PICKING NUMBERS –
LET’S JUST USE JESUS’ NUMBER.”**

That’s how the guest speaker began his presentation at the fall pastor’s conference. “Most churches and schools run like bankruptcies. (He said) Last I checked, the avg. giving by LCMS members was about 2.7%. So when we pick numbers we pick 2.7% and nothing works. When Jesus picks numbers he picks 10% as a starting point, and everything works! What does this mean? We are no good at picking numbers.”

During the month of November we will focus on stewardship; our response to God’s rich blessings and our raising the bar of support for the Lord’s work here at home and beyond. Included in this conversation will be tithing. The question raised in this article: Do we as Christians living in the New Testament church have to tithe? What is tithing? Tithing, giving 10% of our income to God’s work in the Church is an Old Testament law. Given that we live under Christ in the New Testament does the law still apply to us?

We might approach the question by asking whether or not we have to keep the Third Commandment, ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’ Exodus 20.8 Should we cease from all labor on Saturday as they did in the Old Testament? Of course not! Since Christ has fulfilled the Sabbath rest by resting in the tomb we are free from the Sabbath regulation. Just as Paul writes in Colossians 2, “the Sabbath (as Old Testament law) is a shadow of the things to come, the substance belongs to Christ.” And yet . . .

‘Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy!’

What’s going on here? The question is answered by the explanation: ‘We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but gladly hear and learn it.’ While the form of command, the letter of the law has passed away as a shadow, the spirit remains. We are to honor God by our worship, by gladly receiving His Word and Sacraments in Church, not because we have to but because we **‘love’** to.

So it is with tithing. The Old Testament regulation about giving the tithe served to point to Christ; who represents the fullness of humanity though He is one Man. Thus we are in no way bound to the law of tithing. Instead we are free to **'lovingly'** participate, as God gives for us to participate in faithful financial stewardship. The New Testament is full of admonitions on this point:

- 'On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as each one of you may prosper.' 1 Corinthians 16.2
- 'But just as you excel in everything, in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us, see that you also excel in this grace of giving.' 2 Corinthians 8.7
- 'The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work.' 2 Corinthians 9.6-8

My point is this: "As the Old Testament Sabbath became the benchmark for worship in the New Testament, so also the Old Testament tithe becomes the benchmark for New Testament stewardship. Not in the way of inflexible, minute regulation – but in the way of pattern and fulfillment. Given the New Testament language of 'give in proportion to what you receive' and 'give weekly' and 'give generously' . . . a tithe (10%) is the floor level of Christian giving . . . not the ceiling." Pastor Heath Curtis, Steward Under Cross

You may have heard the saying, "Jesus never lowers the bar – but always raises the bar of righteousness." This article began with a quote: "We stink at picking numbers, so let's use Jesus' number." While New Testament giving is always between 10% and 100% there is no argument given that 2.7 or 1.5 or 1 is faithful, let alone 0%!! During November join us in prayer and focus on stewardship: our response to God's rich blessings and our raising the bar of support for the Lord's work here at home and beyond.

And let me invite you to just do what Jesus did. It's genius! And it works!!

WHAT CHILD IS THIS? Mid-Week Advent at Zion, 2018

In order to have hope a beggar must go to someone who has money – one who is sick, a physician – one who is needy, a king. That’s just the way it works. But in Advent we are reminded of something quite extraordinary: God’s kingdom doesn’t work that way. God doesn’t wait for us. Instead “He comes” to us. That is Advent. Advent is not about us going to God but God coming to us. The rich man coming to the poor, the healer coming to the sick, the significant one coming to the insignificant. Therefore **Advent’ Hope** is confident trust in what is not seen. **Advent’ Hope** is confident trust in the One, not seen, but who has promised to come for us in glory on the Last Day. That person is God in the flesh, our King, Jesus Christ.

This year once again you are invited to take up our Lord’s Advent invitation to devotion, prayer, and worship. Let us walk together through Advent joyfully pondering the question “*What Child is this?*” and waiting in anticipation for His return.

December 5, 1:00/7:00 Midweek 1: “The Child Who is Zechariah’s Hope”
December 12, 1:00/7:00 Midweek 2: “The Child Who is a Virgin’s Great Son”
December 19, 1:00/7:00 Midweek 3: “The Child Who is John’s Joy”
December 24, 7:00: Christmas Eve: “The Child Who is the Lord”

LAW and GOSPEL The key to unlock the Holy Scriptures, by Pr. Mike Strong

“All the surveys and personal interviews say the same thing. The average Christian is woefully IGNORANT about his/her faith. Now, to be fair, most (Christians) know and affirm the virgin birth, Jesus’s sinless life, His death, crucifixion and resurrection . . . but beyond that many Christians are not taught well in their churches. So here I’m going to share two fundamental teachings of scripture which should help make the Bible more understandable for you. These teachings are Law and Gospel.

First, what is the Law? The Law is the expressed will of God. It is found in Exodus 20, it is called the Ten Commandments. The Law of God (Ten Commandments) is as binding today as it was 3000 years ago. When God gave the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel it was His intention that they keep these commandments.

Second, what is the Gospel? Strictly speaking the Gospel is just this: It is the Good News that God in the person of His Son Jesus Christ, true God and man (born of Mary) paid for, died for, atoned for all of the sins that ever have been and ever shall be committed by human beings. The Apostle Paul writes, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” 1 Timothy 1.15

So what is the relationship between the two? First, the Law always shows us our sin. It always condemns. The law saves no one. The Law always says, “**Do this**” and “**Don’t do that**” but never enables us to keep perfectly what it commands and forbids. The Gospel on the other hand always says, “**Done!**” It says, “**Forgiven**”. It says we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do we need to hear both Law and Gospel? Absolutely! The Law shows us our sin and prepares us for the Gospel. The Gospel comforts and consoles us. But the Gospel should predominate in the church for Christ’s mission was to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world. Thus our Lord commanded His disciples to do the same. At the beginning of this article I said that it is my observation that many Christians simply do not know the rudiments of the faith. The distinction between Law and Gospel is a good place to start. Listen to God’s word in devotions, sermons, prayers and keep the difference between Law and Gospel clear in your minds. You will be a richer Christian for it.” Michael M. Strong, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Farmersville, IL strong@eosinc.com

LAW and GOSPEL p.s. Again this year our 7th/8th catechism class are taking service notes. As such they are to listen for and identify the Law/Gospel found in the sermon. Wouldn’t it be a great thing as church to prayerfully grow in this faith’ grace of finding the key to unlock the Word of God? As you are asked to sign their service notes (also part of the deal) please feel free to briefly talk Law/Gospel with them.

DO I HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH? **Part 1 of 2**

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.’” Mark 2.23-28

Beep! Beep! Beep! The alarm clock goes off and soon a pot of coffee is filling the air with the unmistakable promise of a good morning. It’s Sunday and soon you will be heading off for church. A smile is no your face after a long week and now it is time to gather the family and go to church and worship the Lord.

But as you try and rouse your kids (or spouse) they throw the covers back over their heads with, “do I have to go to church . . . I’m tired.”

Do I have to go to church? How do you answer the question? It’s a challenge thrown out by children, inactive church members and non-Christians. And not just that, how often doesn’t it creep into our own thoughts? Do I have to go to church today? Sometimes we hear it even more bluntly “I don’t need to go to church.” The Pharisee’s behavior in Mark 2 clearly shows how they would have answered the question. “Yes! You have to go to church. That’s the rule.”

Jesus rejects that answer. But Jesus isn't saying, "No you don't have to go to church." Rather Jesus shows that the mindset that asks this question has already moved well down the wrong road. He goes underneath the question to change the way we think about worship and going to church. Let's focus on the question: "Do I have to go to church?"

