



Zion Lutheran Monthly



August 2014

What Makes God Laugh

What makes you laugh? Is it a well-timed one-liner? A joke that needs to be set-up and delivered just-so? Slapstick? Irony? Sarcasm? What makes you laugh? Is it time around the campfire with the guys, telling the same stories of the glory days of time gone by? Or is it in the comfortable confines of a friend's house and a half-empty bottle of wine? Is it going out with friends or at something someone sent you over the internet?

I've heard it said that the Duck-Billed Platypus is proof that God has a sense of humor. I'm not sure who came up with that saying, but it lets the Naked Mole Rat off way too easily. With that being said, God's sense of humor is not found in the creation of strangely proportioned or unfortunately named animals. God's sense of humor—what makes him laugh—is found in the Bible, specifically (and uniquely) in Psalm 2.

Psalm 2 is a Psalm of David to be read (or sung) at his son Solomon's coronation as king. One can only imagine the powerful impact it had; the words of the beloved deceased king honoring his son as he succeeded his father as king. The Psalm does a beautiful job of honoring Solomon as king of a united monarchy while also looking forward to the King of God's people, Jesus the Christ. It does so with these words:

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves,

And the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,

"Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."

These are the mighty men of earth, the kings and rulers—people who have dominion over the lives of those under their authority. And they want nothing to do with the Lord. If this sounds not a little bit like the rulers of the people today, it is no accident. They want God removed from their lives and the lives of the people under them. They prefer overt atheism, undercover atheism (agnosticism) or a docile deism over the God of Biblical Revelation and the Lord Jesus Christ. Him they cannot have.

So how does God take to being rejected by the mighty men of earth? Is he threatened by their rejection? Does their rebellion and faithlessness threaten his rule and reign? Hardly. Here is how God replies to those who rebel against him: "He who sits in the heavens laughs. What makes God laugh is the pitiable attempts of mortal men to set themselves in opposition to him."

We may not like it, but we are living in a time where the influence of Christianity on culture is waning. The norms and values of the people around us do not agree with the way of life we have been called to in Christ. It is popular to mock God. Claiming God does not exist is academically preferable to being a person of faith. More and more, people want nothing to do with God. If God's response to this is to laugh, we should not be frightened, alarmed, or even troubled by it. Instead, we should rejoice in what God has done when "the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain." God's response to rebellion and unbelief is this: "As for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill." God says: "My response to your little attempt at rebellion is to send Jesus, my King, who will die on Golgotha, a hill he made holy through the shedding of his blood. Because, you see, the rightful king of creation is not one who rules by naked force, but one who rules in grace and mercy, humility and service. Only Jesus, my son, has the right to reign. I have installed him and there is nothing you can do about it because you do not have what it takes to arrest the throne from him."

When it looks like God is not in control, that his enemies are making great gains in our world, remember it is at times like these when God laughs.

-Pastor Duncan McLellan

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Sunday School News

A Sunday School teacher is needed for the Confirmation class (6th-8th grade unconfirmed). Anyone interested should contact Katie Gielarowski at (724) 713-6523 or email winechick123@gmail.com.

Sunday school begins September 7th! Children ages 3-18 are welcome. If your child has never attended Sunday school and would like to, please register via email to winechick123@gmail.com or contact our church secretary.

Confirmation!

There will be a mandatory information meeting for our Confirmation students and their families after the late service on Sunday, September 7th in the Conference Room. We will go over the plan for this year, including the date for Confirmation.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|---------------------|
| 2 | Carrie Albert | 24 | Joseph Pracel Jr. |
| 3 | Leif Luedeman | 24 | Bob James |
| 4 | Nicholas Buzzelli | 25 | Megan Meyer |
| 4 | Louise Prager | 28 | Kim Luedeman |
| 5 | Anna Gresh | 29 | Henry Dittmer |
| 5 | Darla Rockovich | 29 | Helen Erbrecht |
| 6 | Megan Gauger | 29 | Sheila Ferry |
| 6 | Mark Pracel | 29 | Chrissy Scott |
| 8 | Paul Klemash | 29 | Jaclyn Scott |
| 9 | Pam Trentini | 30 | Bernie Blanco |
| 10 | Matthew Liberatore | 30 | Dawn Geregach |
| 12 | Jennifer Fitzgerald | 30 | George Kozak |
| 13 | Samuel Trentini | 31 | Mitchell Fitzgerald |
| 14 | Brittany Buzzelli | | |
| 14 | Paula Jones | | |
| 14 | Bill Koester | | |
| 19 | Jack Bishop | | |
| 21 | Matt Oelschlager | | |
| 22 | Jane Lenhart | | |
| 24 | Rebekah Ackerman | | |

Happy
Anniversary

- | | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 3 | John & Tracey Coyle |
| 5 | Jack & Jacque Oelschlager |
| 11 | Ken & Bethany Schrag |
| 12 | Peter & Barbara Fisher |
| 16 | Henry & Lois Dittmer |
| 16 | Robert & Amy Morgan |
| 18 | John & Jean Endler |
| 22 | Ron & Betty Valentino |
| 24 | John & Kari Gresh |
| 29 | David & Mary Hutula |
| 30 | Joseph & Carol Pracel Jr. |
| 30 | Bob & Diana Schmidt |
| 31 | Bill & Susie Bishop |

Introducing...Vicar Chris!

Hello Zion!

