

# *Zion's Messenger - December 2021*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Is it just me...or has this year flown by? Thanksgiving Day has passed, and the Season of Advent has begun. Christmas is coming, with the anticipation of gathering for worship again in person. From the responses to the survey in November, we are planning to resume three Christmas Eve services, which will actually allow for continued “social distancing” and gathering times that serve the needs of the congregation.

I do enjoy the Advent and Christmas seasons. Although separate “seasons” in the church year, they tend to get fused together because of the influence of culture, especially from the emphasis on Christmas shopping, holiday parties, and the decorations and light displays in neighborhoods and businesses, even before Thanksgiving.

On the four Sundays of Advent, the sanctuary is adorned with blue paraments, reminding us that the season is both a penitential and anticipatory time. The daylight shortens as December progresses, and we light a new candle each week to bring light into the darkness.

Then Christmas arrives—no longer a penitential and anticipatory time—but a time of great rejoicing as we relive the proclamation of Messiah’s birth among us. The blue is gone, and the sanctuary is bathed in white, the color that signifies the celebratory events in the life of Christ. The sanctuary remains “decorated” for the Season of Christmas to help us experience the matter of God’s timing for the salvation of the world. The Season of Christmas takes us up to the Day of Epiphany (always January 6), when we recall Jesus being recognized as royalty by kings from distant lands who come to pay homage.

As much as I have tried to “get in the mood” for Christmas as December arrives, I have found, over the years, I have found that it doesn’t seem real to me until the organ bursts into “O Come, All Ye Faithful” and Christmas Eve worship begins.

The carols and the readings appointed for Christmas fill the holy space with a certain joy. We tell the story of Jesus’ birth among us, with the angels radiantly proclaiming his birth to shepherds, common ordinary people who often exist in the margins of society.

God has clearly kept the promise to intervene in the human condition to begin the salvation event that God’s people have longed for forever! That, in truth, is Christmas!

We have much to celebrate and be thankful for as we contemplate the birth of Jesus among us—the Incarnation (God in flesh). This act of God gives us what no other religion or belief gives. It is a tangible sign of God’s unconditional love for us. Jesus makes all the difference in the world, bringing the light that surpasses any lighting display the human community can ever devise.

We will come together on Christmas Eve, lighting our candles in the “Silent Night.” The words from John’s gospel [Ch. 1.5] will give us the good news and the hope for what is yet to come: “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”

May the message of Christmas bring you joy, now and always!

Blessed Christmas!

‡ *Pastor Diane LaFauci*

## ***A special note of thanks...***

I meant to get this note of thanks in the November newsletter, but somehow it got away from me. I was so touched to receive the gift certificate to one of our favorite restaurants on the occasion of “Pastor Appreciation Sunday” in October! Doug and I do enjoy dining out, especially now that the vaccines have made it safer, and we thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity.

## *Christmas Eve*

*O, Come! All ye faithful!*

December 24, 2021

**4pm Family-centered worship with Holy Communion**

**7pm Holy Communion – Candlelight**

**10pm Holy Communion – Candlelight**

*Social-distance seating*

**First Sunday of Christmas**

*Lessons & Carols*

December 26 10:30am

### **Building Security Precautions**

In October Zion's hosted the community for an "Active Shooter" presentation by State Police Trooper Dave Boehm. The presentation gave us significant points to consider to ensure that any event, including worship, at Zion's remains safe for all attending.

Recent incidents over the past few years across the country suggest that *no location*—whether on a major highway or center of town, or out in the country—is completely secure when it comes to someone with no good intentions in mind. Such is the world we live in today!

One very simple but critical need is keeping doors secured during times we gather in the building, be it for worship, Sunday School, events, meetings.

**>>On Sundays, doors to the Sunday School wing will be open for arrival and departure, secured during class time. Of course, folks may knock for entrance at secured time.**

**>>The front entrance will be the only entrance open during worship.**

**>>If your group is here for a scheduled meeting, please lock the entrance door during the meeting.**

Zion's is not in a highly visible place, making it even more vulnerable. From time to time we have had people seeking entrance for inappropriate reasons, especially during the week.

**Please remember to let the Office know you are in the building during office hours, as the Administrative Assistant cannot monitor each entrance.**

Thanks for helping to keep Zion's a safe and secure place for ministry and mission.



## **Council Corner**

Church Council met on November 9<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was opened with devotions on the topic of being thankful in all circumstances, both when things are going well and when the going gets tough. This is an important reminder, as we all have things to be grateful for. Even when things seem to go against us, God’s hand holds us up and helps us to endure.

We finished the month of October in the black by \$4,066, leaving us in the red by \$10,961 year-to-date. We still need to collect \$10,000 for the parking lot.

The Zoom book study that the Pastor is holding based on the book, *Families of Faith: An Introduction to World Religions for Christians*, has been well-attended and there is room for more participants! Please consider joining in on a Wednesday morning or evening.

A survey will be distributed regarding Christmas Eve service times. The Music and Worship Committee has discussed having two services based on the desires of church members, one at 7:00pm and another at either 4:00pm or 10:00pm. Surveys will be available in upcoming church bulletins and requests can also be communicated to the church office.

Great news for all attending in-person services... a sound system upgrade is in process! It may take some time for new parts to be received and installed, so please bear with us. We are hoping to have better sound quality in the sanctuary for the Christmas Eve service.

In anticipation of winter weather, the 8:00am Sunday service will be halted until springtime. By waiting until the later service to gather, we are hoping that the roads and parking lot will be clear so that everyone can travel safely. The final 8:00am service for this year will be on November 21<sup>st</sup>. After that date, please join us at 10:30am.

Several people attended the Active Shooter training that was held by Trooper Boehm and Trooper Brownback of the Pennsylvania State Police on October 14<sup>th</sup>. As a result of this training, only as a safety precaution, we will start keeping all external church doors locked during worship services except for the center doors. The center doors will remain unlocked for entering the church and all exterior doors will serve as exits.

This year we will once again participate in the Salvation Army’s Angel Tree Tag program. Tags will be available in the narthex starting on November 14<sup>th</sup> and unwrapped gifts must be returned to the church by Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. Tags will be available for both children and seniors.

~ Respectfully submitted by Heather Gring

### **Financial Report**

We finished the month of October at \$4,065.67 in the black (monthly income over expenses). Overall, for the year, at the end of October we were \$10,960.84 in the red, a significant improvement from the \$28,784.44 deficit carried into January 2021.

We continue to see Capital Improvement donations for the paving of the driveway and parking lot completed a few years ago. We are hoping to observe the payoff of the \$9,956 balance in the coming months.

Monthly – Income for October      \$15,364.23  
Monthly – Expenses for October    \$11,298.56

The General Offering            \$12,489.00  
Online Giving                      \$1,876.15  
Loose Change                      \$88.03  
Other Income                      \$911.05  
Subtotal                              \$15,364.23

**Thank you for your continued support!**

## Consider online giving in 2021

Visit <http://zionslutheran.org/donate/>. Please call the church office if you need assistance.

### \*\*VOLUNTEERS NEEDED\*\*

December 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM – Volunteers are needed to help decorate the church for Christmas. We especially need people who are not afraid to climb a ladder.



### Sunday School Special Event

The story of the Nativity will be portrayed by the adults of the congregation for the children in Sunday school on **December 19th in the fellowship hall at 9:15 am.** Christmas crafts will follow.

**Everyone is invited to come see the story of Jesus birth depicted by adults.**



### SIGN UP FOR CHURCH EMAIL

If you are not receiving the weekly bulletin via email and you would like to, we encourage you to go to the churches website and use the Zion's Email Sign Up Form. The email address that you provide will only be used for church communications.

Thank you.

## BULLETIN AND ALTAR FLOWER SPONSORS

Sponsors are needed for bulletins and altar flowers. If you are interested in sponsoring either, please sign up on the corresponding paper on the bulletin board in the narthex. Bulletins - \$13.00, Altar Flowers, \$40.00.

### LECTORS AND CAMERA

If you would like to be a lector or camera person for a Sunday worship service during the month of November or December, please contact the church office at 610-562-3112 or send an email to [churchoffice@zionslutheran.org](mailto:churchoffice@zionslutheran.org). **Thank you.**

### ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Watch your bulletins for more information! **We are always looking for new participants.** We have great discussions on a variety of topics - both Bible Studies and more contemporary issues. If you have any topics you would like to learn about or discuss, please contact Janine Dreibelbis at [mjdrei@verizon.net](mailto:mjdrei@verizon.net) or 610-488-7896.

### PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

**As we go into the winter months, please keep your eyes open for schedule changes. Changes will be announced in the bulletins, online and in newsletters.**



Thank you all for the cards, prayers and well wishes for Lee Barto and our family, especially to Faye Smith & family, Jane Seidel & Brenda Hartman.

### **MARY BARTO & FAMILY**

Eleanor Dietrich would like to say thank you to the Knotters for the Wooden Bridge gift card.

WELCA gives thanks to all who donated to Mary's Shelter as we celebrated National Gratitude month. Your gifts are appreciated by the recipients.



### **ANGEL TREE GIFT TAGS**

Please return all gifts and tags to the church **by Sunday, December 5 for pick up the following day by the Salvation Army.**

Thank you again for helping to make someone's holiday a little brighter!

### **OPPORTUNITY HOUSE**

#### **Opportunity House Volunteers needed for 2022!**

We will be preparing a meal **bimonthly** in 2022.

