

ZIONNEWS

MARCH 2015

A publication for the family of Zion Lutheran Church
202 Erie St., Stratford, Ontario N5A 2M8
Phone: 271-8527 Fax: 271-8536



www.zionstratford.com
e-mail: zionlc@golden.net

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. – Psalm 51:10

Question: How many Lutherans does it take to change a light bulb?

Answer: WHAT DO YOU MEAN "CHANGE"!?



In fairness to us change-adverse Lutherans, you could use this joke to refer to a wide variety of people and groups who are threatened by change. Change implies risk; it means letting go of what is safe and familiar in order to take hold of something which may be unknown and unproven. I have to confess that as a creature of habit, I often have a difficult time embracing change: I eat the exact same breakfast every morning, usually park in the same location at every store where I shop, and have a desktop that borders on being obsessive-compulsive. As a pastor, who is often faced with unexpected changes of plans and circumstances, it is often comforting to have routines that are safe and familiar, and any changes in even the simplest of tasks can create tremendous stress and anxiety.

Yet there are some changes that are important, and even essential. If we are faced with a health crisis, we have to make lifestyle changes in the way we eat, the amount of sleep we get every night, and the manner in which we deal with stress. If we lose our job (as many people are presently facing), we have to make unexpected changes in our household budget as we face the uncertainty that unemployment foists upon us. If we are under the throws of addiction, we know that change is necessary if we are going to survive and live the abundant lives that God desires for each of us.

The season of Lent that we have entered into is a call to change, an invitation to "return to the LORD your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love." (Joel 2:13). Lent calls us to look at the path our lives have taken, and to make the necessary changes in direction from those which have led us away from God's loving presence in order that we might return to the source of blessing. As all of nature will soon experience the newness of life that comes with the season of spring, Lent is also a season of new life, a change from ways that lead to sickness unto death

to new directions and fresh perspectives on all that is possible for those who love and follow our Lord. Lent is a time for us to look to the Lord who will *"restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit."* (Psalm 51:12); to return to the Lord so that we might receive God's blessing of *"a new heart [that] I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you"* (Ezekiel 36:26); and to open our hearts and our lives to our Saviour who will make us *"a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

On Wednesdays in this holy season of Lent, we gather for worship around the theme of **Making Change**. The change that is offered to us is far more than what we eat or what we wear or even how well we care for ourselves; it is the change that only our Lord can provide, the change that can turn despair into hope, sorrow into joy, and even death into life. We will explore what it means when we are confronted with a **Change of Season, Change of Habit, Change of Circumstances, Change of Heart, and Change of Plans**. Although contemplating such profound changes may provoke anxiety, we come together knowing that the one constant in the midst of any change is God's loving, steadfast presence which never fails, never fades, and never ends.

- "All my hope on God is founded, who will all my trust renew, who through change and chance will guide me, only good and only true. God unknown, God alone, call my heart to be thine own." – ELW Hymn 757

At the end of this Lenten season, I'll probably continue to eat the same breakfast every morning and keep my desktop as fanatically organized as usual; but the kind of change that our Lord invites us to embrace is of far greater significance than our daily routines and habits. It is a change that can open new doors, invite us to consider new possibilities and directions, and create renewed hope and newness of life. It is the change that is ours as we journey in this Lenten season toward Christ's death and resurrection, the ultimate change that is the hope that is ours in this and all seasons and children of our God of constant change and unchanging love.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jeff Laustsen



WEDNESDAY EVENING WORSHIP

On Wednesday evenings of Lent the parish will gather to sing and pray Holden Evening Prayer. Worship begins at 7:30 PM. Please join us in this Lenten discipline.



SERVICES FOR HOLY WEEK

HOLY WEEK
WORSHIP
SCHEDULE

Sunday of The Passion/Palm Sunday: Palm Sunday, March 29: 10 AM Holy Communion; Distribution of Palms; Reading of the Passion - Mark.

Maundy Thursday: Maundy Thursday, April 2: 6 PM Potluck Dinner; 7:30 PM Worship Service with Holy Communion; Stripping of the Altar.

Good Friday: Good Friday, April 3: 10 AM Liturgy of Good Friday; Reading of the Passion according to John; Prayers of Good Friday.

Easter Sunday, Resurrection of our Lord: Easter Sunday, April 5: 10 AM Holy Communion. Sunday School is on holiday on Easter morning, so teachers and children can worship with their family.



CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS 2015

For this year, the following responsibilities have been assigned to Church Council members by election and appointment. They are: Chairperson: Bill Hoffard; Vice-Chairperson: Gerald Cook; Secretary: Audrey Miller; Treasurer: Marg Lamont; Finance: Audrey Miller, Andrew Ehgoetz, Stephanie Sousa; Property: Paul Hansen, Gerald Cook; Worship & Music: Elizabeth Forrest, Deb Kindler, Nancy White; Congregational Life: Kurt Gough, Linda Weitzel, Brian Gropp.

