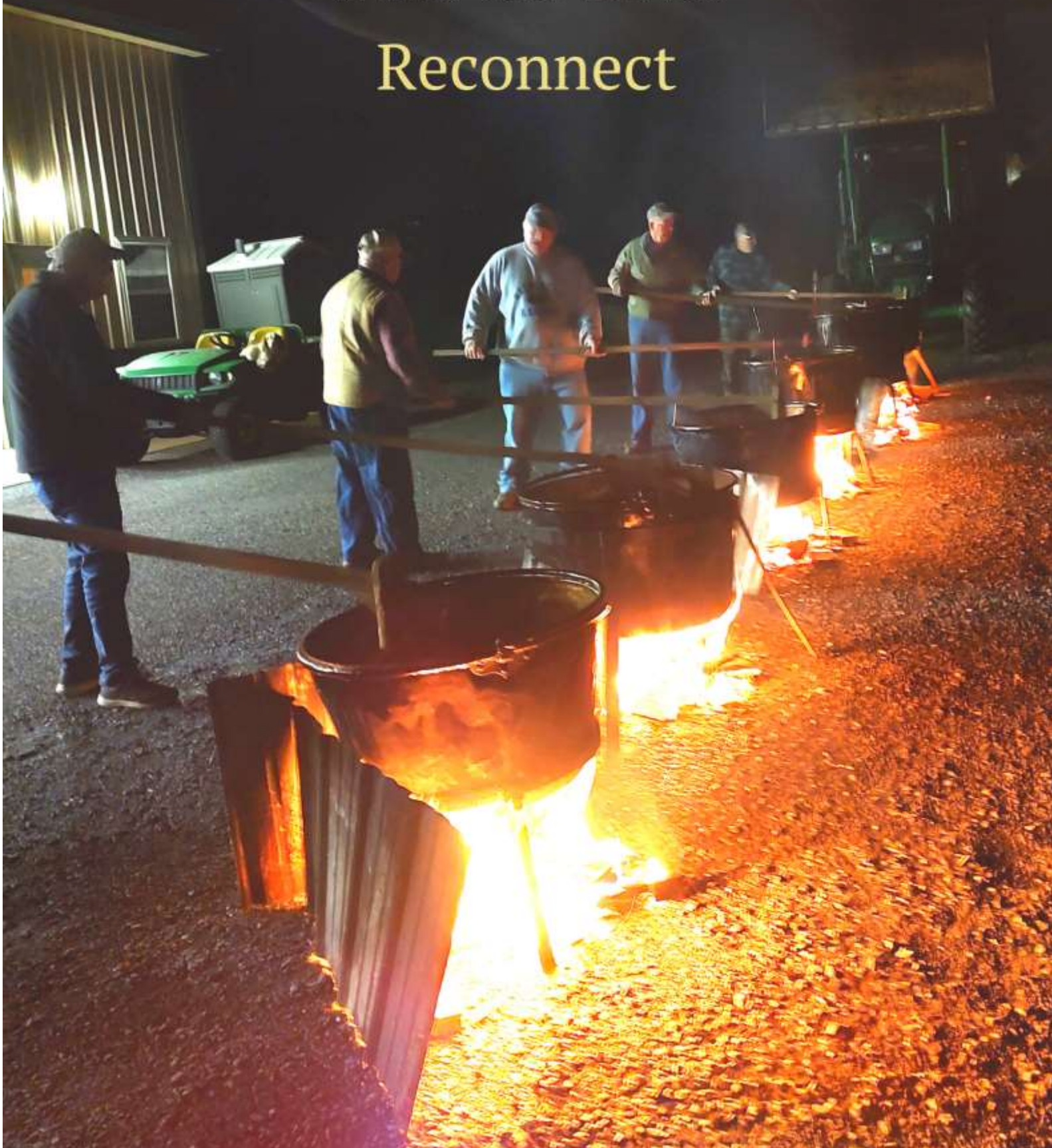


# THE BEACON

A MINISTRY OF ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH  
WINTER 2023 EDITION

## Reconnect



# Upcoming Events

<b>First Sunday of the Month</b>	Confirmation from 4-6 p.m.
<b>First Sunday of the Month</b>	Youth Group from 6-8 p.m.
<b>First Thursdays of Month</b>	Table Talk at the Main Cup at 6 p.m.
<b>Second Monday of the Month</b>	Council Meeting
<b>Third Wednesday of the Month</b>	JOY Luncheon from 12-2 p.m.
<b>Last Monday of the Month</b>	Hope to Faith at 3 p.m.
November 23 & 24	Office Closed for Thanksgiving
November 26	Christ the King Special Worship
November 28	CPR/First Aid Training at 6:30 p.m.
November 29	J.O.Y. Luncheon (No Joy Luncheon in December)
November 30	Decorating for Christmas at 9 a.m.
December 2	Christmas in the Valley
December 3	Advent Craft and Game Night (Youth Group too!)
December 6	Wednesdays in Advent - Meal, Worship, and Children's program starting at 6 p.m.
December 7	Table Talk at Zion (Bring a dish to share!) at 6 p.m.
December 10	FootPrints
December 10	Children's Christmas Pageant at 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m.
December 13	Wednesdays in Advent - Meal, Worship, and Children's program starting at 6 p.m.
December 15	Cookie Exchange at Lori Odell's Home at 5:30 p.m.
December 17	Worship Leaders (Greeters, Ushers, Lectors, etc.) workshop at 10 a.m.
December 17	Christmas Caroling at 5:30 p.m.
December 20	Wednesdays in Advent - Meal, Children's program, and Blue Christmas starting at 6 p.m.
December 24	Fourth Sunday in Advent Sunday Morning Worship at 9 a.m. in the Chapel.
December 24	Family Worship at 4 p.m. Candlelight Worship with Handbells and Holy Communion at 7 p.m. Candlelight Worship with Orchestra, Choir, and Holy Communion at 10:30 p.m.
December 31	Deadline for Annual Report submissions to the Church Office
January 4	Table Talk at the Main Cup
January 7	Confirmation and Youth Group
January 14	Footprints
January 15	DayOff Program
January 17	J.O.Y. Luncheon
January 21	Town Hall Meeting at 10 a.m.
January 24	Town Hall Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
January 28	Joint Worship Service at 10 a.m. and Annual Meeting following worship
February 14	Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent

**Share Christ's Love, Grow in Faith, and Serve Others**



## A WORD FROM PASTOR DIANE

Here we are coming to the end of another year. I am thinking about those New Year's resolutions that got left behind. I am thinking about all the ways we were hoping to change and perhaps didn't over the past year. I am thinking about all the ways we wrap up a year and consider it successful. And I am also thinking about how this is the time of year where we are all supposed to be joyful and bright at the same time. How are we supposed to do it all?! There is a lot of pressure on us as individuals every single year in every single season. Be our best. Make things happen. Make it the best year, the best event, the best us yet. It's exhausting!

