

Zion's Messenger – September 2026



Running on Empty... and Filled by Grace

There are seasons in life when it feels as though the fuel gauge is constantly hovering near empty. Perhaps you know that feeling. The demands keep coming, the phone keeps ringing, and the to-do list keeps growing. We tell ourselves that if we can just get through one more week, one more appointment, one more challenge, things will settle down. Yet sometimes life has other plans.

Over the past months, I have found myself walking through one of those "running on empty" seasons. Ongoing health concerns for my husband, helping grandchildren prepare for a new school year, coordinating care for my mother's terminal illness from hours away, traveling out of state to help move a family member to Pennsylvania, and even navigating an unexpected car collision have all competed for attention, time, and energy. There have been moments when I have wondered how much more could fit into a single season. Perhaps you have had seasons like that as well.

When we are exhausted, it is tempting to think that God's presence is strongest when life is calm and everything is going according to plan. Yet Scripture tells a different story. Again and again, God meets people not in times of abundance and ease, but in wilderness places, on difficult journeys, and in moments when they have nothing left to give.

The psalmist writes, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1, NRSVUE). Notice that God is not merely a help after the trouble has passed. God is present in the middle of it. God helps us through difficult seasons in many ways. Sometimes through the practical care of family, friends, and church members. Sometimes through the encouragement of a phone call, a prayer, or a meal. Sometimes through the quiet reminder that we do not have to carry every burden alone. And often through the promise that Christ walks beside us even when we cannot see the end of the road ahead.

One of the lessons I continue to learn is that faith is not about having endless strength. Faith is trusting that God's strength is enough when ours is not. When we are running on empty, God does not ask us to manufacture more energy, patience, or courage than we possess. Instead, God invites us to rest in the assurance that we are held by grace.

As September begins and routines return, many of us carry burdens that others cannot see. Some are facing health challenges. Some are caring for loved ones. Some are grieving losses or navigating uncertainty. Whatever fills your days, remember that you do not walk alone.

The God who has carried us through every season before remains faithful today. Even when our tanks feel empty, God's love, mercy, and strength never run dry.

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Stephanie



***** Reminder – Time Change *****

Beginning Sunday, September 13th

Join us for Sunday School at 9:15am with Worship to follow at 10:30 am



Church Picnic

The Church Picnic will be held following worship on Sunday, September 13th.
Hamburger BBQ, hotdogs, and drinks will be provided. Please bring your favorite dish to share.
Someone will be available before Sunday School and worship to accept your covered dish.



School Kits for Lutheran World Relief

Knotters are again making backpacks to be delivered to Lutheran World Relief in the fall.
Backpacks will be assembled on Sunday, September 13th after lunch
as part of the ELCA God's Work, Our Hands Day.



Sunday School will resume on Sunday, September 13, 2025 at 9:15 AM.

We are looking forward to a new year.

Our teaching staff for this year will be:

Nursery/Preschool – Samantha Gruber

Kindergarten – 2nd grade – Heather Gring

3rd & 4th grade – Tiffany Gruber

5th & 6th grade – Faye Heckman

7th – young adult – Mark Dreibelbis

Adult class – Janine Dreibelbis

Substitute Teachers are needed! If you would be interested in serving as a substitute teacher,
please contact Tiffany Gruber at 610-823-2880.

***Adult*
Sunday School**

Adult Sunday School will resume on
September 20th at 9:15.

We will begin a 5-week study on the Holy Spirit.
The study includes video, Bible readings, and discussion.
All ages welcome! Please join us.



Confirmation News

Monthly Confirmation classes will resume in October.

Orientation for 2026-2027 will be
September 20th at 5:30-6:30pm in the Gold Room.

Any student in 7th through 12th grade who
has not been confirmed is welcome.

Please contact the church office
for more information



Fall Church Clean-up Day

Our annual fall church cleaning day will be **Saturday, September 19th at 9:00 AM.**

We need volunteers to help spruce up the church with those cleaning tasks that we just don't
get to on a weekly basis. We will find a job to suit your ability; no job is too small.

