The Gathering

The monthly newsletter of Zion Presbyterian Church

December 2026

Sing and rejoice O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord.
Zechariah 2:10









A most memorable Remembrance Day Concert at Zion featured the Legion Choir, the PEI Regimental Band and the Belfast Pipe Band. Pictured above are our music director, Faye Barrett, trumpeters Cathy MacDonald and Laura MacLeod who brought a joyful sound to the Thanksgiving service.



Liz's Corner

Greetings Brothers and Sisters!

Merry Christmas dear friends!! As 2026 comes to a close, plans for celebrating the birth of our Saviour are well underway at Zion and, indeed, worldwide. Serving in the choir is an integral part of my discipleship year-round; but at Christmas time, being in the choir and sharing the season's music and songs with family and friends draws me even closer to the heart of God. Music paves the way for the Lord's hope, joy, peace and love to flood the world with the knowledge of Jesus; and to make everlasting life possible for all. This is the time of year to ponder the miracle of Jesus' birth and our salvation. Praise His holy name!!

Hopefully you will be able to attend the Christmas services at Zion this month; or at least be able to enjoy them online. Faye and the choir are practicing some new Christmas tunes in praise of our dear Lord Jesus that are positively beautiful. The church is aglow with subtle Christmas decoration and reverent, warm lighting in the sanctuary gently lifts one's spirit and warms the heart. Merry Christmas to Rev. Kirk and Rev. Allyson! Thank you for your messages of love and praise! May your worship continue to reach the vaults of heaven where combined with heartfelt praise from your flock, it will resound from our lips to Gods ears!!! I love this family of God!!

Although I no longer erect a Christmas tree at home, I continue to delight in the 'drive part' of the process of choosing potential candidates for the prized position. Back in the day, my father, Cecil, took the family out on the back roads to Hampton (drive part) where we would wander the fields in search of the perfect specimen of fir. My mother, Hazel, determined when "the one" had been found. In later years, it would be just Dad and I who picked out the tree; often resulting in the drilling of holes and the insertion of branches in "bare spots" when we dragged it home. These days, I take pleasure in travelling with friends down back roads checking out the firs, enjoying the splendour of the woods and reminiscing about the "spruce gum" Dad cut from the trees for our enjoyment. Though some connections with my Dad have faded from my memory, I feel that the spruce gum memory will always stick with me!

During this holiday season, let's put into practice true Christmas spirit by caring for others, providing food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty and companionship and care for the sick and lonely. For when we do, we not only serve others but Jesus too. As Jesus told us, *'whatever you did for one of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'.* The true gift of Christmas is knowing Jesus and the gift of eternal salvation He offers. I pray we might be used by God to lead people to the Saviour. Jesus urges us to pray continuously. He said, *'your Father knows what you need before you ask Him'*. So ask, seek, and knock in prayer. Every petition we make draws us closer to the one who answers. God is love. Love that is stronger than death, stronger than evil, stronger than our failings. This Christmas let's encourage each other with written notes, spoken words, acts of service, or a simple embrace. Despite living in a hurting world, we wait on Jesus with hope and faith to encourage those around us until He comes again in glory. Thank you, Jesus for the best Christmas gift of all, your unconditional love!! Whenever life casts a shadow, there is always a source of light. His name is Jesus! His birth changed the world! Hallelujah! Let us continue to be kind and be grateful. Next year, 2027, we will keep the faith together dear friends! Pray for me as I pray for you!! Love to all!

Godspeed,
Elizabeth Ferguson

Our church doors were often open to welcome both friends and strangers in November.



This is a picture of the Saturday crew of volunteers for the Fall Sale which raised over $6000. Thanks for all your hard work, ladies. There was a good turnout for the Chowder, Chili & Cows event in support of the Canadian Foodbank. The Abegweit Chamber Singers used Zion as the venue for their concert "Peace in the Shadow of Remembrance" on November 22nd with violinist Tsu-Cheng Wang who also played a Chinese musical instrument known as an erhu.











I found my favourite at the Fall Sale-mustard pickles!





Thanks to Amanda Webster for sharing this story of her volunteer trip to Peru on "Race to the Build".



I work for Goeasy. I have been a very proud employee for approx. 24 years- some of you may have even noticed the "eh" tattoo on my arm- I got this once I hit my 20-year service with the company. Each year I compete to take part in our highly anticipated global volunteer trip, *Race to the Build!* This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to support our national charity partner, BGC Canada, and make a real difference in communities at home and abroad.

What is Race to the Build?

