



The Gathering

"My dear friends, we always have a good reason to thank God for you, because your faith in God and your love for each other keeps growing all the time." *Thessalonians 2: 1-3.*
February 2025



Oh, to be young again!

Many of our church youth had a whale of a time gathering on Sunday, January 19 for a fun night of games, learning and fellowship. Thanks to Cloe MacLean for this peek at the activities.

"We admire the strength of youth and respect the gray hair of age." Proverbs 20:29

Here I Am!

The other day, I was sitting in my favourite Tim Horton's treating myself to the usual-medium coffee, with double cream (no sugar) and a Boston Cream Donut. As I bit into its sugar-loaded filling, out of the blue came a recollection of when I was a student, reading Marcel Proust's *'Remembrance of Things Past'* and in particular, the moment in the novel when the main character bites into a madeleine after dipping it in his tea and the taste of it unexpectedly unlocks a rush of memories from his childhood. A madeleine is a very small sponge cake, shaped like a shell and guess what? I had my "madeleine moment"! My donut set me off wandering on a trip down memory lane. What resurfaced was me being regularly dispatched to Sunday school at Grange Church in my home town, clad in my kilt, with my younger brother in tow and three pennies in my pocket for the collection (two of which I squandered on penny caramels at the tuck shop en route to Kirk Street!)

The interior of that church was very much like Zion-sun streamed through colourful stained-glass windows onto well-worn wooden pews and the burning bush, the symbol of the Presbyterian Church embroidered on the fall of the pulpit, blazed brightly. Whenever I look at that bush now, I recall the story in Exodus Chapter 3 of God calling Moses who promptly answers "Here I am!" and receives an assignment all carefully planned for him. Well, in my life, I haven't been very good at saying "Here I am" to the Creator or listening for any plan he has for me. In fact, I have spent a lot of time ignoring Him. However, in my own 'remembrance of things past', I can see clearly how tenaciously God was pursuing me, giving me gifts, taking care of me, leading me to Him. It's a long story but I am glad He is persistent-there comes a time when you can't get away with shrugging Him off if He has chosen you for a special task, a call on your life. It took 40 years for Him to get my attention, get me to surrender and get me into the water to be baptised. And "HERE I AM" putting the church newsletter together for the first time, trusting He will continue to bless this ministry and the team responsible for it.

For a few years, the work establishing His kingdom on earth was done by His Son who recruited a diverse group of ordinary fishermen, a tax collector, a few others and a Pharisee named Paul to spread the word about the New Covenant. Nowadays, God has to work *through US, His people*, to get that work done-you and me. With the Holy Spirit, God equips us for ministry with gifts we may not even be aware of. We are not all destined to be prophets, healers and miracle workers (Corinthians Ch. 12) but we can all be givers. He gives **us** so much, we should not be surprised when He asks **us to give of ourselves**. He gives us time to use for that, but I for one, can waste a lot of time on meaningless activities that bear no fruit. He must delight in those of His flock who give their time and talents in so many different ways to loving the church, the community, strangers and others. We pray and ask Him to do so many things for **us**, maybe it is time to ask what we can do for **Him**? Could He be nudging you to pray to Him more often than you do at present? Might He be whispering to you to get to know Him better by spending more time reading your bible? It is not hard to find ways of giving oneself to His purpose and showing others His love for them, even in small ways-by encouraging and offering to help a neighbour who has run into difficulties, saying you will pray for a person who is looking for answers to problems, cheering someone up by giving them a surprise treat, going the extra mile for others whenever you see an opportunity, stepping up and putting your own plans aside. He will provide these opportunities if you ask Him to and it will bring you joy to act on them to His glory!

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." John 13:34-35.

Joan Cumming

A word from Euan

I wrote last month about moments in the lives of many biblical figures that would drastically alter their futures, and how the events that followed forever changed them. One individual that perfectly fit the topic but I didn't mention was Paul, who had his life forever changed on the road to Damascus. As recorded in Acts 9:1-31, Paul, who had gone to Damascus to persecute the followers of Jesus, was struck blind by God. Healed by that same power, he began to preach that Jesus was the Son of God. Paul would use his personal experience with the power of the Lord as inspiration to begin a life-long mission that led him to spread the gospel to places outside Israel: Anatolia, Greece, and Rome.

