

THE BEACON

A MINISTRY OF ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
FALL 2025 EDITION

Born Anew



Upcoming Events

First Sunday of the Month	Confirmation from 4-6 p.m. (First session is September 7)
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 Wednesday of the Month	JOY Luncheon from 12-2 p.m.
Last Monday of the Month	Hope to Faith at 3 p.m.

August 16 & 17	Backpack Blessing at all Worship Services
August 28	All Committee and Ministry Chair Gathering at 6:30 p.m. (both in-person and zoom)

September 1	Office Closed
September 6 & 7	Bible Blessing and Presentation at all Worship Services
September 7	Season of Grandparenting Adult Sunday School Class Begins at 10 a.m.
September 7	Kids' Sunday School Classes Begin
September 7	Confirmation Class at 4 p.m. and Youth Group at 6 p.m. Resumes
September 9	GriefShare Resumes at 6 p.m.
September 11	Choir Rehearsal Resumes at 7 p.m.
September 14	FootPrints at 9 a.m.
September 27	Heritage Days Festival in Middletown (No Saturday Night Worship)
September 28	Saints before Us Special Adult Sunday School Class at 10 a.m.

October 2	DayOff Program
October 5 & 12	First Communion Gatherings (both for new kids and refresher) at 12:30 p.m.
October 5	A Study of 1 John Adult Sunday School Class Begins at 10 a.m.
October 8	Trip to Gettysburg
October 12	FootPrints at 9 a.m. and Kids' Choir Practice at 10 a.m.
October 26	Joint Worship for Reformation Sunday and FootPrints with a Potluck Meal Following Worship

November 1 & 2	All Saints Sunday Worship
November 9	FootPrints at 9 a.m. and Kids' Choir Practice at 10 a.m.
November 23	Christ the King Special Worship and Bishop's Ordination Anniversary Celebration
November 27 & 28	Office Closed
November 30	Advent 1

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.

Our Top Ministry Priorities for 2025

- **Leadership**

Called by the Spirit to be transformed as God's loving people, the Council will continue to discern where God is calling Zion in its defining of vision. We will be open to new ways and opportunities that God is calling us to serve beyond our building in sharing Christ's love. We will support one another in our ministries as we share cherished traditions and try new things.

- **Communication**

Celebrating new tools we have learned to communicate information, we will hone and plan strategies to more effectively use them to share what God is doing at Zion. We will use these tools and new avenues to share how God's love is nurturing and changing us.

- **Relationship Building**

With Jesus as our example and guide, we will grow in building relationships with one another and those beyond our building through practicing welcome and invitation. We rejoice and celebrate our generational diversity. We will practice grace and understanding as we make mistakes. We will focus on serving one another in love, especially those in need and who are often forgotten.





A WORD FROM PASTOR DIANE

*You have been born anew **through the living and abiding word of God.***
(paraphrase of 1 Peter 1:23)

This is one of the responses to the reading of scripture as part of the office (worship service) of Morning Prayer (*Matins* in Latin). At the seminary, we would have Matins at least once a week as part of our daily worship time together. The other days, seminarians experimented with other forms, we had a service of Holy Communion, or a professor preached. We sang Matins so frequently during my three years on campus, that it is ingrained in the innermost heart of my memory.

Every year, there is a preaching conference called the Festival of Homiletics. It is four days of preachers across mainline denominations lecturing and

preaching on a theme. Pastor Matt and I went once before we had children when it was in Nashville. Obviously, the location was just as amazing as the conference! Since having kids on our end and since COVID on the festival's end, attending this conference online has become the more viable option for many reasons.

Catching up on some of the recordings of lectures and sermons of this year's conference that I missed because one cannot be listening to two at once, I have been renewed, born anew, in my calling of preaching. As I have listened to these amazing folks, I have been reminded of texts that I have read that I have forgotten or previously didn't personally deem as overly relevant. In this new season of my life, I have been born anew in their meaning for where I am and what they mean for how I live.

Even though you think I would realize this, it still surprises me when I hear God's word anew. At moments, it is a good surprise that brings joy and energy and in others, it is hard to hear truth about my actions that God calls me to confess, make reparations for, and change for the future. We believe that the word is living, that it constantly calls us back to the ways of life found in following God. We are born anew when we are open and willing to hear what God has to say for us in this moment. And honestly, sometimes we are not willing and open to letting the Spirit do the Spirit's work in calling us through the living word to life

and would rather choose death.

What word have you heard anew recently? Or is the word feeling more dead than alive? Has it ever felt living for you or has it felt more prescriptive? - "Just read it and believe it!" How can we help one another encounter God's word for the sake of living lives of abundance?

Let me offer an invitation and a prayer to conclude. Zion is a place where we seek to encounter the living God, that we may know our purpose and be transformed for the sake of bettering this world God so loves. Please ask someone; it doesn't even have to be the pastor, if you have questions or need help understanding and journeying in your faith. That's why we are together. Let us pray. Living God, you speak to us in many and various ways. May your living word abide in, around, and through us. May it call us anew to each day we awake and the calling to live your word spoken and in action. In the name of the Triune God, amen.

Blessings,

Pastor Diane Ray



A WORD FROM PASTOR MATT

As the vibrant colors of fall surround us and we begin to feel the crispness in the air, we are reminded that this season is one of both change and harvest. It is a time when the labor of the past months begins to bear fruit, and we pause to give thanks for God's provision. Fall is also a perfect time to reflect on what it means to be stewards—not only of our resources, but of the community we've been entrusted to love and serve.

When we talk about stewardship in the church, our minds often go immediately to finances—and yes, managing our resources faithfully is important. But stewardship is much broader than that. It is about how we care for everything God has placed in our hands, including the relationships, spaces, and people in our community. I think one of the most

valuable assets God has given to us is our community of people. My own family has been on the receiving end of this community many times over and have felt what it feels like to be overwhelmed with love and care. From meal trains to that simple prayer, our congregation's greatest asset is the people.

Therefore this fall, I want to encourage us to think deeply about **the stewardship of our community.**

The Apostle Paul writes in Galatians 6:10, *"So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all and especially for those of the family of faith."* God has given us this church family, this town, this great valley we all call home—not by accident, but on purpose. We are here to be caretakers of one another, to lift each other up, and to ensure that our community reflects the light and love of Christ. Yes, this does mean we are called to be our brother and sister's keepers.

What does that look like in practice?

- It looks like checking in on a neighbor you haven't seen at church in a while.
- It looks like mentoring a young person in the faith or listening patiently to someone who is hurting.
- It looks like showing up to serve meals, stocking our food pantry, or helping with a local cleanup project.
- It looks like being faithful in our giving—not just to keep the lights on, but to fuel the mission we share.

Community stewardship means being present. It means seeing needs

and responding—not out of obligation, but out of love. It's easy to get caught up in our individual schedules and responsibilities, especially as the holidays approach. And I am not saying that we drop everything else and commit all of our available time to Zion. Instead, I want us to see the power that our communal response has on fulfilling our mission.

Part of our work this fall will include our pledge card drive. However, we are changing the card up a bit. There will be three parts to the card: 1) list three things you are good at; 2) how do you want to make an impact at Zion (and this isn't how can we assimilate you into our ethos but rather, how can you help us change and grow into a better faith community); 3) how can you support the mission of Zion financially. It is our hope that through this season we can spend some time reflecting on how each of us can live with intention, generosity, and compassion in the spaces where God has planted us.

Let us not grow weary in doing good. Freed by grace and led by the Holy Spirit, let us embrace this fall season as an opportunity to grow not just upward in our relationship with God, but outward in our love for one another. The harvest is plentiful—and God is calling us to be workers in the field, stewards of His people.

In Christ,

So, what's been happening?

Confirmation Sunday

In June, we celebrated and welcomed two of our young adults into full membership through the Rite of Confirmation: Leah Gordon and Eryn Kline. 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. We meet on the first Sunday of each month from September to May. Each confirmand is given a gift of a Harper Collins Study Bible as well as a hand-picked confirmation verse.



Work Day

After worship on Pentecost, a group of about 15 people stayed after to tend to some projects around the church. The work this year consisted of bringing down a number of old pews removed a few years ago when the wood floor in the sanctuary was added. These pews were very heavy and it took all of us working together to get them down the stairs. We also threw out a number of old couches, moved some old Chapel chairs downstairs to be sold in order to make way for new chairs we are hoping to purchase this fall, and threw out some old, broken stuff. Thanks to a Thrivent Action Team Grant, we were able to purchase lunch for everyone. But the greatest gift was getting to know each other and work together towards a common mission!



Church Picnic

The weather was perfect on June 22nd as we enjoyed an old fashion picnic including hot dogs, tons of sides, and even more desserts. It was a great time to get to know people, meet new friends, and enjoy the gift of God's creation!



Golf Tournament

After a long hiatus, we had our Golf Tournament and raised \$12,500 to be used for the repair and maintenance of Zion's Steeple. It was a rainy day in May but that didn't stop the golfers from showing up, playing a few holes, and taking home some pretty nice door prizes. Thank you to the organizing team for putting this all together and we especially want to thank Deb Reichelt for going above and beyond to make the Golf Tournament a success!





Take me out to the ball game!

On a very hot night in June, we took our trusty van on a trip down to Baltimore to enjoy a baseball game at Camden Yards. Zero breeze in the ballpark did not squelch our fun! The O's have had a bit of a rough year, but on this night, they played one of their best games ever. We all had a lot of fun, ate way too many hot dogs, and cheered on the mighty O's! We look forward to going back next year and maybe we'll add a trip to the Frederick Keys too!



Adrienne Rhoderick turns 100

Not too many people are blessed to live to 100 years old! Adrienne's family threw her a party to celebrate the occasion. Family from all over came to Zion to celebrate, share a meal, and see some really cool photos of Adrienne when she was a little younger. While Adrienne might be getting a little bit older, it has not slowed her down and she is still as sharp as ever. We thank God for giving us Adrienne and we hope for many more years of her wisdom and love!

The Ladies' Spring Fling!

The Ladies' Spring Fling this past May was another great one. The men of the church served a meal of fried chicken, scalloped potatoes, and all the fixings. Since we had so much success last year with painting, the ladies painted some friendship rocks that can be placed throughout town to brighten someone's day. Special thanks to everyone who made this night possible!



Vacation Bible School 2025

Are you mad?! Christmas in July?!?!

It was a little bit weird (and hot) wearing Santa hats, singing Christmas carols, and decorating Christmas trees in July, but so often we do not take the time to really explore the story of Christmas during the season of Christmas because we are so busy. This July, we took the time to hear how God saved the world by sending us a child who was named, Emmanuel.



Hunger Insecurity Exists even in the Summer

During the months of November and December, many food banks are overwhelmed with donations because our attention is on giving and sharing. However, the need for food doesn't stop in the summer months and many food banks during the summer have a hard time stocking their shelves. Throughout VBS and during the entire month of July, we asked you all to bring in non-perishable food items and to give generously to a number of worthy causes. Thank you for sharing your generosity! The kids brought in 371 food items alone and their reward was not only making a huge difference at the Middletown Valley Food Bank, but they also got to see Pastors Diane and Matt take a pie to the face!

Servants of Christ

Go to any church in America today and you will hear how it is getting harder and harder to find volunteers. That is true at Zion, but despite a smaller pool of volunteers, the needs of many people still remain. This new ministry was started by the Welcome and Engagement Ministry Team as a way for Zion's members to engage with our neighbors to make their lives better. On the fourth Sunday of the month (or around there), a group of people volunteer their time to help their neighbor in need. The tasks have included gardening, cards for shut-ins, and a free car wash just to name a few. Here are a few pictures from the past few months of some of the projects we have been able to participate in. To learn more about this new ministry opportunity, talk to Jamie Derr or a member of the Welcome and Engagement Ministry Team the next time you are at Zion.



Worship Opportunities



Mark your calendars!

October 26, 2025

10am

Reformation Sunday

We will celebrate God's Word living, moving and breathing in our community with special music including both choir and orchestral 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

26 OCT

REFORMATION

POTLUCK

BRING A DISH TO SHARE!

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
WORSHIP ON OCTOBER 26

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

Blessing of the Backpacks

**At all Worship Services on the weekend of
August 16th and 17th**

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.

Worship Services

Saturday:

5 p.m. Casual Worship

Sunday:

**9 a.m. Contemporary
Worship**

11 a.m. Traditional Worship

All Saints Worship

November 1st and 2nd

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

A special liturgy on Sunday, November 23, at both 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.

Sponsor a New Chapel Chair

Be a part of Zion's transformation. The chapel is just the beginning. Your sponsorship will help us as we update our facility and become a more welcoming space for visitors, guests, members, and neighbors. Would you or your family be willing to sponsor a chair \$100. Maybe consider your donation in honor of or in memory a loved one. Your sponsorship would make a major difference in making this idea become reality.



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.

Being the Church...

Interview with Heather Crummitt by Mary Ann Marcantonio



Heather was born and raised in Middletown and graduated from Middletown High School in 2000. She was very blessed growing up surrounded by a close family. On a sliver of the family farmland, her father built their house in 1972 for his family. Her extended family all lived nearby; her grandparents lived in the farmhouse, two of her father's brothers lived one on each side of her parents. Even her maternal grandparents lived close by near Locust Valley. Since her grandparents passing, her uncle now lives in the farmhouse and still owns and operates the family farm. Like so many dairy farmers, the hard decision was made to finally end dairy farming and take up raising beef and grain.

Now what do farm kids do on weekends and summer breaks? Well after chores, they find time to play. Heather has only one brother that is three years older. Although they were close, I'm sure they got into their share of trouble together. In the summertime, her brother would help on the

farm and on occasion, Heather would help her grandmother clean the house. On one of those occasions, her brother got maybe a little jealous when Heather got the better lunch which included mashed potatoes. She quickly told her brother the best lunches went to the inside workers. Grandma's mashed potatoes were the best! Heather has tried to duplicate the recipe; it's close, but somehow there is a missing ingredient, it must be Grandma's love.

Young Heather needed a little female friend. While in second grade, she met her best friend, Jennifer. They went to school together, Sunday school, Confirmation and the two of them have been inseparable for 36 years. Best friends are the sisters that God never gave us.

Heather's connection with Zion began when she was three months old. She was presented for baptism by her parents on September 12th, 1982 by Pastor Hoover. Her parents lived out the promise they made by seeing she was raised in the faith. She attended Sunday School from Nursery to Confirmation and she affirmed the faith as her own when she was confirmed by Pastor Turley. She married Jack Ely at Zion on October 6th, 2018, by Pastor Marv Tollefson. That connection with her faith community through all her major milestones is the foundation she wants for her daughter, Faye. And now she and Jack are raising her, the fourth generation to occupy a pew at Zion. Faye was to be baptized in March of 2020 by Pastor Kathy, but Covid delayed it from happening. But as things all work out, Faye was baptized on the date of what would have been her great grandmother's birthday, May 22, 2021 by Pastor Diane – her first baptism since she arrived at Zion. The Crummitt-Ely family are regular attendees at the 11: 00 Traditional service.

In 2005, Heather made a major life decision and taking the courage to make a leap, she left a job that offered security to achieve a dream...to be a teacher. Before taking her job working in the health insurance field, she had begun her college and had dropped out. But there was always that unfinished vision of her heart's desire. In 2005 she left her job, enrolled to complete her education. After 5 years, she

graduated from Hood College in 2010. But the job search for a teaching position did not go well. She was able to secure several long-term sub assignments along with some part time jobs to have income. At the start of this journey, the decision was made with hopes of a different life. Now disappointment... is this the result of making the wrong decision? Although at times difficult, Heather credits her faith and the trust in God that all things will work out and God never fails us. Today Heather has fulfilled her dream as a special education resource teacher for Loudoun County; first at Ashburn where she worked with the autism program and now Lucketts Elementary School. This September she starts her tenth year in her dream career. We all give you loud “Kudos, Heather!” for your accomplishment and never losing faith that it would work out.

It is always interesting to ask the question “What is the most notable change you have seen over the years?” As a teacher, she shares with her students about the way things were before technology. Kids cannot believe that when she was in school she didn’t have a computer, cell phone or tablet. Once computers were available, storing our data was on a floppy disk, no iClouds back then. To this generation, we must have lived in the dark ages!

The pleasures she enjoys besides her family are getting her hands dirty in her flower garden, decorating and the quiet times on her front porch. In high school, she went to Frederick’s Career and Tech where she learned different methods of installing landscape and hardscape projects, which she has benefitted from in her own yard. She has even created her own workspace in her she-shed! But with all she does for her family and friends, she still has found time to serve others. She is a regular volunteer at VBS and currently serves on the Child Protection Policy Team.

The largest challenge to her faith was when her mother had a stroke in January of 2023. It was a long recovery to get her home. With the assistance from Home Health Professionals and the tender love and care of her family, her mother lived an additional 15 months more. The caring for her mother during this time was a huge task for her brother and her father. Heather had a full time job, a husband and the needs of a three year old were in itself busy enough and now gladly taking on the added role of caregiver for her beloved mother. But through her illness and since she passed away in April 2024, Heather admits she has asked God why? Her mother survived breast cancer twice and being Faye’s Nanny was the delight of her life, a relationship that both she and Faye were robbed of. Many of those “whys” we never get the answers we long for but in Faith, we find the quiet strength that carries us through the biggest storms in our life.

Faith has served Heather well, through valuable lessons from the godly examples of people in her life. Her parents started the foundation through their example and the lessons taught at home. Witnessing her parents as they lived their faith journey, not just in easy times, but most especially as they dealt with their trials and tribulations was an affirmation of the importance of faith. Sunday School teachers, Pastors, and her best friend’s mother were all wonderful examples to emulate and who were open in conversation about their faith. We all have a role in raising up the next generation of saints! Don’t be shy! Share a faith story with someone who may need to hear how Jesus still walks with us today.

Project Tanzania

Cultural Immersion Here at Home

The Delaware-Maryland Synod has a Global Mission Team that is set up to support our relationship with the Mara Diocese in Tanzania. Recently, Pastor Dave Baker and Lois Ahalt traveled to Tanzania and experienced the amazing culture and ministry happening in the Lutheran Church there. They formed friendships that have inspired them to share that experience and help the Mara Diocese in this missional work. In April, they shared some of their experience, brought food for us to try, and even taught us some dance moves with the help of the Liturgical Dancers from The Dee Buchanan School of Dance. To the right, Dee Buchanan shares the importance of dance as a form of art that sings praises to God.



A Gift to make a Major Difference

Kiabakari Pre and Primary School, owned by the Mara Diocese, purchased a used 30-passenger bus to provide safe transportation to and from school for the children. The bus was in need of repairs and repainting and the TTF was asked for help with this project. We are pleased to announce that the people of Zion, Middletown, generously contributed \$1,781 to make the repairs which are currently being done with the hope of using the bus beginning in August. **"Asante Sana!"** (Thank you!) for the hard work of Pr. David Baker and the people of Zion to make this possible! **"Bwana Asifiwe!"** (Praise the Lord!)

