LENT

Lent is a jarring season haunted by the organ's minor key. To gathered worshipers, Lent's descent from Epiphany's joyous major chords is precipitous and sudden. What happened? Why the solemnity? We were ambling through town on a crisp, sunny day until seeing the flags at half-staff. Death. You know it instantly. Somebody died. Lent's minor key is the church's way of communicating death. Somebody died. "Who?" is the question we must ask, but it is always one we ask with measured caution, lest we be surprised by the answer.

So we ask in Lent, "Who died?" and Lent simply points us to a cross. A man labors painfully for breath. He's been beaten, flogged, and pierced. People stand at his feet. Some jeer. Some weep. Some stare in dreadful silence as the sky darkens. Heaven itself appears to be dying. The man speaks… to his Father in heaven, "Forgive them… they don't know what they're doing." He's forgiving his tormentors. Now he speaks to a criminal dying next to him, "Today, you will be with me in Paradise." Who is this man who forgives tormentors, whose Father is in heaven, who grants access to Paradise?

The sun's light fails in midday… darkness reigns… he gasps… death is near. He speaks again, "It is finished!" What is finished? And then, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" The organ sounds its minor key. Death. Who can sing "Alleluia" now? Who can echo joy in a major key now? A man has died.

Do we dare ask his name? Do we dare ask why he died? These are the questions the church asks in Lent. Isaiah spoke of this man as "a man of sorrows," as one "acquainted with grief." He calls him "despised." Yet he tells us that "he has borne our griefs," that he has "carried our sorrows" and we rejected him. "But," Isaiah says, "he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed." He dies because of me? Because of you? We are indicted in his cross? Surely a season of deep soul searching is in order. Lent is that season. The hymn "Alleluia, Song of Gladness" acknowledges that Lent is the church's solemn season:

Alleluia cannot always
Be our song while here below.
Alleluia, our transgressions
Make us for a while forgo;
For the solemn time is coming
When our tears for sin must flow.

Now is the season of solemn tears. Christ is wounded for our transgressions. Christ is crushed for our iniquities. Lent makes us see it and hear it. We cannot avoid the cross. Many would simply skip to Easter, but without the cross, there is no empty tomb. Without Good Friday there is no Easter. Without death there is no resurrection.

Good Friday requires a season of sober reflection. Our sins have necessitated Jesus' death. We can no longer dismiss them as insignificant. Our sins must be put away, left behind. This is repentance. Further, our prayers must be intensified and our devotion deepened. This is why we need Lent. This is why we need its minor chords. They make us see Christ's death and hear the call to repent, but they also deepen our longing for life and the exultant major chords of Easter. Then our hearts will soar. Then our standards will be lifted high. Then our flags will fly at full height with joy. Then we will celebrate death's defeat and life's triumph. Then we will rejoice that our sins have been put away and we have been made new. But first, the minor chords. First, death. First, repentance. First, Lent.

- Pastor Conner

Ministry "apps"—Zion Lutheran

Christian Education Apps
Applying the Truth of Scripture
to Children and Families

Zion March 2014 Newsletter

Midweek Lenten Worship

How do we apply the reality of Christ's journey to the cross to our life journey? The "**Restored in Christ**" Lenten series will recognize the brokenness of our lives and our world, and then turn that brokenness over to Christ so that we can be restored by Him through the cross.

Each service in the "Restored in Christ" series focuses on a certain event in the Lenten story and takes a good, hard look at the broken element from the particular story. Coming to an understanding of how each of these broken elements leads to restoration in Christ is key to understanding what it ultimately means to live today as new creations in Christ.

What's broken in your life? We come together at Zion to have Christ pick up the pieces and put them together again. Lenten worship will be held **Wednesday evenings at 5:45 p.m.** with the youth-hosted fellowship meal to follow. All Zion members (and guests) are invited for a time of spiritual restoration. Christ restores:

- March 5 (Ash Wednesday)—Broken **Hearts** (Joel 2:12-14); Communion Service
- March 12—Broken **Bread** (John 6:48-58)
- March 19—Broken **Vessels** (Mark 14:1-9)
- March 26—Broken **Promises** (Matthew 26:69-75)
- April 2—Broken **Trust** (Matthew 26:14-25)
- April 9—Broken **Justice** (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

The midweek Lenten services are designed to be "family friendly" in theme and time. Children will be engaged and will experience a special journey to Jesus' cross. Bring the whole family! Midweek families are reminded the Midweek classes (grades 5-8) will take place after the service and fellowship meal (until approximately 7 p.m.)

Special Lenten Study—Monday mornings

What's broken your heart? What breaks your heart? Many of our spiritual heart infirmities are the result of the powerful emotions of guilt, anger, greed, and jealousy. *Enemies of the Heart* helps participants diagnose a chronic heart condition and lead us to the Master Physician for healing. Participants will read the thoughts of author Andy Stanley, explore the truth of God's Word, and by God's grace have broken hearts made whole.

