

# ZION HERALD – MAY 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



# Love. Grow. Serve.

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

<b>May 06</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Worship</b>	<b>Easter 6</b>	<b>Partnership in the Gospel</b>
<b>PASTOR'S FAREWELL BBQ MARKING 15 YEARS OF SERVICE TO ZION</b>				
May 13	10:00 am	Worship	Easter 7	The Christ Hymn
<b>May 20</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Worship</b>	<b>Pentecost</b>	<b>Rejoice in the Lord</b>
<b>Pastor's last Sunday at Zion</b>				
May 22	7:00 pm	Council		
<b>May 27</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Worship</b>	<b>Supply Pastor</b>	
Jun 03	10:00 am	Worship	Supply Pastor	

### 2016 Zion Council

Nick Beck (Chair) Wayne McCracken (Vice Chair) Mickford Durgana Christine Gulyasik  
Ginette McCracken Alethia McIntosh Ed Strath Ingrid Beck (Treasurer)

### Non-Council Positions

Brian Cartwright (Recording Secretary)

## **A Hopeful Earth**

*(from A Hopeful Earth: Faith, Science and the Message of Jesus by Sally Dyck)*

Genesis 1 is not a "how to create a universe" cookbook; it doesn't answer our question of how, but it does answer other questions, such as what our relationship is to God, to other creatures, and to the earth itself. The creation story is a beautiful liturgical poem about the home that God made for and gave to us. Carefully reviewing Genesis 1 in terms of the order of creation, we can recognize that it's not meant to describe how creation came into being. What do you see in this ordering of creation? On the first day God created the heavens and the earth and light, but it wasn't until the fourth day that God created the sun and the moon, which give and reflect light on earth. If Genesis 1 were a how-to manual, wouldn't the sun and the moon have been created on the day that light, day, and night were created?

Likewise, on the second day the sky and the sea were created, but it was not until the fifth day that the species that fill the sky and the sea were created: birds and fish. On the third day earth's dry land, its vegetation, and the definition of the sea were formed, but it was not until the sixth day that the dry land was filled with animals, humanity, and vegetation for food. Instead of giving a how-to approach to the story of creation, the ordering of creation in Genesis is a mnemonic device by ancient storytellers so they could remember the way to tell this beautiful story and thereby keep the telling of it consistent over time. Eventually the story was written down. Its beauty and message are in the proclamation and affirmation that God created all; it is God's creation, and God established the laws of nature as part of that existing order.

People of faith began to develop the field of science. It's hard for our modern minds to understand the role that Christianity played in bringing about the development of science. "What?" you may be asking. "I thought science and faith were always at odds with each other!" We forget that science and faith haven't always been at odds with each other. That's a relatively recent phenomenon, spanning mostly the twentieth century. The history of science and Christianity is a complex relationship, but it has not always been one of conflict. In fact, the Christian faith actually encouraged scientific observation, exploration, and experimentation.

David A Wilkinson has a PhD in theoretical astrophysics. At least that was his first career. But then he became a British Methodist clergyperson. He writes that our Judeo-Christian faith encouraged science because the universe was created by God, and as humans we can never figure it out solely with our minds. We need to observe it, ponder it, explore it, and experiment with it in order to better understand it. Wilkinson also argues that since God created humanity in God's own image, our fundamental belief is that we can also come to understand these laws of nature as we observe them, record them, analyze them, and build on them over the ages. This is the result of a miraculous mind that God created and that is able to become sophisticated in methods of observation. Therefore, the Judeo-Christian tradition provided the impetus for the gift of the scientific community. Science and technology aren't in opposition to our faith, but we're still to avoid insisting that science and technology should save us from our ecological sins.

One temptation is to believe that science and technology will save us. I know people who think that they can eat and live however they want because by the time the effects of their habits influence their health, there will be a pill or a treatment to change their lifestyle outcomes. Too often we have had this perspective on the creation crisis: science and technology will take care of any accidents or the overall negative impact of our living. We can't make science our idol; we can't just trust science and technology to save us from the ecological mess we're in because of who we are: followers of Jesus. Will we make the lifestyle changes of which Jesus spoke in order to restore some semblance of health to this earth, God's creation? Or will we be tempted to trust solely in science and technology to bail us out?



The time has arrived for us to part. Farewells are always hard. We have shared fifteen years together through good times and some not such good times. I had my "Exit Interview" with Pr. Doug Reble, assistant to the Bishop, a couple of weeks ago. One of the questions that is part of the interview asked what my hopes and dreams were when I began my ministry at Zion. My hope was that I would be able to use my gifts, talents, and experience to inspire the congregation, to bring joy, to work together in service to God and community. I was hoping that the congregation would be just as excited as I was to begin our ministry together.