Community Events



Zion Heritage Day Luncheon - September 27, 2025

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 @
301-371-6500**

Creating Sacred Spaces

This past Lent on Wednesday nights, we talked about theology around why evangelism matters and how we, as a congregation, can become better at welcoming strangers, visitors, and each other into our sacred space. Let's keep these conversations going and work together to provide a sacred space for all people. Consider becoming a Greeter. Right now, we only have one Greeter stationed at the top of the ramp. It would be really nice to have an additional Greeter at the bottom of the ramp to open the door and welcome people into Zion. Perhaps you can help us identify areas around Zion that need improvement. If you visit our website, we have created a page called Creating Sacred Spaces that has all the sermons from



the past Lent as well as some resources like a Mystery Worshiper Sheet that you can fill out to help identify areas we need to fix. Together, we continue to make Zion a Sacred Space for all people.

What's Up with the Quilters?



Stars! Christmas Stars to be more specific. Since it was Christmas in July, they decided to celebrate and make some festive stars and donate them to make someone's day a little brighter. If you wish to join them, they always have room around their table.



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. 5th and 12th, 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. 26th. **Please RSVP to the Church Office by Oct. 1st if you will be joining us.**

Sunday Mornings



**ADULT EDUCATION
MEETS IN THE FOOTPRINTS
ROOM 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 doughnut and join in the conversation, no matter your age!

SUNDAY SCHOOL EDUCATION

SUNDAYS AT 10 A.M.

**ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, &
HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES**



Thank you for helping to make VBS a success. Your continued support of prayers, time, and support makes this ministry possible. We had a lot of fun this year exploring the story of Christmas. If you missed our recap video, scan the QR code and check it out!



VBS 2023 RECAP

Adult Sunday School Calendar

Date	Facilitator	Topic	Comments
August 17	Donna Huffer	Teach Like Jesus Tell Stories Expect Change Ask Lots of Questions Confront Hands On Make it intriguing Make it kid friendly	Social Room Book by Josh Hunt (Amazon \$14.99)
August 24	Donna Huffer	Teach Like Jesus Panel	Social Room
August 31	Donna Huffer	Teach Like Jesus You Teach Something!	Social Room
September 7	Lois Ahalt	Season of Grandparenting	Back of Chapel
September 14	Lois Ahalt	Season of Grandparenting	Back of Chapel
September 21	Lois Ahalt	Season of Grandparenting	Back of Chapel
September 28	Mary Ann Marcantonio	Saints Before Us	Heritage Weekend
October 5	Bruce McIntosh	A Study of 1John	Back of Chapel
October 12	Bruce McIntosh	A Study of 1John	Back of Chapel
October 19	Bruce McIntosh	A Study of 1John	Back of Chapel
October 26	////////////////////	Combined Service – No Sunday School	////////////////////
November 2	Bruce McIntosh	A Study of 1John	Back of Chapel
November 9	Donna Huffer & Diana Baker	The Power of the Holy Spirit's Name	Back of Chapel Book by Tony Evans (Amazon \$7.49)
November 23	Donna Huffer & Diana Baker	The Power of the Holy Spirit's Name	Back of Chapel
November 30	Donna Huffer & Diana Baker	The Power of the Holy Spirit's Name	Back of Chapel
December 7	////////////////////	Combined Service – No Sunday School	//////////////////// /
December 14	Donna Huffer	Because of Bethlehem: God Has a Face	Back of Chapel Book by Max Lucado (Amazon \$7.80)
December 21	Donna Huffer	Because of Bethlehem: Worship Works Wonders	Back of Chapel
December 28	Donna Huffer	Because of Bethlehem: God Guides the Wise	Back of Chapel

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. In conjunction with the Council's 2025 Priorities of leadership, communication, and relationship building, 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.



THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH

FROM 4-6PM

AVAILABLE BOTH IN-PERSON AND ON ZOOM

**First Confirmation Class begins September 7
in the Conference Room**

IGNITE YOUR FAITH

YOUTH NIGHT

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

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

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

**Youth Group starts back up Sunday, September 7 at
6:00 p.m. with ice cream and some hang out time.**

WE GOT A **DAY OFF!** The Next Date...

Thursday, October 2

From 9-3 p.m.

with a trip to

**Jumbo's Pumpkin
Patch**

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 year, they have added a new BIG slide.

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

Extra chaperones are always needed and appreciated!!!!

SCAN
ME! >>



**DAYOFF PROGRAM
REGISTRATION**





2025 Footprints Upcoming Dates

September 14th

October 12th

October 26th

November 9th

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 7th



We will be handing out new Bibles on Sunday, September 7th 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 3rd, 10th, 17th

Christmas in the Valley—December 6th

**Children's Christmas Pageant—December 7th
at 10 a.m.**

Advent Family Night—December 7th

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!

Mar-Lu-Ridge



Zion Showed up at Mar-Lu-Ridge!

