

Zion's Messenger - December 2024



As I am writing this message it seems unreal that Thanksgiving is coming up so soon. Although, when I walked into a store the last week of October, I almost panicked. The Christmas displays were being set-up. I had to check my calendar as I thought I had blinked and missed several weeks of my life. No, it was truly still October. I wondered why we are in such a big hurry to zoom from Halloween to Christmas.

For many of us, the approach of Thanksgiving brings with it a lot of extra work. Thanksgiving might mean picking up guests from the airports, car rides, huge meals, family gatherings (maybe more than one gathering) food shopping, cooking, cleaning up and then, planning for Christmas. The list of things to do seems endless. Sometimes the “busy-ness” of our holidays and our lives is unavoidable. However, we should not carry the burden of unrelenting “busy-ness” in our hearts and allow it to weigh us down.

During this time of year, especially as we prepare for Advent, we should think about the story of Mary and Martha. You may remember, Martha was running around preoccupied with all her busy preparations while Mary was sitting at Jesus’ feet and listening to Him. Jesus told Martha that it was Mary who had chosen what is best (Luke 10:38-42).

We all know that we will undoubtedly have busy moments in our lives. That is normal. However, as Christians, we do not have to allow the busy moments to take our focus away from Christ. As we move toward Advent and Christmas, let’s not forget the reason for these celebrations; our Lord is coming to do great things for us!

Like Martha, it can be so easy for us to get wrapped up in OUR plans, and all the work WE have to do to get ready for our secular celebrations. Sometimes we can completely lose focus on what this time of year is all about for Christians. Our thoughts should be centered on Jesus who has done so much for us. Let’s remember to slow down and take time during Advent to contemplate and prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas.

As we begin our preparations for Christmas, may we pause to reflect on the preparations God made for us in the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus and give thanks for the gift that God has given to us in the promise of eternal life.

May we find peace in the Advent season as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Christ child, the greatest gift of all.

Advent and Christmas blessings,

Pastor Stephanie



**** SPECIAL NOTICE ****

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

MONDAY, DEC. 09, 2024.

December is very busy in the church office with extra bulletins, newsletter and the Annual Report so, we need your reports in a timely manner. Please notify us even if your report has no changes from last year.

**THE ANNUAL REPORT MUST BE PRINTED AND AVAILABLE BY
SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2025.**

**THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 26, 2025.
THE SNOWDATE IS FEBRUARY 2, 2025.**



Preparing for Advent and Christmas

We need assistance in preparing the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season.

The Christmas Tree will be decorated on Thursday, December 5th at 6:00 pm.

On Sunday, December 22nd after the 10:30 am service we will be taking down the Advent swags and replacing them with Christmas swags. Also, we will be setting up the pew candles, Christmas wreaths, and window decorations in preparation for the Christmas Eve services.

At the same time, the 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.

The Christmas Tree, along with all the Christmas decorations will be taken down on Thursday, January 9th at 7:00 pm

We welcome everyone who wants to help!

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



Council Corner

The monthly Church Council meeting was held on November 12, 2024. The meeting was opened with devotions on awareness of the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Dan Brennan attended this month's meeting to present the 2025 budget draft, which council reviewed and suggested some changes. An amended budget will be presented next month.

Following discussion about on-line giving, the treasurer's report was reviewed and accepted. The secretary's report was reviewed, corrected and accepted.

Pastor Stephanie reported the Jammies & Joy donation box was filled and therefore emptied, ready to receive more P.J.'s for families in need. Thank you to all who have contributed and to those who plan to give.

Wanda announced the Altar Guild's schedule for the holidays:

Advent swags & wreath set-up - Nov. 27 at 9:00 am

Christmas tree set-up - Dec. 5 at 6:00 pm

Pew decorating - Sun. Dec. 22 after services

Volunteers are welcome, especially on Dec. 22nd.

The Christmas Eve usher schedule was decided for both 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm services.

Council reviewed the rental agreement for the Fellowship Hall. Painters' tape is the only adhesive allowed for decorating.

Angel Tree gifts will be picked up by the Salvation Army on Monday, Dec. 9.

Council reviewed it members' term changes for 2025. We currently have open positions on Council and on Nominating Committee. Anyone interested in sharing their talents as a council member, please contact any council member.

Respectfully submitted, Carolyn Hollenbach

Financial Report

We finished the month of October at \$4,587.21 in the red (monthly income over expenses).

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Monthly – Income for October | \$11,073.96 |
| Monthly – Expenses for October | \$15,661.17 |

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| The General Offering | \$ 6,393.00 |
| Online Giving | \$ 2,706.06 |
| Loose Change | \$ 155.00 |
| Other Income | \$ 1,819.90 |
| Subtotal | \$11,073.96 |

As we are finishing up the roofing project, donations can be made to the Capital Improvement fund to help cover the costs of the project. Donations can be placed in Capital Improvement envelopes in the pews. If you use a plain envelope, please label it Capital Improvement.

Thank you for your support!

Consider online giving

Visit <http://zionslutheran.org/donate/>.



