

ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

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December 2007

"I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES. IF A MAN REMAINS IN ME AND I IN HIM, HE WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT; APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING" JOHN 15:5

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR HUGH

Where did the time go? I asked this question when I spoke to you in the Fall Edition of *The Vine* yet it remains as relevant now as it did then. Pam and I came to minister with you at Zion just in time for the Advent Season in November, 2005. This is not the same Zion Baptist Church of Kensington in November, 2007. Praise God!

The past two years have been exiting and rewarding from our perspective. God has been gracious and good to all of us and it shows. There is a sweet fellowship in our gatherings and in my communications with you and I sense that we have put the hardships of the past behind us.

The Church Council and the Budget Committee have submitted a challenging, yet encouraging Budget for the year 2008. We are no longer in a maintenance ministry but one that looks forward with faith and confidence to the new year, and beyond.

The Pastoral Search Committee is making good progress in their prayerful deliberations regarding God's direction for identifying, and hopefully calling soon, a Pastoral Couple who will work with you to take you to the next chapter in the ministry of the Gospel here at Zion Baptist Church of Kensington. Meanwhile, Council has asked me to remain for the short term in 2008 while the Search Committee works to complete its assignment.

We are pleased and honoured to have served with you here for the past two years. You are a special people, and we shall cherish our memories of our time here with you.

Blessings to all of you.

Pastor Hugh

Pastor Selection Committee Update

The members of the Pastor Selection Committee have been spending many hours reading and praying over the pastor applications we received from the Baptist Union. It is exciting to see a range of choices in age and experience. It is also educational to find out what these pastors believe and the kinds of programs they have tried in other churches. Also, learning about the amount of success they have encountered with church growth is exciting, too. Some of the programs these pastors have run look like they would be good possibilities for Zion. We are meeting this week to discuss the pastor choices we have and how we feel about them. If we can, we will narrow our search down to a first and second choice at this meeting. With faith, we look forward to choosing a pastor who is a good fit for our needs at Zion. We will keep you posted on how the meeting goes.

Submitted by:
Corinne Fontaine, Chair
Pastor Selection Committee.

Members of the committee are:

Bill Vergo, Corinne Fontaine, Howie Wynn, Lou Gall, Marcella Hunter, Marnie Knudson and Ron Low, Ministry Council representative.

SUMMER VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

It was wonderful to hold a Vacation Bible School for the children last summer, after not having held one for several years! We obtained a STEP grant from the provincial government, but with the booming economy in Alberta we were unable to find any people interested in filling the position for 6 weeks. So, it was a blessing and really good news when Elizabeth Lindstrom indicated that she was interested in organizing the activities for the week! Also, Elizabeth's mother Nadia offered to organize all the craft activities, so that was a tremendous help! A big thank you to both of you from all of the church family!!!

A Safari theme was selected and it proved to be extremely popular with the children who really enjoyed the sessions that were held each morning. This theme was interwoven into songs, crafts and several activities that took place daily along with a Bible study.

What would the program have been without others helping? While Pastor Hugh kindly attended some events so the children could meet him, Georgina and Ken Shields assisted daily with activities. Several people in the congregation provided snacks for the children including Alice Hunt, Marnie Knudson, Wendy and Ed Gerbrandt, Zoie Gardner House, Georgina Shields, Bill and Gwen Toller and Elizabeth Lindstrom. Dairy Queen also provided some gift certificates for the children. Both the generous support and encouragement were greatly appreciated. Thanks to all of you!

After a successful week of Bible School, the children attended the worship service on Sunday July 22nd and performed a musical number for us. What a delight! It was also a pleasure to have many of their parents with us for the service as well as for the special lunch that followed.

Let's hope that we are able to hold another Vacation Bible School next summer; Council Deacons have placed funds in the draft budget for a leader, so please keep this event in your prayers! Thanks again to Elizabeth for a job well done!

FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

This autumn the Social Committee planned and hosted a number of events that allowed the church family to enjoy each other's company. Thank you to the committee members Wendy Gerbrandt, Gwen Toller, Mary Markovich and Ken Shields. We will miss Fran Martin who recently moved to New Brunswick as Fran Pwas a hard worker on this committee for several years. Thanks, Fran! We hope that you enjoy your new home! Although not on the committee, Marcella Hunter and Georgina Shields often assist us with the set-up for the various events and we appreciate their help very much!

When the worship service concluded on September 16, the tantalizing aroma of pancakes and sausages wafting up from the kitchen certainly attracted a lot of people! And was the food delicious! Thanks to Wendy and Mary for preparing the sausages, and to our super cooks who spoiled all of us!

We realized what talented chefs we have in our congregation when we held a potluck Harvest Thanksgiving luncheon in October! It really was a delicious meal ending with pumpkin pies for dessert, and the room was beautifully decorated in the Thanksgiving theme. Ron Low, on behalf of the church family, presented a gift to Pastor Hugh Clendenning in appreciation of all his efforts.

To encourage us to get to know each other better, a Friendship Week was held. During this time, people were encouraged to invite someone in the congregation they don't know very well for a light lunch or coffee. We heard positive comments about this initiative, so hope to hold other Friendship Weeks in the future.

Gwen Toller graciously provided a delicious cake for the church family to celebrate her husband Bill's 80th birthday on a recent Sunday. Bill, we wish you God's richest blessings for many more years of good health! And thank you for your kindness in sharing this special event with us, Gwen!

