

A publication for the family of Zion Lutheran Church, 202 Erie St., Stratford, ON N5A 2M8

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## PASTOR'S DEVOTIONAL

*"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place." – Acts 2:1.*

Gatherings



In my childhood, our family life was defined by our gatherings. Even though the Laustsen family was quite large (my father is the oldest of eight children, and the family took the biblical command to “be fruitful and multiply” very seriously!) we always found occasions and places in which to gather. On Christmas Eve, the family rented the local Grange Hall for our large holiday celebration. On Labour Day weekend, we gathered at my Aunt Alice and Uncle Norman’s cottage on Culver Lake for our summer picnic. There would be frequent summer picnics on my Aunt Alice and Uncle Bud’s farm, and the almost annual Confirmation celebrations for my many cousins. Our gatherings were at the heart of who we were as a family.

Unfortunately, time and circumstances have made those family gatherings far more rare. While in my childhood most of the family lived within a half hour of each other, we have now spread out across the USA (and in my case Canada), so getting together is much more difficult. Most of my father’s generation have passed away, so the people who organized these gatherings are no longer with us. The travel restrictions of Covid made gatherings all but impossible; this summer, Susan and I are planning to travel to New Jersey to see our family for the first time in five years. On the rare occasions when we are together, we talk about those old family gatherings and how important they were to us, and how much we miss them.

From its beginning, the Church of Jesus Christ was defined by its gatherings. The word “church” (*ekklesia*) means “assembly,” with its roots in Jesus’ assembling disciples to be his

followers. After his resurrection, our Lord instructed his disciples that they will be sent out as witnesses to his Gospel, and that *"I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."* (Luke 24:49). This promise is fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, a harvest festival when the Jewish people gathered in the holy city of Jerusalem. On this day, as the disciples are gathered together in one place, *"suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting ... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability."* (Acts 2:2-4). The mission and ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ begins on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit comes into the gathering of the disciples of Christ so that the people gathered in Jerusalem could *"in our own languages hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."* (Acts 2:11).

As we celebrate the Day of Pentecost this month, we are reminded that the church's ongoing ministry is rooted in our life as a gathered community. Our Lutheran confession documents define the church as *"the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel."* (Augsburg Confession, Article VII). Our life as a faith community is centred on our gatherings around Word and Sacrament, where we hear God's Word, receive the Lord's Supper, and are empowered to go forth and serve as God's people in our community and world. We gather for celebrations of baptism, confirmation, and marriage; we gather to offer each other our strength and support at the hour of death; and we gather to share in the fellowship that is ours in the ties that bind us together as sisters and brothers in Christ.

These past few years have been very challenging for a community that is defined by our physical gatherings. While we were able to stay in touch with each other through phone calls, Zoom meetings, and other electronic forms of communication, we yearned for the connections that can only be made when we are in-person. We rejoiced when we were able to gather as a community, and mourned the times when restrictions forced us to stay apart. While we are still living with Covid and observing appropriate guidelines, our ability to gather in worship and on other occasions is a cause for celebration. These extraordinary times will remind us never to take opportunities for gathering for granted, since they are truly times of blessedness for the community that believes our Lord's promise that *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:20).

**This month, we have an opportunity for a special gathering of Lutherans from across the Nith Valley Ministry Area. On Sunday, June 12, we will gather at the bandshell in Upper Queen's Park for a worship celebration that will bring together congregations**

**from across the area for a time of worship and fellowship that has not been possible for some time. The worship service will begin at 11:00 am (in case of rain, we will gather in the picnic pavilion behind the bandshell) and will be followed by a brown-bag lunch and time of fellowship, enjoying all that our city's parks have to offer us. There will be no worship in our building that morning as we come together with our sisters and brothers in Christ to worship and praise our Lord as the assembly of God's people.**

We are looking forward to gathering with our family this summer, and look forward to continue to gather with our family in Christ here at Zion and the Nith Valley as together we rejoice in all that is ours when our Lord gathers us as God's holy people, people who are "*one in the Spirit, one in the Lord.*"

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Jeff Laustsen

## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MAY 18, 2022 CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**



The May 18, 2022 Congregational Council Meeting was held in person in the Fellowship Hall and via Zoom Conference.

A decision was made to remove the ropes from the pews. Wearing masks, social distancing and pre-registration for services will continue.

Plans are being firmed up for the Sunday Service at Queen's Park on Sunday, September 11, 2022 which will also be Rally Sunday for Sunday School re-opening.

We have been incurring problems with the new phone system; therefore, other options are being considered at this time to resolve the problems.

A request has been received to bring the bell ropes down so that it will not be necessary to climb the stairs for bell ringing. This project is being completed.

It appears Katharses will not be renting our parking lot across from the Church this year. We have not been told officially, but the trailer is parked on another lot within the city, so we need to assume that they have made other arrangements.

