

ZIONEWS

APRIL 2015

A publication for the family of Zion Lutheran Church

202 Erie St., Stratford, Ontario N5A 2M8 www.zionstratford.com

Phone: 271-8527

Fax: 271-8536

e-mail: zionlc@golden.net

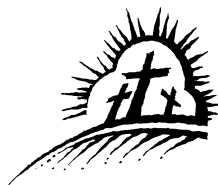


PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL

"And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take." – Mark 15:24.

WHAT'S SO "GOOD" ABOUT GOOD FRIDAY?

It's a question that I remember asking with my friends one Good Friday during my childhood. Normally, a day off from school (whether it was a scheduled holiday or an unscheduled snow day) was an occasion of great rejoicing in my neighbourhood; it meant that instead of sitting in our classroom at Stony Brook School, listening to our teachers and taking tests, we were free to play games and share all of the things we enjoyed instead of what we were required to do in school. But even though Good Friday was a school holiday, it didn't feel like a day to celebrate; there was something very sad, very somber about this day in which we remember the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Even though we were too young to fully understand the theological meaning of the death of Jesus on the Cross, we knew that it was a very sad occasion, and were very puzzled as to why we called this day "Good" Friday. Shouldn't it really be called "Bad Friday"?



The origin of the name "Good Friday" to identify the day of Christ's Crucifixion is unclear. Some say it comes from one of two German phrases: *Gottes Freitag* ("God's Friday") or *Gute Freitag* ("Good Friday"). However, Germans refer to Good Friday as *Karfreitag* – Sorrowful or Suffering Friday – so connecting the name to a German tradition is not the answer.

Perhaps the best explanation for the origin of the name for this day is from the Roman Catholic Church's *Baltimore Catechism*, which states that Good Friday is called good because "*Christ, by his death, showed His great love for man, and purchased for him every blessing.*" "Good," in this sense, means "holy," and the day is known as Holy and Great Friday among Eastern Christians, both Catholic and Orthodox. The "goodness" of the day comes not in the death of Jesus, but what his death has meant for those who follow him in the way of the Cross.

Even though Good Friday is a statutory holiday, it is not a day in which we feel like celebrating as we do on other holidays. Even though schools are closed along with many stores and businesses, it is a day that continues to have a somber feeling, one that can be quite unsettling. Unlike holidays such as Christmas and Easter, there are no family traditions that surround this day; we don't gather for meals, share in times of fellowship, or tell stories of times we shared together on this day in the past. It is a day that we may enjoy a break from school or work, but it is not a day that we enjoy, because it reminds us of the saddest moment in the Bible: the day Christ died, when "*Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.*" (Mark 15:37).

In his book *The Crucified God*, Jurgen Moltmann identifies one of the reasons why Good Friday makes us so uncomfortable, both in its name and in what it commemorates:

- "The cross is not and cannot be loved. Yet only the crucified Christ can bring the freedom which changes the world because it is no longer afraid of death. In his time the crucified Christ was regarded as a scandal and as foolishness. Today, too, it is considered old-fashioned to put him in the centre of Christian faith and of theology. Yet only when men are reminded of him, however untimely this may be, can they be set free from the power of the facts of the present time, and from the laws and compulsions of history, and be offered a future which will never grow dark again."

The Cross is the symbol of the Christian faith because the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is at the heart of the church's proclamation. Paul states in First Corinthians that "*we proclaim Christ crucified ... [which] to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, [is] Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*" (1:23-24). When we gather to share the Lord's Supper, Paul reminds us that "*as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*" (11:26). In his death on the Cross, Christ has "*purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and his innocent suffering and death.*" (*Small Catechism*). We cannot celebrate Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday without remembering his death on Good Friday, and the hope that is rooted in both the Cross and the empty tomb, the good news that "*we have been buried*

with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” (Romans 6:4-5).

“What’s so good about Good Friday?” It will remain a holiday unlike any other, because it is a day unlike any other day. On this day, we remember that “for our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.” (Nicene Creed). But therein lies the good news of Good Friday: that Christ suffered and died in order to free us from the power of death to separate us from God’s love and deny us the eternal life that God desires all of us to enjoy. In his death is our life; in the Cross is our salvation. It may be a somber day, but Good Friday is a day of good news for us, because in the cross of Christ “peace is there that knows no measure, joys that through all time abide.” (ELW Hymn 324).

Yours in our crucified and risen Lord,
Pastor Jeff Laustsen

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Jesus Eats a Final Meal with his Disciples: On Thursday, April 2, 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 3, 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 5, 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.

Lutherans: Past, Present and Future.

Have you ever been curious about the origins of the Lutheran Church? Would you like to learn more about the mission and ministry of Lutherans here in Canada and around the world? Would you like to become a member of Zion Lutheran Church or become more involved in our life together? Then join us on three Mondays this Spring as we explore our heritage, our present work, and our vision for the future. These three sessions will meet on **Monday, April 20; Monday, April 27; and Monday, May 4 at 7:30 p.m. (following our 7:00 p.m. Chapel worship service, which will resume on April 20).** Come and learn more about our Lutheran heritage and mission as we prepare to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 and consider what it means for us to be Lutherans in this and future generations.



ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS

Our next gathering of Zion Table For Seniors, our ministry which promotes fun, food, and fellowship, takes place on Tuesday, April 28 at 12 noon. Please let Doris Bartlett (519-271-9622) or Beryl Horst (519-276-3501) know by Tuesday, April 21 if you can attend. Lunch cost is only \$12. Our after dinner entertainers are singers “The Fedoras.”

FRIENDSHIP MEAL



Our Fellowship Meal ministry continues to serve people in our community. Our April gathering is Friday, April 26 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).



ZION WOMEN OF FAITH NEWS

April 6 – Board meeting at 7 PM
April 22 – Monthly meeting at 7:30 PM. All ladies are welcome to this joint meeting

Living And Learning Kits are still on going. Copies are at the back of the church, as well as a box to put them in. Thank you to all who have given so far.

CAN YOU HELP???



The volunteers of the Stratford Mission Depot need your help! We are out-growing our current space and are in need of dry storage for donated wheelchairs and walkers which are sent to third world countries via ongoing medical and humanitarian missions. If you have an unused garage or storage space that is easily accessible that you wish to donate to our cause please contact me (Colleen Pola, 519-271-8471, & leave a message). Please pass this information on to any friends or associates who might be able to help. Thank you for your consideration!



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.

APRIL 2015 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 5	Rob Leifso & Linda Springer	Tom & Joanne Cosstick	Ian Watson	Ed Illman	N/A
Apr 12	N/A	Wayne & Barb Higgins	Marilyn Wells	Wayne Yundt	Deb Kindler
Apr 19	Fritz Steigmeier & David Bennewitz	Rudy & Bea Deighton	Stephen Fischer	Wayne Yundt	Paul Hansen
Apr 26	N/A	Mervyn & Joyce Dietz	Marilyn Sylvester	Jerry Terhaerd	Paul Hansen