

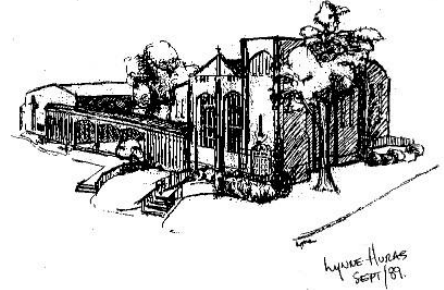
ZIONEWS

APRIL / MAY 2026

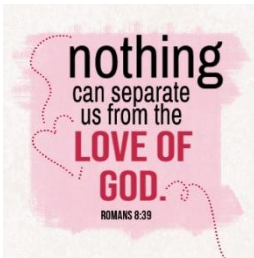
A publication for the family of Zion Lutheran Church
202 Erie St., Stratford, ON N5A 2M8

Website: www.zionstratford.com

Email: zionlc@golden.net



PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL



“Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.” – Mark 15:37.

A major milestone for many teenagers is getting their first driver's license. For me, it happened in Grade 11 in my hometown of North Plainfield, New Jersey, where driver's education was a required course for all students. Our year began in the classroom as we learned the rules and regulations that governed driving in our state that prepared us for the written driver's examination. Once we passed this test, we were eligible to receive our learner's permit that allowed us to take the second part of the course, driving a car with a licensed teacher in the passenger's seat. We progressed from driving on side streets to busier streets in our community and finally to some of the busier highways in central New Jersey. For our final exam, we went to an unopened portion of Interstate 78 to practise driving on major highways. Everything about the road was completed, but at one point it reached a dead end because of having to go across a wildlife preserve that caused a great deal of controversy and compromises. Coming upon this dead end meant that we had reached the end of the road, with no way forward and no hope of continuing. This unfinished roadway was a perfect place to practise our driving skills, but it was always strange when a six-lane highway suddenly ended with no way to go forward.

The story of the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ in some ways feels like a “dead end,” suddenly ending a journey that had begun with such hope and expectation. The story of Jesus and his ministry begins at his baptism where the heavenly voice proclaims that “*you are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased*” (Matthew 3:17). After resisting the

temptations of Satan in the wilderness, Jesus calls people to become his disciples, inviting them to *“follow me, and I will make you fish for people”* (Mark 1:17). Our Lord draws large crowds and many followers, and when he asks his disciples *“who do you say that I am?”* Peter speaks on behalf of the Twelve in confessing that *“you are the Messiah”* (Mark 8:29). All signs are pointing to Jesus as the fulfillment of God’s messianic promises of one who will defeat the oppressive Roman Empire and restore Israel to the position of power and respect it had enjoyed under Kings David and Solomon.

These messianic hopes continue as Jesus enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the cheers of the crowd that spread their cloaks on the ground and *“leafy branches that they had cut in the fields ... shouting, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!’”*(Mark 11:8-10). But the joy of Palm Sunday would turn to darkness and despair when Jesus is betrayed by Judas Iscariot, condemned to death by Pontius Pilate, and nailed to a cross at Golgotha. At noon on that dreadful Friday, *“darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon”* (15:33) as Jesus cries out in agony *“my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* (Psalm 22:1). As the crowds taunt him to come down from the cross, *“Jesus gave out a loud cry and breathed his last”* (Mark 15:37). By the end of that first Good Friday, it appears that Jesus and his followers have reached a dead end, the end of the road. Joseph of Arimathea claims Jesus’ body, wraps it in burial cloths, and lays it in a tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus witness this final step in what they must have assumed was the end for Jesus and for those who followed him, the final chapter in a story that began with hope but ended in tragedy. They return to the tomb on Sunday morning, bringing the spices necessary for the final anointing of Jesus’ body, one last act of respect for the man they had loved but whose journey ended so suddenly and violently.

But when they arrive at the tomb, they discover that the stone has been rolled away and the body of Jesus was not present. Instead, a *“young man in a white robe”* responds to their fear and anxiety by assuring them that while they were *“looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified ... he has been raised, he is not here”* (Mark 16:6). Jesus’ death was not the end of the road for him or for those who believe in him; while it was necessary for Christ to suffer and die on the Cross, his journey and his mission are fulfilled when he is raised from the dead on Easter morning so that all who believe in him will know that even though we will die, death is not the end for us, for we live in the sure and certain hope that *“if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.”* (Romans 6:5).