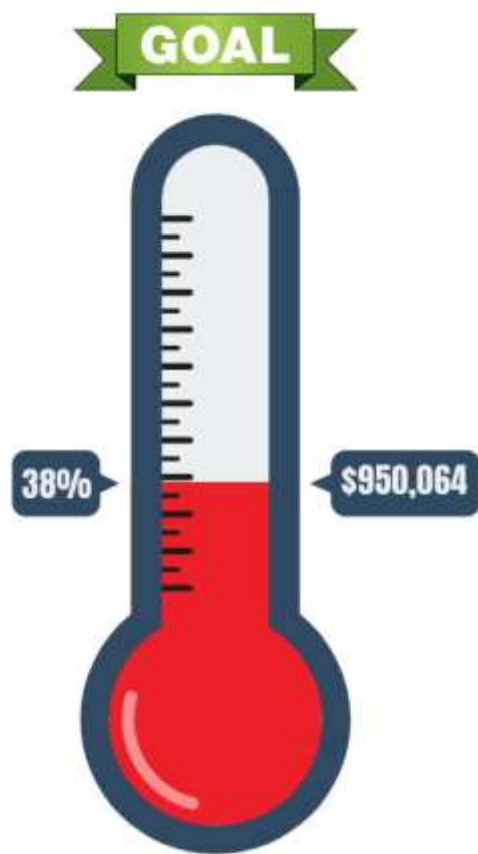
This year, Zion really showed up at Mar-Lu-Ridge by sending 15 kids to camp. A big hinderance for summer camp is the cost but we have been blessed with many generous people throughout the years to help create a fund to provide scholarships for kids to attend camp. For many of the kids that went this 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!



You are Never Too Old for Camp!

Especially when you are a medical professional! Lois Ahalt was able to volunteer some of her time and professional expertise as Camp Nurse. Pictured here with Sarah Lefler, Lois made sure all the kids at Mar-Lu-Ridge that week got their meds, were bandaged up after they skinned their knees, and got to do a little relaxing too!





A Letter from our Executive Director

Friends of Mar-Lu-Ridge,

God is moving through and among this ministry. For scores of summer campers, youth, adults, and families, Mar-Lu-Ridge is a place of sanctuary. It is a place where the noises and distractions of the world fall away, allowing space to engage with God's created world, to hear God's reassuring promises.



What a welcome gift in these times! We are a community with a rich legacy. Our retreat groups and campers are diverse and faithful. As we build on the commitments of leaders and supporters from the last **63 years** and position Mar-Lu-Ridge for a strong and vibrant future, we are renewing our efforts to provide a safe and inclusive environment which reflects the lessons Jesus taught us: To love one another, even as I have loved you. (John 13:34)

Renovating Ridge Inn for increased accessibility and hospitality is a big step for Mar-Lu-Ridge, but one that will have even greater return on our investment in welcoming people to encounter God's love through sacred hospitality, deepening relationships, and care for creation. Through this plan, we will be able to serve people in ways we are unable to at this time – especially groups and individuals with mobility needs. When these campaign initiatives are completed, the manner in which we welcome people will be more fully realized.

I am energized by the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of youth and adults of every walk of life and by the restoring messages of God's grace and love which will frame the way we think of each other and of ourselves. The impact of Mar-Lu-Ridge lives on in generations of campers, retreat guests, staff alumni, and our congregations.

I hope you'll join in this campaign for Mar-Lu-Ridge—for the future of our ministry throughout the region and beyond.

God's peace,
Sarah Lefler, Executive Director

Project List

As contributions to the With Open Arms Campaign are received, we have prioritized the following improvements to increase MLR's hospitality, inclusion, and accessibility for all people:

1. We will make the Ridge Inn fully accessible for all guests and visitors. An elevator will be installed so that guests with mobility needs may easily and safely access the top floor. Adding public restrooms on the lower level and installing automated doors will expand our hospitality in new ways.
2. Next, we plan to improve Cabin 3—our most-requested, most-used cabin—with an accessible restroom and a refreshed interior. Siding will replace the log exterior to prevent further decay from pests.
3. Carpenter bees have damaged a significant portion of Potomac Lodge's exterior log structure. New concrete siding will be added to protect this building.
4. Cabins 1 and 2 are beyond repair and are no longer in use. These buildings will be removed to allow for increased green space. The old swimming pool at Area 3 is no longer serviceable. We plan to remove this feature and level the ground for group gathering space. This area is in near-constant use thanks to renovations and upgrades by MLR staff. In time, we will develop this space with an accessible pavilion.
5. In 2020, MLR secured the main camp water reservoir, which was leaking. Gifts to the With Open Arms Campaign will help to quickly clear the remaining \$220,000 debt acquired for the reservoir development.



Scan the QR Code to learn more about their campaign



Ministry Updates

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.



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.

