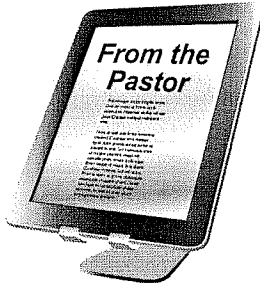


Burlington Zion Express

August 2013



Is it possible the Catholic's have a pope I can like? Even possibly admire or emulate? John XXIII who convened the Second Vatican Council was the only other pope I thought I could ever love. But now there is this new pope who acts more like the Vicar of Christ. No more red shoes. Gone is the pope mobile, (he insists on driving his own small car), he hasn't moved into the papal apartments but keeps his own small living space. But it isn't just material possessions about which this pope is humble. He also seems to have a personality of humility warding off the "pope groupies" that are gathering in his home city of Rio de Janeiro. Pope Francis supposedly abhors the statue of himself and demanded that it be taken down (of course, if you've seen the statue, it looks pretty awful). The pope also told the bishops that they had "better look out for their flocks and put an end to the 'clerical' culture that places priests on pedestals."

Pope Francis is unassuming and he is non-materialistic. But most importantly, he actually uses the language of Jesus. Francis talks of social justice, equal rights, and an end to poverty. Only this morning, he said: "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?" Is he all talk and no action? I don't know yet, but it looks hopeful. And hopeful isn't a word I generally use when I describe the Vatican.

Even so, this pope is not perfect—infallibility doctrine aside. He has declared the issue of women priests "closed." As much as I try, I just cannot figure out why the pope and the Vatican are so weird about women. I suppose the Vatican is a deeply political institution sustained by its own maintenance of power and even a really cool new pope doesn't have the courage to challenge that. Too bad; the greatest voices of

Christianity have been those unafraid to stand up and speak out. Pope Francis seems like he might be one of those voices. Let's hope so.

So why spend so much time discussing my observations of the pope? Because our actions and our speech are also observed by people who will make decisions based on what they see about Zion UCC. A few Sundays ago, we had two visitors from northwest Iowa. When I asked what brought them to Burlington that morning assuming that they had friends or family in town, their answer surprised me. They said they had heard about our rainbow banner and had driven here just to worship at Zion. A week later I received a thank you note from them saying that they felt at home when they worshipped with us. Our rainbow banner is bigger than we think it is. A young woman sat in my office in tears telling me about losing her job and facing eviction. I asked her how she knew about Bridging the Gap. She said a friend in another town told her Zion is the helping church. Our outreach to low-income people is bigger than we think it is. A member of the Burlington community began worshipping at Zion recently and later said to me, "I think I may have finally found the church that lets me believe in God my own way." Our theology of acceptance is bigger than we think it is.

Just like a pope who realizes that the world is bigger than bishops in long red robes, ours is a world that includes everyone. Zion is a church answering the many needs of God's people. We are not just the gay pride church, or the church that helps the poor, or the church that practices an accepting the journey of faith. We are more. As Zion continues to reach further out into the world it will continue to be a church of many things to many people. We are bigger than we think we are!

See you in the pews...

Pastor Jane

BZ Express – August 2013



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I'm writing this letter with mixed emotions. I am very excited to return back to St. Louis and continue my studies, but I've also come to care for the congregation and church quite a bit in my brief time here. I've been incredibly blessed to have the opportunity to come and learn from you as a church community and I know that the experiences I've had while I've been here have not only helped prepare me better for my job in ministry, but for dealing with a whole host of experiences in life.

I can't thank you enough for the hospitality and kindness that has been shown to me in the brief time I've spent here. From the lunches and dinners with you, to the computer that I'm typing this letter on, I am more grateful than I can say. Everyone has had a hand in this and deserves thanks for helping me out at this time. I've been put up in people's houses, received gift cards, and have known that I'd be taken care of regardless of what may come. Your hospitality and generosity have really made this feel like home and I am truly grateful for that.