This special Lenten study is for all ages and stages (and neighborhood friends too!). The study will begin on **Monday, March 10** and continue through the Lenten season. Sessions will begin at **10 a.m.** and conclude by approximately 11 a.m. Pastor Riggert will facilitate the series.

Giving with Both Hands: Charity with the Left; Offering with the Right

As Christians, we love to give. God has showered us with gift upon gift. The *Small Catechism's* explanation to the First Article of the Apostles' Creed details a sampling:

> He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also give me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

And this says nothing of the gift of redemption, the kingdom of God, sanctification, forgiveness, and future resurrection! How could we not be joyful givers!

As every Christian knows, our giving is never limited to the offering plate; we have numerous opportunities to give charitably to other noble causes. What every Christian doesn't know, however, is that our offering isn't subsumed under the umbrella of charitable giving. The IRS lumps them together, but the IRS doesn't understand the difference between the two. Offering and Charity are two distinct kinds of giving, giving with different hands. To understand why, we need to understand the ambidextrous reign of God.

What do I mean? I mean that God reigns in what theologians have called "Two Realms." One realm includes the world, creation, the state, marriage, family, etc. The other realm is the church. The realm of the world has been called "God's Left Hand Reign" and the church has been called "God's Right Hand Reign." The simple point is that God rules them both. God reigns with both hands. In His "Left Hand Reign" God rules with the Law. The Law is God's will for His creation and, just as with physical laws like gravity, His moral law is hard-wired into creation (Scripture says it's written on our hearts). This moral law is lived out in our various vocations. Vocations, it must be remembered, exist for the well-being of others. Spouses obey God's will by sacrificially loving and respecting one another. Parents obey God's will by raising their children in the fear and instruction of the Lord. Farmers, teachers, nurses, and representatives obey God's will by excelling in their vocations for the well-being of others. In this realm God gives government to protect life and to ensure that justice is done. The government is given the sword to see that no one violates the gift of life or perverts justice.

In His "Right Hand Reign" God rules with the Gospel. The Gospel is the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ and it is the special gift of God in the church. It is the Gospel that establishes the church as an utterly unique realm because the Gospel is available nowhere in the left hand realm. Instead of the sword of justice, God has given the right hand realm His Word.

As Christians, we live in both realms and, as such, our giving is directed to both. Our offerings are specifically directed toward the Right Hand Realm to ensure that the Gospel never ceases to be proclaimed. Our charitable giving is directed toward the Left Hand Realm and it is intended to meet the needs of others. The IRS may lump the two together, but we distinguish between them so that we can rightly give with both hands and not withhold from either. As members of the church, we are called to give generously. Christ has freed us from the Old Testament mandate to tithe. So we are not under that law - we're free to give more! The tithe, however, is a helpful place to begin our giving to our local congregation. Our charity, then, is something separate. Historically, it has been understood as the giving that has gone beyond the tithe. This giving is specifically directed toward meeting the needs of others to ensure they too have all that they need for their daily life. Because God reigns with both hands, we give with both, too.

Prayers for Families

The Generations Prayer Team is grateful to the many prayer partners making themselves available to pray for our Sunday school families. Because of their faithfulness, all of our 48 elementary Sunday school families will be routinely covered in prayer for the year 2014. Thank you to the many individuals, couples and families willing to commit to this ministry. The "PRAY-ERS for Families" will regularly be praying for each Sunday school family's:

Protection
Relationship with God
Attention to God's Word
Yielding to God's Will
Education (at church and school)
Relationships in the Home

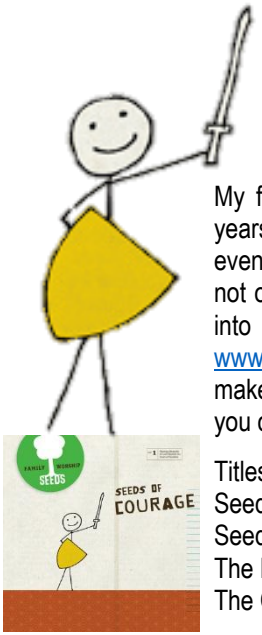
PRAYERS for families

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

PRAY-ERS will be in contact with the family for whom they are praying throughout the year. It is our hope that our Sunday school families will feel free to contact their PRAY-ERS partner to share prayer needs and concerns, as they arise. We are confident that the blessings of this ministry will be far-reaching, and we are excited to see how God's Hand will work through our church body because of it. Thank you to all of you who are participating!