We have been feeling this pressure here at Zion too. We have been doing the hard work as staff, committees, and Council to be cognizant of our expenditures and think creatively about how to do ministry in the upcoming year as costs increase and perhaps as the world sees church as even less important. We don't have any quick fixes to these issues. Our understanding of God and our

community needs don't jive with making ourselves flashy and adding a coffee shop to our building. Sometimes the things we decide to do work and sometimes they don't. And there is the reality here too- we can't do it all.

In all of our diligent evaluations and plans, multiple leaders and staff have expressed an important sentiment they are feeling under all this pressure : we ALL need to do this work. It isn't just staff, committees, or council who have to make the ministry of Zion happen. Every single one of us does. Every single one of us does. I will type it one more time- every single one of us does. We can't just come in and punch our worship timecard, throw our offering in the plate, and dust our hands off and call it good. Is that really giving with our whole heart? And yes, we all have different abilities and some of us cannot do what we used to, but there are even little ways we can each



we are doing to make ministry possible.

I plead with you to think about how greatly blessed we are to be called together as a community at Zion. We cannot do it all alone and because we have each other, we do not have to. Please think about how you can help when we have an event that promotes the church and then do it! Think about how you might give more of yourself to the ministry here and then do it! Let us continue to ALL work together to share Christ's love, grow in faith, and serve others.

In Christ,

*Pastor Diane Ray*



## A WORD FROM PASTOR MATT

Ever since I have come back to the office following the birth of James and Joseph, I found it very difficult to keep up on all the emails and text messages. It usually takes me all week to get my emails below a double digit number, but come Monday morning, that number quickly grows to 80 and 90 emails. I try very hard to not check my emails or my cell phone on my day off in order to have a break from the work. However being a good millennial, I feel guilty about this practice.

I have learned that there's actually a term for all of this. It is called Digital Debt. Every time I open up my phone and see the amount of emails and text messages that I need to return, I feel this weight upon my shoulders grow heavier and heavier because I know there are people on the other side of those emails and text messages awaiting my reply. I feel that



weight but at the same time there are other pressing matters such as pastoral care and ministry planning that for me, take priority. Do I spend an hour reading and responding to emails or do I spend that same hour providing pastoral care? Being a good millennial with a hearty protestant work ethic, the answer to that question is yes.

As we approach the month of December, I am feeling more and more the pressure and stress of all the extra work that needs to be done on top of the other regular work of checking emails, replying to text messages, returning phone calls, and all the other duties assigned as a pastor. I am not at all complaining about my job but there are days when I long for Jesus to return not so that he can fix things but so that I can get a break from the email. Perhaps you feel this way as well.

I realized a couple years ago that we put four weeks of work into just three weeks during the month of December. I love the season after Christmas (the 12 days after Christmas) but it is often neglected in the life of the church because we are all so exhausted from all the "getting ready." Personally, I don't have it in me to preach or study on any of the feast days that occur between December 25th and January 6th because I am so busy.

This is not a new phenomena. I have read numerous pastors diaries from the 17 and 1800s and these pastors would say these things about December and Christmas. There just isn't enough time to fit everything in that we want to do or that we think we need to do. For the last 12 years in my December newsletter articles, I have said something to the effect that we need to slow down this Advent and Christmas. And every year, none of us, not even me, heed that advice or prescription. Perhaps this year I should stop giving that advice and simply say, "Don't worry. Jesus is still coming."

Ever since we started having kids, Christmas has not been the same. Something always goes wrong that usually involves more stress than was actually merited. And yet even in the midst of everything going wrong, Jesus shows up. Last year, pipes were bursting, electronics were getting fried, and our building was very cold due to a power outage and a severe cold front. Yet somehow, Jesus showed up. I don't know what the season of Advent and Christmas holds for any of us this year. All I know is this—Jesus will show up.

In Christ,

# So, what's been happening?

## Garden Rededication

After months of work, the Memorial Garden was rededicated to the glory of God to be used by humans to the smallest insect. We also officially dedicated the Praying Hands statue as a reminder to the souls who were once buried in the cemetery behind Zion and the newly erected cross. Finally, we ended the morning by blessing our Christian Education leaders. It was a busy day! Following the festivities outside, we all headed inside for breakfast and coffee. Very few people sat outside in the garden due to the weather, but the plants, trees, flowers, and shrubs all appreciated the extra rain. There is still time to purchase a brick and help create a lasting endowment for the care of the garden!



## Women's Bible Study

For the past two years, a group of women from Zion have gathered at Valley-Ho Farm for fellowship and study of the Bible. This group typically meets in the warmer time of the year. It has become a place of trust and relationship with others. After the COVID shutdown, we have had to rebuild much of our community and this faithful gathering of women has been integral in rebuilding. The group is "on hold" for the winter months but plan to start again this spring! To learn more about the group, talk to Jamie Derr or Pastor Diane.

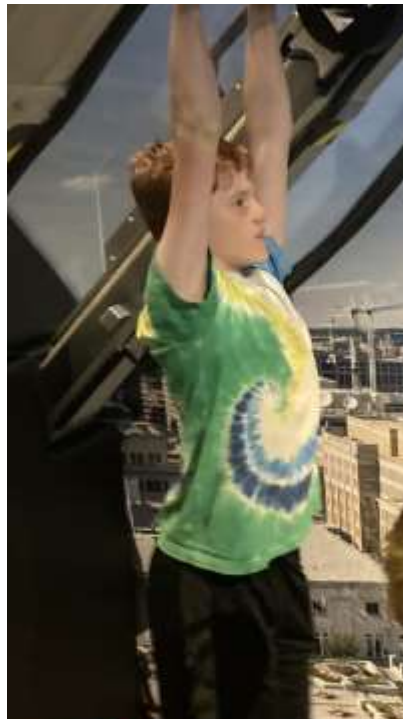
## Gavin Witt Makes Eagle Scout

The highest rank in Boy Scouts is Eagle Scout. Since the Boy Scouts were founded, in 1912, only about 2% of the members have made it to the rank of Eagle Scout. Recently that number has been going up but only slightly. Earning Eagle Scout requires a lot of work including merit badges, a special project, and a board of review. All the work must be completed before the scout turns 18. Gavin officially joined the ranks on October 15 in our Social Room with his Court of Honor. We salute you Gavin and all your hard work!



## A Day Off from School!

Because what is more fun than to spend the day at church...said no one ever. But on September 25, 15 people did just that! Since school was closed, we invited kids to come and spend the day with us as we journeyed down to DC to the Spy museum. After our time in the museum, we took our trusty church van on a detour through DC to see some of the sights like the Capital Building and the White House. While we were at the museum, we learned what it took to be a spy by having to remember key phrases and then repeat those words back sometime later as well as what it would take to hang off the side off a building. Let's just say, some of us are more cut out for the spy business than others...



