

Zion's Messenger - December 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This time of the year seems always to be more hectic than the rest of the year...Thanksgiving, preparing for Christmas, baking (for those so inclined), finally Christmas...followed by New Year's Eve.

The carols we hear spread the notion of "Peace on earth..." when all around us seems anything but peaceful!

I do love the season, with its decorations and lighting displays. I am ok with lights and displays in the stores *after* Hallowe'en and Thanksgiving.

I change the seasonal touches at home in the kitchen and great room. The pillows on the sofa and chairs clearly reflect wintry scenes. And, of course, the Christmas trees (yes, *trees*, the main one for the family Christmas gathering, plus some smaller trees with unique decorations or with special memory significance) come out of storage. The outside lighting changes from fall to Christmas/winter...and will stay that way at least thru January. The indoor trees get to stay up past the Day of Epiphany (Jan. 6) and for as long as I choose to enjoy them.

I bring out my little Santas from different countries, and I have a special display of my Swedish figures, including the straw goat that "Tomte" (the Christmas gnome) rides thru the Swedish countryside bringing gifts into the snow-covered villages and farms. I try to prepare one or two Swedish dishes...remembering Christmas gatherings with my father's side of the family. I lament the fact that I did not inherit from my mother the love and the energy needed for baking cookies. Perhaps, if I am ever truly "retired" at Christmas time, I might have time to try my hand at some of Mom's tried-and-true cookie recipes!

But in the church, it's a "different world", as we strive to emphasize that "place away" from this world where we might focus with intention on God coming among us as a human child... under circumstances to which we *might* relate, had we lived 2,000 years ago in a place and a culture so removed from our world today.

We bring out the Advent wreath, lighting the candles in counter-clockwise order to signify that God's time is different from our time. And finally we transition the sanctuary for Christmas, and the carols we sing reflect the special joy of Christ's coming among us.

God's timing was perfect and always will be. With the way things are today, how in the world would anyone have even noticed? Shepherds in the fields?? Kings from the East?? Who would be summoned to come and how: by angels in the sky over the fields or text message or breaking news on TV? Would it be like paparazzi outside the London hospital waiting for the birth of the heir to the throne?

No...God's plan was, and always had been, perfection. Simple and straightforward. And that is why we tell the story and again and again without letting the outside world in.

We have special services planned for later in the month of December: Dec. 24 at 10:30am for Advent Scripture & Song (we review the words of the prophets who foretold the birth of Messiah and reflect on those messages of hope in the songs we sing) and then Dec 31 at 10:30am for Lessons & Carols (where we rejoice with the Nativity story and the time of the infant Jesus).

Of course, we gather on Christmas Eve, Sunday this year, at 4pm an 7pm to relive the glorious birth of a baby in an intimate space far from any paparazzi. A baby who would impact all of humanity forever...more than any other royal birth.

The glory of God revealed for our longing souls and hearts!

May you know and experience the peace that only God can give through Jesus!

Christmas blessings always!

✠ *Pastor Diane LaFauci*

**2023 Northern Berks Ministerium
Community Advent Worship Services
Thursday Mornings 11:30 a.m.
Worship / Soup and Bread Fellowship**

Thursday, December 7th

Zion (Blue Mountain) UCC,
6573 Old U.S. 22, Strausstown, PA

Thursday, December 14th

Victory Chapel,
213 N. 4th Street, Hamburg, PA

Thursday, December 21st

Blue Christmas
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church,
99 Church Street, Hamburg, PA

Freewill offering benefitting the Emergency Assistance Fund

****Additional Northern Berks Ministerium Services:**

Sunday, December 10th at 4:00 p.m.

