



Zion Lutheran CHURCH

Faithful From Generation to Generation

Volume 1, Issue 4

4/May/2005

Our Spiritual Journey

by Robin and Tim Damschroder



**Tim and Robin
Damschroder**

We remember all too well when we joined Zion. We came in the back doors, worshiped, and left. It took us many months to muster up the courage to walk through those small doors at the front of the Sanctuary and into Zion's family (literally and figuratively). When serving as ushers, we can see this reluctance in our visitors today.

We have been excited about the expansion and renovation project at Zion since the very beginning and watched patiently as the congregation discerned our readiness to move forward. Our belief is that the long-term success of our ministries requires us to invest in this renovation/expansion project. We recognize that bricks and mortar alone will not bring us success, but without moving forward with this project, our abilities for further growth in young and adult discipleship will be limited. In addition, the access points to and from the Sanctuary and Stellhorn Lounge limit the ability for us to interact as one congregation and be more inviting to guests on Sunday mornings. The Welcome Center will provide a common welcoming area and open Zion to outsiders with open arms and help them feel more comfortable entering the Sanctuary.

For these reasons we are very hopeful (and resolute) that Zion's current members will follow the path of those who sacrificed before us and gave us this beautiful building. We believe that they will give generously so that we can include the building of the Welcome Center now. To do this would be truly for the glory of God, for our church family, for our neighbors, and for Zion's future generations. We are merely stewards on this earth with possessions given at the will of God. They are not ours to the exclusion of God's will; His will must come first.

Through the feasibility study period of this project, Tim and I had not prayerfully considered our role or accountability as members in bringing this project to life. The journey since the annual congregational meeting in February at which the members voted overwhelmingly (85% to proceed with the campaign) has been an inspirational period for us. We agreed to be Campaign Directors for the Capital Stewardship Campaign because we wanted to help keep the momentum building to make this project a reality. However, we still had not defined our financial commitment to it.

Prior to joining the Campaign team, we were in the process of searching for a new home. We finally found our dream home. It was larger than we really needed and would increase our real estate taxes several fold over our current ones. We spent many hours discussing how we would afford the move and the higher taxes. We decided to make sacrifices in other areas, including putting off some retirement savings and decided to buy it.

Before we could settle on a price with the sellers, we had our first meeting of the "Faithful From Generation To Generation" campaign and we were compelled to think about the sacrifice

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Important Dates to Reserve Now!

- 5/10: **Advance Commitment Gathering**
(7:00 p.m.- Stellhorn)
- 5/22: **Commitment**
(Note: Only one service at 10:00 a.m.)
- 6/5: **First Fruits**

A publication of
Zion Evangelical
Lutheran Church
1501 W. Liberty
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
(734) 994-4455
www.zlc-aa.org



Bryan Weinert

Space to Wrestle With God

By Bryan Weinert

“To wrestle with God.” This is one meaning of the word “Israel,” the name given to God’s Chosen.

It is clear that God intends for us to struggle with life’s choices, to seek His will, and to listen to the wisdom of others in living a righteous life. Struggle, or wrestling, is what it means to be a true grown-up Christian, an adult, a mature Seeker. Far too many Christians (and churches) seem to think that all of

life’s answers are clear, are simple, are all laid out for us in Scripture. At Zion, we know better. The Bible points us in a direction, but the hard choices of life are ours to make.

Adult Discipleship at Zion understands this, and endeavors to provide a setting where the struggles of faith, culture and relationships can be played out in a comfortable yet challenging setting. And sacred space for such an undertaking is critical to its success. Current space is often crowded, is poorly lit, doesn’t have technical resources, and has far too many distractions. While

adequate and peaceful space alone can’t produce mature Christians, it can help to create an environment where the serious work of developing adult, “wrestling” Christians can take place. A high school gymnasium without wrestling mats would be considered ill-equipped. A church without “wrestling” space should also be so judged.

God bless our wrestling and God bless Zion for recognizing the importance of adult discipleship.

Our Spiritual Journey (Continued from page 1) of the members who came before us. We were compelled to think about our responsibilities to spread God’s message of love and forgiveness. We were compelled to understand that our earthly possessions belong to Him and not to us. We were already tithing—something that we had worked towards nearly our entire marriage and finally achieved three to four years ago. Didn’t we already make the sacrifice? Did God expect us to give more? We anticipated supporting the capital campaign, but would we need to make yet another sacrifice?

We spent the next several weeks reflecting on what God would have us do with the gifts He had given us to steward. We have many great blessings in our lives: a comfortable home, two cars, good health, two happy boys, good jobs and great family and friends. Are we content? Yes. Do we need more? No. Are we happy? Yes. Are we expected to sacrifice, too? Yes. We concluded the plan we had made to pay the additional taxes was the roadmap that God gave us for our commitment to this capital stewardship campaign.

We have decided not to buy the house

and to pledge three years of the annual tax savings towards the campaign. (Editorial Note: Those are Robin’s words. Tim’s words are, “God whacked us on the head with a baseball bat. He knew what He was doing the whole time. As with many things in life, it is all so obvious after you get to the end.”)

All of us at Zion have been blessed more than most. We hope that you prayerfully consider joining us in our commitment to Zion’s future generations. Thank you very much for listening. God Bless (and say lots of prayers).

First Fruits Sunday and Offering

Every great journey begins with one step. Our first step toward our future plans for the renovation of Zion and hopefully, the building of the Welcome Center begins on Sunday, June 5 with the giving of our **First Fruits Offering**. This offering begins our three-year giving to the renovation of Zion and hopefully, for the new Welcome Center, also.

Special “pink” offering envelopes (Please see sample to the right.) will be

sent to you prior to the worship service. You will use these envelopes for your initial gift towards your three-year commitment.



A strong response on this day provides the financial resources for our church to move decisively toward implementing our plans. Our consultant, Greg Gibbs, tells us that it is not unusual to receive First Fruits offering of at least 10% in cash or stocks of what was committed to the project.

Let’s strive to do 10% or more.

Commitment Questions and Answers

Q: How much money are we trying to raise in this campaign?

A: We are trying to raise \$2 million for the renovation of Zion. Should larger than expected funds be committed due to member generosity, then additional aspects of the entire construction proposal might be financially feasible, including the Welcome Center.

Q: When will I receive my commitment card?

A: Most commitment cards will be passed out during the one worship service at 10:00 a.m. on Commitment Sunday, May 22, while others will be passed out during the Advance Commitment Gathering on May 10. For those wishing to make a commitment who were unable to attend either the service or Gathering, a commitment card will be provided.

Q: When will I make my three-year commitment towards this campaign?

A: Most commitments will be made during the one worship service at 10:00 a.m. on Commitment Sunday, May 22; others at the Advance Commitment Gathering on May 10 at 7:00 p.m.; and others in the privacy of members' homes.

Q: How will I make my commitment?

A: Commitment card (Please see sample below.) will be provided for your use.

Q: When do I start paying my commitment?

A: We will begin paying our three-year commitments during the worship services on First Fruits Sunday, June 5. A special "pink" envelope (Please see sample on page 2.) will be sent to you prior to the service for your use.

Q: Will I have the opportunity to revise my commitment?

A: Yes, you will have the opportunity to revise your commitment at any time during the three-year period.

Q: Will I be asked to make the amount of my commitment public?

A: No, your commitment is confidential and will be kept confidential.

Q: How will we make our "gifts" toward our commitments over the next three years?

A: Special offering envelopes will be provided for your use.

Q: Can we make a family commitment?

A: Yes, by all means, if this suits your situation better.

Q: Can I give toward my commitment once a week, once a month, or once a year?

A: Yes, whatever is best for you.

Q: Will my commitment constitute a permanent investment?

A: Yes, take for example George W. Carroll, a wealthy philanthropist who gave large sums to Christian causes. After he lost considerable wealth during the Depression, he was viewing a building that he had helped fund. Someone asked him, "Aren't you sorry now you gave all that money away?" He answered, "No, because all I kept for myself is lost, and only that which I gave away has been preserved," and so it may be in our lives. When the "things" of life are gone, that which we have invested in Christ's cause will continue to flourish and bear fruit.

Zion Lutheran CHURCH
 Capital Stewardship Campaign
"Not Equal Giving, But Equal Sacrifice"

Because we believe in the future of our church and want to be a part of its success, we will endeavor to give:

\$ _____ Weekly for 156 Weeks:	Total \$ _____
\$ _____ Monthly for 36 Months:	Total \$ _____
\$ _____ Annually for 3 Years:	Total \$ _____

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Signature: _____

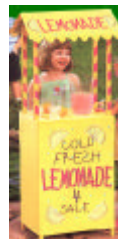
SAMPLE

This statement of intention may be revised should circumstances make it necessary.

Dear Lord, help me to decide what you wish my commitment to be to Your capital stewardship campaign for Zion. I ask this in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Zion's Youth Have the Spirit

Can you imagine what your home would be like if you hadn't updated it in fifty plus years? Well, BibleLand is in need of modernization so we can provide a stimulating educational environment for the children of today.



The children are in the "campaign spirit" and some have already set up special "Zion" jars at home in which they will put money for the renovation of Zion. Others eagerly await serving you cold lemonade and donuts from their stand to help raise funds.

We hope that you encourage these children by stopping by their stand, have refreshments and fill their "kitty."



Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
1501 W. Liberty
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103



WHAT
 will be
 MY
 Sacrifice?

What the Bible Says

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV)

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

Revelation 22:21 (NIV)

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Timothy 6:6-10 (NIV)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NIV)

Note: This is the fourth and final issue of this special Campaign newsletter. Ongoing notices and information about the results of the campaign and plans will appear in future issues of the *Tower*.