



Good News from Zion

Connecting People with God's Grace

June 2026

A Message from Pastor Kat

One God, Three Persons

The Trinity is perhaps one of the most mysterious theological concepts of the Christian faith. We speak of our God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit regularly in worship, prayer, and blessing. We hear that Jesus commissions his disciples – and us! – to baptize people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We see religious leaders, maybe even ourselves, make the sign of the cross as a visual gesture of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But what does it *really* mean for our God to be one and, at the same time, three?

This question has been asked by people of the faith since the time of Christ. Our three creeds – Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian – testify to the copious thought and debate of our forebears about the exact mechanics and impact of the Trinity.

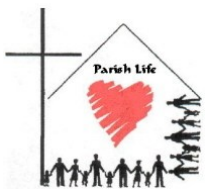
A Mystery, A Relationship

When it comes down to it, we don't really need to have it all figured out. The Trinity is an important theological concept, but it's also a human attempt to fully understand the divine. Ultimately, our God remains a bit of a mystery to us. What's important is less the how and more the why. Our God comes to us mysteriously as three persons to show us love and to redeem us from our brokenness and restore us to new life.

In every person of the Trinity, our God reaches out to us in relationship. As the writer of Psalm 23 says, our God "pursues us" with blessing all the days of our lives. We experience this blessing in the concrete love of our neighbors, and we experience it in the less definable knowledge of God's presence – that we feel in both the highs and lows of life. This coming month, I pray that may you know and experience the love of God as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit.

In Christ,
Pastor Kat

Parish Life Update



The Parish Life committee is continuing to sponsor the **Needles and Hooks Club** on the third Tuesday of each month – a casual gathering of those who want to work on a crochet, knitting, or needlecraft project, as well as anyone who would like to learn to crochet. Join us on Tuesday, June 16th from 4-5:30 in the Great Room. We are also planning to meet one Sunday after church, so stay tuned!



Have you been to **Grounds for Sculpture**? It is an amazing display of 300 sculptures in Hamilton Township (about an hour away). If interested, add Saturday, June 27th to your calendar. Tickets need to be reserved in advance, but unfortunately, they haven't yet opened up their June calendar. We will keep an eye on this and reserve tickets when they are available (cost is \$25). We'll plan to go in the morning.

Also on the docket are visits (yes, plural!) to local vineyards, and Fridays on the Farm at Melick's for wine and cider tasting.

If you missed the outing to the **Somerset Patriots game** in May, be sure to join us on Saturday, September 29th for another night of baseball, fun and fireworks!

Church Council Highlights



The Church Council met on May 21st. Highlights from that meeting are below.

- Three candidates have auditioned for the Director of Music position. The committee will meet next week to determine whether one of the three candidates is suitable for recommendation to the council.
- Air conditioning at the CEB has been fixed. A quote has been received for repair of the furnaces.
- A time of orientation to the AED unit at the church (there is also a unit at the CEB) has been scheduled for June 14th, immediately following 9:30 a.m. worship. The demonstration will be led by Zion member Sarah Chardoussin, and all are encouraged to attend.
- The 2026 Tag Sale raised over \$7,000 for Family Promise of Hunterdon County. Adding funds available from previous tag sales, Zion was able to send Family Promise a check for \$10,000.

Thank you to:

- * Kathleen Harris and Jaime Van Nostrand for preaching on May 3rd and May 10th, respectively, while Pastor Kat was away on her honeymoon.
- * Tom Held and Rev. Ingrid Wengert, who provided administrative and pastoral coverage, respectively, while Pastor Kat was on her honeymoon.
- * Joanne Rupp for leading the efforts to have new trees planted in the CEB parking lot.
- * Helen Livingston for ensuring the air conditioning in the CEB Great Room would be in working order before summer.
- * Kaity Costello and Leah Wintemute for their leadership of the Parish Choir this year during the search for a new Director of Music.
- * Rebecca Melick, Cindy Rupprecht, and the many volunteers who contributed to the success of this year's Tag Sale.
- * Jaime Van Nostrand for her excellent leadership of Zion's Sunday School program, including guiding the teachers and supporting the parents.

The next meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, June 18th. Meetings are open to all.



Lunch Bunch — June 11th

Zion's lively group of retirees meets for lunch on the second Thursday of each month at 12 p.m. On June 11th we will gather at Mama's Café Baci in Hackettstown. Please see the sign-up link emailed from the Parish Office to reserve your place at the table. Lunch Bunch will be on hiatus in July & August, returning on September 10th.