- “In the end, his will, not ours, is done. Love is the victor. Death is not the end. The end is life. His life and our lives through him, in him. Existence has greater depths of beauty, mystery, and benediction than the wildest visionary has ever dared to dream. Christ the Lord is risen.” – Frederick Buechner.

When I returned to New Jersey for my high school reunion, I discovered that Interstate 78 is no longer a dead-end road but has been completed and now allows thousands of vehicles per day to drive across central New Jersey. The dead ends we may encounter in life need not deter us or discourage us in our journeys, and the good news of Easter is our assurance that what seemed like the end of the road on Good Friday was really the beginning for all who believe in Jesus Christ, whose death and resurrection assures us that nothing can “*separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” (Romans 8:39).

Yours in Easter hope,
Pastor Jeff Laustsen

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MARCH 18, 2026 CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

HIGHLIGHTS



The March 18, 2026 Congregational Council Meeting was held in-person in the Parlour.

Pastor Jeff welcomed new members, Ron Hesas, Shirley Whittaker, Isaac Whittaker and those members who continue to serve, Laurie Snow, Irene West, Gerald Cook, Audrey Miller, Carmen Beck, Janet Chandler and Irene Ehgoetz.

As the first Congregational Council meeting following the Annual Meeting is the organizing meeting with the election of officers and designation of Committee Assignments, Pastor Jeff was Chairperson of the meeting.

Pastor Jeff and Congregational Council reviewed the Congregational Council Member Charter which states the Duties of the Congregational Council and its Officers.

The following responsibilities have been assigned to Congregational Council Members by election and appointment:

- Laurie Snow** - Chairperson (Congregational Life Committee)
- Irene West** – Vice Chairperson (Worship and Music Committee)
- Gerald Cook** - Treasurer (Finance Committee and Rental Committee)
- Audrey Miller** – Secretary (Finance Committee)
- Janet Chandler** (Christian Education Committee)
- Carmen Beck** (Congregational Life Committee)
- Irene Ehgoetz** (Congregational Life Committee)

Ron Hesas (Property Committee and Visioning Committee)
Shirley Whittaker (Christian Education Committee)
Isaac Whittaker (Finance Committee)

Installation of Council members was Sunday, March 22, 2026.

Kyla Montgomery has agreed to take on the position of Sunday School superintendent as Paula McNaughton will be stepping down from this position at the end of this Sunday school year.

The next Seniors' Luncheon will be Friday April 10th at 12:00 noon.

Tickets are now available for the May 31st Concert in the Sanctuary.

On a trial basis, the Newsletter will now be published five times a year instead of monthly; January and February together, March, April and May together, June, July and August together, September and October together, November and December together.

Donations/offerings, can continue to be completed via our Church website, including additional options for QR Code and E-Transfer, in addition to the PAR program, mailing cheques or dropping off donations either at the Church office weekday mornings or in the locked mailbox at your convenience.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



There is **NO** Sunday School on **Easter Sunday April 5, 2026.**

The Sunday School children will be singing on **April 26** and **May 10** under the guidance of Susan Laustsen.

Last Sunday for Sunday School is May 10, 2026.

SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2026

Have you registered your child(ren) or Grandchild(ren) for Sunday School? By Registering them is not a commitment for them having to be here every Sunday. By Registering them, helps us arrange our classes and arrange for the number of teachers we need.

Children/Grandchildren eligible for Sunday School include any child turning four (4) years of age in 2026 right through to children in Grade 6.

If a child(ren) has left the Sunday School program for any reason and would like to return, they are more than welcome!

It is quite easy to register them. All we require is the child(ren)'s name(s), current grade(s) as of September 2026. You may email the information to: zionluth.sscored@outlook.com

All children/grandchildren of members need to be registered to attend Sunday School. Any visiting families with children 4 years of age in 2026 are welcome without registering.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your assistance and co-operation.

Paula McNaughton,
Sunday School Coordinator

“PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY”



**Prayer
Shawl
MINISTRY**

The lovely ladies of your Prayer Shawl Ministry have passed on this message:

We are still here.
We are still knitting and crocheting.

If there is anything you want from them, please reach out!

Prayer Shawl Minister Member
Nancy Schaff

“SENIORS’ LUNCHEON REPORT”

The “**March**” **Seniors’ Luncheon** was attended by 41 people who, despite Mother Nature giving us another winter stormy day, enjoyed another delicious meal consisting of chicken, cheesy potatoes, hot veggies, kale salad, rolls and yummy carrot cake for dessert.



