

We Worship, We Grow, We Serve,  
We reach out in love sharing God's  
message of hope through Jesus Christ.

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We recognize and acknowledge the Qayqayt  
First Nation, as well as all Coast Salish  
peoples, on whose traditional and unceded  
territories we gather.



# Message

2022 Epiphany Newsletter

## A COVID Epiphany!



**PASTOR'S PEN**  
*A word from the heart*  
Pastor Marlys

Epiphany: a season of celebrating the revelation of God in Christ Jesus to the world. I must confess I did not expect to observe another COVID Epiphany. How long, O Lord, how long?

As I read Christmas letters, emails, texts, social media posts I noticed we sound like many writers of the psalms and some of the prophets. We lament. We question. We doubt. "Where are you, God?" "Have you abandoned us?" How long, O Lord, how long?" It's good to be honest in our prayers, our writings, our conversations. Often they reveal our innermost longings and beliefs. People of faith struggle. That is life – real life.

My epiphanic moments include how I have taken so much for granted, like freedom of movement, freedom from fear, easy access to food, clothing, shelter, medicine, etc. I expect to do what I want, when I want, with whomever I want. The reality is: I live a very self-centred, privileged life. Probably my most profound epiphany is taking God for granted in the midst of life when I feel I am in control. And now that much of life is not always in my control I expect (as do many others) for God to fix things according to *my* expectations and *my* timeline.

Except that is not how God works, as we clearly read in the readings for this season. God shows up in Jesus Christ on the lakeshore, among the crowds, on the plain, on the mountaintop, and even in the synagogue. But Jesus does not always perform in the ways or places the crowds expect. God is God! God knows what we need and when we need it.

I think this global pandemic has shown me how much I really want to "play God" by being in control of the world around me. Such foolishness! I have never been in control. How dare I think that my being in control is a way to love God and neighbour?

This notion of control, my idolatry of self, is very convicting. Yes, we are entering the third year of pandemic. Yes, I am tired of all the protocols and restrictions, and the constant changes and pivoting. Can I trust God that God is still at work? That God is in control? That God knows better than I what is best for the world God so loves? Even if I can't see the ending?

Most of us who were born and raised in Canada have never experienced such vulnerability. Yet many of our neighbours and siblings in the pew have, with their experiences in refugee camps or living under dictatorships. What can we learn from their endurance and faith?

The Israelites wandered for 40 years in the desert. That was how long it took them to get rid of their myths about life in Egypt. So often their memories were short when it came to the realities of living in slavery, to living with injustice and inequalities. They murmured and complained to their leaders and to God. Sound familiar?!

One thing the pandemic has highlighted is how systemic inequality has only exacerbated the difference between the advantaged and the disadvantaged. And what are we, as Christians, doing about this? Will it take us 40 years to get rid of the myths of what life in Canada is like? Myths like: there is no racism or prejudice or inequality or...there are so many blanks to fill. What we do know is this is not how God envisioned life for God's beloved creation and creatures.

Yet God is in control. God is at work. How is God's revelation at work in our lives? As I have noted before: the revelation of Jesus in the stories during Epiphany changes those who experience it. How is God changing us during this COVID Epiphany?

Again the psalmists and prophets provide us with some helpful insights and perspective. As they lament and complain about their present circumstances, they gain strength by looking back over God's presence and faithfulness in their lives throughout the good times and the challenging times. May we too look back and see God's goodness and faithfulness – things often taken for granted. Then let us share those stories with one another as we continue to take one day at a time in our wilderness of pandemic.

May God grant us patience to endure and to be faithful!

-Pastor Marlys

**During the month of February we are following provincial health orders and continuing to provide a safe environment. All in-building worship services and gatherings are cancelled.**



A Word from the Chair

Can you feel the change in the air? The days are getting longer, snow drops are in bloom, the magnolia tree buds are puffing up and the robins are singing, "I'm back." We not only see change in the nature around us,

we are also anticipating change for our church and congregation. When will the church reopen? When will Pastor Marlys venture into retirement? What changes will we experience? While some of these changes may leave us with feelings of uncertainty, we know, we are not alone. The Spirit of God is at work in our midst. For now, various committees are

meeting, bills are being paid, day to day maintenance is covered, the garden gnomes are watching for church tulips to bloom and we, last but not least, are holding our breath until we can once again worship in-person.

This past month, council, along with a host of other church members, has been busy preparing year-end written summaries for our 2021 Annual Report. Our Annual General Meeting will take place on the last Sunday of the month, February 27, 2022, only on Zoom. I hope you can make it because we value your input.

God Bless,

Lyna Kiviste, Chair of Council



### Can You Help?

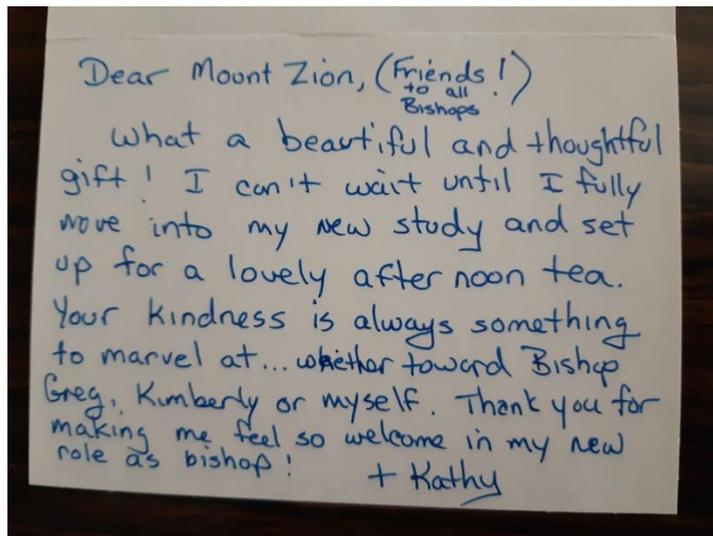
Aluel Nyok's orphaned 16-year-old niece, Nyakong Nyok, is living in a refugee camp in Uganda. Because she is a minor Aluel is unable to sponsor her at this time. Prior to COVID-19 Aluel had been providing financial support for her niece's living expenses and schooling. However, due to the pandemic and loss of employment Aluel is unable to send money at this time. She is grateful for the generous support she received throughout 2021. Currently Aluel needs \$120/month to assist with supporting her niece. **Can you help? Please contact Aluel or the church office. Thank you!**

Your prayers are also appreciated for everyone in Uganda which is currently experiencing much violence and political unrest, in addition to COVID-19.



## Welcome Bishop Kathy Martin!

To welcome Bishop Kathy, Mount Zion gave her a gift of a tea tray and tea set, complete with a sample of teas! She was very grateful and sent us the following note:



Bishop Kathy (far right) displaying her ceremonial cope with seminary friends, Pastors Marlys Moen, Trish Schermund and Margaret Propp.



### Black History Month Challenge



Mount Zion Lutheran is joining with others from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in participating in the Eastern Synod's Black History Month Challenge. The challenge is **to learn and converse** with someone else about what you have learned. Various resources are available on their website: <https://rjaceastern.wixsite.com/home/copy-of-workshops-resources>. The BC Synod is lifting up the following video series, 28 Moments of Black Canadian History, which you can find at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLT9MbfNkf-UjoR-4wYeVWxiyolxQPIXF>. Also check your local community information and public libraries for other resources. The more we learn about one another, the more we engage in loving our neighbour.

### Just So You Know...

The chart to the right gives you a snapshot of our financial situation for the month of January with a comparison to January 2021. **Please note: There are no subsidies to supplement our income.** The following financial highlights are from our bookkeeper, Sinta Nurianti:

- Donation (Envelopes) = 48% vs monthly budget
- Rental revenues = 75% vs monthly budget
- Expenses = 73% vs monthly budget
- Deficit = (\$4,153) was higher than anticipated/budget deficit (\$3,175)

**We trust God to supply all our needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus.** (Philippians 4:19) But we think it helps if you know too!

Non Designated	JAN 2022	Jan 2021
Donation	\$ 4,058	\$ 4,203
Rent	\$ 2,455	\$ 1,923
Subsidy	\$ -	\$ -
Other Income	\$ -	\$ -
Expenses	\$ (10,666)	\$ (11,955)
<b>SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$ (4,153)</b>	<b>\$ (5,829)</b>

# Mount Zion's Online Presence

## Worship at Mount Zion Still Looks Like This!



Check out online worship services on our YouTube channel, Mount Zion Lutheran Church, New Westminster BC. We are always looking for people to video the Bible readings. Please contact Pastor Marlys at 604-521-0120.



- People struggling with isolation
- Healthcare & frontline workers, teachers
- People in nursing homes
- Thank God for vaccines and many answered prayers.
- People dealing with a diagnosis of COVID or cancer
- People to train as Stephen Leaders
- People to serve on Mutual Ministry Team
- Annual General Meeting on February 27

***“Don’t worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God.”***  
(Philippians 4:6, CEV)

### Devotional Booklets

The January-March edition of ***Eternity for Today*** is still available. Please contact the church office to arrange for pick-up or delivery.



Sunday Coffee Time  
Church Council

Bible Study Reflections  
COVID-19 Task Force

Please contact [mountzion930@gmail.com](mailto:mountzion930@gmail.com) for more info or to receive a Zoom link. Please phone Vivienne Welters for how you can connect by telephone too 😊

## Mutual Ministry Team

Mount Zion is looking for new people for the Mutual Ministry Team. Please pray for people to come forward to serve. The following items identify the role for the Mutual Ministry Team.

- To work with the congregational council/board to ensure clear and realistic expectations are developed for council/board members, rostered ministers, congregational ministries and staff.
- To support effective communication among the congregation, rostered ministers and staff.
- To act as a confidential sounding board and support team for rostered ministers and staff.
- To review and provide timely compensation recommendations to the congregational council/ board for rostered ministers and staff if there is no other personnel team in place.
- To work towards conflict resolution as it arises and involves the rostered minister or other staff members.

For more information contact Norma Houde or Vivienne Welters who have served with the Mutual Ministry Team.

## Stephen Ministry

Mount Zion is also looking for 2 people to train as Stephen Leaders for Stephen Ministry. Stephen Ministry offers a proven and effective way to organize, equip, and supervise a team of congregation members—called *Stephen Ministers*—to provide high-quality, one-to-one, Christ-centered care to people in the congregation and the community experiencing life difficulties. Your prayerful consideration is appreciated!



## Community Connections

Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation writes, *“The secret to community lies in the way we let other people get through to us and the way we move out of ourselves. This is, of course, the mystery of spirituality, of vulnerability, and powerlessness.*

*We learn and are healed by committing ourselves to others, especially those at the margins. At one time this type of service was mostly an act of faith, but now we have evidence to back it up: serving others is a healing balm to our own souls.”*

As we explore what it might mean for us to live out **Loving God ~ Loving One Another**, as individuals and as the people of Mount Zion, we, like many churches, are at a threshold moment.

*“What are we to do at such a threshold moment? . . . In moments of transition, we are simply to be. We are to pause and acknowledge that a transition is taking place. Instead of seeking to abruptly pass through a threshold, we are to tarry. A new reality is emerging, but we cannot see beyond the threshold. All we know is that we exist in this moment, where everything is in transition. We may experience a new way of being, but we cannot yet sense what it will look like.*

*Simply put, any notion of a future church must be a fully practical church that is concerned about **getting the job of love done—and done better and better**. Centuries emphasizing art and architecture, music, liturgy, and prescribed roles have their place, but their overemphasis has made us a very top-heavy and decorative church that is constantly concerned with its own in-house salvation. What we are seeing is that this is not sustainable going forward.*

*Not one of us has a reliable crystal ball. We don’t know what lies ahead in this uncertain moment in history. Yet we know we are called into relationship, with our Creator and with each other. It is through liminal space that we may taste—however briefly—experiences of divine union, recognizing the radical oneness we all enjoy with everything—simply by being born.”<sup>1</sup>*

Whether Pr. Marlys is retiring (which she is) or not, the question remains the same, “What does equipping the saints look like?” It is about what will support us as we actively live as Christ’s servants and messengers among our family, friends, and neighbours in the community around our church and the communities where we live and work.