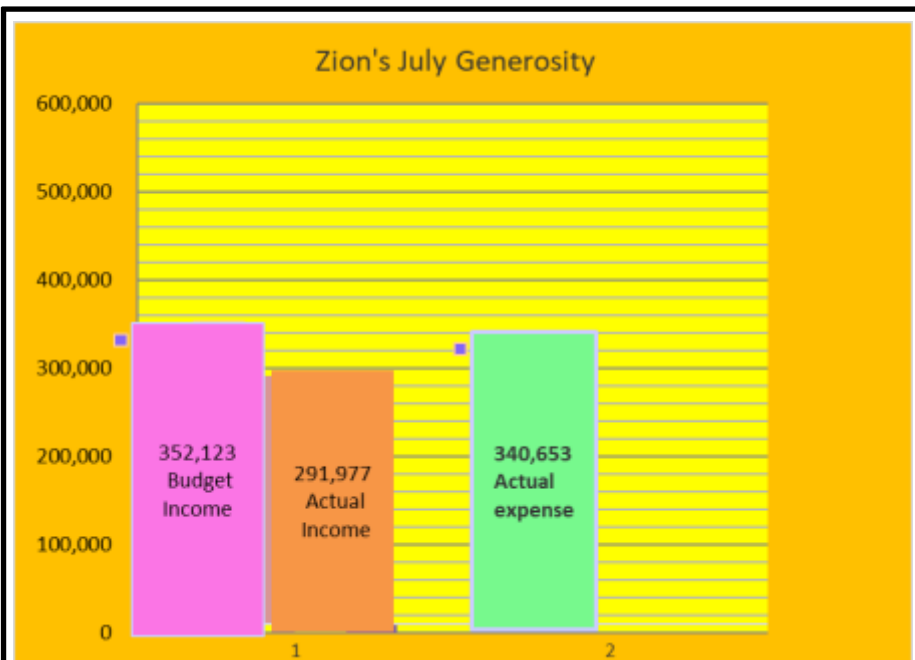
September—Individual Cereal including oatmeal

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.



Budget/Income Information-YTD as of July 31, 2025

YTD Proposed Budget income \$352,123.

vs YTD Actual Income \$291,977.

YTD Proposed Budget Expense \$378,031. vs

YTD Actual Expenses \$340,652.

Actual YTD Income is less expenses in July 2024 by \$48,675.



Did you know that the number one most needed item of the homeless is a clean pair of socks? Zion Quilters are sponsoring a Socktoberfest drive again this year for the month of October. A box will be located in the ramp area 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.



JOY +50 (Just Older Youth) Lunch

J.O.Y. 50+ seniors have been enjoying lunch and programs/bingo for the past few months. The J.O.Y 50+ meets on the third Wednesday at noon for lunch and a fun program or a rousing game of bingo. 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 2024 are:

Sep 17

Oct 15

Nov 19



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 amasser202@comcast.net.

New Staff Members

As we announced in May, our organist and director of traditional worship, Bobby Staples resigned from his role in order to support his wife in her new role at the Virginia Symphony Orchestra in Norfolk, VA. During Bobby's leave of absence, we contracted with Dr. Katelyn McClinton and Mr. Kirk Denton to fill his shoes. Both Dr. McClinton and Mr. Denton have agreed to stay on in their respective roles permanently. Over the past year, Katelyn and Kirk have become valuable to our worship life. They bring with them different experiences and musical abilities. We are blessed to have them on our staff and a part of our worship community. Katelyn, as Director of Traditional Music, will continue to direct the choir, choose hymns for Sunday, organize special music, direct the hand bell choir, and director the orchestra. Kirk, as our organist, will lead us in song and accompany the choir when they sing. We hope to celebrate Bobby's work some time this fall and give thanks for his many years of service to Zion and Christ's Church.

Effective bystander CPR, provided immediately after cardiac arrest, can double a victim's chance of survival. Are you prepared?

On Tuesday, October 30, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., Zion will be hosting a CPR & First Aid Training Class. If you attended the last training we hosted two years ago, your training certification will expire in November of this year. The training usually lasts less than 2 hours. Cost for registration ranges from \$60 - \$75. Donations are accepted to assist with payment. The more participants, the cheaper the price. If interested, please contact Deb Reichelt or the office at 301-371-6500 by October 15th, 2025

Hope

To

Faith

Hope to Faith

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

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

Noisy Offering Updates



May—Hearty House

\$439.76

June—Lutheran Campus Ministry

\$217.80

July—Middletown Vol. Fire Department

\$374.63

Thank you to all who donated!

Upcoming Noisy Offerings

August 16th and 17th

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

September 20th and 21st

Lutheran Disaster Relief

October 18th and 19th

Frederick Rescue Mission

November 15th & 16th

ELCA World Hunger

December 20th & 21st

Beyond Shelter (Religious Coalition)

*Homemade
Apple Butter*

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

**\$6 for a
Pint**

A jar of homemade apple butter.

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!



A Monthly
Community Service Ministry
of Zion

On the 4th Sunday of
the month (time
depends on each
project), we will
gather and do service
projects. It is a great
way to come
together, learn and
serve our neighbors
and community!

