



Good News from Zion

Connecting People with God's Grace

July 2025

A Message from Pastor Kat

A Green and Growing Season

In July, we have officially entered the Season After Pentecost. This is the longest season of the liturgical church year, which stretches from Holy Trinity Sunday, usually in late May or early June, to Christ the King Sunday in late November. It is during this time that we hear stories from the heart of Jesus' ministry and are challenged to follow him and live in his ways.

Suitably, this season of the church year aligns with summer and autumn, which, in our part of the world, include the growing and harvest seasons. Like the natural world, which is now green and vibrant and will soon bear fruit and seed, we too are blessed and challenged to grow and bear fruit as we hear about the ministry of Jesus and reflect on the implications of his teachings for our lives.

A Fruitful Gospel

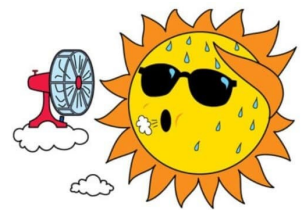
During July, we will hear a portion of Paul's letter to the Colossians in which the apostle urges followers of Jesus in Colossae to remember how God is at work in them through their baptism and how baptism makes them one in Christ. These words of encouragement and admonition continue to speak powerfully to us in a world starkly divided between us and them. As the church, part of the fruit we bear is our unified witness of God's grace for all people.

This month, I pray we can respond to God's gift of grace to us by living out our mission as a congregation to "Connect People with God's Grace" – that is, to share this gift given to us with all those who cross our path.

In Christ,
Pastor Kat

July and August Worship Services at CEB

With the summer temperatures on the rise, all July and August worship services will be held in the air conditioned Great Room at the Christian Education Building at 9:30 a.m.



Church Council Highlights

The Church Council met on June 19th. Highlights from that meeting are below.



- Pastor Kat reported that the New Jersey Synod has elected a new bishop, the Rev. Christa Compton.
- The Parish Life committee is planning two events for the summer — a trip to the Mad Lavender Farm in July and a visit to Little Ridge Vineyards in Phillipsburg in August. Stay tuned for dates and details.
- The Evangelism committee is working on plans for the annual 5K Fun Run/Walk coming on September 6th. Please save the date.
- The new trees and lighting in the CEB parking lot will be installed in the fall.
- The council approved a motion to donate \$2,500 from Endowment Mission Outreach monies to the Open Cupboard Food Pantry.
- July and August worship services will be held at the air conditioned Great Room at the Christian Education Building.
- Thank you to:
 - * Jaime VanNostrand for the new Sunday morning rhythms she put in place last fall that led to a successful year of Youth & Family Ministry.
 - * Colleen Bryson, Janet Hornich, and Jenna Tolzmann for accompanying Pastor Kat to this year's Synod Assembly.
 - * Vacation Bible School volunteers Alexa Batkowski, Chloe Brokaw, Nate Brokaw, Jade DiCriscio, Melanie Hodges (VBS director), Jennifer Hodges, Kristen Hodges, Janet Hornich, Lauren Janssen, Betty Lanka, Jodi Lanka, Teddy Lanka, Sandy Matsen, Cailla Minerowicz, John Minerowicz, Wendy Minerowicz, Sara Reilly, Cindy Rupprecht, Reina Schumann, Bonnie Stanski, Michele Stevens, and Sue Swanson.

The next meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, July 17th via 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.

Synod Assembly Recap

Representing Zion at this year's New Jersey Synod Assembly were Pastor Kat, Colleen Bryson, Janet Hornich, and Jenna Tolzmann. The event began on Thursday evening, June 5th, and concluded on Saturday, June 7th. One may think this was a lot of meetings to sit through, but actually, the time went by at warp speed. In addition to the ultimate goal of electing a new bishop for the New Jersey Synod, there were reports given, resolutions voted on, opportunities to make new friends, and a chance to reconnect with old friends.

Through a well-orchestrated process, the assembly chose the Rev. Christa Compton as the bishop-elect for the New Jersey Synod. As we welcome Rev. Compton, we say farewell to Bishop Tracie Bartholomew, who has served as the New Jersey bishop for 12 years. Thank you, Bishop Bartholomew.

Below are a few of photos from Synod Assembly, and you can check out some more of the group's events on the Zion Friends & Family Facebook page.



Bishop-elect Compton



Youth & Family Ministry at Zion

by Jaime VanNostrand

With much of our Youth & Family programming on hiatus until the fall, we would like to offer Zion's families a few Faith at Home practices this summer! We hope that these practices support you and your children as you continue to grow in faith during these summer months.

This month, we invite you to consider the following practice as outlined in Traci Smith's Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home.

Prepare for the Day to Come

As we embark on each new day, sometimes we wearily open our eyes and find that we are in need of energy or courage. There are other days when we wake up with anxiety or nervousness and find we are in need of peace and calm. On still other days, we are in need of joy or self-control, or something else.

For this simple tradition, family members take a moment at breakfast and reflect on what the day might bring. Each person identifies the thing he or she most needs for the day ahead, choosing the appropriate word card and putting it in a pocket to use as a prayer and hope for the day.

Materials

Empty box, index cards, markers, clear contact paper or laminating machine (optional).



Time Investment

30 minute initial investment to make the box, and then 10 minutes daily whenever the tradition is practiced.

