

## ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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## THE HERALD – DECEMBER 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

Dec 04	10:00 am	WORSHIP - ADVENT II	Joel 2 (Turn to a Merciful God)
<b>Dec 11</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>WORSHIP - ADVENT III</b>	<b>Isaiah (Spirit of the Lord Upon Me)</b>
Dec 12	7:00 pm	COUNCIL	
<b>Dec 18</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>WORSHIP - ADVENT IV</b>	<b>Luke 1 (Jesus' Birth Announced)</b>
Dec 24	7:00 pm	WORSHIP - CHRISTMAS EVE	- Birth of Jesus
<b>Dec 25</b>	<b>NO SERVICE - TIME WITH FAMILIES</b>		
Jan 01	10:00 am	WORSHIP - CHRISTMAS I	Luke 2 (Simeon and Anna)
<b>Jan 08</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>WORSHIP - BAPTISM</b>	<b>Luke 3 (John baptizes Jesus)</b>
Jan 15	10:00 am	WORSHIP - EPIPHANY II	Luke 4 (Sermon at Nazareth)
<b>Jan 22</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>WORSHIP - EPIPHANY III</b>	<b>Luke 5 (Great catch of fish)</b>
Jan 29	10:00 am	WORSHIP - EPIPHANY IV	Luke 6 (Healing on the Sabbath)

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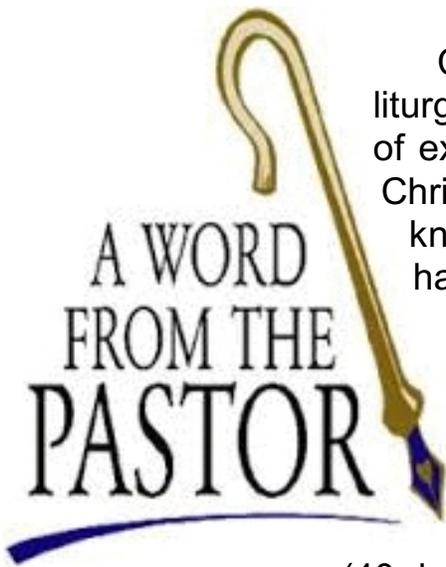
### 2016 Zion Council

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)



Christians today (especially those who follow the liturgical calendar) observe the season of Advent as a time of expectation, preparation and celebration leading up to Christmas or Christmastide. Many may be surprised to know that the original observance of the Advent season had nothing to do with Christmas!

The word Advent means “coming” and is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, a translation of the Greek word *parousia*. In the fourth and fifth centuries Advent was a season of preparation — not for Christmas but for baptisms that would take place at Epiphany. It was a season (40 days) of fasting, prayer and penance. Roman Christians in the sixth century began to tie the season of Advent to the second coming of Christ. It was not until the Middle Ages that Advent was celebrated in anticipation of Christmas.

In the modern-church era, Advent is a memorial of Christ’s first coming and an anticipation of the kingdom to come. In fact, the first two Sundays of Advent point to the return of Christ in judgment while the last two Sundays remember his first coming into the world.

Advent is intended to be a time of reflection, penance, fasting and praying. Ironically, the weeks leading up to Christmas are filled with parties, food and shopping. The secular commercialism of Christmas, which begins right after Halloween, can distract the faithful from taking time to reflect during this holy season.

Amid the activities of the season, reflect on the Scriptures for each week in Advent. Also, reflect each day of the week on the themes for each Sunday: hope, peace, joy and love. If you haven’t picked up a copy of “Eternity for Today,” there are still a number of copies available.

Reflection often prompts one to action, and many wonderful gifts of kindness and compassion are expressed during the season of Advent. This is a story of kindness shown by complete strangers.

As is evident in most coffee shops, baristas are trained to offer polite conversation and care to customers while they simultaneously maintain a steady focus on their primary task of preparing and serving drinks. Yet, when baristas Pierce Dunn and Evan Freeman of Vancouver, BC, noticed a grieving woman pull up to the drive-through window of their coffee shop, they did something bold.

They stopped what they were doing and listened to the woman tell them about her recently deceased husband. Then, together, they reached out the window to hold her hand and to pray for her. Unbeknownst to the baristas, the driver of another car also waiting in line snapped a picture of them praying for the woman.

The image ultimately went viral, and the crew's story was featured across Canada and the United States. When asked about why he chose to pray for the woman, Dunn concluded that "if you can bring yourself to understand what someone else is going through, you can show them kindness and make an impact on the world."

From a Christian perspective, this story is striking and startling because such a small act of kindness has been viewed by the world as a rare and special moment. Yet, in today's world, we often find ourselves substituting a "nice" gesture for a "kind" action. A polite habit can even be used as a cop-out or excuse for avoiding deeper conversations and bolder actions. And while our intentions may be good, our nice habits are often void of value and substance, and the power of our Christian faith is subsequently held at bay.

The message and character of Jesus was rooted in kindness and care for others. He never allowed rules, reputation or risk to hold him back from serving those in need. He was and is the perfect example of kindness: one who puts others' needs before his or her own. His disciples were and still today are called to the same task.

After all, during the first Advent, God gifted the world with a Savior and Jesus gifted the world with salvation. The second Advent promises eternity with Christ for those who receive his gift of salvation.

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As reported last month, on October 31, history was made. The Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church celebrated the joint Commemoration of the Reformation in Lund, Sweden. The worship service has been recorded, and in discussion with members of our congregation, it was decided that they would indeed like to see the service. On a Sunday yet to be determined, we will replace our regular Sunday worship with the service from Lund. It was a beautiful service. We could follow this with a time of fellowship - perhaps a small lunch and discussion. Stay tuned for details. (Hopefully you have all had a chance to read Pope Francis' address in last month's Herald as well as the Joint Statement signed by Pope Francis and the president of the Lutheran World Federation.)

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## OLIVE BRANCH NEWS

Deborah and Putiyei were invited to Germany by a group that has been supporting the Olive Branch. They have been travelling to a number of schools and sharing the work of the Olive Branch, garnering support, and encouraging volunteers to come out and help. Below is the story of one of the many people whose life has been changed by the Olive Branch.

December 3 is the International Day of People with Disability! It is estimated that 3.5 million people in Tanzania live with a disability. According to WHO, 'people with disabilities have generally poorer health, lower education achievements, fewer economic opportunities and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities'.

This is the story of Ayubu, 30 years old, from the village of Rwanyo . Ayubu, orphaned at a young age, struggled with poverty, hunger and marginalization after his grandmother- his sole caregiver - passed away. When he was 24 he joined a home for vulnerable children and youth in his village, but they were not looked after properly. There were ten children living together whose basic needs were often not met.

In 2011 he connected with The Olive Branch for Children and became a food support client, meaning that he receives a portion of maize, beans, eggs and soap every month. Due to his disability, Ayubu is not able to do physical jobs, like farming, and hadn't been able to earn enough to start a business. The Olive Branch for Children supported him to be independent and self-sufficient. In 2011 he was sponsored to start a small shop, which has allowed him to escape extreme poverty. His shop is his house. Because of this, he doesn't need to pay rent, which would be an additional burden.

He usually pays someone to cook food for him since he is unable to cook for himself and has no kitchen. His neighbours help him with his personal hygiene needs by allowing him to have showers in their homes. He wants to start a family, but not until his financial condition is stable. "I would love to have a wife and children. But I need to be able to take good care of them. If they have to sleep inside this small shop, it won't be fair."

Ayubu is now content with his life, has a girlfriend and loves football.

