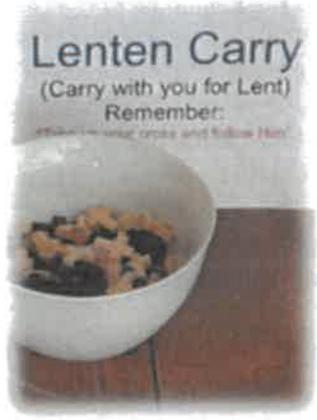
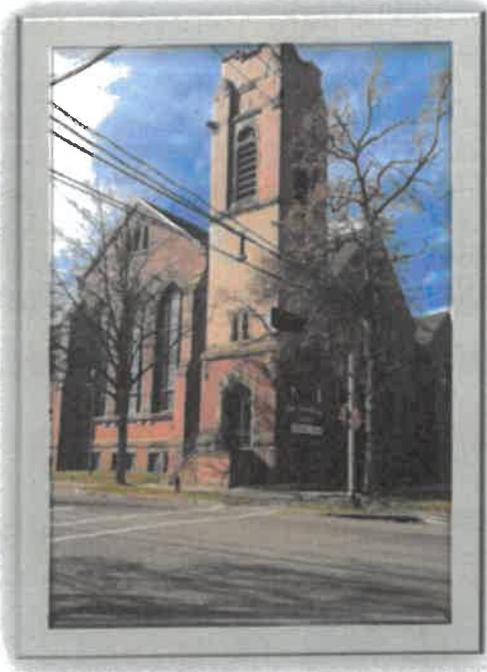


# The Gathering

*A Monthly Newsletter from Zion Presbyterian Church*

*March 2026*



These small wooden crosses are this year's "carry in your pocket" for Lent.

**The Prince Street Churches**  
*Lenten Series 2026*

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**They Were There**  
A study of the various people associated with the Passion of Christ.

**Wednesdays in Lent**  
A short worship service 12:10 pm – 12:30 pm  
Followed by a light lunch.

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Feb 16	St. Paul's Anglican (Ash Wednesday) Peter
Feb 25	Zion Presbyterian Caiaphas
Mar 4	Central Christian Pontius Pilate
Mar 11	The Salvation Army The Centurions
Mar 18	Trinity United Simon of Cyrene
Mar 25	Trinity United The Women of the Cross



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*"Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"*



The quartet from the Great George Street Brass Band who joined the worship service on February 15 and added a rousing new sound to our singing. From the left are Cathy MacDonald, Dylan Ferguson, Pam Forrester and Bruce Lochhead. Thanks to Cathy for the photo!

*The night is far gone, the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Romans 13:12*

## Liz's Corner

Greetings Brothers and Sisters!

I want to extend to our Ministers, staff, Session, Board and all the many volunteers who give to Zion their best efforts to make our church such a welcoming and successful house of God, a heartfelt thank you. The February annual meeting was eye opening, and I am grateful to the congregation for their faithfulness. Thanks be to God!

EASTER IS COMING!! Hallelujah! May the Lord bless you dear people! Family and friends, all!

Last month it was a marvellous gift to share the beginning of the Lenten season with our friends from the Prince Street family of churches. In particular, the Ash Wednesday service at St. Paul's Anglican Church was very moving for me. The congregation was invited to step forward to receive 'the imposition of ashes'. As a lifelong Presbyterian, I understood it was the practice of the Roman Catholic Church alone to have a priest place ashes in the sign of the cross on the forehead of the faithful. So, as I stepped forward to take part in the practice, the thought crossed my mind that my grandparents would be 'rolling over in the grave' to think that I would take part in the service. But as quickly as that thought entered my mind, it was replaced with the thought that the unifying force of Jesus's love was at work amongst us. As the ashes were applied to my forehead, the clergy spoke the words, "*you are dust and to dust you will return*". What a powerful reminder of our human mortality shared by all Christians regardless of their church affiliation. Our bible speaks to this message in Genesis 3:19

*"By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken and to dust you will return."*

and in Ecclesiastes 3:20

*"All go to the same place; all come from dust and to dust all return."*

Today in prayer as I remembered the people in my life who are weighed down with sickness, fear and anxiety and grief and sorrow, the Lord spoke to me to share with them the knowledge that God's love will see them through their days and nights of pain and loneliness. I received strength from His words from Matthew 6:34

*"Don't be anxious for tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow, too. Live one day at a time."*

There is nothing like the encouragement given to us from our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I pray for the Holy Spirit's help in aiding myself and others to find new strength in Him. We know that God's peace isn't an absence of conflict, but a profound sense of security even in distress. When Jesus is your constant companion, He becomes your home, your lifeline.