Jan Bennewitz arranged for a Festival Theatre vocalist, Scott Beaudin, to entertain us with some good old-fashioned music; popular songs from the past that were easy to tap your feet and sing or hum along. Scott managed to get Pastor Jeff up to the mic and sing an Elvis tune "I Can't Help Falling In Love With You".

Once again, a big **"THANK YOU"** to our volunteers: Irene Ehgoetz who attended to the door; Dianne Mann and her kitchen helpers and servers: Sheila Wittig, Laurie Snow, Sonya Fischer, Marilyn Neumeister, Marie Ehgoetz and Carmen Beck, Wendy Hansen. And "Thank You" to Jan Bennewitz for enjoyable entertainment. Congratulations to all on another successful luncheon!

Dianne Mann decorated with a "St. Patrick's Day" theme that was beautifully done. Handmade with love she had a "four leaf clover" on each plate. "Thank you Dianne" for putting so much thought and work into your beautiful decorations.



The Fellowship Hall was definitely Irish on March 13th



Scott Beaudin singing to a happy audience





Pastor Jeff singing “I Can’t Help Falling In Love With You” with Scott singing backup



Dianne’s centerpieces were so creative (and Irish)

SAVE THE DATE



Join us for Zion's Senior Luncheons. \$20.00 - 12 to 2 pm.

Here is a sneak preview of upcoming entertainment:

April 10, 2026. Think Spring! Hear all about Monarch butterflies.

May 8, 2026. Find out what is happening at the Stratford Public library.

June 12, 2026. A reporter from the Stratford Times will tell us her story.

The next Seniors' Luncheon will be held on **Friday, April 10th**. We hope to see you for another delicious meal and educate you on the beautiful "Monarch Butterfly".

A reminder to enlighten you on how the process for the Seniors' Luncheon works.

Please remember that if you say that you will attend the luncheon, your name is added to the list of participants. On the Tuesday before the luncheon being held on the Friday, the number of participants is called in to the caterer to order that number of meals. It is at this time we are committed to pay for the number of meals we have ordered.

INVITATION

Members and Friends of Zion Lutheran Church Invite you to Zion's next

SENIORS' LUNCHEONS

**On FRIDAY,
APRIL 10TH, 2026 and
MAY 8TH, 2026**

Starting at 12:00 Noon

**202 Erie Street – enter off Erie Street
519-271-8527**

Wheelchair accessible

On the Queensland bus route

\$20.00

Worship on Sundays is at 10:00 A.M.

Everyone Welcome!!!

MIKE & SUE WEBER
& FRIENDS
Perform Classic Country Music



SUNDAY MAY 31ST

(2:00 – 4:30 pm)

AT ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

202 Erie Street, Stratford

A FUND RAISER FOR ONGOING MAINTENANCE FEES OF CHAIR LIFTS

Tickets: \$35.00

CALL: 519-271-8527

Refreshments Available

**Please spread the word! Come out and enjoy some good country music
while supporting your Congregational Life Committee!**

STRATFORD CONNECTION CENTRE



Due to overwhelming generosity, the Connection Centre is currently accepting ONLY the following items:

- * New underwear, size medium
- * Water resistant winter boots
- * Handwarmers
- * Razors and deodorant
- * Laundry soap
- * Grab & go snacks or baked goods

If you are interested in donating to the Connection Centre or Warming Centre, please note the following;

- Donations are ONLY accepted Monday to Friday, between 12:00-4:30, unless pre-arranged or you may **drop off donations at Zion in the bins at the back of the Sanctuary or inside the office entrance door.**
- At this time they cannot accept anything that is not listed, they will update as their needs change!
- Supporting Goodwill and Value Village DOES support their participants, they collaborate with each other regularly to meet people's needs!
- Any donations must be functional and clean. If you wouldn't wear it then our folks shouldn't either
- We **CANNOT** accept expired food, or food items past their 'best before date'

Thank you for continuing to support the Connection Centre so they can support our vulnerable neighbours! ❤️

Please drop off donations in the bins located at the back of the Sanctuary or inside the office entrance door.

The sandwich makers for the Connection Centre would greatly appreciate donations of food gift cards from Walmart or Food Basics. Any support you are able to provide is most welcome.

Thank You!

Spring

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid.
The remaining letters spell a message about Spring.

