



Good News from Zion

Connecting People with God's Grace

December 2021

A Message from Pastor Kat

Shocking Beginnings

Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical calendar year and starts us off with a bang. As we prepare for the coming of Christ, we encounter scriptural texts that startle us with end times images, prophetic signs, and surprising encounters.

In Advent, we begin at the end and work our way backwards. First, Jesus speaks to us near the end of his life foretelling the coming of the kingdom. Then, John the Baptist cries out from the wilderness calling us to prepare for the coming ministry of the adult Jesus. Finally, we witness the meeting between Mary and Elizabeth, mothers of Jesus and John, before either man has been born.

Advent draws us back to the beginning, while, at the same time, anticipating what will come at the end. Each reading calls us to wake up, shape up, and get ready. Now is a time of preparation and also a time of action. We get ready for Christ's coming by reaching out with kindness, compassion, and justice.

Now is the Time!

This season, we are called to stand up, to lift up our heads and take notice of the world around us. Where do we see God's love already at work? Where do we see a need for God's love to be shared?

At Zion, there are many opportunities for us to witness and share God's love during this holiday season: through service opportunities like Alternative Giving and the Giving Tree; through social gatherings like Advent Parish Night (Sunday, December 5th at 6:30 PM) and Mid-week Advent Gathering (Wednesdays in December at 7:00 PM); and, of course, through worship. Don't miss this year's Christmas Program on Sunday, December 12th at 10:00 AM and our Christmas Eve Services at 5:00 PM and 8:00 PM!

During this hectic time of year, Advent invites us to take a step back from the mania and to act with purpose and love. As you engage in service, celebration, and praise this coming month, may God's love touch your heart and pull you closer into God's presence.

In Christ,
Pastor Kat

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT ZION

- | | |
|---|--|
| Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 7 p.m. | Wednesdays in Advent <i>Unwrapping the Gifts of Advent with Pastor Kat (CEB)</i> |
| November 28 8:30 & 11 a.m. 9:45 a.m. | First Sunday of Advent Service of Holy Communion Sunday School, Confirmation Class |
| December 5 8:30 & 11 a.m. 9:45 a.m. | Second Sunday of Advent Service of Holy Communion Sunday School, Confirmation Class |
| | 6:30—8:30 p.m. Advent Parish Night (CEB) |
| December 12 10 a.m. 11 a.m. | Third Sunday of Advent Second Sunday Single Service with Sunday School Christmas Program <i>Special Meeting of the Congregation (Church)</i> |
| December 19 8:30 & 11 a.m. 9:45 a.m. | Fourth Sunday of Advent Service of Holy Communion Sunday School, Confirmation Class |
| December 24 5 p.m. 8 p.m. | Christmas Eve <i>Service of Candlelight Communion and Carols (with Bell Choir)</i> <i>Service of Candlelight Communion and Carols (with Parish Choir)</i> |
| December 25 | Christmas Day Pre-recorded Worship Video (online) |



Congregation Council Highlights

The Council met via Zoom conference call on November 18th. Below are the highlights of that meeting.



