



A Message from Pastor Mathew

Qualities of a Missional Church, Part 4

As we prepare for the “BER” months of the year, I like to think that those who have been traveling over the summer are returning home, that those who participate in summer activities are seeing them winding down. I see families preparing to send kids back to school. I see people talking about how fast summer went. What I pray I also see are individuals and families returning to a Sunday morning (or Saturday evening) routine of worship. Of course, sometimes this doesn't happen and we see people fall away. How can we reach out to God's people who have wandered? I think that fits well into the theme for my article this month as we continue looking at qualities of a missional church. How can we be a church that is grounded in the Gospel, grafted in Christ, and oriented to growing His Kingdom? We've looked at a number of qualities so far this year. Let's get two more.

A Church Trained to Evangelism in an Organic Way

Evangelism is always a tough word that comes with a higher level of angst that we care to engage with. Somehow we think evangelism is leading someone toward a slam-dunk conversion. Evangelism is painted as a sales pitch, propaganda, with quick-witted apologists and eloquent speakers. I mean, if one can do that, great. But, for the rest of us, myself included, evangelism is more about organic discipleship, it is less sales pitch and more conversation. To organically share faith, it must come from bringing Jesus into a conversation about our day. It comes from seeing the gospel as something that is woven into everyday life. As we have eyes to see God around us and in us, God becomes a natural part of conversation. If we bring Christ into our pain and suffering, we're more likely to bring him into conversations with those who struggle with their own pain, Christian or not. And seeking that slam-dunk conversion? Organic evangelism doesn't work that way. If it does, great. If not, it's all in the Spirit's timing. Let's be people who allow Jesus to do the saving work and who just give Jesus the opportunity to use us while he's doing it.

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*“Do not be
wise in your
own eyes;
fear the Lord
and shun
evil.”*

Proverbs 3:7

OUR MISSION: WHY WE EXIST

To bring people into a covenantal relationship with the Lord (Matthew 28:19-20), and to equip them for personal growth and impact.
Ephesians 4:11-26

A Message from Caitlin Nobile' **Outreach and Communications Coordinator**

On the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds Matthew 13: 24-30 & 46-47

I'm originally from Florida, and I can't say that I have adapted to the long Western Pennsylvania winters. So when spring finally arrived, I was so excited to set up a window box of flowers outside of my apartment. Each morning, I would lean in and look close to see if there was any breaking news in my little garden. A bud might have blossomed...a spent flower might need pruning...a bee might have visited. *The possibilities were endless.*

That was until the day everything changed. One fateful morning, I discovered that my once lush bed of flowers had been ravaged. All that remained was a single bright red geranium, a lone survivor of a senseless crime. My enchanted mornings and the fruit of my labor were reduced to a snack for a local squirrel. Those of you who have gardened have no doubt had a similar experience. There is no shortage of uninvited possibilities that can creep into your field and corrupt what you have patiently and carefully sown. This does, however, point to the kingdom of heaven as it currently stands on earth.

Our gospel reading today covers the parable of the wheat and weeds, but before we *enter into the weeds* so to speak, why is Jesus speaking to us in parables in the first place? Why use a metaphor to speak of something so critical like the kingdom of heaven? This is a puzzling concept for the crowd. When the disciples asked Jesus why, he tells them. "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." Though the crowd surrounding Jesus is diverse, the message remains the same: The kingdom of heaven has arrived here on earth in the form of Jesus Christ.

The *weeds among the wheat* describes the kingdom of heaven as a Master who sows good seed in his field, but one day, the servants woke up to a field of weeds alongside the wheat. They were confused. *Master, I thought you sowed good seed?* However, the Master already knows what has happened: *an enemy has done this.* The response of the servants is natural: *so should we uproot them?* The Master says no. Uprooting the weeds at this early stage of growth would cause the wheat to be uprooted also. He declares that the wheat and the weeds will grow together until the harvest, and at that point they will be separated. The weeds will be collected in bundles for burning, and the wheat will be gathered into the Master's barn.

So what does this parable reveal to us about the kingdom of heaven? The field is the world where the gospel has been sown, and this good seed bears fruit in the lives of his followers. Yet, at the same time, in the same field, the fruit of the devil also takes root.