Feel free to contact them with concerns or questions, if they arise. In the meantime, please pray for these brothers and sisters in Christ. May the Holy Spirit guide them as they undertake their ministry of leadership, insight, and oversight.



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: MARCH 6

This year's World Day of Prayer Service takes place on Friday, March 6, at 2 PM, at St. John's United Church, 175 Waterloo Street. This year's program's theme is "Focus On The Bahamas." This is a community service so please know all are welcome. Women, and, of course, men too.

The World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian laywomen's initiative. It is run under the motto "Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action," and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday of March. The movement aims to bring

together women and men, of various races, cultures and traditions, in a yearly common Day of Prayer, as well as in closer fellowship, understanding and action throughout the year.



ZION WOMEN OF FAITH

March 2: Board meeting at 7 PM

March 25: WOF meeting, Lenten Service followed by business

Friday, March 6 is World Day of Prayer at St. John's Church.

Make a Joyful Noise. A weekend retreat May 29-31. An Event for all Women will be held at Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre. Contact Linda Springer for more information if you are interested in going. Registration date is March 15.

We are still looking for people to volunteer for helping with flowers.

Living & Learning kits project is still going on. Copies of what you need for a kit is on the table at the back of the church. The box to place them in is under the table.

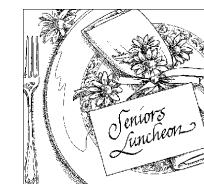
Linda Springer (WOF President)



FRIENDSHIP MEAL

Our Friendship Meal continues to serve people in need in our community. We are now serving around 100 people a month which unfortunately indicates that things are difficult for some people. Our next Friendship Meal is Friday, March 27 at 5 PM. Volunteers are needed to prepare, cook, serve, and clean-up. That could mean you and you are welcome to help out. Indeed, we need you! Questions?

Please call Sister Jean Widmeyer (519-273-6810).



ZION TABLE FOR SENIORS

Our next gathering of Zion Table For Seniors, our ministry which promotes fun, food, and friendship, takes place on Tuesday, March 24 at 12 noon. Please let Doris Bartlett (519-271-9622) or Beryl Horst (519-276-3501) know by noon, Monday, March 16 if you can attend. Lunch cost is only \$12. Our after dinner entertainment will be the Alzheimer Society.



EASTER FLOWERS

As is our custom, at Zion, donations will be accepted so the Women of Faith group can purchase flowers and decorate the church for our Easter celebrations. Please write "Easter Flowers" and your name on a separate envelope and place it on the offering plate or bring it to the church office any weekday morning. Donations will be accepted up to Palm Sunday, March 29. Thank you kindly!



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

We are truly blessed! THANK YOU to everyone for their part in making our bake sale very successful, from our students who did an awesome job by making the signs and assisting with the sale itself, to those who showed off their baking talents in providing us with many yummy treats, to the generous members of the congregation and guests who were very big-hearted in their purchases. With everyone's efforts we raised \$350.00 which is up from last year's amount of \$335.26 and the previous year of \$249.05 for the Sunshine Foundation.

In March, the children will be proudly participating in one Sunday morning service, look for postings for the exact date.

Sunday School Co-Ordinators
Mitzi Podann & Tina Small

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE BUS TRIP TO RIPLEY AQUARIUM



The Congregational Life Committee is organizing a bus trip to the Ripley Aquarium in Toronto, on Saturday, April 19. The cost is \$109.00/per person and Senior (65 w/ID) or Youth (13 or under) is \$99.00. The price includes deluxe motorcoach transportation, buffet lunch at Tuckers Marketplace in Toronto, admission to the Aquarium (2-3 hours depending on group) and all taxes and tips. We will depart at 10 AM, returning around supper time. Join us at this new Toronto tourist attraction for fun and fellowship.

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!

MARCH 2015 VOLUNTEERS

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

| Date | Communion Assistants | Greeters | Readers | Usher Captains | Counting Captains |
|--------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Mar 1 | Janet Ahrens & Judith Hammond | Marilyn Sylvester | Joanne Wallace | Fritz Steigmeier | Gerald Cook |
| Mar 8 | N/A | Scott & Janice Beirness | Anne Cooper | Fritz Steigmeier | Gerald Cook |
| Mar 15 | Barb Higgins & Ed Illman | Klaus & Linda Springer | Linda Weitzel | Steve Lamont | Brian Gropp |
| Mar 22 | N/A | Don & Connie Campbell | Mary-Lou Drown | Steve Lamont | Brain Gropp |
| Mar 29 | Loralee McNaughton & Linda Weitzel | Al & Lorraine Skowby | Loralee McNaughton | Ed Illman | Deb Kindler |