Please sign up on the bulletin board so we know how many volunteers we will have to help.

Thank-you for being good stewards!



Sock It To 'Em

The most requested item by military personnel deployed overseas is "Socks", yes socks.

The 2026 Stockings for Soldiers "Sock It to Em" campaign is starting now!

Help us provide socks for every soldier this year.

Please place your sock donations in the drop box in the narthex.

All socks must be new, no used socks!

ALL TYPES OF SOCKS ARE BEING ACCEPTED.

Men's & Women's Boot Socks

Black or White & Mostly Cotton

The Keystone Military Families thank you for your donation!



Stay Tuned – Kid's Music Classes

We are excited to announce that beginning this fall, Berks Youth Chorus will be offering
Rhythm Kids classes here at Zions' for youth not yet old enough to join BYC.

They are also exploring offering Music Together, a daytime mixed age class for families.



Council Corner

Church Council met on August 11, 2026 at 7PM. Devotions were from Max Lucado's book – Grace for the Moment, Prayer Reminds Us.

Financial statements for June and July were reviewed, since there was no Council meeting in July. Expenses were incurred related to the circulator, which Council approved to be taken from Capital Funds. A new AED needed to be purchased, with training, for those interested, being planned. Our fire alarm system was discussed and a proposal to update system and monitoring was approved, which will use Capital Funds as well.

Since we will have utilized Capital Funds for the circulator and the fire alarm system, Council is asking the congregation to consider using The Capital Fund donation envelope for August to help replenish our Capital Funds.

A joint confirmation covenant for 2026-2027 will be signed by Faye Hekman.

Fall cleanup for the church has been scheduled for Saturday, September 19. If you are able to help, please put it on your calendar and check the bulletin board for signup.

Submitted by Lucille Gough



2026 Flower & Bulletin Sponsors

Sign-up sheets are posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.

The cost of bulletins is \$13.00
and flowers are \$40.00.

Bulletin Items

Bulletin items should be submitted to the church office no later than close of business the Tuesday of the week of desired publishing.

Newsletter Items

Newsletter items should be submitted to the church office no later than the Monday following the council meeting in the month publishing is desired.



Financial Report

We finished the month of June \$ 1,171.48
in the black (monthly income over expenses).

Monthly – Income for June \$17,380.12

Monthly – Expenses for June \$26,458.64*

*\$10,250.00 from Capital Improvements for circulator replacement for heating system

The General Offering \$13,276.05

Online Giving \$ 2,542.43

Loose Change \$ 90.00

Other Income \$ 1,471.64

Subtotal \$17,380.12

We finished the month of July \$ 4,333.45
in the red (monthly income over expenses).

Monthly – Income for July \$11,602.25

Monthly – Expenses for July \$15,935.70

The General Offering \$ 6,910.00

Online Giving \$ 2,005.21

Loose Change \$ 40.00

Other Income \$ 2,647.04

Subtotal \$11,602.25

Thank you for your continued support!

Consider online giving

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



Thank you for all of the Prayers and well wishes for the speedy recovery of Darren Barto.

~The Barto Family

Thank-you to the Quilter's Group at Zion's for the beautiful knotted quilt that I received It provides me comfort when I am struggling with my illness.

Thank-you for keeping me in your prayers.

~Caralyn Mummert (Pastor's Mom)



Fellowship Time

Sunday, September 20th, 2026.

Please plan to join us after worship.
Sign up on the bulletin board to bring snacks or to set-up.



