



# Good News from Zion

Connecting People with God's Grace

February 2024

## A Message from Pastor Kat

### What's Love Got to Do with It?

This year, for the second time in five years, Ash Wednesday falls on the commercial holiday, Valentine's Day. These might seem like two holidays that have nothing to do with each other. On Ash Wednesday, we worship together and many receive what's called the imposition of ashes – a mark of the cross made with ashes on our forehead. This ashy cross reminds us of our baptism, another time when our forehead was marked with a cross, as well as the finitude of life: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." In the church year, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent a time of reflection and, for some, works of service and sacrifice, when we walk with Jesus down the road to Jerusalem and the cross.

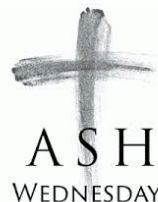
Valentine's Day, although initially based on a church day, the Feast of St. Valentine, has become in our culture a commercial holiday when stores are full of hearts, flowers, and chocolates. Many of us have memories of exchanging Valentines in school, and, later still, of exchanging gifts or going on a special date with our loved one. For some of us, the holiday is fraught because we don't have a partner or spouse, and so some people acknowledge the day with friends or skip it all together.

### A Beloved Child of God

This Valentine's Day, you have the opportunity to make a date with God who gives us the greatest gift of all – a life filled with grace and shaped by God's calling. Join us on February 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in church, as we prepare our hearts for Lent and recall our baptism in which God claims each of us as a beloved child.

I pray that, this Lenten season, you have the opportunity to remember you are always loved and part of a loving community as a member of God's family.

In Christ,  
Pastor Kat



### Ash Wednesday — February 14th

Start your Lenten season with a reminder about who we are as a people made from the dust of the earth as we gather at 7 p.m. for an Ecumenical Service at the church. There is also an all-day retreat being offered at Cross Roads Camp & Retreat Center – please visit their website for more information.

## Church Council Highlights

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



- Council President Janet Hornich welcomed new council members and thanked them for their willingness to serve this year.
- The council approved a motion to appoint Rick Schroeder as Treasurer.
- The Ash Wednesday service at Zion on February 14th will be an ecumenical event, with several area churches participating.
- Jaime VanNostrand reported that we will not have any attendees going to this year's National Youth Gathering in New Orleans. Several students were interested but ultimately decided not to sign up. Jaime is hoping for good participation in 2027!
- Helen Livingston will give an update to the congregation at the January 28th Annual Meeting regarding the issue of the second means of egress at the church. She is still looking to be able to present three bids for the potential work, but as of now has only one company that has provided a quote.
- The Property committee is planning to replace the fire alarm system at the CEB, and is investigating the possibility of installing an alarm system at the church.
- The Social Ministry committee is hoping to bring back Feed My Starving Children in the spring, potentially on May 31st—June 1st.
- The Parish Life committee, under new leadership by Cindy Rupprecht, has begun planning 2024 events.
- The Communications committee will be exploring the possibility of adding a video to our website's home page.
- Pastor Kat is working on forming a Mutual Ministry committee that will serve to support Zion's staff members, as we have been without one for many years.
- The council will hold their annual retreat on February 10th at the CEB.
- Thank you to:
  - \* Joanne Rupp for her leadership in decorating the church for Christmas.
  - \* Jeff Livingston for leading worship on December 31st while Pastor Kat was on vacation.

The next meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, February 15th on Zoom. 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.



### Memorial Service for Peggy Eppley

A service of remembrance for Zion member Peggy Eppley, who passed away on May 4, 2023, will be held on Friday, May 3rd at the church. A luncheon at the CEB will follow.



## Youth and Family Ministry at Zion

by Jaime VanNostrand

A Sunday snowstorm couldn't keep our Sunday Schoolers from coming back together on January 7th for the first class of the new year! Thanks to our dedicated teachers who ventured in bad weather to make sure that our children and families could start the new year together!

On Sunday, January 14th, teachers, students, and volunteers gathered during the Sunday School hour for a baptism-themed All School Event. Together we explored all of the ways in which things can be washed clean! Hands on learning activities included the making of DIY dish detergent and sugar scrub as well as the donation of laundry detergent to benefit the clients of Harvest Family Success. Keep an eye out for more details on our Lenten All School Event being held on February 11!



From Oldwick to Louisiana, our Youth and Family Director is on the move! Jaime attended a national gathering of ELCA Youth Ministry professionals in New Orleans called The Extravaganza. This year's theme was DREAM. She participated in workshops, learned from keynote speakers, and connected with colleagues from across the country as she strives to grow in her capacity to serve the children, youth, and families of this congregation!

