



The Gathering

Zion Presbyterian Church Newsletter

February 2026

*Let all that you do
be done in love.
1 Corinthians 16:14*



HAPPY
VALENTINE'S DAY!

Tuesday evening and Thursday morning Bible Study are in full swing. Our learning to be like Jesus is based on a course by Pastor Randy Fazee of Westside Family Church in Lenexa, Kansas. Over 50 of us have signed up to participate. If you are unable to join us, you can check out some of the videos on You Tube or find out from our ministers if you are able to join one of the small groups.



Believe | The Church | 10-21-18 | Randy Fazee

Westside Family Church • 1.2K views



John's Thoughts

Oh! What a Wonderful, Wonderful Day!

Reading from Matthew 8: 1-3 (NIV) *"When he (Jesus) came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy."*

Leprosy was a terrifying disease. When a person contracted the disease, he was declared a leper by the priest and was banished from his home and city.

This message from Matthew may be considered a parallel to worldwide unrighteousness, which has affected mankind since Adam and Eve. It's a picture of the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus, and the trust that the leper had in Jesus. Jesus knew this man's trusting heart, so the leper was cured, because of his faith.... immediately, when the leper came to him. No more questions asked... no more doubt about it.... just like that, he was cured because of his faith. He just submitted himself unto the Lord.

Just as the leper was cured of his disease, you and I are forgiven of our unrighteousness, our sin, our shame and guilt, immediately, when we submit our lives unto the healing hand of Jesus, and believe in Him, trusting that he is who he said he is. The verse says, "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy." ... "Immediately!" No need for any doubt or second guessing.

We see another picture of love, mercy, and trusting when we read about the thief on the cross in Luke 23:42, 43. *Then he, (the thief) said "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."*

What a wonderful day for the thief! Although he knew that he was not worthy because of his unrighteousness, Jesus knew that the thief was repentant, he knew his heart, and he assured him of his salvation right then and there. So, like the man with leprosy, and the thief on the cross, we too can find assurance of salvation when we cling to the promises he has blessed us with, accepting Jesus as our saviour, and we too can have a wonderful day leading to everlasting life.

John 3:16 says *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

Jmf (Jan 2026)



Liz's Corner

Greetings Brothers and Sisters!!

Happy Valentine's Day month! I pray you know the love from God that the prophet Isaiah spoke to us about from Isaiah 46:4 - *'I will be your God through all your lifetime, yes, even when your hair is white with age. I made you and I will care for you. I will carry you along and be your Saviour.'* This is love that never fails, never waivers. Ours to have and to hold for ever and ever. We just need to ask for it in prayer. We just need to believe. We know we are sinners and not worthy of God's love. We feel this unworthiness. But through our Lord Jesus, our Saviour, we have hope. Hope that is rooted in God's faithfulness - regardless of our situation.

What to share with you in my February submission to The Gathering has been on my mind since I committed my January thoughts to paper. When, in prayer, I asked Jesus to put upon my heart something that I could submit that would resonate with you all, the melody and lyrics of this Burt Bacharach/Hal David song came to mind. Made popular in 1965 by Jackie DeShannon, I memorized it from listening to CFCY on my little transistor radio and often sang it as a prayer back in the day. It continues to instill in me much comfort and inspiration.

What The World Needs Now

**"Lord, we don't need another mountain; there are mountains and hillsides enough to climb.
There are oceans and rivers enough to cross, enough to last till the end of time.
Lord, we don't need another meadow; there are corn fields and wheat fields enough to grow.
There are sunbeams and moonbeams enough to shine; Oh, listen Lord, if you want to know...
What the world needs now is love, sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of.
What the world needs now is love sweet love; no, not just for some but for everyone."**

Even today, more than a half century later, the world still needs love. This message in song is timeless. When mindfulness, gratefulness and kindness walk hand in hand with love, what a wonderful day this will be for us all. I am so thankful for the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life. Thanks be to God! The greatest of God's commandments, love your neighbour as yourself, is definitely not being put into practice in today's world. If it were, oh, if it were, what would life look like - no hunger, no homelessness, no hate, no war. It starts with you and me. Today, let us be the people who love each other as our Father in heaven loves us. Let us have no fear for tomorrow for tomorrow is in God's hands! Praise the Lord!!! Please pray with me - *Dear Jesus, give us the words to speak that we might bless someone with Your grace and love today and in this new year. Heavenly Father, we know we all fall short of your glory every day. Thank you for your unconditional love. Help us strive to be more like You by being patient and gentle with others. Amen.*

Keep faith my dear friends!

Godspeed

Elizabeth Ferguson



A Word from Evan

It's difficult to turn on a television these days and not see an ad for one of the many food delivery services that have popped up in the last decade. Whether it's a thirty second spot between Double and Final Jeopardy, or a little 5 second pop-up in the corner of the screen while the Leafs are lining up for a face-off, food delivery advertising is everywhere. While picking on annoying ads is a cheap and easy target, there was one particular example that seemed to be everywhere for months: the delivery driver rings the doorbell, and the crowd inside is drawn toward the food at the door in what might very charitably be described as a "dance." While I can't remember which company ran that commercial, and I couldn't tell you much about what the people in it looked like, I remember that draw; the pull toward something which fulfills a vital need.

