



Zion News



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2022 - VOLUME 63 ISSUE 12

To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2:11

ADVENT

Begins Sunday, November 27th

The English word Advent comes from the Latin phrase—ad venion. Which, loosely translated, means “until the coming.” Advent was created to be a time for Christians to reflect on their outer witness and proclamation of Christ in the world. It is intended to be a time set aside to consider how the presence of Emmanuel (God with us) can transform how we relate to one another, love another, and how we can further the reign of Christ in the world.

Advent invites us to ask what difference Christ coming to the world has and can have in restoring the goodwill God intended for humanity and all creation. Advent invites us into a time of holy imagining not of what is, but what can be. This holy imagining is not only focusing on what Jesus brought into the world as the incarnation of God, but also what we are called to bring into the world as those who are created in the image of God.

~ Rev. Shana Johnson, Illinois Southern Conference Minister

CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

The UCC Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing assistance to lower-income retirees. Give onsite, online at www.zionreformed.church/give, or by mail throughout the month of December as you are able.

Christmas Services



Christmas Eve - 7pm
Christmas Day - Online Only
(No Sunday School Classes)

Sunday Service: 11 am
Sunday School: 9:45am
Worship online:
www.zionreformed.church/worshiplive

Address:
201 N. Potomac St.
Telephone:
301-739-7244
Email:
zionrucc@myactv.net





“Nothing will be impossible with God.” Luke 1:37

Every holiday season, you have the choice to either survive it or thrive in it. When Thanksgiving dinner is barely cold and the pressure of Christmas looms on the horizon, it is tempting to resent the expected pace and emotional stress that’s coming. What should a person of faith do? This year why not try to approach Christmas with something new that will carry you down the road rejoicing? Here’s one thought that might lift you up: Christmas teaches us that all things are possible with God.

If God wants something done, it can be done. It’s really as simple as that. For us, goals can seem beyond our reach or even impossible, but throughout time, from the moment creation began, God has shown us that what God envisions is possible... and can come to fruition before our very eyes!

Just look at that first Christmas...God gave an overwhelming goal to a young girl named Mary. An angel told her that she would become a mother, and that her son would be the Savior of the world. When she inquired of the angel about this seemingly impossible accomplishment, the angel simply said, “Nothing will be impossible with God.” We would never dream of giving our children a task they could not complete; and neither does God. God envisions goals for us as well. They may not seem possible, but God knows that together we can rise to the occasion. When Mary was faced with what seemed to her life an impossibility, she responded, “Behold, the bond slave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38) She demonstrated true faith in the face of overwhelming circumstances! She trusted that with God on her side, the seemingly impossible would occur. She accepted the life of challenges that God offered her, knowing that she also accepted a life filled with blessings.

Think of the overpowering assignment that confronted Mary: She was to have a baby, despite so many obstacles that confronted her. She was to raise the boy who would save the whole world. The entire course of history would change because of her beloved son. The fact that we celebrate Christmas is proof that Mary’s faith in God to do the impossible was all she needed to complete God’s will for her. Here’s the lesson: We need faith in God for whatever impossible challenges face us.

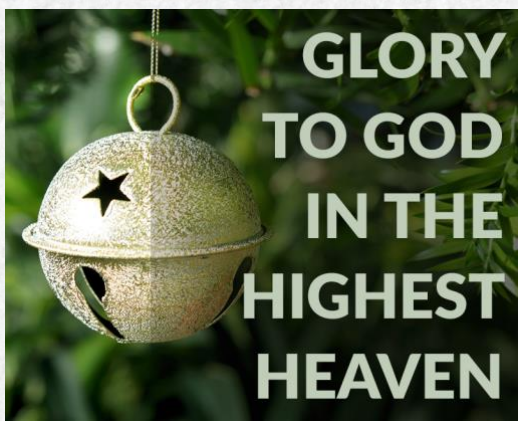
What struggles do you face this holiday season? Ongoing fears over the changes brought by COVID? The first Christmas without a loved one? Health issues? Broken relationships? Financial strain? Uncertainty? A broken heart over a child? When you feel overwhelmed with responsibility or overcome with pain, remember that God is able to go above and beyond all we ask or think. Christmas teaches us that God is still looking for those who are willing to trust God to do the impossible. Let’s give thanks that with God all things are possible!

A Blessed and Merry Christmas to you and your family,
Pastor Katie



Pastor Katie and the Zion ONA Team stand with the officers and staff of the United Church of Christ in mourning with the nation the needless death and wounding of Club Q patrons in Colorado Springs. With each violent act of aggression against our LGBTQIA+* siblings we pledge anew to confront such evil with all the power given us through the liberating love of a God whose image we all bear.

*LGBTQIA+: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual, and allies



December **12**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				01	02	03
04	05	06	07	08	09	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

January **01**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

DECEMBER WEEKLY/MONTHLY EVENTS

Sunday Worship – Every Sunday at 11am in the sanctuary and virtually at

www.zionreformed.church/worshiplive

Sunday School – 9:45am - Adult and Children's classes with hybrid options also available. There will be no Sunday School classes on 12/25 and 1/1. More info at www.zionreformed.church/education

Tuesday's Supper and One Stop Shop – Every Tuesday from 5-6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall

Thursday Lunch Bunch– Weekly at 11:30am in the Burhans Room and ZOOM

More info at <http://www.zionreformed.church/thursday>

Choir Practice - Every Thursday at 4:00pm in the Chapel

4-H Club – Dec 8, 15, 22 at 4:30pm in the Burhans Room

Executive Team Meeting–12/8 at 2:00pm in the Burhans Room and ZOOM

Consistory–12/12 at 7:00pm in the Burhans Room and ZOOM

Service Workers–12/7 at 1:30pm in the Burhans Room

Search & Call Team Meetings – 12/12 at 5:30pm in the Burhans Room and ZOOM

Staff Team Meeting – 12/8 and 12/22 at 12:30 in the Burhans Room

ONA Team Meetings – 12/13 and 12/27 at 12:30pm in the Burhans Room

December Birthdays

Matthew Cook	12/01	Anissa Wade	12/20
Richard Owens	12/02	David Ridenour	12/21
John Dwyer	12/05	Carol Schultz	12/22
Jeanne Stoner	12/10	Ralph Sellers	12/23
Koda Bell	12/12	Michael Jones	12/23
Carol France	12/13	Sandra Rhodes	12/24
Scherry Sellers	12/15	Mackenzie Ridenour	12/29
Howard Kaylor	12/20		

December Anniversaries

Bob and Peggy Lowman	12/07	Richard and Susan Lohman	12/29
Wells and Karen Ridenour	12/12		

Notes from the Consistory

Continuing with our November Stewardship Theme, President Kim reminded us, as Consistory members, of our responsibility to be good stewards of our and others' time, resources, and finances as we meet and make decisions.

Much of our discussion centered on the 2023 budget and topics related to the budget. A procedure for approval of purchases larger than a set amount will be developed and presented at the next Consistory meeting. Our two new part - time employees will be wrapping up their probationary periods in December. The performance review process will need to be completed prior to the next Consistory meeting. How sick, vacation, and/or PTO hours for part-time employees are computed is still under discussion. Another small group has been looking at how other churches deal with Consistory term limits. There will be a series of discussion meetings with interested people about the design and layout of our Fellowship Hall.

Fellowship Hall is long overdue for renovation but it is important that our improvements in the Hall reflect the various needs and future needs of the groups that use it.

One stark reality that Zion must face as we move forward is the fact that there is a vast difference between the weekly plate receipts and the weekly expense of the church. Different steps are in place to reduce spending whenever we can. It is the responsibility of us all to be mindful of Zion's spending. If you are looking for an opportunity to increase your involvement with Zion, our various committees are always looking for new members. Please reach out to any Consistory member about volunteering.

Speaking of volunteering, there are 4 members who have committed to running for the Consistory. They are Matt McDonald, Carol Mooers (continuing), Jean Simmons, and Megan Schultz Shroyer. Remember to be part of the Annual Meeting on December 11 immediately after the Sunday Service when we will vote on these candidates and on Zion's budget for 2023.

And be sure to check out the calendar to see the many holiday events planned for December and early January. Happy Holidays to all!



In this season of celebration and giving, please remember your church and your church family.
Your sacrificial giving is necessary to keep all of our ministries going.
Thank you for giving generously to the work God is leading us into.

