
Zion News

A newsletter of Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia – August, 2009

“Come let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God.” Jeremiah 51:10

Zion Annual Picnic – 2009

by Ann Duncan



The annual Zion church picnic was held on a sweltering Sunday afternoon, June 28, at Rhodes Jordan Park, not too far from the church, right after worship service. Because we were unable to rent a shelter, the pastor suggested we “snag” the pavilion by the ball fields. It was perfect! There was plenty of space with a number of picnic tables under a nice shelter.

There was a lively group there, including the TVBS team and their leaders from

Eau Claire, Wisconsin (I think they were still hungry from that long drive through the Tennessee mountains), the Mayhew family, Virginia Tetens, the Radichel family, Larry and Maria Nielsen and family, the Durst family, the Duncans, Mark Greve, and the King family.

Brian Radichel showed up in the church parking lot ridiculously early that morning and smoked a pork butt for us – it was very delicious. There were plenty of side dishes, such as cole slaw, potato salad, and the

like, as well as an assortment of cold drinks.

People chatted and ate and ate, while the children ran around, tossed balls, and played in the water fountain. (I saw Jerry King soaking little Annie, who seemed to enjoy it.)

I knew I was at a picnic when the ants showed up. They were lurking about waiting for food to hit the ground – which it did fairly often. I know they were waiting for Debra’s cake and Leigh’s famous mint brownies!

I was kind of worried when Pastor climbed up to the rafters to hang up the Zion banner. He continues to amaze me, but I think he gets all that agility and climbing skills from his Dad.

Let’s do this again really soon! †

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We continue our "Hymn writer" series with a feature on Isaac Watts, one of the most prolific hymn writers of all time. There are more hymns in our hymnal written by Isaac Watts, than by any other hymn writer! Watts has had a monumental influence in English hymnody, and we hope that this biography of his life and character will be of great benefit to you!

Hymn Writer: Isaac Watts

Adapted from ISC Hymnworks

By the time our hymn writer began his work in the year 1689, the old hymnals were in trouble. English complaints about the uninspiring translations of the psalm books were common, "sometimes they make the Maker of the tongue speak little better than barbarism, and have too many verses in such poor rhyme that two hammers on a smith's anvil would make better music."



Looking back now, we can say that a smith's anvil did make things better. The hammer clanging in Isaac Watts's shop was working overtime. So many editions of his hymn works were published that an exact tabulation is no longer possible.

Revolutionary soldiers knew and sang Watts, and the next generations of their New

England children learned to read from his hymnbooks. Copies of Watts were also used by Robert Browning, Florence Nightingale, the Brontes, the Presidents and the wives of the Presidents of the United States. Even Benjamin Franklin issued a reprint of Watts's *Psalms of David* in 1729.

To this day the abundant psalms and hymns of Isaac Watts remain a mainstay of just about every Christian hymnal. There are more hymns by Watts in our hymnal, for instance, than by any other writer.

Precocious Child

Watts was born July 17, 1674, the eldest of nine children. At only four years of age, he began studying the classics. Beginning Latin at four and Greek at nine or even earlier may not have been unusual for that time, but Watts was probably different than most in that he pursued learning with dedication his life long. The story is told how his mother found this precocious seven-year-old writing poetry. Not quite believing it was his, she was amazed when her young son handed her proof of his authorship in the form of this acrostic:

I am a vile polluted lump of earth,
S o I've continued ever since my birth,
A lthough Jehovah grace does daily give me
A s sure this monster Satan will deceive me,
C ome therefore, Lord from Satan's claws relieve me.

W ash me in Thy blood, O Christ,
A nd grace divine impart
T hen search and try the corners of my heart,
T hat I in all things may be fit to do
S ervice to Thee, and sing Thy praises too.

Maker of Verse

As a young man, Watts complained to his father that all they had to sing in church were bad translations of the Psalms. His father suggested that he do something better and Watts took up the challenge. Watts himself said later that he was a “maker of verses from age fifteen to age fifty.”

Watts thought that the psalms “ought to be translated in such a manner as we have reason to believe David would have composed them if he had lived in our day.”

Blinded by the Sun

Watts was not only a prolific poet but he also wrote many theological treatises. Sadly, his Calvinism and other errors found their way into his writings. *The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal* states that Watts was charged with Arianism for his *Speculations on the Human Nature of the Logos*. Others have pointed out error in his teaching on the Trinity.

