



# Good News from Zion

Connecting People with God's Grace

November 2024

## *A Message from Pastor Kat*

### **Let Us Remember**

Every November, we remember the saints of the church who have died in the past year. While it is our practice at Zion to name these loved ones during worship on the first Sunday of November, the festival is officially marked on November 1st. (This is how Halloween got its name. Another name for All Saints Day is "All Hallow's Day," and the night before was called "All Hallow's Eve," now Halloween.)

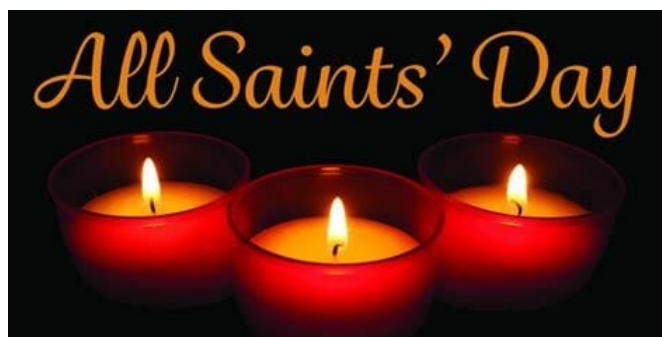
This year on Sunday, November 3rd, the name of each saint who died in the past year will be read aloud, and a candle lit for each person to remind us of the light of Christ this person brought to us and to the world through their life. This candlelight harkens back to when each of these saints was first welcomed into the family of God in baptism. At that time, at the very beginning of their faith journey, they received a baptismal candle as a sign of how Christ's light shines through their words, deeds, and very being as a beloved child of God.

### **A Beloved Community**

This special festival of the church year not only gives us time to remember and honor those who are dear to us and have died: it reminds us of the power of the community of saints. Through Christ, we remain united with God's children of all times and places, including those who have died – and those who have yet to be born!

Join us on November 3rd, as we remember the saints who have died and celebrate the union we share across time and space through the body of Christ. May we always be reminded that, as Christians, we are never alone but connected intimately with our siblings in Christ through the community of saints.

This blessing of community is one of our greatest strengths as we seek to share God's grace with others and do God's work in the world. Thanks be to God!



## Church Council Highlights

The Church Council met via Zoom conference call on September 26th and October 17th. Highlights from both of those meetings are below.



- The Youth & Family Second Sunday Social program kicked off in October with fourteen Zion members enjoying a pizza lunch and a trip to Schaefer Farms.
- Three new families have become active in Sunday School this year with a total of 10 children between them.
- Zion's Endowment Fund has reached a balance of \$1,000,000.
- Planning is underway for Advent Parish Night on December 8th.
- September's 5K had 76 participants and \$2,100 was raised for the Good News Home for Women. Council voted to use \$2,100 from Endowment Fund earnings to match this amount.
- The Stewardship committee mailed pledge cards to Zion's membership and Commitment Sunday was October 20th.
- The Social Ministry will sponsor the Thanksgiving Adopt-a-Family initiative again this year, in cooperation with Harvest Family Success Center.
- Three families have expressed interest in joining the church, and a New Members Class has been scheduled for November 10th. New Member Welcome will be on November 24th.
- The CEB alarm panel needs to be replaced. Helen Livingston is working to get this job completed as soon as possible.
- The September 22nd Pet Blessing was well attended, and included several Oldwick neighbors.
- Family Promise is moving into their new facility in Flemington. During what would have been our hosting periods, we will be asked to provide groceries for the week and hot dinners each night.
- An Information Session will be held at the church on October 27th to provide an update on the construction project at the church and give members an opportunity to ask questions.
- The council voted to send \$5,000 from Endowment Fund earnings to Lutheran Disaster Relief in response to the devastation caused by Hurricanes Helene and Milton.
- Thank you to:
  - \* Ken Bryson and Janet Hornich for the leadership of Zion's choirs during this interim period.
  - \* Gerry Dehkes, Lou DiCriscio, and Cindy Rupprecht for volunteering to assist with Confirmation Class.
  - \* Colin Brokaw, Colleen Bryson, Lou DiCriscio, Janet Hornich, Jeff Livingston, Sandy Matsen, and Reina Schumann for their participation in the October 6th Stewardship Sunday School program.
  - \* Lauren Janssen for assisting Sunday School children with bell ringing to ensure no one went airborne!