Race to the Build offers employees the chance to fundraise and earn a spot on a hands-on global volunteer trip to support communities in need. In past years, my company has sent employees to Nicaragua, India, Guatemala, Cambodia, and Bolivia to help build homes. I actually had the opportunity to attend both Cambodia and Bolivia and now Peru. But this time, in Peru it was a bit different-we went beyond building walls-we bult connections, supported sustainable community projects, and made a lasting impact where it was needed most. In partnership with Global Volunteers, the team helped build a greenhouse that will provide fresh fruits and vegetables for the children in the Sagrada Familia community in Lima.

Fundraising for BGC Canada

For the first time ever, employees had the chance to fundraise directly in support of BGC Canada as part of Race to the Build. For over 20 years, we have been heavily invested in building a strong partnership with BGC Canada to help the clubs with their mission of providing safe, supportive places where children and youth can experience new opportunities. One of the most powerful ways we support BGC Clubs is through our Feed their Future program — providing thousands of young people each year with access to nutritious snacks and meals so they can focus on learning, growing, and thriving. One way we did this was by providing ***new kitchens in 100 boys and girls clubs across Canada- including our very own here in Charlottetown. (Sophie and I attended the ribbon cutting).*** Top fundraisers for the BGC then got the opportunity to do the green house build in Peru. (Thank you to the many of you who donated).

What is Sagrada Familia?

One of the leading problems in Peru is domestic violence and its consequential relationship to poverty. Women who attempt to leave abusive relationships with their children often give up their only source of income. Another major problem in Peru is the plight of children living on the streets. These include those escaping abusive homes or those who have families too poor to care for them.

Sagrada Familia began over 30 years ago in Ventanilla, Peru, by Miguel Rodriguez. Sagrada Familia has blossomed. Starting as a safe place for street children to sleep, Sagrada Familia grew into a large school and orphanage with a medical clinic, and then, with the introduction of vocational workshops, most children began to find jobs upon graduation. Miguel came to this mission after experiencing a family tragedy and now puts his energy into providing love and care to all the children coming into this community. Alumni of Sagrada Familia are now working as successful teachers, lawyers, and other professions. With now over 1,000 children at the school.





Lots of hard work!

Our 2025 Goeasy Race to the Build Team touched down in Lima, Peru in late November and the week was full of connection, community, and incredibly meaningful work. The group spent the week supporting the community at Sagrada Familia construct a new greenhouse that would provide long-term food and learning opportunities for local families.

After touring the grounds and meeting the founder, Miguel, the team jumped straight into the build — laying the foundation, mixing cement, carrying bricks, and working side-by-side with local leaders. Between build shifts, the group was connecting with children, visiting homes and ensuring the new moms had what they needed to support their new babies at home, we took shifts teaching English. We helped in the wood shop and bakery and we embraced Peruvian culture (including some amazing food!).

Lasting Memories

I will never forget the giggles from the children as we played games of tug of war between mixing cement. We wanted to celebrate and treat the kids. We went to the local outdoor street market and purchased burgers and all the fixings and so many potatoes so we could treat each of the children who lived at the orphanage to a burger and fries. We got to serve the food. I walked out of the dining hall bawling as the kids were so happy-most had never had a burger in their life. They all wanted seconds it certainly makes you appreciate how blessed we are. We left the work site on the last day in our sock feet...leaving our shoes for the children and staff because so many didn't even have the bare necessities.

My time in Peru was very rewarding. I came home feeling so blessed that that I was able to make an impactful change on so many lives, and so very grateful and blessed for what I do have here at home. If you ever have an opportunity to take part in a build, I highly recommend you take it.

A Word from Evan

It's time to put the Christmas decorations up again. Lights, wreaths, and nativity scenes are coming out of the boxes where they were carefully packed away some eleven months ago, and neighbourhoods are starting to sprout festive cheer, house by house. You don't even need to check the calendar; Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so down the block are putting the lights up, so it must be December 1st. The regularity of their decorating schedule stands in stark contrast to how unexpected the birth of Jesus was.

Two thousand years ago, the people of Israel prayed for liberation from the oppressive Roman occupation. So God sent a mighty warrior king to defeat the foreign legions; a man with the skill in battle of David, the wealth and wisdom of Solomon, and the overwhelming strength of Samson.

But wait, that's not right.

God sent a baby. A baby of very humble beginnings, a baby of an unimportant place and people. That's the story we tell every year at Christmas. "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7, KJV). The mighty king God sent to bring salvation wasn't at all what Israel was expecting. A king should be born in a palace, not a stable. His birth should be celebrated by all the richest and most powerful people in the land, not whatever animals had been around to see their food turned into impromptu bedding. God chose to send His perfect love to Earth as a humble servant King because what Israel expected was not what it truly needed.

Try not to be surprised, then, when I tell you that you also are chosen in much the same way and for much the same reason. Someone, somewhere, is waiting for you to be God's messenger to them. There are many possible reasons that they need you: There are some who left churches because they felt alone even in the middle of a congregation, some who left the church behind when they moved to a new and strange place, and still more who simply have never been invited to church at all.

