



Good News from Zion

Connecting People with God's Grace

January 2024

A Message from Pastor Kat

A New Year

Happy New Year! Can you believe it? We're officially entering the year of 2024! The new year is a time when many reflect on new beginnings. Some of us consider embracing new habits or a new outlook on life. Others of us choose a theme or goal to give shape to this next year of life.

Appropriately, in worship, we hear texts that help to set the tone for something new. On January 7th, we hear the story of three sages from afar adopting a new infant king. On January 14th, we hear the story of Jesus being baptized as he makes a start to his earthly ministry. On January 21st and 28th, we hear stories of how everyday people take up a new calling to be Jesus' first followers and disciples.

A New Beginning for Zion

As a congregation, the month of January also marks a new beginning. On January 28th at our Annual Meeting of the Congregation, we will officially install our new council members and consider the shape of our ministry for the next year. This year, we will also install our new Director of Youth and Family Ministry, Jaime VanNostrand, during morning worship. This gives us an opportunity to celebrate her leadership and accomplishments so far as well as pledge our support to her and to Zion's ministry for young people and their families.

The arrival of the new year gives us the perfect opportunity to consider again how God is calling to us – as individuals and as a congregation. May God give us ears to hear and eyes to see as we embrace our new beginning!

In Christ,
Pastor Kat



ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Meeting of the Congregation — Sunday, January 28th

The 2024 Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held at the Christian Education Building at 11 a.m. on Sunday, January 28th. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the 2023 Annual Report, approve the 2024 church budget, and install 2024 Council members.

On that day, we will worship together at a **single service at 10 a.m.**, and the meeting will be followed by a potluck luncheon. If you are available to help with set up or clean up, please contact Cindy Rupprecht at 908-963-7604. Watch for an email from the Parish Office to sign up for the potluck.

Church Council Highlights

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



- Council approved the 2024 budget to be presented to the congregation in January.
- The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held on January 28th at 11 a.m. at the Christian Education Building, following 10 a.m. worship at the church. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the 2023 Annual Report, approve the 2024 budget, and install the 2024 council. A potluck luncheon will follow the meeting.
- The Property committee has received one bid for the construction work to be done at the church and is hoping to get two more before the end of January.
- The Social Ministry committee is providing a new service opportunity that begins in January. Five volunteers will be needed once a month to travel to the Open Cupboard Food Pantry's Washington location to assist with sorting items in the pantry and other needs.
- The balance of the 2023 Endowment Mission Outreach funds was distributed, and there will be \$25,850 in Endowment Fund earnings available for mission outreach in 2024.
- In February and March, the Evangelism committee will be sponsoring opportunities for guided meditation sessions on Tuesday evenings at the church, to which the local community is invited.
- Correspondence was received from one of the military care package recipients, thanking Zion for their ongoing support.
- Thank you to:
 - * Outgoing council members Eric Evers, Donna Reilly, Rick Schroeder, and Leah Wintemute for their service.
 - * Incoming council members Paul Batkowski, Laura Bredeson, Chloe Brokaw, Tom Held, and Brooke Schumann for their willingness to serve.
 - * The children and youth of Zion for their retelling of the Christmas story at this year's pageant.
 - * Jaime VanNostrand thanked the council and staff for being awesome. :)

The next meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, January 18th. 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.



A Note from Zion's Treasurer

If you are making a contribution to Zion and would like to have it credited to 2023, it must be in the offering plate on Sunday, December 31st or delivered to the Parish Office no later than 12 p.m. on Wednesday, January 3rd, as the 2023 books will be closing on January 3rd.



Youth and Family Ministry at Zion

by Jaime VanNostrand

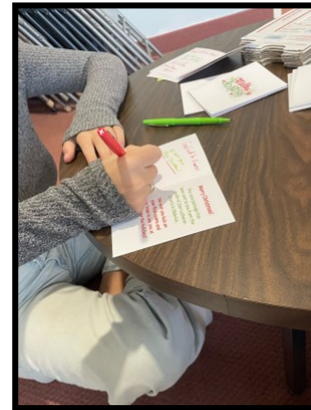
December was a busy month for Youth and Family Ministry at Zion!

We started the month by remembering our college students as our Sunday School and High School kids made Christmas care packages. Younger students decorated the boxes while older ones filled out greeting cards that included words of encouragement for finals and a healthy dose of Christmas cheer!

Our young people and their families were well represented at Advent Parish Night as the Zion community came together in fellowship over crafts, snacks, and some neighborhood caroling. The Christmas spirit was on full display!

The capstone of our month was the annual Christmas pageant. Several of our youth members narrated a retelling of the Christmas story as the younger children gave life to the tale by acting it out in front of the congregation. Students of all ages also helped to lead the congregation in the singing of classic Christmas carols.

All are invited to be a part of the Youth and Family fun in the coming month as we resume regular Sunday School classes on January 7th, high school zoom check-ins on January 8th, and gather across age groups for a baptism-themed All School Event on January 14th. See you in the New Year!



Parish Life and Shepherding Committees

Shellie and Eric Evers would like to send out a HUGE thank you to the committee members of the Parish Life and Shepherding committees, Anita Zarate, Rod Briscoe, Pastor Kat, and Jenny Gelson, and to our very generous congregation for your support over the past three years! We've had fun and accomplished so much – with your help – and it's time to hand over the reins to new leadership!



