

# ZION HERALD – FEBRUARY 2018

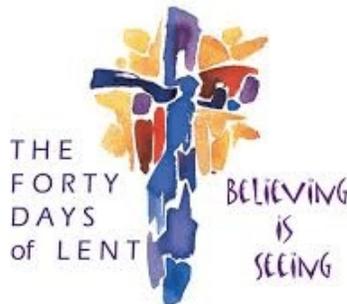
*We are a congregation that strives to be an inviting, faithful, and growing presence in our community and in our world, with a passion for living and spreading the love of Jesus Christ by using our spiritual and material gifts in the service of God's people*

## ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

8795 Keele Street, Box 576 Maple, Ontario L6A 1S5

[www.zionmaple.ca](http://www.zionmaple.ca) Email: [zion.maple@gmail.com](mailto:zion.maple@gmail.com)

Pastor Linda Douglas Phone: (905) 417-0519



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Feb 04	10:00 am	Worship	Epiphany 5	Woman at the Well
Feb 11	10:00 am	Worship	Epiphany 6	The Man Born Blind
<b>Feb 14</b>	<b>7:30 pm</b>	<b>Worship</b>	<b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>The Good Shepherd</b>
Feb 18	10:00 am	Worship	Lent 1	Jesus Raises Lazarus
<b>Feb 19</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Council Meeting</b>		
Feb 25	10:00 am	Worship	Lent 2	Jesus Washes Feet
<b>GENERAL ANNUAL MEETING FOLLOWING WORSHIP</b>				
<b>Mar 04</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Worship</b>	<b>Lent 3</b>	<b>Peter's Denial</b>
Mar 11	10:00 am	Worship	Lent 4	Jesus and Pilot
<b>Mar 18</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Worship</b>	<b>Lent 5</b>	<b>Jesus Condemned</b>
Mar 25	10:00 am	Worship	Palm Sunday	The Crucified Messiah

### 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)



For those who have not been in church lately and missed my letter of resignation, I would like to share with you the fact that I am resigning from Zion as your pastor effective June 3. My last worship service will be May 20, followed by two weeks of vacation. Your council will be working with Synod staff on Zion's future plans and ministry. I have enjoyed my fifteen years of ministry with you. But preaching to one, two, or three people Sunday after Sunday has become rather depressing and de-spiriting. I will continue in my call to serve God's people where I am truly needed. Hopefully, some of you will make an effort to worship with me over the next few months.

### **The Olympic ideal**

Over the next two weeks, the eyes of the world will be on PyeongChang, South Korea, as the best winter sports athletes from across the globe gather to compete for gold, silver and bronze medals. Although many fans and countries may see the games as a chance to claim international bragging rights, the Olympic Games themselves don't keep track of medal totals and don't promote them as an official statistic of the games. Also, there's no official recognition of the leading countries at the end of the games.

Instead, according to the Olympic Charter, the Olympic ideal "is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity."

It's a grand ideal that's often juxtaposed with the actual history of the Games, a history that's filled with not only "the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat" but also with political tensions, scandals, protests, and even violence like the 1972 massacre of Israeli athletes in Munich. This year, major scandals forming the backdrop of the Olympic Games include the ongoing sexual assault case against former USA Gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar as well as the ongoing Russian doping scandal.

However, despite the fact that the Olympic ideal has been tarnished throughout the history of the Games, the ideals themselves and the fabric of the Olympic spirit remain visible at each of these worldwide gatherings, where athletes push one another to compete at the highest level. It's this Olympic ideal that has much to teach us.

### **Opening ceremony**

The Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games is well-known for its spectacular displays that embody the host city's culture, values, and achievements. In addition to these displays of art, culture, and music, the ceremony also includes the Parade of Nations, which this year includes 93 countries. In 1924, at the first Winter Olympics in Chamonix, France, there were only 16 participating nations.

Every two years, hundreds of millions of people from around the world tune in to watch the Opening Ceremony and the Parade of Nations. The television commentary is similar to that of other major parades, with tidbits about the history or culture of each nation. For the most part, however, the focus remains on the athletes, their style of dress and their hopes for success in the upcoming competitions. Other highlights of the Opening Ceremony include the lighting of the Olympic torch, which is the conclusion of a continent-crossing relay that begins in Olympia, Greece, months before the kickoff of the Olympic Games. The lighting of the torch symbolically opens the Games, and the torch remains lit until the Closing Ceremony two weeks later.

### **The Olympic spirit**

On an individual level, the Olympic spirit is embodied in the motto *Citius, Altius, Fortius*, which means "Swifter, Higher, Stronger." It's found in a constant striving for greater excellence in fields of athletic competition. Though competing against one another, individuals also strive for their own personal improvement.

The dedication necessary even to become a member of an Olympic team, let alone win a medal, can be all consuming and involves maintaining a strict training regimen as part of their lifestyle for years on end. The result is that records are eclipsed regularly at each of the Olympic Games as athletes attain their goals of being swifter, going higher and becoming stronger.

On an international level, the Olympic spirit focuses on mutual respect, dialogue, and peacemaking. As noted in the Olympic Charter, the intention of the Olympic Games is to create opportunities for humanity to live in harmony with one another, promoting peace and preserving human dignity. The competition is only a means to those ends. Remember, there's no official declaration honoring the country with the largest number of medals or of gold medals.

The Olympic spirit focuses on competition as a means of being together as a world community. This aspect of the Olympic spirit is embodied by the Olympic symbol that's widely recognized around the world. The symbol consists of five rings, each of a different color. The rings symbolize the five continents, with the Americas, North and South, combined as one. The rings are interlocked as a sign of unity while maintaining the diversity of different colors.

### **Faith and the Olympic spirit**

The Olympic Games welcome people of all religions as well as all nationalities. The Olympic Charter even disallows the opportunity for speech-making so that competitions between the athletes, and not the countries, remain the focus. When Adolf Hitler sought to co-opt the Games in Berlin in 1936 to show racial superiority, African-American athlete Jesse Owens put the lie to that belief by winning four gold medals. The Olympic spirit focuses not on that which would divide us but rather on that which unites us in our common humanity.

For us as Christians, this is part of our ideal as well. The times when there are hints of a life lived together in peace and harmony, such as when North and South Korea agree to field a unified Korean team, are for us a vision of God's kingdom. Jesus taught a great deal about the kingdom of God (or the kingdom of heaven). These moments when peace and harmony break through are a glimpse of God's kingdom in our midst, a preview of what's yet to come. As N. T. Wright states in his book *Surprised by Hope*, these are "thin places" where heaven and earth nearly touch.

Christian faith also teaches us that taking care of our bodies is a way of honoring God, because we're taking care of a gift that God has given us. By watching those who have honed their bodies to their peak, we're inspired to see them embrace the beauty and potential of this gift that God has given each of us. We may also be inspired in other ways to seek, to grow and to improve in all things that we undertake as part of our life's work. Despite the tensions produced by the Olympic Games, there are a great many benefits not only to the competitors but also to the spectators.

## OLIVE BRANCH UPDATE

**SAVE THE DATE  
THE OLIVE BRANCH FOR CHILDREN GALA  
APRIL 27TH, 2018  
HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**



**27 APRIL 6:00–11:00**

**BELLEVUE MANOR  
8083 JANE STREET**

**TICKETS \$135 (\$65 TAX RECEIPT)  
CAN BE PURCHASED ONLINE OR FROM THE PASTOR**

**INCLUDES:  
5 COURSE DINNER  
ENTERTAINMENT  
RAFFLE  
SILENT AUCTION  
OPEN BAR**

**UPDATE ON LAST YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS**