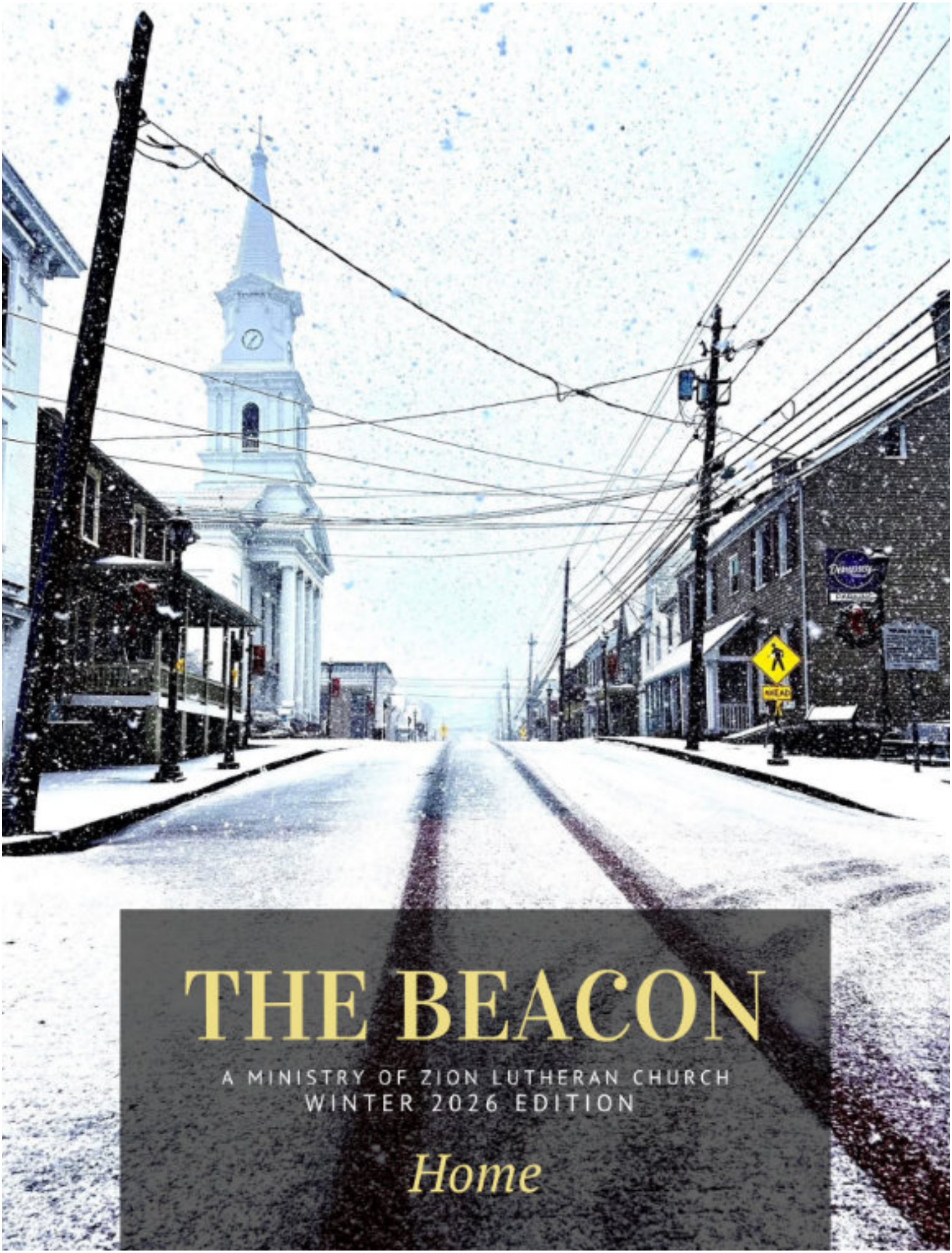


THE BEACON

A MINISTRY OF ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
WINTER 2026 EDITION

Home

Upcoming Events

First Sunday of the Month	Youth Group from 4-6 p.m.
First Thursdays of Month	Table Talk at 6 p.m.
Second Monday of the Month	Council Meeting
Third Wednesday of the Month	JOY Luncheon from 12-2 p.m.
Last Monday of the Month	Hope to Faith at 1 p.m.

November 18	J.O.Y. Luncheon (No Joy Luncheon in December)
November 21 &22	Christ the King Worship
November 26 & 27	Office Closed for Thanksgiving
December 1	Decorating for Christmas at 9 a.m.
December 2	Wednesdays in Advent - Meal, Worship, and Children's Program starting at 6 p.m.
December 3	Table Talk at 6 p.m.
December 5	Christmas in the Valley
December 6	Joint Worship and Children's Christmas Pageant at 10 a.m.
December 6	Advent Craft and Game Night (Youth Group too!)
December 9	Wednesdays in Advent - Meal, Worship, and Children's Program starting at 6 p.m.
December 11	Lumos Concert at Zion
December 16	Wednesdays in Advent - Meal, Children's Program, and Blue Christmas starting at 6 p.m.
December 18	Parent's Night Out Youth Fundraiser
December 20	Christmas Caroling at 5:30 p.m.
December 24	Family Worship at 4 p.m.
	Candlelight Worship with Hand Bells and Holy Communion at 7 p.m.
	Candlelight Worship with Orchestra, Choir, and Holy Communion at 10:30 p.m.
December 25-Jan 2	Church Office Closed
December 26 & 27	Lessons and Carols at 5 p.m., 9 a.m., and 11 a.m.
December 31	Deadline for Annual Report submissions to the Church Office
January 3	Confirmation and Youth Group
January 7	Table Talk at 6 p.m.
January 10	Footprints
January 18	Day Off Program
January 20	J.O.Y. Luncheon
January 23	Town Hall Meeting at 6 p.m.
January 24	Town Hall Meeting at 10:00 a.m.
January 31	Joint Worship Service at 10 a.m. with FootPrints and Annual Meeting following worship
February 7	Youth Goup Football and Valentines
February 7	SNOW DATE FOR ANNUAL MEETING
February 9	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner Fundraiser for Youth Gathering
February 10	Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent



Sharing Christ's Love

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Middletown, MD



Our Mission

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

Our Vision

Zion aspires to be a church where all are welcomed and loved; God's purpose for each of us is found; and lives are transformed.

Value Statement

Zion is a Christian ***community***, imperfect, but brought together by God's ***love*** to be strengthened through worship and study of the Bible in order to be sent out to ***serve*** with ***integrity***.











A WORD FROM PASTOR DIANE

As I have said before, one of the most challenging things about being a leader is the feeling that before I encourage you to do a spiritual discipline, I think I should have at least tried it for myself. After 33 years as a Christian with the cognitive ability to reason, I am still trying out new ways to connect with God.

After some time discussing this with my coach, my newest iteration of connecting with God looks like the following. As soon as I get into the office (which hasn't happened exactly as I had hoped due to a lot of sickness with my kids), I turn on the *Do Not Disturb* setting on my cell and office phones. I turn off my office lights. I turn on some instrumental music. I light a candle. I set a timer for 10 minutes. Then I open up my calendar and look at my schedule for the day. I add tasks I need to do and when I hope I am going to complete them. After the 10 minute timer goes off, I set another 20 minute timer and with my trusty pen and notebook, I start writing to God about what is on my heart and my mind. There's no judgement-I just write to God my thoughts and concerns. Sometimes, I just pause if I have no words or just need to breathe. That's it. When I have this half an hour to prepare and talk to God about what the day holds, I feel like I might actually be able to do the important work to which I am called to do because, I have asked God for help.

As I was thinking about this newsletter article and the season of Advent, I thought I might write my prayers going into this season and share them with you.

God, I am excited for Advent. I am excited because this season makes me think about a future, a hopeful time. Right now as I look around, I am reminded that things aren't as they should be under your ways. As much as the world is ready for Christmas and there is joy and expectation all around us, we are still waiting. There are folks we long to be reunited with. There are folks we are at odds with in our family and our community. There are people who still are struggling to receive their daily bread and be filled. The earth is changing and its usual patterns are not what we have known. Our world is not at peace, with nations fighting among themselves. We long for your wholeness in so many ways. We don't know when you are coming, but Advent reminds us again of your promise that you will come to make all things right. Help us hold the stories of the past and the longing of your inbreaking that the Israelites had. Help us to see glimmers of you in our present when we serve others and receive you in word and sacrament. And help us to look joyfully to your future, knowing you will meet us there with a world made right and your love. Amen.

Wishing you a blessed Advent season that does not get you so overwhelmed with all the"to-dos" or "what isn't right yets" and allows you to hope for a better world that you capture in daily moments and promises of days of old.

In Advent hope,

Pastor Diane Kay



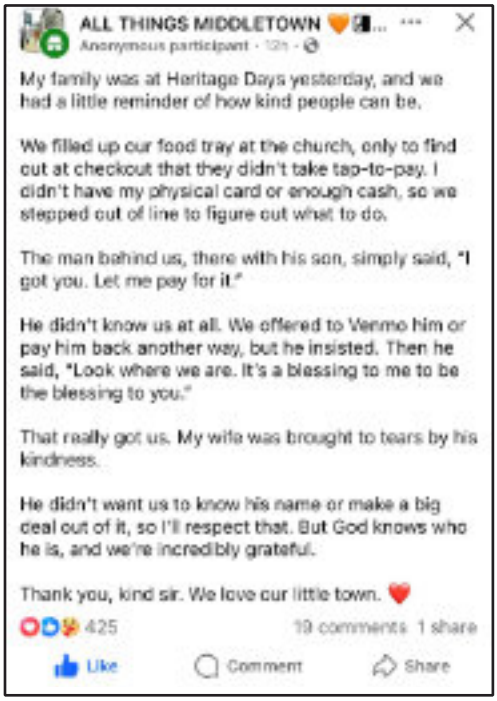
A WORD FROM PASTOR MATT

My dear friends in Christ,

After the Heritage Festival this year, I was at home trying to rest and enjoy the evening. Of course, my mind was all over the place, and instead of resting, I was doom-scrolling through Facebook. I saw a post in the All Things Middletown group that caught my attention. As I read it, I could feel the tears welling up in my eyes.

Needless to say, I was on the hunt to figure out who had done what. At our staff meeting on Monday, I read the post to the group, and just like me, everyone around the table was moved by it. Deb said she was there when it happened. I learned that it wasn't a member of Zion who had covered the bill, but a complete stranger. Deb was about to tell the family not to worry about paying when this gentleman stepped up and offered to pay for their meal. He said, "Look at where we are. We are in the Lord's house. Don't worry, I got it."

I have said this many times now: What we do up here in worship is just as important as what we do downstairs in our Social Room. Yes, the stranger was correct. This is God's house, and because it is God's house, no one should ever go away hungry. One of the VBS kids' moms was telling me that her son calls Zion the "Dinner Church," and I am proud to have earned that distinctive title. I want people to know that when they come here, they will leave full, whether that be in their heart, mind, or stomach. Nobody should ever leave Zion hungry for more.


ALL THINGS MIDDLETOWN
Anonymous participant · 12h ·

My family was at Heritage Days yesterday, and we had a little reminder of how kind people can be.

We filled up our food tray at the church, only to find out at checkout that they didn't take tap-to-pay. I didn't have my physical card or enough cash, so we stepped out of line to figure out what to do.

The man behind us, there with his son, simply said, "I got you. Let me pay for it."

He didn't know us at all. We offered to Venmo him or pay him back another way, but he insisted. Then he said, "Look where we are. It's a blessing to me to be the blessing to you."

That really got us. My wife was brought to tears by his kindness.

He didn't want us to know his name or make a big deal out of it, so I'll respect that. But God knows who he is, and we're incredibly grateful.

Thank you, kind sir. We love our little town. ❤️

425 19 comments 1 share

Like Comment Share

But what happens when someone does leave hungry? I mean, we are not perfect, and sometimes that does happen. Maybe the sermon didn't hit this week, maybe the Sunday School lesson didn't stick, or maybe someone took your favorite donut (the struggle is real sometimes… just ask my twins!). What do we do when we are still hungry?

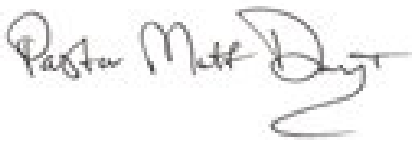
First things first, we need to tell someone. When my kids come home from school, they are always hungry. I always ask them what they want, and typically they answer, "I don't know." When I was a newer parent, I used to offer options, and sometimes I still do. But more often now, I tell them, "When you figure out what you want, tell me, and I will make it."

I have made so many snacks over the years that I thought they would love, only to discover that they hated them. The best way I have found to give them the food they want is to let them tell me what they want. They need to use their words, and I think that is good advice for all of us. Sometimes, we need to tell our leaders what we want to eat.

But that doesn't mean you are going to get what you want. My kids want chicken nuggets and French fries for snacks most days. I might do that every once in a while, but that's not healthy and typically causes them not to want to eat dinner. Sometimes, what we might want is not what we need. And yes, that does create some conflict because French fries are always better than an apple. But apples do more than just fill our stomachs.

So, talk to your leaders. Tell them what you want, but be prepared for some push back. We are not McDonald's; we are Christ's church. You will be fed, but you will be fed with the Bread of Life, who is Jesus Christ.

So, let us know if you are still hungry. I will make sure your favorite donut is ordered for next week and that the sermon is more on point! But I also want to encourage you to be on the lookout for those families who come into our space, have forgotten their wallets, and are hungry. This is God's house, and perhaps God has raised you up for such a time as this: to care for them, to pay for their meal, and to give them Jesus.



So, what's been happening?

The McClinton Family Joins the J.O.Y. Luncheon

Many of us know how blessed we are to have Dr. McClinton as our Director of Traditional Worship. Katelyn is a gifted musician in her own right but she comes from a family of gifted musicians. At the August J.O.Y. Luncheon, Pastor Brian McClinton (Katelyn's dad) Sister Meghan McClinton (Katelyn's mom) and Katelyn performed a number of different pieces of music. It was a great way to spend the afternoon! If you are interested in participating in the Traditional Worship music program, please talk to Dr. McClinton. She not only leads the choir but also leads the Bell Choir and the Orchestra!

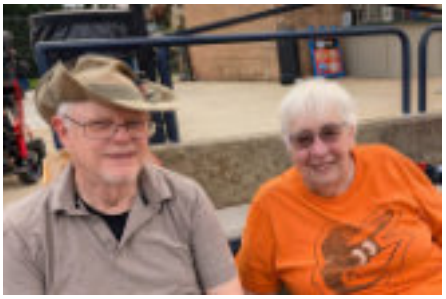


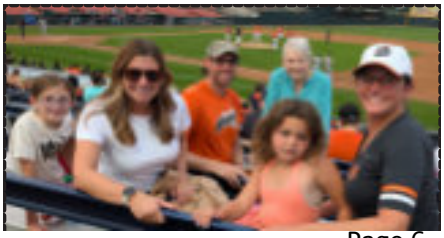


Take me out to a Ball Game - Round 2!

On another beautiful summer evening in August, we took our trusty van on a trip down to Frederick (a bit closer than Camden Yards) to enjoy a baseball game of the Frederick Keys. We had a huge group join us in Frederick back in August. Unfortunatly, the Keys lost in extra innings, however it was a beautiful night to enjoy everyone's company. The kids did their best to catch a fly ball thoughout the game and many hot dogs were consumed. Of special note, Bruce and Pat McIntosh celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary that night at the baseball field. At the end of the game, the kids got to run round the bases. Until next year!









Reformation 2025

509 years ago, Martin Luther sparked a reform of Christianity when his 95 Theses against indulgences were published. 509 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. This year, we celebrated with Paige Ahalt as she received First Communion. We also gave thanks to Charles Adams, Diana Berkey, Claudia Pearl, and Donald Palmer who became members of Zion Lutheran Church 50 years ago. We also took a moment to publicly recognize all those 50 year plus members.



The Children's Choir Performed!

Under the direction of Emily Hopson, the kids shared a song—Love the Lord your God. The kids practiced the song twice a month during the Sunday School hour. Their next performorance is on December 6 at the Christmas Pageant. This is a combined worship service at 10 a.m. We look forward to hearing them sing again!

A Visit from the Holy Land

In August, we welcomed a group from Holy Land Christian Solidarity Cooperative (HLCSC) who oined us to share a little bit about their story and to share some of their gifts. Because of the October 7 terrorist attacks, tourism in Bethlehem has greatly diminished. Severals of these Christians rely on tourism to sell their work. It was really wonderful having them join us and to be reminded that they have been Christians since the beginning of Christianity. We also had The Rev. Drs. Angela and Martin Zimmmann come and share a little bit about their time in the Holy Land. To learn more about the Holy Land Christian Solidarity Cooperative, visit their website at www.hlcsc.org/



Day Off Program - Take 1



To the pumkin patch we go!

Because what is more fun than to spend the day at church...said no one ever. But we proved that statement to be true again this year by spending the day at Jumbo's Pumpkin Patch. Jumbos was very gracious and paid the admission cost and gave each child a pumpkin. The kids explored all the attractions including a corn maze, new slide, trampoline, and playground equipment. Best of all, we got to enjoy a nice ride on one of their tractors. The weather was not in our favor so we decided to do lunch back at Zion. We put on a classic movie, *The Great Pumpkin* and did some games around church. The weather might have put a damper on our plans, but we still made the best of it!





You can help make the Day Off possible in the future. Consider sponsoring a child today for only $50. It is our goal to keep the Day Off Program free for all kids. Consider making an investment in the life of a child. Do you have a familiy member who doesn't need anything for Christmas? Give the gift of a Day Off Sponsorship today. See page 33 for more details, and thank you for your generous support!



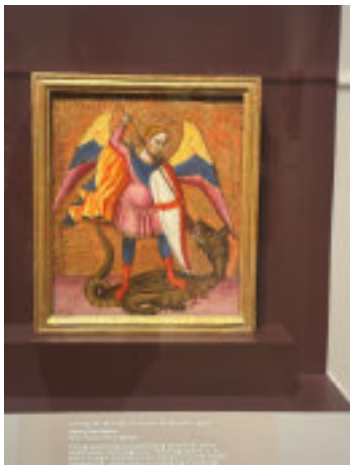








A Trip to Baltimore



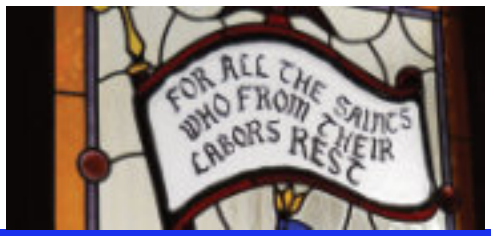
This past October, a group from Zion loaded up in our van and took a trip to Baltimore to explore the Walter's Art Museum. The Walter's Art Museum (formerly known as the Walter's Art Gallery) is a public art museum located in the historic Mount Vernon neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland. Opened in 1934, the museum grew from a private collection amassed by William Thompson Walters and his son Henry Walters, who bequeathed the collection and original building to the city of Baltimore. The museum exhibits span more than 7,000 years of human history (5000 BCE to the 21st century) with roughly 36,000 objects. The museum did not disappoint and neither did dinner. Taking the recommendation of a local pastor, we had dinner at Helmand--an Afgan restaurant. They served dinner via family style. It was an amazing meal.

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 Sunday, we remember those who have died this past year, those who made a lasting impact on our faith, and those lost to our memory but known to God.

We remember those who died this past year...

John Burrier
Marie Boyer
Meredith Kinna
Grace Blumenauer
Greg Beal
David Huffer
Shirley Crone
Pauline "Skippy" Zimmerman
Cindy Stoltz
Jo Ellen Ahalt
Beverly Smith
Grace Routzahn
Kieffer Crummitt, Sr.
Suzanne Bussard



There are so many saints who have left a lasting impact on our lives. Every year, we invite people to write those names down so that we can remember them during our worship service.



Middletown Heritage Festival

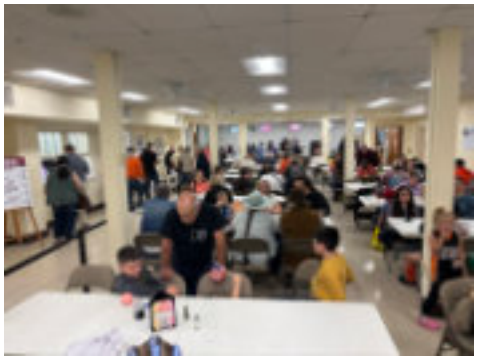
The 42nd annual event was a success!

Another great event is in the books. This year, we decided to enter the van in the parade. Thank you to everyone who donated bags of candy. We gave all the candy away! The day required a number of volunteers in our community to step up and make our participation possible. From cooks in the kitchen, to the cashiers, to the people cleaning tables, to the folks who sat outside at our table—this day would not have been possible without you! So, thank you! And for those who came and enjoyed the festivities and made sure to come inside and buy a few pints of soup, a few turkey sandwiches, and some brownies—thank you!















The hot dog stole the show!

Hueston Putman was given a hot dog costume, a sign, and was told to go and advertise our luncheon. Hueston took his job very seriously and not only walked through the town, but came up and walked with the van. He even got a couple of shout outs from the parade announcer.



Halloween Block Party

Building on the success of 2025, we filled out a couple of Thrivent Action Team Grants to cover the cost of the food for the event. This year we received two $250 grants and with that, were able to cover the cost of the entire event. A group of about 20 people were able to help make all the hot dogs, set up, and clean up. Thank you everyone who helped out and thank you to everyone who stopped by for a hot dog! It was great to see your costumes and to talk to you for a bit!















Pizza Bingo 2026

What exactly is a Pizza Bingo?

Just like the name says, it is a time when you get together to eat pizza and play Bingo. The Christian Fellowship ministry team has been exploring alternatives to the church picnic that might work better for everyone. We applied for a a couple of Thrivent Action Team Grants to cover the cost of the food and then asked people to donate White Elephant gifts. A bunch of gifts were donated including a 8x10 picture of Pastor Matt. We played a bunch of games of Bingo and in between the games, did raffle tickets so that everyone went home with a gift. All the gifts were wrapped, so you didn't know what you had until the end. There were a lot of laughs shared by everyone. The turn out for the event was amazing and exceeded all of our expectations. Over 90 people joined us! Christian Fellowship is planning to do a similar event in the spring. Stayed tuned for more information! If you are interested in helping plan similar events like this one, reach out to a member of Christan Fellowship.

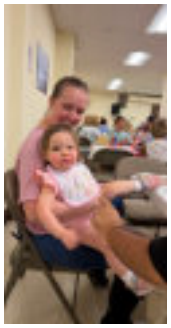
















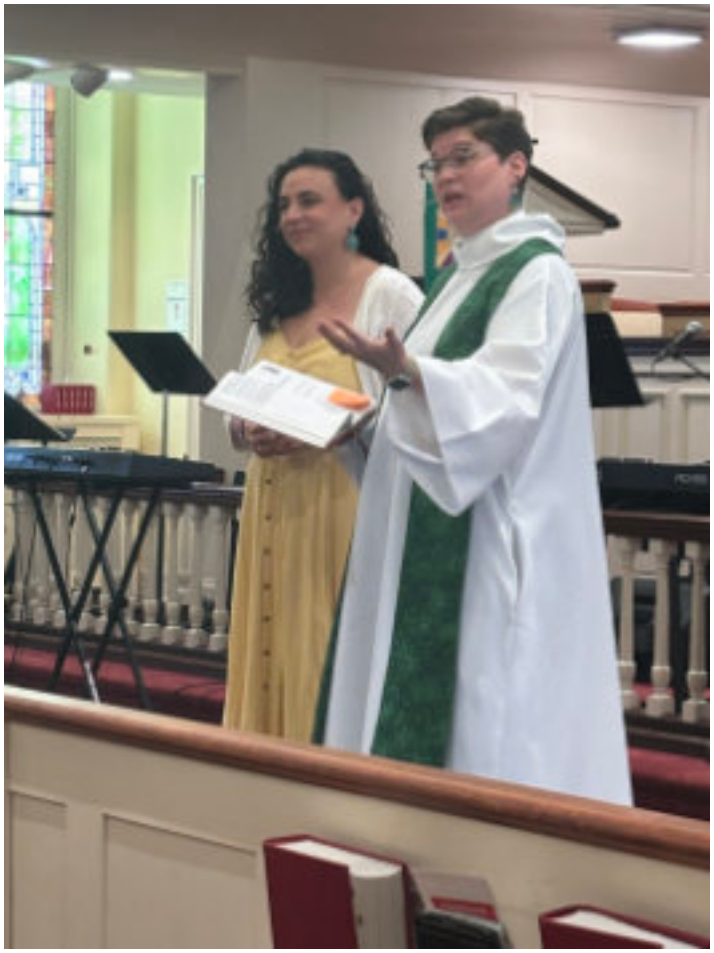
Hanna was the "lucky" winner of the 8x10 photo of Pastor Matt. She even got it autographed!



Two Installations at Zion

We officially welcomed Alix Albright onboard as director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries here at Zion on August 29 and 30 at all of our worship services. The reason we installed Alix was to publicly acknowledge her ministry and to prayerfully ask for the Holy Spirit to direct her in all her work. We also welcomed Seminarian Rita Saavedra. She will be working with Zion over the next year. Rita is studying to become a deacon. As the year progresses, we will be giving her more and more responsibilities in worship. Please make sure you introduce yourself to her and get to know her!







The Sunday the lights went out at Zion

Some days, we get a reminder of what it was like to do worship in the days of Jesus. Thanks to a freak power outage, we lost power around 9:40 a.m. on Sunday, October 11th, and we got to experience this "old school worship." We had just finished up the consecration of the Eucharist when the lights when out. It made distribution a bit hard, but we persevered. People were able to whip out their cell phones and turn on their flashlights to help people navigate the dark sanctuary. After the 9 a.m. worship service, the plan was to cancel the 11 a.m., but a number of people had already gathered for worship, so we decided to hold worship for whoever showed. We moved the worship to the chapel because it was brighter. The worship turned out to be very holy and the lights came on right after the consecration, which was pretty cool. Thanks to Levi Derr for snapping the picture of the altar during the power outage.

Sunday School is Back in Session!

On Sunday, September 13, we kicked off another program year by blessing Bibles to be used throughout the year, blessed our Sunday School teachers, and then had our first class of the season. Our Sunday School wing is a hopping place on Sunday mornings this year. Most classes are full of kids and adults eager to learn a little bit more about Jesus and God's love for them. There is a place for everyone during the 10 a.m. hour. Be sure to check out a class the next time you are at church.









Christian Education Hour

Every Sunday at 10 a.m.

Cradle Roll Class (a class for infants - 3 year old)	Pre-K to 2nd Grade Class	3rd-5th Grade Class	Confirmation, Middle and High School
Meets in the Nursery	Meets Downstairs Room 114	Meets Downstairs Room 115	Meets Downstairs Room 119

Adult Forum meets in the Conference Room

Mutual Care meets in the the Library

Did You Say, Sour Beef?

Normally, these two words do not go together unless you grew up in a German household. Sour Beef or Sauerbraten is a German dish of cheaper cuts of beef marinated in vinegar and other spices to tenderize the beef. It is then slow cooked for hours and served with purple cabbage and potato dumplings. In Baltimore, they thicken the gravy with gingersnap cookies to give it a little bit different flavor. Back in the day, a bunch of Lutheran churches whose heritage included German immigrants, had Sour Beef dinners as a fundraiser. These days, only a few have these dinners. This year, a small group from Zion joined our sister congregation, Zion in Baltimore, at their dinner. It was fantastic. The food was great, the entertainment was superb and Bishop Gohl was able to join us for dinner.







Día de los Muertos

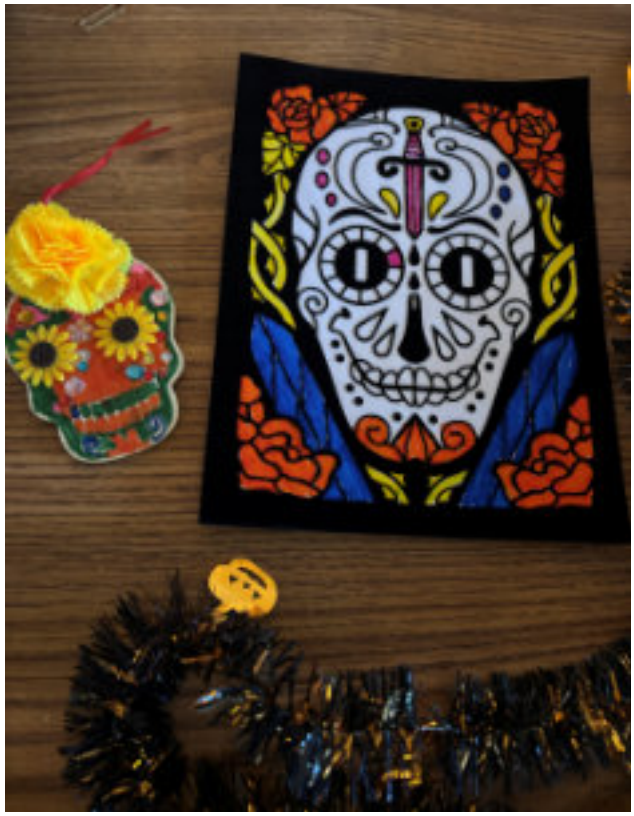


Our latest Day Off Program was filled with fun, learning, and a little cultural exploration as we celebrated Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)! Día de los Muertos is a Mexican holiday that celebrates and remembers loved ones who have passed away. It is a time to honor their memories through colorful decorations, food, music, and family traditions. In English, we know the day as "All Souls Day." The 21 registered children enjoyed a day packed with themed crafts, games, a trip to the park, and a scavenger hunt that included a piñata. We also watched the Disney movie "Coco," which beautifully introduces the traditions and meaning behind this special celebration. For lunch, the kids got to make their own quesadillas and guacamole. It was a wonderful day of fellowship, creativity, and learning about another culture! A special thank-you to Sandy Bell and Joe McIntosh for volunteering their time and helping chaperon the children. We couldn't do these days without the help of our volunteers! The next Day Off program is January 18, 2027.









Community and Church Events



<u>Christmas in the Valley - Volunteers Needed</u>

Join us in celebrating the beginning of the holiday season at Middletown's annual Christmas in the Valley celebration, **Saturday, December 5thh, at 7:00 p.m**.

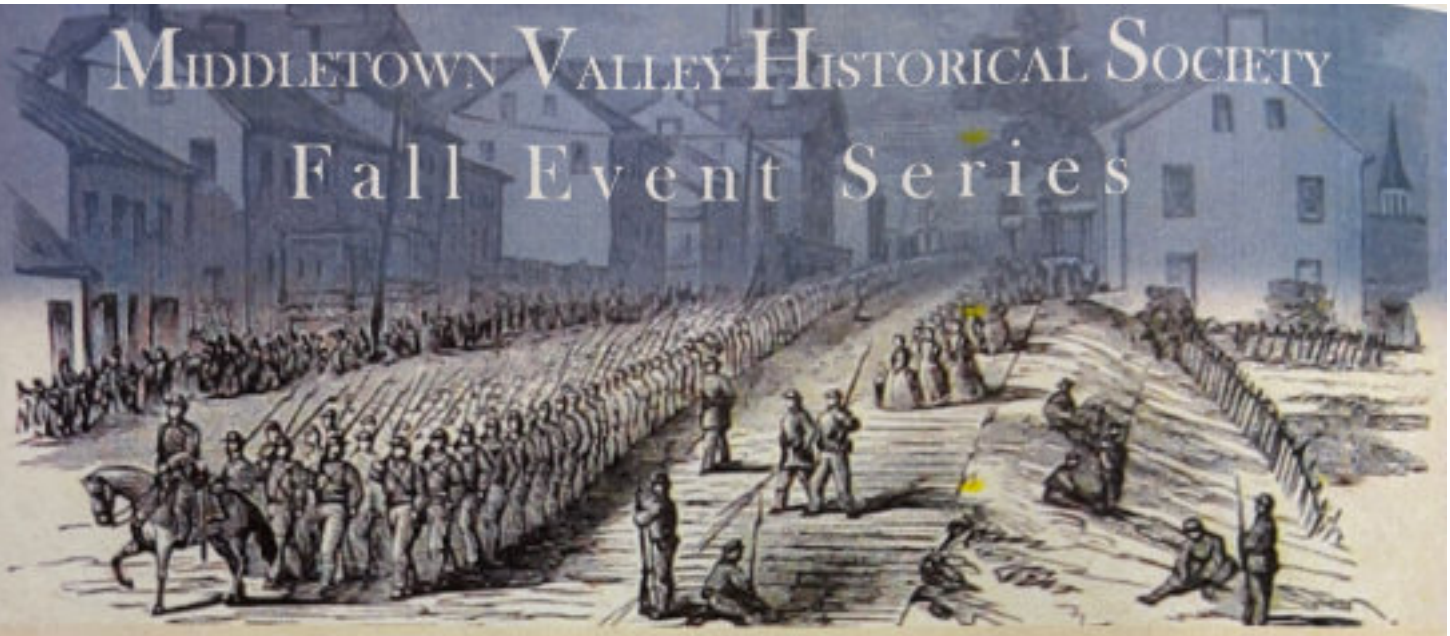
We need approximately 10-15 adult volunteers to help at the church with ushering before and during the concert, as well as afterwards in the Social Room to help with cookies and punch. If you can help, please sign up on the clip board in the Office.

Questions? Please contact Jennifer Caulk or Mary Ann Marcantonio.



Middletown Valley Historical Society

Fall Event Series



Invited Lecturer

Mary Ann Marcantonio

Presents

1862: Middletown's Role in the Battles of South Mountain and Antietam

Ms. Marcantonio dresses as nurse Helen Knight and reenacts the story of events before and after the Battles. Ms. Marcantonio serves as the Historian for Zion Lutheran Church in Middletown.

Sunday, November 15, 2026

2:00 – 3:00 PM

Zion Lutheran Church Sanctuary
107 W Main St, Middletown, MD
Light refreshments will be served

FREE
Open to the Public

SUPPORT LOCAL HISTORY

MVHS is a volunteer-run nonprofit.

Join • Donate • Learn More

Middletown Valley People Helping People

2026 Holiday Craft Fair

Saturday, November 21, 2026
9 am to 3 pm

Middletown Volunteer Fire Department Activities Building
1 Firemans Lane
Middletown, MD 21769

Local Artisans
Amazing Raffle Baskets
Homemade Baked Goods
Money Wreath Raffle
Breakfast & Lunch Available for Purchase

BAKERS NEEDED!

For additional information: *Contact Lorrie White at lorriebw@yahoo.com*

Proceeds support Middletown Valley People Helping People
www.mvphpmd.org

Middletown Lions Club

Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, Dec. 12th, 2026
7:30 - 10:30 A.M.

Santa Visit



$14 Adult
$13 Senior
$9 Child (5-10)
Free < 5 yrs.

ALL YOU CAN EAT!
Proceeds benefit the Middletown Community Handicap Access Lower Back Parking Lot off Green Street

Event Location
Zion Lutheran Church
107 E Main Street
Middletown, MD

Featuring Chocolate Chip Pancakes
french toast, eggs, sausage, tater tots, biscuits, sausage & chipped beef gravy, fruit, juice & coffee



What is a Deacon?



What is a deacon? That is the question we have heard through the grapevine as Seminarian Rita Saavedra has joined us this fall and spring for her first experience in Ministerial Fieldwork. Let's answer that question!

In the early days of the Church, after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, the leaders of the Church were very busy as the folks starting to follow Jesus' way were increasing. The Twelve found that they were having a hard time meeting the demands of teaching the people all Jesus had said as well as living out his words by serving. Both elements of living the life Jesus had called them to, sharing the word and serving the people, were equally as important as they are today. In Acts 6, we hear the story of when the diaconate, the focused leadership ministry of service, was formed. Some of the widows felt they were being left out of the daily distribution of food. The Twelve decided that seven people should be selected who could help and serve in order that folks would not be left out, so that the Twelve could continue the study and sharing of the word. ***5*** *What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.* ***6*** *They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.* The Greek word for service is diakonia. The diaconate has continued since that day in the Church and has also taken on some different meaning depending on the denomination it is connected with.

In the ELCA, diaconal ministry (now part of the "Minister of Word and Service" roster) is a public, lifelong call to embody Christ-like service, especially at the boundary between church and world, and to equip all the baptized for their daily ministries. Diaconal ministers/deacons are rooted in God's Word, trained for particular forms of service, and charged to speak both God's gospel to the world and the world's needs back to the church, with special attention to the poor, oppressed, and marginalized. This ministry witnesses that every Christian is called in baptism to loving service, and it helps the whole church live more deeply into God's mission of justice, mercy, and reconciliation.



Please take the opportunity to get to know Rita and ask her particular focus in serving. She has a rich background in education and hopes to continue that work in helping the church serve others.



AN UPDATE FROM TANZANIA
Rebuilding The Burned-Down Men's Dormitory





Our siblings in the Mara Diocese experienced a tragedy in early July 2026 in the wake of a fire that destroyed the boys' dormitory at Kiabakari Bible College which also resulted in the loss of life of the pastor's son.

The DE/MD Synod mobilized and informed our congregations of this loss and the desperate need of the school. God moved the hearts of many individuals and within 3 months over $ 70,000 had been raised. The Kiabakari Bible school touched our hearts when the last group visited in June 2024.This is a successful Bible school that trains evangelists for the community. It is a very dedicated group of teachers that also work a farm and lumbermill to keep the school operating. Thanks be to God that they can continue God's work.

The DE MD Synod hopes to return to the Mara Diocese in 2027. Prayerfully consider joining this group. This trip will change your perspective on life. If you are interested, contact Pastor Charles Zang at czang48@gmail.com or call 301-305-5034

Please consider making a gift today. Make donations payable to the Delaware-Maryland Synod with a notation in the memo line that it is for the "Tanzania Project". These checks can be given to your local church or mailed to:

DE-MD Synod
P.O. Box 826643
Philadelphia, PA 19182-6643

Sponsored by the DE-MD Synod Tanzania Task Force



Worship Opportunities



Christ the King Sunday

A Journey through the Seasons

A special liturgy on the weekend of November 21/22 at all our worship services to help us wrap up the liturgical year and remind us of all that we have seen, heard, and learned.

Wednesdays in Advent

Because of Bethlehem

Love is Born, Hope is Here

Dinner begins at 6 p.m.

Children's Activities begin at 6:30 p.m.

Worship begins at 7 p.m.

COMBINED SUNDAY WORSHIP

December 5 and 6

Sunday Morning Worship
10 a.m.

&

Saturday Worship
at 5 p.m.

Join us on Sunday Morning at 10 a.m. for the Christmas Pageant.

Blue Christmas Worship

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

Wednesday, December 16 at 7pm


Christmas
CANDLE SERVICE
EVE
AT ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
FAMILY WORSHIP AT 4 P.M.
CANDLELIGHT WITH HANDBELLS AT 7 P.M.
CANDLELIGHT WITH CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA AT 10:30 P.M.

Being the Church...

Interview with Christopher and Chelsea Greco



I recently had the pleasure to sit and have a conversation with a wonderful couple, the Greco Family, Christopher and Chelsea and their two young children Maeve and Cameron. On many Sundays, we walked up the ramp in the back of the church at the same time with only a casual greeting of "Good morning." I am always amazed how they manage to arrive 10 minutes early for church, with two kids in tow, neatly dressed, not a hair out of place, and not a stress or wrinkle on their faces. What's your secret?

Chris and Chelsea were both born and raised in the same town in New Jersey and have known each other their whole lives-literally! Chelsea was born on June 8th and 36 hours later, in the same hospital, Chris was born. They began their lives as roomies in the hospital nursery room. Little did their parents realize that this connection would not end at the hospital but their lives would come full circle just a few years later. By the time they were in Middle School, a teenage crush, and as the grades passed and the years turned into adulthood, the relation would continue to grow, eventually leading to marriage.

But before they tied the knot, they both went off to college, Chelsea to Villanova and Chris to Muhlenberg and upon completion of his undergrad he attended Georgetown for his graduate work. Oh! And this is when sparks of a different kind began to fly! If you know sports and the rivalry between these two schools then you understand the competitive spirit these schools hold for their basketball programs; it runs deep and it has for years. For Chris it is "Go Hoyas" and for Chelsea "Go Wildcats" and it is forever in their blood. For Chris and Chelsea, the marriage vow of "for better or for worse" is really tested when one teams\ loses to the other, but one thing that runs deeper than any competitiveness is the love of each other. Now, inquiring minds want to know: will Maeve and Cameron take sides in this household rivalry?

After Chris finished grad school, Chelsea moved to Maryland and in November of 2018 they married. Their first home was in Rockville but in a few short years, Covid hits and with the necessity of both working from home, they began looking for more space and a little bit of tranquility. This brought them to Middletown. Chris works for Labcorp in their Oncology department as a bioinformatician. He writes software, algorithms and statistics around detecting cancer as early as possible and mutations and current medications that may be better treatments. Chelsea graduated with a degree in marketing and communication. Upon her arrival in Maryland, she began her search for employment. She landed a contractor job with the Department of Homeland Security, assigned to supporting their public awareness campaign to combat human trafficking. She now works in the private sector as a Project Manager supporting marketing and communication campaigns.

Chris was born of Norwegian descent and raised in the Lutheran Church. Chelsea, being of Greek and Italian descent, was raised in the Catholic Church. Both having been afforded the benefits of being raised in the faith, they wanted the same for their family. They have attended Zion now for several years, seeking membership about three years ago. Being two working parents with two young children it is hard to get as involved as they would like but they have managed to carve out a few hours where Chelsea can serve on the Mutual Ministry Team.

As this is in the Holiday issue of the "Beacon", it was interesting to see how they celebrate the holidays. Chris looks forward to cooking a big meal for Thanksgiving. But most of their family traditions are built around Christmas. With their families in New Jersey, a planned road trip is in store. The highlight is the huge gathering at Chelsea's grandmother's house, close to 60 people, now four generations. It's just like you can imagine, all the fixings of a good Irish/Italian holiday, joyful yet chaotic. Then on Christmas Eve, with the kids dressed in their Christmas pjs and ready for bed, they make the long drive home. As the kids sleep in their carseats, Chelsea and Chris reflect on the joys and excitement of the morning ahead.

As we have already established, Chris and Chelsea are sports fanatics and they are raising two clones, I do believe. Although they grew up in Jersey and they have abandoned their allegiance to any of their prior football preferences, they are now converted Commander fans and are raising two sports enthusiasts who frequently yell at the TV "Go Commanders!" during the football season. This must be hilarious to see. So when the season switches and it becomes America's Pastime, the team favorite is the Boston Red Sox. The kids think every team that bears a uniform, holds a bat, or glove and throws a ball…it's a Red Sox! But they know Fenway and they can ID their mascot in a lineup and get it right. Kids are amazing!

Another family favorite pasttimes is Sunday Meals. After a long work week, Chris and Chelsea look forward to the times they share around the kitchen stove, preparing a delicious meal for the four of them, especially Italian,"cotto a puntino" cooked to absolute perfection and on other times BBQ. Another favorite escape from the stressful work week is frequent trips during the year to Deep Creek to enjoy the lake. Watching the boats and hearing the kids call out the different animals they see is such a joy to watch them take in nature around them. They are looking forward when they can begin to experience some of the winter activities the lake has to offer.

My time with their two young kiddos was priceless. First, Maeve; she is four. I asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up and surprisingly she said Princess. It is unfortunate that we don't have the same dream as little Maeve because we are all Princesses/Princes; we are all joint heirs in the Kingdom of God. Little Maeve may see Disney's Princesses as her protégé but she is in training for the greatest Princess role of her life time, following Jesus. Cameron, who is three, didn't really understand the question. But the family was in agreement that right now Cameron would want to be a tractor driver. He loves tractors! He sees them, he will point them out to you. If he hears one, even before you get a chance he yells out "Tractor!" That's a boy for you!

And the highlight! The year ahead is one of great joy for the Greco family. Maeve and Cameron will welcome a new baby brother in April. They are so excited! Chelsea and Chris, the whole congregation joins in your joy and prays God's blessings on all!

So what is my take away? Getting to know each other within the church is vital to the life of the church. The church was meant to be in connection with one another and not in isolation. Who sits near you that you should begin a conversation with? As a church, how is it possible that we can get to know each other a little better? A question to pray on and see where God is leading you.

Christian Education



We are taking November off but will gather in December, January, and February to finish up our discussion on the gospel of Matthew.

Sunday Mornings



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

Adult Sunday School Calendar

Date	Topic	Comments
November 8	Not God Enough	Conference Room
November 15	Advent Study	Conference Room
November 22	Advent Study	Conference Room
November 29	Advent Study	Conference Room
December 6	**Combined Service - No Sunday School**	----------
December 13	Advent Study	Conference Room
December 20	Advent Study	Conference Room
December 27	Advent Study	Conference Room

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Confirmation

EVERY SUNDAY AT 10 A.M.

IN THE YOUTH ROOM WITH BREAKFAST

Confirmation is open to all Middle and High Schoolers.
You don't need to be a member of Zion to Participate

Ignite Your Faith
Youth Group at Zion

Youth Group Will Meet On The First Sunday Of Every Month At 4 P.M.

Dec 6th: Advent Game Night
Jan 3rd: Spinners Arcade
Feb 7th: Football and Valentines
March 7th: TBD

Wednesday's in Advent
Children's Program

Mark Your Calendars

December 2nd, 9th, 16th
6:30 p.m.

After dinner, youth of all ages will convene together in the Garden's Edge for a time of games, crafts, and some Holiday fun!

WE GOT A

DAY OFF!

The Winter Day Off Program is on

Monday, January 18
at 9 a.m.
Spend the day Snow Tubing at Ski Liberty



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!!!!

DAY OFF PROGRAM REGISTRATION

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

COMING SOON

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
JULY 11TH - JULY 15TH 2027

Christmas Night Out

Fun Holiday Activities for Youth
Parents Get a Night Out



December 18th

4:30–8:30

Open to K–12th grade

$10 per child

Zion Lutheran Church

Proceeds Go Towards the National Youth Gathering

Register your child on our Youth and Family Page

2026-2027 Footprints Upcoming Dates

Footprints

December 13th	January 17th
January 31st	February 14th

Join us on the second Sunday of each month at **BOTH SERVICES** 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. Combined Worship then we will also have Footprints at that service.



Christmas Pageant



Sunday, December 6 at 10 a.m.

Christmas Light Show

Amid all the busyness, decorations, and excitement of Christmas, we are reminded that Jesus is the greatest gift of all—the true light who came into the world. We are then called to carry that light into the world around us..

Pageant rehearsals will be held during the Sunday School hour. If your child cannot make the rehearsals, don't worry. We will find a place for them!

MAR-LU RIDGE

SUMMER 2027

For program descriptions, prices, and more information, scan the QR code or visit our website mar-lu-ridge.org/summer-camp

Registration opens January 1, 2027!

Early bird registration discount ends February 15, 2027.

Questions? Contact the office by calling 1-800-238-9974 or email mlr@mar-lu-ridge.org

	Junior Completed Grade K-2	Pathfinder Completed Grade 3-5	Middler Completed Grade 6-8	Senior High Completed Grade 9-11	Family Camp Ages 0-150
WEEK 1 June 13-18	Junior Classic 1 Try-it 1		Horseback Middler Classic 1	Staff in Training Completed Grade 10-11	
WEEK 2 June 20-25	Day Camp Monday-Friday	Horseback Pathfinder Classic 2	Hammock Middler Classic 2		
WEEK 3 June 27-July 2	Day Camp Monday-Friday	Wacky & Wild	Middler Classic 3	Adventure	June 27-30 **Family Camp 1** Sunday-Wednesday
WEEK 4 July 4-9			Night Owls	Night Owls	July 9-10 **Weekend Family Camp** Friday-Saturday
WEEK 5 July 11-16	Junior Classic 5 Try-it 5	Pathfinder Classic 5	Music	Adventure	
WEEK 6 July 18-23	Day Camp Monday-Friday	Art	Mini Adventure *Previously Pioneer*	Senior High Classic	July 21-24 **Family Camp 2** Wednesday-Saturday
WEEK 7 July 25-30	Nature Explorers	Nature Explorers	Nature Explorers		

NEW Info and FAQs

Why are there four age groups? We split the youngest age group (previously known as Juniors) into two groups to better provide programming and group dynamics for both campers and staff.

What is Try-it? For our youngest campers, we are bringing back the option for half-week stays. This provides the opportunity to try out three days and two nights.

Why is Senior High Classic not during week 3? The ELCA National Youth Gathering is held every three years during the final week of June. These are the same dates as week 3 of camp at MLR. We want to make sure that anyone who has the opportunity to attend the gathering can do so and still attend summer camp.

Why are the program groups sorted by grade completed instead of age? This allows for ease of registration and cabin assignments. For example, campers with summer birthdays will be placed with peers who are more similar to them.

Are there any other discounts available? In addition to our early bird discount, we do provide discounts for campers who attend multiple weeks and for families who send multiple campers. Full and partial scholarships are also available for ANY family in need. We never turn campers away!

SYNOD Youth Events

COMING SOON

SEEKERS

Students 3rd-5th

March 13th-15th 2027

Mar Lu Ridge



NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING

June 28th to July 2nd 2027

Minneapolis

Learn more about the Gathering by scanning the QR Code

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 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!





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. November: canned chicken or tuna. December: chicken noddle & tomato soup. January: boxed mac and cheese. February: granola bars and pretzels. March: shelf stable milk. Thank you!

Sharing Christ's Love

Become A Zion Ministry

SPONSOR

Do you have that special person in your life who doesn't need anything this Christmas? We have some ways that you can share your generosity that would make a major impact and difference here at Zion. Just like the ELCA Good Gifts, we will have a special card that you can take to let your loved one know you gave a gift that made a difference here at Zion.

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.



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.

Pastoral Emergency Fund



As Jesus says in Matthew 25:40, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." When people come to our church in need of emergency help and assistance, we use these funds to put people up in a hotel room for the night, help cover the cost of groceries, pay an electric bill, or simply cover a tank of gas. Any gift towards this fund allows us to the do the work our Lord calls us to do.



The Steeple

Zion's steeple can be seen for miles in the Valley. it serves as a physical reminder of being the Beacon in the Valley. Help us save this landmark today. A gift of a $50 will make sure the steeple remains standing in the valley for many more years to come!



Thrivent Action Teams Grants are micro-grants of $250 and are designed to be seed money for a project. In the past, Zion has used these to fund all sorts of ministry. And the best part about these grants is that each Thrivent Member gets two $250 grants each year to use for whatever orgranization they choose.

How can you help? Let us know you are a Thrivent Member and we will contact you throughout the year when a project or need comes up.

In 2024, we received over $2,000 from the Thrivent Choice Dollars program. If you are a Thrivent member, each year you are able to direct a portion of money to whatever charitable organization you choose. Check your account and remember Zion as you live and give generously.

Direct your
Thrivent Choice
Dollars
Today!

Aero Energy
HOUSE OF WORSHIP PROGRAM

Small donations from a committed congregation make a difference.

The Aero Energy House of Worship Program is a donation program established by Aero Energy to provide Aero Energy customers an opportunity to give to our church To participate, Aero Energy customers sign up by phone or online after which Aero Energy donates 4 cents for every gallon of fuel they use to us. Just think, if 100 Aero Energy customers from our congregation participate, our church could receive an annual $3,000.00 donation *(this number is based 750 gal/year average fuel use per participant).*

AERO energy
EMPLOYEE OWNED. CUSTOMER APPROVED.

Sign up for the Aero Energy House of Worship Program online at AeroEnergy.com/HOW or call 888-827-1713.

Poinsettia Orders and Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Monetary Gifts

The Altar Guild will be accepting poinsettia orders and LWR monetary gifts through November 29, 2026. All poinsettia orders and LWR gifts must be in by November 29. You may pick up order forms for poinsettias and LWR gifts at the church office. Please complete the appropriate form and mail it with your check to the church or drop it off at the office after the Saturday evening or Sunday morning services.



2026 POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Poinsettia orders will be accepted through November 29, 2026. Poinsettias are $11.00 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 November 29. No orders after that date please.**

2026 Order Form for Poinsettias

Each Poinsettia is $11.00 **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 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 $11.00. 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 November 29, 2026, 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.

2026 Monetary Gift for LWR

Each gift is $11.00 **Total Amount enclosed $_____**

In Memory of:	**Given by:**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

In Honor of:	**Given by:**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Flower Chart and Coffee Hour Chart 2027

The 2027 flower chart will be posted outside the Living Library after Thanksgiving. The cost of the altar flowers is $72.00 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 and nursing home members that receive them after the services. In addition to flowers, you can sponsor the coffee hour on Sunday Morning. It is the same price as the flowers and you can sponsor the coffee hour in memory or in honor of someone just as you would for the flowers. Sponsoring the coffee hour does not require you to purchase, make, or clean up. Our hospitality volunteers will continue to do that part.



Our 2026 Holiday Assistance Program is now open for registrants and will close on Friday, November 20th. Each year, we serve about 100 families and 200 children, all made possible by our generous community.

Holiday In-Person Distribution will take place on Saturday, December 19th at the Middletown Volunteer Fire Department's Social Activities Building at 1 Fireman's Lane, Middletown, MD.

This year, we will support local families by donating the following items.

Teens and Children will receive:

- $100 gift card of your choice to either Amazon or Walmart
- Younger aged children will receive a toy
- Older tweens and teens will receive a bag of toiletries

Families will receive:

- Families of 4 will receive a $100 grocery card to either Safeway, Weis or Walmart
- Families of 5-7 will receive a $150 grocery gift card
- Families of 8 or more will receive a $200 gift card

How to register:

- Families that wish to participate in our program may register for assistance by completing the https://forms.gle/va3XodMzWp4dvSXD9
- Applicants must submit documentation of their residence and participation with state or federal agencies, or qualification under ALICE standards.
- Collection times will be issued after all requirements are met.

How to contribute:

- You may make a donation on our https://www.mvphp.org/donate-now On the dropdown menu, please select 2026 Holiday Assistance, then make a donation to the general holiday fund or choose to support an entire local family.
- Toys, toiletries and other item donations will be collected at Christmas in the Valley and other events leading up to December 12th.
- If you have questions, please email us at mvphpmd@gmail.com or phone us at 301-371-3119.

Minstry Updates

You can make an impact!

Yes, you read the numbers correctly. We are currently $92,416 behind for the year. As you know, the cost of just about everything has increased, and churches are not exempt from those rising costs. The Church Council, Finance Committee, and Stewardship Team are working together to explore creative ways to address our deficit and put Zion on stronger financial footing.

How can you help in the meantime? First, pray. God hears our prayers and wants us to bring our worries, concerns, and hopes to God. Please keep Zion, its leaders, and our ministry in your prayers as we navigate this challenge together.

Second, consider increasing your weekly giving by $10–$15. If every family were able to make this small increase, we could make significant progress toward closing our deficit by the end of the year. We recognize that not everyone is in a position to give more, and that is okay. But if those who are able contribute a little more, together we can make a big difference!

Thank you for your continued generosity, your prayers, and your commitment to Zion. We are all part of this ministry, and by working together in faith, we can continue sharing Christ's love, growing in faith, and serving others.

Finance Snapshot

YTD Income: $423,246

YTD Expenses: $515,662

What is the average weekly offering?

$9842.95

How much do we need each week to meet our Budget?

$12,278.29



You can make a difference today! Scan the QR code to see how you can reimagine your generosity!



Remember us on December 1st. We set a goal to raise $2,000 to support the minstry at Zion

JOY +50 (Just Older Youth) Lunch



J.O.Y. 50+ seniors have been enjoying lunch and programs/bingo for three years now. The J.O.Y 50+ 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 still $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 alexamasser@gmail.com. Everyone welcome!



2027 JOY 50+ lunch dates

Jan 20 Feb 17 Mar 17 Apr 21

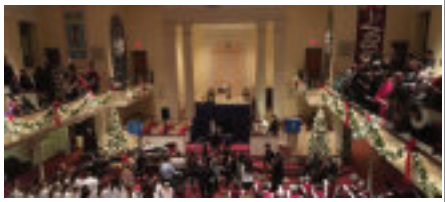
May 19 Jun 16 Jul 21 Aug 18

Sep 15 Oct 20 Nov 17

Snow policy: Joy +50 will follow the FPCS snow closings

Decorating Zion for Christmas!

Altar Guild members will be decorating the church for Christmas on December 1, 2026. We could use a little help if you have some free time. We always have fun decorating, so we hope you can join us!



Pick Up Your Church Directory!



Church directories are still available for all members. They are free, though we do ask for a suggested donation of $10 to help cover the cost of printing.



The Zion Quilters are making soup & subs for Super Bowl on Sunday, February 14, 2027. Pickup will be from 10-1 pm in Zion's Social Room, 107 W Main St, Middletown. Soup variety is ham & bean and vegetable beef. $9 per quart. Sub varieties will include ham & cheese, coldcut and turkey. All subs are 8" and will include lettuce, tomato, onion, mayo and a pickle spear separately packaged. Sub cost is $9.00. Also included as an option is a salad bowl (lettuce, cucumber, tomato, onion and meat). Dressing will be included. All soup, subs & bowls MUST be pre-ordered by 2/7/2027. Call 301-514-4479 or email alexamasser@gmail.com. Zion Quilters thanks the congregation and the community for their support.

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.

We meet on the last Monday of the month at 1 p.m.in the parking lot.



Noisy Offering Updates

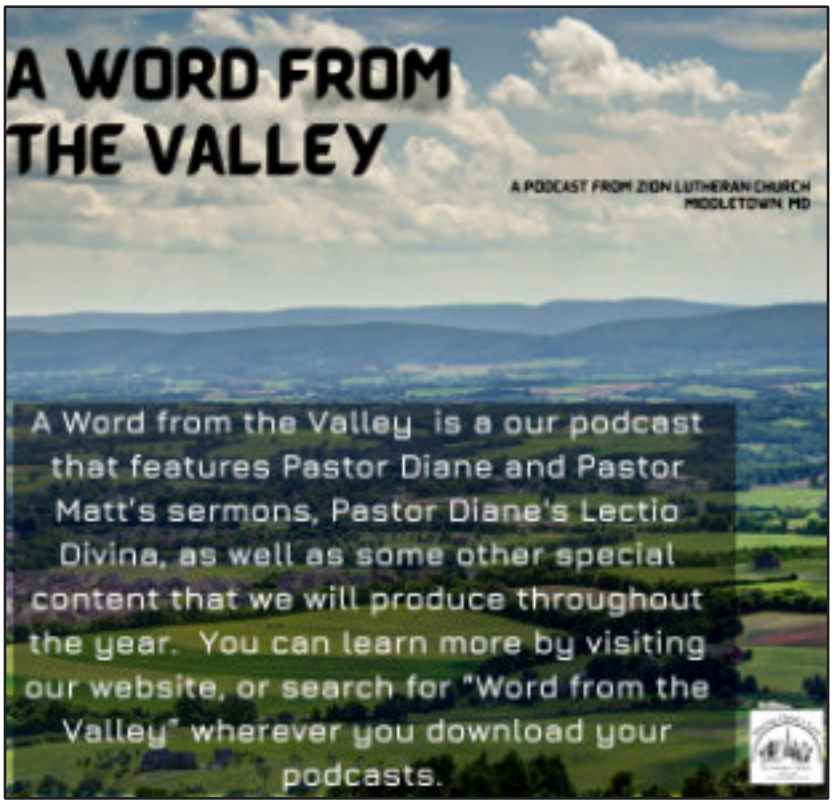
September—Lutheran Disaster Response **$414.11**
October—Frederick Rescue Mission **$357.82**

Thank you to all who donated!

Upcoming Noisy Offerings

November 14th & 15th **ELCA World Hunger**
December 14th & 15th **Religious Coalition**

Thank you for Generosity!!!



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 286,607 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"

Official Notice
Town Hall and Annual Meeting Dates!

Town Hall—Saturday, January 23, 2027
at 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall—Sunday, January 24, 2027
at 10:00 a.m.
Annual Meeting—January 31, 2027
Snow Date—February 7, 2027
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 16. 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. Please email reports to macbru@comcast.net.

2027 Pledge Campaign

In baptism, we promise to "proclaim Christ in word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace". Your gifts of time, talent, and money have blessed our church, the local community, and the wider world this year. Your incredible generosity this past year has enabled Zion to share Christ's love, grow in faith, and serve others. Thank you for stepping up at a crucial moment to increase your giving for our shared ministry—thank you. It's time to share your love again!

Because of you, 13 kids from Zion were able to go to Mar-Lu-Ridge and receive a $200 scholarship to offset the cost of camp. Older members of our community have a place to go every month and receive lunch and fellowship through the JOY Luncheon. We served over 500 hot dogs as part of the Halloween Parade. 40 kids participated in our Vacation Bible School program where they not only learned that Jesus loves them, but were also fed a hot meal each night. And these are just a few of the incredible things happening at Zion. As we look forward to 2027, we are excited for another year of inviting, growing, and serving.

Will you take a momemnt to prayerfully fill out a pledge card this year? You are invited to return your pledge card the next time you are at worship or drop it in the mail. If you would rather fill out your pledge card online, visit our website and click on the Pledge Card link on our front page or scan the QR code. We will bless these pledge cards on December 6 at our Combined Worship service.



I intend to give $_____ of my/our gifts each week/month/year (circle one) for 2027 Current Ministry Expenses and Benevolence

Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

Email:_____

Phone Number_____

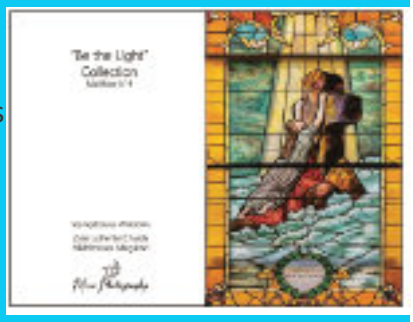
x_____

Please Sign

You can fill your pledge card out online by scanning the QR Code

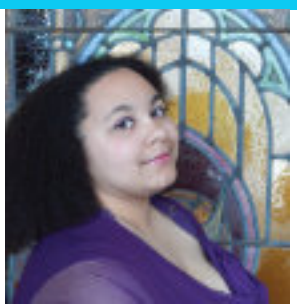
Take Zion's treasured windows home with you!





- Perfect gift for friends, family or yourself
- Keepsake box includes 12 blank note cards (2 of each window)
- Photographed by a local artist, Reanna Muse
- $25.00 per box
- All proceeds go to "With Open Arms" Mar-Lu-Ridge Renovation Project and Zion's Tanzania Support Project

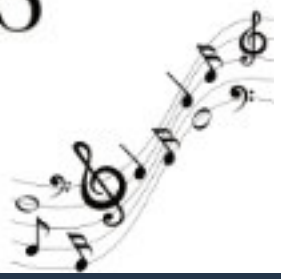
You can purchase the Cards in the Church Office



Violin Lessons

with Dr. Katelyn McClinton

Location: Zion Lutheran Church Middletown
107 W Main Street
Middletown, MD
Contact at katelynmcclinton@gmail.com





I would like to thank everyone for all of the nice cards that I received at the time of my twin sister's passing. It was such a comfort and also for Pastor Diane's visit.

Barbara Adams

MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY

Take a Break. Grow in Faith.



Take a break from the busyness of life and spend time in God's Word with us. Join us once a month for conversation, learning, and fellowship.

THIRD MONDAY NIGHT AT 6:30 P.M.
IN THE LIBRARY

Welcome Baby:
Maggie Boyd

New Members:
Shirley Hyssong

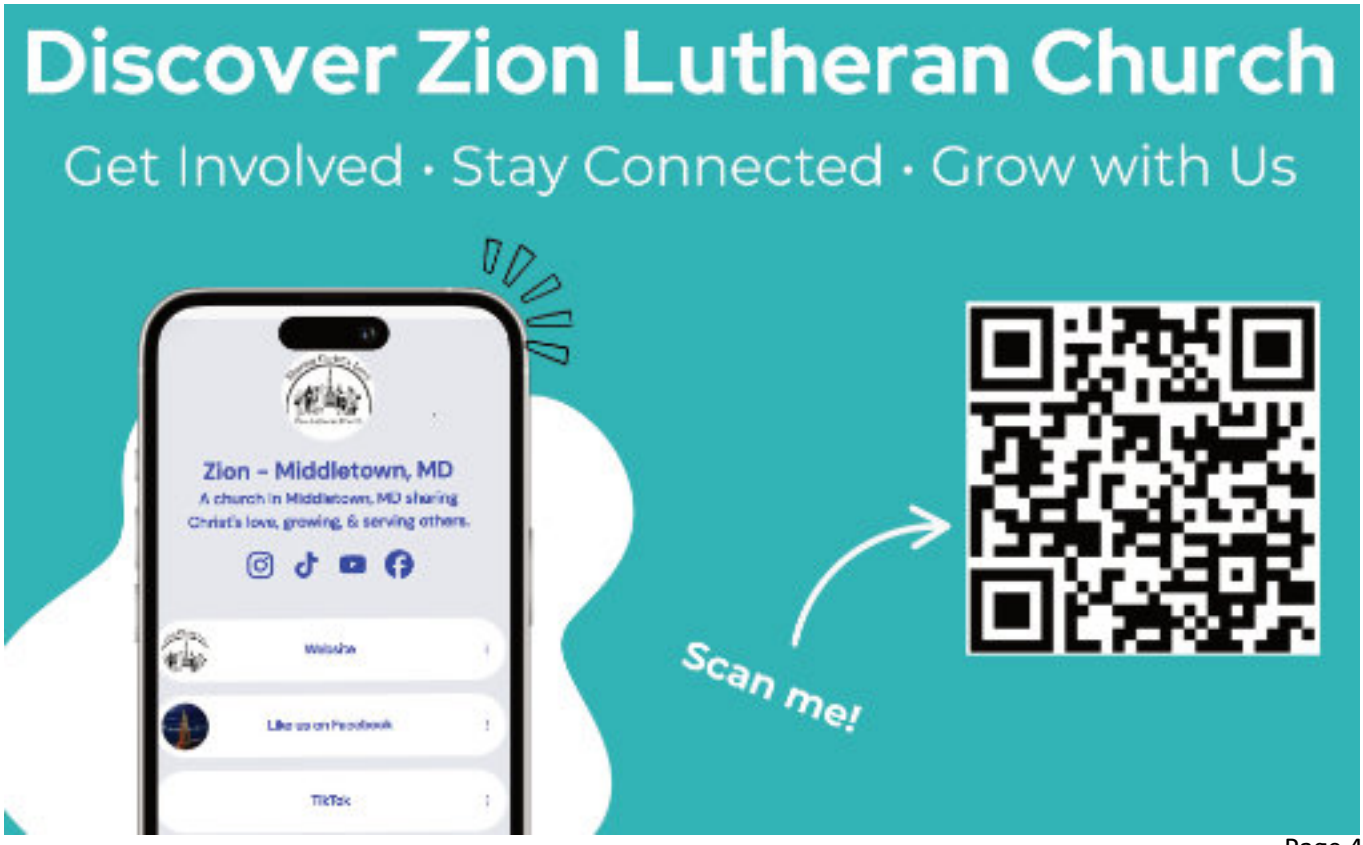


With our deepest sympathy we keep in our thoughts and prayers the families of:
Grace Routzahn
Kieffer Crummitt, Sr.
Suzanne Bussard
Richard Brandenburg



Addison Hopson, Jill Sagez, Jim Huckleberry, Jim Cartlidge, Christopher Gray, Jim McMorrow, Jennifer Shankle, Tristan Swiney, Susan Dirndorfer, Mike Fath, Bill Blair, Karen Carpenter, Jake Straits, Linda Stottlemyer, Sarah Routzahn, Jim Allen, Sarah Gladhill, Graham Haverfield, Karen Muscolino, Mackenzie Miessau, Pat McIntosh, Natalie, Margaret Guyton, Kim Buhrman, Harriett Hahn, Gary Fulmer, Carrie Basler, Robert Berkey, Brittany Mushuda, Benedict Phelps, Colin Sweigert, Shirley Hyssong, Samn Huffer, Marty Appleby, Judith Smith, Jackie Bello, Trish Tollefson, Deb Kahihikolo
Military: Eric Saxton

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.



Evangelical Lutheran Church Zion
107 W Main Street
Middletown MD 21769

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 be taken to our online giving portal.

AND THANK YOU!