

ZIONEWS

APRIL 2014



A publication for the family of Zion Lutheran Church
202 Erie St., Stratford, Ontario N5A 2M8
Phone: 271-8527

Facebook/Zion Stratford
www.zionstratford.com
e-mail: zionlc@golden.net

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

The last six days of Jesus' life begin on Palm Sunday and end on Good Friday. These six days are called Holy Week. The Gospel of Mark describes Jesus' last week day-by-day, almost hour-by-hour.

Evidence shows that Jesus began his public ministry in Galilee with his cousin John (the Baptist), but they parted company because of a difference in theology, and Jesus began his own ministry. Jesus' early work may have been among the poor fishers along the Sea of Galilee who were being taxed to death by Herod Antipas, a puppet of the Roman occupiers.

At Jesus' baptism, God sent Jesus on a mission to replace the unjust empires of the world with the love of neighbour, distributive justice, and the lasting peace of the Kingdom of God. This mission would inevitably get Jesus into trouble with the Romans, and the Jewish Temple authorities in Jerusalem, because the Kingdom of God threatened the authority of both the Roman Empire and the Temple. As Jesus made his way to Jerusalem, his reputation as a trouble-maker continued to grow.

On Palm Sunday Jesus arrived in Bethany early in the morning. Bethany is located to the east of the Mount of Olives about 2 km. from Jerusalem. Today the town that was known as Bethany in Jesus' time is a Palestinian town by the name of Al-Eizariya, which means "The place of Lazarus." That's where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived. Today Israel's apartheid wall separates "Bethany" from Jerusalem. If Jesus were arriving in Bethany in 2014, he would have to travel many kilometers out of his way and pass through an Israeli checkpoint to get into Jerusalem.



In 2008, Donna and I participated in the annual Palm Sunday procession. We gathered at Bethphage on the East side of the Mount of Olives, and processed up and over into Jerusalem, waving our palms and shouting "Hosanna." Palestinian Christians from "Bethany" couldn't join the procession because of the Wall.

Jesus sent a couple of his friends ahead to Bethphage, just a stone's throw from Bethany, to get a donkey for his ride into Jerusalem. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was a planned political demonstration that could have got Jesus arrested immediately. Jesus

knew that Pilate and his legion were entering Jerusalem from the west, from Pilate's headquarters in Caesarea Maritima, at the very same time that Jesus was entering from the east over the Mount of Olives. The Romans always sent reinforcements to Jerusalem during the week of the Jewish Passover. That was always when trouble started.

Think about it – Pilate on his magnificent plumed warhorse, his polished armour clinking, the oiled leather of myriad soldiers squeaking, the rumble of perhaps 4000 horses' hooves, and Jesus on a young donkey with a few of his friends following along. The Romans could look upon Jesus' action as either high treason or insulting humour. So, why wasn't Jesus arrested on Palm Sunday? Because of his popular support. The people of Jerusalem lined Jesus' way over the Mount of Olives shouting "Hosanna," which means in Aramaic, "Help us." The local authorities were simply afraid to arrest Jesus for fear of the people.

According to Mark, this was Jesus' first time in Jerusalem. He took a quick look at the Temple and then returned to Bethany to spend the night.

The next day Jesus returned to the Temple, and for a few minutes, on the Monday of Holy Week, managed to close it down with his angry actions in the outer court.

What was this Temple outburst all about? When Jews arrived at the Temple for Passover worship, they had to do a couple of things. In the outer court of the Temple, called the Court of Gentiles, they, first of all, had to change foreign currency into Jewish shekels to make their donations to the Temple. Secondly, they had to purchase the birds or animals that would be offered up by the priests as sacrifice to God. The money-changers and the animal vendors served a purpose. Contrary to common belief, Jesus did not upset their tables because he was critical of what they were doing. He didn't think that the money-changers were cheating the people who came to worship. When Jesus called the Temple a "den of thieves" – a place where thieves go to hide, he was criticizing the Sanhedrin (the Temple Council) for their collaboration with the Romans in overtaxing the people in Judea and creating a nation of paupers. Jesus asked, "Isn't God's house supposed to be a house of prayer?" By symbolically closing down the Temple, Jesus did not criticize Temple worship or the vendors in the outer court; he criticized a political system that was impoverishing "the widow and the orphan."

Why wasn't Jesus arrested at the Temple? Once again, because the people supported him. They agreed with what he said about the Romans and the Jewish authority. The governing power did not want to rile up the people. That would be dangerous, especially during Passover week. For the moment Jesus was safe.

By Thursday Jesus knew that his time was growing short. He couldn't avoid the

authorities forever. He sent his friends to find a place for them to have the Seder Meal, and there he announced that his time was almost up. At the meal, he offered the disciples bread and wine separately – the bread during the meal and the wine after the meal. An execution such as the crucifixion that awaits Jesus separates blood from body. Therefore, Jesus was telling his friends that he was about to shed blood for the Kingdom of God.