Zion is truly an incredible church and one that shows how churches can be healthy and growing. It has been an amazing learning experience and I can look back and see how I've grown and how much more I know now than I did before. I thank you all so much for your generosity and hospitality.

God Bless,

Jeff Mueller

Worship

Sunday, August 4 – Communion

10:00 am: Worship

Scripture: Luke 12:13-21

11:00 am: Coffee Hour

Sunday, August 11

10:00 am: Worship

Scripture: Luke 12:32-40

11:00 am: Coffee Hour

Sunday, August 18

10:00 am: Worship

Scripture: Luke 12:49-56

11:00 am: Coffee Hour

>>Saturday, August 24

>> 6:00 pm: Worship

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31 and Luke 18:1

Coffee Hour Hosts for August



August 4: _____

August 11: Heather Pope and Matthew Patrick

August 18: The Neises family

August 25: Zion UCC Run/Walk for the
Homeless -- No Coffee Hour

September 1: Emily Roane and Janet McCannon

All are invited downstairs to the fellowship hall following the worship service for a time of coffee, simple refreshments, and fellowship.

Please check the schedule posted on the bulletin board and feel free to sign up for any Sunday without sponsors. Thanks!

Worship Helpers

August church closer: Judy Taylor

Sunday, August 4

Communion preparers: Sandy Deal and Kathy Morrish

Greeters: Joe and Sandy Deal, Jim and Deb Ritters

Reader: Marlis Robberts

Tower Bell: Marvin Fraise

Valet: Jim Ritters

Sunday, August 11

Greeters: Jerry and Carol Goddard, Bill and Ann Hummel

Reader: Jim Ritters

Tower Bell: Milt Paule

Valet: Bill Daws

Sunday, August 18

Greeters: Dennis and Dyan Dietzman, Charles Brissey, Pauline Kuster

Reader: Lisa Neises

Tower Bell: Jakob Welch and Marlis Robberts

Valet: Tom Ralston

Sunday, August 25 – Race for the Homeless

(No Worship Helpers needed)

Saturday, August 24 Worship at 6:00 pm

Our worship service on race weekend will be on Saturday at 6:00 pm! It will be in the sanctuary and then we'll all go downstairs for a pasta supper provided by the Social Justice Committee. All church members and friends, along with runners, walkers and volunteers are encouraged to attend.

Our worship theme will be to run and not be weary...walk and not faint. We will take for our scripture: Isaiah 40:31 and Luke 18:1.

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

by Janice Gibson

NOIZ KIDZ Day - Aug. 7

Jesus at the Water Park?!

Jesus seemed to be near the water so often—at a well, in a boat, on a beach! Children and youth, 1st grade through 8th grade, are invited to join us at the church on **Wednesday, August 7** from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. for a day of water stories from the Bible.

There will be fun with water crafts and water experiments. We'll also be playing some water games and getting wet ourselves, of course, so bring your swimsuit! Then we'll finish it off with lunch.

So put it on your calendar and invite your friends. It will be a fun day!

P.S. We need to know your t-shirt size, so email the church (ucczionbur@aol.com) or call the church office (319-752-2305) with the information. Thanks!

Board of Christian Education Meeting

August 20 – 7:00 p.m.

We will plan a meeting for Tuesday, August 20, at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Please plan to attend.

Adult Sunday School

Resuming September 15

The summer session led by Jeff Mueller has concluded. Adult Sunday School will start up again for the fall session on September 15. Stay tuned for details!

Coffee and Scripture



Adult Bible Study
Tuesdays, 7:30 a.m.
at Diggers Rest

Join us for Tuesday morning Bible Study! We are reading Marcus Borg's book The Evolution of the Word. However, there is really no required reading...just show up at Diggers at 7:30 Tuesday morning and jump into the discussion. See you there!

How Can We Keep From Singing?



