



Good News from Zion

Connecting People with God's Grace

October 2025

A Message from Pastor Kat

Hopes & Dreams

Zion is a historic church of the ripe old age of 311 years old. This is a point of pride for our congregation, but it does mean we don't have any founding members within living memory. We have to imagine what the hopes and dreams of our forebears in faith might have been. Since Zion's founding congregation was made up of one-third freed slaves and two-thirds German immigrants, we can imagine they were hoping to find community and belonging as well as a foundation in the word of God. Many would have been starting new lives in a new place and, no doubt, hoped to find support from their siblings in Christ.

I doubt those first members of Zion all those years ago could imagine what lay ahead – revolution, war, hardship, as well as joys, milestones, and shared achievements. This month, I invite you along with our stewardship committee to embrace the theme of hopes and dreams. Imagine with us a future for Zion today, and discern with us how each of us, with the help of the Spirit, can be a part of making these hopes and dreams come true.

Celebrating The Present

Even as we look to the future, we have much to celebrate. Our congregation continues to grow both in members and in mission. We should be proud of the many ways that we are community to one another and to our neighbors in need. I invite you to particularly celebrate the accomplishments of our young people on Sunday, October 26th. On this day, at a single service at 10:00 a.m. our youth will help to lead Reformation Day worship, and we will confirm this year's graduating confirmants.

Even in a world where we, like our forebears, continue to face hardship and challenge, we are invited just as they were to lean on one another and on our God, who is alpha and omega – who holds our past and all our future hopes and dreams in his hands.

In Christ,
Pastor Kat

*Be still AND KNOW
THAT I am God*
PSALM 46:10

Contemplative Prayer Retreat — October 12th

Are you looking to deepen your prayer life? Or learn some new ways of connecting with God? You are invited to join us for an afternoon retreat to engage in contemplative prayer practices. The will be held on Sunday, October 12th at 1:00 at the CEB. If you would like to attend please sign up via the link that was emailed from the Parish Office.

Church Council Highlights

The Church Council met on September 18th. Highlights from that meeting and the upcoming October meeting will be included in the November newsletter. The next meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 16th. Meetings are open to all. If you would like to attend an upcoming meeting, please let the Parish Office know and we will send you the link to join.



Evangelism Committee Update

The Good News Home 5K run/walk was attended by 55 people and a total of \$1700 was raised for the GNH. Thank you to all the Zion volunteers who came out and helped make this a success. And a big thank you to Helen Livingston who was able to get a Thrivent gift card and t-shirts to help our committee put on this event.

EVANGELISM



Upcoming events to put on your calendar:

- October 26 - Pet Blessing and Halloween costume contest to be held at the church at 1:00.
- October 31 - Halloween Hospitality at both the church and CEB
- January 25, 2026 - Gideons personal witness training in the CEB at 1:00

Our next meeting will be on October 14 at 7:00 in the Martin Luther Room if you would like to get involved with our committee.



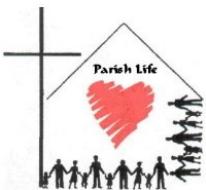
Lunch Bunch — October 9th



Zion's lively group of retirees meets for lunch on the second Thursday of each month. On October 9th we will gather at Brasserie 513 in Califon at 12 p.m. Please see the sign-up link emailed from the Parish Office to reserve your place at the table.

News from the Parish Life Committee

In November, Parish Life committee will be sponsoring a trip to BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham, a Hindu temple in Robbinsville, NJ. Please stay tuned for information about the date and other details. To learn more about the Akshardham, including the dress code for visitors, please go to usa.akshardham.org.



SAVE THE DATE for Advent Parish Night, coming on December 7th. If you are available to help with this event, please contact Cindy Rupprecht at cindyrupprecht@gmail.com.

Women of Zion Thanksgiving Dinner

The Women of Zion will be having their annual Thanksgiving dinner celebration on Wednesday, November 12th at 6:30 in the CEB. All women are welcome, including family members and friends. Please use the sign-up link emailed from the Parish Office to RSVP and let us know what you will bring for the meal. You can also respond by calling the Parish Office at 908-439-2040 or Barb Surhoff at 908-303-7442.





Youth & Family Ministry at Zion

by Jaime VanNostrand

September has been a busy and exciting month in Youth and Family Ministry here at Zion! On September 7th we kicked off the new program year with a Rally Day celebration where we introduced the month's faith formation theme (CREATION!), played games, made crafts, and connected with old friends and new at a reception hosted by Janet Hornich and Lauren Janssen. We can't wait to see all of the ways that our students will be "Growing with God!" in the year ahead!

On September 14th students of all ages gathered for the first service project of the new year. In keeping with our CREATION theme, students worked together to serve God's good world and the critters who call it home by making seed bombs and pinecone bird feeders. What a fun way to get our hands dirty doing God's work!



September also saw our students' return to the classroom. We are thrilled by the ways that our community is growing! We've been able to add an additional Sunday School classroom for our younger students and welcome on board another incredible volunteer in Melanie Hodges. She joins Michele Stevens and Brooke Schumann on what is a very talented and dedicated team. We are so grateful for all that they do with and for the youngest among us as they learn and grow in faith.

As we look ahead to October there are a number of exciting ways to get involved with Youth and Family Ministry!

On Sunday, October 5, students will gather for a Stewardship themed All School Event followed by a service project on October 12th where they will help prepare items for the upcoming season of Alternative Giving.

After worship on October 19 children, youth, families, and mentors are invited to participate in our annual hike on the Columbia Trail! We will gather in the CEB after worship for a pizza lunch and then carpool over to the trailhead together. The trail is flat, paved, and accessible to all skill levels so please don't hesitate to sign up for this exciting event!

On October 26 there will be no Sunday School but that doesn't mean it will be a quiet morning for Youth and Family. Quite the opposite! That morning the congregation will gather for a single worship service at 10 where several of our congregation's young people will be confirming their faith. It will also be a Youth Sunday service so most of the responsibilities of weekly worship leadership will be taken on by our kids!

Lots of exciting things happening this month! We hope to see you there!

Soles4Souls Shoe Collection

The Social Ministry committee is collecting shoes to be donated to Soles4Souls. All styles and sizes of new or gently-worn shoes can be dropped off at the church or CEB any time before October 31st. For more information about Soles4Souls, please visit www.soles4souls.org.



Open Cupboard Food Pantry

In addition to typical food pantry donations, Open Cupboard of Washington desperately needs personal care items. Please leave donations in the large basket in the narthex of the church or in the entryway of the CEB.

Current items needed: body wash, shampoo/conditioner, diapers & pull ups, cereal – sweetened and unsweetened, regular coffee, paper towels.



Faith Kitchen Update

Zion's faithful volunteers gathered at Faith Kitchen on September 4th with heavy hearts, greatly missing our Christian brother John Ruland. Our service to feed those in need was dedicated to him on this day.



Saturday's Faith Kitchen volunteers of Cindy Rupprecht, Tom & Rita Groendyke, and Jeff & Helen Livingston prepared a delicious meal of Cindy's Mexican lasagna with chorizo, green salad, tortilla chips and salsa,

and homemade zucchini bread. We served 29 seated meals and 62 take out meals for the clients who voiced their many thanks for the meal. Thank you Zion for your support of this mission to feed the hungry!



Adult Education Class on Zoom

“Scriptures That Didn’t Make It”

What: A five-week study of intertestamental and early Gnostic scriptures; we'll be looking at everything from Jubilees and Pseudo-Philo to Gnosticism and the Enochic writings.

Where: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/89411022376>

When: October 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 at 7:00 p.m.

Why: To learn from directions not taken

Who: Rev. Chris Halverson, Pastor of Spruce Run Lutheran and author of An Uncomfortable Bit of Rope and Other Essays on the Binding of Isaac.

For Whom: All those interested in the textual traditions that enveloped and shaped our own. Please join us!



Stewardship Campaign

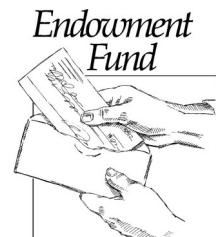


If it's October, it's Stewardship Campaign time! This year our theme is "Dreams Become Reality Through Our Gifts." You'll be hearing from us during Sunday services as fellow Zion Members will be sharing their "Dreams for Zion" during Temple Talks, leading up to Commitment Sunday October 19th. Stay tuned!

Endowment Fund News

The final Endowment Sunday for 2025 will be on All Saints Sunday, November 2nd.

There was \$26,814 from Endowment Fund earnings available for ministry opportunities in 2025. 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, \$4,425 to Feed My Starving Children, \$2,000 to Operation Christmas Child, \$5,000 to Lutheran Disaster Response, \$1,000 to the Good News Home, \$250 to Clinton Township's Relay for Life, \$1,500 to the House Next Door Pastors Retreat, \$420 for Candlelight Meditation Leadership, \$2,500 to the Open Cupboard Food Pantry, and \$2,000 for Thanksgiving meals for Harvest Family Success Center, leaving a current balance of \$6,219 available to support 2025 ministries.



Please consider giving to the Zion Lutheran Church Endowment Fund on November 2nd to celebrate All Saints Sunday or to commemorate a significant milestone in your family's church life such as a baptism, confirmation, or wedding. Please 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 in the church on November 2nd. 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.