### Confirmation & Youth Group

We kicked off Fall Programming with another year of learning together and going on adventures. Confirmation meets on the first Sunday of the month at 4 p.m. and Youth Group meets right after Confirmation Class at 6 p.m. Both of these groups are open to all Middle and High Schoolers.





## Reformation 2023

506 years ago, Martin Luther sparked a reform of Christianity. 506 years later, we remember this time of great change and upheaval by doing what the church always does: preach the word of God, celebrate the sacraments, raise up another generation of faithful followers, and offer praise to God.



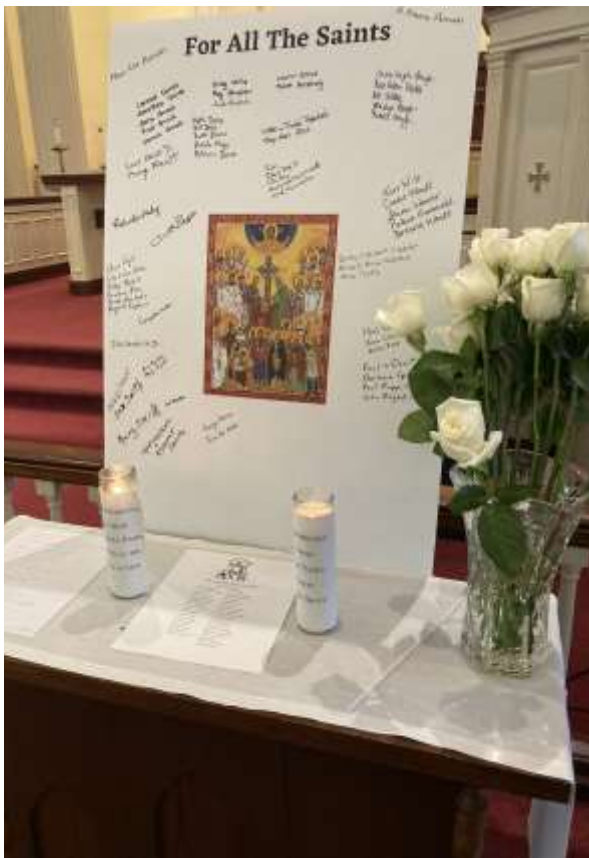
## 50 years ago...

Gil Stroup, Valerie Main, Ron Moss, Brian Blumenauer (not pictured are Cathy and Glenn Baker, Kathy Gordon, Larry Minnick, Nancy Roberson, Sarah Routzahn) became members of Zion Lutheran Church. 50 years of faithfully working to support and care for the mission and ministry of Zion Church is a major accomplish!

## FootPrints!

Mrs. Diana from Mar-Lu-Ridge joined us on Reformation to lead a special FootPrints Class! As you can see, the kids had a lot of fun!





## For All the Saints

Every year, the church sets time aside to remember and reflect on the lives of the faithful departed saints. We tell stories of some of the great heroes of the faith as well as name those who have died. One of the great ministries of the church is creating a space where people can come and mourn the death of someone they loved as well as hear the promise of the resurrection. On All Saints day, we remember those who have died this past year, those who made a lasting impact on our faith, and celebrated with Jennifer Caulk and her son, Hueston, as they were baptized into the body of Christ.



### *We remember those who died this past year...*

Donald Shank	Carol Main
Gladys Poffinberger	Faye Greenawalt
James Joyce	Rheta McCutcheon
John Bagent, Jr.	Joel Engel
William Eisentrout	Gerald LaWall
D. Gaither Dean	Joyce Hale
Betty Wachter	Matthew Herzberg
Matthew Perkins	Nancy Coppola
Frances Eaves	Jennifer Harne Keller
Donna Musser	Guynella Keller
Ann Hough	Jessica Catechis
Charles Rapp	Ray Pettingal
Robert Guyton	Mary Jablonski
Harry Pettit	Joanne S. Albright
George Harne	Barbara Angleberger
Mary Smith	Mary Ann Flint
Jack Newkirk, Sr.	Bob Moler
Stacie Schneider	Brenda Wolfe



## Quilt and Fiber Show

The Quilters didn't let a hurricane stop them from displaying and talking about their work of designing and creating quilts. They gathered a number of their prized quilts as well as some quilts from the community to show them off. A lot of people came to check them all out. There were quilts everywhere and each quilt had a story to tell! Nice job, ladies!





# Middletown Heritage Festival

## The only thing that can stop us is a hurricane!

And a hurricane did just that! With weather forecast predicting a Ophelia hitting Middletown, the organizers of the annual event decided it was best to postpone. Even though we tried to avoid the bad weather the first time, it seems we were just destined to have a rainy day. But that didn't stop people from coming out and watching the parade. This year, we handed out yellow, drawstring bags to kids along the parade route so that they could pick up the candy as it was thrown from the different floats. It was really neat looking down the parade route and seeing a sea of yellow. Inside, the kitchen crew worked hard to crank out hot bowls of soup, ham and turkey sandwiches, hot dogs, and most importantly—HOT COFFEE! It might not have been the nicest weather day but we did get to meet a lot of our neighbors, offer them a glass of water, and tell them about the mission and ministry of Zion.



## Thank you, volunteers!

It took a lot of volunteers to make this year a success. Though it was a lot of work, everyone shared the load and we were very successful. If you would like to help next year, we have a soup ladle or a pair of tongs with your name on it! Not only do you help with serving food, but it is also a lot of fun as you can see from the pictures!

# Apple Butter

On the morning of October 21 at 5 a.m., an orange glow could be seen coming from the back of our cemetery. It was the glow of fire beneath large pots of applesauce that would eventually be cooked down and made into apple butter. It is not a hard process but it does require hours of stirring and tending this delicious elixir that Zion is known around the county for making every year.



COVID put a hinderance on our apple butter making in prior years. From safety precautions at first then an apple shortage, we haven't been able to make apple butter since 2019. Not only were we missing this delicious condiment, many missed the fellowship.

Though it might be cold and early, it is the gathering of folks that really makes Apple Butter making fun! There is a lot of joke and storytelling around the kettles and inside the kitchen. Everyone pitches in and makes easy work of all the tasks.



Once the apple butter is made, it needs to be placed in jars and a dedicated group of people process them for canning. A label is put on top and it is ready for pick up. We still have lots of Apple Butter left to sell. It makes a great holiday gift! A pint costs \$6 and a quart jar is \$10. Pick yours up today by contacting the Office or Dixie! And thank you to all the volunteers who came out and helped this year.