- The Treasurer's Report reflected a positive balance at the end of October. Zion's financial picture is healthy. Please see page 9 for an update.
- Zion's Endowment Committee has calculated that \$25,148.72 will be available from Endowment Fund earnings to support new ministry opportunities in 2022. This number is obtained by taking 3% of the 3-year average of the balance in the Endowment Fund.
- There will be a Special Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, December 12th at 11 a.m.
- Pastor Kat and the Worship & Music committee have scheduled Christmas Eve services for 5 p.m. (Bell Choir) and 8 p.m. (Parish Choir). On Christmas Day, there will be a pre-recorded worship service available on our YouTube channel.
- Pastor Kat is offering a mid-week Advent Gathering at the CEB on Wednesdays in December. Please see the article below for more information.
- The Sunday School Christmas Program will take place during the December 12th Second Sunday Single Service at 10 a.m.
- The church sanctuary will be decorated for Christmas on Saturday, December 4th at 9 a.m. Please contact Joanne Rupp if you would like to help.
- A number of local churches have formed the Hunterdon County Ecumenical Council for the purpose of partnering with school nurses to assist families in need during the holiday season. Zion's Council voted to donate \$3,000 to provide gift cards to these families.
- The water heater on the second floor of the CEB is being replaced.
- Pastor Kat's installation will be taking place in January or February. The date will be set in cooperation with the Synod.
- Pastor Kat presented three options to the Council for a visioning/innovating opportunity in the coming year. The Council discussed the opportunities and asked for more information, which Pastor Kat will provide at the December meeting.
- Thank you to:
 - * Colleen Bryson, for her continued efforts to improve the quality of the Sunday morning worship livestream.
 - * Eric Evers, John Minerowicz, and Harold Wrede for donating their time and talent completing carpentry work at the church.
 - * Shellie Evers for her leadership of the Military Recognition program.
 - * Sonja Fesenmaier, Meghan & Jon Holman, Debra Kaufman, John Minerowicz, and Cindy Rupprecht for volunteering at Zion's Halloween Hospitality event, and to Rebecca Melick for donating cider and donuts.
 - * Linda Held & Sandy Matsen for coordinating the October 31st Reformation Celebration.

The next meeting of the Congregation Council is scheduled for Thursday, December 16th. Meetings are open for all to attend. If you would like to attend an upcoming meeting, please let the Parish Office know and we will send you the Zoom link.



Unwrapping the Gifts of Advent — Wednesdays in December

In a season when many of us labor to buy gifts for others, we invite you to take some time to unwrap the gifts that God gives to us. Set aside your busy preparations and take an hour with us midweek to rest in God's presence and Word. Join Pastor Kat on Wednesdays in December from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the CEB Conference Room for a time of meditation, reflection, and thoughtful conversation.

Special Meeting of the Congregation — December 12th

On Sunday, December 12th, there will be a Special Meeting of the Congregation at 11 a.m., immediately following 10 a.m. worship. The purpose of the meeting is to elect 2022 congregation council members and to receive a preview of the 2022 annual budget. No other business may be conducted at this meeting.



Youth and Family Ministry at Zion by Rhonda Rossi

Sunday School News

Beginning Sunday, Nov. 21st, all Sunday school classes (Pre-K – 6th grade) will **begin meeting in their classrooms at 9:45 AM**. This month, the younger classes (Pre-K through 4th grade) will experience lessons on the Annunciation and the Christmas Story while the older class (5th-6th grade) continue working their way through the Old Testament with lessons on Abraham and family of Jacob.



Please mark your calendar for the following special days:

Sunday, Dec. 5th – Christmas Program Rehearsal

Sunday, Dec. 12th – Zion's Christmas Program will take place during SSSS worship at 10 AM. All classes PreK through 8th grade will be participating.



Confirmation

On Sunday, Oct. 31st at the 8:30 AM service we confirmed six of Zion's youth. Following the service, we held a reception in the Great Room and celebrated Confirmation and Reformation Sunday. The current Confirmation class continues to meet at 9:45 AM in the Conference room on the 3rd floor of the CEB. This month the class will begin lessons on Lutheran Heritage. On Sunday, Dec. 19th the class will participate in a Spiritual Advent Mini-Retreat.



Reformation Celebration Recap

The Reformation Celebration was held on Sunday, Oct. 31st. In addition to all the fun and games, we held a reception for the Confirmands. Special thanks to Linda Held and Sandy Matsen for creating this special event for all ages!



Become a Youth Mentor!

Zion's Christian Education & Youth committee is offering an opportunity for members of the congregation to connect directly with our 7th-8th grade youth in a new way – becoming a Youth Mentor! Adult volunteers will be matched with a member of the Confirmation Class for the purpose of building a relationship, facilitated by special programs and suggested activities. Our hope is that this relationship will be an ongoing connection for you and the young person as they finish high school. Please contact Rhonda Rossi for more information.