T L E M W O N S S S A R G L A
G C Y C L A M E N S A L I L P
G N G R O W T H R L L L L R S
O Y I I D L S A R A I E S N N
L A L N K A I E B E R R O H E
F M L O A N F E S G M I P W W
E N A E E E S F I U L R R A L
I O B Q R A L E O E C S A B E
R S T U B E S C D D F O S W A
I A F I G R N N G L I N R H V
S E O N N R A E O N I L C C E
E S S O I D E W W B I R S B S
S I N X R G E E O A A R M E G
A Y F L P R O R N M L W P E O
E T E W S S P I L U T R S S R
R E T S A E P L A N T I N G F

ALLERGIES
APRIL
BASEBALL
BEES
CROCUSES
CYCLAMENS
DAFFODILS
DANDELIONS
EASTER
EQUINOX
FLOWERS

FROGS
GOLF
GRASS
GREEN
GROWTH
IRISES
LILIES
MARCH
MAY
NEW LEAVES
PLANTING

RAIN
RENEWAL
ROBINS
SEASON
SNOWMELT
SOFTBALL
SPRING BREAK
SPRING CLEANING
TULIPS
WARMER
WET

Mothers Day Word Scramble

Mother's Day is a celebration to honour mothers and mother figures. Cards and presents are usually given to honour the day. Children also often organise a special day out or a treat such as breakfast in bed!

asudyn

ady

teulrgfa

htamrw

dutreaHg

alyd

cnehdrlI

ohlceoaTc

ssroe

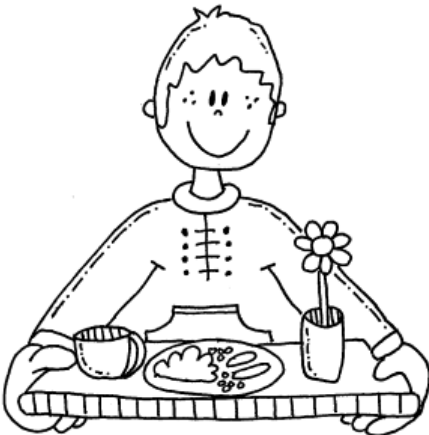
latebeecr

This Mothers Day themed Word Scramble features **10** Mothers Day themed words which have been scrambled. See if you can unscramble them to see what they are.

Answer sheet

The answers to this Mothers Day Word Scramble are shown below:

asudyn	sunday
ady	day
teulrgfa	grateful
htamrw	warmth
dutreaHg	daughter
alyd	lady
cnehdrlI	children
ohlceoaTc	chocolate
ssroe	roses
latebeecr	celebrate



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



Date	Greeters	Readers	Usher Captains	Altar Guild	Counting Captains
April 5 Easter Sunday	Gerry & Janet Ahrens	Tom Waschkowski	Tom Cosstick	Ellen Wolfe	NO COUNTERS
April 12	Audrey Miller & Mervyn Dietz	Fritz Steigmeier	Darrell Renecker	Carmen Beck	NO COUNTERS
April 19	Tom & Joanne Cosstick	Aline Kouhi-Klemencic	Brian Coe	Sister Jean	Irene West
April 26	Wayne & Linda Faulhafer	Stephen Fischer	Jerry Terhaerd	Shirley Whittaker	Irene West



Date	Greeters	Readers	Usher Captains	Altar Guild	Counting Captains
May 3	Ron & Nancy Hesas	Murray Scholl	Tom Cosstick	Ellen Wolfe	Carmen Beck
May 10 Mothers' Day	Darrell & Judy Renecker	Isabel Cook	Darrell Renecker	Carmen Beck	Carmen Beck
May 17	Paul & Janet Jeffery	Linda Faulhafer	Brian Coe	Sister Jean	Isaac Whittaker
May 24	Bob & Marilyn Wells	Glenn Ritinger	Jerry Terhaerd	Shirley Whittaker	Isaac Whittaker
May 31	Brad & Sherri Beatty	Mary-Lou Drown	Tom Cosstick	Ellen Wolfe	Janet Chandler

“THANK YOU” to our Volunteers for giving of your time!

Worship would not be the same without you!!