Prayer Corner for Our Community of Faith

Immediate Concerns:

Dan Adams, Darren Barto, Izzy Crespo,
Carl Hein, Robin Henry, Maya Lea Hoherchak,
Hazel Gough, Anthony Grugan, Bill Gundrum,
Jim Jones, Dean Lawrence, Steve Mengle,
Caralyn Mummert, Pat Potts, Ruland Family,
Reid Schrack, Jeff Shagnaw, Roy Sousley

Ongoing Concerns:

Colson and Courtney Dougherty,
Tracy Schaeffer, Don Roth

Shut-Ins and Nursing Home/Personal Care Residents:

Ruth Bensinger, Jean Daub, Mabel Fry,
Lee Gahringer, Helen James, Grace Ketner,
Kathrine Reinhart, Christine Ryan, Carl Sechler,
David Seidel, Barbara Shafer, Shirley Sohon,
Lester Wessner

Family and Friends Grieving

Recent Losses:

Family of Jeffery Brobst, Family of Cathy Gatto,
Family of Norman Gundrum,
Family of John Persons



Bike Rides

On September 12th, our bike ride will take us to
the Schuylkill River Trail starting in Birdsboro.

We will meet at Zion's at 9am
and carpool/caravan to the Trail.

Bring your bike, water, and also a snack to
share for some fellowship time

Questions? More info?
Contact John Smith or Eileen Puglia.



Imagine the impact you
can make in the community!

We want to hear from our members!

Take a moment to think about a project, program,
or outreach idea that could make a positive
difference in our community.

What is something you would love to see us
do to help our community?

Write down your ideas, big or small.

There are no bad ideas—we want to **Imagine**
What is possible when we work together!

Please fill out a form to share your idea and
place it in the “Imagine” mail box in the narthex.

All ideas will be reviewed by Zions' leadership
and considered to be incorporated into
our next outreach endeavor.



Crochet Group

Get your hooks and yarn ready as we
start our next project.

We will be meeting in the library on
Thursday, September 10th & 24th at 10am
Bring your imagination and a friend.



Knotters Group

Please consider joining us in the Gold Room
at 9:00 am Tuesday, September 8th & 22nd.

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

Patches are available in the church office.

For any questions contact –
Eleanor Dietrich at 484-824-4388.



Senior Group

Our next Senior Group will meet
Thursday, September 17th, 2026
in the Fellowship Hall,
11:00 am – 2:00 pm.

You are welcome to bring a
side dish to share for lunch
and a friend to play board games and cards.
All ages welcome to join.
Hope to see you there!



Mums for Harvest Home

All orders are due by Friday, September 18th.
Mums are \$8.00 each
Color options are yellow, red/maroon,
orange/rust or purple
Flowers can be picked up after Worship on
Sunday, September 27th.



Zion's Library

*A positive thinker does not refuse to recognize the
negative; he refuses to dwell in it.*

~Norman Vincent Peale

Don't give us, Moses was once a basket case.
You think it is hot here....

New Additions:

John
~Bible Study

Romans
~Bible Study

Until Tuesday
Luis Carlos Montalban
~BIO



Garden News

*"It's difficult to think anything but pleasant
thoughts while eating a homegrown tomato."*

— Lewis Grizzard

We continue to pick our tomatoes, peppers,
cabbage, cucumbers and green/yellow beans.
Hundreds of pounds of produce have already
been grown, picked, weighed, and delivered
to food pantries and food insecure individuals and
families in our community this season.

There continues to be a need for volunteers each
week as we reap God's bounty.

Please listen for announcement or check the
Sunday bulletin/Facebook page for news of our
work schedule. If you want to be put on the Garden
volunteer contact list, please email us at
communitygarden@zionslutheran.org or
contact Lori at 610-401-1186.

There's still time to come out and help
in the garden this year!



Opportunity House 2026

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.

2026 Schedule:

September 18 & November 20



Faith Night at the Movies

Hamburg Strand Theatre

Sept. 8, 2026 Unsung Hero

Oct. 13, 2026 Beautiful Mind

Nov. 10, 2026 The Great Awakening

All movies start at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$10.00 at
the door and include a popcorn & medium soda.



WELCA's Annual Drive-thru Favorite Food Sale

Saturday, October 10th

WELCA is again holding a food sale of some of your favorite Bazaar foods, including barbecues, soups, and apple dumplings.