The next part dealt with the joys and sorrows of our ministry together. Confirmation classes were a real joy. Each group was so very different and they did their best to challenge me. The confirmation class with Faith was a lot of fun. I took the youth to Seminary Youth Day which was enjoyed by all the kids. Including children in communion rather than waiting for confirmation was a happy, momentous occasion. We had special communion classes for children and parents before they communed. Having the kids participate in Christmas Eve services in a creative way rather than separate pageants was fun and inspirational.

Our 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration year was a great historical event. We had a beautiful new sign made. In our search for some special way to mark this special anniversary, after hearing about the work Deborah McCracken was doing in Tanzania, our congregation decided to support her work and set a goal of raising five thousand dollars with two special concerts. Our spring concert was a Bach Contata where our choir joined a guest choir for a delightful evening. Our fall concert was a Gospel music event enjoyed by all. We did reach and surpass our goal. With the money raised, Deborah was able to open Zion Home, a place for HIV/AIDS orphans. Since 2006 we have had a concert almost every year as we continued to support the Olive Branch for Children. With our Faithlife Chapter and the matching funds, we were able to achieve our goal every year. The concerts have brought our supporters a variety of music and entertainment.

I was able to go to Tanzania twice (2008 and 2010) to volunteer at Zion Home for a month during each trip. It was wonderful to see the work that was being carried on there. I baptized a number of our orphans (over 40 now) during both trips. We had bible studies and worship services. Working with Deborah and observing the work being carried out by the Olive Branch was a life-changing experience.

Baptisms and weddings were times of joy for all. Although we had several baptisms, weddings were fewer, only two members. Deborah McCracken's wedding was the most challenging - the service was prepared in both Swahili and English. Our choir sang beautifully for Deborah and Putiyei as they exchanged their vows.

The other highlight was the Toronto Conference celebration of Synod's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary which was held at Zion. Zion is where the Eastern Synod was born so it was a logical place for the wonderful service. Each congregation created a pennant representing their history or mission and these were hung from the balcony. Our choir inspired and amazed all who attended.

Being elected dean of the Toronto Conference was another joy. I started annual Reformation services for the Conference with a “mass choir” representing a number of our congregations. It was fun picking out the music for the choirs. Each congregation practised on their own and then came together for the service. At one of the services we collected sweaters for Syria. I started an annual pastors’ retreat which was very well attended. The Conference work was inspiring and affirming. Serving on the Board of Camp Edgewood was another highlight, even though the Ministry forced us to close the camp.

Another joy has been our organist Jill and our choir which sadly has stopped supporting our worship services. Visitors were always amazed by the talent and we were so proud of our choir. The children’s Bell choir directed by Jill was a great highlight for our congregation.

Helping families work through their grieving and preparing meaningful funeral services despite the sadness, also brought joy in its own way. It is always a great privilege to be a part of this sensitive and difficult time in people’s lives. Being there for our members during times of illness or other needs has been a highlight and meaningful experience.

For about ten years, I provided Maple Health centre with monthly worship services with communion, as well as some Christmas services and a memorial service. Sadly, the administration changed and the services of a number of worship leaders were no longer needed.

The sorrows were a little more difficult to address. The greatest sorrow is the gradual decline in membership and overall lack of interest in the life of Zion. I have continually offered Bible studies, discussions, Adult Sunday School, Home church, and very little to no interest has been shown. That has made me very sad, the inability to grow the congregation spiritually. I tried Lenten services but not a single person showed up. Ideas to reach out to the community and new ministries were never supported. Those were my greatest sorrows or low points.

I also found it dispiriting to discover that a member has been sick, or hospitalized, had surgery or faced other health issues, but never contacted me or let me know that they were going through a difficult time. We can’t support one another when we don’t know of the need.

The other sad issue is that we simply don’t have the people to take care of all the needs of the congregation and it is more and more difficult to keep going without mutual support and caring. The exit interview was a great time for reflection on fifteen years of ministry.

As I move on to my next call, I will treasure the time spent at Zion, especially all the great people who have supported me and stood by me. This will be a time of joy and sorrow - joy as I remember all the good times and great people, and sorrow as I leave a struggling congregation. I will hold you in my prayers and ask that you do the same for me. May God bless each and every one of you and your future ministry.

