

ZION HERALD – JANUARY 2018

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 God's people

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Pastor Linda Douglas Phone: (905) 417-0519



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Jan 07	10:00 am	Worship	John 1:35-51	Jesus Says Come and See
Jan 14	10:00 am	Worship	John 2:1-11	Wedding at Cana
Jan 21	10:00 am	Worship	John 2:13-25	Jesus Cleanses the Temple
Jan 22	7:00 pm	Council Meeting		
JAN 28	10:00 am	WORSHIP	John 3:1-21	Nicodemus
		TOWN HALL MEETING WITH BISHOP PRYSE FOLLOWING WORSHIP		
		IMPORTANT FOR ALL TO ATTEND		
Feb 04	10:00 am	Worship	John 4:1-42	Woman at the Well
Feb 11	10:00 am	Worship	John 9:1-41	The Man Born Blind
Feb 14	7:30 pm	Worship	John 10:1-18	The Good Shepherd
		ASH WEDNESDAY		
Feb 18	10:00 am	Worship	John 11:1-44	Jesus Raises Lazarus
Feb 25	10:00 am	Worship	John 13:1-17	Jesus Washes Feet
		GENERAL ANNUAL MEETING FOLLOWING WORSHIP		

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)



Our culture presents us with so many versions of Jesus, letting us make Him in our own image. Maybe you've come to depend on a false Jesus and didn't even realize it. If you are struggling to find peace, read about these false Jesuses with an open mind. Consider what Jesus said about Himself, and test your beliefs against the truth from Scripture. Here are 10 false Jesuses we keep falling for:

1. Mean Jesus

Perhaps this image of Jesus comes from social media and the rants we see from devoted churchgoers. Maybe it is our constant news sources bickering over who is better. Or it could be you had a hellfire and brimstone pastor growing up, and this became your earliest depiction of Jesus — mean and angry, full of wrath, ranting and raging about how sin would destroy you. But balance this image of Jesus with the story of the little children gathering to him, with his compassion for the sisters of Lazarus, with his acceptance of the woman at the well. While Jesus called out sin when He saw it, He was never cruel. Jesus, the lamb, went to slaughter so that you would be free.

2. Political Jesus

How would Jesus vote? Since there were no Democrats or Republicans in His day, we don't know. What we do know is that He loved. The side He took was the side of those in need. Today, we are all in need in one form or another, and we all need Him. As a believer in Jesus Christ, He is on your team. He is for you. He is for your redemption. He is for your sanctification. He died for you while you still sinned. Right or left, wrong or right, He is for you. He is patient with us as we learn and grow and understands the frustrations that we face. He walks with us through the valleys, and He delights in our newfound wisdom and growth.

3. Genie in a Bottle Jesus

Your wish is not necessarily His command. We're often mystified when we clasp our hands tightly together and summon Jesus to answer our every request and nothing happens. We become deflated by what we believe is unanswered prayer, allowing our faith to increase or decrease by what we perceive. If you're a parent, chances are you desire a good relationship with your child. But if your child asks for \$10 and you say no, does that mean they stop believing in you and the relationship is destroyed? Of course not. In the same way, you must consider what you are asking of Jesus. What are your expectations? And are you still going to believe in Him even when you don't get your way?

4. I'll Teach You Jesus

Imagine what your relationship with your child would look like if these were some of the requirements: You will meet me at 5 every morning, I don't care if you didn't sleep. Now tell me what you want. I may or may not give it to you. If you have been completely impossible to deal with, I might sprain your ankle or give you a brain tumor to teach you something. Laughable? Sure. But how many of us believe in this works-based and punishment-loving Jesus? He died while we still sinned. He came to bind up the brokenhearted, not break our hearts and spirits to keep us in line.

5. You Can Take It Jesus

"God won't give you more than you can handle." Do I look like I can handle cancer? Or bankruptcy, a natural disaster or the death of a child? Do I even look like I could handle an itchy rash? Scripture teaches that we can't handle anything apart from Christ. Far from doling out sickness or discomfort or tragedy, He promises to be with us in times of need. In our weakness, He shows Himself strong.

6. I Couldn't Care Less Jesus

Sometimes we feel like He is nowhere to be found. We call, and there is no answer. This Jesus is not the compassionate Christ who laid down His life for ours. Still, in times of heartache, it is hard to understand why He doesn't answer. He has shown me it is OK to question Him. My most favorite prayer in these seasons? "Lord, help my unbelief." A relationship with Jesus is a journey.

There will be ups and downs. He can take the heat — He proved that through the cross. It is OK to ask why. He always shows up, every time. Ask, seek, knock. He will answer.

7. Church Jesus

“The Law is Holy and Good, but it doesn’t make me Holy and Good,” says author and teacher Tricia Gunn. No matter how good a church and its teaching of the Word of God, it does not make me holy. Paul reminds us, do not neglect the assembly (Hebrews 10:25). Yes, hold each other up, hold each other accountable, and by all means encourage one another. But if the pew is shaken, guess what shouldn’t be? You and Jesus. Your relationship with Jesus is separate and not dependent on the church. No matter what unexpected challenges happen in the church, you and Jesus should still be on solid ground. The church is made up of imperfect people, while Jesus is perfect and holy.

8. Rule-Play Jesus

This Jesus and I have been super tight for many years. I obeyed all the rules. I even laminated a list and used color-coordinated markers to check off my accomplishments, believing they counted me worthy. Beloved, salvation is the Cross plus nothing. The thief on the cross was asked only to believe. There was really nothing left for him to do. He couldn’t attend a service, memorize Scripture, sing in the choir, take a meal to a neighbor, volunteer or wash the altar clothes. He was made righteous because he said yes to Jesus. There was no other requirement to fulfill. There is nothing that can make the perfected work of the Cross any more perfect. Your yes to Jesus counts you as righteous. Toss out the rules of religiosity and bask in the refreshment of relationship.

9. Confused Jesus

A couple years ago I went to a pastor and asked some questions about the Sermon on the Mount. The pastor laughed and said, “Yes, ours is not to understand. Ours is just to obey. Jesus was a confusing guy.” I lived with this, heavy on my heart. It would be two more years before I heard a sermon by another pastor and was undone by the revelation that Jesus was not confusing. Jesus fulfilled the Law and set us free from this heavy burden of condemnation. Jesus died to set me free. There is nothing confusing about this. We walk free from condemnation in the grip of grace.

10. If/Then Jesus

This is the most elusive and deceptive Jesus. If I do such and such, then Christ will do what I expect. But Jesus cannot be manipulated, and our works do not make Him move. Our good deeds do not make him love us more. And most importantly, nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus. The belief that “If I do or do not do, then Jesus will or won’t do” is a Jesus of colossal works. This Jesus keeps us in bondage to busyness and striving that keeps us apart from the good nature of a Jesus who just simply loves. He loved perfectly so that we might be together for eternity. That was all. Simply Jesus.

Was there a twinge or flutter in your spirit? One that said, “Oh, that is the Jesus I have been serving?” I know as I came to a place of knowing and loving the real Jesus I saw pieces of the false Jesuses falling away and more of His natural and good character shining through. Will you pray this prayer with me? “Jesus, I said yes to you. I want only you. The real you. All of you. You promised that if I seek I will find. Help me seek the truth and keep my eyes wholly fixated on the true you. Amen.”

Jami Amerine, M.Ed., is author of “Stolen Jesus an Unconventional Search for the Real Saviour”

OLIVE BRANCH UPDATE



Mlombwa is part of the group of six original orphans that came to Zion Home in 2007. This is a recent update. Aren't our Zion Home kids amazing!!

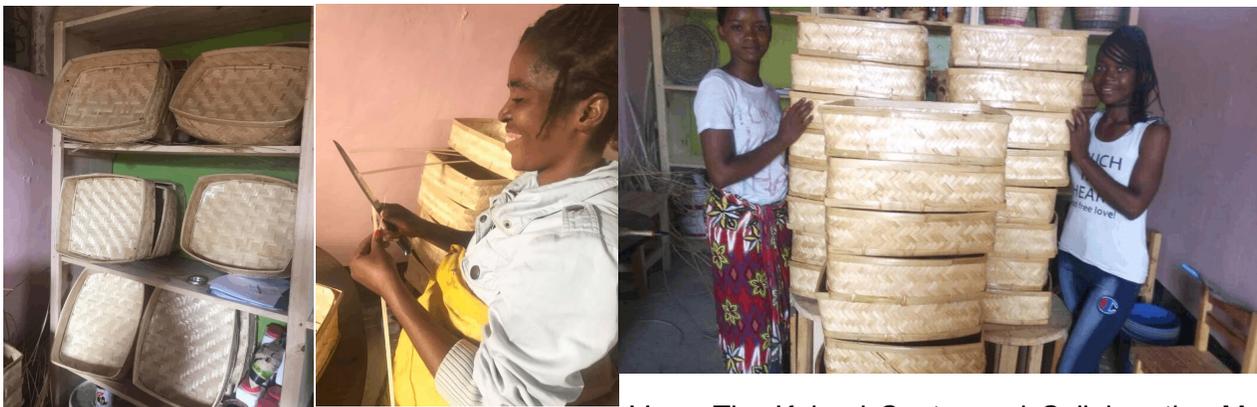
Born in the village of Mahango, Mlombwa Yassin is one of the older girls at the Zion Home. At the age of 19, she is on course to complete secondary school in May of 2018, and is looking forward to her very bright future.

“My plan is to get a job. I want to go to university even though I'm not sure what I want to study. Maybe medicine or bio-chemistry - I am not quite sure yet. I would like to study in Arusha or Dodoma, to see some of the country outside of Mbeya. I'm going to finish Form Six in May. I study chemistry, geography, biology, along with general studies and math. It's really tough but I need to push myself so I can pass.”

Mlombwa is a very friendly, out-going, and caring person. The smaller children all look up to her and she is regularly entrusted with teaching them a lesson or two in the classroom.

What the Olive Branch has provided her with is not lost on Mlombwa. Her home schooling from Standard 4 (4th grade) has meant the transition from Swahili in primary school to English in secondary school was smoother for her than for most. She's very grateful and wants to give back.

“I would like to help this organisation because it helps other people, especially in the villages, in whatever way I can.”



Vero, The Kubuni Centre and Collaborative Manager and her mentees, Feby and Zaituni, finished 30 beautiful, bamboo baskets for a hotel in Dar-es-Salaam! Well done and we are very excited to see what the future holds of Maisha Bamboo.

Dear Members and Friends of Zion,

You will see in our schedule listed above, that Bishop Michael Pryse is coming to Zion on January 28. He will be preaching that day followed by a town hall meeting. Bishop Pryse along with members who have been showing up for services, have grave concerns about the future of Zion. The main topic for discussion will be the closing of Zion. The Bishop and Synod no longer see Zion as a viable congregation.

These are the attendance numbers for the past few months. The organist, pastor and spouse have been removed from the count. Most of the counts above 4 include 2 children and an infant.

Sept 3	4
Sept. 10	4
Sept 17	4
Sept 24	8
Oct 1	7
Oct 8	4
Oct 15	10
Oct 22	8
Oct 29	(9 Zion members attended Toronto Area Reformation service downtown)
Nov 5	7
Nov 12	10
Nov 19	7
Nov 26	4
Dec 3	2
Dec 10	6
Dec 17	2
Dec 24	2 (morning service Advent 4)
Dec 24	19 (3 were relatives of pianists for Christmas Eve - 16 Zion members)
Dec 31	1
Jan 7	1

With these numbers, it is not possible to carry on any sort of meaningful ministry. It's not easy to preach to one or two people.

It's a very sad situation, but these are the facts.

It is most important that everyone attend the meeting and discussion. Everyone's opinion, thoughts, reflections are valuable and essential as we face this dark time in Zion's faith journey. Please keep Zion in your prayers.