

Kainos Mission

Zion Lutheran Church / Appleton
Contact: Rev. Wendy Wirth-Brock
920-739-3104
pastorwwb@zionlutheranonline

The Kainos Mission began in the spring of 2004, as the result of a conversation among Zion staff members about ways to encourage our confirmands to live their faith. We asked ourselves questions like these: When our confirmands affirmed their faith before the congregation, how could the congregation affirm their confidence in these young people's ability to be faithful Christians? How could we encourage their creativity in serving their Lord with the abilities they'd been given?

We decided to try putting our money where our mouths were: each of our twenty confirmands that year would receive \$50 from the congregation, to use in designing and carrying out a mission project in the community that showed Jesus' love to people in need. Mission projects could benefit individuals outside the confirmand's immediate family; community groups; or other groups that the confirmand discovered. Confirmands were asked to pray and reflect on possible projects with their parents and/or their confirmation mentor, and then turn in a project within a year of their confirmation. They were also asked to turn in a summary or display of their project, so that the congregation could celebrate their mission. To tie the program to the power we receive in our risen Lord, it was named the Kainos Mission, after the Greek word for "new".

The response from both parents and confirmands was overwhelmingly positive. Youth took their Kainos Mission seriously, carefully choosing projects that reflected their individual concerns, their abilities, and their faith. Some youth, for example donated their money to social service agencies; others used their money to buy school supplies for children. Another bought gardening supplies and planed a garden, which yields several hundred pounds of food for St. Joe's Food Pantry.

After two years of success with our confirmands, a council member suggested that we use a grant from the Zion Foundation to launch a similar program for adults age 18 and over. Like the Youth Kainos Mission, the Adult Kainos Mission asks participants to design and carry out a project benefiting people in need in our community. Begun in the Spring of 2006, this ministry will allow thirty Zion Adults to be "spiritual entrepreneurs": people who creatively embody their faith in loving action in the community. We hope that the Adult Kainos Mission will spark both spiritual growth in those who participate and the growth of the new outreach ministries at Zion.