# Community & Church Events

## MIDDLETOWN'S 2023 CHRISTMAS IN THE VALLEY

**Saturday, December 2, 2023 4 - 8:00 pm**

Donate a New Unwrapped Toy & receive a Santa Sack at **MAIN STREET MIDDLETOWN Booth** 4 - 8:00 pm

Visit our businesses to fill your Santa Sack 4 - 8:00 pm

Visit with Santa Outside Town Hall 4 - 5:30pm & 6:30 - 8:00pm

Storytelling with Mrs. Claus at More Ice Cream 4 - 7:00pm (every ½ hour)

Lighting of the Town Tree  
Caroling with MHS Chorus  
Santa's Arrival 6:00pm

Holiday Music Program & Refreshments 7:00pm  
at Zion Lutheran Church



### More Fulfilled Activities

- The Frederick Catoctones Caroling
- Donuts & Coffee at Bobbi Prescott, ReMax Results
- Roasting Marshmallows with the Scouts
- Photo op w/ Frosty Middletown Valley Bank
- Gifts from Santa's Elves at Kelley's Real Estate Professionals
- Hello Gorgeous & Hair Tinsel
- Make a reindeer treat at **MAIN STREET MIDDLETOWN** Welcome Center w/MHS's NAHS Booth - Apple Cider Courtesy of Main Cup
- Hot Chocolate Courtesy of Christmas in the Valley
- Donate a Toy for MVPHP & receive a Santa Sack
- Middletown Library Craft at More Ice Cream



### DURING CHRISTMAS in the VALLEY

**Donate a New Unwrapped Toy! Get a Santa Sack!**

**MAIN STREET MIDDLETOWN** is collecting New Unwrapped Toys for children 12 & under for Miracle on Main Street to be distributed by Middletown Valley People Helping People.

That evening, visit participating businesses between 4-7:00pm to have your Santa Sack filled with Goodies.

### Christmas in the Valley - Volunteers Needed

Join us in celebrating the beginning of the holiday season at Middletown's annual Christmas in the Valley celebration, **Saturday, December 2nd, at 7:00 p.m.**

We need approximately 10-15 adult volunteers to help at the church with ushering before and during the concert as well as afterwards in the Social Room to help with cookies and punch. If you can help, please contact Mary Ann Marcantonio or Jamie Derr.

## Christmas Caroling

**Sunday, December 17 at 5:30 p.m.**

We will meet in the church parking lot and load up take a tractor and wagon to go around town to sing carols. We will also have the church van for those that need it. We plan to get back to church a little after 7 p.m. for some hot chocolate and cookies.



READY, GET SET, BAKE!

## COOKIE EXCHANGE

Come enjoy a fun night with food, drinks, and fellowship!

**Dec. 15, 2023 • 5:30 pm**  
Lori Odell's Home  
2520 Old National Pike  
Middletown

Cookie baking is optional, so please come even if you don't want to exchange cookies.

FOR COOKIE EXCHANGE: Bring 5 dozen cookies of your choice (10 bags with 6 cookies in each bag).

RSVP to either:  
Jamie Derr at 301-305-9796  
Lori Odell at 904-923-8213

# Worship Opportunities



## Christ the King Sunday

A Journey through the Seasons

A special liturgy on Sunday, November 26th, at the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services to help us wrap up the liturgical year and remind us of all that we have seen, heard, and learned.



Sunday, November 19, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Middletown United Methodist Church  
7108 Fern Ct, Middletown, MD 21769

## Blue Christmas

A service of Healing and  
Hope for all who mourn  
at Christmas

Wednesday,  
December 20 at 7pm

## WORSHIP ON THE Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 23 at 5 p.m.  
Sunday, December 24 at 9 a.m.  
In the Chapel



**ADVENT 2023**  
Dinner at 6pm  
Children's Activities  
at 6:30 p.m.  
Worship at 7pm

**A MIDWEEK  
ADVENT SERIES  
PONDERING  
THE URGENCY  
OF FAITH**

This year, the Fourth Sunday in Advent 4 is on the same day as Christmas Eve. It only happens once every 7 years. So, we will have two opportunities for you to worship that weekend: Saturday night at 5 p.m. and Sunday morning at 9 a.m. After worship on Sunday morning, we will have some hot chocolate and share some Christmas Cookies. Kids, wear your PJ's! And if you can't make both the morning and the Christmas Eve, we will see you that night!



THE WORD BECAME FLESH  
AND LIVED AMONG US

# CHRISTMAS EVE

## *Worship*

Join us this Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our Savior and  
God entering our world in human form.



Family Worship at 4 p.m.

Candlelight with  
Handbells at 7 p.m.

Candlelight with Choir and Orchestra  
at 10:30 p.m.

More Information about Worship and Times can be found by visiting  
[www.ZionMiddletown.org](http://www.ZionMiddletown.org)

# Being the Church...

## Interview with Bobby Staples by Mary Ann Marcantonio



Worship at Zion has centered itself around music and has for nearly three centuries. So important was Music, that the earliest worshipers in 1783, even when money was very scarce, made sure that an organ occupied the west side of the building. We know little else about that early building but they felt it was the utmost importance to record this information so that future generations would know that organ music existed in our early congregational beginnings. Today, the fourth organ installed at Zion stirs us to worship. Many organist have filled the position to lead the congregation and the fruits of their labors live on in our current organist, Bobby Staples.

Bobby's interest in the organ began with a simple question... to see the organ. He was curious and then encouraged by his mother to walk up to John Seachrist, a very accomplished musician and our organist at the time. Service had just ended, and a shy young man took those first steps to a long organ career.

Bobby began his organ study with John soon after he took those first steps. After only a few months, John knew that Bobby had both the desire and the ability to be a great organist and took an interest in his music career and opened the door to many opportunities for him. It was only 6 months into his study that John asked Bobby to play Silent Night at the Christmas Eve Service. This was the beginning of his love of organ music. In October 2011, Bobby's mentor passed away and left big shoes to fill. And just one year later, Bobby was playing with organists in and around Frederick County at a concert sanctioned by the American Guild of Organists.

Bobby's music career began in a most unusual way. In his youth, (I laughed at this) Bobby had taught himself to play the piano through learning chords and where the chord was located on the piano keys. After several years he sought formal lessons.

While in high school, Bobby played the piano in the jazz band and the trumpet for the concert band. Upon high school graduation, Bobby attended Hood College for 4 years where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in music and his Bachelor of Science degree in computer science. He studied the Art of Organ Performance under the world renowned organist, Dr. Wayne L. Wold. While pursuing his music interests after college graduation, Bobby earned his Master's Degree in cybersecurity at John Hopkins University. This interest in computers opened the door to a career in the federal government at the National Institute of Standards and Technology where he is employed as a Systems Administrator.

A passion of Bobby's is transcribing music not usually heard played on an organ and by doing so hopes to bring a new interest in playing or listening to organ music. He enjoys using the latest computer technology in his musical endeavors.