Blood Drive — July 28th

The Social Ministry committee is sponsoring a Blood Drive on Tuesday, July 28th, at the CEB. Please watch your email for the link to sign up.

Save the Date — 5K Run/Walk



Zion's sixth annual 5K Run/Walk benefitting the Good News Home for Women is just around the corner.

Between now and Saturday, September 12th, you have plenty of time to break in those new running shoes and get ready for this fun filled event. The 5K course takes you through our Oldwick neighborhood and surrounding beautiful rolling farmland. Pre-race snacks and a light lunch following the run/walk will be provided for all participants. The race starts at 10:00 a.m. in the CEB parking lot.

This is a wonderful way to show support and to provide fellowship with our friends at the Good News Home. More details will be forthcoming as the day gets closer, but for now, please add the date to your calendar. Thank you for your support in this important ministry.

If you would like to get involved a little more with the Evangelism committee, our next meeting will be on June 8th at 7:00 p.m. in the Martin Luther Room at the CEB.



Youth & Family Ministry at Zion

by Jaime VanNostrand

Just like that, we have once again found ourselves at the end of a program year. It seems like just yesterday that we were welcoming students into their classrooms!

Our final faith formation theme this year was BEYOND OUR WALLS. And it's no coincidence that this theme comes up when students are preparing to leave our classrooms for several months. Our hope is to encourage kids for several weeks before the end of the program year to think about all the ways that we can grow and engage our faith outside the walls of our classrooms and church buildings. We want to encourage and equip children and families to continue to grow in faith over the summer months!



To get the ball rolling, on Sunday, May 3, we had a camp themed All School Event on Camp Sunday. Together we made s'mores flavored trail mix, made craft lanterns, built tents with chairs and bedsheets, and even experienced the closing moments of our lesson from inside our tents! All of the day's activities were designed to encourage kids to think of camp specifically and creation more broadly as a place BEYOND OUR WALLS where we can go to meet God, witness God's work, and grow in faith!



When we gathered for our monthly service project on Sunday, May 10, we shifted our focus from our own experiences of God and instead looked at the impact that our faith can have on others far BEYOND OUR WALLS. For the third consecutive year we hosted a friend of the congregation who is deeply involved in the Operation Christmas Child ministry that sends shoeboxes of Christmas gifts to children all around the world. Students, teachers, parents, and volunteers packed over 400 boxes in one hour! We are grateful to everyone who made that ministry possible, and we pray that the impact of their work might be felt far BEYOND OUR WALLS!

Sunday, May 17, was the final Sunday of the program year! Students started the Sunday School hour in their classrooms for a final Bible lesson with their classroom teachers. Following that lesson, students of all ages, teachers, and parents gathered in the Great Room for a closing celebration! We celebrated Pentecost a bit early, framing the day's celebrations as a birthday party for the church. Together we talked about the Holy Spirit's movement among the early followers of Jesus and in the church today - especially the Spirit's tendency to show up at unexpected times and in unexpected places, often finding us BEYOND OUR WALLS!

We also held our final Seasonal Social of the program year on the 17th as 20 members of our community gathered for a pizza lunch before heading over to Farm View Golf Center in Hackettstown for a round of mini golf. It was a wonderful time of fun and fellowship for all who attended!

Now that the program year has come to a close, the weekly rhythms of Youth and Family Ministry will look quite different. However, there is still much to look forward to! On Sunday, May 31, we will celebrate Sunday School teachers and Confirmation helpers in worship with a special moment of teacher recognition. On Sunday, June 14, we will honor all of this year's graduates of 8th grade, high school, college, and graduate school at our annual Graduate Recognition Sunday. We are also looking eagerly forward to another year of Vacation Bible School beginning on Monday, June 22!



Congratulations to Zion's 2026 Graduates!

All will be recognized during 9:30 a.m. worship on June 14th.