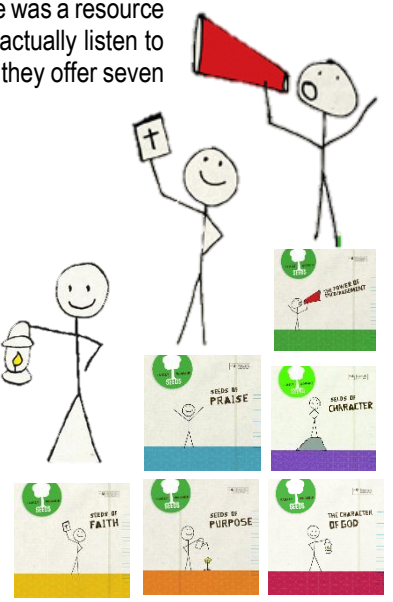
The Generations Prayer Team

Resources for Families



Do your children listen to music? Wouldn't it be great if there was a resource that put Scripture to music that your kids (and you) would actually listen to and love? There is! It's called "Seeds Family Worship" and they offer seven different CDs with songs echoing God's Word.

My family (Pastor Conner's) has been listening to them for years and we all love them. We sing them, dance to them, and even reflect on the verses and their meaning. It's a great way not only to get your family into the Word, but to get the Word into your family. You can learn more at www.seedsfamilyworship.com or stop in and visit with me. They make great gifts and they usually come with two CDs so that you can share one with a friend.



Titles include:

Seeds of Courage
Seeds of Praise
The Power of Encouragement
The Character of God
Seeds of Faith
Seeds of Purpose
Seeds of Character

Today's Special: Sawdust and Manure

Parents, are you feeding your children this?

In his book *Holding Your Family Together*, Rich Melheim recounts the story of the Nazi siege of Leningrad in the early 1940s. Nearing the end of 1941 the city leaders came to the sobering realization that they didn't have enough grain to feed the entire city through the winter. They could either provide food for a small percentage of the people and let the rest starve or look for ways to stretch the grain. They couldn't let nearly two-thirds of the city starve, so in desperation they began mixing sawdust and manure into the grain to stretch it. Nearly one million Russians died, many of them going to bed bloated and full from the sawdust and manure, but starving for lack of quality nutrition.

As parents, we want the best for our children and we will go to great lengths to ensure our children are eating a healthy diet, getting a quality education, and being exposed to edifying experiences. And none of us, given the choice, would fill our children with health-robbing food, mind-diminishing teaching, or soul-shrinking experiences. None of us, given the choice, would serve our children a regular diet of sawdust and manure.

But what if someone else is when we're not looking?

According to the data, American children are spending 7.5 hours a day absorbing some form of media. By the time the average child reaches 18, he will have been exposed to 60,000 hours of media! Do we know what the media is feeding our children? None of us would let our children pick up something off the street and consume it, but how many of us give any thought to what they're picking up off the media and consuming? What if it's sawdust and manure?

Do you know what they're seeing on Snapchat? Do you know what they're reading on Twitter or Instagram? Do you know what they're watching on Vine? What worldview are they absorbing on *The Vampire Diaries* or *Pretty Little Liars*? What are they being taught about manhood or womanhood? Further, what effects are hours and hours of *Flappy Bird* and *Temple Run 2* having on their minds?

It's tempting to discount these concerns as hype and overreaction. We hear responses like, "It's just a TV program. It's just an app. It's just a movie, video game, or YouTube clip." According to Dr. Rich, however, "Nothing is 'just' anything when it comes to the constant, persistent exposure to media on the young brain. Neurologically, nearly everything we encounter has a potential shaping effect – chemically, physiologically and psychologically – as it works its magic or its mayhem on the developing brain."

Here's what he's saying: our actions hardwire our brain. For those of you interested in the science, here's what happens: our brains have special neurons that have been given the job of processing the information our brains receive. So every new thought, experience, sensation, image, etc. is received and logged by these little neurons. In order to get these thoughts/experiences to move from what Dr. Rich calls the "scratch pad" of the hippocampus to the "hard drive" of the neo cortex, they have to be repeated. If we repeat them enough and entire network of connections will form that will grant us ready access to the information.

This means that our thoughts and experiences can actually change our brains! Scientists call this phenomenon "neuroplasticity," but it comes with a catch. As malleable as our brains are, repeated thoughts, experiences, and behaviors eventually carve what's called "grooved pathways." It's kind of

like rushing water that cuts pathways in the ground. Once the path is cut, every new rain shower follows the established groove. The earlier we form habits, the easier the grooves are cut and the harder it is to cut different ones.

As parents, we not only establish the patterns of the home, but we have the ability to influence the hardwiring of our children's brains which will affect their entire lives! If we put garbage in, we'll hardwire their brains to crave garbage. If we steadily stream well-dressed lies, anti-Christian worldviews, and false philosophies into their minds, the grooves will deepen, the connections will strengthen, and their ability to appreciate truth will wither. Further, if we allow a steady diet of visual media to redefine the way truth is told – and make no mistake, visual media changes the way truth is understood from true/false statements to like/dislike images – our children will be greatly compromised in their ability to discern truth from error.