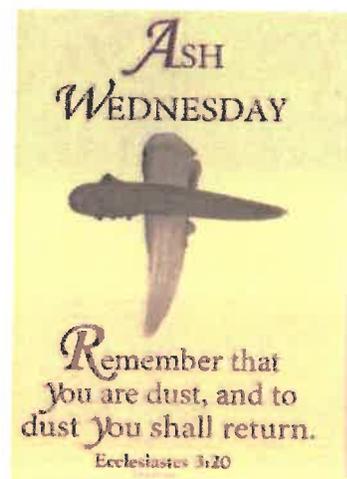
I thank God every day for the blessings He lavishes on me; especially the people He places in my path. Even though I am not worthy, His spirit lives within me providing me with His peace, joy, hope and love. Hallelujah!!

Seek and ye shall find! Keep The Faith!!

Godspeed

Elizabeth Ferguson

The ashes remind us of 2 spiritual realities-our mortality (our ultimate destiny lies beyond earthly existence) and repentance (in the Bible, wearing sackcloth and ashes was a sign of sorrow for sin and a desire for repentance.) ed.





Scott Mac Donald took the new lift for its first trial run (opening celebration to be announced) and bells jingled as a jolly gang turned out wrapped against the chilling cold for the sleigh ride. Thanks, Roylean!



## A Word from Evan

There's a lot of climbing going on in the Bible. Whether mountains or hills, famous biblical names always seem to end up on top of something, usually because God wanted them there. Abraham and Isaac went up (and mercifully, down) a mountain together, and Moses climbed Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. The writers of the psalms often included words that invoked imagery of long climbs and lofty heights.

Jesus too did his share of hiking. Galilee is a rocky region with plenty of hills and mountains, and growing up there must have inured a boy to clambering up, down, over, and around rocks of all shapes and sizes. He spends a lot of his ministry on mountainsides, including the somewhat obviously named Sermon on the Mount. As we enter the season of Lent and prepare for the events of Easter, we will follow Christ as He climbs the Mount of Olives to pray and then makes that terrible final climb to Calvary.

By contrast, there's far fewer hills to climb on PEI, and we have all the advantages of an extra two millennia of technology. Our highest point of elevation is the geographical equivalent of a speedbump at only 142 metres, but having automobiles and paved roads to do all the work for us means we don't even have to worry about so much as a stone in our sandal. Personally, I'm quite a fan of modern technology, and especially the new lift.

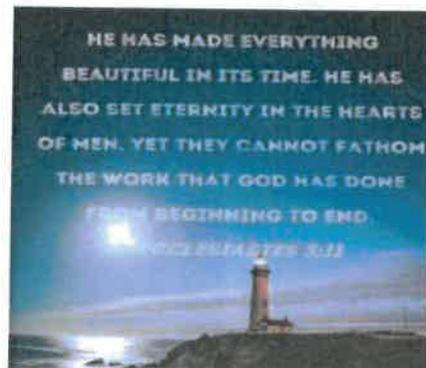
It takes 36 steps to climb the main staircase at Zion from bottom to top. I'm quite certain of that count, as I've had plenty of chances to check while carrying an endless array of items up and/or down those steps this last year. It's not such a terrible number on the first trip of the day, but after the fortieth round-trip, I suggested waiting until the holes had been cut in the floor for the lift shaft so that anything else that needed to be moved downstairs could simply be delivered in a more expeditious manner, i.e. dropped.

I don't want to embarrass myself by forgetting to include names if I tried to list the veritable army of people who supported the purchase and installation of the lift in so many ways, so I will simply thank and congratulate everyone as a whole. For a congregation whose mission is "to know Christ and to make Him known," having a place of worship that is accessible by all who come to learn about Him is a vital part of that mission.

I am reminded of the words of the prophet Isaiah, which were fulfilled by the life and work of John the Baptist:

*"In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together." (From Isaiah 40:3-5, NIV)*

For some, 36 steps might as well have been a mountain, so I am thankful for the ways we've found to open our church to the world. Whether it is the YouTube livestream for those who cannot attend in person on Sunday morning, the upgraded ramp at the Prince Street door, or now the lift, I pray that our congregation will keep finding ways to open ourselves to others and make Christ known.