MOTHER'S DAY IS SUNDAY, MAY 10TH



**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO ALL
MOTHERS, STEP-MOTHERS &
GRANDMOTHERS**

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH APRIL 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5 * EASTER * 10 Worship **NO SUNDAY SCHOOL**	6 EASTER MONDAY OFFICE CLOSED 1-4 Playmakers in Shuffleboard Rm 2 Prayer Shawl Ministry 7-8:30 SSSYO in FH 7 Choir in Chapel	7 9:30 Chair Yoga-FH	8 9 Quilters in ParLOUR 2 McCarthy Worship 5 Bethel Community Meal	9 12 Noon Bible Study in ParLOUR 2:30 Hillside Worship 4:30 Confirmation in ParLOUR	10 9:00 WOF making Sandwiches in Kitchen 12-2 Seniors' Luncheon in FH	11
12 * EASTER 2 * 10 Worship 10 Sunday School	13 2 Prayer Shawl Ministry 6-8 Girl Guides in GG Rm 7-8:30 SSSYO in FH (LAST) 7 Choir in Chapel	14 7 Rotary in FH 9:30 Chair Yoga in FH 2 Greenwood Crt Worship 4:30 Christian Ed Meeting in ParLOUR	15 9 Quilters in ParLOUR 7 Congregational Council Mtg in ParLOUR	16 12 Noon Bible Study in ParLOUR 2:15 Knollcrest Worship 4:30 Confirmation in ParLOUR 6:30-8 Girl Guides in FH 7 Shelterlink in ParLOUR	17	18 11 Doris Lewis Funeral
19 * EASTER 3 * 10 Worship 10 Sunday School COFFEE HOUR	20 10-Noon Alzheimers in ParLOUR 2 Prayer Shawl Ministry 6-8 Girl Guides in GG Rm 7 Choir in Chapel	21 9:30 Chair Yoga-FH	22 9 Quilters in ParLOUR	23 12 Noon Bible Study in ParLOUR 4:30 Confirmation in ParLOUR 6:30-8 Girl Guides in FH	24 9:00 WOF making Sandwiches in Kitchen	25
26 * EASTER 4 * 10 Worship 10 Sunday School	27 10-Noon Alzheimers in ParLOUR 1-3 Shelterlink in Boardroom 2 Prayer Shawl Ministry 6-8 Girl Guides in GG Rm 7 Choir in Chapel	28 7 Rotary in FH 9:30 Chair Yoga-FH 10:30 Worship & Music Mtg in ParLOUR	29	30 12 Noon Bible Study in ParLOUR 4:30 Confirmation in ParLOUR 6:30-8 Girl Guides in GG Room		

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH MAY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 * EASTER 5* 10 Worship 10 Sunday School PASTOR JEFF AWAY	4 10-Noon Alzheimers in Parlour 2 Prayer Shawl Ministry 7 Choir in Chapel PASTOR JEFF AWAY	5 9:30 Chair Yoga-FH PASTOR JEFF AWAY	6 8-5 Festival Hydro in FH 9 Quilters in Parlour PASTOR JEFF AWAY	7 6:30-8 Girl Guides in GG Room PASTOR JEFF AWAY	8 9:00 WOF making Sandwiches in Kitchen 12-2 Seniors' Luncheon in FH PASTOR JEFF AWAY	9 PASTOR JEFF AWAY
10 * EASTER 6* 10 Worship 10 Sunday School *HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY*	11 10-Noon Alzheimers in Parlour 2 Prayer Shawl Ministry 6-8 Girl Guides in GG Rm (LAST) 7 Choir in Chapel	12 7 Rotary in FH 9:30 Chair Yoga in FH 2 Greenwood Crf Worship 7 Finance Committee Meeting in Parlour	13 9 Quilters in Parlour 2 McCarthy Worship 5 Bethel Community Meal	14 12 Noon Bible Study in Parlour 2:30 Hillside Worship 4:30 Confirmation in Parlour 6:30-8 Girl Guides in FH (LAST)	15 PASTOR JEFF AWAY ZIONNEWS DUE	16 McNaughtons in Chapel for Dedication Service Lunch in Parlour to follow Service
17 * EASTER 7* 10 Worship	18 ** VICTORIA DAY ** OFFICE CLOSED 2 Prayer Shawl Ministry	19 9:30 Chair Yoga-FH	20 9 Quilters in Parlour 5:30-8 Thorne Property in FH 7 Congregational Council Mtg in Parlour	21 12 Noon Bible Study in Parlour 2:15 Knollcrest Worship 4:30 Confirmation in Parlour	22 9:00 WOF making Sandwiches in Kitchen	23
24 * PENTECOST* 10 Worship * CONFIRMATION SUNDAY *	25 10-Noon Alzheimers in Parlour 2 Prayer Shawl Ministry 7 Choir in Chapel	26 7 Rotary in FH 9:30 Chair Yoga-FH	27 9 Quilters in Parlour	28 12 Noon Bible Study in Parlour	29 PASTOR JEFF AWAY	30 MMMM CONCERT IN SANCTUARY (Marco Burak) SISTER JEAN AWAY
31 * THE HOLY TRINITY* 10 Worship 2-4:30 * MIKE & SUE WEBER & Friends CONCERT * SISTER JEAN AWAY						