



Good News from Zion

Connecting People with God's Grace

September 2026

A Message from Pastor Kat

A New Program Year, Something for Everyone

In my childhood, I remember the beginning of the school year being an exciting – and somewhat anxious – time of anticipating new learning, new friends, and new opportunities. I pray you might also feel these same feelings as we begin a new program year here at Zion.

Every fall, we are excited to begin offering regular weekly fellowship and faith formation opportunities: Sunday School, Confirmation, High School Connect, and Café Zion. Between our 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. worship services, we have opportunities for folks of every age to build community and deepen faith from 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. at our Christian Education Building just one block from the church.

In Sunday School, Confirmation, and High School Connect, children and youth ages pre-school through 12th grade have opportunities to learn about God and build relationships with peers. At Café Zion, parents and all adults are invited to spend time in casual conversation and mutual support – while also getting that vital cup of coffee!

A New Program Year, A New You!

This September, we will kick off the program year as we do each fall with **Rally Day**, this year held on **Sunday, September 13th**. On this day, we will gather as one community for **9:30 a.m. worship** in our Christian Education Building Great Room. During worship, Sunday School age children will be dismissed after the children's time with Jaime to meet their Sunday School teachers and have an initial class.



After worship, children and their teachers will rejoin the congregation for a **Ministry Fair at 10:30 a.m.** During this time, each committee will staff booths in the style of a town fair with fun games, prizes, and information about their programs. It's our hope that this will be an opportunity for you, members and friends of Zion: young and old, new and long-established, to learn more about our wonderful ministries and hear the voice of God calling you to a new thing!

In Christ,
Pastor Kat

Church Council Highlights



The Church Council met on August 20th. Highlights of the meeting are below.

- Zion's budget is on track — currently \$2,207 in the black.
- The final 9:30 a.m. summer worship service at the CEB will be on September 13th. Worship services return to the church on September 20th, at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.
- Sunday School Rally Day and the Ministry Fair will take place on September 13th at the CEB.
- Due to a gap in enrollment, there will not be a Confirmation Class this year. Ninth graders who completed the class last year will be confirmed on 25th.
- Jaime VanNostrand reported that the nursery room at the CEB is available to families during the Sunday School hour, although it is not currently staffed. She will be talking with the families to find out what will work best.
- There are 19 youth eligible to attend the National Youth Gathering in 2027. Jaime has sent information to the parents and is determining how many kids will be able to go.
- Upcoming events sponsored by the Evangelism committee include the Pet Blessing on September 20th, New Members Class on September 27th, New Member Welcome on October 4th, and Halloween Hospitality on October 31st.
- Many prayers have been left in the box on the Prayer Wall in front of the church.
- The Social Ministry committee made a donation of \$350 to Family Promise to cover the cost of groceries for the week of August 16th.
- The Social Ministry committee's Fall Drive is for animal shelter supplies. Please see the article below for the list of items being collected.
- The Stewardship committee is in the planning stages of a potential 2027 Capital Campaign.

The next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, September 17th. Meetings are open for all to attend.

Animal Shelter Helpers Drive

During the months of September and October, Zion's Social Ministry committee is hosting an Animal Shelter Helpers Drive, sponsored by Jersey Cares. Donations can be left in the entryway at the CEB any time between now and October 31st.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unopened dog food - dry or canned• Unopened dog treats• New dog toys• New or gently used raised pet beds• New or gently used collars and leashes• 3-quart stainless steel dog bowls• Unopened cat food - dry or canned• Unopened cat treats• New cat toys• Kitty litter• KMR milk replacement formula for kittens & puppies | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dust pans• Nail clippers for cats• Turbo scratcher replacement pads• New blankets & towels for bedding• Paper towels• Spray bottles• Scrubber sponges• Disinfecting wipes• Bleach• Laundry detergent• Dish detergent• Hand soap |
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Youth & Family Ministry at Zion

by Jaime VanNostrand

Greetings, Zion families! We pray that during this season of backpacks, bus routes, and school supply checklists, you are finding peace and groundedness in the midst of new beginnings. As you orient yourselves and your families to a new school year, we'd like to take this opportunity to orient you to the Zion program year as well! We know that you all live rich and busy lives and we want to do our part to help you look ahead and make plans that suit your family. Below you will find some of the rhythms, events, and activities that will give shape to the year ahead. You'll find that there are many ways to get involved in Youth & Family Ministry this year!