If you enjoy riding some of the back country roads of Frederick County, you may be lucky to see Bobby riding his motorcycle. But lately not alone. His new found love, Avery Pettigrew, will be close behind. Avery herself is quite an accomplished musician and on several occasions has shared her talents here at Zion during worship. She plays French horn with several local professional orchestras, including the Maryland Symphony, the Virginia Symphony, the Mid-Atlantic Symphony, and teaches both privately as well as on the faculty of Frostburg State University. Marriage plans are set for them early next year, January 27th. Congratulations to you both!

Besides playing the organ at the 11 o'clock service, he also directs Zion's choir and Zion's handbell choir.

I asked Bobby what his dream for Zion is and his answer did not surprise me...to start the children's choir back up again. Since COVID, the youth choir has been inactive but hopefully that can change.

And just as what others have done for him, he now is doing the same...teaching Addison the organ. The amazing thing about "being the church", as our life ends, the fruits of their labors never die. Just as Bobby has learned from John, John learned from Mary Hoffman and so on. Each of these very accomplished musicians got to see the fruits of their labors through their investment in their successor. Our talents, no matter what they may be, are not meant for us to store up but to invest in the lives of others. This takes work, a commitment to be involved in developing the labors of others. Sharing our talents is a responsibility and being a good steward of God's gifts. In return, our talents are multiplied as we work to develop others. As we share our talents, they reflect back as to what we treasure most and by doing so, we are invited to "Come share your Master's joy" (Matthew 25:21). What gift is God's Spirit inspiring you to

# A WORD FROM THE VALLEY

A PODCAST FROM ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH  
MIDDLETOWN, MD

A Word from the Valley is a our podcast that features Pastor Diane and Pastor Matt's sermons as well as some other special content that we will produce throughout the year. You can learn more by visiting our website, or search for "Word from the Valley" wherever you download your podcasts.



# Christian Education

## Sunday Mornings



### WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Grow in faith and help prepare for the coming week's lessons

WEDNESDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30 A.M.  
IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM



WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT 6:30 P.M.  
IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM



ADULT FORUM  
MEETS IN THE CHAPEL  
AT 10:00 A.M.  
&  
MUTUAL CARE AND SUPPORT  
MEETS IN THE LIBRARY  
AT 10:00 A.M.

Unless otherwise noted, Sunday Morning Christian Education is always available! Grab a cup of coffee, a donut and join in the conversation no matter your age!

## SUNDAY SCHOOL EDUCATION

SUNDAYS AT 10 A.M.

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, &  
HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

Theology and Bible  
**TABLE TALK**  
Food and Drink

FIRST THURSDAY  
OF THE MONTH  
6pm at the Main Cup

**Donuts and coffee**

Every Sunday  
at 10 a.m.

In December, Table Talk will be gathering at church for a Friend's Christmas Dinner. Bring a dish to share as we talk about Luther and his view around Christmas. Starting in January, we will gather back at the Main Cup in the front Dining Room.



# Music Ministry

## LOOKING FOR CHOIR MEMBERS

If you have a passion for singing, join us!

EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT  
FROM 7-8:30 P.M.

No Experience Necessary



If you wish to join either our choir in time for Christmas, we will begin rehearsing Christmas music on the following date on Thursday, November 30

### Zion's Music Ministry



The psalmist says, *"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing."*

The music ministry at Zion helps us express ourselves that spoken words alone cannot always do. The worship experience is not only about hearing a message from a minister or learning a new interpretation of Scripture. It is also a complete and fulfilling worship experience that involves community-building, bonding and creating an atmosphere through physical vibration as only music can.

God has blessed us all with the gift of music. Perhaps you feel called to share your gifts with others and help us make a joyful noise. Consider joining our choir, playing in our worship band, or participating in special orchestral ensembles and handbells.

**More information can be found at [www.zionmiddletown.org/music-ministry](http://www.zionmiddletown.org/music-ministry)**



We are always looking for new musicians and sound techs who have a passion for playing and leading our Contemporary Worship

Service in song. Rehearsals happen on Sunday morning. Speak with Matt Puziss to see how we might use your gifts!



### Handbell Rehearsal

Reasonable music-reading fluency is required in both rhythm and notes. Treble or bass clef space is available if desired. Rehearsals are from 7pm to 8pm during the academic year. Visitors and interested persons are welcome to stop by at any rehearsal if interested in finding out what we're all about!

### Upcoming Rehearsal Dates

11/14 - Rehearse

11/21 - Rehearse

11/28 - Rehearse

12/05 - Rehearse

12/12 - Rehearse

12/19 - Rehearse

**12/24 - Perform (Christmas Eve at 7 p.m.)**

Orchestra music will be made available to the orchestra members around Thanksgiving. Please contact Bobby Staples ([rstaples93@gmail.com](mailto:rstaples93@gmail.com)) if you wish to join Zion's orchestra for this year's Christmas music, or any other of our ensembles!



# YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

## Confirmation

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH  
FROM 4-6PM

AVAILABLE BOTH IN-PERSON AND ON ZOOM

Open to all Middle and High School Students who  
have not completed the program

IGNITE YOUR FAITH

# YOUTH NIGHT

YOUTH GROUP WILL MEET  
ON FIRST SUNDAY OF  
MONTH FROM 6-8 P.M.

YOUTH GROUP IS OPEN TO 5TH  
GRADERS, ALL MIDDLE AND HIGH  
SCHOOL AGE KIDS!

An opportunity for the youth to grow in spirit through worship,  
prayer, good food, fun games, and amazing company!

# WE GOT A DAY OFF!

The Winter Day Off Program is on  
Monday, January 15  
at 9 a.m.

We are doing Tie Dye Shirts In the morning  
followed by some Minute to Win It Games at Zion.

After lunch, we are going to Urban Air  
SPACE IS LIMITED! Please RSVP by January 8 to secure your spot.  
Cost is FREE thanks to generous donations.

This is open to Elementary, Middle and High School Kids.  
Extra chaperones are always needed and appreciated!!!!



And Mark Your Spring Calendars...The  
Day Off Program is on  
Tuesday, May 14  
A day In DC with a visit to the National Zoo

*Are you joining us  
in New Orleans?*

2024 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING  
*July 16-20*

*Talk to Pastor Matt if you are  
interested! 8th graders to  
Seniors in High School are  
eligible to participate!*





## 2023-2024 Footprints Upcoming Dates

December 10th

January 14th

January 28th

February 11th

Join us on the second Sunday of each month at the 9:00 a.m. service for Footprints! Youth of all ages will gather together after the Prayer of the Day for a lesson and activity.

We will return to worship in time for communion.

If we have a 10 a.m. Joint Worship, then we will also have Footprints at that service.

# Advent

## CRAFT & Game Night

### Sunday, December 3 at 6 p.m.

Bring a game to share. We will have a Wii set up in the social room. We will have some crafts you can do to help you celebrate Advent. We will have Taco Bar for dinner.