Jesus certainly had that kind of draw. We can read throughout the Gospels about all the people he pulled towards Himself. We see the disciples who were called and came, dropping whatever work they were in the middle of to follow after Jesus. We read about sinners in need of forgiveness, like Zacchaeus, who climbed out of the sycamore tree when Jesus called on him by name. There were those pulled toward Jesus so that they could learn, such as the rich man who wanted to know how to enter the Kingdom of God, and there were many who came to Jesus to seek healing for themselves or others, like the friends of a paralysed man who cut a hole in the roof and lowered him down when the crowd was so large they couldn't get in through the front door. The crowds! Crowds of people following Jesus everywhere for days on end, even when Jesus tried to get some private time by taking a boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Crowds of thousands following Jesus even without food, so many hungry people that Jesus worked miracles to feed.

Do we feel that pull just as strongly as the ancient Galileans did? Certainly, having Jesus amongst them in person gave them a tangible target onto which they could focus their needs, wants, and desires. You and I may not have the ability to reach out and physically touch our living God, but we must understand that He is with us at all times. For all the ways that our world has changed in two thousand years, we still have the same human needs, and the same Jesus who fulfills them. However you seek God this month, whether in prayer, worship, or service, reach out and seek His healing, His forgiveness, and His love.

Maybe skip the dancing bit though, we're Presbyterians and have a certain reputation to uphold after all.



A WORD FROM JOAN

Pick up your Pen!

As I prepare to do the write up on The Gathering for the Church's Annual Report, I have been thinking about how fortunate we are to have our team of writers who contribute original, interesting and inspiring messages for you every month. They put a lot of thought, heart and soul into them and I always look forward to their arrival in my mailbox. I can always create more space for new writers so if you have a personal, uplifting message you would like to share with other readers, feel free to send a copy to me at gatheringinfo2025@gmail.com and you will have the pleasure of seeing yourself in print!

The Widow's Walk

I wonder how many of you expect to send or receive valentine cards this month? Maybe you will be treated to dinner out or enjoy the gift of a favourite box of chocolates. The cards I have saved over the years came to mind at Christmas when, like many of you, I was deeply moved by the Angel service as the ornaments decorated the branches of the tree in the sanctuary-each an expression of love, like a fond valentine, to someone dear named on it, but who is no longer among us and is dearly missed by friends and family members meaning an empty space has been left in someone's life that no one else can fill and particularly so if this was a husband who got his angel wings and went ahead to heaven leaving wife, children and grandchildren behind to mourn. She will continue living what will become a changed life, especially if the marriage was a long and much celebrated one, dreading celebration days when cards would be exchanged. It is the same for men who become widowers.

God joins couples together in Christian marriage "for as long as we both shall live" and when death separates them, He is concerned, especially for the widow. There is a biblical imperative to look after a widow. Her children and grandchildren have primary duty towards caring for her, but the church has a similar charge to be her guardian, if she has none, (or no family close by) and is left vulnerable and alone – a true widow. These days, in their grief, I have found that many widows turn to the internet where there are groups they can join to ask for advice and share their stories. In private sites they can unburden themselves and describe their struggles which are eye-opening to read and range from dealing with/disposing of their spouse's personal effects, vehicles, machinery and tools, to coping with finances, mortgages, legal issues arising out of the will-matters that the husband always managed. Some are even left with debts they did not know about and then there is the house to cope with as breakages and necessary repairs become a burden that the husband always dealt with. She now has to find someone to turn to for help, hoping she is not going to be scammed.

Aside from those practical concerns, what often dominates the internet discussion are shared insights about a spouse's lingering disease, mental illness, tragic accident and even suicide as well as pleas for help and advice on how to deal with alone ness, loss of support from "friends" who vanish, torment resulting from guilt, remorse about things said or not said, done or not done, lack of sleep and motivation to keep house, take care of themselves, eat properly, and what alarmed and shocked me the most, trying to cope with family and close relatives who turn on them, make unreasonable demands about issues like funeral arrangements, quarrel over the inheritance, want them to get over their grief in a couple of weeks, and move on-nightmarish stuff that is hard to imagine - some of which makes me regret the insensitivity (due to lack of awareness), of every sympathy message I ever sent to a friend who lost her husband. Truth is, no one can ever know what it is like to suffer that kind of loss until it's their turn. It is rare to completely "recover" from the devastation of it or to find someone else to bring back the joy of being cared for.

God knows all this and His word reminds us to act in love, compassion and extraordinary support for widows.

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this; to look after orphans and widows in their distress.

James Ch 1 v 27

Fortunately, some churches do offer grief groups and pastoral care for widows, but it pained me to read of instances when some were treated with indifference. Comforted indeed are those who find themselves in a loving church community that is sensitive, aware and concerned enough to offer support and genuine encouragement. A widows ministry can be a way of ensuring that a church is listening to God and his concern... there are about 80 direct references to widows in Scripture ...that tells us they are special to him. And Jesus in his final moments looked at the apostle John and said, *Here is your mother and from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.* John, 19 v 26-27.

