



# THE BEACON

A MINISTRY OF ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUMMER 2024 EDITION

## Renewing

# Upcoming Events

<b>First Sunday of the Month</b>	Confirmation from 4-6 p.m. (Last Session is May 5)
<b>Every Tuesday Night</b>	GriefShare (Last Session is May 21)
<b>First Sunday of the Month</b>	Youth Group from 6-8 p.m.
<b>First Thursdays of Month</b>	Table Talk meets at 6 p.m.
<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.
<b>April 21</b>	Women's Bible Study (every Sunday night )
<b>May 2</b>	Table Talk at Verona's at 6 p.m.
<b>May 5</b>	Liturgical Dancers join us at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m./Last Sunday for Kids' Sunday School
<b>May 5</b>	Confirmation/Youth Group
<b>May 8</b>	Ladies' Spring Fling
<b>May 12</b>	Footprints
<b>May 19</b>	Pentecost/Joint Worship at 10 a.m./Confirmation Sunday/Children's Choir Sings/Footprints
<b>May 27</b>	OFFICE CLOSED
<b>May 31</b>	Summer Office Hours Begin at Zion
<b>June 6</b>	Table Talk at Tapia's at 6 p.m.
<b>June 7-8</b>	Synod Assembly in Westminster, MD
<b>June 9</b>	Footprints/Church Picnic at 3 p.m. at Memorial Park
<b>June 12</b>	Baseball Night at Camden Yards!
<b>June 19</b>	OFFICE CLOSED
<b>July 4</b>	OFFICE CLOSED
<b>July 7-11</b>	VBS from 5:30-7:30 p.m.
<b>July 14</b>	Footprints
<b>August 1</b>	Table Talk at Tapia's at 6 p.m.
<b>August 11</b>	Footprints
<b>August 18</b>	Backpack Blessing
<b>September 4</b>	OFFICE CLOSED
<b>September 6</b>	Normal Church Office Hours Resume
<b>September 7</b>	Community Day of Service
<b>September 8</b>	Footprints/Kids Sunday School Resumes

**Zion Lutheran Church Middletown, MD**

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



## A WORD FROM PASTOR DIANE

As a pastor, celebrating the major festival holidays can be quite challenging. We are very conscious of planning and executing worship that is meaningful and memorable which takes a lot of behind-the-scenes work with various groups. Even with wonderful and supportive teams doing their part to make special services happen, there is still a lot of concentrated effort and stress that takes a toll. With our focus on the logistics and execution, truly enjoying the meaning and reality of the holiday does not really set in until the week after.

This is definitely the case for me every Christmas, but I didn't realize until this year how true this also was for Easter. Where we have some special services weekly for Advent leading up to three Christmas Eve services, Lenten midweek services plus the back to back Triduum services before Easter Sunday services again take a great deal of concentrated effort and energy. This year the week following Easter gave me a moment to pause and rejoice not because all the planning had come to fruition but rather, to sit, myself, in the story of resurrection and wonder what this past Lent meant for my faith, moving forward.

Throughout Lent I had been trying to focus more on turning to and growing in relationship with God daily and less to all the mindless scrolling and distractions I choose to pass time, but was that it? Check that box off for trying to do Lent this year and move on to the next thing? Did I grow closer to following and diminishing the distractions that keep me from strengthening my relationship with God? The honest answer: no. How does that make me feel? Judgmental of myself- yes, a little. Like I want to give up because I'll never get it right- this time, no. I say this time because this hasn't been the first Lent I did not accomplish what I had hoped and said forget it and ignored what I had hoped would come to fruition. This year, I am thinking about what I learned by not growing more into my spiritual discipline. Why at times couldn't I stop the mindless scrolling and turn to the devotional reading? Was there something else in those moments I could do instead that my mind could handle? What am I missing when I don't stop in my overwhelmed state to talk to God? What is it that I am specifically seeking when I turn to that mindless scrolling? Is there another way I can tune into God that my overwhelmed brain can handle versus my devotional



reading? What about some contemplative prayer?

Entering into the season of Easter, we are welcomed into the good news of being brought from all those ways we daily choose death and distraction into life abundant. Death and separation are no longer the final words for us. We don't have to live like they are. Even though we may still choose those things that keep us from God, we are welcome to choose and keep trying to choose the life and relationship our Creator wants for us. We don't have to think there is no hope for us. God does have hope for us providing a redemption from these things through Jesus and the Spirit's encouragement to keep us connected and keep us being formed into God's holy people. If you feel like Lent was a lost cause, I want to encourage you to think in this season of abundant life how you can continue to grow closer to God. The call to connect hasn't stopped just because the paraments have changed.

In Christ,

*Pastor Diane Ray*



## A WORD FROM PASTOR MATT

Looking back to a year ago, I was in a completely different state. We were preparing to welcome our twins into our family so that meant I was feverishly trying to get the nursey ready, carrying boxes of diapers and clothes up to the closet, and trying to get every ounce of sleep in that I could. We were not prepared for what would happen over the coming weeks with James having to be transferred to the NICU at Johns Hopkins Children's Hospital. Frankly, it all remains a blur, though I do remember the moment they came and took James to the Operating Room. I hope I never have to experience something like that again. It was rocky bringing back home two babies along with two other children, but we got through it and continue to make it, but I will admit that there are some days when we are just in survival mode.

In all of this, I just want to say thank you for your understanding and patience.