Pre-order and pay by Sunday, October 4th

Drive-thru and pick up your food on Saturday, October 10th from 11am until 1pm.

Orders received by September 20th, will be entered into a drawing for two Hamburg Strand movie tickets, good through the end of 2026.

Baked goods will be available for sale the day of pick up.

Sign-up sheets are posted in the Narthex for baked good donations and for volunteers to help in the kitchen or the day of the sale.

Order forms are available in the Narthex and on Zion's Facebook page and website. Order forms and payment can be put into Sunday's offering basket, dropped off at the church office, or mailed to the church c/o WELCA. Please make checks payable to WELCA.

Thank you in advance for your support!

~The Women of WELCA



Fill the Truck for Opportunity House

On Saturday, October 10 from 11am ~ 1pm

In the Church Parking Lot

Donate gently used furniture, clothing, and household items to help families get back on their feet after experiencing homelessness.

Please donate only items in good, usable condition.

Items accepted: Furniture, Clothing, Household items

Items not accepted: Electronics, Baby furniture

Your generosity can make a meaningful difference in helping families create a fresh start.

Tell your friends and neighbors. Everyone is welcome to participate!

Thank you for your support!



Zion's Cemetery Co., Inc.

Our Monthly Board Meeting will be held on

Thursday, September 10th at 9 am.

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

Single or multiple grave lots are available for sale.

Please contact David Geschwindt, Cemetery Manager, 610-562-7421



As we continue to give thanks for God's blessings and the many ways He provides for our community and congregation, we invite everyone to take part in our special August offering opportunities. Your generous gifts help sustain our ministry, care for those in need, and keep our church a warm and welcoming place for all.

Charity and Emergency Fund:

The Charity and Emergency Fund provides immediate, compassionate help to individuals and families in times of unexpected need. These donations allow our church to respond quickly and quietly when crises arise, both within our congregation and in the surrounding community. This fund gives our congregation the ability to be Christ's hands and feet in real time—offering hope, care, and practical help when it is needed most.

World Hunger Envelope

Through the World Hunger Envelope, we join together with the ELCA World Hunger program to reach out beyond our walls, supporting efforts to feed the hungry and combat poverty both locally and around the world. Every gift—big or small—helps bring hope and nourishment to those in need.

Every envelope, every gift, and every offering helps us share God's love in word and deed. Together, we can continue to build a vibrant, caring church community—rooted in faith and reaching out with compassion.



Grab-A-Tab Outreach

We are excited to announce that we will continue to collect
soda can tabs
to go to Hamburg Area School District for the
“Grab-A-Tab” program.



The “Grab-a-Tab” program is a community friendly fund-raising program that allows people of all ages to join the effort to provide a “Home-Away-from-Home” to children with cancer and other serious illnesses and their families.



BEAR CREEK CAMP

Explore, celebrate & grow in God's creation!

Women's Fall Retreat

The Fall Women's Retreat is designed to provide women with an opportunity to enjoy time both individually and collectively, participate in creative activities, explore outdoors, having time for rest and renewal, and be in the beauty of God's creation in a peaceful setting.

October 2-4, 2026 Bear Creek is holding a women's retreat.

Retreat Center Cabins: \$215/Person

Program Site Cabins: \$200/Person

Included in this price is a 2-night stay,
6 meals (Friday dinner thru Sunday lunch), and programming.

If you have any questions please reach out to Pastor Stephanie Roth.



Food Pantry

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

Canned Pasta: Ravioli, Beefaroni, Spaghettios

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., September 22nd, from 6 pm to 7 pm.

*For monthly and weather-related updates, the Northern Berks Food Pantry line is 610-562-8250



Danielle Cares for Chairs

We are collecting

BREAD TAGS

What is Danielle Cares for Chairs?

*Non-Profit

*Run by kids

*Collect bread tags + bring them to recycling plant = get proceeds for mobility products.

How to help?

*Collect bread tags bring them to school.

Where are bread tags found?