# OUT OF TIME

## AN ADVENT & CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

written by Emily Trubey-Weller and Justin Kosec

**You are invited!**  
**Sunday, December 10th**  
**“Out of Time: An Advent & Christmas Pageant”**

Each set of characters from the Christmas story experience the timing of Jesus’ arrival differently. The angels have waited millennia for this moment to occur; for the innkeeper, the night’s events fly by; the townspeople of Bethlehem sleep through the moment entirely; and the animals have a different take on human urgency. Pervading every scene is the sense that God can, does, and will show up in all sorts of moments. Come and hear this timeless story: **The show begins at 6:30 p.m.—doors open at 6 p.m.**

**Christmas Pageant Rehearsal Schedule:**

November 30 and  
December 7th at 6 p.m.

Program:

December 10th at  
6:30 p.m.

All are  
welcome to participate!

Contact Stacey Black  
or Pastor Diane with  
any questions.

# Ways to Give



Give something **unexpected** this Christmas.

## ELCA Good Gifts Tree

These little gifts make the perfect stocking stuffer or the perfect gift to the person who already has everything! ELCA Good Gifts gives people in developing countries the tools to better their family and community such as School supplies, vaccines and farm animals. Here is how it works: Pick an ornament off the tree (located in the chapel) and either visit [www.ELCA.org/GoodGifts](http://www.ELCA.org/GoodGifts) or drop a check/cash in the offering plate marked in the memo line—ELCA Good Gifts. 85% of donations received to the ELCA good gifts goes directly to people in developing countries. Your gift this Christmas can make a lasting and significant difference in someone's life. Give today and THANK YOU!

## God's Global Barnyard

An animal can make a world of difference for a family in need. Animals provide food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops and offspring to sell at the market. With one gift, you can help a family escape the cycle of hunger and poverty for good.

 <p><b>Cow</b> \$50</p> <p>A cow's milk, meat, fertilizer and calves can quickly strengthen a family's financial security.</p>	 <p><b>Chicks</b> \$10</p> <p>Chicks begin laying eggs at just a few months old, offering nutritious, protein-rich meals for families who are hungry.</p>
 <p><b>Goat</b> \$50</p> <p>Fresh milk from a goat is very nutritious and can be used to make products like yogurt and cheese to sell at the market.</p>	 <p><b>Honeybees</b> \$20</p> <p>Bees pollinate plants and boost crop growth — helping the wider community. Soaps and candles can be made from their wax and sold at the local market.</p>
 <p><b>Pig</b> \$30</p> <p>Within months after birth, piglets grow to weigh over 200 pounds — bringing a big payoff at the market.</p>	 <p><b>Fish Farm</b> \$250</p> <p>A fish farm and training in good business economics can provide a lifetime of meals for a community.</p>

Give through your congregation by visiting [ELCA.org/goodgifts](http://ELCA.org/goodgifts) or by sending a check to ELCA Good Gifts, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. Please indicate your gift in the memo line of your check.

[ELCA.org/goodgifts](http://ELCA.org/goodgifts)



**WEEKEND BACKPACKS**  
Hunger doesn't take the weekend off

The weekend Backpack Ministry meets the needs of students on the weekends when they do not receive food at school. The critical need item for November is canned chicken or tuna. For December, it is chicken noddle & tomato soup . You may drop off your donation in the box outside of the Chapel.

## Poinsettia Orders and Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Monetary Gifts

The Altar Guild will be accepting poinsettia orders and LWR monetary gifts through December 3, 2023. Poinsettias and LWR gifts are \$10.00 each. All poinsettia orders and LWR gifts must be in by December 3. You can complete the order form on pages below or pick up order forms for poinsettia and LWR gifts outside the church office. Please complete the appropriate form and mail it with your check to the church or drop it off at the church office after Saturday evening or Sunday morning services



### 2023 POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Poinsettia orders will be accepted through December 3, 2023. Poinsettias are \$10.00 each. Please be sure to indicate below how many poinsettias you will be picking up. You may pick them up after the last Christmas Eve service.

Orders will be accepted by completing the form below and mailing it with a check to Zion Lutheran Church, 107 West Main Street, Middletown, MD 21769. Please mark your envelope "Poinsettia". You may also drop it off at the Church office before or after any service. **Orders must be received by December 3. No orders after that date please.**

---

#### 2023 Order Form for Poinsettias

**Each Poinsettia is \$10.00**

**Total Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**In Memory of:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Given by:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**In Honor of:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Given by:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**I will pick up \_\_\_\_\_ poinsettias (Put in number you are picking up)**



**Monetary Gift in Memory or Honor  
of a Loved One  
(Alternative to Poinsettia)**

Zion is providing an opportunity to remember or honor a loved one with a monetary gift to Lutheran World Relief (LWR)—an alternative to purchasing a poinsettia. Each gift is \$10.00. All gifts will be combined to make a purchase from the LWR gift catalog to help a family and/or a community in need.

**Monetary gifts will be accepted through December 3, 2023**, by completing the form below and mailing it with a check to Zion Lutheran Church, 107 West Main Street, Middletown, MD 21769. Please mark your envelope “LWR Gift”. You may also drop it off at the Church office before or after any service.

**2023 Monetary Gift for LWR**

**Each gift is \$10.00**

**Total Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**In Memory of:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Given by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**In Honor of:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Given by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## **2023 MUPHP Holiday Adopt-A-Family Assistance Program**

### **~ Info for Sponsors ~**

The holidays are here, and we are asking for your generous help by sponsoring a family for this Holiday Season. Last year we provided Holiday assistance for 220 children and 65 families. It was only through your community effort that so many were assisted. Distribution to the families will take place on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at the Middletown Volunteer Fire Department's Social Activities Building.

#### **Each child receives:**

- Children (0-18 years of age or a senior in high school) in the family will receive a \$100 gift card to either Wal-Mart or Amazon.
- Younger aged children will receive a toy donated to the 2023 Middletown Christmas in the Valley Celebration on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4 p.m.

#### **Each family receives:**

- A gift card for their holiday meal to either Safeway, Weis, or Wal-Mart.

#### **To become a sponsor:**

Contact us at [MVPHPM@gmail.com](mailto:MVPHPM@gmail.com)  
Or call us at 301-371-3119.

#### **Other ways to donate:**

- Gift cards or unwrapped toys can be dropped off at Town Hall (31 W Main Street, Middletown) during regular business hours through Wednesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Bring unwrapped toys to Town Hall during Christmas in the Valley on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, and get a Santa Sack with treats from local businesses!

*Please call or email us if you need further information!*

# 2023 MVPHP Holiday Adopt-A-Family Assistance Program

## ~ Info for Families ~



You must pre-register for this event and documentation is required at the time of registration. Each family will receive a local grocery store gift card for their holiday meal and each child will receive a gift card for their parents or guardians to holiday shop for them.