Zion's adult choir will begin rehearsals again on **Wednesday, August 28, at 7:00 p.m.**

Our choir is always looking for new members so even if you just want to give it a try, come! We are a pretty informal group that loves to sing.

If you have any questions, call Janice Gibson at 319-752-7353.

Fall Adult Sunday School Summer-Fall Reading List

In November, Adult Sunday School will consider “Racism and National Security” in the context of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The summer-fall reading list for this topic is:

- A Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston "is the true story of one spirited Japanese American family's attempt to survive the indignities of forced detention...and of a native-born American child who discovered what it was like to grow up behind barbed wire in the United States." [dust jacket copy]
- Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson. "San Pedro Island, north of Puget Sound, is a place so isolated that no one who lives there can afford to make enemies. But in 1954 a local fisherman is found suspiciously drowned, and a Japanese American named Kabuo is charged with his murder. In the course of the ensuing trial, it becomes clear that what is at stake is more than one man's guilt. For on San Pedro, memory grows as thickly as cedar trees and the fields of ripe strawberries—memories of a charmed love affair between a white boy and the Japanese girl who grew up to become Kabuo's wife; memories of land desired, paid for, and lost. Above all, San Pedro is haunted by the memory of what happened to its Japanese residents during World War II, when an entire community was sent into exile while its neighbors watched." [dust jacket copy]
- Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet by Jamie Ford explores the experience of Japanese Americans in the Seattle area during World War II in the context of a love story between a Chinese boy and a Japanese American girl who was sent to the Minidoka camp in Idaho.



A huge thank you to **Jeff Mueller**, our amazing summer ministry intern!

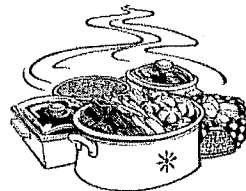
Jeff is only halfway through his seminary experience and yet he stepped into his role here at Zion with skill, professionalism, and confidence. Jeff visited all of our shut-ins and hospital patients, preached four Sundays, and taught Bible Study and Adult Sunday School. He has attended almost every church meeting or event, was an escort at the Over-the-Hill Gang bridal gown show, and is scheduled to help at the summer NOIZ KIDZ Day event. There has been very little this summer in which Jeff didn't participate! His most valuable contribution was "taking over" when Pastor Jane was at General Synod and then on vacation. **Jeff's last Sunday will be August 11 when he returns to school at Eden Seminary.** Thank you, Jeff!



**Sunday,
September 8
10:00 a.m.**

Rally Day at Zion means coming together to kick off the church year! We're back from summer vacations and ready to start up again. Let's pack the pews with friends and neighbors, kids and acquaintances. See you in church!!

Back-to-Church Potluck



After the worship service there will be a potluck dinner in the fellowship hall for everyone. Please bring a dish or two to share. Drinks and table service will be provided.

Sing-along at Rosebush Gardens

Sunday, August 18, 2:00 p.m.

A group of volunteers will be going to Rosebush Gardens at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 18, for a sing-along with the residents there. Please join them!

Thank you to the following people who sang at the Burlington Care Center for the July 21st sing-along: **Debbie Gottschalk, Gail Lawlor, and Donna Norris.** We also thank the good turnout of residents that were there who did an excellent job of singing along!



Ryan Paul Gibson
on July 21, 2013

Ryan is the son of Justin and Lizzie Gibson, born on September 11, 2012. He is the grandson of Lyle and Janice Gibson and the great-grandson of Don and Vivian Kellar.



Our generous grant from Walmart has finally run out, and we are getting very low on a number of items in our food pantry. We could really use some



donations again. There have been a lot of people who needed assistance from our food pantry this past month. Donna Norris came in on Monday morning and sacked up enough food for 12 more families, but now our shelves are pretty bare.