The next meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, November 21st 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 link.



## Youth and Family Ministry at Zion

by Jaime VanNostrand

October was a busy month for Youth and Family Ministry at Zion! We shifted the theme of our faith formation programming from Creation, which guided and grounded all our September content, to Community.

On October 6th we learned more about Zion's congregational community through a Stewardship-themed All School event. Students of all ages were led through hands-on demonstrations of the many ways in which the adult leaders of Zion steward their gifts in service of this community. Students learned that whether greeting and ushering or singing in the choir, whether balancing the budget or serving communion, members of our community are what make this congregation what it is!



On October 13th we shifted our focus from learning to serving as students of all ages gathered at the church building to wash the fence that borders our property. We learned that we have a responsibility to contribute to our communities, offering our time and our talents to help them grow and thrive. So together we rolled up our sleeves, picked up our sponges, and got to work!



Of course, community isn't all hard work. It's also a source of fellowship and fun! After worship on the 13th several of our Zion families gathered for our inaugural Second Sunday Social event. Together we shared a pizza lunch before heading down to Schaefer Farms for an afternoon of fall festivities.

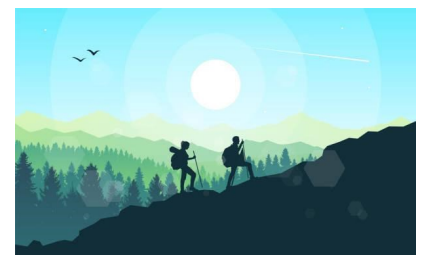
On October 27th four of our young people became full members of our congregation by confirming their faith during a Youth Sunday worship service marked by the leadership of their peers.

Stay tuned for November's faith formation programming as we shift our focus from Community to Gratitude with an All Saints themed All School event on November 3rd and a Military Recognition service project on November 10th.

And, of course, don't forget about the next Second Sunday Social! On November 10th you can find us hiking the Columbia Trail in High Bridge. Please sign up via the link emailed from the Parish Office to join us on for the hike!

### Youth & Family Second Sunday Social — November 10th

Zion's youth and families are invited to join Jaime for a hike on the Columbia Trail on Sunday, November 10th. We will gather in the conference room on the third floor of the CEB at 12:15 for a pizza lunch and then head to High Bridge for the hike. Parking is in the lot across the street from the trailhead. If you have any questions, please contact Jaime at [youth@zionoldwick.com](mailto:youth@zionoldwick.com).





## Lunch Bunch — November 14th

Lunch Bunch will meet at Delicious Heights in Bedminster at 12 p.m. on November 14th. Please sign up via the link that was emailed from the Parish Office to reserve your place at the table!

## News from the Evangelism Committee

EVANGELISM



The Evangelism committee met October 15th to discuss upcoming events. The Halloween Hospitality event location will be split between the church and CEB and will be staffed by committee members who will be handing out treats and books to the children stopping by. Other upcoming events to look for include:

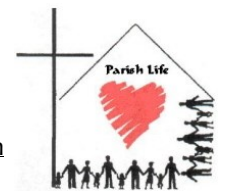
- New member class and welcome in November.
- Our second mindful meditation class starting in mid-February 2025.
- Atlantic Health Systems presentation on Alzheimer's and dementia to be held in either January or February 2025.

All above Evangelism events are open to the public, and by showing Zion's presence in the community we are able to meet new people and introduce them to Zion's ministries at work in their community. Our next committee meeting will be on November 12 at 7:00 in the CEB if you're interested in joining the committee.

Lastly, a big thank you to everyone who helped make the Pet Blessing & Dog Show such a successful event. Pastor Kat blessed 25 dogs, 16 of whom entered the Dog Show. Olivia Bryson and her Golden Retriever, Goose, won both Big Dog Male and Best in Show! Sara Reilly and the Stevens' Scottish Collie, Kali, won Big Dog Female. The other winners were not members of Zion. All winners received a ribbon and a prize. The Tewksbury Inn, Bishops Supermarket, Kitchen American Grill, Fresh Market, Melick's Town Farm and Giovanni's Pizza & Pasta all generously donated to our event.

