



## A Message from Pastor Mathew

### Inside Out or Outside In?

Caution: movie spoilers ahead. Recently, we had friends visiting from Wisconsin and on a hot day, decided to see a movie. Our choice? Inside Out 2. I've been excited to see this movie, especially as the title character was turning 13. I went as a parent of a teen and a pastor who wants to see how Hollywood understands the proper balancing of life.

In this movie, the emotions inside 13-year-old Riley's head are met with upgrades in their control room and new emotions move in, including Anxiety, who begins to take over the console and run Riley's life, destroying Riley's belief system and starting from scratch. At the low point, Joy, the protagonist, doesn't know what to do. She thinks maybe the older you get, the less joy you have. Anxiety can't be stopped, she thinks. Without going into detail, it all works out in the end. Joy and Anxiety manage to work together, agreeing on the messiness of Riley's belief system that contains statements like "I'm a good person" but also "I'm not perfect" and that it's okay to have both.

While, we understand that those do better at working together than separately, they actually don't work well together at all. Instead of moving together, they move like feet as we walk, alternately. The left has to take a step followed by the right. The left can't take us anywhere, we'll fall, same with the right. So, they are never side by side, but always working alternately.

The movie implies the cure for imperfection is remembering I'm a good person. The cure for perceived faults is then remembering I'm not perfect. But those can't lead to true joy because outside of perfection, we're not good at all. Paul writes in Romans, "None is righteous, no not one." Jesus also says, "be perfect as my Father in heaven is perfect." That's a high bar. A high bar that our emotions will never be able to meet by simply trying to stabilize things.

There may be a sense of balance, but it will continue to run below the bar. The key to life is not finding balance in our emotions from the inside out but by receiving the love and righteousness of God in Christ from the outside in. It admits our imperfection that anxiety is trying to caution us about, but then it fuels our joy in that we don't have to work toward perfection because we have the perfection of Jesus, given to us by his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. More can be said on this, but it would take up too much space.

I wonder if a future Inside Out movie would include something like faith to steer the ship. I'm not holding my breath. But, see the movie, it is a good one with many insights. Laugh along the way, see some of these signs, and then think about how important a role faith plays in this crazy existence we call life.

God's peace,  
Pastor Mathew



*"When anxiety  
was great  
within me,  
your consolation  
brought me joy."*

*Psalm 94:19 NIV*

#### **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 Pastor Bill

### Faith is a Gift!

I have been recently reflecting on what is faith and many Bible verses come to mind. One definitely is *Hebrews 11:6*, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."

This clears up some confusion over the nature of faith. You and I often get confused about the nature of faith. We are tempted to believe that we must earn God's good gifts. But a gift can't be earned...right? What makes it an actual gift is that it is completely free. We don't pay for gifts or earn gifts. But maybe our perception of a gift is skewed. After all, we learned, "You better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I'm telling you why..." For many, even gift giving has conditions attached, "If you aren't good, you'll get a lump of coal in your stocking." My point is, **God's gifts have zero conditions attached!**

Faith is a gift too! We don't produce faith. We just can't do it! You are in a right relationship with God because God has given you the gift of faith. Your trust in the Savior's gift of forgiveness did not come from you; it came from outside of you. You are trusting in Jesus because God has granted you the gift of faith!

Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Listen to this: you are pleasing in God's sight, because God through Christ has birthed within your hearts by the power of His Word.

This brings us to another aspect of faith. Faith is a gift given by God, through the power of His Word (the Bible). St. Paul writes in *Romans 10:17*, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ." Apart from the Word of God faith cannot be birthed in the ears of unbelievers. It is only by hearing (or reading) the message of the Bible that God grants the gift of faith to unbelievers. Therefore, St. Paul also says in the same passage, "How can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone **preaching** to them?"

Are there practical implications here? Yes! Hearing the message preached by the pastor is necessary to the creation and maintenance of saving faith. Preaching is also a gift given to you.

Do you doubt God's goodness directed towards you? We all do from time to time. Then it is doubly imperative that you hear the preaching of God's Word. Without hearing, you may not believe that God is for you and not against you. The good news that is preached is the good news that causes you to believe and trust that you are forgiven by the merits of Christ alone.

Come to church and hear God's Word!

Alive in Christ!  
**Pastor Bill<sup>+</sup>**

## In Our Prayers

Kevin Barrett  
Marilyn & David Detwiler  
Mary Ann Dunlap  
Corey Fischer  
Casey Hirsh  
George Langford  
John Reed  
Glenn Ribblett  
Dani Richey  
George Schubert  
Sara Smerkar

## July 13, 2024 Summer Saturday Cookout

Please join us for fellowship and a cookout after the Saturday Service. The meats will be provided by the Ministry of Disciple Life. We need a few persons to bring a side dish or dessert and a few willing helpers. If you are able to bring a side dish or dessert, please use the mealtrain to sign up or call Karen Stoddart at 412-580-5814

[mealtrain.com/6z9v2g](https://mealtrain.com/6z9v2g)



## PASTOR'S SUMMER SERMON SERIES Real Life Discipleship: Meditations on the Life of Jacob

Life can be a struggle. The Old Testament figure Jacob embodies such struggles. The series will cover the events of Jacob's life from birth to when he wrestles with God. We can learn a lot about discipleship from Jacob's life and God's interaction with him.