January 21st  
March 18<sup>th</sup>  
May 20<sup>th</sup>  
July 15<sup>th</sup>  
September 16<sup>th</sup>  
November 18<sup>th</sup>

If you are interested in being a captain or assisting in making the food, please reach out to the church office, or Wanda Hoherchak.

**Thank you for you continued support!**

### **SOUND SYSTEM**

As anyone knows who has been in church recently, we have been having ongoing problems with our sound system. Despite some new mics, we have not been able to improve the situation. Worship and Music arranged for 3 companies to come and give us free assessments of our sound system. We received multiple proposals which included replacing the entire system and starting over vs. using what we have that is still working with a variety of options for improvement. Prices ranged from about \$7000 to over \$22,000. All information was reviewed, and Worship and Music recommended to Council that we use Entertainment Services Group from Allentown to replace the speakers (which are the original 1969 ones that no longer work) and the digital processor which is the computerized "brains" of the system. We will re-use the existing amplifiers and wiring as we are able. The cost for this upgrade will be about \$8000. This was approved by Council at November's meeting.

The new technology in a building our size is to not use smaller speakers down the side, but to use one central overhead speaker which will direct the sound down towards the congregation. This is designed to improve clarity and allow for good sound no matter where you are seated. There will also be speakers toward the back which will direct sound up to the balcony.

Council approved using memorial money and the Bill Hill estate donation. The supply and shipping delays will have an effect on this project. We hope to have the speakers in place before Christmas, and the new digital processor installed and the project completed by March. We will have a 1-year warranty, so feedback from the congregation will be welcomed to be certain that the system is working as well as possible. Thank you for your patience while we work to get this resolved.

Janine Dreibelbis, Worship and Music Chairperson



## **KNOTTER'S NEWS**

### **Thank you for all the donations received for the quilts.**

We would also like to thank all of our volunteer crafts people who help to put the quilt tops together and knot the quilts. Your time and talents are always greatly appreciated.

In November, backpacks and quilts were delivered to Opportunity House, Mary's Shelter & Safe Berks.

We are always looking for material, bed sheets & blankets. Pillow cases are stuffed and given to the kennels for dog & cat beds! Nothing given goes to waste! There are always patches available for sewing in the office.

We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month to knot from 9 am to 11 am.

**Please join us!**



### **FOOD PANTRY**

These are some of the items that are needed for the upcoming holiday season:

**Flour**  
**Sugar**  
**Cake and cookie mixes**  
**Canned pumpkin**  
**Baking soda**  
**Baking powder**  
**Spices**

The Food Pantry is still accepting monetary donations to help with their increased expenses. Checks can be made out to **Northern Berks Food Pantry** and mailed to:

Sherry Strausser, Treasurer  
207 Beechwood Drive, Hamburg, PA 19526

**Thanks for helping members of our community to make ends meet!**

### **Food Pantry Distribution:**

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday, at 9:00 am at the Lutheran Church of Holy Trinity, Leesport

**The next Northern Berks Food Pantry distribution is currently scheduled for Tues., Dec. 21 from 6 pm to 7 pm. We will be staying at the Hamburg Area High School until the new year. Recipients should use Exit 9. Please call 610-562-8250 for information about distribution location.**

### **ZION'S CEMETERY COMPANY OF PERRY TOWNSHIP INC.**

The December monthly board meeting will be held on December 9, 2021 at 9:00 am. Meetings will be held at Zion's UCC Church in the Fellowship Hall.

The Annual Lot Owners meeting will be held January 6, 2022 at Zion's UCC Church at 9:00 am. The January monthly Board meeting will follow.



## December Birthdays

1st Jeffrey Seidel  
3rd Bruce Troutman  
Zoey Adam  
4th Mary Ann Adam  
5th Brad Doklan  
Cameron Queenan  
6th Susan Horst  
Leonardo LaVentura  
7th Richard Reinhart  
Allen Rausch  
9th Tyler Gough  
Chase Denatala  
10th Nathan Price  
Owen Schroeder  
11th Susan Lutz  
Paul Strauss  
15th Noah Neuin  
18th Lisa Deibler  
Roger Heckman  
19th Ronald Seaman  
20th Samuel Olszewski  
21st Daniel Mazaika  
23rd Amber Noecker  
24th Daniel Brennan  
Logan Heffner  
26th Gabrielle Leone  
Melinda Ruth  
David Strunk  
28th Bailey Koehn  
Julianne Kohler  
29th Melanie Epting

Would you like your birthday listed in the newsletter? Please contact the Church Office today. 610-562-3112.