## Parish Life Happenings

The Parish Life committee is always looking for new ways to get the congregation together to socialize and create bonds. Our "all levels welcome" [Crochet Class](#) has been well received and attended by all ages. We are hoping we can hold one more before the holiday season! We are currently gearing up for [Advent Parish Night](#) on Sunday, December 8th. Come join us for crafts, snacks and caroling!



Anyone interested in joining the Parish Life committee, please contact Cindy Rupprecht at [cindyrupprecht@gmail.com](mailto:cindyrupprecht@gmail.com).

## Women of Zion Thanksgiving Dinner — November 13th

All are invited to the Women of Zion annual Thanksgiving Dinner on Wednesday, November 13th at 6:30 p.m. It's a wonderful way to begin the holiday season, especially if you invite your mom, sister, mentee, and friends. All are welcome!

Please use the link e-mailed from the Parish Office to sign up by November 10th, and let us know what you will bring for the meal.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the [Cookie Exchange](#) at the CEB coming on Wednesday, December 11th at 7 p.m.



Advent  
Parish Night

## Advent Parish Night — December 8th

Save the date! Advent Parish Night is coming on Sunday, December 8th. All are invited to join friends from Zion for all-ages crafts, snacks and caroling! Watch your email for the sign-up that will be sent from the Parish Office.

## 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. Pantry donations can be dropped off at the church or CEB any time.



### November Washington Pantry needs:

- Baked beans
- Toilet paper
- Decaf coffee
- Paper towels

## Faith Kitchen Update

Everything went smoothly as Zion's Faith Kitchen volunteers provided 65 plates and 50 takeouts for lunch on Thursday, October 3rd. Our crew of John McAleer, Michele & Todd Stevens, Bonnie Stanski, Chris Clark, and Steve & Barb Surhoff prepared chicken taco soup, cornbread, and salad. Audrey Ruland was away, so Michele made delicious brownies and John brought us apple cider donuts!



Early in the morning on October 19th Zion's youth made 120 sandwiches to be served at Faith Kitchen that day. An additional 20 were made at Faith Kitchen by our adult volunteers. What a wonderful opportunity for the kids in our congregation to be a part of this ministry! Thanks to all the volunteers who made the sandwich-making event happen and especially to Cindy Rupperecht who organized everything.



## Alternative Giving

It is hard to believe that Christmas is just around the corner! Time to start thinking about all those hard to shop for people on your Christmas list. How many times do they tell you “I don’t need anything for Christmas”? This year, why not donate to a charity they might find meaningful. Alternative Giving is a way you can “gift” a friend or loved one and also do some good in the world. With each donation, you will get a card with the organization’s information and small ornament/gift that represents the charity, which you can give to that special person on your list.



**Gifts will be available for purchase at the CEB beginning November 10th.** Here are the four charities for 2024, selected by the Social Ministry committee.



### **\$5 - HeroRATs**

They are born in Tanzania. They have names like Baraka, Ronin, Carolina and Magawa. They are the size of a small cat. They have distinct personalities, described as playful, curious, cheeky and hardworking. Their jobs are of vital importance to the wellbeing of communities in Senegal, Angola, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Relying on their remarkable sense of smell, these African giant pouched rats, called HeroRATs, can sniff out explosive materials in landmines and tuberculosis in sputum samples with significantly greater speed than a deminer or lab technician. For over 25 years, through the expertise of APOPO, these scent detection rats have saved villagers from sustaining tragic injuries from landmines and given communities back their fertile lands and travel routes. The US is one of their international partners. For more information about HeroRATs and their programs and to watch a video of HeroRATs and trainers in action, please visit [APOPO.org](http://APOPO.org).