Sunday School Christmas Program

December 15, 2024 – 10:30 am

Please join us on December 15th as the Sunday School presents the Christmas story as a grandparent tells the story to their grandchildren.

Calling all Musicians!

Zion's orcheband will be playing Christmas Eve at 6:30 pm. We are always looking for more musicians. All instruments and any skill level are welcome. If interested, please contact Steve Turner at sturner324@gmail.com for music. **Practice will be after church on Sunday, December 22.**



Fellowship Time

**Our next fellowship time will be
December 15th**

A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Narthex if you are able to help at fellowship time or bring a snack for everyone to enjoy.

Senior Group

Our next Senior Group will meet on
**December 19, in the Fellowship Hall,
11:00 am – 2:00 pm.**

for a lasagna dinner. Please bring a side dish to share and a friend to play board games and cards.

Try to arrive early to divide into card groups.

Hope to see you there!



Knotters News

We always need helpers to sew quilt patches together for our knotted quilts.

Patches are available in the church office.

We are also in need of clean sheet sets & blankets.

Thanks to everyone for your assistance with our projects!



Blue Christmas

*A Service of Comfort and Hope
for anyone who is experiencing loss*

Sunday, December 22 at 3:00 pm

The service will be at the home of

Pastor Mark Jensen

745 N. Fifth St., Hamburg, PA 19526

Tea and refreshments will be served.

RSVP: 610-562-3808 – St. John's Lutheran Church

Opportunity House 2025

We are always looking for additional volunteers to assist with the food service at Opportunity House. Please let me know if you are willing to either captain a team or assist with the food service. My email address is whoherchak@gmail.com or my phone number is 570-778-8403. Thank you, Wanda Hoherchak.

2025 Schedule:

January 17

March 21

May 16

July 18

September 19

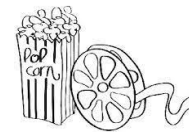
November 21



Card Shower

The Welcome and Outreach Committee invites the congregation to participate in a Christmas card shower for Brett Daub. Brett is currently serving our country with the US Navy. This is a great way to let him know that we are thinking of him and appreciate his service to our country! Cards should be mailed to the following address:

Brett Daub
5033 Shell Cove Lane
Virginia Beach VA 23455



Faith Night at the Movies Hamburg Strand Theatre

12/10 – The Least of These; A Christmas Story
All movies start at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$8.00 at the door and include a popcorn & soda.

Zion's Cemetery Co., Inc.

**Our Monthly Board Meeting will be held on
Thursday, Dec. 12 at 9:00 am.**

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

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

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

Wreaths Across America

Every December, Wreaths Across America honors
our fallen heroes by placing wreaths at their
markers. Zion's Cemetery is part of this mission to
honor over 250 Veterans buried in our cemetery.

To sponsor one or more wreaths, go online to:

www.wreathscrossamerica.org

Location ID: PAZTPT (aka Zion's Cemetery)

Sponsorship Group ID: PA0868 (aka BST163)

Or contact Heather Gring at 610-334-7476.

Deadline to sponsor a wreath is Dec. 3rd.

Zion's Cemetery Remembrance Ceremony followed
by wreath placement will be held on
December 14, 2024 at 12:00 noon.

Boy Scout Troop 163 will be participating.



Blue Mountain Heritage Chorus

Blue Mt. Heritage Chorus will present a FREE
traditional Christmas concert at

Salem Bellemans Church on
Sunday, December 1, 2024

Doors open at 1:30 pm. Concert begins at 2:00 pm.
Refreshments will follow program and a free-will
offering will be accepted.

Emmaus Chorale Holiday Concert

Emmaus Chorale Concert
Donald Ryan, Director
Sunday, December 8 at 3:00 pm

Faith Presbyterian Church
3002 North 2nd Street
Emmaus, PA 18049

The concert will feature selections from Benjamin
Britten's *A ceremony of Carols* with harpist Andrea
Wittchen and other sacred and secular favorites.
Free will offering * reception following in
fellowship hall.

Salvation Army Red Kettle Concert

Red Kettle Christmas Concert
Sunday, December 8 at 4:00 pm
St. John's Lutheran Church, Hamburg, PA

The concert featuring local musicians and singers as
well as the Salvation Army Brass Ensemble
is free and open to the public.
A freewill offering will be collected to benefit
our local Salvation Army.

GriefShare

GriefShare is a special weekly seminar and support
group for people who are grieving the death of
someone close to them. The Griefshare support
group meets Wednesday evening, on the dates
below at 6:30 pm and will continue through
Dec. 18, 2024. Sessions take place at:

Zion's Church
770 Zion's Church Rd.
Hamburg, PA

| | |
|---------|------------------------|
| Dec. 4 | Stuck in Grief |
| Dec. 11 | Hope & Resilience |
| Dec. 18 | Surviving the Holidays |

Please call 610-562-2300 to register or for more
information. You can join at any time.

*See the flyer on bulletin board in narthex for
details. A workbook will be provided at no cost.