Advent Parish Night — December 5th

This wonderful tradition has to look a little different again this year. Please plan to come by the CEB between 6:30 and 8:30 pm on Sunday, December 5th to enjoy the bonfire, roast marshmallows, and create your Gnome Family with us (socially-distanced and with masks like last year), or pick up your craft supplies to assemble and decorate your Gnome Family at home. Either way, please share photos on Zion's Friends and Family Facebook page afterward.



Women of Zion Christmas Cookie Exchange

The Women of Zion Cookie Exchange will focus on spreading God's grace to others again this year. Calling on all Zion bakers to make 2 dozen cookies! We will bake cookies at home to be shared with the Good News Home staff and Zion's home-bound/elderly members.



The sign-up link has been emailed from the Parish Office. Volunteer to bake, assemble boxes, and/or deliver. Cookies should be delivered to the CEB by December 13th and the assembly date is December 14th at the CEB at 9 a.m. Happy Baking! Any questions, please contact Debra Kaufman 703-402-2158 or dkaufman1977@yahoo.com.

Season of Connection

Zion's Season of Connection is back! Please check your email for more information on these opportunities. Changes have been made to the plans for Advent Parish Night and the Women of Zion Cookie Exchange. Please see the articles above for more details.



**season
of
connection
is back!**



*Connecting Zion
congregants, local
kids and families in
need, the broader
community, and
the world — with
God's grace!*

**1 The
Giving Tree**

*Donations accepted
until December 5*

**2 Alternative
Giving**

*Gifts available until
December 5*

**3 Advent
Parish Night**

December 5

4 Blood Drive

December 9

**5 Women of Zion
Cookie Exchange**

December 14

**6 Bonfire and
Christmas Caroling**

December 19

Lunch Bunch — December 9th

Please join Pastor Kat at Spain 92 on Thursday, December 9th at 12 p.m. RSVP to the Parish Office no later than Tuesday, December 7th.



Tewksbury Holly Day — December 12th

Between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. on the morning of December 12 members of the Parish Life committee will be placing luminaries along 523 through Oldwick for the Tewksbury Holly Day Craft Fair/Tree Lighting which will occur from 11AM – 6PM the same day. Please contact Shellie Evers if you would like to assist.



The Tewksbury Holly Day Craft Fair will be held 11AM – 4PM at the Manor (behind the Oldwick Firehouse). At 5PM Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive at the Oldwick Fields to light the Christmas Tree and Menorah.

Halloween Hospitality Recap

The Halloween Hospitality held on 10/31 was a huge success! Kudos and a big thank you to volunteers Meghan Holman, Jon Holman, John Minerowicz, Debra Kaufman, Pastor Kat Steinly, Sonja Fesenmaier, and Cindy Rupprecht who talked to lots of community members and trick-or-treaters at the CEB and the church. We estimate they gave out 175 bags of treats, lots of candy, and plenty of Melick's cider and donuts. (Thank you to Rebecca Melick for the delicious donation!)



2021 Military Recognition



"Never was so much owed by so many to so few."

—Winston Churchill

In a joint effort between Social Ministry, Parish Life, 14 very generous congregants, Pastor Kat, and a Thrivent grant, Zion honored 11 active duty military service men and women in Alabama, Florida, Hawaii, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Virginia with care packages valued at over \$125 each. We also expressed gratitude to 11 Zion Veterans in the monthly and weekly newsletter, and on Zion's Facebook page.



News from the Social Ministry Committee



Blood Drive

Zion is hosting another blood drive on December 9th at the CEB. Please check your email for the sign-up link.



Giving Tree

Thank you to all who have chosen gifts from the Giving Tree. All gifts should be dropped off at the CEB no later than Sunday, December 5th. Don't forget to use a gift bag rather than wrapping your present! If you would like to participate and have not yet signed up, please contact the Parish Office.