What might emerge to help show us the way during this threshold time? How will we know unless we are willing to risk, to try new things, to fail in the trying? That’s what the Book Nook experiment is about. Our prayer is that together, with the community around the church, we will discern next steps, ways we might encourage neighbour-to-neighbour connections, thereby strengthening community. It is only in building relationships with others that we can listen to hear their stories and faith journey and then, in time, share our stories.

We do not know what the future holds for Mount Zion. As we ponder what God is calling us to be, as we explore possibilities and as we are open and curious to the Spirit’s leading, we know one thing for certain: God is with us.

*If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to let you hide under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand – shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven. Matt 5:15-16*

## Community Church Connections

Speaking of community connections, Creekside Community Church recently installed some new equipment for the sound system – as a gift to Mount Zion! YoungNak Community Church contributed \$3000 towards the installation of the lift. We are so blessed with such generous partners in the gospel in both Creekside and YoungNak Community Churches. Unlike most congregations, our tenants still pay 25% of their rent, even if they cannot use the building.



<sup>1</sup>Richard Rohr – Centre for Action and Contemplation



# Memo

**To:** Members of Mount Zion Lutheran Church  
**From:** Church Council  
**Date:** February 7, 2022  
**Re:** Notice of Annual General Meeting

As per Bylaw 7 (Congregational Meetings), Section 5:

Written notice of all congregational meetings shall be sent to all members and to the rostered minister(s) under call to the congregation at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the date of the meeting. Written notice must be sent:

- a. by mail, unless a member has provided his or her email address to the Congregational Council, in which case written notice must be sent by electronic mail;
- b. by posting the written notice on the congregational website; and
- c. by posting the written notice in a public area within the church building.

## Notice of Upcoming Annual Meeting Sunday, February 27 at 11:00am via Zoom

We encourage you to sign in or phone in for the Zoom meeting at **10:45am** to provide time for dealing with any technological difficulties☺ You **must** use the telephone information below to connect with the meeting. Do **NOT** use Mount Zion’s telephone number. For a copy of the annual report to be mailed to you, please contact the church office between **February 10-23**. Digital copies will be emailed in mid-February.

Join Zoom Meeting  
**Please contact [mountzion930@gmail.com](mailto:mountzion930@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom link and information. Please phone Vivienne Welters for how you can connect by telephone too☺**

Thank you for your prayers and participation in the congregational life of Mount Zion Lutheran Church.  
 +++++



**If you are interested in being a part of Church Council, the Nominating Committee is looking for people who feel God is leading them to participate in church leadership. Please contact Tigisti Glaizghi.**



In order to vote and/or be elected to Church Council you must be a member of Mount Zion Lutheran Church. Visitors are welcome to attend and participate in the meeting’s discussions.

**The following page is a letter from the BC Synod outlining due process for electronic meetings and voting.**



# BRITISH COLUMBIA SYNOD

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

80 East 10th Avenue

New Westminster, B.C. V3L 4R5

January 26, 2022

Dear Friends,

This is now the second year that most of our congregations have had to find alternate ways to conduct their AGMs and we appreciate the importance of clarity in the current circumstances. A couple of questions have arisen around appropriate process and procedure. So after consulting with the synod's legal counsel we offer the following comments knowing some congregations have already held their meetings.

### Can congregations hold their AGM's electronically?

The first question asks if congregations can still hold their AGM's electronically. The answer to that question is "yes". Last year societies were allowed to hold their AGM's electronically by virtue of a special ministerial order. Since then the Societies Act has been amended and now, by virtue of section 83 of the Act all societies are permitted to hold their AGM's electronically, unless a society's bylaws prohibit electronic meetings, in which case the meeting must be held in-person and in compliance with covid orders and rules.