On the flip side, if we put the Bread of Life in through consistent family worship, devotion, and study, we'll enable them to desire the Bread of Life and to know the difference between life-giving truth and the sawdust and manure steadily streaming across the airwaves. Dr. Rich minces no words when he says, "We have the Bread of Life readily available, but we are feeding our children a steady diet of mental sawdust and spiritual manure." Many of us, according to Dr. Rich, "are completely full, and yet we are completely empty. We have no time for the best because we settle for the rest."

What does all this mean?

It means we, as parents and grandparents and church, have the opportunity to help our children hardwire their brains for God's beautiful truth. What Christian would knowingly waste this opportunity?

What do we do about it?

If every thought, every story, and every image can be made into a neurological highway in the brain through repeated exposure and experience, then shouldn't we start asking what highways we want paved in our children's brains? If we want God's story to be the highway their thoughts regularly travel down, isn't it worth the effort to help our children pave that road by them telling the story every night? Dr. Rich reminds us, "the things in which we immerse ourselves again and again and repeatedly set our hearts and minds on do not simply *shape* our hearts and minds; they eventually *become* our hearts and minds." As parents, grandparents, and church, we have the amazing privilege and responsibility to immerse our children in the story of God. The more we do it, the wider God's highway will become in their brains (and ours!) and the chances of our children traveling on God's highway throughout their lives will be greatly strengthened.

Will this be hard? Yes. It's especially hard on the front end because it may require changing well-established patterns (This is why so many of us give up). Remember, just as with children, your thoughts and your experiences have cut deep grooves in your brain and trying to establish different pathways of thought will be difficult. But, it's worth it – eternally worth it. And, the more we practice worshiping every Sunday, doing family devotions every night, and freeing ourselves from the steady stream of sawdust and manure, the more we, and our children, will desire the Bread of Life.

Want to talk more about this? Drop me an email (revconner@mmctsu.com) or stop in a visit with me. – Pastor Conner

Holding Your Family Together

Last month we introduced five simple steps to help you hold your family together (listed below). Over the next several months we'll examine each step individually. This month we consider the first Family Faith Practice: Sharing.

Family Faith Practice 1: Share

Most familial conversations sound like this:

Parent: How was your day?
Child: Fine.

Not too enlightening, huh? What if there was a better question, a question that fostered family bonds even as it produced empathy, sympathy, and harmony within the family? There is! And it's the lead off question for the five Family Faith Practices, but it requires a little bit of prep work before it can be asked effectively. So before we reveal the question, let's recall how we set the stage for healthy sharing.

"Calling the Huddle"

Dr. Rich, author of *Holding Your Family Together*, calls it "Calling the Huddle." After your family completes its bedtime preparations, someone (either the designated person of the day or the one going to bed first) calls the family together for the "Faith 5s" (or whatever name you want to call it). You may have a specific location set aside for this time or it may rotate nightly (do what works for your family). And remember, "night time is the right time" for these Family Faith Practices because of the numerous positive effects they have on the sleep patterns of children (and adults!).

Share the highs and lows of your day.

Read a Bible verse or story.

Talk about how the Bible reading relates to your highs and lows.

Pray for one another's highs and lows.

Bless one another.

"Winding Up for a No-Whining Wind-down"

It may sound odd, but Dr. Rich recommends "winding up" before bedtime, what he calls "winding up for a no-whining wind-down." That means that dads who are infamous for wrestling and riling children before bed are on to something. Dr. Rich explains, "one of the best times to work out problems and fix positive memories in the human brain is *right after a workout*." "Exercise," he says, "enhances learning and brain function by birthing new nerve cells and creating better connections between existing nerve cells. It lowers stress, reduces anxiety and depression, enhances the ability to focus, reduces ADD/ADHD, balances hormonal systems, bolsters immune systems, burns fat and slows aging processes way down." That's quite a list!

Not only does winding kids up before bed actually help wind them down from the day, but, as Dr. Rich explains, "It is also a good wind-up for what intentional and thoughtful parents should want to design into every night, which is:

- A recap of the day
- A recasting of the day's events in the context of a loving and supportive family
- A way to embed positive memories
- A sneaky method of short-circuiting any whining that might occur at bedtime
- A method of setting up the brain for maximum problem-solving abilities before drifting off to a better night's sleep."

He concludes, "An energetic wind-up is the perfect precursor to an effective wind-down."

Asking the first question

All of this is simply the prep work for our first question. So what's the question? This: "*What was the high point of your day?*" You can phrase it however you want, but ask it of every member of the family (including yourself) and remember that the goal is to open conversation by opening everyone's eyes and hearts to the good in the day. And specifically asking about the high in each other's day helps facilitate that by inviting everyone to review the positives in their day.