Alternative Giving

Alternative Gifts are available for purchase until Sunday, December 5th. Please see below for the descriptions of this year's gifts.



\$5 – Canines for Disabled Kids

Their mission statement: "Increasing independence for children with disabilities and their families by promoting service dog partnerships, understanding and awareness throughout the community." For more information, please visit caninesforkids.org.

\$10– The Outreach Connection

The Outreach Connection distributes food and supplies to those in need. They supply essential living items, such as food, clothing, hygiene supplies, and household basics. Outreach Connection also provides mentorship, connections to other resources, and classes to acquire personal and professional skills. For more information, please visit theoutreachconnection.org.



\$15- Trinity Place Shelter

Trinity Place's mission is "To help homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) youth and young adults in New York City to safely transition out of the shelter system and grow into independent, positive, and productive adults." New York City has the second highest number of homeless youth of any major city. It is estimated that 40% of homeless youths identify as LGBTQ. There are only 250 - 350 beds that are specifically for LGBTQ. These youths often experience abuse and trauma in other shelters and on the street. Trinity Shelter provides safe place to sleep, shower, and eat. They also provide counseling and support services. For more information, please visit trinityplaceshelter.org.

\$20- ELCA Good Gifts – Hygiene Kits

Hand washing is an important way to stay healthy and control the spread of disease, including COVID-19. In many communities, soap, bleach, and even water are scarce. Hygiene kits provide sanitation supplies and education for household, schools, and other public places. Washing hands is a simple yet very powerful way to protect vulnerable people. For more information on ELCA Good Gifts, please visit goodgifts.elca.org.



Good News Home Expansion and Fundraiser

The Good News Home is a faith-based, residential rehabilitation center for women 18 years of age and over with chemical dependencies. Zion has collaborated with them for many years now and celebrates their plans for expansion! Shellie Evers and Sue Swanson attended a fundraiser on November 19th in support of the project. For more information, please visit their website at www.goodnewshome.org.

Thank You for Your Support of LDR

Thank you to everyone who donated to Lutheran Disaster Response during our fall drive. The congregation raised \$7,400 which was matched through the Endowment Fund. Lutheran Disaster Response will be getting a check for \$14,800 from Zion so they can continue to bring God's hope, healing and renewal to people in the U.S. and around the world whose lives have been disrupted by disasters.



Faith Kitchen News by Debra Kaufman

Faith Kitchen - November. Taco Soup is back! John McAleer Sr. led the soup group (John, Stacey, John and Donna) at Faith Kitchen cooking the clients' favorite - taco soup (smelled so good!). And thanks to Jann McAleer for chopping all the onions for the soup.

The CEB group (Steve, Chris, Sonja, Audrey and Linda) made a delish pasta salad that was delivered to Faith Kitchen with bananas and chocolates. Two great groups - one marvelous mission - sharing God's grace with Faith Kitchen. Our last gathering for 2021 is December 2nd. Please contact Debra at 703-402-2158 if you would like to join!



Thanksgiving Adopt-a-Family

Social Ministry would like to thank our generous congregation who participated in the Adopt-a-Family Thanksgiving project and provided 35 Thanksgiving meals for families in Hunterdon County who are experiencing food insecurity. We worked with the Harvest Family Service Center in Flemington who identified the need and asked if we would be interested in helping this community. Special thanks to Rebecca Melick who donated 3 bushels of apples for the families, Debra Kaufman who shopped for dry ingredients for 15 meals, Cindy Rupprecht who helped pack and deliver the meals and our awesome confirmation students who helped to pack the 140 bags of food! This mission was truly a shared effort to help our neighbors in need.





Sunday School Christmas Program

Deck the Halls and
Trim the Tree!

Sunday, December 12
at 10:00 am

CROSS ROADS CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER



WEDNESDAYS AWAY 2021 - 2022

Join us for Wednesdays Away, a time of retreat and spiritual renewal one Wednesday a month. This upcoming year we are excited to welcome you back to Cross Roads for these retreats, from 10 am - 3 pm. The cost for each retreat is \$50 and includes lunch. A virtual option for participation will also be available. Register on our website.