Tom Cosstick attended a meeting of the Nith Valley Ministerial Area Churches on April 27,

2022 and shared with Congregational Council the topics that were discussed. Some of the thought-provoking topics include focusing ministry on children, youth and families, difficulty finding volunteers, sharing of a Youth Minister within the congregations of Nith Valley and the balance between holding on to traditional services versus contemporary services and the challenges presented by moving forward with this change.

Donations/offering, can continue to be completed via our Church website, including an option for E-Transfer, in addition to the PAR program, mailing cheques or dropping off donations either at the Church office weekday mornings or in the locked mailbox at your convenience.

## **A MESSAGE FROM YOUR TREASURER**

As we approach the summer months, I want to share with each of you what has been happening financially during the first four months of this year.



The current deficit is much higher in comparison to last year. Part of the reason for this increase is that we no longer receive the Wage Subsidy, Rent Subsidy and the income from the Rohfritsch Trust. Overall the envelope (includes PAR) income is down marginally. However, due to the loss of the income from the three sources that I mentioned earlier, the current deficit at the end of April was \$40,739.43 in comparison to \$23,180.60 the year earlier, the difference being \$17,558.83. The income from the three sources amounted to \$11,500.00 approximately, however, at the same time our overall expenses are up by \$5,300.00 approximately which makes up the largest amount of the increase in the deficit. The heating costs alone make up a large portion of the increase in our expenses.

In my role as Treasurer, I am required to keep our members informed of the financial status of our church. We ask that you prayerfully consider your church financially at this time. Your financial support is very much needed.

Gerald Cook, Treasurer

On behalf of the Finance Committee and Congregational Council.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS**

Once again, we are reaching out to you as we are trying to organize classes and arrange for

teachers in anticipation for the return of Sunday School in September.



For this reason, we ask that all parents wishing to enroll your child(ren) in the Sunday School program, please fill out the attached survey. If for some reason you are unable to complete the survey, you can also email your name, your child(ren)'s name(s), current grade(s), and whether or not they would be participating in Sunday School to Paula at

[pauley\\_mcaughton@hotmail.com](mailto:pauley_mcaughton@hotmail.com)

Please click here for the survey: <https://forms.glc/bS3dCdiEaSmrnXLEA>

Once we have our students registered, we will be in a better position to arrange for teachers. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your assistance and co-operation!

Paula McNaughton, Sunday School Coordinator

## PLEASE ACCEPT OUR APOLOGIES



Our current phone system is *not* working as it should. We are very sorry if you have been trying to call the office and you have not been able to get through.

If you need to get in touch with us and it is an "emergency" please call Pastor Jeff's cell phone at 519-274-1300.

Otherwise, you may send us an email at [zionlc@golden.net](mailto:zionlc@golden.net) and we will get back to you.

The problem is being worked on. Thank you for your patience during this stressful time.

## CHAIR YOGA UPDATE



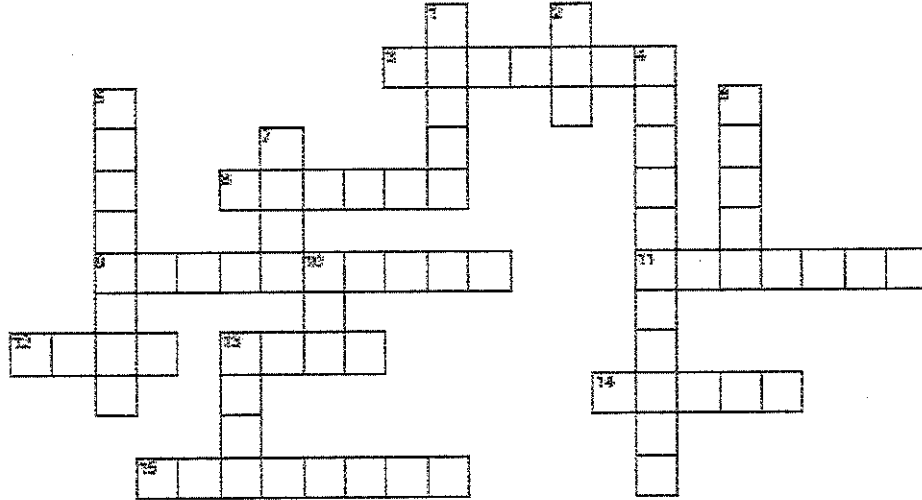
"*Chair Yoga*" has been a "BIG" success at Zion and the participants continue to have fun. The benefits of "chair yoga" include: increased flexibility, improved strength, improved proprioception, reduce stress and pain, improve pain management skills and sleep better. Everyone is welcome!! So if you want to

join in on the fun on **Tuesday mornings from 9:30 A.M. to 10:30 A.M.** please call Jane in the office at 519-271-8527.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Father's Day Crossword



### ACROSS

- 3. Sleep in a tent.
- 8. Day of the week that Father's Day is celebrated.
- 9. Outdoor Cooking.
- 11. Outdoor activity that involves sitting in a boat.
- 12. Opposite of female.
- 13. My father is my \_\_\_\_\_.
- 14. Singular form of children.
- 15. My father loves to watch \_\_\_\_\_ on the TV.

