

THE BEACON

A MINISTRY OF ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
FALL 2026 EDITION

Neighbor



Upcoming Events

First Sunday of the Month	Middle and High School Youth Group from 4—6 p.m.
First Sunday of the Month	Youth Group from 6-8 p.m. (First meeting is September 7)
First Thursdays of the Month	Table Talk at 6 p.m. (See bulletin and email for location)
Second Monday of the Month	Council Meeting
Third Monday of the Month	Monthly Bible Study at 6:30 p.m.
Third Wednesday of the Month	JOY Luncheon from 12-2 p.m.
Last Monday of the Month	Hope to Faith at 3 p.m.

August 12	Baseball Night at the Key's
August 15 & 16	Backpack Blessing at all Worship Services
August 28	Pizza Bingo at 6 p.m.
September 6	Youth Group at Nutter's Ice Cream in Sharpsburg
September 7	Office Closed
September 8	GriefShare Resumes at 6 p.m.
September 12 & 13	Bible Blessing and Presentation at all Worship Services
September 13	Kids' Sunday School Classes Begin
September 13	First Confirmation Class at 10 a.m.
September 13	FootPrints at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.
September 21	DayOff Program to Jumbo's Pumpkin Patch
September 26	Heritage Days Festival in Middletown (No Saturday Night Worship)



October 1	Socktoberfest Begins
October 4 & 11	First Communion Gatherings (both for new kids and refresher) at 12:30 p.m.
October 11	FootPrints at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.
October 14	Trip to Baltimore
October 21	Sour Beef Dinner at Zion City Hall (Baltimore)
October 24	Middletown Halloween Parade and Block Party
October 25	Combined Worship for Reformation Sunday and FootPrints with a Potluck Meal Following Worship
November 1	All Saints Sunday Worship
November 3	DayOff Program
November 7	Wooly Retreat at Mar-Lu-Ridge
November 8	FootPrints at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m..
November 21 and 22	Christ the King Special Worship

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



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.

Proposed Value Statement

At the July 2026 Council Meeting, after months of discernment and prayer, the Council finalized our congregation's values and created the following statement. The Council is asking for feedback and will have some formal time this Fall for you to offer feedback. Please prayerfully consider the following statement:

Zion is a Christian spiritual community 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. We acknowledge we will fall short but through forgiveness and practice, we will strive to follow Christ's commands and grow into the loving people God has created us to be.



Announcing a New Joint Director of Youth and Family Ministry

Email: cyfdirector@ZionMiddletown.org
Phone: 301-371-6500



Alix Albright

Hi! I'm Alexandra "Alix" Albright, and I'm excited to be serving as the Joint Youth and Family Director at Zion Lutheran Church and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Before stepping into youth ministry, I spent five wonderful years as an elementary school teacher at St. Thomas More Academy. While I loved being in the classroom, I'm grateful for this new opportunity to walk alongside young people in their faith.

One of the things that makes this role especially meaningful is that I have the

opportunity to serve the very communities that once poured into me as a youth. The encouragement, friendships, and faith I experienced helped shape who I am today, and it's a true blessing to now give back in the same way. I earned my Bachelor of Applied Science from UNC Greensboro and my Master of Arts in Teaching from Mount St. Mary's University. My background in education has given me a passion for helping young people learn, grow, and discover the unique gifts God has given them.

Outside of church, I enjoy traveling to new places, getting lost in a good book, trying new recipes in the kitchen, and spending as much time as I can doting on my niece. I'm looking forward to getting to know the youth and families of both congregations and growing together in faith and fellowship.

After nearly three years of searching, we are so happy to have Alix join our ministry team!

The ability to have Alix at Zion is a result of a partnership with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Frederick. While she will not be at Zion every week, we look forward to this partnership and being able to have a very qualified individual lead our children, youth and family ministries. Her first day will be August 10th.



A WORD FROM PASTOR DIANE

¹⁸ *Do not remember the former things*

or consider the things of old.

¹⁹ *I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth; do you not
perceive it?*

*I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.*

(Isaiah 43:18-19)

For over two years (plus perhaps even a year more before that!), we have been working to have someone come and be our Youth and Family Director. We tried to make connections close to home, across the Synod- we even had a bite from Pennsylvania! But the right timing, position offering, and available person just was not happening. Youth Ministry is not what it used to be, like many ministries of the Church, due to lots

of factors. Eventually, we teamed up with Good Shepherd to think about how we could work together to find someone who could work with both congregations to help us minister to and with younger folks.

When God's people are looking for ways to come out of hard situations, they commonly do not see or perceive where their help is actually going to come from. They tend to look in the places they have always thought help would come. They become dejected when those places don't produce the help they're used to. (Yup, I was feeling that!) But then, God has this way of surprising God's people. I commonly think of these verses from Isaiah when something new happens I hadn't been expecting. God is always up to something new. I'm just usually thinking about the old ways I am used to doing things and not looking for something to come out of nowhere as God is so want to do.

Alix came out of nowhere. I was hoping that we would find someone soon from the Youth Ministry network of the ELCA as we were about to change the job description to make it more appealing. Then I was handed an envelope one Sunday with Alix's resume. Alix just came out of the blue sharing why she thought she would be a good candidate to fill the position that she knew once existed and that we had been doing our best to support in the meantime. With more conversation with Good Shepherd and with some support from others in the past who have funded Youth Ministry for perpetuity, we were able to offer a

beginning salary that acknowledges Alix's gifts and our hope to continue to grow Youth and Family Ministry. When we least expected it, God provided someone from among us to help us do a new thing.

As Alix begins her ministry, we give God thanks for this new thing God is doing. We are grateful that God brought this idea to her mind. We are excited to learn from and grow together with the folks at Good Shepherd. Please pray for Alix and this ministry. Please support her by reminding her of your name, helping when she asks for assistance or chaperones, and celebrating the work she does. God is doing a new thing and made a way where it seemed like there was none. Thanks be to God!