Our whole way of doing ministry has been turned upside down over the last year. If you don't know, James and Joseph have come with us to the office almost every day. They nap in Pastor Diane's office, play in pretty much all the offices (when James and Joseph get tired of Pastor Diane and I telling them no, they go over to Deb and the Office Volunteers to get their way), and pretty much hang out on our laps as we make phone calls, answer emails, and go on visits. So, thank you for your patience, love and care over this past year.

We are in the process of planning and gearing up for the summer here at Zion. It feels weird that even though we just got through Lent, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday that we would jump into the summer, but that is because the ministry and missional of work at Zion doesn't stop. We have some great things planned for this summer that we hope you can take part in. I also hope that you can take some time to rest. This summer, we are planning on taking a trip down 81 and exploring different parts of Virginia. I did my internship in Rural Retreat, VA and my supervisor, his wife, and his family still live there and actually run a goat farm (in addition to Jonathan being a pastor and Chelsea being a Family Medicine Doctor). We are looking forward to exploring Virginia and catching up with the Hammans. While I might have lived in Virginia for year, I

didn't have a lot time or money to explore the different parts of Virginia. Virginia is also a huge state so we will just be scratching the surface. Where are you going this year? What plans do you have this summer? Let us know.

Zion will continue to do the work of the gospel this summer. As you travel, feel free to worship with us virtually or visit a local Lutheran congregation. I know this sounds very self-serving but keeping up the habit of going to church is a good thing! Also, have you checked out our Podcast—A Word from the Valley? We post our weekly sermons there for you to listen to again or hear for the first time. If you subscribe, they automatically get downloaded to your phone or computer. Details can be found on our website.

We are in this together and I look forward the months ahead as we continue in this work of sharing Christ's love, growing in faith, and serving others.

In Christ,



In February, the Council along with some of our ministry and committee leaders did some visioning and goal planning work for the upcoming year. After a morning of discussion, reflection, and prayer, the Council drafted three top priorities for our congregation. In March, those priorities were officially adopted. As we go about the work of sharing Christ's love, growing in faith and serving others, we also want to be mindful of leadership, communication, and relationship building.

## 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.

## Our Top Ministry Priorities for 2024

- **Leadership**

We will work on developing new and existing leaders to carry on the mission of the gospel and the congregation who effectively plan, execute, and communicate. In addition, discern the God-given mission and vision of Zion through, prayer, planning and future-thinking. We intend to develop and better utilize our committees and ministry teams to deal with the needs and challenges of the congregation so that council can focus on the mission and visionary work.

- **Communication**

We will strengthen our communication strategies and techniques to make sure we keep the congregation and other vested parties informed of our work and plans. For example, the encouragement of timely two-way communication at all levels of congregational life.

- **Relationship Building**

United around Jesus, we will strengthen relationships among ministry teams, committees, and individuals in the congregation to foster mutual care and support of one another such as aiding in conflict resolution when it arises.



# On Being the Church...

*An interview with Jamie Derr by Mary Ann Marcantonio*



Farmlands once occupied a great deal of real estate in the Middletown Valley and they are slowly disappearing. In spite of this trend, the Derr family has chosen this as their life's occupation. It is hard work, never ending hours, little time to enjoy the niceties like vacations or even a night out, but for the Derr family, contentment in life is found in doing what they love...and that's farming. Jamie described her early years as a "fairytale life" growing up on a dairy farm. A fairytale life to some of us may seem like a privileged life but Jamie explained it as having devoted parents, loving siblings, hard work with no regrets and being raised in a home where everyone was welcomed...to many less fortunate, this does

sound like a fairytale!

I asked Jamie, "Why did you choose farming?" She was very clear that she did not choose farming but God called her to be a farmer. She is a fourth generation dairy farmer and it seemed like a natural choice to make but God was very clear. She followed his call and he has opened up ways that Jamie never dreamed of. Following the Lord was not always easy for Jamie and Chris. When it was time for them to begin their farming operation, the economy was not doing very well. They approached two different banks and were declined a loan. They were even told they were being crazy to consider it. But God never calls you to follow without providing, and so persistence was in order. Another loan application was submitted, and Jamie said her happiest moment in life (outside her family), came when they received the call their loan was approved.

Jamie's faith began when she was very young. In fact, she calls herself a cradle Christian. Sunday was go to church day and attend Sunday School and it was expected. There was no fussing! The friendships she made in those classes are lifelong friends. But the foundation of faith was born and would serve her well.

In following her call to farm, she attended Delaware Valley College with hopes of earning a degree in horticulture but switched her path to Agriculture Education. Jamie's older brother had gone to Delaware and had friends that she had already met. It was through these acquaintances that she met Christopher. She had asked him where he was from and he said Middletown. Her quick response, "Middletown where?" He replied, "Maryland." She told him, "I know where Middletown is, I'm from Boonsboro." This conversation led to the beginning of how God brought them together. At school they lived a distance apart but managed to make it work and soon were married. They now have two boys, Levi, age 13 and Zack, age 10 and enjoy the adventures that come with two young and active boys.

For believers, challenges are always waiting in the wings, and this was true for Jamie in a troubling way.

Jamie opened up and exposed a weakness (and God was going to use this to show His strength in her). She suffered with anxieties most of her life, but they progressively got worse. She would put on a happy face for everyone and deep inside her joy was being eaten away. She would pray, "God please take away the crazy" yet she continued to struggle with deep anxieties for two years. She found the strength each day to lift herself up off the couch and do what needed to be done. She was diagnosed with Chronic Sinusitis which heightened her anxieties and the doctor urged her to consider medication to help with the added stress caused by her physical health. Not feeling any better and as a last resort, she began taking the medication. For Jamie, it was the struggle between believing in the power of prayer for help or relying on medication to get better. The taking of the medication seemed to be showing a lack of confidence in the power of prayer. But Jamie admitted, sometimes God's help comes in the most unexpected way...God was sending help but not in the way she expected. Today she uses her experience of her suffering to be a source of encouragement to others and claims to be the happiest she has ever been. As we talked, she was up to her elbows in dirt, preparing and transplanting her seedlings to take root with genuine enthusiasm and joy. She believes she is living the dream... she has a beautiful family, her farm, flowers and more friends than she would have ever expected. What more could you want!