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A Church Deeply Involved in the Needs of Its Neighborhood and World

Unlike any other church I've led or attended, Zion has a knack for going into and helping to care for its community. I'm proud to be a part of such a community of believers. We don't live to ourselves, we live for Christ and the mission field into which we have been planted. There is something about the love and charity of Christianity that is contagious and we should always aim to have such qualities. Remember the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus and how oppressive it was to Jews? Once Jesus followers started forming Christian churches, the Empire shifted their oppression toward them. But, it couldn't last. Eventually, Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire. And when Emperor Julian even attempted to revive Rome's old pagan ways, he attempted to do so imitating that which made Christianity so popular among the people, her love and charity. Pope Benedict XVI even said that charity was not some kind of welfare activity but rather part of the Church's very nature, an expression of her very being. Let's keep that nature going.

As always, if something within these missional qualities speaks to you, whether about something Zion is doing or could be doing, please make that known. God may be calling you to help emphasize something in place or something new He wants to start.

God's peace,

Pastor Mathew

[A Message from Caitlin Nobile' continued from page 2](#)

Until the end of this world, both good and evil will be found together. A comforting detail within this parable is that before the servants told the Master of the weeds that were sown, he already knew what had happened. The work of the enemy does not take place outside of God's field of view. Though good lives alongside evil for now, God remains in control of the situation. Know that whatever may come, God will not allow the weeds to overtake you.

As for my window box, there is good news. Eventually I figured out that there are certain smells that squirrels can't stand. I added a barricade of marigolds and suddenly my little garden was safe from nibbling. Though this is not the end of the enemy, (need to figure out how to stop the aphids next), I can take comfort in what I found in this little vignette. God's creation will continue to flourish even in an environment corrupted by evil. Friends, in Jesus Christ, you are a good seed. As you navigate this world of good and evil, remember that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It is the will of the Father that you will be gathered up to live with him forever.

In the name of the Father, the Son + the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In Our Prayers

Maria & Steve Clancy
 David Detwiler
 Mary Ann Dunlap
 Corey Fischer
 Jon Galland
 Sherry Galland
 Ken Garver
 Marshawna Hill
 John Reed
 Glenn Ribblett
 Suzanne Roberts
 Dolly & Ken Rosier
 Peggy Schoch
 Dave Sheridan
 Carol Succop
 Kathleen Waite
 Family of Tom Weiers

"Pray without ceasing."
1 Thessalonians 5:17

SEPTEMBER BAPTISMAL BIRTHDAYS

Alexander Reck	September 4, 2011
Brody Scholze	September 11, 2021
Peyton Hill	September 13, 2020
Bennett Buechel	September 24, 2016
Bailey Reck	September 25, 2016

*If we are missing your child's baptism date, please advise the church office.

Worship

Saturday 5p
 Sunday 9a

Starting 9/8/26

Confirmation Class

Students grades 6-8
 10:30 AM
 Library

Starting 9/13/26

ConnectFor

(See page 5)

High School Class

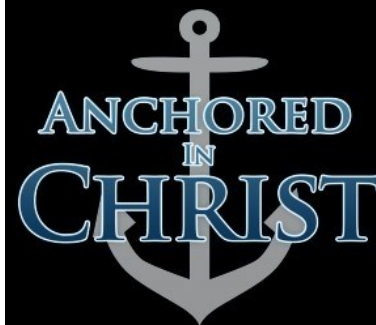
Students grades 9-12
 10:30 AM
 3rd Floor Youth Room

Adult Class

Adults of all ages
 10:30 AM
 Zion's Heritage Room

For small group

Bible study,
see Zion website.





Lion cub Kiazi (potato) and mom

Family Ministry Zoo Day

Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium

Saturday, September 19

Meet at 11 AM outside the gate

Join us as we look for God's creatures and then head for an adventure around the world, across the land, and under the sea. All children, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors and everyone in between are welcome to join us. Please contact Pastor Mathew if you are interested.

