



Good News from Zion

Connecting People with God's Grace

October 2023

A Message from Pastor Kat

We Can't Do Ministry Without You!

Every October, we invite you to renew your commitment to the ministry of Zion through our Stewardship Campaign. This year, we're embracing the theme: "Building Connections: Making Ministry Happen." We have already invited you to take a survey to help us match your interests with our various ministries and to help us realize your new ideas for ways to grow Zion's mission. If you have not yet taken this survey, I invite you to use the QR code below, which will bring you to the online version of the survey.

In the near future, you will receive a letter from the Stewardship committee inviting you to consider your financial pledge for the 2024 fiscal year. Letting us know how you plan to financially contribute helps us to plan our ministries for the year ahead and keeps our congregation vibrant and growing. If pledging is new for you, I invite you to listen to John Rustwick's temple talk on October 15th during worship. You can also reach out to him at jrustwick@gmail.com if you would like help setting up your giving online.

Let's Connect People with God's Grace!

Simply put, our life together as a congregation and the difference we seek to make in our community is not possible without your contributions – of time, skills, and financial resources. Your help allows us to fulfill our mission of connecting people with the wonderful gift of God's grace. Thank you for committing to make ministry happen at Zion!

In Christ,
Pastor Kat



Church Council Highlights

The Church Council met via Zoom conference call on September 21st. Below are the highlights of that meeting.



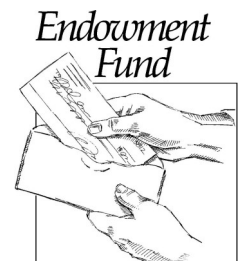
- Over 20 children attended Sunday School Rally Day on September 10th.
- The Finance committee reported that a bequest has been received from the estate of Peggy Eppley.
- Jaime VanNostrand has begun reaching out to families of 8th-12th graders regarding the 2024 National Youth Gathering.
- The September 9th Community 5K raised \$1,600 for the Good News Home for Women. Council approved a matching gift of \$1,600 from Endowment Fund earnings for a total donation of \$3,200 from Zion to the Good News Home.
- The Worship & Music committee is sponsoring a youth-led service on Reformation Sunday, when our ninth-graders will be confirmed.
- The Stewardship committee's "Building Connections" online survey has been shared with the congregation. A paper version of the survey is available for those who prefer not to take the survey online.
- Thank you to:
 - * Debra Kaufman for chairing the Community 5K.
 - * Melanie Hodges for refreshing the CEB bulletin board.
 - * Brian Hodges for spreading mulch at the CEB.
 - * Colleen Bryson, Gerry Dehkes, Lou DiCriscio, and Cindy Rupprecht for helping lead the Confirmation Class.

The next meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 19th. Meetings are open for all to attend. If you would like to join an upcoming meeting, please let the Parish Office know and we will send you the Zoom link.

Endowment Fund News

The final Endowment Sunday for 2023 will be All Saints Sunday, November 5th.

There was \$25,282 made available from the Endowment Fund earnings for new ministry opportunities in 2023. This is determined by taking 3% of a 3-year average of the fund. The Church Council is open to suggestions on ways to the funds to support our ministries. YTD \$1,500 has been donated to the New Jersey Synod Compensation Aid Fund, \$5,000 to Lutheran Disaster Response, \$396.77 to purchase Prison Prayer Books, \$325 for ELCA Good Gifts and \$3,090 to Family Promise (in honor of Zion's 309th anniversary), leaving a current balance of \$14,970.23 available to support 2023 ministries.



Please consider giving to the Zion Lutheran Church Endowment Fund on November 5th to celebrate All Saints Sunday or to commemorate and celebrate a significant milestone in your family's church life such as a baptism, confirmation or wedding. Always keep in mind that the Endowment Fund only grows with contributions from members and friends of Zion — those who share the vision of not only a living memorial for loved ones, but also recognize that upon maturity, the fund will provide significant monetary grants for many new mission-oriented programs, forever.

Envelopes marked "Endowment Fund" will be available in the church on November 5th. If you are worshipping virtually, please consider mailing a check marked "Endowment" to the Parish Office.

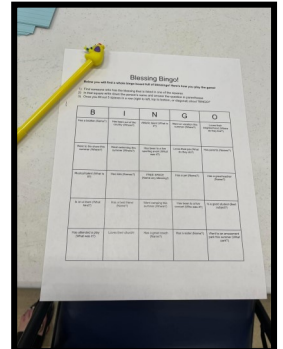
Please contact any member of the Endowment Committee (Mike Donnelly, Ted Jermansen and Rick Schroeder) if you have any questions.