Ready or Not, Here it Comes - *from the Parish Nurse*

The last month of the year is a busy season at home and at church. There is shopping, baking, wrapping, decorating, visiting, parties.....the list goes on. At church, we have Advent activities, special rehearsals for pageants and musical presentations as well as our regular weekly activities. You may feel like you are running and can't stop because you are behind. It is important to get some rest and relaxation EVERY day during this stressful time. Try to spend some time each day doing something you enjoy, even if it's only for 30 minutes or so; read a good book, enjoy a quiet cup of tea or hot chocolate without any interruptions, sit or walk outside for a few minutes and enjoy the amazing changes that winter brings to our world. The possibilities are endless, so pick something you love to do every day and enjoy it to the fullest. One of the best "short" activities to help restore your spirit is a daily devotional or scripture reading. Just a few short Bible passages can lift your mood and enrich your spirit. Talking and praying to God are great ways to be renewed.



Don't stress over gift giving. With the busyness of our lives, the best gift is often to give your time to help someone or just be with them. Share a meal with a friend or loved one you don't see very often. Spend time with your children doing something that *they* enjoy. Remind your family and friends about the real meaning of Christmas and why we give gifts. It is believed that the tradition of giving gifts began after the Wise Men or Magi gave their gifts to the baby Jesus after his birth. This was to honor Jesus and express their love and respect for him. Do you think about that with your gift giving? Remember too, that God gave us a gift- his Son!

Here's a tip on time management; put church related activities on your calendar **FIRST** before over-booking your schedule. This works during the Advent season and the entire rest of the year. You may even need to say "no" to a few events in order to limit holiday stress and keep yourself rested. It can be hard to be a "cheerful giver" when you are over-booked and over-tired. Keep smiling and pace yourself. You may even realize that you are giving yourself a gift of less stress and optimum enjoyment in what you are doing when you aren't worrying about what is next on your schedule. And never forget that all of us have **already** been given the most stupendous gift that was ever given; God gave us Jesus. You need not ask for anything else!

Blessings and Health,
Barb Hendershot, RN
Parish Nurse

Sources: billygraham.org



What's Happening

December Book Club

Join the Zion Book Club for its next meeting on December 9th at 7pm at the home of Sue Graff. The group will be discussing the book *Dear Santa*. A special holiday wish list brings about hope, love, and second chances in this nostalgic novel from the queen of Christmas stories, Debbie Macomber. This will be the last book club of 2022. The next book group after the December meeting will be held on January 27th.

December 1 – World AIDS Day

Take time to remember and pray for those affected by HIV and AIDS.

December 4 – Stewardship Pledge Cards Due

Please remember to pledge on or before Sunday, December 4. We give generously because in God's compassion God has given so generously to us. Through our giving to Zion, we can support our loving community. Pledge cards can be dropped off in the pledge card drop box located in the rear of the chapel or mailed to the church.

December 10th and 11th – Hagerstown Nativity Festival

The Hagerstown Area Religious Council sponsors the festival featuring local musicians and live nativity! Hosted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at 1253 Mt Aetna Rd.

December 11th - Congregational Meeting (During Worship)

Make plans to join us for our annual meeting. We need your voice and your presence as we discuss plans for 2023. Consistory nominees are Matt McDonald, Carol Mooers (continuing), Jean Simmons, and Megan Schultz Shroyer. Find out more about the consistory nominees and the budget proposal at www.zionreformed.church/winter-mtg.

December 21st – Longest Night Service 7pm

This service is designed for those who don't feel so merry, a space for those who are depressed, lonely, and grieving during the holidays to acknowledge those feelings and to know you are seen.



**PURCHASE A
POINSETTIA**

- IN HONOR OF
- IN MEMORY OF

\$10 EACH

ORDERS ARE DUE BY DEC. 11TH

Lector

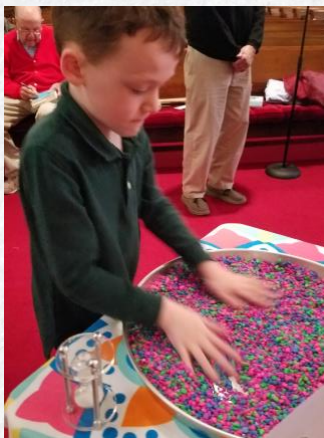
Ushers

Dec 4	
Jean Simmons	William Brewer Calvin Livingston Jean Simmons Gerald Saum
Dec 11	
Missie LaBombard	Richard Cantilena Edward Patterson Kimberly Ridenour Carol Mooers
Dec 18	
Rae Smith	Burnie Clutz Susan Clutz Becky Hohman John Schnebly