Jamie is involved in many ministries at church. She leads the Welcome and Engagement Ministry Team that was instrumental in refurbishing the rear ramp of the church and changes the flower boxes out seasonally. She teaches Sunday School to the young. She loves being a part of Zion's ministries and cheerfully serves but her joy is found in gardening and her flowers, a passion she learned from her grandmother.

Being the church is not just showing up on Sunday morning. It is what we do with the other hours of the week. Jamie recognizes today that all along God was preparing her to use her passions to help others and share a little joy. The Derr/Burrier families have resided on Valley Ho farm for decades and has been a welcoming place for many friends over the years. Her love of flowers has inspired her to begin a "Faith Flowers Fitness" program. She has hosted the Women's Bible Study on Sunday evenings at the farm for several years now where women are learning to balance faith and life. Whether casting a line into the pond or a visit to the milking parlor, having a conversation with a friend or just watching a crazy dog chase the geese into the pond, a warm welcome and a portion of peacefulness is always at hand!



# A WORD FROM THE VALLEY

A PODCAST FROM ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH  
MIDDLETOWN, MD

A Word from the Valley is 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.



## Donuts and coffee

Every Sunday  
at 10 a.m.

# So, what's been happening?



## Sometimes you just gotta dance!

One tradition that continues most Sundays is the final song dance at the 9 a.m. worship service. Matt and the worship team lead us all in a great sending song that causes some of us to just want to praise the Lord through dance. This week, we just happened to snap a photo of the dancers bobbing around on the Chancel floor. As the psalmist says, "Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre. For the Lord takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with victory. Let the faithful exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their couches...Praise the Lord!"

## The Youth Group

Sometimes the Youth Group has so many kids that it fills up the church van and sometimes the Youth Group is just 3 or 4 kids. The photo to the Right was from March's Youth Group when we went Bowling up in Hagerstown. In April, we planned to head down to Spinner's Arcade but found out as we were leaving that they temporarily closed as they moved to their new location. Mr. Jeff suggested that we buy them ice cream (since they ate a ton of snacks during Confirmation class) and then just stay back and play some board games. And that was what we did. And it was one of the best youth group's we have had in a while! In May, we are heading to Valley-Ho Farm for a night of fishing, marshmallow roasting, and hot dogs.



## Stations of the Cross

Since the late 4th century, the Church has used the Stations of the Cross liturgy to help followers remember the last events of our Lord's life before his death. During 2020, the church was not able to have in-person worship due to the pandemic but turned to ancient liturgies like the Stations of the Cross to help people remember the story of how God saved the world through the cross. After a few years of being in the weather, we had our stations redone, simplified, and ready for many more years of service. It is our hope next year to have them out a bit earlier in Lent for everyone to use and enjoy.



## Palm Sunday

It was a bit chilly this year as Palm Sunday fell on the third Sunday in March. We had enjoyed some unseasonably warm weather leading up to Sunday morning, but the warm weather was replaced by a cold, strong wind from the East. Nonetheless, we persevered at the 9 a.m. service and began outside in the cold for a very short procession as we welcomed our Lord and those who came to worship the one who comes in the name of the Lord.



Once we were inside and warmed up from the cold, we saw and heard just how quickly those shouts of praise and thanksgiving from the crowd turn to shouts of "Crucify him!" Palm and Passion Sunday is always a hard Sunday to grasp but it is important to keep both of these stories together because otherwise we would go from celebration to celebration and forget the part where God overcomes death and the grave.



# The Three Days—Holy Week 2024

## Maundy Thursday

Holy week is unique in that it takes three days to tell the story of God overcoming the grave. Part 1 began on Maundy Thursday. We gathered downstairs for dinner prepared by the Council. Afterwards, we made our way upstairs for worship. Maundy



Thursday is the weirdest of the Three Days in that the focus is on the last commandments that our Lord gave the church: Confession and Forgiveness, foot washing, and Holy Communion. Most of us don't like to have our feet touched but the command from our Lord is clear: "Unless you wash one another's feet, you have no share with me." In most traditional Maundy Thursday services, you would simply focus on the three commands or mandatumes, but we know people experience things differently and learn through different means. So, this year, we added a number of different stations that people could explore and experience during the washing of feet. These stations included a sensory table, coloring station, journaling station, and prayer and anointing station. Everyone really got into the stations and we had over 90 people participate in worship that night. The liturgy ended with the Stripping of the Altar which lead us into part 2.

## Maundy THURSDAY SENSORY TABLE

Feel free to touch, smell, look, and feel anything on this table. Each of these items are either used in either worship tonight or is a part of the passion story.



## Good Friday

Good Friday's focus is on reading the Passion according to St. John, prayer, and reflection. What is unique about our Liturgy is that it is mostly led by the congregation as a reminder that we all are active participants in the passion. Our Good Friday liturgy is steeped in old traditions dating back to the 3rd and 4th centuries. The service begins with a large candle being carried in but hidden throughout the liturgy. It is brought back into the sanctuary and left on the altar near the cross at the end. The words, "We adore you O Christ and we bless you. For by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world." remind us of the hope that still is to come on Easter. The Good Friday Liturgy doesn't end on a note of despair but on hope and the single lit, remaining candle reminds us that Part 3 happens in less than 24 hours.





## Easter Vigil

On Saturday night, in joyful expectation we gathered to join in a tradition that dates back to the first century—the Easter Vigil. On the night before Easter, the Church would gather to read scripture starting at Genesis 1 to hear the salvific story of God. The liturgy moves from one location to another and along the way, we follow the Pascal Candle. Eventually, we made our way back to the Sanctuary and joyfully proclaimed, “Alleluia, Christ is risen!”

## Easter Morning

Almost 400 people joined us on Easter Sunday to shout Alleluia and praise God for the gift of the Resurrection. Our Christian Fellowship Ministry provided a breakfast of coffee and items that could be eaten in the Social Room or taken to-go, but we were delighted to see so many people stay and join in conversation with one another. We had two great worship services on Easter morning. Matt and the Worship Team sang their hearts out to a packed congregation. The Orchestra and choir sounded fantastic as always. Thank you to everyone who made Easter Sunday so special!



# Community Easter Egg Hunt

On March 30, over 80 people filled the Social Room to go hunting for some special eggs left by the Easter Bunny. But we couldn't just have a massive Easter Egg hunt...We also had cookie decorating, crafts to make, popcorn to eat, story time, and a community service station where we put together buckets full of cleaning supplies donated by Zion to the Middletown Valley Food Bank.



## Behind the scenes...

There are a lot of people who work behind the scenes to make things happen here at Zion. On Saturday morning while the community gathered in our Social Room for the Easter Egg Hunt, members of the Altar Guild prepared the sanctuary for worship that evening and the Orchestra rehearsed for worship on Sunday.



# Worship Opportunities



## Pentecost

with the Rite of Confirmation

Combined Sunday Morning Worship  
on May 19, at 10 a.m

Join us as we celebrate and  
give thanks to God for working  
in the lives of our confirmands.

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### Worship Services

**Saturday:**

**5 p.m. Casual Worship**

**Sunday Services:**

**9 a.m. Contemporary  
Worship**

**11 a.m. Traditional Worship**


### Zion Worship Service

#### Viewing Options:

To view our weekly recorded worship service any time during the week, click on the webpage link at [www.zionmiddletown.org](http://www.zionmiddletown.org) and it will take you directly to the video. The link for the livestream can be found on our website; click the link and it will take you directly to the video.

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## Carnations for Mother's Day



JOIN US IN CELEBRATING MOTHERS AND ALL WOMEN WHO PROVIDE MOTHERLY LOVE AND CARE ON MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND. WE WILL BE GIVING CARNATIONS OUT TO ALL WOMEN THIS WEEKEND AT WORSHIP.

### Pops for Pop!

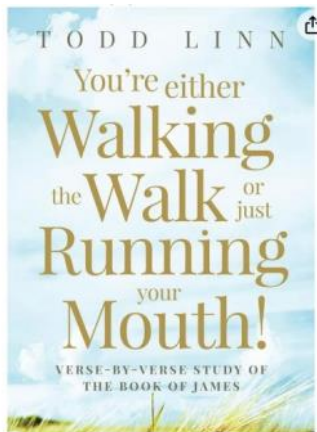


In celebration of Father's Day Weekend, we will be giving out "Pops for Pop" to everyone on June 15th & 16th at all worship services.

# Christian Education

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Walk In The Park Bible Study

Dive into the book of James with us!



June 4, 11, 18 & 25 (Tuesdays)

Bible study 6:30 pm – 7:15 pm (pavilion)

7:15pm Walk Othello Park

Othello Park: 1901A Jefferson Pike, Brunswick, MD

Study Leader: Donna Huffer (240-285-2092)  
Great fellowship, fresh air and gorgeous views!  
Bring your friends and your dog!

Call the church office to register or text Donna!

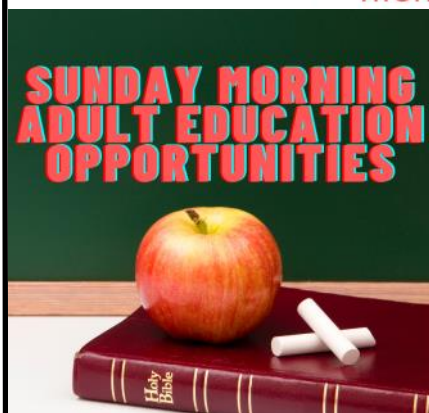
## Sunday Mornings

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

## SUNDAY SCHOOL EDUCATION

SUNDAYS AT 10 A.M.

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, & HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES



ADULT FORUM MEETS IN THE CHAPEL AT 10:00 A.M. &

MUTUAL CARE AND SUPPORT MEETS IN THE LIBRARY AT 10:00 A.M.

**What is Mutual Care and Support?** Sometimes we all just need a place to come, enjoy a cup of coffee, chat with others, and hear you are not alone. Try it out this Sunday!

Theology and Bible  
**TABLE TALK**  
Food and Drink  
FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

In May, we will meet at Verona's. June and August, we will meet on the deck at Tapias. Table Talk begins at 6 p.m.

BIBLE Women's STUDY  
Restarting on Sunday, April 21 at 6:30 p.m. and every Sunday for 6+ weeks  
Topic: Common Ground: Learn to live at peace with others even when you disagree by studying biblical stories of rivalries.  
Location: The Derr Farm Pavilion At 7800 Picnic Woods Rd.  
Contact Jamie Derr at frmgr17@aol.com  
COMMON GROUND  
Loving Others Despite Our Differences  
A STORY OF BIBLICAL RIVALRIES AND PEACE  
AMBERLY NEESE

## High School Senior Recognition

Join us on Sunday, **June 2nd**, as we recognize our graduating high school Seniors. We will present them with a gift in celebration of their accomplishments!

# 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



### 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.

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 have been moved to Thursday nights from 6pm to 7pm this Spring.** 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

4/11 Rehearse

4/18 - Rehearse

4/25 - Rehearse

5/9 - Rehearse

**5/12 - Perform (Sunday after Memorial Day)**

**We wish to thank our musicians, choirs, and singers for all the hard work and practice they put in to make our worship even more beautiful. As many of them take a break for the summer months, we all look forward to seeing them return this Fall!**



## YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY



THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH

FROM 4-6PM

AVAILABLE BOTH IN-PERSON AND ON ZOOM

**Last Confirmation Class for the School year is May 5th. Youth Group will continue through the summer on the First Sunday of the Month.**

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!

### Summer Camp Registration is now open!

We have a number of kids from Zion attending Mar Lu Ridge this Summer. Don't be left out! If you are not sure if you're ready for overnight camp then you should definitely check out DAY CAMP.

**Register today at [www.mar-lu-ridge.org](http://www.mar-lu-ridge.org)  
Scholarships from Zion are available!**

WE GOT A

# DAY OFF!

The Spring DayOff Program is on

Tuesday, May 14

at 9 a.m.

We are going to take a trip to Baltimore to tour Christ Lutheran Church and learn more about their many ministries including their Women's Shelter, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, and Lutheran World Relief. After lunch, we are going to the Maryland Zoo.

**SPACE IS LIMITED! Please RSVP by May 1 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!!!!

SCAN ME! >>>



DAYOFF PROGRAM REGISTRATION





## 2024 Footprints Upcoming Dates

May 12th

May 19th

June 9th

July 14th

August 11th

September 8th

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, activity and craft. We will return to worship in time for communion.

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

# VBS

## Vacation Bible School at Zion Lutheran Church

# JULY 7-11 • AGES 2-11

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

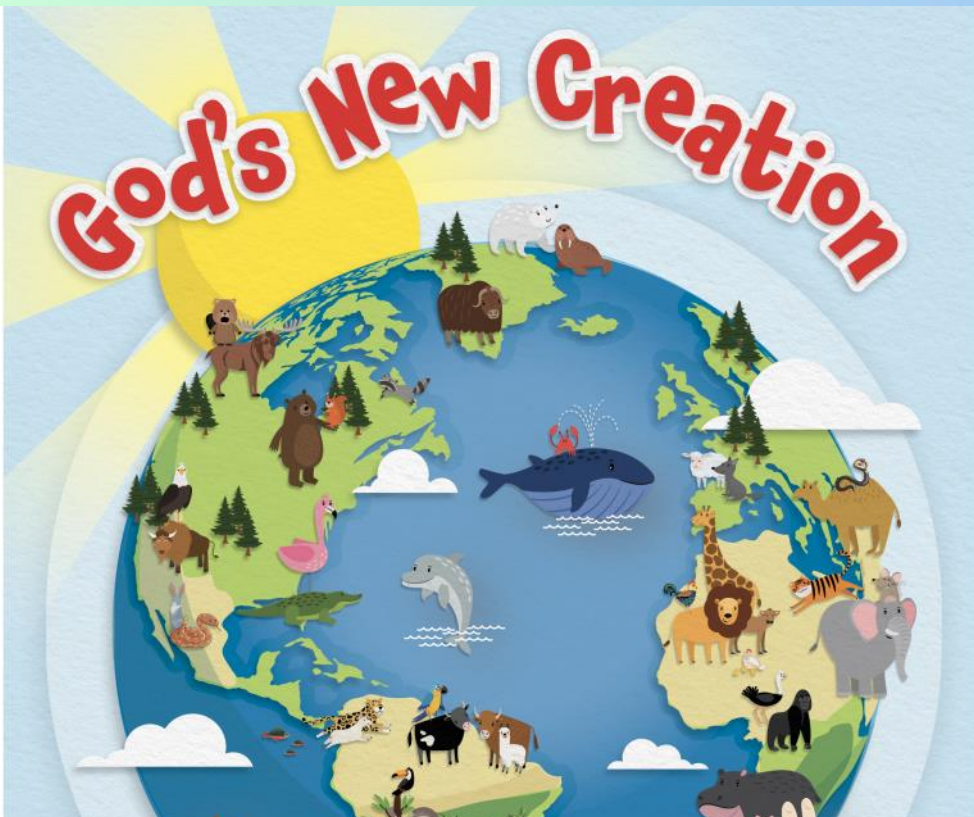
Dinner Included

Visit

[www.zionmiddletown.org/youthandfamily](http://www.zionmiddletown.org/youthandfamily)



# God's New Creation



**Registration for  
VBS will go live**

**June 1**

Be sure to check out our Youth and Family page.

**Help Needed!**

Vacation Bible School is just around the corner and we need you to help make it a success! This is also a great way for youth to get service learning hours. Let the office know if you are interested!

# Ways to Give

Food donations are needed now more than ever!

Food items in demand include: Canned tomatoes diced or crushed, Rice-a-Roni, Canned peas, Canned fruit, Sugar, Tea bags, Small cans of coffee, Crackers, jam or jelly, Jell-O or pudding mix, Salad dressing, & Instant potatoes

Donations can be dropped off outside the chapel or taken directly to the Food Bank on Wednesdays from 1-3 p.m.