The items we especially need at this time are:

peanut butter
jelly
canned soup (tomato, chicken noodle, vegetable)
crackers
spaghetti
spaghetti sauce
canned ravioli, spaghetti, etc.
noodles
cans of broth
cans of peas (have green beans and corn)
boxed potato mixes
ramen noodles
tuna helper (have plenty of tuna)

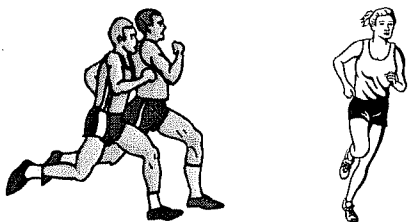
If you are able to help with any of these items - or any other type of non-perishable food - please bring them to the church during the week or on Sunday. We also accept monetary donations, of course, and will do the shopping for you. Just make your check out to Zion and mark your donation for the food pantry.

Thank you in advance for your help.
Deb Ruble, Director of Bridging the Gap

P.S. Within a couple hours of sending out my email plea, two people stopped by the church with monetary donations and a little later an email was received with a promise of a donation in the offering on Sunday! We couldn't operate our food pantry without all your help! Thank you so much.

Zion's 5k Run/Walk for the Homeless

Sunday, August 25, 8:00 am



Registration forms are available for anyone who plans to walk or run in the Zion UCC Run/Walk for the Homeless. Pick one up from the table in the narthex or check Zion's website.

The entry fee is \$20 before August 17th and \$25 after that. If you sign up by August 15, you will be guaranteed to receive a t-shirt. Everyone is asked to bring a canned good on the day of the race for the homeless shelter.

All proceeds will go towards the Burlington Area Homeless Shelter – a very good cause – so spread the word! Feel free to take extra forms to hand out to friends, family and co-workers.

The race will begin at 8:00 am at North Hill Park, continue through some of the beautiful North Hill neighborhoods, and then have a unique finish down world-famous Snake Alley! After the race there will be refreshments and music, with the awards presentation at 9:30 am.

Plan to come down and join the festivities! Show your support for Zion and the Homeless Shelter. If you want to volunteer to help and didn't get a chance to sign up, just show up the day of the race and we will find a job for you!

Race T-shirt

Everyone who registers by August 15th to run or walk in the race will receive a specially designed "Zion UCC Run for the Homeless" t-shirt.

If anyone else who is not participating in the race would like to order a t-shirt, you may do so for \$12 each. Sizes available are S, M, L, and XL. Each larger size after that is \$1.00 extra (2XL: \$13.00; 3XL: \$14.00; 4XL: \$15.00). Place your order in the church office on week days or in the narthex on Sundays. Your payment is due with your order. **The deadline to place your order is August 15.**

Worship Service

Saturday, August 24, 6:00 pm

Due to the race on Sunday, we will have our worship service on Saturday evening in the sanctuary. We would like to have everyone in attendance – including church members, family and friends, runners, walkers, and volunteers.



Pasta Supper to Follow

After the service the Social Justice Committee is providing a "Carbs for Christ" pasta supper in the fellowship hall for everyone. There will be pasta, salad, and dessert. Please join us!

Over the Hill Gang

Thursday, August 22

10:45 a.m.

Lunch is planned at the **Carthage Lake Club** on **Thursday, August 22**, with Milt and Laurie Paule hosting. Meet at the church at **10:45 a.m.** to carpool and caravan over there.

Thanks

A special thanks is extended to the following volunteers from the Social Justice Committee who greeted meal participants and assisted at the July 25th Community Meal: Cherry and Steve Klein, Gail Lawlor, David Ekman, John Riessen, Barb and Rod Botts, and Donna Norris.

A meal is provided free of charge the last Thursday of each month at Grace Methodist Church through the organizational efforts of Shared United Methodist Ministries. In addition to the work of Burlington-West Burlington area Methodist churches, other local churches and Boy Scouts assist to help assure continuance of this most worthy community-based mission project.