According to Dr. Rich, "Starting the night out on a high sets the stage for an overall positive experience." Further, "sharing highs validates both the person and the high." It invites the entire family into the high and helps everyone to enjoy it with the sharer – and who doesn't like sharing positive experiences together! Doing this every night will not only set the stage for a positive sharing time, but it will affect your children for life, and possibly your future generations that will learn from your children!

But there's more! Something happens in the brain when families share the highs in their day. Dr. Rich explains:

> Neurologically, sharing a high triggers a cascade of positive and powerful neurochemical transmitters that bolster immune systems, regulate hormonal systems, improve one's digestive tract, slows down the aging process, and triggers positive electro-chemical exchanges throughout the brain and the body.

And then, when positive memories are recalled, things really get neurologically exciting:

> An electrical message flows from your brain at 100 yards per second. The memory message speeds down your neurons to the ends of each wire-like cell, where little bags of chemicals are waiting to be released. There, the electrical message changes to a chemical message and jumps across the space between the neurons (synapses) to bond to proteins on the other side. The electrical message changes to a chemical message, and then back into an electrical message. In an instant, all through your body flashes an electrical/chemical charge that shouts out to every cell, 'I feel good!'

All this from sharing the highs of your day! What parent wouldn't want to give his or her child this gift? As Dr. Rich says, "Sharing highs is cleansing, cathartic and beautiful. And it's free."

It's no wonder the Scriptures repeatedly encourage us to rejoice *together*, to recall the glorious deeds of God *together*, to celebrate the highs of his gifts to us *together*.

Asking the second question

After everyone has had the opportunity to share in one another's highs, transition to the second question: "*What was the low point of your day?*" As fun as it is to share highs, our days aren't filled with highs alone. Lows are a part of reality in a broken world, and sharing lows will help family members verbalize their lows, empathize with one another, and help members truly know each other. Further, naming your lows in the loving and nonjudgmental environment of the family enlists a team of caring helpers to help you. Dr. Rich points out, "There, in the hands and hearts of the people who love you and want the best for you, a treasure trove of solutions, allies, creativity and untapped resources suddenly spring to the surface." Unnamed and unshared lows isolate individuals to deal with their lows alone and allow the low to grow to giant proportions in the mind and that has direct effects on a person's well-being. Dr. Rich shares a few disturbing statistics:

- 75% of all health-care costs are related to chronic illnesses, a major driver of which is stress.
- More than half of all deaths between the ages of 1 to 65 result from stress.
- The U.S. accounts for 5% of the world's population and 33% of the world's anti-anxiety pills.

- Stress is directly linked to all six leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung disease, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide.

Further, as Dr. Rich points out, "Holding negative feelings inside and living with resentment actually hurt the holder more than the 'holdee.' It raises blood pressure, eats away at the lining of the stomach, erodes the immune system, and sets the holder up for a host of maladies."

Dr. Rich says it's like someone saying, "I'm so angry at you, I'll get migraines, ulcers, and hemorrhoids! That'll show you!" Why would we want to raise children to think like that? Helping one another name lows will help everyone to battle the negative effects of stress by enlisting a team of loving helpers.

Further, imagine the effect on children who are raised not only to name their lows, but to listen to the lows of others. They are far more likely to grow into empathetic adults who understand the importance of actively listening and caring for others.

And guess what! There's a neurological boost from sharing lows, too. Dr. Rich explains,

> Like sharing a high, a message comes from the brain at 100 yards per second. It speeds down the ends of the neurons. Little bags of neurotransmitter chemicals – amino peptides and endorphins – are released, and they jump across the synapse and bond to a protein on the other side. All through your body, at 100 yards per second, flashes a painkiller!
>
> When you cry and release the pain, the chemical composition in your tears has a higher concentration of dopamine than do your tears when you laugh. Dopamine is a pleasure enhancer and painkiller. A good cry is powerful medicine!

And did you know that sharing feelings (like highs and lows) out loud and learning to listen to the feelings of others, according to Dr. Rich, actually grows brain tissue "in the areas the process sympathy, empathy, compassion and deep care. Sharing a low literally rewires your child's brain."

Is it any wonder the Scriptures repeatedly invite us to share one another's lows, to carry one another's burdens, to weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn?

Two rules to remember

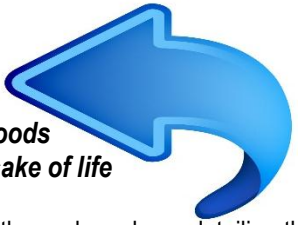
Now that you've got the questions for the first Family Faith Practice of Sharing, it's important to remember to key rules detailed by Dr. Rich: 1) No interrupting. Clarifying questions are fine, but no one is allowed to butt in to talk about themselves or to change the subject. It doesn't matter if the highs or lows seem insignificant to you; let the child share. If you shut them down when they're sharing "insignificant" highs and lows, do you think they'll ever come to you with something significant? 2) No judging. If you want to create a safe environment for sharing, you need to listen for your child's heart. If they've have spoken something untrue, there will be a time to speak truth to it, but that will not be spoken as a rebuke, but as a gentle redirection of their thoughts.