In gratitude and celebration,

Pastor Diane Ray



A WORD FROM PASTOR MATT

I was driving around on a Saturday afternoon a few weeks ago with the radio playing in the background. I was enjoying the cooler temperatures and letting my mind wander aimlessly. On the radio was *The Moth Radio Hour*, and a man named Ron Hart was talking about his daughter's love of reading.

You see, his wife was the bookworm, and he was not. But his wife believed that instilling a love for reading in their children would open the door to greater opportunities and success. So, it became his job to read to his daughters every night before bed.

His oldest daughter's favorite book was *10 Minutes to Bed*. We have a copy of that book, and I know it well. It was one of my favorite books to read to Thomas

and Isaiah because it was short! Ron described one evening when his daughter was sitting in a chair reading the book to her dolls. When she reached the final page, her dad burst into the room and shouted the last words of the book: "TIME FOR BED!" She jumped into his arms, and he carried her off to bed.

Eighteen years later, his daughter was accepted into an outstanding college because, just as his wife had hoped, she had grown to love reading and succeed academically. Ron was sharing this story on the very day he dropped her off for her freshman year.

By that point of the story, Ron was crying—and so was I.

Usually, these *Moth* stories are funny. That's why I had it playing in the background. Instead, I found myself pulling over to find a tissue because I couldn't stop crying.

You see, it's my job to put the kids to bed, which means I'm the one who reads the books. Some nights are exhausting, and all I want is for them to fall asleep so I can move on to everything else that needs to be done. But every once in a while, I'm reminded what an incredible privilege it is to be their dad.

The other night, after I tucked the twins into bed, I said, "Good night. I love you." Joseph replied, "I love you too, Dad." I think it was the first time I had ever heard him say those words. I already knew he loved me because every time I

leave the house, he completely loses his mind. But hearing him say it changed something.

It also made me wonder how often we leave those words unsaid. I don't think we tell each other "I love you" nearly enough. For many of us—especially those of us who speak English—the word *love* has become so common that it sometimes loses its depth and weight. Yet imagine how different our world might be if we were more intentional about expressing genuine love for one another.

As we reminded our children during VBS, Jesus tells us to "love your neighbor as yourself". I'll admit, as someone who gets uncomfortable giving hugs or even expressing my feelings out loud, that isn't always easy. But love is rarely about what comes naturally; it is about choosing to see Christ in one another.

If we can see the love of Christ in another person, and they can see the love of Christ in us, then perhaps we will begin to recognize Christ's love all around us. And maybe—just maybe—that love can move us to set aside our weapons of war and instead take up the tools of peace, grace, and love.

So my friends, let's do the hard work: read the books and share the love. That's how we change the world.

Pastor Matt Dyer

So, what's been happening?



Confirmation Sunday

In May, we celebrated and welcomed three of our young adults into full membership through the Rite of Confirmation: Tristan Swiney, Andrew Stup, and Trent Saxton. Our Confirmation program runs roughly three years and is a mix of education and formation. Confirmation is one way we raise up our baptized members into the body of Christ by teaching them the basics of the faith using the Small Catechism and the Bible as our guide for teaching. This past year, we met on the first Sunday of each month from September to May. Each confirmand is given a gift of an Oxford Study Bible as well as a hand-picked confirmation verse for each of them to ponder. In the Lutheran Church, the act of confirming someone is different from our Catholic and Episcopal siblings. For us, confirmation is not a sacrament but is understood as an educational, faith forming ministry. In Catholic and Episcopal circles, the bishop is the only one who can perform the Rite of Confirmation. For Lutherans, it can be done by the parish pastor(s). Because of that, we are able to involve the family of the confirmand more in the rite. We ask the confirmand to invite whomever they want from their family to join them and lay a hand on their head.





Take me out to the ball game!

On a beautiful summer evening in June, we took our trusty van on a trip down to Baltimore to enjoy a baseball game at Camden Yards. The O's had a bit of a hard night but since then, have been playing really well. I guess we needed to go and leave them with a little good luck! This year, two of our kids got game balls! We all had a lot of fun, ate way too many hot dogs, and cheered on the mighty O's! There are still tickets available to the August 12 Frederick Keys' Game. Sign up in the Office today!



The Church Van Gets a Facelift

This spring we dropped our van off at Mountain Postal to make it a little bit more personalized. Our van has served Zion faithfully over the years transporting people from event to event, but we wanted it to also serve as a vehicle for evangelism and market our church. What is neat about this wrap is that you can still see out of the windows while inside the van. The Church Van is available to be used by any of Zion's ministry teams and committees for their work.

Pastor Kathy's Retirement

A large group from Zion made the trek up to St. Matthew in Hanover, PA to celebrate the retirement of Pastor Kathy from active ministry. Pastor Kathy served as the Senior Pastor at Zion from 2007-2019. We give thanks for Pastor Kathy's ministry and bid her some well-deserved rest and relaxation!



Golf Tournament

On June 1st, we hosted our second Golf Tournament and raised over \$17,000 to be used for the repair and maintenance of Zion's Steeple. The weather was perfect for a day of golfing. After all the teams played 18 holes, we gathered for lunch, door prizes, and a silent auction. Thank you to the Golf Committee for putting together the event and we especially want to thank Deb Reichelt for going above and beyond to make the Golf Tournament a success!



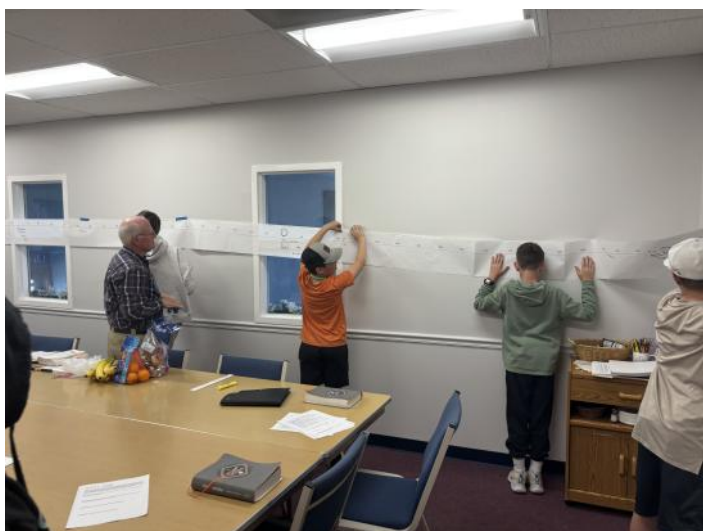
The Ladies' Spring Fling

The Ladies' Spring Fling this past May was another great one. We broke out the fancy silverware and decked out the Social Room for this special occasion. The men of the church served a meal of chicken parmesan, spaghetti, and salad. Yes, the menu was different, but it was so good! Thanks to Lisa and Gary Beistel for their extra cooking expertise! This year, the ladies made these cute wall hangings. Special thanks to everyone who made this night possible!