I am ecstatic to be your vicar for the next year! I do not think that I could have been more welcomed and comfortable than I have been in the past few days. Thank you for all that you have done to make me feel at home here.

I would like you to get to know a little more about me. I was born in Buffalo, New York and moved shortly thereafter to Columbus, Ohio. That is where I would grow up and that is where my sister and two brothers were born. I am the oldest, my sister is a year younger and my brothers are four and five years younger than I.

I graduated from Granville Christian Academy in 2008 and went to Concordia University Wisconsin for my Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Pre-Seminary Studies. After I graduated there in 2012, I went to Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

My girlfriend has followed me here to the Pittsburgh area, also. Her name is Cathryn Zarnke and she is an incredibly intelligent woman working on her Ph.D. at Concordia Seminary. She is an art teacher by background, but has also taught English and Media. She is an Australian who came over to the Seminary to investigate Luther's theology and his use of media, especially in Lucas Cranach's work. We met at the Seminary around a campfire last October and have enjoyed each other's company ever since.

For fun I like to be outdoors. I enjoy fishing, hiking, and though I've only been once, hunting. I like the fresh air and watching the animals in their environment. But my love of animals has extended even into my own house as I have brought with me my dog. He is a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and his name is Monster. (He was the firstborn and the biggest puppy). I have seen him from the day he was born and my family took care of him until now. He is about six years old and thinks he is a ferocious guard dog. But if you come to my house, don't worry, he wouldn't know what to do after he finished barking.

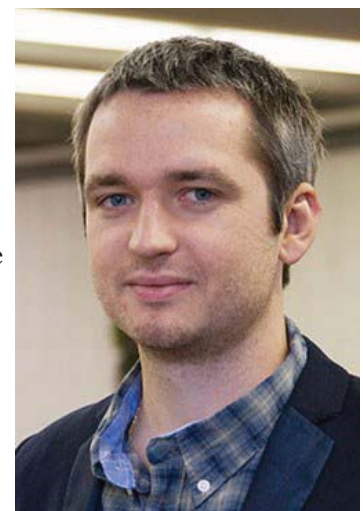
I also understand that there are some car buffs here at Zion, another interest that we share. I did not care much for cars most of my life, because my father is a car salesman and I heard about new cars all the time. But when he offered me a job as a lot tech at his Chevy dealership, I grew to be more interested. I got to drive Impalas, Camaros, Corvettes, even a Challenger or two. I found out that it is hard to find a ZR1 boring.

Another interest of mine is computers. I enjoy building them and tinkering to get the machine to run as efficiently as possible. My brothers and I built three just this past summer and it was a fun and enjoyable way to spend much needed time with them.

I am glad to be here at Zion to serve as your vicar for the next few months. I know that I will learn and grow here under your care. You have been more than generous to me already and I thank you for your thoughtfulness and gifts to me. God's richest blessings to you.

In Christ,

Christopher McCarthy



SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

August

DATE	TIME	GREETERS	ACOLYTES
August 3	9:00 AM	George, Jane & Michael Kozak	Carley Rockovich
August 10	9:00 AM	Bill & Melanie Becker	Lara Luedeman
August 17	9:00 AM	Shane & Sandy Bryant	Augie Bishop
August 24	9:00 AM	Lois Sauro	Josiah Ackerman
August 31	9:00 AM	Roxanne Burgh	Carley Rockovich
September 7	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Joyce Wood Lois Klemash	Nathan Morgan Chirs Yellig
September 14	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Wayne & Barb Oechslein Jim & Marylou Neill	Augie Bishop Lara Luedeman

ELDERS	Frank Vallelunga, David Hutula
ALTAR GUILD	August 3 & 10: Clara Hayes, Barb Oechslein August 17: Mary Hutula August 24: Janet Oeschlager, Marian Oeschlager, Molly Oeschlager
USHERS @ 9:00 am	Joe Gielarowski, Loren Ludeman, Jim Oeschlager, Lois Sauro

September

ELDERS	Ken Wuerthele, Pete Fisher
ALTAR GUILD	Paula Jones, Rose Steranko
USHERS @ 8:00 am	Carl Bauer, Gene Koop, Ron Meier, Jack Oeschlager
USHERS @ 10:30 am	Sam Dragan, Steve Gauer, Josh Gielarowski, Chuck LaJeunesse

If you are unable to participate on the assigned date, please find your own substitute and notify the church office (412) 221-4776 or secretary@zlc.org of the change.

Stephen Ministry Corner

We are excited that Kristen Neill has felt called to attend the Stephen Ministry Leadership training here in Pittsburgh. We thank God for her desire to serve as a Stephen Leader and look forward to joining our ranks as we seek to extend Christ-centered care to people who are going through hard times.



Collection for this month's Bridgeville area food bank is Sunday, August 10. The "item of the month" is crackers. You are also welcome to help at the food bank every third Saturday of the month between 7:45 and 12:00 at Bethany Presbyterian Church.

FOOD BANK



Chairman's Report

Church, Mission & Synod (CMS) & Plate Finances

We ended the budget cycle with an unfavorable result of \$4,000. All bills have been pay for the June.

Just another reminder, as we enter into summer vacations we tend to see giving decrease, so we encourage you to remember Zion while you are away on vacation, since our expenses don't go on vacation. May God guide us in using our financial gifts and our talents to spread the Good News!

There is no Church Council meeting in August.

Bob Schmidt
Chairman