*Loaves of bread

*Fruits

*Vegetables

*Hamburger/Hotdog Buns

*Paper towels

3 million collected thus far 6 products given.

Teaches about sustainability and to give back to others.

Collection bin on table in Narthex.

September Birthdays

1st Donna Long
Dwight Heckman
2nd Jay Wheeland
5th Mark Price
Audrey Rothermel
6th Owen Neuin
7th Angela Gough
Doris Gough
Korey Onulack
Linda Stewart
8th Hazel Gough
Shawn Koller
Jacob Zimmerman
10th Brenda Ramich
11th Andrea Heckman
Lisa Ruth
13th Nathan Bender
14th Connie Reinhart
15th Dennis Madeira
Lisa Fegley
16th Jennifer Hoshauer
Colson Dougherty
18th Karen Himmelberger
19h Reece Hawk
Julia Werley
20th Grace Ketner
Chris Mengel
Charles Seidel
22nd Nancy Pursell
Don Roth
Layne Schroeder
23rd Kyle Pursell
Brittany Noecker
Maylynn Wagner
Toni Herr
Makenzie Reitenauer
Jason Seidel
25th Marvin Adam
Paul Engle
Larry Long
28th Samantha Gruber
29th Woodrow Lutz
30th Craig Reinhart

Would you like your birthday listed
in the newsletter?

Please contact the Church Office
at 610-562-3112 or
churchoffice@zionslutheran.org

Shut-in Mailing List

Jean Daub
1020 Railroad Rd.
Dauberville, PA 19533

Mabel Fry
65 Fry Lane
Auburn, Pa 17922

Lee Gehringer
501 Hoch Rd
Blandon, PA 19510

Helen James
668 North 5th Street
Hamburg PA 19526

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

Kathrine Reinhart
Grandview Manor
129 Houck Road
Fleetwood, PA 19522

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

Carl Sechler
Laurel Center
125 Holly Rd.
Hamburg, PA 19526

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

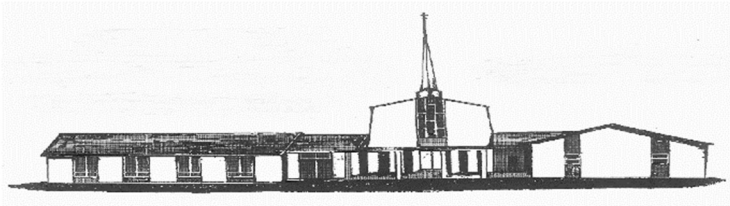
Barbara Shafer
21 East Noble
Shoemakersville, PA 19555

Lester Wessner
350 Witchcraft Rd
Hamburg, PA 19526

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: 9:00 am, Holy Communion,
Indoor recorded service



September 2026

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 Zions Church Road
Shoemakersville, PA 19555

September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
** 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 7 pm A.A. Meeting	2	3 6 pm Worship & Music Meeting	4 F.H. Rental	5
6 9 am Worship 6:30pm Cub Scouts & Boy Scouts	7 Office Closed	8 9 am Knotters 7 pm Council Meeting 7 pm A.A. Meeting	9	10 10 am Crochet Group	11	12
13 Church Picnic 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 6:30 pm Cub Scouts & Boy Scouts	14 Office Closed	15 7 pm A.A. Meeting	16	17 11 am Senior Group 7 pm Property Meeting	18 Harvest Home Mum Orders Due	19 9 am Fall Church Clean-up
20 Fellowship Time 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 1 pm Girl Scouts 5:30 pm Confirmation Orientation 6:30 pm Cub Scouts & Boy Scouts	21 Office Closed October 2026 Newsletter Deadline	22 9 am Knotters 7 pm A.A. Meeting	23 5 pm Girl Scout Bridging F.H. Rental	24 10 am Crochet Group	25	26
27 Harvest Home 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 6:30 pm Cub Scouts & Boy Scouts	28 Office Closed	29 9 am Knotters 7 pm A.A. Meeting	30			