Sunday School Rally Day

On Sunday, September 10, we kicked off the new program year by celebrating Rally Day with students of all ages, their families, and even a few of our youth mentors. Our theme for the day was that each of us has been “Blessed to be a Blessing” and together we made blessing bags for school, played Blessing Bingo, and colored backpack tags that proclaimed our theme, Blessed to be a Blessing! What a gift to begin the new year with fellowship and fun!

Sunday School classes have now resumed for the new year and we are blessed to have a talented group of volunteer teachers as well as a lively group of active and engaged students of all ages. We look forward to learning together about God, our faith, ourselves, and each other in the year ahead!

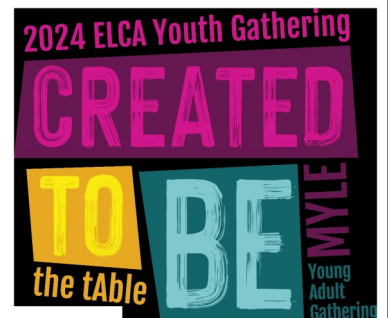


Confirmation Sunday — October 29th

On October 29th, Reformation Sunday, our ninth-grade students will become confirmed members of the congregation at our 10 a.m. single service. Youth of all ages will be participating in leading the worship service as we celebrate this year’s confirmands.

2024 National Youth Gathering

The summer of 2024 may seem like it’s a long way away but we, like ELCA congregations around the country, are already making plans! Having not been held since 2018 due to Covid, the National Youth Gathering will be making its long awaited return next summer in New Orleans, Louisiana. We are excited to put together a group of high schoolers from Zion and to connect them with Lutheran youth from across the country!



Update on the Fire Code Violation *by Helen Livingston, Property Committee Chairperson*

At the Annual Meeting of our congregation held in January 2023, and again following the Palm Sunday church service on April 2, 2023, discussion was held with the congregation regarding the citation the church received from the Tewksbury Township Fire Marshal, as we are in violation of the 1985 New Jersey Administrative Code which requires any facility that has the ability to hold more than 50 people to have a minimum of two means of egress.

A historic preservation architect was hired by Zion's Council — a design for a door was developed, and two areas in the church building were identified as possible locations for the second door. There was much discussion at both meetings about the possibility of filing a variance due to the historical nature of our church building and the desire not to make any alterations to the building's current layout. After much research and consideration, and after discussion at the April meeting, the Council decided not to seek a variance because 1) many in the congregation do not want a variance filed because they are in favor of having a second exit for the safety of our congregation; 2) we would not get approval of the variance using an argument based around the historic nature of our church building, since major renovations have already been done 1831, 1854 and again in 1883; and 3) the variance request would need to be submitted by an architect and our architect stated he would not file the request because he could not, in good conscience, ask for something that would put our congregation in harm's way, and he would not stake losing his architect's license by requesting something that would be a health and safety hazard and violate NJ code.

Recently, the Fire Marshal who submitted the original citation resigned his position to take a job in another town. The question has been asked by some congregation members whether we could decide not to move forward with addressing the citation at all given the resignation of the Fire Marshal. This is not an option, since the citation has been registered with the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety which means it must be resolved. If we do not move forward, we may face significant fines.

It's hard to imagine making extensive alterations to our church building. I believe there must have been much discussion and even dissent among our predecessors in 1831 when the decision was made to move the pulpit, punch a new entrance into the west wall (now, the rear of the church) and to place a window on the south wall (facing Church Street) where the original entrance had been. I'm imagining many concerns were expressed in 1854 when the decision was made remove the entire west wall to create the narthex and add the steeple, and again in 1883 when it was decided to remove the east wall to create the altar area at the front of the sanctuary. After all these changes, Zion's building was no longer the church it had once been, but it is the church we know and love today.

The Council has heard from some church members asking why the second egress is even necessary given that nothing bad could ever happen to us here in Oldwick. Unfortunately, in this day and age, it would be irresponsible of us to have that mind-set not only for our present congregation, but also for those who will come to Zion after we have gone. A recent Washington Post article reported that 34 fires occur at religious institutions each week. In only the last few years, Peace Lutheran Church in New Mexico was set on fire while worshipers were present, and recently, just in January 2023, Abiding Love Lutheran Church in Colorado had multiple Molotov Cocktails thrown into the church building during services which set off multiple fires. That church had a sprinkler system and multiple means of egress. Zion does not. A second door is a necessity for the safety of all of us. And in the eyes of the congregation who will come after us, it will be just another door in a beautiful building.



Military Recognition Care Packages

Zion is proud and appreciative of its long history of military service, our current members who have served, and those friends and family who are currently serving.