How To

1. Make several cards with each of the following words: Love, Grace, Peace, Joy, Kindness, Friendship, Patience, Mercy, Courage, Compassion, Honesty, Energy, Friendship.
2. Laminate the cards with either a laminating machine or using clear contact paper (optional).
3. Include several cards blank, as well.

For the Tradition

1. In the morning, sit together as a family and talk about the day ahead. What significant things are happening in the day? What do you need for the day?
2. Pick what you need out of the box and carry it with you for the day in your purse, backpack, or pocket. Return it to the box at the end of the day so that it might be taken again another day.

Notes

Parents might feel tempted to use this exercise as an "information-gathering" session. If a child mentions needing courage because of a difficult situation at school, the instinct might be to say, "Oh, really, what's the situation? Is someone picking on you? Are you in trouble?" etc. Try to resist the urge to do this, instead saying, "Anything else you would like to share about that?" Encourage family members to share as little or as much as they feel comfortable sharing. The focus of the tradition is to be quiet before God and to reflect on the day ahead.

If your family practices this tradition daily, it will be necessary, from time to time, to reevaluate the box and replenish it because the cards may get lost in pockets, shoved into bags, etc.

The blank cards in this exercise are meant to represent a value or quality that is not listed here. When the cards are passed around, tell family members that they can select a quality that is not in the box and write it on a blank card.

Possible Variations

Eliminate the sharing time and leave the box by the door. Allow family members to sift through it and take what they need for the day.

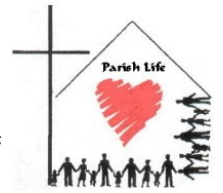
Gather together at the end of the day to evaluate how the day went for each of the family members, and how they experienced the thing they were hoping to receive throughout the day.

Parish Life News

Come join Parish Life as we find fun things to do together!



We will soon announce a date for our visit to Mad Lavender Farm in Milford at the beginning of July. Also in the works is a wine tasting at Little Ridge Vineyards in Phillipsburg in August.



Our next crochet class will be from 5 - 6:30 on Thursday, July 10th, in the Martin Luther Room at the CEB. Supplies will be provided, or bring your own crochet (or knitting) project. All skill levels are welcome!



Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch will not meet in July and August. See you in September!

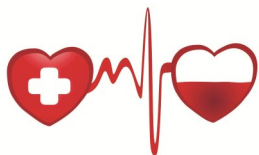
Thank You from Feed My Starving Children

All 85,536 meals provided by Zion's April MobilePack have now shipped to El Salvador via FMSC's mission partner, Cross Catholic Outreach.



Cross Catholic Outreach launched its ministry in 2001 to provide material and spiritual blessings to those in need around the world. Since then, thousands of lives and communities have been transformed by God working through its mission of mercy. You can learn more about CCO on their website: www.crosscatholic.org.

Thank you to all who made this possible!



Blood Drive — July 10th

The Social Ministry committee is sponsoring a blood drive on July 10th from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Please see the link emailed from the Parish Office to register.

5K Fun Run/Walk — September 6th

Mark your calendar for Zion's 6th annual 5K Fun Run/Walk on Saturday, September 6th, starting at 10:00 AM. The suggested entrance fee for this event is \$20, with all proceeds benefiting the Good News Home for Women in Flemington. The race will start from the CEB parking lot and will wind its way through scenic Oldwick.



If 5K (3.1 miles) seems like too much for you, the first part of the course circles back to the CEB after less than a mile before heading out through farmlands. Snacks and drinks will be provided before and the event. If joining the run/walk isn't for you, please stay tuned to your email to learn more about a variety of volunteer opportunities that are available.

Last year we had 77 participants. With your help, we can break 100. We hope to see you at this family fun event on September 6th!

Open Cupboard Food Pantry

Thank you to Zion's members for the 336 pounds of food that you have already donated this year!

As you know, grocery prices have gone way up and unfortunately food donations have gone down. Open Cupboard gets new clients every week and there's not much food on the shelf to give out. Also, since last year's fire at the Clinton location, the new thrift shop has not been producing the revenue needed to buy groceries.



Please consider donating to the pantry this month. In the email version of this July newsletter, there is a link to an Amazon Wish List where the you can choose items to donate. They will be delivered to an address in Middlesex and then get transferred to the pantry. Again, thank you for donations and please visit us at the thrift shop if you would like to do some shopping! (Open Cupboard Thrift Shop, Grayrock Plaza, 1802 Rt. 31 N., Clinton, NJ 08809.)

Current pantry items needed: canned mixed fruit, jar pasta sauce, cereal, coffee, paper towels

Faith Kitchen Update

The 6/5 Thursday Faith Kitchen crew of John McAleer, Todd & Michele Stevens, John & Audrey Ruland, and Tom & Rita Groendyke once again served many needy clients. We served over 120 sit-down and take-away meals of meatball hoagies, potato salad, green salad, and a banana. Always heart warming to hear the many "thank you" and "God bless you" comments.



On June 21st, Saturday's Faith Kitchen volunteers Ken & Liz Degen, Catherine Koch, Jeff & Helen Livingston, Brian Reilly, and Sue Swanson prepared and served 95 meals of egg and chorizo breakfast burritos, tater tots, fruit salad, and assorted puddings to appreciative clients. We received many thank you's and God Bless You's, and the thanks and blessings go to Zion's members for your support of this wonderful and necessary mission!