Later in life, Watts seemed to have turned away from the blinding glare of reason. He prayed that the vanity of his own imagination not impede his salvation, “Help me, heavenly Father, for I am quite tired and weary of these human explainings, so various and uncertain... Not let any pride of reason, nor any affection of novelty, nor any criminal bias whatsoever, turn my heart aside from hearkening to these divine dictates of Thy word and Thy Spirit. Suffer not any of my native corruption, nor the vanity of my imagination, to cast a mist over my eyes while I am searching after the knowledge of Thy mind and will, for my eternal salvation.”

Waiting God’s Leave

Watts was anxious to sing the Savior’s praises in heaven. Late in life when friends would ask him how he was doing, Watts would reply, “Waiting God’s leave to die.” Commenting on the observation of an old minister that “the most learned and knowing Christian, when they come to die, have only the same plain promises of the gospel for their support, as the common and unlearned,” Watts added, “and so I find it. It is the plain promises of the

Gospel that are my support; and I bless God that they are plain promises, that they do not require much labor and pains to understand them: for I can do nothing now but look into my Bible for some promise to support me, and live upon that.”

On another occasion he said, “I bless God I can lie down with comfort at night, not being solicitous whether I wake in this world or another.” And so Watts died November 25, 1748, and the age of 75.

Our Praises

For our part in the Savior’s praises we are blessed with this “slender” list of hymns by Watts in our hymnal:

- 10. This is the day the Lord hath made
- 13. Before Jehovah’s awe-full throne
- 15. From all the dwell below the skies
- 27. Oh, bless the Lord, my soul
- 87. Joy to the world, the Lord is come
- 123. Our God, our Help in ages past
- 154. Alas! And did my Savior bleed
- 164. Twas on that dark, that doleful night
- 175. When I survey the wondrous cross
- 220. Jesus, my great High Priest
- 286. How shall the young secure their hearts
- 289. The Law commands and makes us know
- 344. Come let us join our cheerful songs
- 416. Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways
- 426. The Lord my Shepherd is
- 487. How beauteous are their feet
- 511. Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
- 629. Let children hear the mighty deeds

... And many, many more! †

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produced by:

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Farewell to the Durst Family

by Ann Duncan

A very special family has just left our congregation with a cross-country move that necessitates a transfer to another CLC church.

After five years, Aaron, Amanda, Sarah, and Rebecca Durst are leaving their Bulldog stomping ground, and consequently, Zion, to move on to new opportunities in Menomonie, Wisconsin.

In July 2004, the Durst family packed up, left Rapid City, South Dakota, and moved south because Aaron had been accepted at the University of Georgia to pursue an advanced degree in music. In May, he was awarded a DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) in saxophone performance, which is a performance-oriented degree with a research component.

After several anxious months of waiting for replies to various applications for teaching positions in higher education, Dr. Durst received an offer (which he accepted) from the University of Wisconsin – Stout in Menomonie to be an assistant professor, director of instrumental music. His duties include directing the concert band, jazz band, and pep band (it's always good to have some pep!). In addition, he will be teaching two sections of Music in our World, a music appreciation class, and also will teach private lessons in a variety of instruments.

As soon as the household is established, running smoothly, and the girls settled in their new school, Amanda plans to hang up her open-for-business sign, restarting her sewing and quilting enterprise. Although she is always happy to assist in music duties at church, Amanda said that a break might be nice.

The Dursts will be members at Messiah Lutheran Church in Eau Claire and hope the girls will be able to attend the day school there.

The relocation will mean Aaron and Amanda will be closer to their families: Aaron's parents live in Spencer, in Northwest Iowa, a quick 4 1/2 hour drive away. Amanda's parents are a bit further away in Rapid City, South Dakota, 11 hours away – only one full day of driving now. Not bad if you can get everyone up by 5 a.m.!

I asked the Dursts if they would like to add a comment of their own, which they did:

“We have greatly enjoyed the fellowship and our time at Zion; if anyone is in the Eau Claire/Menomonie area, make sure you stop by and stay awhile. Oh yes, and listen to more good music, especially Bach, and don't be afraid to tell Pastor when he picks bad hymns.”

What bad hymns?

God bless you, Durst family! Keep making beautiful music and bringing your praises before the Lord. We will miss all the wonderful music you brought us and the exuberance of your lovely girls. And, of course, the good coffee Aaron always brewed at the fellowship meals – not too mention the delicious food! †

The new contact information for the Dursts:

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