To understand Jesus' answer, put yourself back in Jesus' day. God's people still lived under the Old Testament laws given by God through Moses at Mt. Sinai. Many of these laws governed their religious life. We call them ceremonial laws. They told the people how, when, where, and why to bring sacrifices. They prescribed what religious festivals to observe. They detailed the dress and duties of the priests and so on . . . One such ceremonial law was the Sabbath. The word Sabbath means 'rest' Every week on the seventh day, God's people rested from their regular labor and heard God's word and promises anticipating the spiritual rest Messiah would bring. The Sabbath regularly reminded them (FIRST) of God's rest after creating the world in 6 days. (SECOND) it reminded them of when they had no rest as slaves in Egypt. Thus the Sabbath was for Israel time to remember God's creation and rescue; provided time to recharge their spiritual batteries. The rabbis considered the law about physical rest so important that they made extra rules to make sure that no one would be doing work that day. They came out with categories and subcategories of different kinds of work forbidden on the Sabbath all the way down to pulling threads apart or climbing a tree.

But, the understanding of the Sabbath day which the Pharisees created turned every Jew into a slave of the Sabbath. The focus of Sabbath had shifted from the great things God had done to all the little things people could and could not do, to the point that it was considered a great offense to pick a kernel of grain. So, when the Pharisees saw the disciples picking grain, rubbing it in their hands to get the husk off and eating it, they knew this fell under the forbidden categories of harvesting and threshing that the rabbis had forbid.

Rather than descending into a legalistic discussion of what was or wasn't forbidden on the Sabbath, Jesus aims at the core of the Pharisees' thinking. He wants them and us to ask ourselves who rules our lives, laws or the Giver of the laws? Jesus reminded them of how one of the greatest Israelites, David, purposely broke God's ceremonial law in a time of need. (1 Samuel 21.6) David, while on the run from Saul, ate some of the consecrated bread at the tabernacle. According to the letter of the law this was wrong. But neither David nor the priest was condemned by God for their actions. You see, the ceremonial laws were meant to be a blessing for God's people, not a way to deprive them of what they really needed. Or as Jesus put it, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." So what does this mean for us? God no longer commands us to worship or to cease our regular work on the Sabbath. But God's command for us to highly regard, to gladly hear and learn His Word has not changed.

DO I HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH - Part 2 next month.

Live Life In Christ Weekend – Nov. 17 and 18

Sponsored by the Board of Stewardship of Zion Lutheran Church and School Stewardship. You've been hearing that word lots in 2018. Do you know the Biblical definition of stewardship? Can you put it into your own words?

The Board of Stewardship encourages every member to

1. Learn the meaning of good, Biblical stewardship.
2. Conduct a self-examination of the resources of time, talents, and treasures that God has entrusted to each individual.
3. Grow in relationship with the Lord and with one another.
4. Make a commitment to grow in stewardship of God's resources during 2019.

In order to guide your growth, the following are planned:

November 3-11

Members of the Board of Stewardship will present one two-minute talk after each worship service, explaining what good stewardship means to each one personally.

November 3-18

Pastor Mitteis will instruct the congregation on the elements of proper, Biblical stewardship. Live Life In Christ Stewardship forms will be distributed often. Watch for them.

Nov. 17 and 18

Completed forms will be collected during each worship service. Pastor will pray for all members and our congregation to grow in stewardship during the coming year. No gimmicks. No threats. No hard-sell. Just good Biblical stewardship taught and practiced by the members of Zion in response to the good gifts of our Heavenly Father. When we grow in stewardship, growth in Zion will follow.

EVERY ONE HIS WITNESS

LUTHERAN EVANGELISM™

Witnessing. What's it all about? The Every One His Witness Lutheran evangelism program puts sound doctrine into practical action for sharing the faith with people in our everyday lives. The Board of Evangelism is hosting the Every One His Witness seminar on Saturday, November 3, in the gym. Participants will learn what is witnessing? Why do we witness? And the "how to" of witnessing using the LASSIE approach — Listen-Ask-Seek-Share-Invite-Encourage. The seminar runs from 8:30 am – 3:30 pm. A continental breakfast and lunch will both be provided. Please RSVP to Danielle Campbell (217) 556-0886 (text or voicemail) if you plan to attend or if you have questions.