With your help, the Parish Life committee is continuing the work that began in 2018 with our Military Recognition project. The fifth annual project kicked off on Memorial Day 2023 with posts on Facebook and cards sent to those friends of Zion who are currently serving. In November, we will send care packages to these same currently-serving members. We have scaled down the size of the packages so this year we are only asking for donations of gift cards.

This year's Military Recognition project will culminate on the Sunday before Veteran's Day when our veterans will be recognized and the care packages will be blessed. If you would like to add a service member to our list of names, please contact the Parish Office. If you would like to donate items for the care packages this year, please sign up via the link that was emailed from the Parish Office.



Next Steps for Resolving Fire Code Violation by Leah Wintemute

My thanks to Helen Livingston for her many tireless hours of work on resolving the fire code violation. I want to share some information with all of you about our next steps.



As Helen noted in her article on page 4, following the Palm Sunday church service on April 2, 2023, Council hosted an informational meeting regarding the two options for a secondary egress from the church building which was cited by the fire marshal as a violation of NJ code and which we were required to address. Council wanted to obtain feedback from the congregation to see which option would suit the needs and desires of the congregation the best. Approximately 40 parishioners attended the meeting and there was much discussion on why we were required to add this secondary egress and the pros and cons of each of the options presented. At the end of the discussion, the congregation requested that drawings be developed for each option and contractor bids obtained so that Council, on behalf of the congregation, would have as much information as possible before making a final decision.

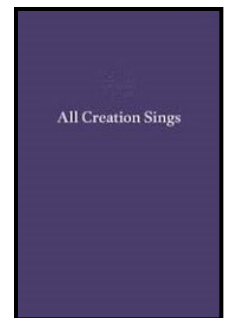
Before the meeting ended, a straw poll was taken for each of the two egress options we received from the architect with a tally of 18 votes for a side door placement and 13 votes for a chancel door placement. When introducing the straw poll, I explained that we want every voice heard in a project of this size and nature before Council votes on a solution. In the five months since that meeting, the secondary egress has been on the agenda at every Council meeting and has been discussed with comments from the congregation brought to our attention. Unfortunately, as in any building project, there are delays, and this has happened in gathering contractor bids for the two options. As soon as we have the requested cost information, we will again convene a special meeting of the congregation to see where the heart of the congregation lies. Ultimately, though, it will be Council who takes the final vote on this issue since that is their responsibility as the elected officials of Zion. So, it is imperative that all members prayerfully consider how this safety issue may be resolved with consideration of our current members and also the future members of Zion, and take part in the discussions to make your voice heard.

Leah K. Wintemute

“All Creation Sings” A New Hymnal Supplement

O sing to the Lord a new song. – Psalm 96:1

This past year, you may have noticed some new songs in our worship together. Some have been new hymns; some of have been new musical pieces in our liturgy. These new songs have come from a new hymnal supplement put out by our denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, called “All Creation Sings.” This supplement is meant to be used in conjunction with the hymnal that is familiar to many of us, “Evangelical Lutheran Worship,” which we often refer to as the “ELW” or “red hymnal.”



God calls us to be people of resurrection, stirring up new life in every aspect of our life together, including in worship. This month, we are offering two opportunities for you to hear and learn a little more about this new hymnal supplement, “All Creation Sings.”

On Sunday, October 8th, members of our Worship & Music committee will provide temple talks during both worship services that will mention this new hymnal and the opportunity it presents for us to sing a new song. **On Sunday, October 15th**, Rod Briscoe, our Director of Music, will give an introduction to the hymnal, including some background on its compilation and a sampling of its music, at 9:45 a.m. in the Christian Education Building and at 12:00 p.m. at church.

We hope that these opportunities to engage with this new resource will build excitement as we prepare to add the hymnal supplement to the pews in the month of November. All Creation Sings will not replace the ELW, but will be an added resource for our worship services. I pray that your hearts will be opened to singing a new song as we renew our praises to God.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Kat



New Jersey Lions Recycle for Sight

Zion's Social Ministry committee has made the first drop-off of the generous collection of eyeglasses. Keep those donations coming — we'll continue to drop them off. Please remember — prescription, non-prescription, sunglasses, kids' glasses — ALL are welcomed!

Faith Kitchen News

Nice work done by the Thursday and Saturday Faith Kitchen crews in September. And we even took time to celebrate John McAleer's birthday at the Saturday event. Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers and the generosity of Zion's congregation for supporting this ministry.