Second quarter offering statements, the record of your personal giving to Zion, are available for you on the back table in the sanctuary. They are in a box in alphabetical order. Please pick yours up!

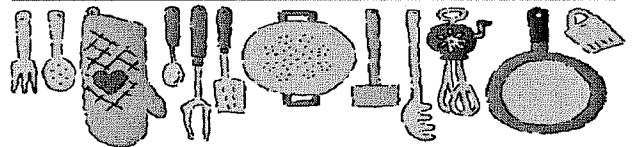


RONALD MCDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES
OF EASTERN IOWA

Collecting the **pull-tabs from cans** is an easy and fun way to support the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Iowa. The pull-tabs are shipped to a recycling center for processing. RMHC receives money from the recycling center based on how many pounds of pull-tabs get delivered. Annually the pull-tab collection program generates over \$12,000 to support services for the families and children that RMHC of Eastern Iowa serves. **Every pull-tab saved does help a lot!** They add up quickly.

If you collect and bring your pull-tabs to Zion, Don and Vivian Kellar regularly deliver them to the Ronald McDonald House in Iowa City for us. Please remember to do this!

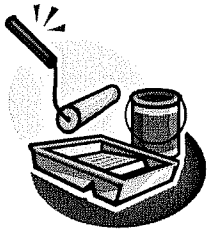
FROM THE KITCHEN COMMITTEE



The following items have been left in the kitchen and need to be picked up and taken home:

- 2 qt. Anchor clear glass rectangular casserole dish
- 3 qt. Pyrex clear glass rectangular casserole dish
- 12" round clear glass (Fortecrisa) serving plate
- Clear glass trifle bowl
- Black Crock-Pot bowl strap

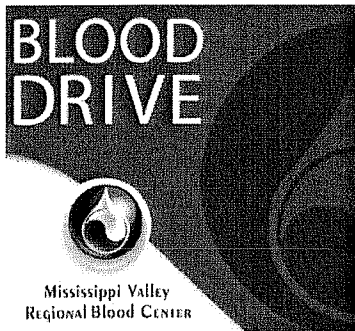
All items are now on the counter in the kitchen. Thank you!



Paint-a-thon Saturday September 7

Zion will be participating again this year. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you are willing and able to help. The official date is September 7, but preparation and painting will begin on **Tuesday, September 3**. We should have our home assigned to us in mid August.

Waivers will also be posted that must be signed before any work is begun. Look for more details to come! If you have any questions, please contact Pam Daws or Paula Renard.



Downtown Burlington Churches Blood Drive

Monday, Sept. 16

1:30 – 6:15 p.m.

Hosted by:

**First UCC – 611 Columbia St.
at the top of Snake Alley**

Put this date on your calendar and plan to give blood that day. David Ekman is the coordinator for Zion. Last date that donors can have given and still be eligible on Sept. 16 is **July 22**. More details will be available in the next few weeks.

Project: **CRAYON**



Zion is participating with F&M Bank & Trust again this year in Project: CRAYON to help get area elementary schools the supplies they need for the classroom. Below is a list of basic supplies that can be used:

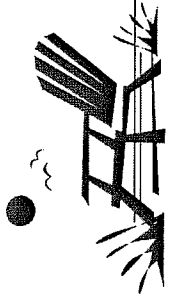
- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| #2 lead pencils | 3-ring binders |
| Baby wipes | Back packs |
| Band-aids | Blank CDs |
| Clorox wipes | Construction paper |
| Copy paper | |
| Crayola crayons – 8 big, 24 ct., 36 ct. | |
| Dry erase markers | Elmers glue |
| Fiskars scissors | Glue sticks |
| Hand sanitizer | Highlighters |
| Index cards | Kleenex |
| Legal pads | Markers |
| Napkins | Pencil boxes |
| Pens | Pink erasers |
| Plain pocket folders | Post-it notes |
| Prang watercolors | Red checking pencils |
| Rulers | Stickers |
| Tempera paint | Vinyl rest mats |
| Wide-lined loose leaf notebook paper | |
| Wide-lined spiral notebooks | |
| Ziploc bags | Zipper pencil pouch |

Cash donations are also appreciated. Make your check payable to “Project: Crayon” and they’ll buy the supplies for you. A box is at the back of the sanctuary to put the supplies and donations in.

