

# The Gathering

A Monthly Newsletter from Zion Presbyterian Church

May 2026



Zion Presbyterian Ch... X

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Now even more can find a faith community at Zion. Come and see what God is doing.



Zion in the news! The installation of the new lift was covered on CBC's Compass and was posted on Facebook to announce that our church is now fully accessible. This includes the ramp which had previously been constructed at the front entrance. Thanks is due to everyone involved.

A transformative change in accessibility at Zion Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown was marked April 12 when an official dedication ceremony celebrated the installation of a lift that connects all three floors of the 100-plus-year-old church. The quarter of a million-dollar project received funding from the federal government, national Presbyterian Church, and Zion church organizations and congregation members. From left, Jim Stavert, Gail Somers, a long-time advocate for accessibility at the church, John Farquharson, Brett Robinson, a church member, Mayor Phillip Brown, and Ken Heckbert, who along with Stavert and Farquharson headed up the lift installation project.

*Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.*

*Revelation 3:20*

## John's Thoughts

### The Sin of Mankind and the Remedy

*"And the Lord God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*

(Genesis 2:16,17KJV)

God told Adam that if he eats of the forbidden fruit, he shall surely die. Adam did not die that day, at least not physically. In fact, according to Genesis chapter 5:3, he became father to Seth at the age of one hundred thirty years, and he lived on until he was nine hundred thirty years old. This implies, to me at least, that it was not physical death, but spiritual death that God was referring to when he told Adam that he would surely die, and it was on that day that mankind surely did die, spiritually, not physically, because of the sin of Adam.

God's Remedy (which is ***much more*** than the sin):

Thankfully, mankind has been redeemed by the far greater gift, the ***much more*** gift of grace in Christ Jesus.

*"For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how ***much more*** will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!*

(Romans 5:17 NIV)

As I read through the fifth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans, I notice the phrase "***much more***" which appears in 5:9, 5:10, 5:15, 5:17, and 5:20. It seems to me, that all of these verses are sizing Adam's sin against Christ's "***much more***" and far greater gracious gift of redemption. The sin of Adam (mankind) was washed away by the righteousness of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gift of Christ's redeeming love is "***much more***" than all of the sins of mankind, so the spiritual death suffered by the fall in the garden is now alive through Christ's resurrection.

*"Therefore, as by the offence of one, (Adam), judgement came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, (The Lord Jesus), the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Romans 5:18).*

So, I believe that whatever the sin may be, no matter how big or how small, it has already been paid for and "***much more***" abundantly by the Lord Jesus Christ, nailed to the cross with Jesus. Any of us who will truly hear the word of God, take the word truly into our heart, and believe in him and in his redeeming sacrifice, already have our sins forgiven, and the promise of everlasting life that we read about in John 5:24. (KJV).

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Praise the Lord!*



Music director Faye Barrett presents Elizabeth Lang with a gift of thanks on behalf of the congregation for her many years of devoted service playing the church organ, especially during the summer months. Enjoy your retirement, Elizabeth. We will miss you! Thanks to Gary MacDougall for the picture.

## JUST PRAY

If you need a steady hand to guide you  
If it seems you've somehow lost your way  
If you feel there's no  
one you can turn to  
Just look to God and pray....  
On your knees or  
standing at a crossroads  
Late at night or in the light of day  
In a crowd, a closet, or a chapel  
Just look to God and pray.

He is there when you're  
searching for the answers.  
He is there when you  
need a little grace.  
You're his child  
and his love will never fail you  
He is with you, He will hear you  
He will say...  
Just pray.

When His love continues to amaze you  
When you feel your heart begin to change  
When you know He gave  
his Son to save you,  
Just look to God and pray.



He is there when you're  
Searching for the answers.  
He is there when you need a little grace  
You're his child and his love will never fail you  
He is with you, He will hear you  
He will say...  
Just pray.

Bring your doubts, your  
worries and your faith  
Share your hopes and  
dreams. He is listening.  
There's no time or distance in the way  
The moment you begin,  
it's just you and Him.

He is there when you're  
searching for the answers.  
He is there when you  
need a little grace.  
You're His child and His  
love will never fail you  
He is with you. He will  
hear you. He will say...

Just pray!  
Just pray!



It was good to hear George Sabapathy assisted by Mom, Jaycee, sing this song encouraging us to pray. Contact [admin@zionpres.org](mailto:admin@zionpres.org) with prayer requests.

## Liz's Corner

Greetings Brothers and Sisters!

He is Risen!! He is Risen Indeed!!

What can be said, that has not already been said, about the joy we shared and rich blessings we received at our Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday services! I feel blessed beyond measure! Many thanks to Rev. Kirk and Allyson for their caring leadership and heartfelt love witnessed to the faithful able to attend at Zion and by our family online. Praise the Lord!! Also, we are so grateful for the determined and worshipful efforts of Faye and the choir who brought glory, laud and honour to Jesus our Saviour through their devotion in music and song! Hallelujah!! To all of us, the children of God, who support the church through our time, talents and financial support - Jesus knows our hearts and minds. Our reward will be to live with Him when He comes again! Amen!

The month of May brings with it Mother's Day. For those of us who are or were blessed by a loving, contented, and God-fearing mother, the day brings happy thoughts and memories; for other families - not so much. In our prayers this Mother's Day, let's be sure to remember the women and mothers who struggle to love and care for themselves and their families. Let's pray for the women and men who take on the role of mother and provide the love and nurturing our families need to thrive; who foster the love and knowledge of Jesus. God bless them all!!

Revival is in the air! With Easter just over and the rejoicing still echoing in my heart, I've turned to the garden with joy and expectation for the coming explosion of colour and life provided by the grace of God to me, His humble caretaker! Spring has sprung and I have already observed three robins hopping through my crocus. I hear from Evan Heckbert that his family's rhubarb plot is growing so well, it will probably be ready for sharing by the end of the month. Having been on the receiving end of last season's bountiful crop, this is very good news indeed! My first forays into my backyard have been to gather up the branches and twigs felled from the trees by the Winter winds and snow. I was thankful to have taken my walking stick with me on the uneven ground, for without it, I would surely have taken a tumble or two. I tripped last Autumn while tying up the yew hedge and had to roll halfway across the lawn to reach a step to assist me to stand. Thank God I didn't break any bones! With two artificial knees past their best-before-date and extensive osteoarthritis, my rising from the horizontal might look comical to a passerby but, as many of you know, it is demoralizing. So, this year, I am taking every precaution to prevent disaster by utilizing my walking aids, dragging my cell phone with me, and seeking assistance with the more difficult garden tasks. As we have learned, the Lord helps those who help themselves!! Amen!

Spring has arrived in all its glory! Trout fishing is underway. Lobster season is on the horizon and our farm families are out on the land. I am looking forward to Zion's spring clothing sale and BBQ planned for May 29 and 30. God is in His heaven and He has everything under control. All we need to do is trust and obey until we see Him face to face! Hallelujah! May God continue to shower His blessings upon all of you, dear friends. Be kind to each other and keep the faith!!

Godspeed  
Elizabeth



Cheerful tulips decorated the sanctuary on Easter Sunday and the quartet performed the Christian version of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah". Singing with John Barrett are members of **The Gathering** writing team, from left to right, Elizabeth Ferguson, John Farquharson and Evan Heckbert.



An interesting variety of colourful millinery was worn at *the Friends of Faith Easter Tea!*

## *“Overcome evil with good,” and lots of other wise advice from Paul*

I'm sure most of us have favourite books of the Bible, a favourite Bible story, passage or individual, and maybe, like me, you have claimed some verses as a significant indicator or theme for yourself and your life. The first time I read the Book of Ruth, her situation jumped right off the page to connect with me and where my life journey was at that moment. Circumstances in her life brought her to a point where she made the choice to resettle away from the land of her birth, adapt to its ways, adopt it as home and in the end succeeded in her new surroundings. In chapter 1 verse 16, when she vows not to abandon her mother-in-law, Naomi, she says,

*“Do not urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go, I will go and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.”* I like this quote because it is something I could have said.

Late in my career, when I signed up to teach French in a Christian High School in Northern B.C., staff were requested to select a passage of scripture as a theme to guide their home room students in their daily life and I settled on Romans 12, which is about being a **non-conformist**. Here Paul skillfully compresses several challenges couched in some lovely language. It is loaded with too much to discuss in just this one page of print, but here are some examples: *“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.” “Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world.” “Test and approve what God’s will is.” “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought.” “Hate what is evil, cling to what is good.” “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” “Live at peace with everyone.”*

Paul tackles what life as a Christian should be like on 4 levels – mentally, physically, socially and spiritually. We are to be in the world but not of it. (John 17, v14-16) not separating ourselves from unbelievers but interacting with them in a lifestyle displaying a different, separate set of moral principles, guided by the word of God. Some of Paul’s practical exhortations are easier to accept and understand than others and I wonder *how* or *if* my home room students of 20 years ago implemented them – it was a different world back then. Nowadays society and its appeals to compromise are before our eyes constantly, so we need discernment to *“renew our mind”* by not allowing media to divert us from truth and God’s plan for us, nor control us in negative, destructive ways. To remain obedient, we may have to change if we are tempted to compromise which may mean spending more time reading scripture and studying the work of thoughtful, experienced authors and commentators in order to grow spiritually and strengthen our faith. Resisting the temptations of secular society will mean being non-conformist not *“conforming to the pattern of this world”* and risk being labelled as puritanical. But Jesus’ disciples did not compromise—they believed when others doubted, risked and even gave up their lives, wrote their story and the world took notice.

When we encounter and recognise evil, we should not embrace it nor ignore it but opt for what is good and truthful. Steering our own path through the ups and downs of life using good judgement and seeking God’s will keeps us hopeful and gives us peace. Remaining joyful even when circumstances threaten to defeat us is difficult, so nurturing a healthy prayer life helps us counter that, as well as seizing opportunities to humbly use the gifts God has given us and to serve our church and community. It may mean we have to have a change of attitude. Why is the church not popular with the world and why are people not attracted to it as they used to be? As a final thought, I was rather surprised several years ago to find out verses from Romans 12 were the only Scripture that Prince William and Kate Middleton had read at their wedding and I wondered what made them decide on it. It sure is a challenge for all of us. Please study it. If any of you has a favourite passage from the Bible that has become really significant in your life, it would be interesting to know what it is and why. Feel free to let me know- it will be kept in strict confidence.

*Joan Cumming*

## A word from Evan

Recently, I'm finding ever-greater numbers of pundits and talking heads opining that the art of conversation is dead. They blame the usual suspects: too much work and no free time, social distancing during COVID, noses glued to phones, and emails instead of face-to-face interaction. Personally, I think anyone who's missing conversation should spend a Sunday at Zion.

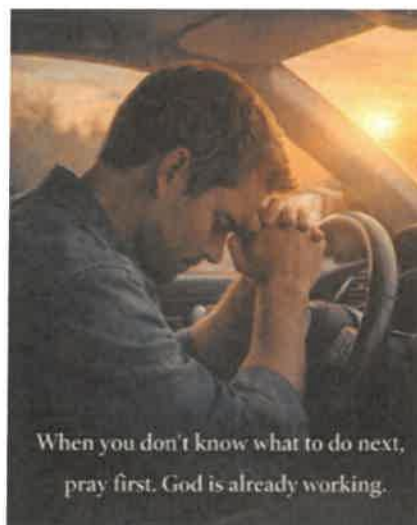
I'm usually fortunate enough to have an elevated view of the goings-on around the church, so I get to see and eavesdrop on some wonderful conversations. Sitting in the choir loft, I'm in the perfect place to watch a loving church family gathering in fellowship, finding favourite pews and conversation partners before worship. (I also get the most comfortable seat in the sanctuary. Fill The Loft is May 24, come get a comfy chair for yourself too.) When I stay for coffee/snack time in Matheson Hall after worship, I get to see a room full of the art of conversation.

While watching all you expert conversationalists, I've noticed three things all those blessed with the gift of gab seem to share: They want to talk to other people, other people want to talk to them, and they're able to talk to anyone and everyone. Perhaps that's why I consider Jesus to be the greatest conversationalist I know.

There is overwhelming evidence that Jesus wanted to talk to other people. Early in the book of Luke, as Jesus is just beginning his journeys to spread God's message to Israel, we read the following passage: *"42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. 43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."* (Luke 4:42-43, KJV) In the same passage we can also see the effect on others, that desire to seek out Jesus so that they could speak to him and learn from him.

While some of the most famous Bible stories involve Jesus in front of crowds by the Sea of Galilee, there are just as many important moments where Jesus speaks to a small group or one person alone. We know that Jesus traveled far to find these people as well. He spends time in the area around the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon in what is now Lebanon (Mark 7). We find him travelling through Samaria when he stops to have a famous conversation with the woman at the well (John 4), and he visits Mary and Martha at their home in the village of Bethany, just east of Jerusalem (Luke 10).

When Jesus walked this earth, he preached and prayed and talked to everyone he met, sharing the word and love of God. You and I might not be so fortunate as to receive an in-person visit from Jesus in this life, but we're blessed to be able to have a conversation with him any time we'd like. After all, he's only one prayer away. I think, perhaps, if you read *The Gathering*, you're the kind of person who has already heard this so many times that it feels like a cliché. However, I hope you can hear it like someone who is hearing it for the first time; Jesus loves you, he wants to speak to you, and he wants you to speak to him. Anyone, anywhere, any time. Just pray.