If you're thinking that you can't possibly be the right person for such a big responsibility, well, you're not the first to say that. Whether you think people won't listen to you, or you don't know the right words to say, you're hardly unique. Moses said the exact same thing when God told him to go to Egypt and free the Israelites from slavery, but he turned out to be the perfect person for the job after all. He started by asking to be replaced by someone more qualified, and ended by parting the Red Sea so a nation could walk across the seabed to freedom.

Every year at Christmastime, I see unfamiliar faces in church, people I can't recall seeing at any other time of year. Some of them come to put names on angels and hang them on the Memorial Tree. Some come Christmas Eve because spending that evening at Zion with their grandparents was a cherished tradition. Whichever service they come for, the common thread is that they come because of someone.
This Advent, as we celebrate the hope, peace, joy, and love of Jesus Christ the Son and God the Father, I hope you find that someone who needs you to share peace, joy, and love with them.

Evan Heckbert



The Bible says a Christian's power comes from God through the Holy Spirit ..... *(Got Questions.org)*

Amazingly, I got through all of last winter without the power going out in my part of town-pretty miraculous considering this summer it failed 3 times for extended periods and of course, I couldn't figure out where my nearest working flashlight was until I remembered my cell phone (Duh, Joan!). Nor could I recall where I had put the two power packs I would use in an outage to recharge my phone...but rest assured, I do know where the well stocked bright red "Battery Daddy" is for my emergency lamps and where to find matches for the candles lying in a drawer in the kitchen.

In last month's newsletter I wrote on the topic of how "seniors" in the Bible were used by God to do important work in His plan of salvation for us and I realise that if He now expects us to reach other people with the message Jesus brought, He has to give us the power to do it. Do we have it and are we using it? We know God is all powerful and in Genesis we read that He could just speak creation into existence "Let there be light!" and in Psalm 119 we are told His "word is a lamp to our feet". God's son Jesus used His supernatural power to enable the necessary "transmission" of the message on earth and do the necessary work of healing, teaching and convicting, but before He left His disciples to continue the work He started, He made sure to pass on the power they needed to do it.

Because of our faith in God, He has given us, through the Holy Spirit, the power that we need to use for His purpose. We just have to let it do its job and ***pray for it to work in us rather than to think we are powerless, unqualified or inadequate*** to be able to influence those around us, particularly people like those Evan describes in his article and ones we know who are not believers and who might experience a life change if their hearts and minds could be opened to the truth of the Bible. All believers receive gifts of the Spirit – special abilities to serve others and build up the church. These can be grouped as **Speaking,** (teaching, encouraging, evangelism, words of wisdom and knowledge). **Serving** (helping, giving, showing mercy, hospitality, pastoring). **Leading** (administrating, being an apostle**). Discerning** (faith, healing, speaking and interpreting tongues). If we look around the church, we can see some people who have certain of these gifts and are putting them to use. If you are interested in switching on the power of the gift *you* have but are not sure what it is, it may be time to activate what may be one of your most underused sources of power – the privilege of prayer and ask the Lord to guide you and if you listen, ready to obey, He will, and your faith could be stirred up into action.

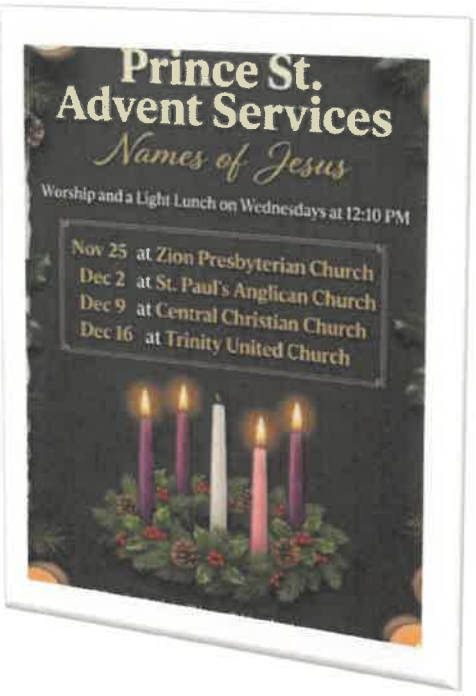
After all, how we Christians act-our attitude and behaviour to others is a huge part of the way the world evaluates the bible message and attracts them to it (which is what happened to me when I was much younger in a church in the North-I wanted what those people had and that's when my faith journey began). Allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us lets the Fruits of the Spirit change us. Through ***us*** God is trying to bring other people to Himself, so we may have to **Love** others more and show we care even when it costs us. I have to ask myself if others see **Joy** in me even when I am going through trouble and sense I am at **Peace** even when my circumstances are difficult. Is **Patience** a strong point in us rather than anger and how often do we show **Kindness** and generosity to others in practical ways and not just give good wishes? The indwelling of the Spirit in us is God's strength in our weakness, so we can feel confident by using it in our own sphere to convict others, be it family, friends, people we meet as we go about our daily routines in workplaces, gatherings of any kind-wherever we see a need. Others should be able to see or sense something different and appealing about us and the way we live our lives every day of the year and especially at Christmas and Easter when they are more aware.