Deadline to give is Sunday, August 11.



AUGUST 2013



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 10:00 am: Worship 11:00 am: Coffee Hour	5	6 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest	7 9:30 am - 12:30 pm: NOIZ KIDZ Day	8	9	10
11 10:00 am: Worship 11:00 am: Coffee Hour Jeff's last Sunday here	12	13 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest	14	15 7:00 pm: Consistory	16	17
18 10:00 am: Worship 11:00 am: Coffee Hour 2:00 pm: Sing-along at Rosebush Gardens	19 	20 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest 7:00 pm: Christian Education	21	22 10:45: Over-the-Hill Gang to Carthage Lake Club	23	24 6:00 pm: Worship Pasta Supper to follow
25 8:00 am: Run/Walk for the Homeless	26 	27 7:30 am: Bible Study at Diggers Rest 6:00 pm: Social Justice Committee	28 7:00 pm: Choir Rehearsals Begin	29	30	31



AUGUST



- 1 ---- **Joe Deal**, 9183 Gaslight Dr.
- 2 ---- **Kyle Des Jardins**, 605 Melville Ct.
West Burlington, IA 52655
- 3 ---- **Sandra Deal**, 9183 Gaslight Dr.
Evelyn Tiemeyer,
1020 Scott Boulevard - Apt 114
Iowa City, IA 52240
Carrie Wagler, 1011 S. 12th St.
- 4 ---- **Dillan Roth**, 10817 115th Avenue
- 6 ---- **Stella Hartman** (12), 2405 Madison Ave.
- 8 ---- **Kathy Morrish**, 1001 Parkway Dr.
Patty Kerr, 9328 Glenmark Dr.
Nanci Ell, 1919 S. Main St.
- 10 --- **Barbara Meth**, 217 Spring St.
West Burlington, IA 52655
- 13 --- **Gary Chapman**, P.O. Box 591
- 14 --- **Connie Ralston**, 3219 Crystal Dr.
Randy Wachter, 1028 Short Ave.
- 15 --- **Vivian Kellar**, 128 Greenwood Dr.
- 17 --- **Judy Taylor**, 18404 125th St.
Danville, IA 52623
- 18 --- **Rodney Botts**, 421 N. 7th St.
- 19 --- **Dennis Dietzman**, 2819 Fair Acres Dr.
Marvin Fraise, 1002 W. Mt. Pleasant
West Burlington, IA 52655
- 23 --- **John Des Jardins**, 605 Melville Ct.
West Burlington 52655
- 24 --- **Titania Reynolds**, 305 Shields St.
Marilyn Stein, 197 Crestview Drive
- 28 --- **Janet McCannon**, 218 Jefferson - 4A
Judy Nesius, 710 Louisa St.

Early September birthdays

- 2 ---- **Louise Rolf**, 1731 Dehn St.
- 3 ---- **Natasha Long**, 1805 S. 10th St.
- 5 --- **Nancy Oetken**, P.O. Box 231
West Burlington, IA 52655