Joan Cumming

The Last Word - Rev Kirk MacLeod

S.A.D.

January can be a sad month in many ways. It's typically the coldest month of the year - with the reminder as I write this, that the temperatures this weekend are supposed to get to -30 with the wind chill. It's also the time of the year when we get the most snow - which may be the reason I finally broke down to buy a "new to me" snowblower. But let's also not forget that with the cold and the snow there is not as much daylight as we like or as we need which brings a different kind of sadness in January.

It's called S.A.D. or "seasonal affective disorder." Some say, "It's just another 'disorder' diagnosed by psychiatrists and psychologists." But to those who get to January and find there is an unexplainable depression that sets in these cold, snowy and dark days, such a diagnosis explains a lot of things. But even in these cold dark days there are reminders that this season will come to an end. The flowers in the picture were given by my daughter Lily to her Mom, Allyson on Allyson's birthday. A burst of life within lots of deadness. I don't see much life in our gardens these days, but these flowers represent that newness that is just below the surface.

In not so many days, Lent will begin, the dreary days of Lent where Easter seems far away. But it's closer than we think, just like the flowers that now adorn our kitchen table. It is the hope of Easter that carries us through the days of Lent and the S.A.D days of January - new life just below the surface. Sometimes we all simply need that reminder. So let me remind you of it today and to encourage you to encourage others you know that might also be finding this season S.A.D. I'd encourage you to get outside and breathe in the fresh air. I would implore you to come out to worship to be in community. I would ask you to put aside your own sadness to encourage another and in doing so you might just find your sadness has also been lifted. Just don't deny it or sluff it off as minor but acknowledge it and also acknowledge that this too will come to an end, before you know it.

If Allyson or I can help in anyway, I hope you will reach out so we can remind you of the joy of the Lord in these S.A.D. days.



Around the Church

Bible Study- BELIEVE! You are invited to study with us on Tuesday evenings at 7pm and Thursday mornings at 10am and come for a cuppa and cookies half an hour before we start.

Choir rehearsals are on Wednesdays at 7pm for Sanctuary Choir with Legato choir (*meaning smooth and connected*) and Marcato choir (*meaning louder and more forceful*) practising at 6.30 on alternate weeks.

Prayer Group meets on Tuesdays at 10am. Your requests for prayer are welcome and kept confidential.

Friends of Faith will meet the last Thursday of the month at 1pm. The program will be announced.

First Place for Health Group meets on Tuesdays at noon. This is a new group that has just started up.

(We hope to be able to report on its activities in one of our future editions of The Gathering, ed.)

DATES TO REMEMBER

February 5 at 7pm- "Pop-up" discussion about bibles and translations so you find the right bible for your needs.

February 15 - congregational meeting after the morning service.

February 28 – Coldest Night of the Year with Zion Zoomers. Contact Beryl Holden at 902 218 9067

Help needed

Over the past few months, the Gathering has been brimming with pictures that let our readers see us fellowshipping, worshipping, learning, fundraising, and providing support to the community. Images add a great deal of interest to the newsletter, so this is a request to those of you who have phones/cameras to send me pictures of church events you attend or activities you are involved in, ***especially if it is one of the ministries*** or groups we have at Zion. As editor, I review articles and information, format the text and plan the layout of the pages which leaves me little time to be a reporter and newsgatherer. Sometimes I grab images from the internet to provide interest, but these are usually small and of poor quality. I also sit on the wrong side of the sanctuary for snapping shots of performers providing special music, so I need someone with a lens near the piano to capture those. There is no need to sign up and feel oppressed by making a commitment. Anyone can snap and send me stuff and I will appreciate it. I will let you know if your pictures are being used and you will be given credit for them. Looking forward to seeing them in my inbox at gatheringinfo2025@gmail.com



February 2026 at Zion Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship Ushers: Kent & Pam	2 3 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health Group 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	4 6:30-Marcato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir	 5 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study 2-Choir Ministry at Andrews of Ch'town 7 pm—Pop up Discussion	 6	 7	
8 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship Ushers: Ron & Elmer	9 6:30pm Stewardship Committee	10 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health Group 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	11 6:30-Legato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir	 12 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study	 13	 14
15 10:30 Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO FOLLOW SERVICE Ushers: Alisha & Eroll	16 17 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health Group 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	 18 12:10 Lenten Service—St. Paul's 6:30-Marcato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir	 19 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Board of Trustees Meeting	 20	 21 3:00 pm Congregational Sleigh Ride at Great Northern Adventures <i>(see bulletin for more info)</i>	 28
22 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship Ushers: Edison & Elaine	23	24 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health Group 6:30 Social Time/ 7 pm Bible Study	 25 12:10 Lenten Service—Zion 6:30-Legato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir	 26 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study 1 pm—Friends of Faith 6:30 pm Session	 27	 28