Red Kettle Benefit Concert
to benefit the Hamburg Salvation Army
St. John's Lutheran Church, Hamburg



Poinsettias For Christmas

Orders needed by 10:00 am, Friday, December 15, 2023

Name _____ Phone _____

Color Choices and number of each? \$10.00 each

_____ Red _____ White _____ Jingle Bells (red leaf with white speckles)

Total Payment Collected _____ (make check payable to Zion's Lutheran Church)

Dedication

In HONOR Of _____

IN MEMORY of _____

Other Dedication _____

**Poinsettias can be picked up after the Christmas Eve Service.



Council Corner

At our Church Council meeting on November 7, we found ourselves in the favorable position of discussing a pastoral candidate and reviewing the procedure to call a pastor! The Call Committee met the candidate and recommended her to Church Council. We then met with her and voted to move forward with the process. A meet and greet open house is scheduled for December 2 from 2:00 to 4:00 in the fellowship hall, with a trial sermon the next day, Sunday, December 3. Immediately after the service, a congregational meeting will be held with a member of the Synod staff officiating and a vote will be taken. A quorum of 50 people is required, so we encourage everyone to attend.

The proposed budget was discussed and will be finalized at the December meeting. Church Council recognized the commitment that WELCA has made toward supporting a new pastor by pledging \$5000 a year for 5 years toward the pastor's salary.

Council accepted the resignation of Ruth Hoppes from her position of cleaning the church. We thank Ruth for her commitment and service for well over 20 years in this position! Don Ryan has been hired as her replacement.

The Library Committee has plans to have the Sunday School children tour the library during class to make them aware of the resources and interesting things to be found there.

As part of a donation from Irwin Levan, a bench was purchased for use in the labyrinth, and was dedicated in memory of his wife, Ella Mae Levan.

Respectfully submitted by Mark Dreibelbis

Financial Report

We finished the month of October at \$4,311.12 in the black.

Monthly – Income for October	\$16,386.03
Monthly – Expenses for October	\$12,054.91

The General Offering	\$ 9,264.00
Online Giving	\$ 2,997.41
Loose Change	\$ 131.30
Other Income	\$ 3,993.32
Subtotal	\$16,386.03

Thank you for your continued support!

Consider online giving

Visit <http://zionslutheran.org/donate/>. Please feel free to call the church office for assistance.

QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS

A qualified distribution (QCD) is a simple and tax-smart way to give to the church.

- If you are 70 ½ or older, you can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution of \$100,000 or less of your required minimum distribution (RMD) annually.
- Giving directly from your IRA can reduce your annual gross income and lower your taxes. You are not taxed by the IRS on this type of distribution.
- Distributions must be made directly from a traditional IRA account by your plan administrator to Zion's.
- Discuss with your investment advisor to arrange for the QCD distribution to be made. Distributions can be transmitted to the church quarterly, semi-annually, or annually.

**** SPECIAL NOTICE ****

**PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR COMMITTEE
REPORTS FOR THE ANNUAL REPORT TO
THE CHURCH OFFICE BY:**

FRIDAY, DEC. 08, 2023.

December is very busy in the church office with extra bulletins, newsletter and the Annual Report which is why we need your reports in a timely manner. Even if your report has no changes from last year, we need to hear from you.

The Annual Report must be printed and available by January 7, 2024.

This year's Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2024. The snow date is January 28, 2024. Please watch future bulletins and newsletters for additional information.



Coffee Bar

**This month's Coffee Bar is
Sunday, December 10!**

Come and enjoy a cup of coffee, hot tea, or hot chocolate before the service or stay awhile after the service and enjoy a time of fellowship over your favorite hot beverage. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Narthex if you would like to bring a baked good or snack for everyone to enjoy.

**We look forward to this time of fellowship
among our congregation!**



As you may know Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year. We are in need of some assistance in preparing the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season.

The Christmas Tree will be decorated on Thursday December 7 @ 7:00 PM.

On Saturday December 23 at 9:00 AM we will be taking down the Advent swags and replace them with the Christmas swags. We will be setting up the pew candles, Christmas wreaths, and window decorations, in preparation for the Christmas Eve service.