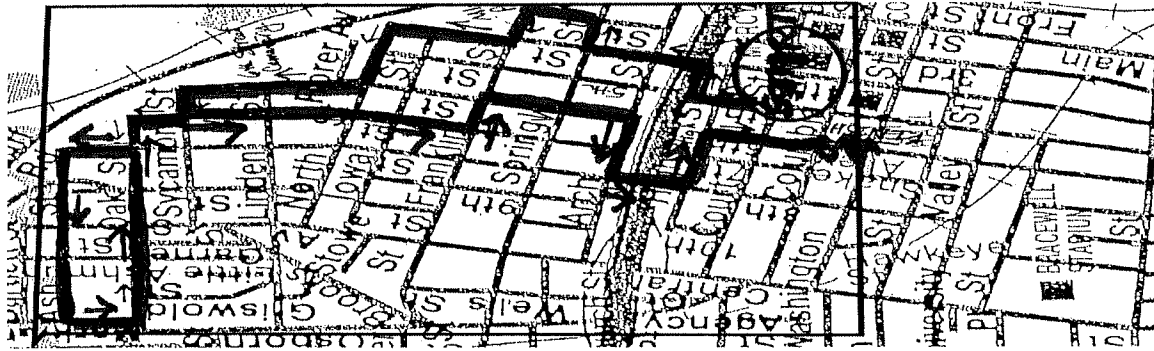
Anniversary Wishes



- 6 ---- **Milton & Laurine Paule** (58)
2601 S. 3rd St.
- 10 --- **Jeff & Marian Fritz** (39)
5956 Hunt Road
- 11 --- **Rev. Jane Willan & Don Lutz** (6)
2404 Florence Ave.
- 18 --- **Lyle & Janice Gibson** (40)
204 Crestview Dr.
Bill & Connie Krieger (34)
12396 Y Camp Rd.
- 25 --- **Darrell & Sue Eden** (40)
218 Lewis St.
- 31 --- **Gary & Janet Chapman** (45)
P.O. Box 591

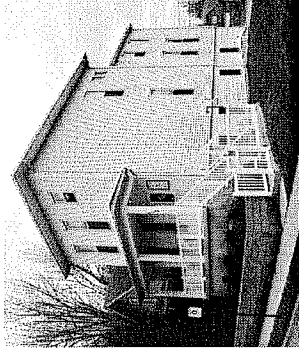
Early September anniversaries

- 3 ---- **Dick & Patty Kerr** (41)
9328 Glenmark Dr.
- 5 ---- **Dan & Lisa Graham** (26)
321 Summer St., West Burl. 52655

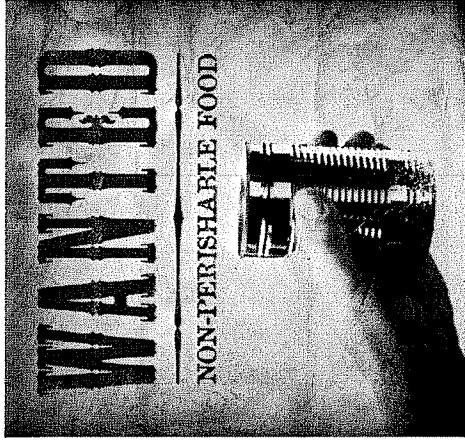
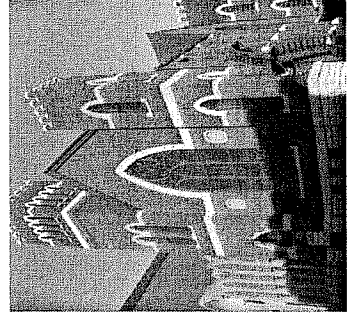


The gently rolling course takes you through the scenic, historic North Hill District of Burlington, Iowa with a unique finish down world-famous Snake Alley!

Run/Walk for the Homeless



Sponsored By:
Zion United Church of Christ
Burlington, Iowa



On the day of the race, bring a canned good or other donation for the homeless shelter. It would be appreciated!

For more information on the event call:

(319) 752-2305

**ZION UCC
RUN/WALK FOR THE
HOMELESS**

**5K RUN/WALK TO HELP THE
BURLINGTON AREA
HOMELESS SHELTER**

SPONSORED BY

**ZION UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST**

**412 North 5th Street, Burlington, Iowa
(319) 752-2305**

Who: All are welcome!