God's Timeline

This past year, the Confirmation class spent its time studying the Old Testament. We are only able to cover a fraction of what is in the Old Testament, so for our final class, we wanted to show where all these stories (and some other stories that we did not have time to teach them) fit into a timeline. But remember, the Old Testament covers a large period of time, so in order to make a timeline that was both inclusive and readable, we found some old dot matrix paper and started making our own timeline. We divided the kids up into teams to read and investigate a story in the Old Testament and put it on the timeline. After we worked on the Old Testament, we moved up to the first century and filled in a few dates there, followed by the 1500's, and then finally the 2000's. We had the kids mark their birthdates on the timeline to show how we are all connected in God's Timeline and that in 2,000 years from now, people might be marking our confirmands' faith story on their timeline.



Frederick Symphony Orchestra at Zion

In July 2026, we welcomed a small group from the Frederick Symphony Orchestra as they performed a free concert for the community. Close to 100 people filled into our pews to enjoy the concert which is pretty neat because one of the final games of the World Cup was on at the same time as the concert! We have been blessed with a beautiful space perfect for concerts and recitals like this. In the past, other groups have used this space and we hope that in the future, more of these types of recitals and concerts can happen here.

Vacation Bible School 2026

Won't you be my neighbor?

Many of us grew up with Fred Rogers on the television singing that very iconic line, *Won't you be my neighbor?* Since then, Daniel Tiger has taken on Fred Roger's legacy. Many know that Fred Rogers was a Presbyterian pastor, so his question, while not limited to Christianity, was based on the parable of the Good Samaritan. For a week, we explored who exactly is our neighbor and how we can be a good neighbor to others!



Pastor Matt Preaches at Rural Retreat, VA

This past May, Pastor Matt was invited to preach at his Internship congregation as they celebrated their 250th anniversary. Pastor Matt served the parish as a intern during 2010-2011. One of the things Pastor Matt focused on was the gift that St. Paul's Lutheran Church has been for the whole Church. Because of their internship program that they hosted for many years, numerous Lutheran congregations have benefited from their faithful stewarding of future leaders. If you want to listen to the sermon, scan the QR code to be directed to our podcast. And while you are there, consider subscribing!



Children's Choir

Originally, the Children's Choir was scheduled to sing at the Combined Worship Service on Pentecost as we celebrated the confirmation of three of our young adults. But schedules changed and we ended up moving the service a week earlier to Mother's Day. The change worked out really well and a bunch of kids stepped out of their comfort zone to perform for us. Even a few adults got in on the action too— thanks Brian and Meghan! Zion is incredibly blessed with not only the critical mass to have a Children's Choir but also the talent. Emily Hopson works with the kids in Sunday School twice a month to teach them songs so that they can learn and share with us like they did on Confirmation Sunday. We look forward to starting another fall of singing and dancing with Mrs. Emily!



Historical Tour

Back in June, we welcomed Redeemer Lutheran Church from Damascus, MD into our Sanctuary for a tour and talk about Zion's historical impact on the area. Mary Ann, our Archivist, gave a wonderful presentation about Zion and answered questions from the group. The Living History Ministry Team's goal is to offer a historical perspective that both informs the past in the hope of shaping the future as a Christian community. Zion has been around for 285 years and a lot has happened in the life of the congregation. By telling our story, we hope to make a positive impact on the future.

Worship Opportunities

Blessing of the Backpacks

At all Worship Services on the weekend of August 15th and 16th

Bring your backpack, workbag, toolbox, etc. and we will bless it! If you will be away that weekend, don't worry because we will have extra stickers and prayers for you to pick up the next time you are in worship.



25
OCT

REFORMATION

POTLUCK

BRING A DISH TO SHARE!

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
WORSHIP ON OCTOBER 25

WE HAVE A LOT TO CELEBRATE THIS DAY:
50-YEAR MEMBERS, FIRST COMMUNION
RECIPIENTS, AND GOD'S EVER ABIDING
WORD LIVING AMONG US!



Worship Services

Saturday:

5 p.m. Casual Worship

Sunday:

**9 a.m. Contemporary
Worship**

11 a.m. Traditional Worship

Mark your calendars!

October 25, 2026

10am

Reformation Sunday

We will celebrate God's Word living, moving and breathing in our community with special music, recognition of 50-year members, and celebrating those who will be taking Holy Communion for the first time.

**Sola Scriptura | Sola Fide | Sola Gratia
Solus Christus | Soli Deo Gloria**

"From the beginning of my Reformation I have asked God to send me neither dreams, nor visions, nor angels, but to give me the right understanding of His Word, the Holy Scriptures; for as long as I have God's Word, I know that I am walking in His way and that I shall not fall into any error or delusion." -Martin Luther



All Saints Worship

October 31st and November 1st

We remember those blessed saints who died this past year and now reside in God's care as well as those who have died but remain influential to us today.



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

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.

Donuts and coffee



Every Sunday

at 10 a.m.



CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY

A Journey through the Seasons

November 21st and 22nd

A special liturgy 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.



Become A Zion Ministry

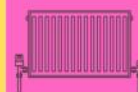
SPONSOR

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.