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY: A PICNIC FOR THE WEDNESDAYS AWAY COMMUNITY Wednesday, September 8, 11 am - 2 pm

Participants and leaders who attended the 2020-2021 Wednesdays Away retreats are invited to a celebratory picnic at Cross Roads. The cost for this event is \$15. RSVP on our website.

WEDNESDAYS AWAY DATES & THEMES

2021

| | |
|---|--------|
| Autumn Blessings with Wendy Abrahamson | Oct. 6 |
| What My Grandmothers Taught Me with Dale Selover | Nov. 3 |
| "Always we begin again" with Laurie Matarazzo | Dec. 1 |

2022

| | |
|---|---------|
| Para + dox with Josh Kelly | Feb. 2 |
| Ash Wednesday: Stations of the Cross with Dale Selover | March 2 |
| Nourished with Kayla Hopgood | April 6 |
| Resurrected Wounds with Kayla Hopgood | May 4 |
| Kindling the Fire with Laurie Matarazzo | June 1 |

WWW.CROSSROADSRETREAT.COM/WEDNESDAYS-AWAY



A Little Giggle from the
Shepherding Committee



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FINANCIAL SUMMARY - YTD 2021

| GENERAL FUND | INCOME | EXPENSE | DIFFERENCE |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| January | \$25,231.84 | -\$21,764.39 | \$3,467.45 |
| February | \$26,011.61 | -\$24,159.74 | \$1,851.87 |
| March | \$30,517.25 | -\$35,025.96 | -\$4,508.71 |
| April | \$39,973.28 | -\$29,769.52 | \$10,203.76 |
| May | \$32,397.55 | -\$26,551.59 | \$5,845.96 |
| June | \$27,953.28 | -\$22,500.80 | \$5,452.48 |
| July | \$28,398.55 | -\$27,824.51 | \$574.04 |
| August | \$30,624.35 | -\$29,315.87 | \$1,308.48 |
| September | \$25,015.03 | -\$26,908.36 | -\$1,893.33 |
| October | \$32,956.27 | -\$27,737.15 | \$5,219.12 |
| Year To Date Total | \$299,079.01 | -\$271,557.89 | \$27,521.12 |



| TD BANK FUNDS | BALANCE | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Checking Account | \$55,592.02 | 11/3/2021 Bank Statement |
| Money Market Plus | \$178,064.49 | 10/31/2021 Bank Statement |
| Cash On Hand | \$233,656.51 | |
| Directed Funds | \$120,191.91 | 10/31/2021 |
| Operating Funds | \$113,464.60 | 10/31/2021 |
| Cash On Hand | \$233,656.51 | |

| ENDOWMENT FUNDS | BALANCE | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------|
| CFNJ | \$550,740.50 | (9/30/21) |
| THRIVENT | \$379,110.69 | (9/30/21) |
| TOTAL | \$929,851.19 | |

ENDOWMENT MISSION OUTREACH

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Available Funds for 2021 | \$23,500.00 | |
| ELCA Compensation Aid Fund | -\$1,500.00 | 2/28/2021 |
| Equipment for Livestream Worship | -\$826.96 | \$1,000 approved/ completed |
| Cross Roads Camp and Retreat | -\$1,000.00 | 5/27/2021 |
| NJ Synod - Bishop's Challenge | -\$2,000.00 | 6/30/2021 |
| Sunday School Marketing Program | -\$182.22 | 8/19/2021 \$1000 approved/in progress |
| GWOH Good News Home | -\$1,799.00 | Approved / spent |
| LDR Matching Gift | -\$10,000.00 | Approved/Not spent |
| 2021 Endowment Funds Remaining | \$6,191.82 | |



Give to Zion from your phone! Scan the QR code to be directed to Tithely's electronic giving site.