### **Required Documentation**

- Adults need photo identification and proof of address. A letter of guardianship is necessary for children not in an adult's immediate family.
- Children (0-18 years of age or a senior in high school) need a Birth Certificate, medical card with DOB, Passport, or a Report card

### **How to Register**

- In Person at the Middletown Library (Prospect Street)
  - **Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.**
  - **Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.**
- By Phone or Email until **Wednesday, November 22nd**
  - MVPHP Phone Number: 301-371-3119
  - Email: [mvphpmd@gmail.com](mailto:mvphpmd@gmail.com)

### **Important information about Pick Up**

Once the required registration process is completed you will be given a time for pick up at the Middletown Fire Department Social Activities Building on Fireman's Lane on the morning of **Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**



# Ministry Updates

## Operation Christmas Child—Update!



Thank you for your continued support of this program each year at Zion. Linda Huckleberry and Linda Sanders coordinated this ministry for Zion and as of November 13th we collected over 125 filled shoeboxes. Stay tuned to the weekly announcements for the final shoebox count and photos of the delivery of boxes! Zion's continued support is greatly appreciated!



### 2024 Pledge Report as of November 14, 2023

#### Total # Received

92

#### Total Dollars Pledged

\$309,455 (52% of Budget)

#### Pledge Goal

\$359,879 (60% of the Budget)

Zion's October Generosity



#### Budget/Income Information– YTD as of October 31, 2023

YTD Proposed Budget income \$526,569 vs

YTD Actual Income \$446,653 .

YTD Proposed Budget Expense \$542,758 vs

YTD Actual Expenses \$439,204 .

Actual Income is more than expenses in Oct 2023 by \$7,449 .



2023 PLEDGE AND COMMITMENT CARD

### **Pledge Cards can still be turned in!**

Everyone should have received a pledge card in the mail back in September. If you didn't receive one or you have misplaced it, you can still turn one in. We have some extras on the bookshelf outside the Office or you can fill one out electronically by scanning the QR code! The pledge cards really help us in our financial planning for the next year. And thank you for your continued support to the ministry at Zion.

## HOLIDAY HOURS



### Office Hours-Thanksgiving Week

The Church Offices will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday, November 23rd—Friday, November 24th. If there is a pastoral emergency, call the Church Office and follow the instructions on the voicemail.

### Office Closure-Christmas 2023

The Church Offices will be closed from Monday, December 25th—Monday, January 1st. If there is a pastoral emergency, call the Church Office and follow the instructions on the voicemail.

**CALLING ALL  
LECTORS,  
GREETERS, AND  
USHERS!**

**DECEMBER 17  
AT 10 A.M.**

The most common, ordinary jobs sometimes are the most holiest and important. Those who read the scriptures to us, greet people as they come to through our doors, and assist them with finding a seat are all vital to our mission here at Zion.

**IF YOU SERVE IN ONE OR ALL OF THESE VITAL AREAS OR ARE INTERESTED SERVING, PLEASE JOIN AT 10 A.M. ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 IN THE CHAPEL AS WE REVIEW CURRENT PRACTICES, GO OVER CHRISTMAS EVE AND TALK ABOUT SOME NEW RESOURCES WE HAVE RECENTLY ACQUIRED.**



**Bread  
for the  
Day:  
Daily  
Bible**

**Readings and  
Prayers 2024** are  
available in the  
Welcome Center.

A \$10 donation is  
requested. Pick your  
copy up today!

### Flower Chart 2023

The 2023 flower chart will be posted outside the Living Library the weekend of November 26, 2022. The cost of the altar flowers to \$62.00 which includes two arrangements and delivery. We appreciate everyone who placed flowers on the Altar for the glory of God. They are always appreciated and enjoyed by the Congregation and especially by our homebound members that receive them after the services.

### Database and Records Updating

It has been a few years since we have really updated our database and records. Over the past few months, we have noticed that we have a number of incorrect email addresses, phone numbers, addresses, or we are missing information all together. Good communication is important and we want to make sure that everyone in our community knows what is happening at Zion. **Beginning the first weekend in December, we will have a station in the Welcome Center where you can verify all your information is correct. Please check your profile and make any changes that are necessary. If there are no errors, simply put a checkmark on the paper and place it into the appropriate box.** This project will be available through the second week in January.



## JOY +50 (Just Older Youth) Lunch

J.O.Y. 50+ seniors have been enjoying lunch and programs/bingo for the past few months. The J.O.Y 50+ usually meets on the third Wednesday at noon for lunch and a fun program. HOWEVER the November and December J.O.Y. 50+ lunch will be combined due to the way the holidays fall this year. The holiday luncheon will be held Nov 29 with the full turkey dinner included



pumpkin pie. Cost is \$10 per person. Advance reservation is a must for planning purposes, please call the Zion's office at 301-371-6500 or Alexa 301-514-4479 or email Alexa at amasser202@comcast.net. Everyone is welcome!



### Upcoming 2024 JOY 50+ Lunch Dates

Jan 17	Feb 21	Mar 20	Apr 17
May 15	Jun 19	Jul 17	Aug 21
Sep 18	Oct 16	Nov 27	



### Decorating Zion for Christmas!

Altar Guild members will be decorating the church for Christmas on November 30, 2023. We could use a little help if you have some free time. We always have fun decorating, so we hope you can join us!



### Golf Tournament Planning Team

We are hoping to hold another golf tournament in 2024. If golf is your passion and you feel called to support the mission and ministry of Zion, please consider volunteering to be on the planning team. We also need people to serve on the team who are connected to the community and can help in creating sponsorships. Contact Deb or the Office at 301-371-6500 to let us know you can help!



Zion Quilters would like to thank the congregation and the community for supporting us in our sock drive during the month of October. We delivered to Frederick Rescue Mission 604 socks which were received with much gratitude. Our heartfelt THANKS to everyone.

Hope

To

Faith

### Hope to Faith

If you have experienced a loss recently or at any time in your life, please know that you are welcome to attend for a time of fellowship and food!

Contact Dixie Eichelberger at 301-667-7586 for more information.

### Noisy Offering Updates

September—Lutheran Disaster Response

\$492.51

October—Middletown Library

\$335.00

Thank you to all who donated!



November 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>

December 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>

January 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>th</sup>

### Upcoming Noisy Offerings

ELCA World Hunger

Religious Coalition

SHIP

*Homemade  
Apple Butter*

We have pints and quarts still available for purchase in the Church Office.

**\$6 for a  
Pint**

**\$8 for a  
Quart**



### Clothes Closet Update

We are open for donations on Saturday mornings from 9 - 11 a.m. If you need to drop off after hours, there is a drop location below the front porch. Thank you!



### Lee Ropp is Crushing Cans for Our Youth!

Lee Ropp has crushed and recycled 229,158 Aluminum cans for the benefit of Zion's Youth and Family Ministry! Cans can be dropped off on the deck of the Clothes Closet.