### What process is suggested for voting at an AGM?

The second question relates to how voting can be conducted at AGM's. There appears to be some lack of clarity in the law as to the validity of voting by electronic means. Thus, the voting function and the "raise hand" function in the Zoom application are not recommended.

The safest way to conduct voting therefore is by simple verbal roll call of all those in attendance. It is likely to be more time consuming, but it is the method recommended to us by our counsel. If an attendee wishes their vote to be recorded confidentially, then a breakout room should be used where the attendee can enter and verbally record their vote to a scrutineer. Obviously, this does not ensure absolute confidentiality, but it is the safest method according to the advice we have been given.

We hope this provides the clarity required for our congregations to proceed as efficiently as possible. As always you are in our prayers for safe and meaningful gatherings.

Rev. Eric Krushel,  
Chairperson, BC Synod Council

Rev. Kathy Martin,  
Bishop, BC Synod

## How to Become a Member at Mount Zion

**Have you ever wondered how to become a member at Mount Zion?** As defined by our constitution, you become a member in **one of three ways**: *received in baptism; through new membership, or transfer from another Lutheran congregation. You remain an active member when you receive communion and contribute through your offerings.* That is why we like you to fill out a communion card and use your offering envelopes.

In addition to all the other benefits of being an active member, it also means you are eligible to vote at congregational meetings and to be elected to church council. If people are not actively involved with the congregation for more than two years, then they are moved to a responsibility list, but they do not cease to be a member. The only way to lose your membership status is by death, transfer to another congregation, or by request to be removed from the membership list.

If you are interested in becoming a member of Mount Zion, please contact Pastor Marlys at [prmarlys@shaw.ca](mailto:prmarlys@shaw.ca) or 604-521-0120. Membership classes can be conducted on ZOOM if there is sufficient interest.

## Mount Zion Church Council Team Descriptions

Mount Zion’s Church Council operates with an executive and teams. Team leaders are members of church council, but any individual can serve (play!) on any team, providing everyone with an opportunity to serve and play together. The following list outlines the teams and some duties. If you would like to be a part of a team please contact Lyna Kiviste or one of the Church Council members. **Please note: Some responsibilities have changed due to public health orders.**

**Please note: Some responsibilities have changed due to public health orders.**

### WORSHIP

- Lectors, Acolytes, Ushers, Pulpit Supply, Communion: set up & clean up, launder & iron linens, polish silver/brass, communion bread, check supplies with Pr. Marlys to order
- Prepare Narthex: communion cards, pencils, pew clean up, post hymn numbers
- Worship folders, collection plates, candle lighting supplies, guestbook, water and glasses, children’s colouring supplies, table with information, sign-up sheets, cards, etc.

Special Services: Advent, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, etc.

- Music: Musician, Special guests/groups

### PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

- Maintenance, Rentals, Contracts, Budget, Lawns, Furnace, Roof, Gutters, Insurance

### PARISH EDUCATION

- Sunday School, English as a Second Language (ESL) Bible Study, Adult Education, Vacation Bible School (VBS), Bible Studies, Confirmation, Youth Group, Christmas Tree

### JOY (Outreach and Fellowship)

- Coffee, Greeters, Community, Advertising, Hospitality, Dinners, Special Events (often coordinated with LCW events), Congregational Picnic, Easter Breakfast, Soup Lunches

### STEWARDSHIP

- Money, Time and Talent

## In-Person Worship

Our hope and prayer is to be able to return to worship in the building in March. In order to do so, we need a number of volunteers who are well and feel safe to assist with worship. This photo shows some of the people involved, but there are several other tasks that need to be done, including video, pew markers, offering box, physical distancing signs, lector, windows, tech set-up and tear-down, sound, counting offering. We usually have 7-10 different individuals who come early and/or stay afterwards to ensure worship can happen in a safe and timely manner. If you are interested and available, please contact Norma Houde or Pastor Marlys.