Photo Gallery



1. Getting ready for the return of the Mummer's Parade!
2. Dinner with the Munroe's!
3. Stewardship Sunday Activities
4. Downtown 4-H Fun





REVERSE

ADVENT CALENDAR

**EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX.
ON CHRISTMAS EVE BRING YOUR ITEMS
IN FOR OUR ONE-STOP SHOP**

- December 1 - box of cereal
- December 2 - peanut butter
- December 3 - stuffing mix
- December 4 - boxed potatoes
- December 5 - macaroni and cheese
- December 6 - canned fruit
- December 7 - canned tomatoes
- December 8 - canned tuna
- December 9 - dessert mix
- December 10 - jar of applesauce
- December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 - cranberry sauce
- December 13 - canned beans
- December 14 - box of crackers
- December 15 - package of rice
- December 16 - package of oatmeal
- December 17 - package of pasta
- December 18 - spaghetti sauce
- December 19 - chicken noodle soup
- December 20 - tomato soup
- December 21 - canned corn
- December 22 - canned mixed vegetables
- December 23 - canned carrots
- December 24 - canned green beans

Home for the Holidays – ONA Team



The holiday season can be especially triggering for many people, but LGBTQIA+ persons are more likely than their non-LGBTQIA+ counterparts to experience stress, anxiety and depression during this time of the year. Research shows that LGBTQ people are more likely to experience these symptoms year-round, but numerous mental health providers say that the holiday season, especially returning home for the holidays, can exacerbate these symptoms. “During the holiday season, I notice that many of my LGBTQ clients have even more difficulty handling the challenges they face in their daily lives and the negative impacts of these challenges, such as stigma and rejection, are much more acute,” TJ Walsh, a psychotherapist and faculty member at Eastern University in the graduate school's Counseling Psychology department, explains. This time of year is stressful for us all, but for the rainbow community, particularly those with Christian families it can be traumatizing. Many LGBTQIA+ persons will spend the holidays separated from their families because of a religious difference. Gay loved ones (and often times their partners and children as well) will simply not be invited

for those who believe that homosexuality is a sin, it will, perhaps, be an opportunity to induce the kind of starvation that aims to lead to repentance. For others, it may be the sacrifice of a child upon the altar of God -- an act of faith, to do one's Christian duty to separate that which is holy from that which is unholy. As Christians, we deeply appreciate the reverence and honor that comes with expressions of one's faith. The things we say and do are important because we see them as reflections of the inner person and the Spirit that lives within us. That is why sacraments are, indeed, sacred. They are the visible activities we do to express the typically invisible, divine, spiritual grace we carry within our hearts. Yet we also know, that any ritual is just something to do if we don't bother to take notice of the inner longings we hope to express in the action. It could be said that the Eucharist is just wine and bread on any other day, but during a moment of sacred worship, it is a connection to the living God otherwise only known in our hearts. All that being said, it leaves us to ask ourselves, what will our Christmas table say about our inner spirit this year? What will our communion table say about us as a congregation in the coming year?

Christian homes across the nation will be praying over their holiday meals with a sense of complete and sincere worship toward a loving God. Our Christmas feast will be transformed by our prayers, turning it into a sacrament of gratitude flowing out from our spiritual being. Instead of sacrificing the fatted calf for our prodigal sons, it will be a frighteningly large roasted turkey or ham and buttery mashed potatoes, but no less propitiatory. Even through the coming tryptophan induced coma, we will make this day one of offering and celebration. In a predictable ritual we will both secretly suffer and deeply long for, we will push back the awkward fear of vulnerability as our overly romantic aunt boldly insists we all join hands and each express aloud one thing we are thankful for. As you feel the dry, rough skin of your father's hand, or perhaps the pudgy, sticky fingers of your nephew in the palm of your own, you may find yourself feeling both uncomfortable and comforted. When was the last time you held their hand for so long? Aren't you wholly grateful you are not alone today? Your mind will race and grasp for something to say as your turn quickly approaches...What am I thankful for? Who am I thankful for?