### Important Dates

Sunday School is once again in session following the holidays. But please be aware that there are several Sundays over the course of the Spring Session when we will deviate from our standard weekly schedule. Please make note of the following dates:

- January 28th - Single Service Sunday, No Sunday School
- February 11th - All School Event
- March 17th - All School Event
- March 24th - Single Service Sunday, No Sunday School
- March 31st - Easter Sunday, No Sunday School
- May 19th - All School Event, final session of Sunday School for the Spring Session



## 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 on the fourth Thursday of each month to help organize and stock the shelves at this location. The address is 386 E. Washington Avenue (Route 57), Washington, NJ 07882. Please check your email for a link to sign up to volunteer on February 22nd!



## Annual Coffee Drive for Faith Kitchen

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

Another wonderful Thursday morning of fellowship and mission was had by the Zion team at Faith Kitchen on January 4th. The team included our fearless leader John McAleer, John Minerowicz, John and Audrey Ruland, Cathy Winter, Chris Clark, Barb and Steve Surhoff. There was a big crowd to feed — every seat was filled and over 100 meals were served!



On a chilly Saturday, January 20th, Zion's volunteer team of John McAleer, Cindy Rupprecht, Sue Swanson, John & Wendy Minerowicz, and Helen Livingston prepared and served 130 meals to grateful Faith Kitchen patrons. John McAleer's Texas Chicken Taco Soup was a huge hit. Mexican cornbread, salad and caramel flan and rice pudding completed the meal. If you'd like to join us on a Thursday or a Saturday, please contact Helen Livingston or John McAleer. All are welcome!





## Lunch Bunch — February 8th

Join friends from Zion for the return of Lunch Bunch at 12 p.m. on Thursday, February 8th, at Delicious Heights in Bedminster. Please contact the Parish Office to reserve your place at the table!



## Candlelight Meditation

Candlelight meditation session in the church sanctuary begin this month. We will gather on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. from February 20th through March 26th. These evening sessions are open to the public and free of charge, and a donation to the Open Cupboard Food Pantry is suggested. Please spread the word!

## Evangelism Committee News

Zion members who joined the church in November have been assigned mentors for their first year of membership. The purpose of this program is to make new members feel welcome at Zion, to ensure they are aware of upcoming events, and to answer questions as they come up. Looking ahead, the Evangelism committee will be working with Christian Education to coordinate the Easter Egg hunt which will be held on March 30.



# Women of ZION

## Women Of Zion Update

Here's a preview of upcoming WOZ events, so you can put them on your calendar!



On Good Friday, March 29th, we are again invited to attend the Living Stations of the Cross at St. John Neumann in Califon, at 12:00 noon, followed by lunch at Max's Market & Eatery.



On Friday, April 5th, we'll have a Beginner Adult Ballet Class at 7:00 p.m., at the CEB. It will be taught by Zion member Michele Stevens, who's a professional dance educator!

Details for both events will be forthcoming. As always, guests are welcome.



# Candlelight Meditation

**Zion Lutheran Church**

**56 Old Turnpike Road in Oldwick**

Guided Meditation

Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.

February 20th—March 26th

**Free of charge and open to all**

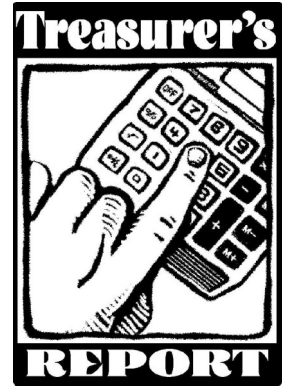
A donation of canned goods for the  
Open Cupboard Food Pantry is suggested

Questions? Contact the Parish Office at 908-439-2040.

**Please Join 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	\$31,463.43	-\$34,565.93	-\$3,102.50
November	\$29,102.32	-\$33,975.73	-\$4,873.41
December	\$44,798.85	-\$35,603.56	\$9,195.29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$370,642.41</b>	<b>-\$367,719.94</b>	<b>\$2,922.47</b>



TD BANK FUNDS	BALANCE	
Checking Account	\$57,069.11	1/3/2024
Money Market Plus	\$228,290.46	12/30/2023
<b>Cash On Hand</b>	<b>\$285,359.57</b>	
Directed Funds	\$173,671.62	12/31/2023
Operating Funds	\$111,687.95	12/31/2023
<b>Cash On Hand</b>	<b>\$285,359.57</b>	

ENDOWMENT FUNDS	BALANCE	
CFNJ	\$519,470.69	11/30/2023
THRIVENT	\$393,066.78	12/31/2023
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$912,537.47</b>	

ENDOWMENT MISSION OUTREACH	
<b>Available Funds for 2023</b>	<b>\$25,282.00</b>
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
Synod Fund for Mission	-\$1,500.00
Refrigerator for Faith Kitchen groceries	-\$458.00
Marty's Place Dog Sanctuary	-\$225.00
Pedals for Progress	-\$380.00
Prison Fellowship	-\$470.00
ELCA Good Gifts (school fees for girls)	-\$695.00
Feed My Starving Children	-\$7,992.23
<b>2023 Endowment Funds Remaining</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>



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