A Radiator

Our heating system in the church is getting older and harder to start up each year. We spend a significant sum of money to repair leaking pipes. We are beginning to research new options to heat the sanctuary but that will be a major expense. Your gift of a \$100 helps us make sure our holy space is warm and comfortable this winter and for many winters to come.

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.

Project Tanzania



A KBC faculty member helping with the building demolition.

URGENT APPEAL

**Help Rebuild The Burned-Down
Men's Dormitory**

On the night of July 7-8, 2026, the men's dormitory at Kiabakari Bible College in the Mara Diocese of Tanzania was burned to the ground. The building needs to be rebuilt. Demolition has begun, and efforts are being made to raise money for its replacement.

Mission Critical: Kiabakari Bible College is the training school for lay evangelists serving the Lutheran congregations in the Mara Diocese, our Companion Synod. KBC graduates serve as parish lay ministers and mission developers and are a major contributor to the proclamation of the gospel in that region.

Students will be resuming classes later this summer, and a replacement dormitory is needed to house the male students studying there. The replacement cost is estimated at \$68,000.

The Delaware-Maryland Synod has been in a supportive relationship with KBC for many years. Now is a critical time for us to provide funding.

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 "KBC Dorm". 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

A prayer for the Kiabakari rebuild: Gracious Heavenly Father, we lift before You Kiabakari Bible college and especially the students and staff affected by the loss of their men's dormitory, asking that you provide comfort, protection, and every resource needed to rebuild what has been lost. May this trial strengthen their faith, unite your people in generous support, and bring glory to Christ as you provide abundantly according to your perfect will. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Mar-Lu-Ridge



Zion showed up at Mar-Lu-Ridge!

This year, Zion really showed up at Mar-Lu-Ridge by sending 13 kids to camp. A big hinderance for summer camp is the cost but we have been blessed with many generous people throughout the years to help create a fund to provide scholarships for kids to attend camp. For many of the kids that went this year, it was the first time being away from home and on their own. They learned about God, how to care for themselves, and created lasting memories!



Support the amazing work of Mar-Lu-Ridge today. Scan the QR Code today to see how you can give generously and support campers, cabin leaders, their staff, and their mission.



Community Events



Zion Heritage Day Luncheon - September 26, 2026

Desserts, Desserts and You or Just You are needed!

Your help would be greatly appreciated to assist with Zion's Heritage luncheon or booth. Please consider helping at our Heritage Day activities. **Even just for one hour, would be greatly appreciated.**

Desserts needed for Heritage Day Luncheon

Cakes, Pies, Cookies and Brownies (see sign up by Office)

Any questions, please call Deb Reichelt at the church @

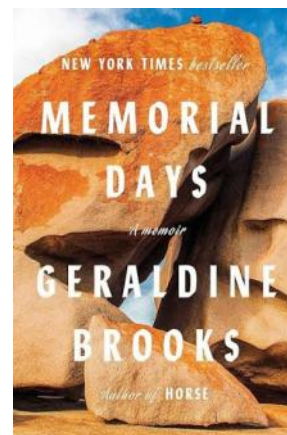
Seeking Volunteers for Zion's Heritage Day Booth!

Zion will have a booth in front of the church for Heritage Day. We need volunteers to fill time slots between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. This is a great time to share and showcase all the ways that God is living and breathing in our congregation and town. Please consider spending part of your day representing Zion! Please talk to Sandy Bell or Pat McIntosh for more information. You can sign up on the Heritage Day easel outside the Church Office.