In that sacred moment, would you ever think to measure your gratitude by the missing? Can you ever truly say: I am grateful there are no lesbian, gay, or transgender people here (or at my church)? There is no way around it; our thankfulness is always celebrated most when we have people in our lives to love. It is always, unreservedly valued by the presence of the most precious, scarcest of good things. We are always most thankful by what we have, rather than by what we have not. So, as we sanctify the bounty on our tables to God this year, who will we blessed with the honor of sharing it with us, who will we extend God's unconditional love to?

Humbly Serving Christ and Zion,
Your ONA Team



Adapted from Dove Award-winning, Grammy nominated singer/song writer and advocate, Jennifer Knapp's freelance [article](#) on HuffPost Contributor platform dtd Nov 26, 2014, and NBC News [article](#), “Why some LGBTQ people feel especially stressed at the holidays...” dtd Dec 23, 2018.

Announcements

OPPORTUNITIES TO **GIVE**



Contact the church office for more information: zionrucc@myactv.net or call 301-739-7244.

A photograph of a dark plate filled with various Christmas cookies, including snowflakes, trees, and gingerbread men, decorated with blue, green, and red icing.

**Cookies
Cards &
Carols**

AFTER
WORSHIP

December 11th
Bring a plate of your favorite cookies to share
& your voice to join together in song



Seeking the story

Angels joyfully announced a special arrival in Bethlehem at Christmas.

Directions: Find the words listed below. Then unscramble the intersecting letters to complete Luke 2:11, NIV.



WORD BANK

- Shepherds
- Child
- Nazareth
- Census
- Baby
- David
- Mary
- Travel
- Town
- Register
- Born
- Night

T	B	W	Y	A	Z	K	E	S	H	N	G	D	J	K
Q	O	Y	A	P	R	A	L	B	F	P	I	C	Q	L
N	R	W	X	B	E	Y	R	M	B	D	M	O	E	E
S	N	O	N	W	G	A	I	B	A	C	D	O	T	D
R	G	X	J	F	I	W	M	V	B	R	R	C	E	O
P	S	C	E	N	S	U	S	H	Y	U	Y	F	P	N
O	T	P	I	G	T	Q	C	N	T	G	M	U	S	T
O	A	N	D	B	E	C	H	I	L	D	N	Z	F	A
A	T	B	A	U	R	W	H	G	F	V	A	B	U	M
T	R	A	V	E	L	J	C	H	V	O	Z	G	N	H
F	B	Q	I	W	D	X	P	T	E	N	A	O	L	Q
Z	C	R	D	Q	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S	V
R	U	V	Y	K	N	I	R	T	K	G	E	Y	I	R
K	V	A	Z	X	L	S	H	Y	T	P	T	J	S	K
L	L	E	S	M	J	Z	L	Q	R	U	H	V	W	X

"Today in the town of David a _____
has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

LUKE 2:11, NIV

Answer: Savior



Unto you.
 Unto you the mother without
 her own
 children.
 Unto you an addict who can't keep clean.
 Unto you the survivor.
 Unto you who can't lose it because you have
 to keep it together for everyone else.
 Unto you the bullied kid.
 Unto you whose family never got you.
 Unto you who lost your parents this year.
 Unto you who doesn't know how in the
 world you can keep going.
 Unto you.
 Unto you a child is born. And also unto me.
 And also unto me and all who already smell
 of sheep and grass and dirt.
 Because the Christ child is always born
 wherever he is most needed.
 Wherever a soul needs to feel it's worth.

—Nadia Bolz-Weber

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Choir Director: Byron L. Stay
Treasurer: Lisa Saum
Special Funds Treasurer: Carol Mooers
Parish Nurse: Barb Hendershot
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 Michael Jones - VP, Carroll Sager - Secretary, Susan
 Clutz, & Carol Mooers.
Consistory Deacons: Dee Krause, Calvin Livingston,
 Rich Owens, Daisy Schlotterbeck, & Tina Shafer.

Zion News is published monthly by Zion Reformed United Church of Christ
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Deadline for articles is the 15th of each month prior to the month of publication.
 All articles are subject to editing for space.

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