Sunday School

In Sunday School you will notice that the rhythms of the past several years have been modified. While we will still be offering a mix of All School Events, Service Projects, and Bible Classes, the dates of each activity will no longer fall into a predetermined pattern of first Sundays, second Sundays, etc. This change was necessary in order to maintain the Sunday School calendar's ties to the holidays and liturgical seasons of the changing Christian calendar and to prioritize gathering for Bible lessons multiple times each month.



While All School Events and Service Projects are opportunities for our entire learning community to learn and work together, our classrooms will continue to be separated into age-based cohorts. This year's classroom breakdown is as follows:

PreK, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 with Cindy Rupprecht

Grades 2 and 3 with Melanie Hodges

Grades 4, 5, and 6 with Brooke Schumann

Seasonal Socials

We will continue to offer seasonal opportunities for children, youth, and families to venture beyond Zion's walls together for fun and fellowship! Mark your calendars for the dates below.



Sunday, November 1st - Fall hike on the Columbia Trail

Sunday, February 7th - Bowling trip to Bowlero Green Brook

Sunday, May 2nd - Mini golf outing to Farm View Golf Center in Hackettstown

Special Worship Services

Each year we look forward to the Sundays when our Sunday School kids make special contributions to our worship services! We'd love to have your kids be a part of the events outlined below.

Sunday, October 25th - Confirmation and Youth-Led Worship at 10am single service.

Sunday, December 20st - Christmas Pageant at 10am single service.

Single rehearsal during the Sunday School hour on 12/13.

Sunday, March 21st - Palm Sunday song at 10am single service.

Sunday, April 25th - Camp themed, youth led worship at 10am service.



We look forward to walking beside your families as you grow in faith in the year ahead!



Lunch Bunch — September 10th

Zion's lively group of retirees meets for lunch on the second Thursday of each month at 12 p.m. On September 10th we will gather the Gladstone Tavern and sit outside, weather permitting. Please see the sign-up link emailed from the Parish Office to reserve your place at the table.

Community 5K Fun Run/Walk — September 12th

On September 12th, Zion will be hosting the sixth annual Community 5K Run/Walk benefiting the Good News Home for Women in Flemington. You've all seen the signs around town so break in those new running shoes and get ready for this fun-filled family event.



The 5K course takes you through our beautiful Oldwick neighborhood and surrounding rolling farmlands. Pre-race snacks and a light lunch following the race will be provided for all participants. The event will start at 10:00 in the CEB parking lot with on-site registration starting at 9:15.

A **volunteer sign-up page** is up and running and can be accessed via the email sent from the Parish Office. Please take a few minutes to look it over and see how you might be able to help on race day. Volunteers are needed to register participants, prep the pre-race snacks, and prepare post-race lunch. You may also decide to just show up and go for a walk on a Saturday morning with your friends at Zion.

This event is a wonderful way to show our support and have an opportunity for fellowship with our friends from the Good News Home.



Pet Blessing — September 20th

Please join us for Zion's annual Pet Blessing — September 20th at 1:00 p.m. Pastor Kat Steinly will bless pets of all kinds, and treats will be provided. This event will take place on the front lawn of the church, NOT at the Christian Education Building.

New Members Class

Are you interested in learning more about what it means to be a member of Zion Lutheran Church? Our fall New Members Class will be held on September 27th at 9:45 a.m. at the CEB. Please let the Parish Office know if you'd like to attend.