After the 10:30 AM service on Sunday December 24th, Altar Guild will be taking down the Advent wreath, setting up the candelabras, moving the Pascal candle next to the Altar, and setting up the Poinsettias for the Christmas Eve Services. Altar Guild will welcome anyone who wants to assist with these tasks.

The Christmas Tree, along with all the Christmas decorations will be taken down on Thursday January 4th at 7:00 PM.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the church office.

Thank you and God Bless!

CARD SHOWER

Our Christmas Card Shower for Brett Daub continues this month.

Brett is currently serving our country on the USS Ashland, so this is a great way to celebrate the Christmas holiday and also acknowledge his service to our country. Cards should be mailed to the following address:

OS2 Daub, Brett
USS Ashland LSD 48
Unit 100147 Box 747
FPO AP 96660

Please note: Brett Daub card shower update

It has been verified that the postage for letters to Brett Daub is standard first-class postage of 0.66 cents.



Ruth Hoppes would like to thank everyone for the “big” card, gift card and flowers she received on her retirement. Your thoughtfulness and kindness are greatly appreciated.



Sunday School Christmas Program

December 17, 2023 - 10:30am

Please join us on December 17 as the Sunday School presents the Christmas story through the eyes of the Shepherds.



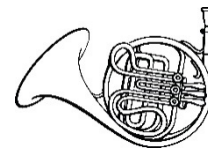
Special Music

December 10th

Please join us on December 10 when we will be joined by the Hamburg Area High School Aerial Boundaries choir in worship. The choir is under the direction of Mrs. Sara Jackson.

Christmas Eve Choir

The Adult Choir invites all who are interested to sing our Christmas Eve anthem "A Celtic Christmas." The anthem incorporates two beautiful carols, Suogan and the Wexford Carol. If you are interested, please contact Donald Ryan at donryan715@gmail.com or 610.762.9322.



Orcheband Announcement

Attention all musicians! Orcheband will be playing once again before the 7:00 pm service on Christmas Eve.

If you are interested in playing, or know someone who is, please reach out to director Steve Turner or a member of the Brass Ensemble. The group will rehearse immediately after the service on December

17 and begin playing at 6:30 pm on
Christmas Eve.

Thank you!

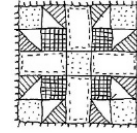


NATIVITY SETS ON DISPLAY

PLEASE JOIN US!

On Saturday, December 16th, Zion's Lutheran Church will open its Fellowship Hall to the general public from noon until 3:00 PM, with a display of over 130 Nativity Sets from a private collection. A "Free Will" donation will be received and all proceeds will be sent to Pastor Aaron Decker, a Son of our Congregation, employed by the ELCA Global Mission, to help in support of the church's Ministry in Bolivia. The display will remain in the Fellowship Hall for the Congregation's viewing following the annual Sunday School Christmas Program on Sunday, December 17th until approximately 1:30 PM. A sign-up sheet for volunteers to assist in the set-up of the display on Saturday, the 16th starting at 8:00 AM and for dismantling and packing-up the sets on Sunday, the 17th is posted on the bulletin board by the Church Office. With the number of items to be displayed, we will be looking for at least 10 volunteers for each day. Cookies and hot and cold beverages will be available during the showing. Please spread the word of this event to friends and neighbors to help in obtaining a generous contribution to Pastor Decker and the ELCA Global Mission Ministry in Bolivia.

If you are unable to attend the display in person but would like to support the **Global Mission Bolivian Ministry**, contributions marked as such may be sent directly to the church or brought to the church in person. Thank you!



Knotter News

Tickets for the quilts displayed in the Narthex are available by donation. Further information about tickets and drawing is available in the Narthex. **Deadline for donations and drawing is Dec. 10.**

96 quilts and 100 backpacks were taken to New Windsor, MD this year. Our only knotting day for December is **Tuesday, December 12**. Regular knotting days will continue in the new year (2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month).

We are still looking for blanket and sheet sets.
Thanks to everyone for your continued support!