Boys and girls are… different

Finally, it's important to remember that boys and girls are different. It's a stereotype, but it's often true: girls talk more. Fact is, they are born with more brain tissue than boys in the areas that control speaking and listening. So, if you have boys and girls, don't expect them to communicate in the same way. Having said that, the brain is a muscle, and boys who practice speaking their thoughts will be better equipped one day to share them with their wives and children.

You can do this. You can hold your family together. You can open your children by opening the conversation with the two simple questions we shared above. So, call the huddle tonight and start sharing.

Counterpoint



Countering falsehoods with facts for the sake of life

For the last few months we have been detailing the various talking points that are readily put forth in defense of abortion and holding them up to the light of reason and Scripture. This month we come to one that, despite a mountain of evidence to disprove it, remains surprisingly still in use.

Claim:
We don't know when life begins, therefore abortion is okay.

This statement is simply untrue. The moment a sperm fertilizes an egg, a new genetically distinct individual comes into being. Randy Alcorn, in his meticulously researched book *Pro-life Answers to Pro-choice Arguments*, details nearly a dozen different medical experts who unanimously assert that the biological evidence is incontrovertible: life begins at conception. One reference will suffice. Dr. Hymie Gordon of Mayo Clinic, standing before a United States Senate judiciary subcommittee, succinctly testified, "By all the criteria of modern molecular biology, life is present from the moment of conception."

And yet the Supreme Court case (*Roe v. Wade*) that effectively threw out all existing abortion laws at the time, defended the right to abortion on the claim that we don't know when life begins. Justice Blackmun wrote, in his majority decision,

> We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer.

Justice Blackmun's words are stunning and, at best, disingenuous. He's effectively saying, "Because we don't know when life begins, it's okay to kill the unidentified thing in the womb." Imagine if we applied Justice Blackmun's decision in other areas. Imagine a hunter waiting in a wooded grove for deer. In the distance he sees something moving in the underbrush, but he can't tell if it's a deer or a child. Should he shoot? If he does and the unidentified object turns out to be a child, would we hold him guiltless? Does uncertainty justify killing? Justice Blackmun, if he were to use his standard employed in *Roe v. Wade*, would render the hunter guiltless. But shouldn't uncertainty call for restraint rather than license? And this all rests on the assumption that we don't know when life begins. But, as Dr. Gordon pointed out, we do! So, if uncertainty is enough to keep us from pulling the trigger, wouldn't it be enough to stop us from aborting what's in the womb? How much more, then, should certainty over life's beginning keep us killing life in the womb?

Sadly, even our current president is unwilling to define when life begins. While being questioned in a pre-election debate on when an unborn baby acquires rights, then-Senator Obama famously said, "whether you're looking at it from a theological perspective or a scientific perspective, answering that question with specificity, you know, is above my pay grade." He later went on to clarify his comments, "What I intended to say is that, as a Christian, I have a lot of humility…all I meant to communicate was that I don't presume to be able to answer these kinds of theological questions." With all respect to our president, the question of when life begins isn't simply a theological question. As mentioned before, science shows us that "life is present from the moment of conception." Further, as one who claims to adhere to Christianity, his humility should be aimed toward caution rather the license, especially since Christianity clearly teaches that the life in the womb is sacred from the point of conception.

Counterpoint:
Based on both science and theology, we do know when life begins – at conception. But even if we weren't sure, respect for the potentiality of life demands restraint rather than a license to kill.

June 2-6

Zion Lutheran Church, Manning, IA

Grab your secret decoder ring and put on your rearview mirror glasses because this summer Zion's VBS is heading to the International Spy Academy where we'll train to become special agents for the one true God! This exciting Vacation Bible School is filled with fun mysteries your kids will love and Bible-based apologetics to teach them truths they won't forget!

With International Spy Academy, your mission is to instill in your children an understanding of the one true God of the Bible they can carry with them for the rest of their lives and share with those around them. They'll uncover the clues that lead to the one true God who is the Creator of all and who calls people from every tribe and nation to have fellowship with Him through His Son Jesus Christ.

Synchronize your watches for this summer and join us at the International Spy Academy, where your special agents will learn to know, love, and live for the one true God!

Ladies Guild

February Highlights

Zion Guild met on February 12th for its regular meeting, hosted by Susan Schilling and Carol Kahl with 18 members and guest Joy Umland in attendance.