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 21st through November 23rd. 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 11-November 8

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 cycle of GriefShare begins on Tuesday, September 9, 2025 and ends on Tuesday, December 2, 2025. Each session is offered from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM in the Living Library at Zion Lutheran Church, Middletown.

At GriefShare, you'll find a safe, comforting place where you can meet and talk with others about your grief. GriefShare provides support, comfort, and guidance on how to navigate the journey of grief.

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.



**Fall Session begins
September 9th**

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. One of our GriefShare leaders will contact you and answer any questions you may have. There is no pre-registration required to attend. However, if you would like to pre-register, simply go to the GriefShare website to complete the online form.



**ONE DAY ONLY -
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2025
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: _____

What are Three Things you are good at?

1

2

3

How do you want to make an impact at Zion? Where do you want to be more involved? What ministries, committees and activities are you currently involved in?

1

2

3

4

I intend to give \$_____ of my/our gifts each
week/month/year (circle one)
for 2026 Current Ministry Expenses and Benevolence

Preparing for season of Stewardship

Our focus this year for Stewardship revolves around the importance of tending to our community. Zion is much stronger when we are all healthy and able to work together. As part of this discussion, we will ask you to 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 pledge. 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!!!



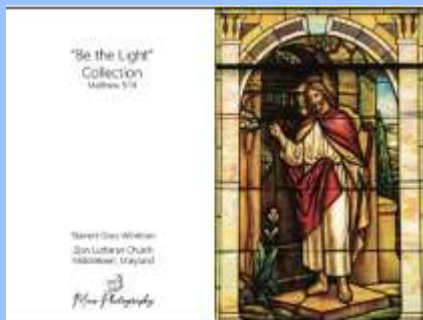
**SEMINARY
RIDGE
MUSEUM
& EDUCATION
CENTER**
GETTYSBURG

**A Trip to Visit the
Gettysburg
Wednesday, October 8
Leaving Zion at 12 p.m.**

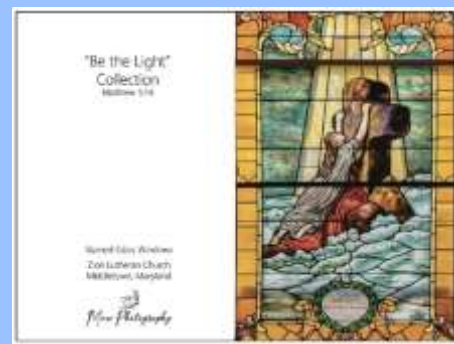
The cost for the trip is \$30 dollars plus dinner. This will cover admission to the Seminary Ridge Museum and a special tour of the famous Copula. After touring the Museum, we will do a quick tour of the Seminary Campus at Gettysburg, an auto tour of the battlefield, (time permitting) a stop at the Gettysburg Visitor Center and then dinner at the Famous Dobbin House. The Seminary Ridge Museum offers a unique experience of teaching about the battle through the lens of faith. And not only that, you get to stand in the place where history was made.

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.



We Need You

ALTAR GUILD—WE NEED YOU!

Would you like to participate in something that is meaningful and rewarding? If so, the

Altar Guild is the place for you. And it doesn't require hours and hours of your time. Every third month you would be helping with communion setup/cleanup,

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



Amelia Violet Leone



**John Wells and
Tanya Miller**

New Members

Eryn Kline

Leah Gordon

With Sympathy



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

Frank Grunwald

Christa Grunwald

Junior Wiles



Texas Flood Victims, Glenn Little, Sandy Bidle, Catherine Brown, Tristan Swiney, Gwen Bowlus, Marion and Jim Damato, J. Richard Staples, All Federal Workers, Pastor Diane Day, Beverly Smith, Dana Carmichael, Brenda Ward, The Gunsallus Family, Samn Huffer, Ursula Powell, Pat Hansen, Jane Nalborczyk, Eric Kinna, Ronnie Kinna, Linda Stottlemeyer, Anita, Gary, Kay Wachter, Michael Easton, Tristan Vail, Lorene Huffer, Bruce Albright, Marty Appleby, Judith Smith, Jackie Bello, Trish Tollefson, Skippy Zimmerman, Sarah Gladhill, Ruby Pyles, Addison Hopson, Kevin Kinna, Deb Kahihikolo

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.

**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.**

Prayer Team Ministry Update

Zion's Prayer Team meets every Sunday evening at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

All prayer requests are confidential.

You may submit a request at the Prayer Wall in the Sanctuary. There are slips of paper to write your request on and then place your request in one of the openings on the wall. A Prayer Team member will retrieve the paper and then pass the request on to the other team members.

You also may call the Church Office at 301-371-6500 and they will contact a team participant or you can contact a team participant directly. Our contact information is in the Church Directory. When we receive a request, each Prayer Team Member is contacted immediately and the prayers begin.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us. Just contact any team participant to get the Zoom information.



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!