What happened to all of Jesus' supporters who were there for him on Sunday on the Mount of Olives, and again Monday at the Temple? They were still in bed. It was too early for them. Jesus was arrested at night and appeared before Pilate early Friday morning. The people who were at Jesus' hearing were Barabbas's supporters. Barabbas was a Jewish rebel who had been arrested for terrorism against the Romans. When Pilate asked, according to Passover custom, "Whom shall I set free, Jesus or Barabbas?" naturally Barabbas's supporters shouted "Barabbas." Jesus was then beaten by the Roman soldiers and taken away to be crucified.

On Sunday morning, in the original Gospel of Mark, Jesus' friends found an empty tomb. A risen Jesus did not appear, but there was a promise from a figure who appeared to be an angel that they would meet Jesus again. The disciples then fled in terror.

What does the Resurrection mean in the Gospel of Mark? I think that it means that Jesus' mission to transform this world into a more loving, kinder, more just, and more peaceful world did not die on the cross. The Romans and their Jewish collaborators thought that they were rid of the threat Jesus posed, but they could not kill God's passion for the world. They could not "crucify" the Kingdom of God.

Now it's up to you and me to finish the work that Jesus started. That, I believe, is Mark's Easter message.

In Christ,
Pastor Dale Finch

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Jesus Enters Jerusalem: On Palm Sunday, April 13, at 10 AM, we become a part of the parade of people following Jesus. The crowds wave palm branches and shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven." Jesus comes to Jerusalem as a person of peace and displays humility as he rides on a donkey. **We too wave palm branches and shout Hosanna. The day ends with sorrow, as we realize that Jesus is headed toward his passion – his death on the cross.**

Jesus Eats a Final Meal with his Disciples: On Thursday, April 17, at 7:30 PM, we enter the room prepared for Jesus and his disciples. There they share a last Supper together. At the meal Jesus, in humility and service, washes his disciples' feet. Then Jesus gives his people a new commandment that they should love one another. Come to worship and receive the gift of Jesus' Body and Blood, given to us for the forgiveness of sins. Worship will conclude with the stripping of the altar in preparation for Good Friday.



Jesus Dies On The Cross: On Friday, April 18, at 10 AM, we stumble through the streets to witness Jesus on his journey to the cross. There he suffers and dies and is buried in the tomb. We hear John's account of the death and burial of Jesus and pray the solemn prayers of Good Friday. We contemplate the cross and express grief over Jesus' suffering and death.

Jesus is Raised From the Dead: On Easter Sunday, April 20, at 10 AM, we walk with Mary Magdalene and Mary to the tomb to mourn. At the tomb the stone is rolled away. There an angel greets them with the good news – "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said." We receive Jesus' command to "go and tell" the disciples this good news. Then Risen Jesus greets us. At Easter we rejoice that our Lord lives and is triumphant over the powers of sin and death. We celebrate a festive service of Holy Communion. **Christ is Risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

MAUNDY THURSDAY POTLUCK SUPPER

On Maundy Thursday, April 17, we begin what is known in the church as the Great Three Days, the holiest time of the church year. As is our custom, we gather for worship, at 7:30 PM, to remember and celebrate when Jesus gave the gift of the Sacrament of Holy Communion to the Christian church. The first communion took place when Jesus gathered with the disciples around a meal in the Upper Room.

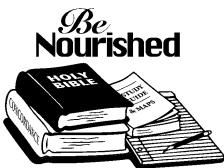


Our Congregational Life Committee, at Zion Church is hosting, a much beloved tradition, a potluck supper on Maundy Thursday, at 6 PM in our Fellowship Hall. This gathering besides celebrating fellowship and friendship, reminds us that our faith journey is one we make together. So come for worship most certainly and join us for supper if you can. Again, a potluck supper. Coffee, tea, and cold drinks will be provided.



LENTEN WORSHIP

Lenten worship continues on Wednesday, April 2 and April 9. At worship we sing the beautiful words of Holden Evening Prayer. We also hear the "I Am" sayings of Jesus from the Gospel of John. Worship is at 7:30 PM.



HOW LUTHERANS INTERPRET THE BIBLE

Our Bible Study will continue on Thursdays, April 3 and 10 at noon. Each session stands alone. You are invited to participate in this study, even if this might be your first session. Topics for these sessions are determining right from wrong and the many meanings of the Bible. Please bring your lunch. Coffee is provided.



ZION WOMEN OF FAITH

April 7 - Board meeting at 7 PM

April 23 - WOF meeting at 7:30 PM

WOF are currently looking for volunteers for the flower committee. Please let Linda Springer know if you can help out. Need somebody to do flowers in September.

