



Good News from Zion

Connecting People with God's Grace

May 2024

A Message from Pastor Kat

The Spirit Moves

On May 19th, we will be celebrating Pentecost a celebration of the Holy Spirit and what many consider to be the birth of the Church. This festival day marks the end of the Easter season.

Many of us remember the fireworks of this holy day – the Spirit making her presence known in the loud rushing of wind and appearance of fire on the gathered disciples' heads, as well as in shared witness in various languages to stunned crowds standing in the streets of Jerusalem.

While Pentecost is certainly a day to relive the splendor of that first outpouring of the Spirit, it is also a day to remind ourselves the same Spirit continues to move among us in our communal life together as a congregation and in our individual lives as God's children in the world.

Envisioning a New Future

“In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” This is what Peter declared to those gathered to witness the events of that first Pentecost. The apostles of the early church needed a new vision for a new future.

In their desire to welcome all people and share the good news with the entire known world, they would need to embrace new traditions and welcome new leaders. This would not be easy. Many would grieve and question the loss of old ways. God was with them in all of this.

God continues to be with us. The Spirit continues to move among us. May God pour out the Spirit upon us in this time, so we have the courage to hold loosely to the past and to dream together of a new vision for the future.

In Christ,
Pastor Kat



Church Council Highlights

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



- Pastor Kat has presided over two memorial services in the past month with four more coming between now and the beginning of May. She has also made arrangements with two families to have their children baptized in the coming weeks.
- Pastor Kat will be on vacation May 8th-21st.
- Jaime VanNostrand reported on upcoming Youth & Family activities, including Camp Sunday, Youth & Family Mini Golf, Youth Sunday, Operation Christmas Child box-build, Graduation Recognition Sunday, and Vacation Bible School (please see page 3 for details).
- The Stewardship committee provided an update on first quarter giving.
- A New Members Class is being held on April 21st, with potentially 10 attendees. New members will be welcomed during worship on April 28th.
- The Parish Life committee will host the annual outing to the Somerset Patriots baseball game on June 22nd.
- Regarding the second means of egress at the church, Helen Livingston reported that she is awaiting construction drawings from the architect. Once the drawings are in hand we will be able to secure permits and schedule the work with the contractor.
- Council reviewed the existing policy regarding outside use of the CEB, as it had not been updated since 2014.
- Colin Brokaw shared that the new video for Zion's website has been completed, and he played it for council members to see. It will be a great addition to our home page.
- Council received a letter of resignation from Director of Music Rod Briscoe, who will be retiring on September 1st. (Please see Rod's letter on page 4).
- Thank you to:
 - * The Worship & Music committee for taking the lead on Holy Week preparations.
 - * Zion's Bell Choir and Parish Choir for special music shared during Holy Week.
 - * Bill Wallace, Mike Donnelly, and crew for cleaning the globe lights at the church in preparation for Holy Week.
 - * Colin Brokaw, and videographer Bill Ivie, for producing the video for Zion's website.
 - * Paul Batkowski and Chloe Brokaw for their participation in the recording of the video.
 - * All of the volunteers who assisted with the Tag Sale.
 - * Rebecca Melick for her tireless leadership of the annual Tag Sale.

The next meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 16th 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.



Feed My Starving Children — May 31st & June 1st

Join friends from Zion and the surrounding community for the Feed My Starving Children MobilePack. Turn hunger into hope with your own two hands by packing nutritious meals for hungry children around the world. Sign up via the link that was emailed from the Parish Office, and please share this service opportunity with your friends and neighbors.



Operation Christmas Child — June 2nd

Operation Christmas Child delivers great joy to children in need around the world through gift-filled shoeboxes. Each box is packed full of quality toys, school supplies, and personal care items that become a tangible expression of God's immense love. If you would like to participate in filling shoeboxes for this special cause, please come to Zion's Christian Education Building at 10:45 a.m. on June 2nd to lend a hand.



Youth and Family Ministry at Zion

by Jaime VanNostrand

Can you believe that Spring has almost come and gone? Warmer days are here and summer is fast approaching. But don't let that trick you into thinking that Youth and Family ministry is preparing for a seasonal slow down. Quite the opposite is true! There are so many exciting things on the horizon for Zion's young people and their families in the weeks ahead!



This month our new class of **Youth Mentors** and Mentees will officially be revealed! Seventh graders and their mentors will meet, get to know each other, and begin this special chapter in our young people's faith formation.

We will be recognizing another formative ministry on May 12 when we celebrate **Camp Sunday** in both worship services and Sunday School. We will be led in worship by our Director of Youth and Family Ministries, Jaime VanNostrand, as well as the Executive Director of Cross Roads Camp, Anthony Briggs. Be sure to wear your favorite camping clothes to worship that morning as we sing camp songs, share camp stories, and lift up outdoor ministry.



Don't worry, we aren't done with the outdoors just yet! Zion's young people as well as their families and mentors are invited to join us for a **pizza lunch and mini golf outing** on the afternoon of Sunday, May 19th, immediately following worship.

On Sunday, May 26th, students of all ages are invited to join us in closing the Sunday School program year with a **Pentecost themed All School Event**. Pentecost is often referred to as the birthday of the Christian Church, so what better way to celebrate than a birthday bash! Come see Sunday School off in style as we bring another fantastic year to a close.

If you find yourself missing the fun and fellowship of Sunday School, you're in luck! The first Sunday of the summer schedule, Sunday, June 2, will be packed with fun! First we will celebrate the young people of our congregation with a special **Youth Sunday** single service at 9:30 a.m. After worship everyone is invited down to the CEB where we will all work together to assemble shoebox-style gift packages for **Operation Christmas Child**. This event is open to people of all ages - a perfect opportunity for the whole family to work together and have some fun!



Be sure to join us in worship the following Sunday, June 9th, as we **recognize the graduates** among us! Is there a young person in your life graduating this year? Make sure to let us know so that we can be sure to include them in the celebration!

And you know it just isn't summer without **Vacation Bible School!** We are excited to be offering the Camp Firelight program this summer during the week of June 24th through June 28th. Please see below for details and visit our website for the registration form.



Vacation Bible School — June 24-28

We'd love to see you at Vacation Bible School this year! This year our curriculum will be "Camp Firelight — A Summer Camp Adventure with God." Each day at VBS begins with a gathering time to learn new songs, hear stories, and share the enthusiasm of the week's events. After the opening, the children participate in a number of different activities: science, bible adventures, recreation, crafts, snacks, and lots of music!

Please register using the form that can be found on our website. We're looking forward to another great year of VBS at Zion!

A Letter from Zion's Director of Music



Dear Zion Family,

Twenty-six years ago, I was a young man in his thirties looking for a church home where I could lead music in worship. A friend told me about a “great little church” in Tewksbury Township he thought would be a great fit. I spoke with the pastor and made an appointment to audition for the search committee. I came in to play the historic tracker organ and totally “blew” the audition – a total fail! The members of the committee were nice people, but their faces informed me that the job search would have to continue.

The endearing Pastor Summer, who I think had already made up his mind, suggested I come and play a service. “And by the way,” he said, “make sure you sing.” I did as he suggested, and when I walked down those narrow stairs after service, I was greeted by a man who was literally glowing. I later learned that man was Staats Brokaw. I knew I had gotten the gig!

Today, working for Zion is so much more than a gig. I have lived the words first introduced to me by John Rustwick, “blessed to be a blessing.” I am surrounded by a “cloud of witnesses,” generous, loving people, who have become my family and life-long friends.

Concurrent with my employment at Zion, I have been a public school teacher in Elizabeth, and have held various other part-time jobs. Everything changed when COVID made its devastating appearance in our lives. The seismic shift that is occurring in public education has been a strain on me mentally and physically, not to mention I’m no longer the young man in his thirties.

Tim and I have been planning our future as teachers and how we’ll approach retirement. We hope to remain in the classroom for a few more years. For me to do that, I need to let go of my part-time work and focus on the school day. Our kids need a total commitment from teachers and staff!

After much consideration and with a heavy heart, I’m making the decision to submit my resignation as Director of Music at Zion. I would like to stay on through this summer, with the resignation effective September 1, 2024.

I am stepping away from my professional responsibilities at Zion, but I’m not abandoning my friends! It’s my sincere hope that I can continue to be a part of our community – singing, laughing and growing in Christ.

With much love,

Rod Briscoe

News from the Parish Life Committee



Parish Life members will continue attending the monthly country line dancing nights at the Shoppes at the Farm in Whitehouse Station. They haven't posted the next date but we assume it is on May 11th. Lessons start at 5:00, and we meet there at 4:45 to get a chance to talk before the action starts! The cover charge is \$15, which includes the lesson and a beverage. Visit the Shoppes at the Farm Facebook page for details. It's so much fun!