Please help us welcome Cindy Rupprecht as the new chairperson for Parish Life, and Pastor Kat as the interim chair for the Shepherding committee. Please see below for more information about these two important groups.

The Parish Life committee is all about connecting Zion's members to each other and to God's grace – and having fun together whenever possible! The committee plans special events such as craft and game nights, parents' nights out with chaperones and older youth hanging with the kids at the CEB, outings to various local events, and our annual Somerset Patriots game. The Women of Zion (WOZ) are a vibrant and wonderful part of Parish Life as well. WOZ leaders organize events for ladies of all ages around four categories – Spiritual, Health, Arts & Crafts, and Fellowship. In short, – Parish Life and WOZ spearhead the social activities of Zion and would love to have new volunteers and participants in any capacity.

The Shepherding committee's role is to care for the members of our congregation and assist those of us in need. Along with our ongoing birthday and anniversary card ministry, we pray for the sick, offer assistance to those in crisis, deliver flowers to homebound members, and provide meals and/or transportation for those who need it. We welcome new volunteers and new ideas for ways to provide support to the Zion family.

Volunteers Needed for Open Cupboard Food Pantry

Please help with our new ministry, in partnership with Open Cupboard Food Pantry in Washington, to bring a crew of five people once a month to help organize and stock the shelves at this location. The address is 386 E. Washington Avenue (Route 57), Washington, NJ 07882.

Our first opportunity is on Thursday, January 26th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please watch your email for a sign up link from the Parish Office and direct any questions to Rebecca Melick at 908-229-3744.



Please see the note below from the pantry's director, Gretchen Surhoff.



The Open Cupboard Food Pantry of Washington thanks Zion for your more than 500 pounds of food donated this year! In just the one year that our location has been open we have 145 families being served and new ones registering every week. You have helped us provide 100,200 pounds of food and I appreciate your support! Donations can be dropped off at the CEB or the church at any time.

Current Needs:

Body wash	Paper towels
Conditioner	Baked beans
Deodorant	Creamy and crunchy peanut butter
Shampoo	Coffee
Wipes	Tea



Lunch Bunch — January 11th

Join friends from Zion for the return of Lunch Bunch at 12 p.m. on Thursday, January 11th, at Delicious Heights in Bedminster. Please contact the Parish Office to reserve your place at the table!



Free Meditation Classes

Planning of candlelight meditation classes in the church sanctuary is underway, expected to be offered on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 from February 19th through March. These evening sessions will be open to the public — please spread the word!



Annual Coffee Drive for Faith Kitchen — January & February

A Zion tradition continues! Join us in supporting our friends at Faith Kitchen. Faith Kitchen serves 90+ meals each day and their patrons LOVE coffee! Let's fill up the Faith Kitchen pantry. Please drop off your coffee cans at the CEB or church no later than February 29th. Thank you for your support of Faith Kitchen.

P.S. If you find a sale on coffee, please share the information in the Zion Friends and Family Facebook group!

Faith Kitchen Update

A great team and a great day at Dover Faith Kitchen on Thursday, December 7th. Thank you John McAleer for your leadership. Our team included John & Audrey Ruland, John & Wendy Minerowicz, John McAleer, Barb Surhoff, Chris Clark, and Tom & Rita Groendyke. Tom provided the recipe for a delicious chorizo and black bean soup, served with sides of salad, corn bread, and a banana. 120 meals were given out! The day was extra special as each person received a handmade candy cane ornament made by Betty Lanka. Thank you, Betty — there were many words of gratitude!



Saturday's Faith Kitchen volunteers (Liz & Ken Degen, Jennifer & Steve Hodges, Helen Livingston, John McAleer, and Sue Swanson) served 92 meals to a hungry group of thankful patrons on December 16th. The meal included chorizo and black bean soup, grilled cheese sandwiches, fresh fruit salad and Christmas cookies donated by Chocolate in the Oven in Milford, NJ. We work hard and have fun. Please consider joining us!



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
September	\$25,884.36	-\$26,811.00	-\$926.64
October	\$31,473.12	-\$35,328.78	-\$3,855.66
November	\$29,102.32	-\$33,975.73	-\$4,873.41
Year To Date Total	\$325,853.25	-\$332,879.23	-\$7,025.98



TD BANK FUNDS	BALANCE	
Checking Account	\$73,862.37	12/3/2023
Money Market Plus	\$228,280.37	11/30/2023
Cash On Hand	\$302,142.74	
Directed Funds	\$193,740.12	11/30/2023
Operating Funds	\$108,402.62	11/30/2023
Cash On Hand	\$302,142.74	

ENDOWMENT FUNDS	BALANCE	
CFNJ	\$492,413.14	10/31/2023
THRIVENT	\$374,116.89	11/30/2023
TOTAL	\$866,530.03	

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	-\$3,090.00
Good News Home for Women	-\$1,600.00
Shop Rite cards for HFSC	-\$1,650.00
Alternative Giving matching funds	-\$1,770.00
NJ Synod Fund for Mission	-\$1,500.00
Fridge for Faith Kitchen groceries	\$-458.00
Feed My Starving Children	\$-7,992.23

2023 Endowment Funds Remaining 0.00



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