As mentioned before we are doing the Learning and Living Kit for Lutheran World Relief again this year. We are asking for whole kits this time. There will be copies at the back of the church for the items needed to complete a whole kit. Everyone is invited to participate.

A box at the back of the church will be available for to you drop off your kits. The kits will be shipped in May.

ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS



Our next gathering of Zion Table For Seniors, our ministry which promotes fun, food, and friendship, takes place on Tuesday, April 22 at 12 noon. Please let Doris Bartlett (519-271-9622) or Phyllis Jeffery (519-271-3668) know by Tuesday, April 15 if you can attend. Lunch cost is only \$12. Africa Need of the Month: **Small Toy (eg. dinky car,**

skipping rope, etc.)

Our after dinner speaker will be Theresa Ryan, from Sinclair Pharmacy, speaking on pharmacy in general. All are welcome!

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



We would like to remind our Sunday School families, that similar to prior years, there will be no classes on Easter Sunday, April 20th. Now that spring is here and with time passing so quickly, we would also like to take this opportunity to advise that the final Sunday School class will be May 11th this year.

Mitzi and Tina, Sunday School Co-ordinators

FRIENDSHIP MEAL



Our Friendship Meal ministry continues to serve people in our community. Our April gathering is Friday, April 25 at 5 PM. The people who come to our meal are a blessing and so are the people who volunteer. We need our volunteers to share their blessing of time and service. Questions? Contact Sister Jean Widmeyer (519-

273-6810).



SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATIONS

Camp Edgewood, our Lutheran Summer camp located in Eden Mills, just east of Guelph has just released their new brochure outlining the various camps and programs they will offer this coming summer. You can pick up a copy from the church. You may also check out the Camp Edgewood website at www.edgewood-camp.ca

Camp Edgewood's Mission Statement: "A Christian organization, Edgewood welcomes all to experience growth and development in the midst of God's creation at our year round camping and retreat facilities." In keeping with their mission, Edgewood's summer camp programs focus on providing positive experience and development in Christian faith, community living and environmental awareness.

P.S. Camperships will be offered, once again, thanks to the Zion Lutheran Church Endowment Fund. The amount is \$200 per child to defray the costs. The only stipulation is that the child has to be a member of our congregation. If your child is attending, please let Terry know in our church office, once you register.

EASTER OFFERINGS



To celebrate the risen Lord, we show our gratefulness with our extra mile Easter offerings. This year's special Easter envelope will be divided in three equal parts between our Current Fund for the work we do in our church community, Canadian Lutheran World Relief for the work it does for people around the world, and a local charity for the work it does in our community. Our Church Council will determine which charity at our April meeting. We thank you for your gifts. One

way of saying thank you to God for the risen Christ.

APRIL 2014 VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers assist with our Sunday morning worship services. Listed below are those who serve in April as a reminder and as a thank you for serving.

Date	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Readers	Usher Captains	Counting Captains
Apr 6		Sharyn Cheney	Susan Steven	Fritz Steigmeier	Brian Gropp
Apr 13	Loralee McNaughton & Verne Hammer	Tom & Joanne Cosstick	Sharyn Cheney	Steve Lamont	Deb Kindler
Apr 17	Sister Jean Widmeyer & Sister Anne Keffer	N/A	Sister Anne Keffer	Brian Wilker	N/A
Apr 20	Janet Ahrens & Anne Cooper	Gerald & Isabel Cook	Hannah Bush	Steve Lamont	N/A
Apr 27	N/A	Don & Sharon Davis	Anne Cooper	Ed Illman	Deb Kindler



Eugene Cole, February 20

LUTHER HOSTEL

Experience Luther Hostel June 2-6, 2014



This summer, Luther Hostel returns to Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and presents "The Dove And The Tree" - A Spirited Exploration of the Church: Come and join us as we explore how the common image of the Spirit as a dove sits with, or perhaps in, Luther's metaphor of the church as a tree in his Genesis commentary. In this series of lectures you will be sure to have your own wings stretched in a community of song, joy and delightful inquiry. Luther Hostel will leave you feeling inspired and energized as you take the time to explore your faith, meet new friends, rekindle old relationships, and stretch your understanding of what it means to be people of faith in today's global community.

Worship

At Luther Hostel we begin and conclude each day with prayer and song. Luther Hostel's inspiring worship helps to unlock each day's presentations with praise and thanksgiving.

Learn

Our theological perspectives and ways of being church can be challenged and transformed through conversation with those whose culture and experience are different than our own. Come, listen, ask questions, experience and discuss, as we explore what it means to be in conversation with others in our global community of faith.

For more information or to register, see the Luther Hostel link on the Eastern Synod or Waterloo Lutheran Seminary homepage www.easternsynod.org or www.seminary.wlu.ca