What better way to enjoy a cool November Sunday than a hot dog and beans luncheon! A special thank you to Kim Taylor who prepared two varieties of homemade beans using her family's special recipe! We sure enjoyed them along with the fellowship and the ice cream and chocolate bars that were provided by Jo and Lou Gall. The committee appreciates everyone who helped at this and other events, especially with the cleanup!

The white stuff falling from the skies lately reminds us that Christmas can't be far away.

With it comes our celebration as a church family of Christ's birth. Part of our activities is a Christmas potluck luncheon that will be held in the church hall following worship on **Sunday December 16**. We hope that you can all attend, so be sure to mark your calendar now! Once the dinner is over, we will hold the Christmas Concert upstairs.

COUNCIL CORNER

There is a lot of activity that goes on in the church that is often unnoticed. For example, preparing the worship service and the weekly bulletin, maintenance work that is completed including snow removal, preparation for the Lord's Table, counting the weekly offering and taking it to the bank. These and many other tasks are all completed by volunteers who love the Lord, and Council wishes to say a hearty thank you to all of you for your efforts and dedication! You are a blessing to all of us at Zion for which we are truly grateful!

Council accepted the resignation of Jim Martin with regret when he and Fran decided to move to New Brunswick. Jim worked hard as a Council Deacon and devoted many hours and days as the head of the Property Management Team. We appreciate all that Jim did on our behalf and wish him and Fran much enjoyment in their new home down East! We look forward to their visit when they return to Edmonton on holidays to see their family.

Council, with the assistance of church Treasurer Georgina Shields prepared a draft budget for 2008 that will be presented at the Autumn Financial Meeting on December 2nd. Thanks Georgina! Everyone's attendance at the meeting as well as your input will be most welcome.

The Pastor Search Committee has been working hard to find us a suitable full-time pastor and we wish to thank them for their efforts! We are grateful for their initiative and the capable committee leadership of Corrine Fontaine.

The entire church building is looking very festive for the Christmas season thanks to a group of enthusiastic people who came to decorate last Wednesday morning. We will all appreciate the decorations for the entire month of December thanks to the volunteers!

On Remembrance Day, Howie Wynn as a military veteran kindly assisted with the memorial segment of our worship service. Thank you for your very meaningful contribution, Howie. At the

same time, Ken Shields on behalf of the congregation laid a wreath at the Remembrance Day Ceremony that was held at the Calder cenotaph.

We welcome Caterina, who is studying at NAIT to our church family and appreciate her helping Ken with the Sunday School children's program.

Officials from the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (formerly Baptist Union of Western Canada) held a meeting with representatives from the nine Baptist churches in the Edmonton area on Saturday November 24. Pastor Clendenning attended along with Council Deacons Ed Gerbrandt and Ken Shields. The C.B.W.C. reps explained their various roles, asked the churches to tell about one highlight in their congregation over the past year, and then had each church respond to 3 questions they had asked. One of these was, "In what way does your church engage and make a difference in your community?"

The Zion report presented by Ken listed a considerable number of activities and we were commended for our outreach. A copy of the Zion report is on the bulletin board and also in the Council binder in the church office. Look for the green sheet. Green was chosen because it symbolizes hope, the hope that we have in Jesus Christ

This spring, our church will be participating in an exciting outreach program in cooperation with Vibrant Communities, a non-profit group that runs a service called Tax Time Pays. The purpose is to provide free income tax preparation services to low income people as well as to advise them of several government subsidies that they may be eligible to receive. We provide the space and a site coordinator on selected days in March or April. The agency advertises and finds the people to complete the returns and the Canada Revenue Agency trains them. This is a wonderful outreach opportunity for our church and we wish to thank Dianne and Wayne Winter who volunteered to be the site coordinators for Zion and also Karen Johnson who offered to assist with the project! The Winters have already attended a training session and may be requesting some help from the congregation over 3 or 4 days for greeting and providing coffee to the people who use this service in the spring.

What a generous response you gave to Operation Christmas Child! Thank you to Pastor Clendenning for coordinating this project and to everyone who prepared the many boxes that will be distributed to children in third world countries at Christmas. You truly have made a difference in the lives of underprivileged children in other countries and you will be blessed for your kindness!

The past two months the Chinese Alliance Church has been holding worship services at Zion on Sunday afternoons. We are pleased to be able to support their outreach to new Chinese immigrants, some of whom do not know about Jesus Christ. We pray that their outreach will bring many people to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, and we are grateful that they take such good care of our building when they use it. The caretaker asked when the Chinese church was going to start to worship here, and they had already been using our facility for 6 weeks! Everything was so neat and clean that he was unable to tell they were here!

Council wishes you a most blessed Christmas Season shared with loved ones!

Submitted by:

Ken Shields, Co-chairman



DON'T FORGET JESUS

Christmas is a special time
To reflect on Jesus Christ
The wonder of His lowly birth
Brings meaning to our lives

There really is no other reason
We celebrate this day
The birth of God's precious son
And the life he willingly gave

But so much seems to distract us
In the busy-ness of our lives
We lose our focus in the happenings
Not knowing, we leave out Christ

We lose sight of the true meaning
As we endlessly rush about
Trying to find that perfect gift
Seems to cloud our Saviour out

We need to stop and reflect a while
Remembering our precious Lord
His birth, His life and sacrifice
And all that he stands for

For though the world may celebrate
It seems though for other reasons
Let's keep in mind that Jesus Christ
Is the true meaning of the season

by M.S. Lowndes

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