Zion students are selling 2019 Cardinals Calendars. The calendars are still just \$15 each and payment can be made by cash or check. Checks should be made out to Zion Lutheran PTL. The school gets to keep half the profit of each calendar sold! Orders should be submitted to school no later than **Friday, November 9**. Calendars will be shipped to school the first week of December. These would make great Christmas gifts! Contact any Zion student or the school office at 635-3060 ext. 01 if you would like to order a calendar.



Broken Pod

By Ruth S. Sievers

*Why do we find it hard to give –
What truly belongs to God?
Excuses bound on every side,
Encased with-in a pod*

*This pod we find so very hard,
Impossible to break –
Until God saturates our lives
With LOVE that is not fake.*

*Then love spills out and all around,
The pod's been opened wide –
And freely we'll give back to God
His gifts, with LOVE ABIDE.*

27th Annual Zion Lutheran School PTL Dinner Auction

Saturday, November 10, 2018

At the Crystal Ballroom

Dinner served buffet style, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m., catered by R&B's

Oral auction begins at 7:15 p.m.

Adults: \$20.00 each; children (grade 8 and under): \$10 each; children 3 and under are free. You Reserve a table of 8 for \$140.

Tickets may be purchased at the church or school office.

Donations: Join in on the friendly competition on the Men's & Women's tables! Donations of items for men and women are needed. Tickets are sold for these items with a drawing for the winner. Please designate if your donation item should be included on the Men's or Women's tables.

Volunteers: Many helping hands will be needed to put together our dinner auction. Want to help but just don't know how? Please consider donating an item (or two) to the silent or oral auction. Volunteers are needed to help with set up at the Crystal Ballroom on Friday, November 9th, and Saturday, November 10th at the auction. Please contact Jamie Crouch or Jessica Meade with questions or if you would be able to help.

Desserts: Pies and cakes are needed for dessert at the dinner auction on November 10. If you are able to donate a pie or cake, please bring it to the Crystal Ballroom between 9am and noon on Saturday, November 10. Thank you in advance for helping to make the auction a success!

If you wish to include anything in the December Messenger, please submit it to the church office by November 26, 2018.

zionlutheranstaunton@gmail.com

November

2018

Zion Lutheran Church

Staunton, Illinois

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				10am Bible Study: Acts 6:30pm Trustees 7:30pm Men's Club		8:30am Witness Seminar 9am Catechism 5pm Worship w/C
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8am Worship w/C 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship w/C 5pm GriefShare 6:30pm Christian Basics			8:30am Chapel 9am Lydia Circle 3:30pm Catechism 6:30pm Communion 7pm Bible Study Evangelism	10am Bible Study: Acts 6pm Shipmates		9am Catechism Dinner Auction 5pm Worship w/C
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8am Worship w/C 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship w/C 5pm GriefShare 6:30pm Christian Basics	7pm School Board	7pm Admin. Council	8:30am Chapel 9am Lydia Circle 3:30pm Catechism 6:30pm Communion 7pm Christ Cares	10am Bible Study: Acts		9am Catechism 5pm Worship w/C
18	19	20	21	Thanksgiving Day 22	23	24
8am Worship w/C 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship w/C 5pm GriefShare 6:30pm Christian Basics		7pm Elders	8:30am Chapel 9am Lydia Circle 12:30pm Glenwood 7pm Worship w/C	No School Church Office Closed	No School Church Office Closed	5pm Worship w/C
25	26	27	28	29	30	
8am Worship w/C 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship w/C 4-6 Trunk or Treat 5pm GriefShare 6:30pm Christian Basics		7pm Parish Ed.	8:30am Chapel 9am Lydia Circle 2:30pm Heritage Health 3:30pm Catechism 6:30pm Communion 7pm Bible Study	10am Bible Study: Acts 7pm Alumni & Friends		

Zion works at His Service Station November 5-10, 2018