### DOWN

- 1. Another name for father.
- 2. Narrow cloth worn around the neck.
- 4. Dad's Father.
- 5. A favorite Sunday sport.
- 6. To fix things Dad needs his...
- 7. Month of the year that we celebrate Father's day.
- 10. Mode of transportation.
- 13. Give Dad \_\_\_\_\_ and Kisses on Father's Day.

HERO	DADDY	GRANDFATHER	FOOTBALL
FISHING	JUNE	TOOLS	CAR
TIE	CHILD	CAMPING	SUNDAY
BASEBALL	HUGS	BASEBALLING	MALE

# Father's Day Word Scramble

**DIRECTIONS:** Unscramble the letters to form the names of ten different words to describe Dad. Then unscramble the shaded letters to answer the riddle.

RFUELAC

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OSDAEHNM

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ONRGTS

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YALLO

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LUEHPFL

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DINK

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RLEECV

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EEVDTOD

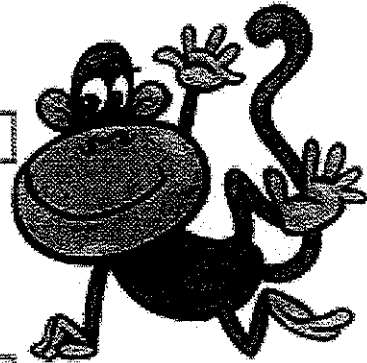
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NLILTARIB

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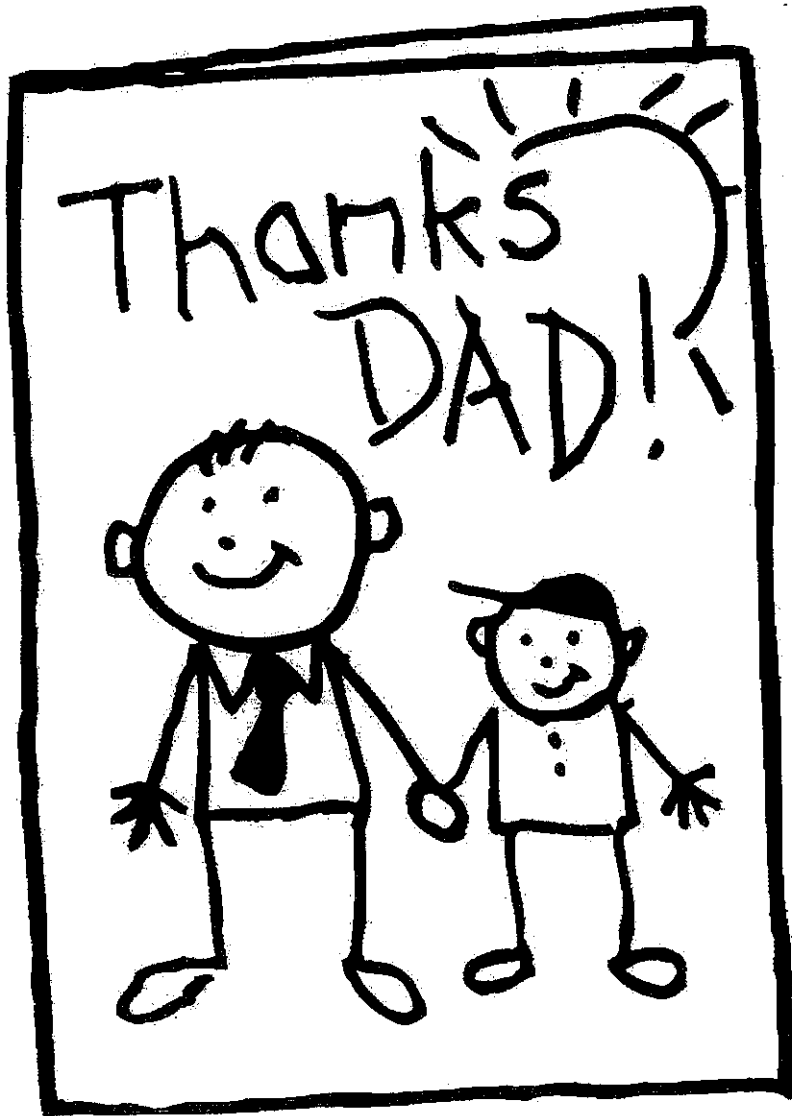
WIES

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What do you call a monkey who is just like his father?

										!



WISHING ALL FATHERS, FATHERS-TO-BE  
& GRANDFATHERS  
A VERY "HAPPY FATHER'S DAY"

*From Pastor Jeff, Sister Jean*

*Jane & Sue*

*Paul, Laura & Sandra*