When: Sunday, August 25, 2013

Event begins at **8:00 a.m.**

Where: Run/Walk begins at North Hill
Park, corner of 5th and Court. Packets and
registration at Zion UCC Church

5K RUN AGE CATEGORIES: MALE & FEMALE

12 & Under	13-19
20-29	30-39
40-49	50-59
60-69	70+

1st Place male and female winners will
receive a trophy.

1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners in each
category will receive a **beautiful,
hand-crafted stained glass sun
catcher made by a local artist.**

Registration Entry Fee: \$20.00
before 8/17/13 and \$25 after.

Make checks payable to **ZION UCC**
and send registration form to:

Zion UCC Church
412 N. 5th St.
Burlington, IA 52601

Pick up your race packet at Zion
Church on Saturday 3-5 PM and
Sunday 6:30 - 7:30 AM.

Last minute registration:
6:30 - 7:00 AM Sunday

Those registered by **August 15th** will receive
a t-shirt.

***Be sure and stay after for the post race
refreshments and music!
Awards at 9:30 am.***

PARTICIPANT FORM:

Print Name: _____

Age: _____ gender: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

T-shirt size:

S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____

2XL _____ 3XL _____ 4XL _____

Read and sign before entering: In consideration of
you accepting this entry, I, my heirs, executors, and
administrators waive any and all rights and claims for
damages against the race director of Zion United
Church of Christ, the City of Burlington, and State of
Iowa, for any accidents, injuries incurred by me
during, because of, or in travel to and from the Zion
Run for the Homeless. I am aware of problems that
could be such as traffic, poor weather, crowds, and
animals. I further state that I have trained adequately
and that I am in suitable condition to compete in the
race I have registered for. If under 18 years of age,
this form must be co-signed by a parent or guardian.

Signature: _____

Parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____

*“Rise and go down, and accompany them without hesitation;
for I have sent them.”*

Acts 10:20

Prayers and Efforts for Peace Prevail



MICHAEL
JOSEPH

Upon returning to Colombia in July, I was asked to begin working full-time with the Council of Evangelical Churches (CEDECOL) Peace Commission's Prophetic Call human rights documentation program. Our goals continue to be to document the impact of the armed conflict on Protestant and evangelical churches in Colombia, to provide material, spiritual and legal support to the victims and to advocate for governmental policies - both in Colombia and from the US - that support victims and bring an end to the armed conflict. We recently published the Prophetic Call annual report with cases from 2010 and 2011 in both Spanish and English. These reports bear witness to the hundreds of human rights violations suffered by members of our churches as well as the positive responses to the conflict from our churches. We continue to accompany the farming communities of El Garzal, Las Pavas and a group of 12 farming communities in southern Córdoba Province all of whom face violence in their struggle to keep the land they depend on for survival. We celebrate with the communities of El Garzal and Las Pavas recent decisions from the Colombian Rural Development Institute (INCODER) in favor of the peasants' ownership of the land.

The biggest new development in Colombia is the beginning of formal negotiations in Havana, between the FARC guerrilla and the Colombian government seeking to end their armed conflict. This new scenario for peace has invigorated peace building networks throughout Colombia.

God, we pray for the peoples of Colombia, especially those who are being terrorized and abused. We ask for a positive outcome to the negotiations to end the armed conflict, and we celebrate the support of the four official partnerships with US churches. We ask for continued strength and renewed hope for the staff of CEDECOL who so arduously work for peace.

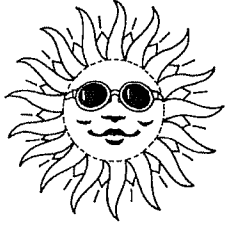
Michael Joseph serves with the Restoration, Life and Peace Commission of the Council of Evangelical Churches (CEDECOL) in Colombia, South America. He provides a pastoral critical presence to church leaders and lay people who are living in life-threatening situations.



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