Inspiration is something I often seek when I write. Usually, it's something I'm desperately hoping for, though that hope can be quite a trap. Far too much of what I write is ground out mere hours (or minutes) before a deadline, after weeks of knowing it was coming. I can't blame distractions or forgetfulness, because it's constantly on my mind that I'll have to write something, but I certainly can blame my usually pointless wait for that one instant of great inspiration to provide me with the words I need.

It's funny then, as we at Zion pursue a series on the Gospel of John, to think about how John the Baptist seemed to live in a constant state of inspiration. Indeed, his entire life as recorded in the Bible shows a singular purpose and dedication to fulfill his role in God's plan. Not just the Gospel of John, but also Mark and Luke tell us about who John the Baptist was, and about his role in proclaiming the coming Messiah before they tell us about Jesus.

Surely we're all aware of the events of the first chapter of Luke; The angel Gabriel appears to someone who never expected to become a parent, certainly not at this point in their life. Gabriel tells this person they have been chosen by the Lord, explains how great and important the child will be, and commands them to give the child a specific name. Obviously, I'm writing about the priest Zechariah, husband of Elizabeth, who receives this familiar message many months before Elizabeth's cousin Mary is visited. Luke notes that Elizabeth is already six months pregnant with John when Mary is visited (Luke 1:26), and that John leaps in his mother's womb upon hearing Mary's greeting when she visits to share the great news with Elizabeth (Luke 1:41).

John appears in Mark 1, Matthew 3, and Luke 3 while in the wilderness, clothed in animal skins and eating locusts and wild honey, but set in his mission; proclaiming the arrival of Jesus and the Kingdom of God, preaching repentance, and baptizing in the water of the Jordan River. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Mark 1:3, Matthew 3:3, Luke 3:4 - KJV) Finally, the day John has long prepared for comes; Jesus comes to John at the Jordan and is baptized with water. Whether you prefer to read it in the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, all agree: the Holy Spirit descends like a dove upon Jesus and a voice proclaims from heaven that Jesus is the Son of God, with whom God is "well pleased."

John is the perfect example for you and I. Just as I shouldn't wait for the extra inspiration to start writing, we don't need to wait for that one sublime moment of inspiration to live as Christ taught us; He has been with us, in us, before we were even born. Our lives, now and throughout eternity, are inspired and fulfilled by the love of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Liz's Corner!

Greetings Brothers and Sisters!

A fond hug and hello to Joan Carr freshly relocated back home on the Gaspé! Joan, no doubt, will be sharing her faith in Jesus with acts of love and kindness for everyone she meets. God bless you, Joan! Until we meet again, dear friend of Zion. Godspeed!

Here it is, February 2025. As usual this time of year, I'm dreaming of the coming of Spring. The Lord usually sends it right on time when people need it most. Today I can feel the heat from the sun streaming in the window warming my face as I take a breather in the back porch. Feels almost tropical! Well, that might be pushing it a bit! Ha! Ha! While Jesus and I were sharing a moment together in peace, I was telling Him how grateful I am that once again during illness, friends and neighbours came to my aid to make life better for me. Dropping by to play cards, cooking dinners, offering to do shopping, running errands, shovelling snow, calling to cheer me up; many acts of love I have been blessed to receive. We reflected on His message to us all. Matthew 25: 37-40 - 'Jesus, when did we see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you anything to drink? Or a stranger, and help you? Or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison, and visit you? The King will tell them, when you did it to these my brothers you were doing it to me'.

At some point or another, we'll all feel unloved, unwelcome, in need, and even physically or emotionally imprisoned. The good works of thoughtful people are reminders of God's loving compassion and forgiveness. We will have opportunities to support others who struggle with these feelings and when we do, we will be spreading His truth and love wherever we go. Talk is cheap. Good works are the key. Please pray with me - Jesus, You calm every spiritual storm. Speak peace to my soul as I put my hope in you. Dear Holy Spirit comfort each of us according to our needs. We know that nothing on earth takes away the desperate ache of loneliness like communion with you. Help us anchor our hearts in the promise and power of your resurrection; in You, who holds the future in your loving hands. Our hope is rooted in your faithfulness, regardless of our situation. Thanks be to You dear Lord ! Amen.