Grade School

Nate Brokaw

Union Township Middle School to North Hunterdon Regional High School

Caleb Schumann

Ethel Hoppock Middle School to North Hunterdon Regional High School



High School

Teddy Lanka

Voorhees High School to Rutgers University

Jessica Rodrick

Voorhees High School to Stockton University

College / University

Ryan Beauregard

University of Mount Union – Bachelor of Arts in Business Management

Dillon Berenty

Paul Smith's College – Bachelor of Science in Wildlife & Fisheries Science

Carol Anne Bredeson

Bucknell University – Bachelor of Arts (summa cum laude) in Political Science w/ minors in International Affairs and Philosophy

Catherine Bryan

Raritan Valley Community College – Associate Degree in Applied Science in Nursing

Jonathan Rodrick

Centenary University – Bachelor of Arts in Business and Sports Management

Tanner Rogers

Penn State University – Bachelor of Arts in Criminology

Graduate School

Andrea Rose Delia

Cardozo School of Law – Juris Doctor

Open Cupboard Food Pantry

The Open Cupboard Food Pantry is in need of several items this month, including:

Canned vegetables (including asparagus, carrots, corn, peas, potatoes, spinach), canned baked beans & chili, canned chicken & tuna, toiletries (including body wash, shampoo & conditioner), baby wipes.



If one prefers to make a monetary donation, please purchase ShopRite gift cards (\$10 increments).

Donated items and gift cards can be placed in the large basket in the narthex of church or on in the bin at the CEB. Please contact Bonnie Stanski with any questions or concerns at bonniestanski@gmail.com. Thank you!

Faith Kitchen Update

At the May 7th Faith Kitchen date, a busy foursome of John McAleer, John Minerowicz, Audrey Ruland, and Christine Clark prepared and served 53 sit-down and 60 take-out meals of chicken drumsticks, rice, salad & bananas. No one left hungry, and there were many “thank you” and “God bless you” comments from guests.



Saturday's Faith Kitchen volunteers of Cindy Rupprecht, John McAleer, Sue Swanson, Kathryn Koch, and Helen Livingston prepared a hearty meal of BBQ chicken legs, fiesta pasta salad, green salad, and cookies for 31 eat-in guests and 62 takeout meals. As always, each meal was so very much appreciated. Thank you Zion for your support of this ministry!



Inspired Investment: Loving and Caring for our Historic Infrastructure

This is the fourth article in our Stewardship series, following previous editions featuring Facilities, Engagement & Growth, and the First Quarter Giving Summary. This month, we are summarizing our short- and long-term potential capital projects.



Our church property dates back to 1749. For over 275 years, Zion has maintained its grounds and buildings with care and commitment. Our Christian Education Building has been standing for over 50 years, with the addition of the great room and kitchen being 30 years old. With the passing of time, various building components naturally begin to require attention, and that is currently the case with the CEB.

The primary emerging issues include (but are not limited to):

1. Heating and AC units in the CEB Great Room
2. CEB windows
3. CEB roof
4. CEB parking lot

The Property committee is currently assessing and prioritizing a list of projects and will be making recommendations to the Council shortly. Currently, the projects listed above are not part of the 2026 budget and are significant enough to require full congregation review and approval. Further, Council leadership is exploring ways to meet these infrastructure challenges which includes the potential for a Capital Giving Campaign that would launch in 2027.

What can you do?

Stay tuned for further updates on both our infrastructure challenges and potential solutions. And in the near term, please ensure that your committed giving is up to date. We do have a modest 2026 budget for capital improvements, which can help us "hold on" until we need to take on larger projects. Interested in supporting something bigger? Please reach out to Tom Held, Council President, if you are interested in helping to fund any of the above projects.

Endowment Fund News

The Endowment committee will be hosting the second Endowment Sunday of 2026 on Father's Day June 21st. The final Endowment Sunday for 2026 will be on November 1st, All Saints Sunday.

There was \$30,077 from the Endowment Fund earnings available for new ministry opportunities in 2026. This amount 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, \$5,000 to Feed My Starving Children, \$250 to the American Cancer Society/Canton Twp. Relay for Life, \$336.74 for an Apple TV unit in the Youth Room, \$1,613.95 for new a new pad and batteries for the AED unit at the church and the purchase of a unit for the CEB, \$1,000 for the House Next Door Clergy Retreat, \$2,000 for the Operation Christmas Child Box Build, and \$2,000 for an Eagle Scout project leaving a current balance of \$16,576.31 available to support 2026 ministries.

Please consider giving to the Zion Lutheran Church Endowment Fund on June 21st as a tribute to all fathers 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 ministries and programs ... forever.

Envelopes marked "Endowment Fund" will be available at the church on June 21st. If you are worshipping virtually, please consider mailing a check marked "Endowment Fund" to the Parish Office, or you can make a contribution via Venmo.

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