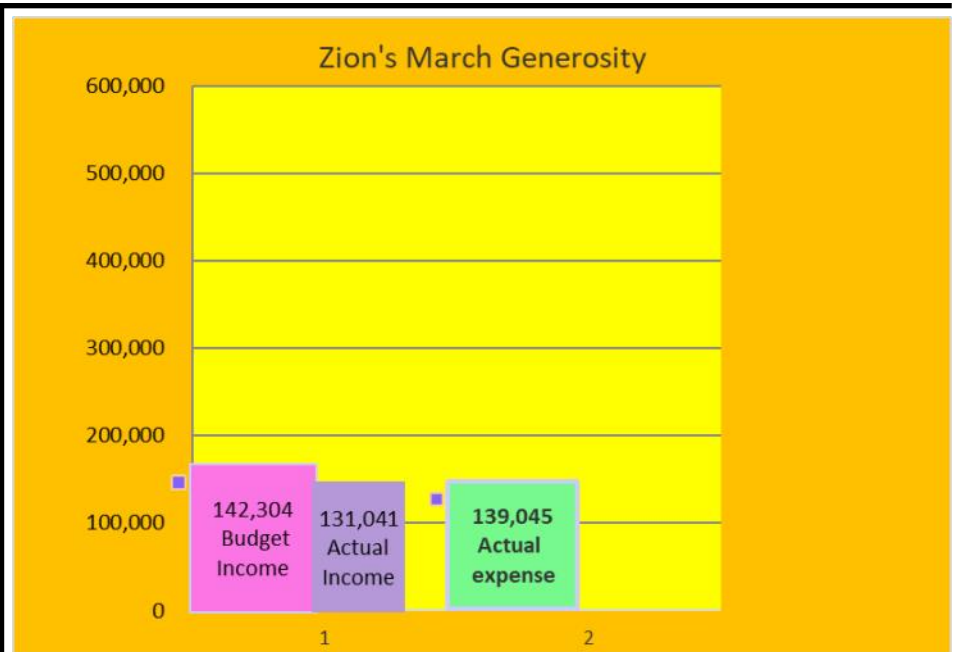


## WEEKEND BACKPACKS

Hunger doesn't take the weekend off

Our Backpack Ministry will be meeting the needs of students on the weekends when they do not receive food at school.

Please consider donating a food item or writing a check to Zion to show your support. Make sure you write "Weekend Backpack" on the memo line to help children throughout the school year.



### Budget/Income Information— YTD as of March 31, 2024

YTD Proposed Budget income \$142,304 vs YTD Actual Income \$131,041.

YTD Proposed Budget Expense \$150,223 vs YTD Actual Expenses \$139,045.

**Actual Income is less expenses in March 2024 by \$8,004**

### Special Offerings Totals

Easter Offering in Lieu of Easter Flowers—\$792.00 for LWR  
 Carenet Bottle Campaign—\$441.60 from Baby Bottle Campaign for Care-Net Pregnancy Center plus over \$300. going directly to CareNet in checks.



## Baby Bottle Campaign Update

Many thanks for all of your support for the Carenet Baby Bottles donations. Zion Members and friends have always been great supporters. Thanks again and may God continue to bless Zion.

# 3 OPPORTUNITIES TO SHOW Generosity

Give today either by check or online. Make sure you write in the memo line where you wish to be generous. **And thank you!**

## WE GOT A DAY OFF!

3-4 times a year, we invite children from our congregation and community to join us on their day off from school. We spend the day playing games, exploring, and having fun. These events are offered free but do come at a cost. Are you interested in sponsoring a child in the Day Off Program? It only costs \$50 to sponsor one child. Perhaps your kids have all grown up. Give a gift today and make sure the next generation has the same amazing opportunities your children did. Got a parent who is hard to shop for at Mother's Day, Father's Day or a birthday? Sponsor a child in their honor.

## Camp Scholarships

Mar-Lu-Ridge is an amazing place where relationships are formed each and every summer between other campers and with our Lord. At Zion, we offer a \$200 scholarship to anyone connected with Zion to go to camp. Last year, we sponsored 6 kids. This year, even more kids from Zion are going to camp which is amazing! You have an amazing opportunity to make Summer Camp at Mar-Lu-Ridge possible for a child here at Zion. Just like the Day Off Program, you can give in honor of someone, make it a gift for that hard-to-shop-for member of your family, or simply to make an impact in the life of a young person.



A week before the start of VBS last year, we had 30 kids registered, but by the end of that week, those numbers doubled! VBS is a great mission and ministry of Zion. We make sure every child who comes through our doors is welcome, fed, and included. We offer VBS free to everyone interested in participating, but that doesn't mean there isn't a cost.

**It costs about \$50 a child to make VBS possible.**

Make a contribution today and help make sure VBS remains a central and important ministry here at Zion. Give the gift of VBS today and help ensure that VBS remains a place where all children can learn, grow, and feel welcome.

# Ministry Updates



## 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. Cost is \$10 per person. Advance reservation is a must for planning purposes; please call 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

May 15      June 19      July 17      August 21      Sept 18

## BASEBALL

Night

TICKET ONLY

\$35

WEDNESDAY

12  
JUNE

6:35 P.M. START TIME  
AT CAMDEN YARDS

## WE HAVE 14 SEATS AVAILABLE IN THE VAN

We will meet at Zion at 4:30 p.m. and drive down to Christ Lutheran to park and then walk up to Camden Yards.

If we have more than 14 people interested, we will find a way and get everyone down to the park!

We will see you at the Yard!

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.

## Myersville-Wolfsville Historical Society Garden Tour

Zion's Memorial Garden will be featured in the June 1 and 2 Country Roads and Garden Tour sponsored by the Myersville-Wolfsville Historical Society. This self-guided driving tour will include at least eight garden spots, landscapes, woodlands, private outdoor residences, and school educational gardens, along with "plein air" artists, musicians, food trucks, and local vendors. Included in the tour are:

- Valley Ho Farm, Picnic Woods Road, Middletown
- Zion's Memorial Garden, West Main St, Middletown
- Surreybrooke Gardens, Baltimore National Pike, Middletown
- Fisher Hollow's Fairy Garden, Myersville
- Stoney Gardens, Myersville-Wolfsville
- Wolfsville Elementary School, Wolfsville
- Edgewood Gardens, Baltimore National Pike, Myersville
- Painted Pastures, Little Antietam Road, Smithsburg



Advance Tickets (\$25) can be purchased through Eventbrite, including a map and brochure. Proceeds will benefit local non-profits organizations.

If you would like to serve as a host at Zion for a two-hour time period on either day, please contact Nancy Gordon, nlg45@aol.com or Zion's Church Office, 301-371-6500



**Do you know someone who is interested in joining our Ministry Team?**

We are actively seeking a part-time Director of

Youth and Family Ministry. This role focuses on fostering faith formation, community building, and service initiatives. Grounded in relationship-building with God, one another, and the broader community, the position requires strong interpersonal skills, the ability to manage multiple tasks and projects, and maintain confidential information. Effective communication and collaborative relationships with Staff, congregation members, Church Council, and committee members are essential. For more details or a comprehensive job description, please contact Bruce McIntosh at macbru@comcast.net, chair of the Personnel Committee.

## Christian Formation Ministry Team

What is Christian Formation? In 2023, the Council saw a need to develop a ministry team which would focus on equipping fellow Christians with tools to help us all grow in faith.

The Christian Formation Ministry has been evaluating what ministries and needs we already have and where we might need to be moving forward.

Our working Vision and Mission Statements are as follows:

**Vision:** A people of God fully equipped with God's Word, enabled, and engaged in sharing Christ's love, growing in faith, and serving others.

**Mission:** The Ministry Team will help and support training and continuing education to prepare, engage, and sustain God's people of all ages in the work of the Gospel.

Currently, there are two subgroups focusing on Children's and Adult Formation.

## Noisy Offering Updates

February—Allen P. Linton Emergency Shelter

\$317.60

March—Lantern Hill

\$450.28



Thank you to all who donated!

### Upcoming Noisy Offerings

April 20th and 21st

Seafarer's International

May 20th & 21st

Heartly House

June 17th & 18th

Lutheran Campus Ministry

July 15th & 16th

Middletown Vol. Fire Department

August 19th & 20th

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

## Homemade Apple Butter

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

**\$6 for a  
Pint**

**\$10 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 236,414 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"

## ALTAR GUILD—WE NEED YOU!

Would you like to  
participate in something that is  
meaningful and  
rewarding? If so, the  
Altar Guild is the place for you.  
And it doesn't require hours

and hours of your time. Every third month you would be helping with communion setup/cleanup, checking candles for oil, delivering altar flowers, etc. You would receive training and assistance with each task. It really isn't hard! We meet several times a year and have an annual luncheon. At least think about giving the Altar Guild a try and if it isn't for you we will understand. If you are interested, please give Shirley Ferguson a call (301-662-7775) or talk to any Altar Guild member after services. You will find them in the Altar Guild Room (Sacristy) right outside the Sanctuary.

# We Need You



We are in need of servers to help prepare food in the kitchen on May 8<sup>th</sup> for the Ladies'

Spring Fling Dinner. We also need helpers to serve food to the ladies in the Social Room. Anyone available to help with either, please let me know by Shirley Ferguson or Deb Reichelt know. Please consider helping with this wonderful event!

### Ladies Spring Fling Dinner – May 8<sup>th</sup>

You are cordially invited to join Zion's annual Ladies Spring Dinner. Tickets will go on sale starting April 6. The cost is \$12 per person, kids ages 6 to 16 are \$6 and 5 and under are free. The menu will be fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, green beans, corn, dinner rolls and drinks! Dessert will be cake and ice cream. Paint Night to follow. Paint a picture for yourself or as a gift. Kids will be doing a finger paint picture. Dinner is at 6:00 p.m. with Paint Night at 7:00 p.m.

**Due to supply purchases please RSVP to Church Office by April 22<sup>nd</sup>.**



Contact the Church Office – 301-371-6500



# Church Picnic

## Mark your calendars for the Church Picnic on June 9<sup>th</sup>!

Zion will be having our annual Church Picnic on Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. at Memorial Park. Family fun activities will begin at 3:30 p.m. All are invited. Dinner will be served at 4:15 p.m. Families are asked to bring a side dish. All committees will be participating. Christian Fellowship will provide the hot dogs & desserts. Quilters are providing the steamers.

What is your committee providing? Don't miss out on the fun! Please RSVP for this event no later than **June 4<sup>th</sup>** to 301-371-6500 or office@zionmiddletown.org. Anyone wishing to help with the picnic, please contact the Church Office.

**\*\* please bring a lawn chair for closing Vespers\*\***

# WORK DAY AT ZION

## May 19th After Worship

**Lunch Provided!**

Our goals are to do some deep cleaning of the sanctuary, deep clean the kitchen, tidy up the church, go through closets and throw out things that we no longer need.

Bring some work clothes to change into after church. To make the work load easier, we need as many as can stay to help take care of some much needed projects around our church campus!

*With Sympathy*



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

Ron Trusty  
Anna Kepler  
Cathy Baker



Have you Checked out the Website lately?

**It has all kinds of things in the Member's area including worship leaders schedules, new educational resources, information about upcoming and Youth and Family Ministry opportunities, and you can access all our old worship services.**

Check it out at [www.ZionMiddletown.org](http://www.ZionMiddletown.org)



The Unangst family, Dick Greenawalt, Linda Crummitt, Margaret Guyton, Bob Hetrick, Tim Quinn, Joe Elliot, Beth H., Mike Lingertot, Janet Rhinecker, Evelyn Hawker, Ruth Kuhn, Ursula Powell, Diane Elizabeth, Marianna Bere, Julie Swiney, Pat Hansen, Jane Nalborczyk, Lucretia Reaves, Eric Kinna, Ronnie Kinna, Tex and Linda Stottlemeyer, Anita, Frank Roys, Gary, Kay Wachter, Michael Easton, Frank Mrazek, The Hubble Family, Sheri Huckleberry, Pat McIntosh, 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, 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.*



# The Bishop's Blotter— reflections from the Rev. William J. Gohl Jr.



*Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." – Matthew 28.18-20*

Editor's note: While we normally do not rerun other articles, this one by Bishop Gohl was too good not to share it again.

On Saturday evening, I had a small part in the Maryland Opera's production of Puccini's *Tosca*. It was a glorious production – fully staged and costumed – with a totally sold-out audience of over 500 people. And, while I am sure that experience will provide sermon fodder for a long time to come, I was witness to something that I have been almost bursting to tell you about.

Discipleship. In the gathering of a community of performers and an audience, I witnessed significant discipleship.

Maestro James Harp, the Artistic Director of the Maryland Opera (and Cantor for St. Mark's (Baltimore), for over 35 years!), is doing the work of discipling a new generation of opera performers and opera lovers. With passion and energy, he has assembled strong partners in the Maryland Opera Board and Staff. He has invited generations of opera lovers to give generously to assure the future for the next generation of musicians and performers. He has personally mentored and raised up youth and young adults, and not just for the Maryland Opera – but often launching careers that take these talented and gifted musicians on adventures here and abroad.

Here is what I noticed from my time behind the scenes:

At 50, I was one of the oldest people in the cast. Mr. Harp is always raising up the next generation of performers, and the Maryland Opera gives some newcomers – and some emerging divas – a stage on which to perfect their art. It often starts with the Maryland Opera's Summer Opera Camp – where students get their first taste of learning and performing. Like Mother Goose calling her goslings, Mr. Harp (as everyone calls him) only needed say, "Ok young people, it's time for your stars to shine," and the "children's chorus" followed clear direction, sang a nearly flawless cantata, then a *Te Deum*, and basked in the applause of the audience – and the pride of their director, who praised them lavishly. It was beautiful to watch these students come alive under Mr. Harp's gentle leadership and obvious love.

All of the Chorus, that is the 20-somethings who played many parts, make their full-time learning and livelihood singing. While there was room in the cast for an amateur like me to play a part, the young men were all committed – heart, soul, and spirit – to making their art happen. I was amazed by their discipline and diligence to make the performance as perfect an offering as they could. Excellence was a word that they bantered about. And, as I sat in the dressing area waiting for my call, even as they obviously enjoyed each other's company, they were welcoming and genuinely interested in knowing more about what a bishop is. I

was amazed and honored by how they shared their faith journeys and struggles – and found that each one of them sings in a choir almost every Sunday! They told lots of stories about whom they had sung for before, the tales of harrowing performances, and quick escapes from sticky situations – but each of them made a point, when I told them that I belonged to Mr. Harp’s church, to tell me how much they respected him – and more than that, how much they appreciated his respect. Mr. Harp called each of them “Mr. So and So” in every interaction, reminding them that they were professionals, and that he regarded them as colleagues.

Everyone’s part is important. Mr. Harp creates and curates a culture of kindness and welcome. Following his example, the stars of the production – who came from many places and who have sung around the world – were a part of building up and encouraging the whole cast. I was on stage for less than 10 minutes, and yet I received the same words, shoulder touches, and “toi toi’s” (the opera equivalent of “break a leg”) on my way onto the stage and when I came off into the wings, as the divas did as they brought Tosca to life over the three hours of our production.

Leadership is being carefully and strategically passed to the next generation. When you look at the staff and leadership of the Maryland Opera, you will see that Mr. Harp has continued to raise up the next generation to lead – and not the way we’ve always done it, but with nimbleness and agility. He trusts his partners in this great undertaking, and they are fiercely loyal to the vision he has cast for a vital and robust opera community now, and for a long time to come.

It was a great experience for me to participate, but it was also a learning experience that gave me a glimpse of what the church could be if we were as passionate about tending the vision of beloved community and making disciples for Jesus – as my friend Mr. Harp is about the opera!

(the picture is of me playing the Archbishop of Rome, and Camile Sergeon (daughter of Pastor Justina Sergeon, Holy Trinity (Laurel), who was a children’s chorister and future famous diva!)

*Bishop Gohl and the synod staff share a weekly newsletter called in DEManD that you can subscribe and stay up to date on all the latest synod news and events. Visit <https://demdsynod.org/communication/newsletter/> or scan the QR code. It is a great resource in order to stay up with the latest synod news and hear from Bishop Gohl.*



## 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!**