'Happy Valentines Day, my friends!! We are truly blessed beyond measure to be loved by the King of Heaven Himself!! Keep praying. Keep praising. Keep believing in miracles! Keep the faith! Godspeed!!

Elizabeth Ferguson

Power Of Prayer

Praying a psalm daily, line by line as a personal petition, enriches our walk with God and brings us closer to him. If we pause at the end of each line and internalise what it says, it becomes food for the soul and we visualize what God is doing in our lives. We learn to know him better. Take note of all the joyful words and phrases in this one. Thank and praise him!

Psalm 16

a miktam of David

Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.

I say to you "You are my Lord, apart from you I have no good thing."

Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup.

You have made my lot secure.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

Surely I have a delightful inheritance.

I will praise you, Lord, who counsels me.

Even at night, my heart instructs me.

I have set you, Lord, always before me.

Because you are at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.

My body also will rest secure because you will not abandon me to the grave.

Nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

You have made known to me the path of life.

You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

(It is thought that the word *miktam* means 'golden' or 'a cover' and in this lovely prayer we sense how God covers us with his care. In Acts 2:25-28, Peter recites verses 8-11 (the last 6 lines) of this psalm linking it to the resurrection of Jesus).

Around The Church

“Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst.” Matthew 18:20

BIBLE STUDY “Search from the book of the Lord and read.” Isaiah 34:16

Bible study continues twice weekly on Tuesday evenings at 6pm with fellowship time followed by instruction at 6.30 and on Thursday mornings with fellowship at 9.30 am and lesson at 10. Everyone is welcome to study the Book of John with us. It’s never too late to join the group!

PRAYER GROUP “Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.” Mark 11:24

The Prayer Group meets every Tuesday morning at 10am and EVERYONE is welcome to join us whether you pray aloud or in the silence of your heart. If you have a request or concern you want us to pray about, please write it on the paper provided in the pew and pop it in the Prayer Box at the back of the church. All requests are kept in strictest confidence unless otherwise instructed.

YOUTH GROUP “Young people enjoy your youth. Be happy while you are still young.” Ecclesiastes 11:9-10. Gatherings are on Thursdays at 6pm at Belfast Church.

CHOIR “I will give you thanks with all my heart; I will sing your praise before the heavenly beings.” Psalm 138:11

The Choir, directed by Faye Barrett, meets every Wednesday evening at 6.30pm for either the Legato or Marcato choir alternating weekly and then at 7.00pm for the Sanctuary Choir. If you love the Lord and love to sing, come and join us and you will find yourself humming the music at home.... in the car.... in the shower....! Children ages 6 to 11 can join the Cantabile Choir which rehearses on Saturdays.

ZION ZOOMERS and THE COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR, FEBRUARY 22. This is an annual Canada-wide Walk of either 2 or 5 km and on the Island it supports Harvest House in Charlottetown, a Christian ministry which offers a hot meal, life skill programs and focusses on helping Islanders to transition from destructive lifestyles to a healthier and more productive life. Since 2019 the Zoomers have raised over \$20,000 and last year were a team of 20 Walkers who contributed the highest donation of \$4000. Join the Walkers or support them with a donation by contacting Beryl Holden at btholden832@gmail.com or visit the CNOY25 website for additional information.

JOIN THE ALPHA COURSE! BRING A FRIEND! There’s nothing you can’t ask and everyone is welcome!

This is a FREE video series being held at Zion for 10 weeks starting Monday, January 27 at 6pm. It is aimed at those who are interested in exploring the Christian faith but are without a church. First we enjoy a light meal together followed by a discussion about big questions like “What’s the purpose of life?” “Who is Jesus?” “Why should I read the Bible?” It’s a way to explore faith in a welcoming environment. You can sign up at alpha2025.eventbrite.co or contact David Sabapathy 902.940.7850

The Gathering Newsletter helps us connect once a month with those who are unable to worship with us on Sunday but who are nevertheless, part of the Zion Family. Comments, suggestions and contributions (either photographs, drawings, stories, poems, articles or inspirational prose) from members of the congregation are welcomed. Please contact Joan Cumming by email for information at gatheringinfo2025@gmail.com



We know it is a discipline of the Christian faith. We know it is something we should do. But like Jesus' disciples, we want to ask, "...teach us to pray..." (Luke 11:1) Sunday School teachers told us we had to "bow our heads, fold our hands and close our eyes" but this is often all we have been taught about praying. Even the disciples' question to Jesus, came only after hearing Jesus pray, which makes us wonder if the question was more about praying like Jesus or learning how to pray.

What followed the disciples' question was teaching the disciples, and us, The Lord's Prayer, an important prayer we pray together every Sunday. And make no mistake about it, when we don't know what to pray, it is a wonderful prayer. But does the Lord's Prayer teach us how to pray "other prayers?" We are typically good at praying when life throws us unexpected challenges. "Lord, get me out of here!" "Lord, let the test be negative." "Lord give me _____." But how do we pray at other times? For those ordinary times of life, I remember a teacher who taught me to pray using a simple acrostic.

The acrostic is **A.C.T.S.** This is not only easy to remember but it stays away from meaningless prayers or what some call, "gimmee prayers" as in "give me this or give me that." The order also moves us deeper into prayer along with developing a healthier relationship with the one to whom we are praying.

A = Adoration We begin our prayer by focusing on some attributes of God or reasons why we adore God. It's as simple as saying, "God you are good. God you are loving. God you are powerful." We begin with adoration, not because God has low self-esteem and needs to hear how good God is but to remind us that we need God and that we are not God.

C = Confession We then move to breaking down any walls between us and God which makes us aware that our sin builds a barrier between us and God. When we ask God to forgive us, we become freer and lighter. We pray, "God I'm sorry for what I said to _____. Forgive me for the way I talked about someone behind their back"

T = Thanksgiving We have adored God, we have confessed our sin to God and now we move to thanking God! We pray, "Thank you for my life, my family, my church. Thank you for the place I live and the food I eat." It is amazing that after we adore God, confess our sins to God and thank God our needs become far less important but still we move on.

S = Supplication. We finally move to address the needs of others, along with our needs. "Be with _____ and their upcoming surgery. Be with me and my impatience with _____"

Let me leave with you a few other reminders because now that you have an "outline" of how to pray you need a few encouragements to actually pray.

- Find a quiet spot to pray. (It helps you focus on prayer)
- Pray at a similar time each day to develop a good routine.
- Use a prayer journal, especially for all those "supplications."
- Find a prayer partner

Please know we are praying for you and we covet your prayers. When people pray, God acts.

Peace, Kirk

February 2025 at Zion Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Ushers Feb 2—Debra Lynn, Gary Feb 9—Allan B., Emma Feb 16—Rebecca, Elaine Feb 23—Gary, Kent</p>		<p>Our Annual Congregational Meeting will Be held on Sunday, February 16th Following the Worship Service</p>				
<p>2 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship</p>	<p>3 6:00-7:30 pm Alpha</p>	<p>4 10 am Prayer Group 6 pm Social Time 6:30 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>5 6:30-7 pm Marcato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir</p>	<p>6 2 pm Choir Ministry at Andrews Ch'town 9:30 am Social Time 10 am Bible Study 6-8 pm Youth Group— Belfast</p>		<p>8 10 am Knot All Knitters - Partour</p>
<p>9 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship 5:30pm Youth Event</p>	<p>10 6:00-7:30 pm Alpha</p>	<p>11 10 am Prayer Group 6 pm Social Time 6:30 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>12 6:30-7 pm Legato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir</p>	<p>13 9:30 am Social Time 10 am Bible Study 1 pm Friends of Faith 6-8 pm Youth Group— Belfast</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>16 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship Annual Congregational Meeting following the service</p>	<p>17 ISLANDER DAY 6:00-7:30 pm Alpha</p>	<p>18 10 am Prayer Group 6 pm Social Time 6:30 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>19 6:30-7 pm Marcato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir</p>	<p>20 9:30 am Social Time 10 am Bible Study 6-8 pm Youth Group— Belfast 6:30 pm Board Of Trustees Meeting</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22 10 am Knot All Knitters - Partour</p>
<p>23 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship Baptism, Membership Classes following the service</p>	<p>24 6:00-7:30 pm Alpha</p>	<p>25 10 am Prayer Group 6 pm Social Time 6:30 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>26 6:30-7 pm Legato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir</p>	<p>27 9:30 am Social Time 10 am Bible Study 1 pm Friends of Faith 6-8 pm Youth Group Belfast 6:30pm Session</p>	<p>28</p>	