Nativity Sets on Display **Please Join Us!**

On Saturday, December 14th, Zion's Lutheran Church will open its Fellowship Hall to the public from noon to 3:00 pm, with a display of over 200 Nativity Sets from a private collection. The display will remain in the Fellowship Hall for the Congregation's viewing following the Sunday School Christmas Program on Sunday, December 15th. A "free will" donation will be received to benefit Domestic Lutheran Disaster Response.

We will need volunteers to help with setting up and packing up the display as well as people to donate cookies for refreshments. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Please join us to celebrate the holiday season!



Angel Tree Tags

All new, unwrapped gifts and tags need to be returned by Sunday, December 8th for pick-up the following day by the Salvation Army.

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



Redner's Save-A-Tape Reminder

Please remember to scan your Redner's Rewards card at every checkout OR you can enter your phone number if you don't have the card with you. Your continued support of this program benefits the ministries here at Zion's, as well as building needs. Thank you, The Women of WELCA



The Northern Berks Community Garden has now finished its 10th season. Thanks again for your support of this ministry!



FOOD PANTRY

Our local food pantry is always in need of donations. Some items that are needed:

**Cake mixes
Flour
Sugar
Chocolate chips**

And of course, any shelf stable item 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, checks 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 17, 2024, from 6 pm to 7 pm.**

Thank You

Thank you, Zion's Lutheran Church, for your assistance at our Thanksgiving Pantry! We served 162 families from your community. Thanks also to your Garden group for their canned food and cabbage 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 your community.
Thank you again!

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| 12/01/24 | 1st Sunday in Advent |
| 12/14/24 | Nativity Display |
| 12/15/24 | Sunday School Christmas Program |
| 12/24/24 | Christmas Eve 4:00 pm & 7:00 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

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



Shut-in Mailing List

Mabel Fry
 65 Fry Lane
 Auburn, Pa 17922

Helen James
 668 North 5th Street
 Hamburg PA 19526

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

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

Carl Sechler
 848 Stone Hill Road
 Shoemakersville PA 19555

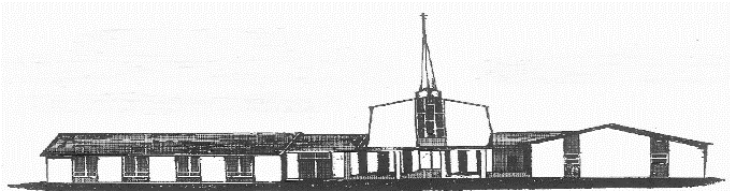
David Seidel
 Grand View Manor
 129 Houck Rd
 Fleetwood, Pa 19522

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 2024

Church Phone: 610-562-3112

Church Email: churchoffice@zionslutheran.org

Church Website: www.zionslutheran.org

Pastor: Pastor Stephanie Roth

Pastor's Office Phone: 610-562-6731

Pastor's Email:

pastorstephanie@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 Zion's Church Road
Shoemakersville, PA 19555

Zion's Monthly Calendar – DECEMBER 2024

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion FH RENTAL | 2 7:00 Adult Choir | 3 7:00 Adult Choir | 4 | 5 6:00 pm Christmas Tree Set-up | 6 FH RENTAL | 7 |
| 8 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion FH RENTAL - PM | 9 OFFICE CLOSED *ANNUAL RPTS DUE TODAY 6:30 pm Cub Scout/Boy Scout mtg. | 10 9:00 am – 11:00 am – Knotters 7:00 pm Council mtg 7:00 pm A.A. Meeting | 11 | 12 9:00 am Zion's Cemetery mtg @Zion's Church | 13 FH RENTAL | 14 12:00 – 3:00 pm Nativity Display FH RENTAL |
| 15 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion Sunday School Program Fellowship Time following Worship FH RENTAL | 16 OFFICE CLOSED JAN 2025 NWSLTR DEADLINE 6:30 pm Cub Scout/Boy Scout mtg. | 17 7:00 pm A.A. Meeting 6:00 -N. Berks Food Bank dist. at H.A.M.S. | 18 7:00 Adult Choir | 19 11 AM – 2 PM Senior Group -FH 7:00 PM Property Mtg. | 20 | 21 |
| 22 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion Sanctuary set-up for Christmas after worship FH RENTAL | 23 OFFICE OPEN 6:30 pm Cub Scout/Boy Scout mtg. | 24 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Service 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service | 25 CHRISTMAS DAY OFFICE CLOSED | 26 | 27 | 28 FH RENTAL |
| 29 LESSONS & CAROLS 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion FH RENTAL | 30 OFFICE OPEN 6:30 pm Cub Scout/Boy Scout mtg. | 31 9:00 am – 11:00 am – Knotters 7:00 pm A.A. Meeting | January 1 2025 OFFICE CLOSED | | ** SERVICES WILL BE RECORDED AND POSTED ON THE CHURCH'S WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE EVERY SUNDAY | **WATCH FOR SERVICE INFO IN BULLETINS, CALENDARS & ONLINE |