FOOTNOTES...FROM OUR LIBRARY

A reading Christian is a growing Christian.

*"When you turn your face to the Son, the shadows
fall behind you."*

In December, our library table will feature
Christmas books.

**Please stop by, take a look and sign-out a
book!**

Senior Group

**Our next Senior Group will meet on
December 21, 2023 in the Gold Room,
11:00 am – 2:00 pm.**

Try to arrive early to divide into card groups.
Hope to see you there!



YOU'RE INVITED

CHILDREN OF THE KING HOME SCHOOL GROUP

You are invited to join the Children of the King home school group on **Friday, Dec. 15 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm** in the Zion's Fellowship Hall. Celebrate an old-fashioned Pennsylvania Dutch Christmas with crafts, stories and a live visit from the Belschnickle!

All ages are welcome!

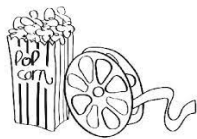
OPPORTUNITY HOUSE 2024

Zion's will be serving meals at Opportunity House in 2024.

The dates for 2024 will be January 19, March 15, May 17, July 19, September 20, and November 15.

Volunteers are always welcome to help cook the food, or to go along to Opportunity House to help serve the food. If you would like to help or have any questions, please reach out to Wanda Hoherchak at whoherchak@gmail.com or (570)778-8403.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and talents to continue to make this possible.



FAITH NIGHT AT THE MOVIES HAMBURG STRAND THEATER

December 12, 2023 – The Christmas Blessing

All movies start at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$8.00 at the door and include a complimentary popcorn & soda.

GRIEFSHARE

The GriefShare support group meets Wednesday evenings, on the dates below at 6:30 pm and **will continue through Dec. 13, 2023**. Sessions take place at Zion's Church, 770 Zion's Church Rd., Hamburg, PA

Dec. 6 Heaven
Dec. 13 What Do I Live for Now?

Persons can join at any time.

***Please see flyer on bulletin board in Narthex for further dates.**

Please call 610-562-2300 to register or for more information. There is a \$20.00 charge for the workbook and other materials.

ZION'S CEMETERY COMPANY INC.

Our monthly Board meeting will be held on December 14, 2023.

Meetings are held at Zion's Church (formerly Zion's UCC Church) in Meeting Room 201.

Our Annual Lot Owner's Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 4, 2024 with the monthly board meeting to follow.

Website: <https://zionsperrytwp.cemetery.network>

Single or multiple grave lots are available for sale. Please contact David Geschwindt, Cemetery Manager, 610-562-7421

Northern Berks Food Pantry

Thank you, Zion's Lutheran, for your assistance at our Thanksgiving Pantry!

We served 149 families from your community.

Special thanks to your Garden group for their canned food donation. We at the Northern Berks Food Pantry, greatly appreciate your generous

donations. 12% of the population of Berks and Schuylkill counties live in poverty. Your support

helps to further our mission of feeding the hungry in our community. Thank you again!



Feeding the
Community

FOOD PANTRY

Our local food pantry is **always** in need of donations and these are some of the items that are needed:

Peanut Butter

Canned Tuna

Canned Fruit

And of course, **any shelf stable item** that you would like to donate would be appreciated.

****If you have tote bags to donate, they are also needed by Northern Berks Food Pantry (Hamburg). Please put them in the shopping cart in the Narthex. You can even put your food donations in a tote bag!**

For monetary donations, your check can be made out to **Northern Berks Food Pantry** and mailed to:

Hamburg Area Middle School
711 Windsor St.
Hamburg, PA 19526

Thank you for helping members of our community to make ends meet!

FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION:

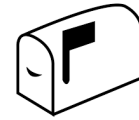
On the 3rd Saturday, at 9:00 am at the Lutheran Church of Holy Trinity, Leesport

The next Northern Berks Food Pantry distribution is currently scheduled for Tues., December 19, 2023, from 6 pm to 7 pm.