*"March brings breezes loud and shrill, stirs the dancing daffodil."*

Sara Coleridge 1802-1852

In my mind, March is a dreary month - a "between seasons misery". Winter is winding down but spring has not yet sprung, and it is easy to become despondent waiting for the weather to warm up. During my second year in Canada, I lived and taught in a small Arctic settlement surrounded by mountains and from the end of October till the end of February, the sun, which rose to the south of us, did not shine on the community because of the hill behind our homes. We lived in its shadow for 4 months, adding to the darkness of the winter. We had to snowmobile out onto the sea ice to get into some sunlight. If the dark depressed you, you were considered "bushed". In those days, there was no airstrip. Small planes landed on the ice in winter and the sea in summer, so during freeze up and break up, we received no mail, magazines or newspapers. Those were days before TV and internet-we communicated by short wave radio so were out of touch with Canada, and clueless about disasters, dangers, difficulties being dealt with in the rest of the world. I was not dismayed by that-being in the dark about all that negative stuff was fine with me... I wasn't bushed.

Nowadays bad news is never distant- it arrives on our screens and at our doors from all over the globe and it is most unsettling. Am I the only one or is there is a malaise among us-a feeling that the world is a worse place to live in these days? What's going on? Change can bring disenchantment and alarm at the actions of governments, institutions, economies and a darkness can be created by disinformation if it is not dealt with. So much depends on our attitude, our outlook and the depth of our belief. In scripture there are many moments of darkness when individuals find themselves grappling with desperate situations from persecution, danger and death to sickness, rejection and grief. You just have to read Psalm 88, a lament written by the Sons of Korah, to find out how tragic life can seem without a glimmer of hope and where the last thought is "darkness is my greatest friend." Jesus himself and others like Job, David, Paul, and Daniel were in dark places at times but their faith in God never wavered no matter the situation they were in.

Like many others, I enjoy the lyrical language and imagery as well as the wisdom and advice of Ecclesiastes and especially those familiar verses in Chapter 3 when the teacher talks about everything having a season. Solomon was a pragmatist providing a personal glimpse of life's ups and downs that seemed meaningless, vain and unpredictable-the light and dark of our days on earth, asking himself rhetorical questions about its purpose and God's role in it. *Initially favoured by God with wisdom, he eventually ignored God's commands and declined morally, putting all his energy and resources into gratifying his physical, emotional and financial needs, neglecting his spiritual side. He compromised his faith for the sake of power, wealth and pleasure.*

It wasn't till recently that further along, in verse 11 this gem caught my eye.

*"He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart."*

This really resonated with me, giving me comfort and a profound feeling of peace. In the midst of all his struggling, he is saying there is more to life than what is visible in our current, earthly experience. He highlights something stable and divine that can encourage us amid the turmoil and chaos of the present, and which in all the darkness around us, provides a ray of hope-the assurance of heaven-eternity in our hearts. Surely this is knowledge that can dispel any darkness and bring light, joy and relief to the most cynical of people. Sadly, many ignore or are unaware they have a spiritual side so have their feet planted firmly in the world of material and physical comforts, ambition, success, and power. Such are the forces in the world which adversely affect the rest of us, casting a shadow over our lives. But God is at work and His message is that we need not feel downhearted!

**"For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world-  
our faith." 1 John 5:4**

Joan Cumming

## Around the Church

**Bible Study** on Tuesday evenings at 7pm and Thursday mornings at 10am is continuing with BELIEVE! as its guide.

**Choir** rehearses on Wednesday at 7pm with Sanctuary choir and Legato and Marcato at 6.30pm on alternate weeks.

**Prayer Group** meets on Tuesdays at 10am. Requests are welcomed and kept confidential.

**Friends of Faith** meets on the last Thursday of the month at 1pm. Program will be announced.

**First Place for Health** meets on Tuesdays at noon.

**Youth and Young Adults** – please check the church calendar.

*(Leaders of the above groups are invited to send information and photos of activities to [gatheringinfo2025@gmail.com](mailto:gatheringinfo2025@gmail.com))*



The ministers and members of session after our Annual Meeting held on Sunday, February 15 in the sanctuary after the Service. Copies of the Annual Report are available from the church office.