## Shut in Mailing List

Mabel Fry  
65 Fry Lane  
Auburn, Pa 17922

Nancy Leiby  
350 Lackawanna St Apt.320  
Reading, Pa 19601

David Peters  
Wyomissing Nursing & Rehab  
1000 E Wyomissing Blvd.  
Reading, PA 19611

Christine Ryan  
Laurel Center  
125 Holly Rd.  
Hamburg, PA 19526

David Seidel  
Grand View Manor  
129 Houck Rd  
Fleetwood, Pa 19522

Myrle Werley  
Keystone Villa  
Apt. 208  
1152 Ben Franklin Hwy East  
Douglassville PA 19518

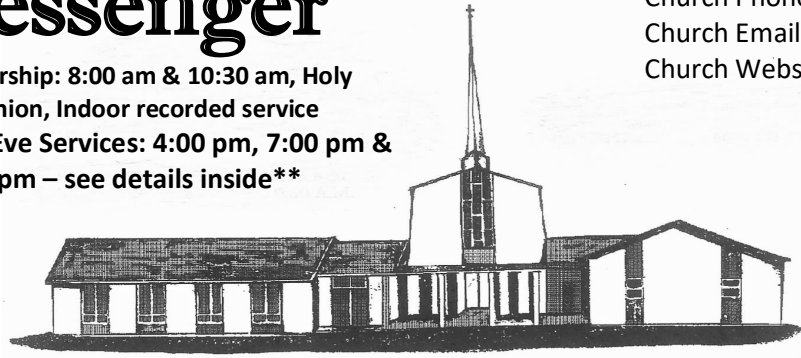
Dorothy Wertz  
Maiden Creek Place  
105 Dries Rd Room 5  
Reading, Pa 19605

If there is anyone you know who is unable to get out and would like to be added to our list, please contact the church office.

# Zion's Messenger

Sunday Worship: 8:00 am & 10:30 am, Holy  
Communion, Indoor recorded service

**\*\*Christmas Eve Services: 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm &  
10:00 pm – see details inside\*\***



Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
354 Zions Church Road, Shoemakersville, PA 19555

## **Purpose Statement:**

God's Purpose for Zion's is to welcome and empower people to grow in faithfulness and service to His mission through the Gospel. † Jesus is Lord & Savior † † Honest & open communication † † Create and sustain healthy relationships † † Share your faith through our daily life † † Recognize and encourage people's spiritual gifts † Perseverance † †  
A congregation united in Christ making Zion's a destination, not an obligation †

Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
354 Zions Church Road  
Shoemakersville, PA 19555

**December 2021**

**Pastor: Pastor Diane LaFauci**

Pastor's Cell: 484-794-5503

Church Phone: 610-562-3112

Church Email: [churchoffice@zionslutheran.org](mailto:churchoffice@zionslutheran.org)

Church Website: [www.zionslutheran.org](http://www.zionslutheran.org)



**Zion's Monthly Calendar - DECEMBER 2021**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
**10:30 am Service will be recorded and posted on the church's website and Facebook EVERY SUNDAY	<b>**WATCH FOR SERVICE INFO IN BULLETINS, CALENDARS &amp; ONLINE</b>		1 ZOOM BOOK STUDY 7:00 PM  7:15 PM CHOIR REH.	2 6:00 PM WORSHIP & MUSIC MTG	3	4  7:00 pm A.A Meeting
5 9:15 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL  10:30 AM HOLY COMMUNION	6 6:30 pm Cub Scouts 7:30 pm Boy Scouts	7 9:00-11:30 am Knotters  7:00 pm A.A. Meeting	8 ZOOM BOOK STUDY 10:30 AM & 7:00 PM  7:15 PM CHOIR REH.	9 9:00 am Zion's Cemetery Meeting – Zion's UCC Fellowship Hall	10	11  7:00 pm A.A Meeting
12 9:15 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL  10:30 AM HOLY COMMUNION	13 6:30 pm Cub Scouts 7:30 pm Boy Scouts	14 7:00 pm COUNCIL MTG 7:15 PM CHOIR REH  7:00 pm A.A. Meeting	15 ZOOM BOOK STUDY 10:30 AM & 7:00 PM	16 6:30 PM CHURCH DECORATING  6:30 REHEARSAL FOR NATIVITY PLAY  7:30 PM PROPERTY MTG.	17	18  7:00 pm A.A Meeting
19 9:15 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL  10:30 AM HOLY COMMUNION	20 <b>DECEMBER NWSLTR DEADLINE</b> 6:30 pm Cub Scouts 7:30 pm Boy Scouts	21 9:00-11:30 am Knotters 7:00 pm A.A. Meeting	22 7:15 PM CHOIR REH	23	24 <b>CHRISTMAS EVE HOLY COMMUNION</b>  4:00 PM  7:00 PM  10:00 PM	25 <b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>
26 <b>**NO SUNDAY SCHOOL TODAY**</b>  10:30 AM LESSONS & CAROLS	27 6:30 pm Cub Scouts 7:30 pm Boy Scouts	28 7:00 pm A.A. Meeting	29 7:15 PM CHOIR REH	30	31 <b>NEW YEAR'S EVE</b>	