December Birthdays

- 1st Jeffrey Seidel
- 3rd Merrill T. Arndt
Zoey Adam
Bruce Troutman
- 4th Mary Ann Adam
- 5th Brad Doklan
Cameron Queenan
- 6th Leonardo LaVentura
- 7th Richard Reinhart
- 9th Chase Denatala
- 10th Nathan Price
- 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
- 25th The Nativity of Our Lord –
Christmas Day
- 26th Gabrielle Leone
David Strunk
- 29th Melanie Epting



Shut-in Mailing List

Mabel Fry
65 Fry Lane
Auburn, Pa 17922

Grace Ketner
1801 Tulpehocken Rd, Apt. 1
Wyomissing, PA 19610

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

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

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

Would you like your birthday listed in the newsletter? Please contact the Church Office today at 610-562-3112 or churchoffice@zionslutheran.org.

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 School: 9:15 am

Sunday Worship: 10:30 am, Holy Communion,

Indoor recorded service

December 2023

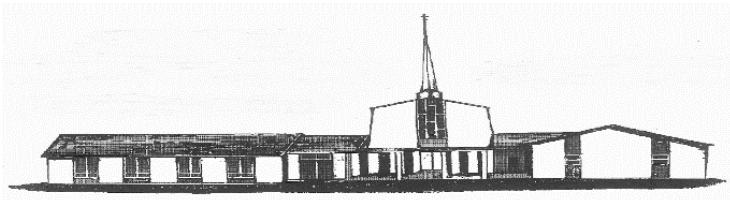
Pastor: Pastor Diane LaFauci

Pastor's Cell: 484-794-5503

Church Phone: 610-562-3112

Church Email: churchoffice@zionslutheran.org

Church Website: www.zionslutheran.org



Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church **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

Zion's Monthly Calendar – December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
** SERVICES WILL BE RECORDED AND POSTED ON THE CHURCH'S WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE EVERY SUNDAY	**WATCH FOR SERVICE INFO IN BULLETINS, CALENDARS & ONLINE				1 FH RENTAL	2 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm Meet & Greet Pastoral Candidate
3 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Call Sermon 11:30 am Congregation Meeting 6:00 – 8:00 pm Confirmation Class Mtg.	4 OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 PM – Cub Scouts & Boy Scouts	5 7:15 pm Choir rehear. 7:00 pm A.A. Meeting	6	7 7:00 pm Christmas Tree Set-up 6:00 PM Brass Reh. 7:00 PM Bells Reh.	8	9 FH RENTAL
10 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion – Guest Choir and Coffee Bar FH RENTAL	11 OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 PM – Cub Scouts & Boy Scouts	12 9:00 am – 11:00 am – Knotters 7:00 pm Council Mtg. 7:00 pm A.A. Meeting	13	14 9:00 am Zion's Cemetery Monthly Mtg @Zion's Church 6:00 PM Brass Reh. 7:00 PM Bells Reh.	15 FH RENTAL	16 NATIVITY SET DISPLAY
17 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion SUNDAY SCHOOL PGM. ORCHEBAND REHEARSAL AFTER WORSHIP	18 OFFICE CLOSED JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 6:30 PM – Cub Scouts & Boy Scouts	19 6:00 pm Berks Food Bank distribution at Hamburg Area Middle Sch. 7:00 pm A.A. Meeting	20 7:15 PM Choir Reh.	21 11:00 am – 2:00 pm Seniors Group (Gold Rm) 7:00 pm Property Mtg. 6:00 PM Brass Reh. 7:00 PM Bells Reh.	22	23
24 10:30 am Advent Scripture & Song CHRISTMAS EVE 4:00 pm & 7:00 pm Holy Communion	25 CHRISTMAS DAY OFFICE CLOSED	26 7:00 pm A.A. Meeting	27	28	29	30
31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 10:30 AM LESSON'S & CAROLS						