Zion Lutheran Church

ConnectFor

Faith | Family | Fellowship | Fun

Growing in faith together at church and at home

Resuming September 13th

Sundays at 10:30 AM
(following 9:00 AM service)

www.zlcbrentwood.org | 4301 Brownsville Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15236 | zlcbrentwood

PreK-5th Grade

Faith
Family
Fellowship
Fun

Contact
Sherry Galland
for more
information at
Musicministry
@zlcbrentwood.org

Zion Lutheran Church



Monday Music Rehearsals



Resuming September 14th

Angelus Ringers
6:00 PM

Zion Voices
7:15 PM



New Members Received in June

Marion Batchler
Beverly Black
Emily Brune
Dan & Melissa Donahue
Nathan Donahue
Christian George
Luc & Leah Lavella
Aidan Manjarezz
Erin Mills

ALTAR GUILD MEMBERS NEEDED

The Altar Guild prepares the altar for communion each week. We are in need of 3 new members. We work in teams and rotate each week. If you are interested in learning more about how we serve or serving with us contact Cheryl Squier @ 412-913-8085 via call or text. Please prayerfully consider joining us.

GRANDMA'S ATTIC/BAKE SALE



With your many donated treasures and our dedicated volunteers, our Grandma's Attic was a huge success, raising \$2,647.35 (Grandma's Attic \$2,347.35, Bake Sale \$300). Our bake sale was headed by Barb Warden and we thank her and ALL the outstanding Zion bakers for their baked goods. The money raised this year will go to updating the 2nd floor restroom.



Many thanks to the dedicated people who worked to make this yearly event possible: Mike Angelo, Nancy Angelo, Linda Betler, Jan Capozzoli, Michelle Dodson, Dan Fisher, Valerie Fisher, Bonnie Gierlack, Carolyn Giovannitti, Jim Hindes, Marilyn Hindes, Lane Magera, Pastor Mathew Magera, Caitlin Nobile, Jean Mann, Ron Mann, Glen Miske, Jennifer Schlessman Miske, Cara Mittenzwey, Harold Mittenzwey, Garrett Russen, Ed Schillo, Gary Schlessman, Mary Watkins.



Our remaining treasures were given to Spencer Methodist Church for their September Flea Market and to the Blessing Board, an organization that Zion supports.

Again, a heartfelt and grateful thank you to EVERYONE who contributed to the success of this yearly event. We look forward to seeing you next year!

Sandra Schlessman

Worship and Picnic in South Park



Praise for the beautiful day of outdoor worship and fellowship!

Mark you calendar for next year's outdoor worship and picnic.

August 1, 2027

(see more pictures on Zion's facebook page)



Please continue to pray for Tommy and Madison Dolgos as they bring the good news of Jesus to Native Alaskans through the Alaska Student Partnership.

[Aksp.org/dolgos](https://aksp.org/dolgos)

"And He said to them, 'Go into the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.'" Mark 16:15 ESV

ZION QUILTERS REQUEST FOR SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The Zion Quilt Ministry has completed 100 school kits for Lutheran World Relief. Please help the quilters fill these backpacks with school supplies for children that live in parts of the world where they can only attend school if they bring their own supplies.

Monetary donations will be used to purchase bulk school supplies. Checks should be made payable to "Zion Lutheran Church" and indicate "School Kits" on the envelope and/or check. If you prefer to purchase supplies yourself, here is what is needed.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ✦ 70 page notebooks | ✦ Ballpoint pens (blue or black) |
| ✦ Blunt scissors | ✦ 2 1/2 inch eraser |
| ✦ Ruler | ✦ 24 count crayon box |
| ✦ Unsharpened #2 pencils | ✦ Pencil sharpener |

**See sample kit in narthex

THANK YOU FROM THE SOUTHWESTERN VETERANS' CENTER

Dear Members,

On behalf of the Southwestern Veterans' Center, I would like to extend out sincere gratitude for your generous donation of \$402 to be placed in the veterans' welfare fund for future needs.

Your generosity is truly appreciated by the veterans we serve.

Our goal is to provide America's heroes with an environment that feels as close to home as possible. Thoughtful contributions such as yours make it possible for us to enhance their quality of life and offer meaningful programs and activities that bring comfort and enjoyment.

Thank you again for your continued kindness and for remembering our veterans in such a meaningful way.

Sincerely,
Cassie Betzler, NHA, PCHA, ALR
Commandant