## Council of Elders Vacancy

The COE continues to seek someone to serve from present until the end of 2024. Please contact Anita Reck, COE President or the office if you are willing to serve.

## JULY BAPTISMAL BIRTHDAYS

Garrett Russen	July 12, 2009
Alec Runevitch	July 16, 2016
Brenna Nagel	July 20, 2013
Charles Thatcher	July 31, 2016

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



# Picnic!!!

Sponsored by Music Ministry

**Sunday, August 13**

**12:00-3:00pm**

**South Park**

**WOODLAND CREST**

**PAVILION**

[www.zlcbrentwood.org](http://www.zlcbrentwood.org)

\* Please RSVP by Monday, 8/7 \*



## **GRANDMA'S ATTIC FLEA MARKET**

**SATURDAY,**

**AUGUST 3 8AM-2PM**

**Your donated "treasures" may be brought to  
the Heritage Room**

**Monday, July 1 – Friday, July 26**



# The Ministry of Disciple Life Invites You to Take the Next Step

Vicky Thatcher, Chair

In the May newsletter, the Ministry of Disciple Life shared about discipleship, creating a culture of discipleship, and the importance of taking next steps. Pastor Mathew wrote in his article, **Taking the Next Step**, "Part of the culture of discipleship we are living and creating here at Zion involves fostering an environment of next steps and encouraging everyone to take next steps." It is my hope and prayer that the Holy Spirit has moved some of you to consider taking a next step in some way.

The Ministry of Disciple Life is responsible for organizing and overseeing the majority of the in-reach and outreach events here at Zion. Currently, we have one person leading each event, but Jesus sent His disciples out "two by two" – to share the burden, as well as to support and encourage each other. We would like to follow Jesus' example by having someone (maybe you) take the next step and join one of Zion's events as a co-leader. You do not need to become a member of the Ministry of Disciple Life. Please prayerfully consider serving with your sister in Christ, Karen Stoddart, in one of the following areas:

- ✦ Serve with Karen Stoddart on overseeing one of our fellowship events which would involve communicating the events with the congregation through the office, determining food needs for the event, and organizing the set up/cleanup. Our fellowship events include:
  - Weekly Lenten meals
  - Saturday Summer cookouts
  
- ✦ Serve with Karen Stoddart in overseeing Zion's Angel Tree event. This typically involves communicating with the facilities that receive the gifts, communicating with the congregation through the office, creating tags with suggested gifts for each "angel", decorating small Christmas trees with those tags, and helping to deliver the gifts to the facilities.
  
- ✦ Next Month:     Serve with Lane Magera on Community Clothes Exchange and NALC Disaster Response Packing Event

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*"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow."*  
*Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*

# Zion's Senior Brunch -- May 22, 2024



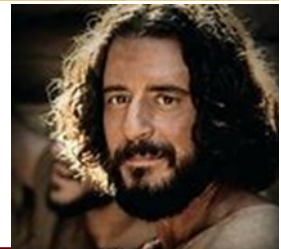
# The CHOSEN



**July 10 - August 28, 7:00 - 8:30 pm.**

Join The Ministry of Disciple Life for summer "movie nights" featuring Season 1 of "The Chosen." Join in the viewing of each episode to be followed by fellowship and discussion on Wednesdays this summer.

The Chosen is the first-ever multi-season drama series about the life of Jesus Christ, our Lord. It allows us to see Him through the eyes of those who knew Him.



**REGISTER at [zxcbrentwood.org/events](https://zxcbrentwood.org/events)**



## Beverly's Babies - Baby Shower

Beverly's Babies expressed sincere thanks to Zion for providing the space to host their FREE COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER on June 4, 2024. They were able to celebrate and support 31 families through the event. These families were able to connect with community resource providers, play games and received free critical baby care items. In partnership with the Allegheny County Health Department an infant car seat education session was offered. [www.beverlysbirthdays.org](http://www.beverlysbirthdays.org)

## WOMEN'S DAYTIME MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY

**2nd Thursday 10a-11a**

**Zion's Heritage Room**



All women are welcome to join this study focusing on the New Testament Epistles and learning to discern where God wants us to serve according to His Will.

If you are interested, please call Zion's office.

## Benevolent Memorial Fund *by John Thatcher*

### Zion Reaches Out to Finleyville Residents Who Sustained Tornado Damage.



The BMF Committee donated \$2,000 worth of Aldi gift cards to the residents of Finleyville who sustained significant damage as a result of the EF2 tornado on May 11. Pictured in the photo are Jacob Lawrence, Finleyville VFC Fire Chief, John Thatcher, BMF chairperson, and Kevin Harris, Police Chief of Mon City (consolidated police department for New Eagle, Union Township and Finleyville Borough). According to these first responders, Zion Lutheran was the first church to reach out into the community to offer support. The overall damage didn't meet the minimum requirement for federal disaster aid, and yet the community needed help.

As a follow up, Pastor Magera reached out to a resident that he knew had property damage, only to find out they had already received 2 gift cards from Zion. Our outreach program is clearly working to get these gifts into the hands of people that need it.



Zion's Men sharing their living faith by singing "Faith of Our Fathers" on Sunday, June 16, 2024, Father's Day.