### World Day of Prayer 2026

Christian men and women, please join us for the World Day of Prayer, a prayer movement that invites us to enrich our faith experience through the life events of Christians from other countries and cultures and to bring hope to women touched by injustice. The 2026 service was written by the Nigerian World Day of Prayer Committee and is jointly organized by multiple churches and parishes in the Charlottetown Area. Zion's representatives are Elizabeth Ferguson and Susan Tucker.

The theme this year is I WILL GIVE YOU REST: COME

Service location is Holy Redeemer Parish Church, 7 Pond Street, Charlottetown, Friday, March 6 at 2pm. More information available from [lmakuch.dennis@gmail.com](mailto:lmakuch.dennis@gmail.com)

### World Day of Prayer



## The Last Word - Rev. Allyson MacLeod

There's nothing like a winter snowstorm to get you thinking of summer vacations! Recently, Kirk and I had a conversation about places we would like to visit, things we would like to see or do. And it made me think of trips I had taken, places I've been. The year I turned 4 my family drove from our home in Cape Breton to visit family in Winnipeg. That was a long car ride! Kirk and I have been to the Holy Land and we travelled to China to be united with our daughter. We've been to the UK, Bermuda and to California, among other places. Each of those has been more than just a trip; they have been journeys. Along the way, we have had challenges we had to learn how to navigate, to learn how to communicate when we didn't speak the "native" language, to learn to flex around delayed flights, or even adapt to cultural differences. Not only have we learned about culture, tradition and the local people but we have also learned a lot about ourselves.

The 40 days of Lent are also a journey. We often refer to this time as "the journey to the cross" and we think of it as following the journey Jesus made during those last few weeks; teaching, healing and caring for people but also experiencing the increasing pressure on him from Jewish leaders and Roman authorities. But these 40 days of Lent are also a journey for every Christian. In the busyness of life and the preoccupation with the list of things we have to do, during these 40 days we are invited to slow down, to take time and to make this journey with Jesus. What does this look like? It could be making time every day to read His word, or being intentional about noticing what is going on in the world around you, or to listen to what God is saying to your heart, or to make time everyday to pray and both tell God how it's going and to quiet yourself just to listen for what God might be saying to you, and finally to trust Him with those things that are weighing you down. As we make this journey of 40 days, ask yourself these questions: Where will I see Jesus, where will I hear Him, what will I trust Him with, and how will I use this journey to grow in faith? We pray that this will be a rich time of growing in faith.



### *Prayer from Psalm 27*

*You, Lord are my light and my salvation-whom shall I fear? You are the stronghold of my life-of whom shall I be afraid? One thing I ask of you, Lord this only do I seek: that I may dwell in your house all the days of my life to gaze on your beauty and to seek you in your temple. For in the day of trouble, you will keep me safe in your dwelling. You will hide me in the shelter of your sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. I remain confident of this: I will see your goodness, Lord in the land of the living.*

*Wait for the Lord: be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.*

# March 2026 at Zion Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship Ushers: Debra Lynn, Anne	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health Group 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	<b>4</b> 12:10 Lenten Service— Central Christian 6:30-Marcato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir	<b>5</b> 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study 2-Choir Ministry at Whisperwood	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship Ushers: Sophie W., Gary	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health Group 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	<b>11</b> 12:10 Lenten Service— Salvation Army 6:30-Legato 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir	<b>12</b> 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 10:30-noon Leading With Caret 5 pm Pot-Luck Supper Doors open at 4:30 Come and celebrate what we have been able to accomplish with God's help
<b>15</b> 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship Ushers: Allan, Kent	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health Group	<b>18</b> 12:10 Lenten Service— Trinity 6:30-Marcato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir	<b>19</b> 6:30 pm Board of Trustees Meeting	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 10:30 am Worship Rev. Dr. Dale Woods Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship Ushers: Alison Anne, Ken	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health Group 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	<b>25</b> 12:10 Lenten Service— Trinity 6:30-Legato Choir 7-8:30 pm Sanctuary Choir	<b>26</b> 9:30 Social Time 10 am Bible Study 1 pm—Friends of Faith—EASTER TEA 6:30 pm Session	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 10:30 am Worship, Children's Ministries 11:30 Fellowship Ushers: Judy, Lloyd	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 10 am Prayer Group 12:00 noon—First Place for Health Group 6:30 Social Time 7 pm Bible Study	Our Easter Services Maundy Thursday Communion April 2—7 pm Good Friday April 3—10:30 am Easter April 5—10:30 am			