Community 5K Recap by Debra Kaufman

Thank you, all Zion volunteers, for supporting the Good News Home at our 4th annual 5K. It was a tremendous success. We had 62 racers this year, almost double the amount of prior years. Many people from the neighborhood attended along with a huge contingent from the Good News Home and many Zion members. Special thanks to the Three Dudes with glasses for their musical entertainment - it kept folks dancing to the very end!

Zion raised \$1,600 at the event and the Church Council made a matching contribution using monies from the Endowment Fund earnings, bringing the total to \$3,200. Praise God for this ministry. See you in 2024 for #5!





Lunch Bunch — October 12th

Join friends from Zion for the return of Lunch Bunch at 12 p.m. on Thursday, October 12th, at Delicious Heights in Bedminster. Please contact the Parish Office to reserve your place at the table!

Trick or Treat!

Do you have a Halloween costume that you are excited to wear this year? Well, come on out to Zion's Halloween Hospitality event! Our Evangelism committee will have two tables set up with candy and goodies - one at the church and one at the CEB. Please let a member of the Evangelism team know if you are interested in helping out. It's always a fun night and a great way to have a Zion presence during this time of family fun. Join us from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on October 31st!



Zion's Evangelism committee members are David Blackwood, Debra Kaufman, Rebecca Melick, John Minerowicz, Donna Reilly, and Anita Zarate.

Animal Shelter Donations

Social Ministry is collecting items in support of no-kill animal shelters in New Jersey through Jersey Cares. All donations can be dropped off at the CEB entry through October 31st. The list of accepted items is below. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

- unopened dog and cat food -- dry or canned
- unopened cat and dog treats
- new dog and cat toys
- new or washed pet beds or cots
- new or gently used collars and leashes
- unopened kitty litter
- KMR milk replacement for puppies and kittens



Women's Retreat at Cross Roads Camp & Retreat Center

October 20th-22nd

Take time to catch your breath this fall at the annual Women's Retreat. Using the spiritual gifts of prayer, scripture, song, conversation, and silence, we will be invited to breathe in the Spirit of the Living God. The retreat will be led by Laurie Matarazzo and Dale Selover. Please visit www.crossroadsretreat.com to register for the retreat.



"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever..."
Psalm 107:1

Women of Zion Thanksgiving Dinner — November 14th

All Women of Zion are invited to join us for the annual Thanksgiving Dinner on Tuesday, November 14th at 6:30 p.m. at the CEB. Bring your daughters, mothers, neighbors, prayer partners, and mentees. Please save the date and stay tuned for more details.

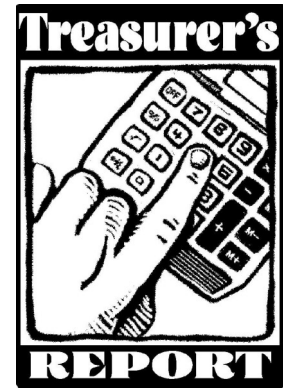
FINANCIAL SUMMARY - YTD 2023

GENERAL FUND	INCOME	EXPENSE	DIFFERENCE
January	\$26,594.04	-\$26,150.29	\$443.75
February	\$35,166.23	-\$29,485.32	\$5,680.91
March	\$36,556.41	-\$29,869.57	\$6,686.84
April	\$33,910.13	-\$29,324.04	\$4,586.09
May	\$25,292.29	-\$28,576.13	-\$3,283.84
June	\$23,501.85	-\$23,937.96	-\$436.11
July	\$30,808.96	-\$32,992.29	-\$2,183.33
August	\$27,563.54	-\$36,428.12	-\$8,864.58
Year To Date Total	\$239,393.45	-\$236,763.72	\$2,629.73

TD BANK FUNDS	BALANCE	
Checking Account	\$39,775.05	9/3/2023
Money Market Plus	\$278,251.98	8/31/2023
Cash On Hand	\$318,027.03	
Directed Funds	\$191,629.34	8/31/2023
Operating Funds	\$126,397.69	8/31/2023
Cash On Hand	\$318,027.03	

ENDOWMENT FUNDS	BALANCE	
CFNJ	\$519,895.26	7/31/2023
THRIVENT	\$369,863.53	8/31/2023
TOTAL	\$889,758.79	

ENDOWMENT MISSION OUTREACH	
Available Funds for 2023	\$25,282.00
Synod Compensation Aid Fund	-\$1,500.00
Lutheran Disaster Response	-\$5,000.00
Prison Prayer Books	-\$396.77
ELCA Good Gifts (LGBTQ youth)	-\$325.00
Family Promise - Come Home to Zion	-\$3,090.00
2023 Endowment Funds Remaining	\$14,970.23



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

A Little Giggle from the Shepherding Committee