### **\$10 - New Jersey Association on Correction (NJAC)**

There are many challenges to a successful transition that an inmate encounters when reentering the community from prison. Typically, an inmate’s race, educational level, limited job skills, history of substance abuse, mental health problems, having a criminal record and residential and financial instability are factors to be considered. NJAC has been addressing these reentry issues since 1961 with the opening of Clinton House, New Jersey’s first halfway house/work release program. They have since opened five more homes for those individuals with varying work release requirements and medical and housing issues. An additional home is a shelter and transitional housing for victims of assault and domestic violence. Case managers fulfill an impressive multitude of educational, advocacy and supportive roles, too many to list, with the goal for each former inmate to achieve self-sufficiency and independent living. NJAC has counseling programs for victims of assault and domestic violence, care and treatment for those with HIV/AIDS, community resource centers and a Batterers Intervention Program. To learn more about their programs, please visit [njaconline.org](http://njaconline.org).



### **\$15 - New Jersey Angels**

Imagine how children, feeling heartbroken and bewildered upon being separated from their parents under dire circumstances, adjust to being placed in the home of an unfamiliar family. New Jersey Angels accompanies these children and their foster families on a journey to create a feeling of belonging. Their goal of enriching the lives of foster children extends to all the children in the family. Their consistent support of the efforts of the foster parents ensures ongoing success. Their Love Box program provides guidelines for the volunteer’s monthly contact with the foster child and all-encompassing care for all the children in the family and parents. The Dare to Dream program provides volunteers who support and mentor children as they age to prepare them for independent living. New Jersey Angles provides all the children with school backpacks filled with supplies, specially selected according to each child’s teacher’s requirements, and provides each family a Christmas holiday basket containing a gift for each child. Please visit [newjerseyangels.org](http://newjerseyangels.org) to learn more about their programs.

### **\$20 - ELCA, necessities for disaster survivors**

The ELCA recognizes the devastating impact of weather-related disasters and endeavors to provide material goods to survivors to lessen the stress of their recovery. The emotional toll on all members of the family living through a disaster cannot be overestimated. Their disaster-related stress will have a significant impact on all areas of their emotional, physical and financial wellbeing. The congregation of Zion Lutheran Church has an opportunity to offer comfort to those whose lives were affected by a disaster. Through the efforts of the ELCA, food, new clothes, housewares and toiletries will help a family struggling in the aftermath of a natural disaster. These gifts remind a family that they have not been forgotten. For more information about ELCA disaster programs, please visit [ELCA.org](http://ELCA.org).



## The Giving Tree

Zion will once again be collecting Christmas gifts for the children and families of Family Promise. Giving Trees with gift tags will be set up at both the church and CEB. Once you have selected a tag and purchased a gift, please bring it in a GIFT BAG (not wrapped) to the church or CEB with the gift tag attached so we know who it's for. Gifts should be delivered to the church or CEB no later than Sunday, December 1st.



## Stewardship Campaign Update

The 2025 Stewardship Campaign culminated on Commitment Sunday, October 20th. The campaign: "An Invitation to Ruel God's Work" commenced with the mailing of pledge cards on October 11th as well as an email survey aimed at better understanding what "fuels" our passion for Zion's ministries. If you have not done so already, please take the time to consider your 2025 commitment and submit your pledge card to help provide the fuel that makes things happen at Zion!

## Endowment Fund News — Endowment Sunday on November 3rd

The final Endowment Sunday for 2024 will be All Saints Sunday, November 3rd.

There was \$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.

YTD \$1,500 has been donated to the NJ Synod Compensation Aid fund, \$1,000 for our new website video, \$2,500 to Cross Roads Camp & Retreat Center, \$1,840 donated to Operation Christmas Child, \$1,750 to Harvest Family Success Center Thanksgiving meals, \$420 for our Lenten Candlelight Meditation guide, \$607.74 for a new Great Room TV, \$2,100 in 5K matching funds to the Good News Home for Women, and \$200 transferred to the General Fund for a 2023 accounting correction, leaving a current balance of \$13,932.26 available.

Please consider giving to the Zion Lutheran Church Endowment Fund on November 3rd 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 at the church on November 3rd. If you are worshiping 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.

*Endowment  
Fund*