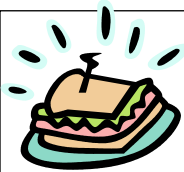


Our favorite cover band The Big Fuss is playing in the tent at the Sunken Silo Brew Works on Saturday, April 20. There is a \$10 cover and bringing snacks is encouraged! We’ll gather at 6:00 to enjoy some time together before the band goes on at 7:00.

The Women of Zion enjoyed two events recently. We held a beginners ballet class taught by Michelle Stevens and it was a great opportunity to get moving in a graceful way. On Good Friday a group of 10 of us attended the Stations of the Cross at St. John Neumann church in Califon, followed by a lovely lunch at Max's.

Stay tuned for news about more activities, including fireworks night at the Somerset Patriots Game on June 22nd!





Lunch Bunch — Thursday, May 16th

Join friends from Zion for Lunch Bunch at 12 p.m. on Thursday, May 16th, at Carlucci's in Whitehouse Station. Please contact the Parish Office to reserve your place at the table!

Open Cupboard Food Pantry



Thank you for your continued support of the Washington Basket Open Cupboard Food Pantry. Volunteers from Zion are welcome on the fourth Thursday of the month to sort donations and organize the shelves. Please contact the Parish Office to sign up.



Barbara and Barry Polhemus would like to thank everyone for their prayers and support while they both have been undergoing cancer treatments. Barbara is currently finishing up her treatments, and Barry is working on pursuing alternate treatment options. Please continue to keep both Barbara and Barry in your prayers.

Current Washington Pantry needs:

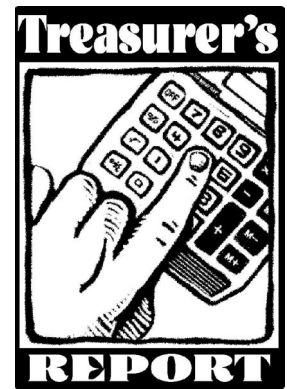
- Decaf coffee
- Regular coffee
- Tea
- Crunchy peanut butter
- Canned items:
 - Ravioli
 - Oranges
 - Pineapple
 - Spinach

Faith Kitchen Update

Another rewarding day serving the less fortunate at Faith Kitchen in Dover. A crew of Soupmeister John McAleer, John & Wendy Minerowicz, Todd & Michelle Stevens, Sue Swanson, and returned snowbirds John & Audrey Ruland fed 83 hungry guests a meal of a robust ham, corn & potato chowder, cornbread, salad & a banana. There was plenty for seconds & 40 takeouts.



GENERAL FUND		INCOME	EXPENSE	DIFFERENCE
January	\$	22,712.19	\$(29,323.59)	\$(6,611.40)
February	\$	29,240.48	\$(39,877.69)	\$(10,637.21)
March	\$	42,730.41	\$(37,889.78)	\$4,840.63
Year To Date Total	\$	94,683.08	\$(107,091.06)	\$(12,407.98)



TD BANK FUNDS		BALANCE	
Checking Account	\$	125,768.44	04/03/24
Money Market Plus	\$	228,318.84	03/31/24
Cash On Hand	\$	354,087.28	
Directed Funds	\$	243,020.77	03/31/24
Operating Funds	\$	111,066.51	03/31/24
Cash On Hand	\$	354,087.28	

ENDOWMENT FUNDS		BALANCE	
CFNJ	\$	525,260.66	02/29/24
THRIVENT	\$	419,275.90	03/31/24
TOTAL	\$	944,536.56	

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

ENDOWMENT MISSION OUTREACH	
Available Funds for 2024	\$ 25,850.00
Synod Compensation Aid Fund	\$(1,500.00)
2024 Endowment Funds Remaining	\$ 24,350.00

Endowment Fund News

The Endowment Committee will sponsor our first Endowment Sunday for 2024 on Mother's Day, May 12th. The other Endowment Sundays for 2024 will be on Father's Day, June 16th and All Saints Sunday, November 3rd.

There is \$25,850 from the Endowment Fund earnings available for new ministry opportunities in 2024. This is determined by taking 3% of a 3-year average of the fund. The Church Council is open to suggestions on ways to use the funds to support our ministries. Year-to-date, \$1,500 has been donated to the New Jersey Synod Compensation Aid fund leaving a current balance of \$24,350 still available to support 2024 ministries.

Please consider giving to the Zion Lutheran Church Endowment Fund on May 12th as a tribute to all mothers 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 at the church on May 12th. If you are worshipping virtually, please consider mailing a check marked "Endowment Fund" to the Parish Office.

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