President Schilling led the group in the League Pledge and called on Margaret Backhaus, Christian Life, who read a devotional entitled "God Loveth Me". Pastor Conner then led us through the hymn "My Song Is Love Unknown" pointing out that Jesus loved us, the loveless, that we might be made lovely through His innocent suffering and death for us on the cross.

President Susan Schilling then opened the business meeting in the name of the Triune God. The secretary read the minutes from the January meeting. Correspondence was shared that thanked the Guild for Christmas gifts and for serving Becky Puck's funeral. The treasurer then gave her report followed by Darlene Volstedt's kitchen fund report. Sunshine Chairman, Bev Grundmeier, reported sending ten cards. Audrey Roe, Human Care Chairman, reported that the sewing ladies have tied 103 quilts to date, and that 30 of them have been dispersed to Adopt a family (8), Quakerdale, (12), and (10) to New Opportunities. She also mentioned that the congregation may want to assemble health kits and collect soap to be sent to: Lutheran World Relief in May.

Circle Reports were as follows:

Circle # 4 is serving the February fellowship coffees. The pre-school will provide the food on the 3rd Sunday of the month.
Circle #1 will have the March coffees. The deacons will provide cookies on the 5th Sunday.
Circle # 4 served Becky Puck's funeral.
Circle #1 served the Allen Rix funeral.
Circle #2 served the funeral of Elaine Reinke
The next funeral will be served by Circle #3.

In old business it was reported that 27,000 meals were packaged for Hope Ministries at the VWF Hall on January 11th. The White Rose ceremony mourning the death of babies by abortion was on January 18th and was said to be very moving.

New business included the audit done of the treasurer's and kitchen fund's books. Both books were found to be in order.

World Day of Prayer will be held at Zion in Arcadia on Friday morning, March 7th, with registration and coffee at 9 and the service beginning at 10.

Plaza Bingo will be Friday, February 28th, with Carol Kahl, chairperson, and Connie Ahrendsen, Audrey Roe and Judy Bald also on the committee.

It was noted that Ash Wednesday is March 5th this year.

The next Guild meeting will be on March 12th with Bev Grunmeier and Barb Anderson serving as hostesses. The business meeting was adjourned with the Table Prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Puck, secretary

February 2014
Issue #6

Meet Cassandra Ruth!

Born Thursday, 6 February at 6:21 am. She weighed in at 8lbs, 2 oz, and was 18" long.

Cheryl woke me up at about 1 am. A few hours later, our family had been blessed with a very smooth delivery, and a very healthy little girl. Contrary to all expectations (especially mine!), we now have three girls to follow our son.

To subscribe to the Ferry's newsletter with photos log onto www.cferry.com.

Cassandra ("Cassie") has lots of dark hair, and has very aware eyes when she's not sleeping. She's already watching everything, and her older siblings can't wait to teach her all they know. The doctors have cleared her and Cheryl both, and everyone's now home together, being assisted by Cheryl's mom who rode the train in to spend some time helping us get adjusted.

Please pray words of thanksgiving to our gracious Lord Jesus, who has answered our prayers in wonderful and gracious ways. He has preserved mother and daughter through delivery, and now will welcome Cassie into His kingdom this coming Sunday at Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church. What a wonderful addition to the celebration of the Transfiguration of Our Lord!

Welcome Pastor Lincon Guerra: On Sunday, February 9th we celebrated a historic bilingual worship service with the Installation of our first resident Hispanic pastor/missionary. Rev. Lincon Guerra, originally from Panama will assume the Hispanic mission located at Our Saviour in north Des Moines. With the church filled to overflowing IDW President Sieveking installed Pastor Guerra. Henry Witte and I translated. Pastor Luciano Vega-Ayala, Pastor Guerra's father in law preached the sermon. Following the service a fellowship meal was shared. +

My Tyson Chaplaincy at the Beef Plant in Denison: My work at the plant in some ways is much like a ministry in a local church. People are in need and come to their pastor with spiritual and material needs. And like a church the pastor's job is to help, with practical as well as spiritual help. One of the ways I help those who come to me is to hold them accountable to keep their goals. For example with Alex who has had a drinking problem in the past. He knows his job and a future promotion will depend on him abstaining from alcohol. So he and I have a deal that he tells me each week about his progress or lack thereof. Is he attending AA meetings? Is he alcohol free, and for how many days? Oscar is another worker who came to me for help with his marriage and his temper. He wants to be a better husband and he wants his wife to trust him. So we have a pact, to talk together about his issues each week, including his attendance at his church. These are just a few examples of the many conversations of pastoral support that I offer to the workers at Tyson. We all have need help at times which may mean someone to talk to, to hold us accountable to do the right thing. +