When you don't know what to do next,  
pray first. God is already working.

## Around the church

**Dates to Remember:** May 10, Mothers' Day. May 11, 7pm Great George Street Band Concert and Zion Choir (proceeds towards our lift expenses). May 24, Fill the Loft. (You are invited to come, sit and sing with the choir). May 28, 1pm Friends of Faith. May 29 & 30, Spring Sale 9am-1pm. May 31, Anniversary Communion. Please check the calendar for times and dates of Small Groups Bible Study, Choir, Prayer Group, Knot all Knitters, First Place for Health, Youth Activities and meetings. Group leaders, please send us information about your activities and pictures if you have any. (ed.)



The Congregation paid tribute to Cloe MacLean (left) during the March 29 service. Due to work commitments, Cloe is stepping down from her lead role with the church Youth Group. Gary MacDougall presented her with flowers and a gift. (Photo courtesy of Donna MacLean). On the right, the colour purple traditionally associated with Jesus Christ and Easter was visible on Easter Sunday. Wearing the colour were (left to right) Sadie Stewart, Calvin MacMillan, Jaycee and George Sabapathy. Below and second from the left is Stephen Cousins who gave an illustrated talk to the Friends of Faith group about his recent ministry trip to Cote d'Ivoire in Africa where he worked giving support to a team of eye surgeons.



## The Last Word-Rev. Allyson MacLeod

### A Season of Renewal

As I write this, I am sitting at our kitchen table looking out on blue skies and open water. The sun is coming through the windows and it's warm! The geese and ducks are back, and the lake has come up a lot after last year's drought. The birds have returned and are flitting about and the buds are visible on the trees. And now that the snow has finally melted, I can see where I planted all those bulbs I bought at Vesey's fall sale which I put in the ground at the last minute in November. Spring is a beautiful season of renewal.

Having just come through the season of Lent and Holy Week, culminating in the wonderful celebration of Easter, we can sense a season of renewal blossoming not only in nature but within the church as well. The completion of the lift project and the ribbon cutting ceremony was a time of celebration, not only for what was accomplished in a relatively short time, but also for the opportunities for ministry that the lift provides. The church library is getting a facelift upstairs and there will also be books on shelves as you step off the lift on the first floor on your way to Coles Hall. We've recently welcomed new members to our church family and we are regularly seeing new faces coming through our doors. I'm reminded of that verse from the prophet Isaiah where God speaks:

*"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"*

Let's keep our eyes open for what God is doing in our midst in this season of renewal.



Our congregation is growing.

Rev. Kirk recently welcomed new members, Robert Boyd and the Millar family to Zion.

# May 2026 at Zion Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Ushers May 3—Allan, Edson May 10 -Jaycee, David, George May 17—Ken, Anne	Ushers (cont'd) May 24—Pam, Elmer May 31—Roylean, Debra Lynn		Deadline to submit for Elder Election is Sunday, May 10 <sup>th</sup>		1	2
3 10:30 -Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship	4	5 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	6 2 pm—Choir Ministry at Andrews of Stratford 6:30-Legato 7-8:30 Sanctuary	7 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study	8	9
10 10:30 -Worship, Children's Min 11:30 Fellowship Elder nomination forms due today	11 6:30 Stewardship 7pm Great George St Brass Band & Zion Choir Concert (proceeds to the Church Lift)	12 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	13 6:30 pm Marcato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir	14 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study	15	16
17 10:30 -Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship	18	19 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	20 6:30 pm Fill The Lift Choir	21 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Board of Trustees	22	23
24 10:30 -Worship FILL THE LOFT Children's Ministries	25	26 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	27 6:30 pm Marcato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir	28 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study 1 pm—Friends of Faith 6:30 pm Session	29 SPRING SALE 9 am—1 pm	30 SPRING SALE 9 am—1 pm 6:30 pm Youth Event
31 10:30 - ANNIVERSARY /COMMUNION Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship		Great George St. Brass Band & Zion Choir Monday, May 11 at 7 pm	FILL The Loft Sunday May 24 <sup>th</sup>	Spring Sale Friday, May 29 & Saturday, May 30 from 9 am till 1 pm on both days!	Communion/ Anniversary Sunday May 31 <sup>st</sup>	