Aging Grace-Fully Series

Kindling Faith
at United Lutheran Seminary



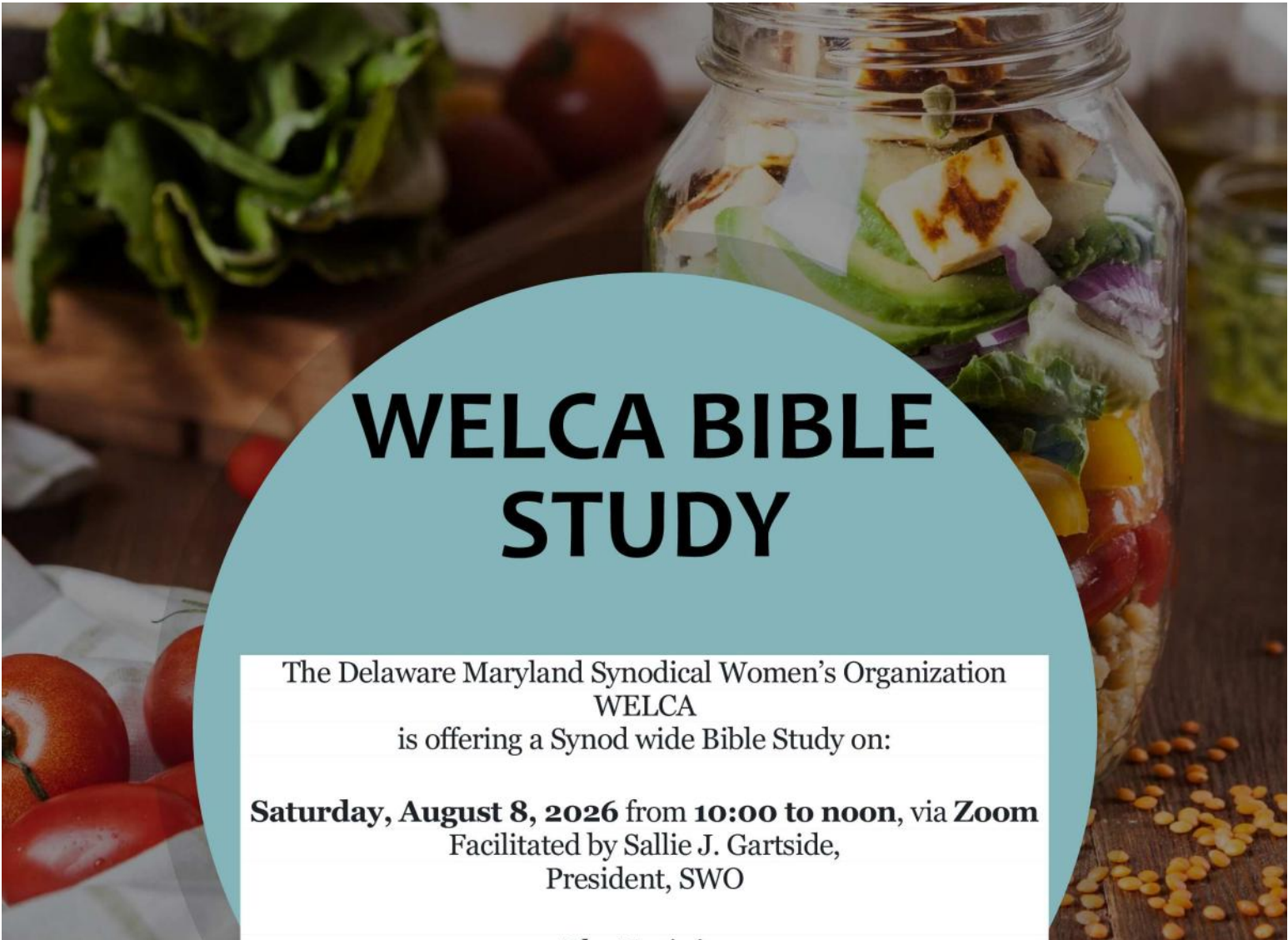
Chat with the Author—
Geraldine Brooks

September 10,
2026 @ 1:30 pm - 3:30
pm at United Lutheran
Seminary—Gettysburg
Campus

Cost is \$25 a person.
After the event, the au-
thor will be available to
sign books.



Register today by scanning
the QR Code



WELCA BIBLE STUDY

The Delaware Maryland Synodical Women's Organization
WELCA
is offering a Synod wide Bible Study on:

Saturday, August 8, 2026 from 10:00 to noon, via Zoom
Facilitated by Sallie J. Gartside,
President, SWO

The Topic is:
I am worthy.

Session one
I am created in God's image.
(No matter what anyone else says.)
BY SARA OLSON-SMITH

The Bible Study can be found in the June/July/August 2026 edition of Gather magazine, but you do not have to have a copy to participate. There is also information in the Summer edition of *The Evangel*.

You will need a NRSV Bible and the internet.

Send an email to sallieabn@aol.com to register
Space is limited.

Christian Education

First Communion Gatherings



Each week we celebrate the gift of Holy Communion as a way of reminding us that Jesus is truly present in the wine/grape juice and wafers. On Sunday, Oct. 4th and 11th, we will be hosting classes around Holy Communion at 12:30 p.m.. This

is for those who are ready to receive their First Communion, those who are exploring but not yet ready, and a refresher course for those who already receive. We will start with a pizza lunch at 12:00 p.m. and then talk and do an activity ending by 1:30 p.m. Those who will be receiving their First Communion will be recognized on Oct. 25th. **Please RSVP to the Church Office by Oct. 1st if you will be joining us.**



**Sunday, September 13
at 10 a.m.**

September 13 marks the return of Christian education classes at Zion for all ages, from Cradle Roll to Adult Education. This fresh start offers opportunities for spiritual growth and community engagement. Whether you're a parent, student, or lifelong learner, we look forward to growing together with you in your faith.



Thank you for helping to make VBS a success. Your continued support of prayers, time, and finances makes this ministry possible. We had a lot of fun this year exploring who are our neighbors.

If you missed our recap video, scan the QR code and check it out!





MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY

Take a Break. Grow in Faith.

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

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.

Adult Sunday School Calendar

Date	Teacher	Topic
August 2		Summer Break
August 9		Summer Break
August 16		Summer Break
August 23		Rev. Dr. Zimmanns' Holy Land Conversation
August 30		Summer Break
September 6	Donna Huffer	<i>Not God Enough: Why Your Small God Leads to Big Problems</i> Author: J.D. Greear Chapter 9
September 13	Donna Huffer	Chapter 10
September 20		Chapter 11
September 27		Chapter 12
October 4		Chapter 13
October 11		Chapter 14
October 18		Chapter 15
October 25	No Sunday School	Reformation Sunday
November 1	Donna Huffer	Chapter 16
November 8	Donna Huffer	Chapter 17 (Final)

The Christian Formation Ministry Team has been hard at work discerning and supporting the formation opportunities currently provided at Zion and implementing what may need to change to better serve our growth as disciples. The Team has formed two task forces to specially focus on youth and adult formation. Topics and themes for formation opportunities have been chosen that better help us remember who we are, know more about the place we call home at Zion, and practice what it means to live out our faith in community. Please pay close attention to your weekly announcement bulletins and e-mails to see upcoming Sunday School topics and themes for all ages that will be changing throughout the Fall.

If you are interested in helping us grow in faith, whether that's through a class or service opportunity for any age group, please speak with Jeff Derr or one of the pastors to become a part of this rejuvenating group.



YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

IGNITE YOUR FAITH

ZION'S YOUTH GROUP

**YOUTH GROUP WILL
MEET ON THE FIRST
SUNDAY OF MONTH
AT 4 P.M.**

**YOUTH GROUP IS OPEN TO
ALL MIDDLE AND HIGH
SCHOOL AGE KIDS! YOU DO
NOT NEED TO BE A MEMBER
OF ZION OR EVEN
LUTHERAN. DINNER WILL
ALWAYS BE PROVIDED.**

**YOUTH GROUP STARTS BACK UP SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6
AT 4:00 P.M. WITH A TRIP TO NUTTERS IN SHARPSBURG
FOR ICE CREAM AND SOME HANG OUT TIME. BRING
YOUR FRIENDS!**

This DayOff program is free thanks to generous donations!
Lunch is included. Jumbos will make sure everyone comes
home with a soccer ball size pumpkin. Jumbo's has a
wonderful playground and corn maze.

This is open to Elementary, Middle and High School Kids.

Extra chaperones are always needed and appreciated!!!!