Please Pray: + In thanksgiving for all the blessings from the Installation service for our new Hispanic pastor, Lincon Guerra and Deaconess wife Noemi, now serving the Hispanic mission in Des Moines. And in thanksgiving for all the support and prayers for my ministry there over the years. + For Jose in Storm Lake who is studying to become adult member. + For our meetings with Voting members in Denison to charter our mission. + For my temporary work as Chaplain at Tyson in Storm Lake and for plans in Storm Lake to also incorporate and a affiliate our mission there. + ***In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of the Iowa District West who monthly support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants. +++***

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March Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion

1. LaVern Bald
2. Jennifer Behrens
3. Lori Genzen
   Fern Jensen
4. Katelyn Crawford
   Marion Ream
6. Camden Alexander
   Josiah Conner
   Mathew Gore
   Paige Hinners
7. Larry Lesle
   Errol Wegner
8. John Anerson
   Lenus Borkowski
9. Lynna Miller
   Craig Musfeldt
10. Stan Baack
    Randahl Peters
11. Cynthia Grau
    Curtis Grimm
    Jeff Hargens
12. Floyd Forman
13. Shannon Walters
15. Dean Grau
    Tyler Saunders
16. Julie Lamp
    Chad Morrow
    Kelly Nissen
17. Nancy Grimm
    Dave Grundmeier
    Katherine Vogel
18. Lyle Bald
    Betty Stoelk
19. Anna Belle Wegner
20. Barbara Grove
    Cynthia Karsten
    Virgene Kroeger
    Abby Lapel
    Chloe Otto
    Ella Stammer
21. Dustin Petersen
    Russell Ranniger
23. Robert Nissen
    Linda Vinke
24. Jonathon Asmus
    Travis Borkowski
    Nathanael Conner
    Claire Gore
    Alix Puck
25. Carla Backhaus
    Danielle Hargens
26. Russell Frank
    Lucas Kluver
27. Noah Gore
    Dwight Gruhn
    Ashley Lage
    Aaron Rutz
    David Tibben
28. Michael Alexander
    Rebecca Conner
    Rachel Stoberl
29. Beth Booth
    Judy Borkowski
    Brenda Ehlers
30. Lacey Hinners
31. Joelle Puck

4. Thomas & Susie Ulrickson
8. William & Shona Weitl
29. Kenneth & Joelle Puck
30. Scott & Terri Rosener
31. Lorrell & Judy Borkowski

If we missed or misspelled your name, please inform the church office.

Congregational Servants

Council:
Curt Struve, President
Sam Musfeldt, Vice President
Donna Forman, Record. Sec.
Amber Neumann, Fin. Sec.
Karen Kienast, Treasurer
Jeff Hargens, CFO

Board of Elders:
Stan Baack, head elder
LaVern Bald, Stan Musfeldt
Dave Grundmeier
Tim Kienast, Lynn Kruse
Craig Musfeldt,

Board of Deacons:
David Bohlman, Bruce Grimm,
Ryan Crawford, Eric Ramsey
Paul Christensen, Richard Zinke,
Don Lamb

Board of Trustees:
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Kent Vollstedt,
Jason Kienast,
Rodney Backhaus

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Dave & Bev Grundmeier,
Frank Mohr, Lynn Kruse,
Gary Schroeder, Warren Puck

Board of Education:
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Trisha Beck, Shelly Gruhn
Joni Kienast, Laurene Meeves,
Kari Ranniger, Kathy Vollstedt

Preschool Board:
Dianne Riggert, Chair
Jean Ferneding, Diane Riggert,
Sandra Sextro, Heather Kusel,
Jen Morris
Elder: LaVern Bald

Altar Guild:
Monica Christensen, Director

Stewardship Board:
Rick Lohrmann, Chair

Ladies Guild:
Susie Schilling, President

Fellowship Club:
Russ Mohr, President

Choir:
Dr. Tom Ulrickson, director

Children's Choir:
Susie Ulrickson, Jill Arp

Preschool Highlights of February

Dear Congregational Family,

WOW!!! Another month has slipped by us and on to March. Will March greet us as a lion or a lamb? The children enjoyed singing on Sunday, February 16. We (Zion Preschool) collected $86.84 in the basket for morning snacks. As a group in both morning and afternoon classes we talked about "giving" and "keeping" the money. The question we asked them was "what difference would the money we collected do to help a project?" The children voted to give the money to Generations Campaign of Zion Lutheran Church.

On February 18, Preschool held open house/registration for next fall. As of today, February 23rd, Zion Preschool has room for one three year old and one four year old. God is good!

Upcoming events:

Parent/Teacher conferences will be held on March 4, 5 and 6.
The children will be studying penguins.

Wanted: Strong shoe boxes with lids. If you can donate please bring to the preschool room.
We are going to make a diorama in the afternoon class. We need 19 shoes boxes.
Thanks!!! Deb Fink and Janice Nemitz

ZION Lutheran Preschool Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting