



# ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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## THE HERALD – APRIL 2016

*We are a congregation that strives to be an inviting, faithful, and growing presence in our community and in our world, with a passion for living and spreading the love of Jesus Christ by using our spiritual and material gifts in the service of all God's people*

<b>Apr 03</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>EASTER 2</b>	<b>Worship (You Shall Be My Witness)</b>
Apr 10	10:00 am	EASTER 3	Worship (Peter Heals in Jerusalem)
<b>Apr 17</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>EASTER 4</b>	<b>Worship (Church at Thessalonica)</b>
Apr 18	7:00 pm	COUNCIL	
<b>Apr 24</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>EASTER 5</b>	<b>Worship (Church at Corinth)</b>

### VISIT WITH DEBORAH, PUTIYEI AND SERIANNE

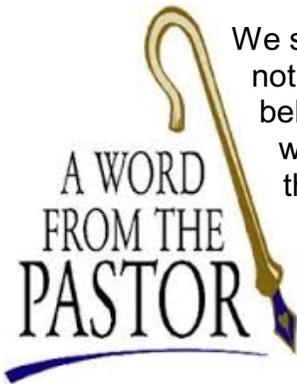
May 1	10:00 am	EASTER 6	Worship (Faith, Hope, and Love)
<b>May 6-8</b>	<b>Whenever anyone is able</b>		<b>Cleanup, Maintenance at Edgewood</b>
May 8	10:00 am	EASTER 7	Worship (Death Swallowed in Life)
<b>May 15</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>PENTECOST</b>	<b>Worship (Gifts of the Spirit)</b>
May 22	10:00 am	WORSHIP	Consolation
<b>May 29</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>WORSHIP</b>	<b>FORGIVENESS</b>

### 2016 Zion Council

Nick Beck (Chair) Wayne McCracken (Vice Chair)  
Mickford Durgana Ginette McCracken Alethia McIntosh Ed Strath

### Non-Council Positions

Ingrid Beck (Treasurer) Brian Cartwright (Recording Secretary)



We should still be riding the wave of Easter excitement, but the excitement may not come as it has in years past. That's not to say we've suddenly stopped believing in God or that we love Jesus any less than we did last year or that we're simply disappointed that this year marks some countless years in a row that we've woken up on Easter Sunday morning to find no Easter basket waiting for us.

What may have tempered our paschal enthusiasm is the unstoppable torrent of doubt every time there's another tragedy like the one that took place Easter morning in Pakistan or during Holy Week in Brussels or the week before in Istanbul or months before in Paris or everyday in between in smaller, less infamous, but none the less tragic ways.

So, what changed after the resurrection? You don't need a degree in systematic theology to have a prepared answer waiting, should anyone have the audacity to ask such an obvious question. Any Sunday School veteran worth their salt knows that, after the resurrection, our sins were forgiven, the grave was conquered and all things were made new.

We believe all of those claims and more are true. But, if we press pause on the Sunday School answers and look around at the world around us with dogma-free eyes — a world filled with death and sorrow, terrorism and abuse, rape and murder, oppression and exploitation — it's hard not to wonder if anything actually did change after the resurrection.

We can pile on all the theological implications we want to the resurrection, but they don't change the fact that, even as Jesus was walking out of the empty tomb, people in his own country were still dying, still suffering under the oppression of the Roman empire, still being taken advantage of by their neighbours, still suffering and causing others to suffer. It's continued that way for some 2,000 years now as if nothing happened that holy morning.

When you think about it that way, or when you simply turn on the nightly news, it becomes hard not to ask if anything actually did change after the resurrection, and just as difficult to find the energy to get excited about Easter, when the promises of Easter seem like they're still going unfulfilled. So what is the answer?

Theodicy, or the matter of why a loving God could allow evil to persist in the world God created, is a question without an easy answer — or perhaps any answer at all. It's a spectre that's hovered over the good news for millennia and will continue to haunt the Church for centuries no matter how hard we try to drive it away.

But hope is not lost. As challenging as the question appears and indeed is, it's not the question we should be asking. Because the Church doesn't believe something changed after the resurrection. We believe something is changing. It's a subtle difference, but a profoundly important one.

As Christians, we are not naïve enough to believe that Jesus walked out of the tomb that first Easter morning and, in an instant, everything changed: all things were made new and suffering and death were no more. As Christians, we believe that when Jesus walked out of the tomb that first Easter morning everything began to change, all things began to be made new and the reign

of suffering and death was finally beginning to come to an end. But in believing this, we also profess that the kingdom of God is a present but not yet fully realized reality, and it won't be fully realized until our Lord returns again.

This is, in part, why Jesus teaches us to pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". It's an active prayer, not a stagnant one. It's a prayer of expectation, not a declaration of a promise fully realized. It's a call to stop standing idly by and start participating in the always unfolding fulfillment of heaven coming to earth.

Which is why the question to be asked this Easter season is not what changed after the resurrection, but what has been changing since the resurrection? If the transforming effect of the resurrection were merely a one-off moment, the centuries of unspeakable suffering and tragedy that have followed in its wake would serve as an indisputable denouncement of our faith in a risen saviour. But if the resurrection is a moment that happened and continues to happen and will continue to happen not just in the life of Jesus, but also in the lives of those of us who call him Lord, then we can begin to see its transforming power in how we respond to the tragedies in our own lives, how we love and console one another, how we work together to keep evil from ruling tomorrow, and how we come together to alleviate the daily suffering that is all around us.

The resurrection was a powerful, history-changing moment, and the resurrection is a daily reality that transforms the world around us, through us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done" becomes not just a prayer, but a way of living the resurrected life. If we look at Christ's resurrection and ask what happened, it's easy to become jaded and say, "Nothing". But if we look at Christ's resurrection and ask what is happening, we find an invitation to participate in the transformation of creation, the making new of all things and the ultimate conquest of suffering and death.

This is what is so incredible about Easter and what makes the resurrection worth believing in despite what we see on the nightly news or even in our daily lives. The resurrection didn't just happen. It's happening now.

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## **THE OLIVE BRANCH - OUR FAMILY IN TANZANIA**

Deborah has arrived and worshipped with us on Easter. What a beautiful little girl Serianne has become. Deborah will be returning on April 24 and share what has taken place over the past year. It has been a busy and unbelievable year.

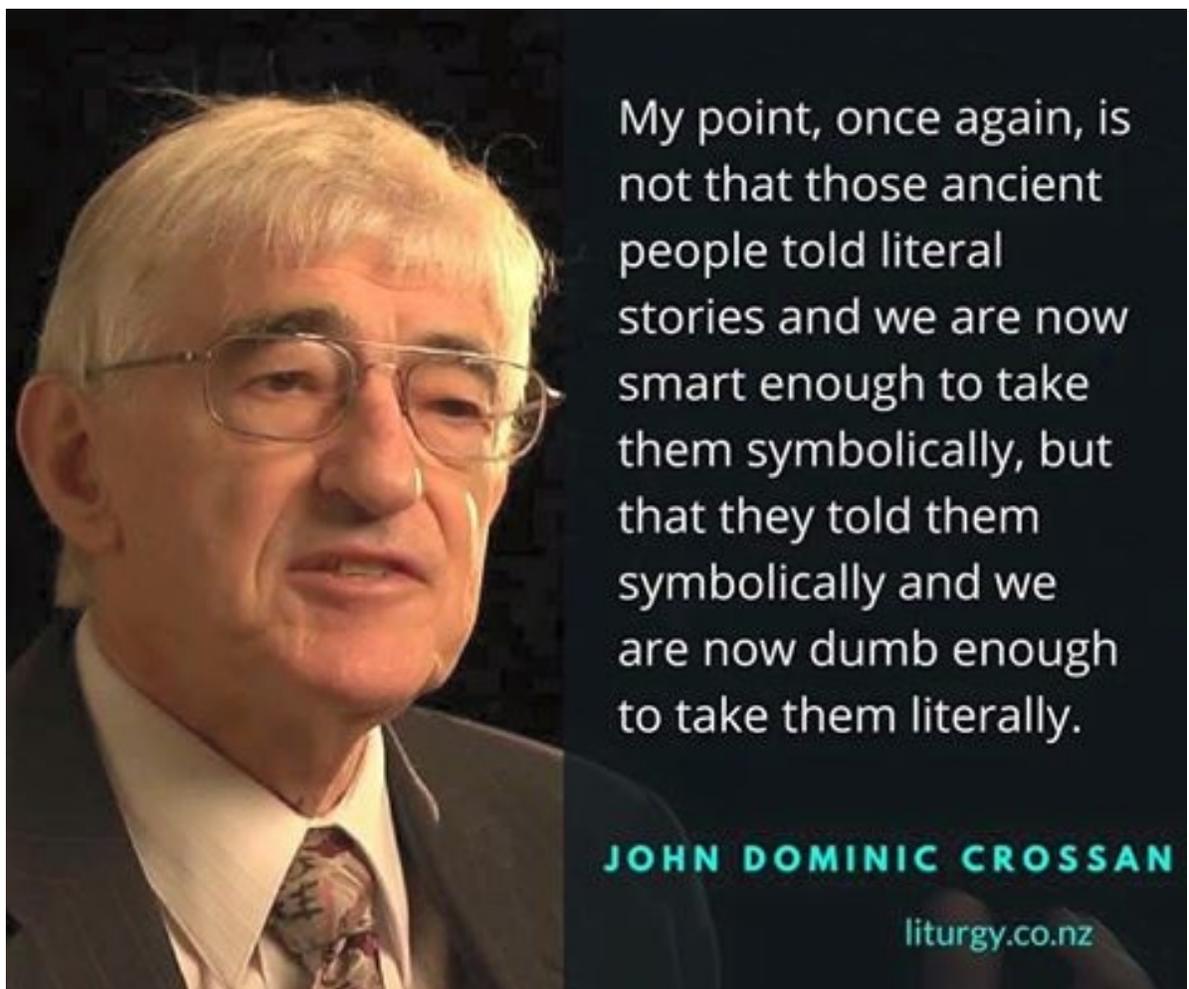
The building of the new complex, including our Zion Home, continues. It is a slow process in Tanzania. Many more supporters have been added from around the world - Germany (building classrooms), Ireland, Argentina, and local supporters. Our little seed had grown into a forest. The projects expand into many new areas. With the HIV patients being taken care of by the Home Based Care workers, it is possible to take care of other needs. The Home Based Care Workers have grown and evolved into real caregivers in their villages. They provide health training and care in their villages, and have removed much of the burden from Deborah.

Our youngest orphans, who were our first residents in Zion Home, are now in secondary school. Mlombwa is starting pre-med. Winnie, who arrived in 2009, was very sick. Her grandmother

begged Deborah to take her to save her life. She was malnourished and all skin and bones. She is a healthy young woman despite HIV and is entering pre-law. Boniface, our oldest, decided to study hospitality, and was offered a job in Moshe. He is working and continuing his studies. Ismael, one of the group of six orphan boys who came from Mahongo, is studying to be a teacher. Our Zion Home children are doing extremely well. We should be proud of them and grateful for the opportunity to reach out to the ends of the earth to help these beautiful children and support Deborah's amazing work and the love she gives not just to the children, but all the poor, outcast, and ostracised and discounted people. What a blessing to be even a small part of this amazing outreach opportunity.

**DON'T FORGET TO COME TO HEAR DEBORAH AT ZION ON APRIL 24. BRING YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND NEIGHBOURS!!!**

**ALSO, CONSIDER ATTENDING THE ANNUAL GALA ON APRIL 15. LOG ON TO THE WEBSITE ([theolivebranchforchildren.org](http://theolivebranchforchildren.org)) OR CONTACT THE PASTOR FOR MORE INFORMATION.**



John Crossan is a world-renowned theologian