Needles & Hooks Club

All are invited to join us on the third Tuesday of every month at the CEB, 4:00 to 5:30. We gather to work on our individual projects and share a time of fellowship. Bring along your crocheting, knitting, needlepoint, or whatever else you enjoy or want to work on. We are also happy to teach crocheting to anyone who would like to learn, and we have plenty of yarn and hooks. Pack up your project and join us! The next two meetings are September 15th and October 20th.



Women of Zion Thanksgiving Dinner — Save the Date

Please save the date for the Women of Zion annual Thanksgiving Dinner Celebration, coming up on Wednesday, November 11th at 6:30 p.m. at the CEB. Stay tuned for details!

Social Ministry Fall Drive

During the months of September and October, Zion's Social Ministry committee is hosting an Animal Shelter Helpers Drive, sponsored by Jersey Cares. Donations can be left in the entryway at the CEB any time between now and October 31st. Please see the article on page 2 for the list of accepted items.



Open Cupboard Food Pantry

The Washington Basket location of the Open Cupboard Food Pantry has seen an increase in the number of clients. The Food Pantry needs the following items:

Canned soups, canned fruits & vegetables, boxed pasta (such as spaghetti, ziti, macaroni), toilet paper & paper towels, baby wipes, baby & adult diapers.

Please place items in the large bin in the entryway of CEB. Thank you for your support of our neighbors in need.

Faith Kitchen Update

On August 6th, fifty hungry guests were served lunch at Faith Kitchen by John & Jann McAleer, Audrey Ruland and Christine Clark. A meal of a meatball sub, chips, fruit salad, and a banana was well received with lots of seconds and takeaway packages for later and to share with friends and family.



Zion's Saturday team of Todd & Michele Stevens, Sue Swanson, Cindy Rupprecht, Helen Livingston, and Kathryn Koch prepared a well-received meal of pulled pork sandwiches, pasta with veggies, zucchini bread, and watermelon for 36 sit-down guests and 63 takeout meals. Cindy's zucchini bread was a big hit with the house crowd with several coming back for seconds and even thirds! Thank you, Zion, for supporting this ministry and feeding the hungry!



Stewardship Campaign Kickoff

Like many other teams at Zion, the Stewardship committee is "gearing up" for the autumn. Our Stewardship campaign: "Inspired Investment" will kick off in early September. We'll have a series of newsletter articles, Temple Talks, and other touchpoints to highlight the aspirations that inspire us to make an annual financial commitment to our church.

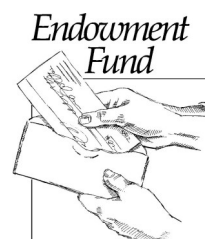


Like other committees, Stewardship will have a presence at the **Ministry Fair** being held on the September 13th Rally Day. We'll talk about proportional giving, level and depth of participation, and achievable goals that will help us both sustain and grow our mission. We'll also share what our potential needs will be related to our infrastructure, mainly the CEB. This year's Stewardship Campaign will conclude with **Commitment Sunday on October 18th**. Mark your calendars!

Endowment Fund News

The final Endowment Sunday for 2026 will be All Saints Sunday, November 1st.

There was \$30,077 from Endowment Fund earnings available for 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/Clinton Twp. Relay for Life, \$336.74 for an Apple TV in the Youth Room, \$1,613.95 for new batteries and pads for the AED Unit in the CEB, \$1,000 for the House Next Door Pastor's Retreat, \$2,000 for the Operation Christmas Child Box Build, \$2,000 for an Eagle Scout project, \$1,000 to the NJ Synod in honor of LuAnn Barnes retirement (\$500 to Global Refuge and \$500 to the Amazon Synod), and \$54.20 to United Lutheran Seminary in honor of their bicentennial celebration. This leaves a balance of \$15,522.11 still available to support 2026 ministries.

Please consider giving to the Zion Lutheran Church Endowment Fund on November 1st as a tribute 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. 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 mission-oriented programs ... forever.

Envelopes marked "Endowment Fund" will be available at the church on November 1st. If you are worshipping virtually, please consider mailing a check marked "Endowment" to the Parish Office, or you can give through Venmo.

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