Confirmation

BEGINS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

To better meet the needs of our confirmands, we are moving confirmation class from Sunday evenings to Sunday mornings. Parents and confirmands should plan to attend the first class together, as we have several exciting ideas to help make confirmation class a meaningful and rewarding experience for everyone.

Confirmation class will meet every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. in the new Youth Room.

Confirmation is a time not only for learning but also for building relationships. By moving from a once-a-month schedule to weekly classes, we hope to strengthen that important relational aspect of the program. We have also designed the class for both middle and high school students—those who have already been confirmed as well as those who are still preparing for Confirmation. The material we will be exploring this year is new and relevant for everyone in this age group.

WE GOT A DAY OFF!

The Next Date...

Monday, September 21

From 9-3 p.m.

with a trip to

Jumbo's Pumpkin Patch

SCAN
ME! >>



**DAYOFF PROGRAM
REGISTRATION**

And save the date...

Tuesday, Nov 3

(More details to
follow closer to the
date)



2026 Footprints Upcoming Dates

September 13th

October 11th

October 25th

November 8th

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.

Bible Presentation - September 13th



We will be handing out new Bibles on Sunday, September 13th to all Kindergarteners (and 1st and 2nd graders who haven't received one yet), 3rd graders and new Confirmation students. We will also have Bibles for adults if you are in need of one!

Mark Your Calendars for December

Hey, we get it...December is busy but we want to make sure these dates get on your calendar before things fill up! More details about these events will be in the next edition of the Beacon.

Wednesdays in Advent—December 2nd, 9th, 16th

Christmas in the Valley—December 5th

**Children's Christmas Pageant—December 6th
at 10 a.m.**

Advent Family Night—December 6th

**Christmas Eve Worship —
4 p.m., 7 p.m., and 10:30 p.m.**

Be sure to mark your calendars and look for details soon!

Ministry Updates

JOIN US



Come and join us for the first ever FREE Pizza Bingo night

Friday, Aug 28th at 6:00pm

What is Pizza Bingo? Just what it says...come and eat pizza while we play some hilarious games of Bingo.



 **Prizes?!?!? Every bingo winner gets to choose a mystery White Elephant gift. Will you unwrap a hidden treasure or something hilariously unexpected?**

An RSVP will make it helpful to know how many to plan for dinner. Please sign up in the Church Office or Call 301-371-6500. If you forget to RSVP, please come! We will always have space and room for you!

This is an intergenerational event. Everyone is welcome to be a part of the event.



21

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21 AT 5P.M.

Sour Beef Dinner

400 E Lexington St, Baltimore, MD, United States, Maryland 21202

Zion Church in Baltimore holds a Sour Beef Dinner every year. This dinner has been a long tradition in Baltimore and it is delicious! Tickets are around \$25 and well worth the money which also includes some entertainment. Plus, it is going to support a sister congregation! If you are interested in going, sign up in the Church Office know so that we can begin to organize the trip. Pastor Matt will handle the driving. You can find the sign up sheet in the Church Office or speak to Pastor Matt.



Wooly Retreat 2026

Are you a knitter, crocheter or even sewer? Consider joining the knitters to craft hats that will be donated to the local cancer and hospice patients or make preemie hats. Bring your own needles and yarn on November 7, 2026 from 9 to 3 p.m. at Mar-Lu-Ridge Potomac Lodge. You can stay all day or leave when you want. Enjoy great fellowship and know that you are giving those cancer patients warmth and comfort. Contact Alexa Masser 301-514-4479 or Shelly Gladhill 301-788-7585 with questions.



Did you know that the number one most needed item of the homeless is a clean pair of socks? People donating clothing rarely donate new socks. The homeless are susceptible to severe frostbite which could lead to amputation. Zion Quilters are sponsoring a Socktoberfest drive for the month of October. A box will be located near the Chapel at Zion Lutheran, Middletown MD for new clean packages of socks. All donations will be taken to the Religious Coalition for distribution to the needy.



**October 24, 2026 in the Parking Lot
Parade starts at 5 p.m. Dinner will be
served around 5:15 p.m.**

The town of Middletown and the Lions Club have agreed to allow us to provide dinner again after the Halloween Parade. Volunteers are needed for cooking, interacting with kids, and assisting with setup and cleanup. This is a great chance to engage with the community and get to know our neighbors. We are able to provide free food again this year thanks to a Thrivent's Action Team Grant.

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!





JOY +50 (Just Older Youth) Lunch

We have fun-we share, eat, remember, learn and LAUGH! Monthly luncheons include a time to dine together, fellowship and enjoy some special entertainment or speaker. The upcoming dates for the rest of 2026 are:

Aug 19-Potluck or Pay, meat provided-

Katelyn McClinton & Family Music

Sep 16-Miss Clela Ahalt's Beefaroni- Jim

Dent Hymn Sing

Oct 21-Veggie soup, Sloppy Joes – History of South Mountain Inn

Nov 18 – Thanksgiving/Christmas – Christmas Carol Sing-a-Long

This group is not just for the Lutheran community. Everyone in the Middletown Valley community is welcome! Cost is \$10 per person. Advance reservation is a must for planning purposes, please call the Zion's office at 301-371-6500 or Alexa 301-514-4479 or email Alexa at alexamasser@gmail.com



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.

September—Individual Cereal including oatmeal

October—canned spaghetti and ravioli

November—Canned tuna and chicken

December—instant ramen, canned chicken noodle soup and canned tomato soup

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.

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 in the Ramp or taken directly to the Food Bank on Wednesdays from 1-3 p.m.



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.



Finance Snapshot as of June 30

YTD Income: 256,466

YTD Expenses: \$291,935

What is the average weekly offering?

\$9,864.10

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

\$12,900.65

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. Scan the QR Code to Donate Today!



Being the beacon in the valley beyond worship...

Our building is not only used on Sunday mornings but is a meeting place for many community groups. Your generosity allows groups to meet and take action.

Here are a few:

- Zion Quilters & Knitters
- JOY Luncheon
- DayOff Program
- Youth Group & Confirmation Class
- Middletown Historic Society
- 4 H Meetings
- Vacation Bible School
- GriefShare Support Group
- Lifeline Screening
- Lions Club
- One God, One Voice
- CODA Meetings
- AA Meetings
- Girl Scouts
- NA Meetings



Noisy Offering Updates

May—Heartly House

\$544.12

June—Lutheran Campus Ministry

\$239.75

July—Middletown Vol. Fire Department

\$422.85

Thank you to all who donated!

Upcoming Noisy Offerings

August 15th and 16th

Global Refuge (Formerly L.I.R.S.)

September 19th and 20st

Lutheran Disaster Relief

October 17th and 18th

Frederick Rescue Mission

November 14th & 15th

ELCA World Hunger

December 19th & 20st

Beyond Shelter (Religious Coalition)



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 organization 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).



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



Decorate a Window in the Sanctuary

Individuals, families and/or groups within our church are invited to decorate windowsills in the Sanctuary!

Decorations will be on display from September 20th through November 22nd. The sills will be covered to protect the paint.

Decorate anytime before September 21st. Displays will need to be removed by November 24th.

Display size is approximately 16" deep by 54" wide

Contact the Church Office to reserve your spot! Windows will be reserved on "first-come, first-served" basis.

Don't miss this opportunity to be creative, have fun and work together to decorate the church!



Operation Christmas Child

October 18-November 15

How might you demonstrate God's love and share the gospel of Jesus Christ? Every shoebox gift placed into the hands of a needy child provides that opportunity.

Filling a shoebox with age appropriate school supplies, hygiene items and toys is a wonderful way to involve our children/grandchildren or neighborhood youngsters in caring for others less fortunate than ourselves. Praying for the child who will receive the gifts, including a note and photo is also encouraged.

Our main drive this year will be October 12th to November 9th. Our goal is 200 boxes. \$10 per shoebox donation is requested to defray international shipping and other processing costs. It also goes toward providing The Greatest Journey, a 12-lesson follow-up discipleship program for shoebox recipients. More than 2.4 million boys and girls made decisions for Christ in 2022.

Brochures detailing packing information (what and what not to include) will be available, as well as empty shoeboxes for you to take home; fill and return. Monetary gifts are also welcome. Donation boxes will be available at the Welcome Center.

There is the option to shop at the Shoebox Supply House in Shippensburg, PA, where for \$17.50 you can fill a box which includes the \$10.00 shipping fee. Linda Sanders and Linda Huckleberry will be going there the last part of October if you'd like them to shop for you.

Let's be the hands of Jesus as we pack one or more shoeboxes for needy boys and girls, knowing we will be bringing joy to the hearts of God's children. Any questions please contact, Linda Huckleberry at 301-371-6677 or email huckhuff@gmail.com. Or Linda Sanders at 301-676-3272 or email lfnelson76@gmail.com



The Fall 2026 cycle of GriefShare begins on Tuesday, September 8, 2026 and ends Tuesday, December 1, 2026. Each session is offered from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM in the Living Library at Zion Lutheran Church, Middletown.

GriefShare provides support, comfort, and guidance on how to navigate the journey of grief, with the help of leaders and other participants.

Each week there is a 30-minute video that discusses the topic for the session. There is group discussion and a time to share one's grief journey. The third feature of GriefShare is the personal work that is done at home, in between the sessions. A Personal Workbook provides guidance as you deal with your grief in your own time.

If interested in joining the Fall cycle, please contact the church office at 301-371-6500.

GriefShare®

**Fall Session begins
September 8th**



**ONE DAY ONLY -WEDNESDAY,
OCTOBER 21, 2026
SHOP 8AM - 11PM**

DONATE \$5 AND ENJOY:

- **25% OFF Lowest price** DISCOUNT SHOPPING PASS
- **REGISTER TO WIN** A \$100 BOSCOV'S GIFT CARD

One Winner at every Bosco's store
100% OF YOUR DONATION GOES TO Zion Lutheran Church

For Shopping Passes or information, contact:
**Deb Reichelt at 301-371-6500 or
treasurer@zionmiddletown.org.**

Time, Talents, Treasures

Name:

Address:

You can make an impact here at Zion! Where do you want to be more involved? What ministries, committees and activities are you currently involved in? Turn over the card for some ideas.

①

②

③

④

What are three things you are good at?

①

②

③

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

TURN ME
OVER!

Preparing for the Season of Stewardship

Zion is much stronger when we are all healthy and able to work together. Please prayerfully consider different ways to be generous over the coming year. What are those things you are really good at? How would you like to be better connected at Zion? Our goal is to have 60% of our budget pledged. Help make our goal a reality. You matter to the ministry here! Consider how you might be able to

invest in the ministry here at Zion today through the giving of your time, talents and treasures. And thank you!!!



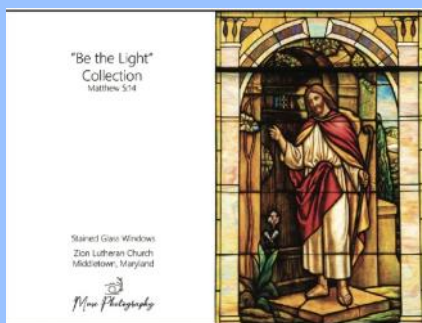
**A Trip to Visit
Baltimore
Wednesday, October 14
Leaving Zion at 12 p.m.**

The cost of the trip is free except the cost of dinner.

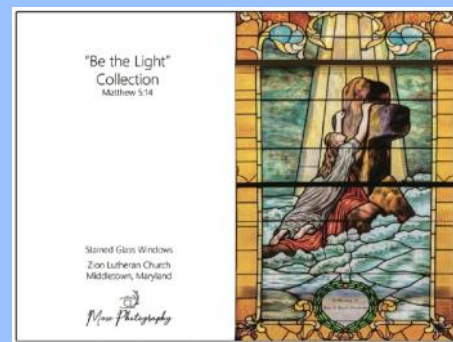
The main place we will be visiting is The Walters Art Museum, but Pastor Matt is working on one or two others places before we head to the museum. After we finish walking around the art museum, we will walk 5 minutes down the block to Helmand for dinner. The Helmand is an Afghan restaurant and has really great reviews and comes highly rated.

Space is limited to 14 people so sign up today at the office!

Take Zion's treasured windows home with you!



- Perfect gift for friends, family or yourself
- Keepsake box includes 12 blank notecards (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

A WORD FROM THE VALLEY

A PODCAST FROM ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MIDDLETOWN, MD

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



THE HOLY LAND CHRISTIANS ARE GOING TO BE OUR GUESTS

HEAR THEIR STORY AND SEE THEIR BEAUTIFUL OLIVEWOOD CRAFTS



On August 22 & 23, 2026 during all services, we will be hearing about the Christians of the Holy Land. After each service, we will be hosting a nice display of handmade olive wood religious articles from Bethlehem available for donations. These carvings include olivewood Nativity sets, crosses, Christmas ornaments, candle holders, angels and many other religious crafts that could make a nice wedding, baptism, confirmation, Easter and/or Christmas gift. The carvings are handmade by Christian families from Bethlehem who rely on this for their daily bread. Please help support our Christian brothers and sisters in the town of Bethlehem where Christ was born by making donations for their carvings.

A Christians family from Bethlehem will be telling us the story of the Christians of the Holy Land and they will be presenting these carvings after the services. It is never too late to help. All donations go to support Christian families from Bethlehem .

Let us carefully tend to our roots, Christian children of God in the Holy Land. And let us pray together for peace in the land where our Savior once walked to tell the world the good news of salvation .



VIOLIN LESSONS

with Dr. Katelyn McClinton

Location: Zion Lutheran Church Middletown

107 W Main Street

Middletown, MD

Contact at katelynmccclinton@gmail.com!

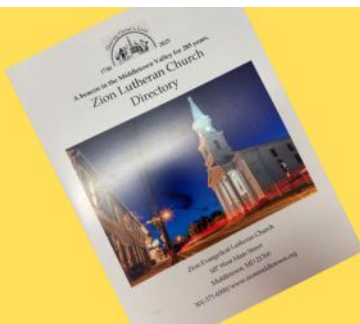


Sign up in the church office. Payment is not due until the night of the game.

NEXT DATE:

Wednesday, August 12 at Keys Stadium at 7 p.m. Leaving Middletown at 6:15 p.m.

Tickets are \$11 a person. We will have the church van available if you would like to a ride down or you can meet us there.



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.

WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARTIN LUTHER

*Rooted by Faith,
Carried by Hope*

A 10-DAY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
THROUGH GERMANY

TRIP DATES

**MAR 30 –
APR 8,
2027**



WHY TRAVEL TO GERMANY?

Experience the places where the Protestant Reformation forever changed the Christian faith.

Walk where Martin Luther lived, taught, prayed, and boldly proclaimed the Gospel while exploring Germany's rich history and Christian heritage.



WALK THE REFORMATION TRAIL

- Wittenberg
- Wartburg Castle
- Luther's Home
- Historic Churches



HISTORIC CITIES

- Frankfurt
- Berlin
- Dresden
- Leipzig
- Nuremberg
- Augsburg
- Munich



CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

- Gutenberg Museum
- St. Thomas Church
- Berlin Cathedral
- Medieval Castles



BAVARIAN CULTURE

- Free time at Oktoberfest
- German food & traditions



MORE THAN A VACATION

“This is a pilgrimage—an opportunity to deepen your faith while discovering how God worked through Martin Luther and the Reformation.



Comfortable Hotels



Professional
Tour Guides



Private
Motorcoach



Christian
Fellowship



Daily Devotions
& Reflection



Historic Christian
Sites

YOU'LL VISIT



TOUR INCLUDES

- ✓ Hotel accommodations
- ✓ Airport transfers
- ✓ Transportation throughout Germany
- ✓ Entrance fees
- ✓ Professional local guides
- ✓ Dedicated Sunlight Tours host
- ✓ Select meals
- ✓ Personal audio listening system during tours

International airfare, some meals, travel insurance, and personal expenses are additional.



Join Us!

Walk where history was made and discover how God's faithfulness continues to inspire the Church today.

The Trip is Hosted by
Pastor Vee at Haven
Lutheran Church in
Hagerstown, MD.
For more information about
the trip, scan the QR Code.





**Kuan Topuz
Bailey Lynn Masser
Garret Alan Masser
Josephine Rita Hinlicky
Joseph Fechter**



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



**Britney Walker
and Austin Poulson**

New Members

Tristan Swiney

Andrew Stup

Trent Saxton



Katana Lewis, Penelope Bybel, Marion Whitter,
Ron and Marsha Niemi, Karen Muscolino, Danny
Moser, Eileen Deschenes, Mackenzie Miessau,
Lois Holder, Pat McIntosh, Natalie, Karen
Carpenter, Margaret Guyton, Kim Buhrman,
Nancy Allen, Harriett Hahn, Gary Fulmer, Kieffer
Crummitt, Sr., Carrie Basler, Robert Berkey,
Brittany Mushuda, Benedict Phelps, Colin
Sweigert, Shirley Hyssong, Samn Huffer, Marty
Appleby, Judith Smith, Jackie Bello, Trish

Tollefson, Addison Hopson, Deb Kahihikolo.

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

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



Dear Zion Family:

Three years ago, on June 28, 2023, I received the miracle of a new heart. This was due to many factors—a wife with a medical background who is a strong advocate and outstanding doctors and nurses at Johns Hopkins University Hospital. But of greatest importance, it was the many prayers that you and others, literally around the world, said for me and for my family.

I still have the cards and letters you all sent to me at this time and during my recovery. This will always be a continuing process, but your thoughts and prayers have made this possible.

Thank you so very much!

Bruce Albright

I wish to thank everyone so much for all the birthday cards sent to me in the last few weeks. They are so beautiful and greatly appreciated. I thank you for your thoughtfulness and I thank God for all of you. - Adrienne

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 taken to our online giving portal.

AND THANK YOU!