Lee says "Keep em' Coming"

Zion's Archives Team is compiling a list of Military Veterans who are interred in Zion's Cemetery. Currently we have identified 280 Veteran Graves for Service Men and Women who served as far back as the French and Indian War (1755-1762) and up to the Persian Gulf Wars. Many have Served our Country during Peaceful periods of our history and those Veterans are being included as well.

We are asking the congregation to help us honor and remember anyone who we may have missed in this endeavor. There will be a Master List of Veterans located in the Welcome Center. If you are aware of a Veteran who has been buried in Zion's Cemetery whose name does not appear on this list, please complete a Data Sheet and return it to the Church Office. Your contribution to our project is greatly appreciated.



Zion's Archivist/Historian Contact Information

Mary Ann Marcantonio [mamarcantonio@gmail.com](mailto:mamarcantonio@gmail.com) 240-675-1140 (m)

Ron Moss [ronmoss11@verizon.net](mailto:ronmoss11@verizon.net) 301-471-9867 (m)

**\*\*Official Notice\*\***

**Town Hall and Annual Meeting Dates!**

Town Hall—Sunday, January 21, 2024  
at 10:00 a.m.

Town Hall—Wednesday, January 24, 2024  
at 6:30 p.m.

Annual Meeting—January 28, 2023

Snow Date—February 4, 2023

**\*\*stay tuned for Annual Meeting information\*\***

**Tis the Season for Annual Reports**

The Annual Report of the Congregation will be available in print by Sunday, January 14. In order to make this deadline, all reports need to be submitted electronically by December 31. If your committee or ministry does not require disclosure of financial statements, you can submit your report early in December. With limited staff in the Office, the earlier that the reports are received, the better.



I want to express my sincere thanks to my church family who comforted and supported me during the loss of Jennifer and George. I appreciate the willingness of so many that helped with the services and luncheons. I am truly grateful for the generosity of food, flowers, cards, and countless acts of kindness. Thank you for your continued prayers and encouragement as I try to move forward without two people whom I dearly loved.

Susan Harne

We are very thankful for Pastors Diane and Matt and the congregation for their support during John’s illness and death. We especially appreciate Pastor Diane’s visits to John during his illness and for the grave-side funeral service. We cannot thank our church family and friends enough for their kind words, prayers, many cards, and the donations given in John’s memory.

God Bless You,  
Wayne and Nancy Bagent and Family

**Our Top Ministry Priorities for 2023**

**Our Mission**

As a people of God, we share Christ’s love, grow in faith, and serve others

**Our Vision**

At Zion we strive to provide a sanctuary for prayerful and joyous worship within a respectful and welcoming environment and to meet the spiritual needs of our intergenerational congregation and community, using Christian ideas and values.

**Leadership Development** – We need to better equip our members to be the ministry of Zion, not just task the Staff with this work. We need to write things down and better organize our information so we can pass on details to those who follow after us. We need to be better mentors as leaders so that those who follow feel equipped and comfortable in moving forward even if in different ways than we had. In addition to our resource of ourselves, we need to better utilize our resources of technology to assess and keep track of those gifts we each possess that can be used for the sharing of the gospel through Zion.

**Communication** – We have avenues of communication but we need checklists and other triggers to check in with groups within our congregation so information is shared efficiently and effectively. We need to better utilize and streamline the modes of communication we already have so they are understandable and easy/quick to gather information from.

**Growing in faith to Christ and relationship with one another** – We come together to share Christ’s love, grow in our faith, and serve others. We are a large congregation in which some of us know one another and some of us do not. We need to work across our worship services to get to know one another and to encourage one another to grow in faith through our worship and education opportunities. This growth needs to lead us out from Zion to serve the world God so loves AND help us share the good news of the gospel in word.



**Natalie Lucia Luther  
Hueston Robert Putman  
Jennifer Michelle Caulk**



*With our deepest sympathy we keep in our thoughts and prayers the families of:*

**D. Gaither Dean  
William Eisentrout  
John Bagent Jr.  
James Joyce  
Gladys Poffinberger  
Donald Shank  
Lyla Scott  
Joyce McAllister**

**News to share?**

**Please let us know of important events, births, deaths, etc. that have happened over the past few months. Email or call the Church Office.**



Lucretia Reaves, Jessie, Eric Kinna, Ronnie Kinna, Jennifer Kinna, Tex and Linda Stottlemeyer, Anita, Dawn Shinault, Linda Crummitt, Lois Holder, Robert Roys, Cathy Baker, Robert Mettert, Janet Young, Gary, Kay & Michael Wachter, Michael Easton, Frank Mrazek, The Hubble Family, Kate Stevens, Sheri Huckleberry, Pat McIntosh, Linda Huckleberry, Nancy Newkirk, Tristan Vail, Beth Smith, Kris Marcantonio, Lorene Huffer, Bruce Albright, Marty Appleby, Judith Smith, Jim Pearson, Darlah Adams, Jackie Bello, Trish Tollefson, Skippy Zimmerman, Sarah Gladhill, Anna Kepler, Marianna Bere, Ruby Pyles, Addison Hopson, Kevin Kinna, Deb Kahihikolo, Janice Wisner

*Please be sure the church is notified if you are hospitalized and if you wish to be placed on the prayer list or would like visitation. For the most up-to-date prayer list, visit our website and look under the member's tab.*



Check  
out the  
website!

**We have some great features on the member page. Visit [www.ZionMiddletown.org/members-area](http://www.ZionMiddletown.org/members-area)**

## COMMEMORATIVE BRICK FUNDRAISER ORDER FORM

These custom engraved bricks will be installed in the Memorial Garden around the cross and the circle area in front of the cross.

Your commemorative brick is a wonderful opportunity to leave a lasting legacy to Zion Lutheran Church.

Bricks can be engraved with your name, or to honor or remember an important person, event, family, accomplishment, or donated as a special gift.

Each 4 x 8 brick costs \$100.00.

Your inscription must fit into the white boxes below, 1 character per box. Each brick can have a maximum of 15 characters per line. A character is defined as a letter or a number, a space or punctuation mark.

**USE UPPER CASE BLOCK LETTERS. PLEASE PRINT CAREFULLY!**


RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO

Zion Lutheran Church  
107 West Main Street  
Middletown, MD 21769

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email\* \_\_\_\_\_ \*Important

Make checks payable to "Zion Lutheran Church". Include "Brick Fundraiser" in Memo Section.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Zion  
107 W Main Street  
Middletown MD 21769

[www.ZionMiddletown.org](http://www.ZionMiddletown.org)



The work and mission at Zion can only happen through your gifts of time, talent and treasure. We cannot do our work without your support. To give financially, please give either online or drop your Offering in the offering plate as the ushers come up and down the pews. You can also scan the QR code to be taken to our online giving portal.

**AND THANK YOU!**