The Greek word used in the Bible for power, strength, ability or potential is *dunamis* which is the root of our word dynamite or dynamo. As the New Year approaches, it may be a good time to test the dynamo and find out where we can direct our energy which may let us be a light in other people's lives so they can see more clearly what Jesus did as our Saviour, coming into the world as a baby at Christmas. ***"He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us".*** **Ephesians 3:20**

Joan Cumming

Around the Church & Special events in December





Surprise Sponsorship of The Gathering

Beginning in January, it will be possible for you to sponsor an issue of the Gathering as a special surprise to anyone in the church or among the readers on our mailing list. Your donation of $25 will be announced on this "Around the Church" page together with the name or names of the recipient(s) and if you wish, the reason for the surprise gift. It will help to defray the cost of mailing the newsletter to nearly 70 shut-ins and let them know you care about and are thinking of them. A picture card will accompany the announcement. Just call the office at 902-566-5363 with your request or email it to gatheringinfo2025@gmail.com before the 3rd Friday of the month to ensure publication.

If you would like a visit from one of our ministers, please phone the church office.

Special events: December 3, Choir is at Andrews Stratford, 2pm

December 12, Acts of Kindness here at Zion

The Last Word by Rev. Allyson MacLeod

What are you hoping for this Christmas?

The Christmas season is in full swing now. We are counting down the days. I remember, as a child, when the Sears Christmas Wish Book would be delivered to our house and my brother and I would dog ear the pages and use those as our reference files for our letters to Santa. And the days which followed were full of best behavior, or at least, trying, and the hope-filled anticipation of Christmas morning.



But when we grow up, our hopes shift. We hope the kids and grandkids will come home. We hope that the weather won't cause any travel disruptions. We hope everyone will be feeling well. We hope everyone will get along. We hope....

But sometimes Christmas can feel like a let down. It's no longer just that we didn't get the present we were really, really hoping for, but after all the excitement and anticipation and looking forward, Christmas just doesn't seem to meet all our expectations and hopes. And maybe the reason Christmas isn't exactly what we imagined is because our hope has been misplaced. We've put all our hopes into the holiday celebration and our long list of expectations being fulfilled instead of keeping our hope focused on Jesus. We say "Jesus is the Reason for the Season" and indeed, He is! But do we keep Him at the centre of our celebrations? Is He the reason we gather? Is He the reason we keep hoping, even after life lets us down?

The countdown to Christmas is on and our hope filled anticipation is growing with every passing day. This year may we set our eyes and our hearts on God's gift to us in Jesus, our reason for hope. May we each experience as if for the first time, the wonderful news that God has come to be with us in Jesus. He is the gift of hope.

From our house to yours, may you experience the hope, joy, peace and love of Christ this Christmas!



December 2026 at Zion Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Ushers Dec 6 - Alisha, Ron Dec 13—Roylean, Ken Dec 20 -Gary, Elaine Dec 24-3 pm Scott Dec 24—Gary, Kent Dec 27 –Alison Ann, Rob		1	2 12:10 noon Prince St Advent—St. Paul's 2 pm Music Ministry—Andrews of Stratford 6:30 Legato Choir 7 pm Sanctuary Choir	3	4	5
6 10:30 am Worship Service, Advent—PEACE Children's Min. 11:30 am Fellowship	7	8	9 12:10 noon Prince St Advent—Central Christian 7pm Sanctuary Choir	10	11	12 2 pm - Family Event Acts of Kindness Here at Zion
13 10:30 am Worship Service, Advent—JOY Children's Min. 11:30 am Fellowship	14	15	16 12:10 noon Prince St Advent—Trinity 6:30 Legato, Marcato & Sanctuary Choirs	17 6:30 pm Board of Trustees Meeting	18	19
20 10:30 am Worship Service, Advent—LOVE Children's Min. 11:30 am Fellowship	21	22	23 6:30 Sanctuary Choir	24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES 3 pm Impromptu Pageant 7 pm Traditional Christmas Eve	25	26
27 10:30 am Worship Service, SING WE NOW OF CHRISTMAS Children's Min. 11:30 am Fellowship	28	29	30	31	Last day for accepting 2026 donations will Be Sunday, January 3, 2027 Cheques must be dated December 31, 2026	