



Zion News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2023 – VOLUME 64 ISSUE 12

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”. ~ Luke:2-10-12

Christmas at Zion

Christmas Pageant during Worship on Dec 17th.

Practice on Dec. 3 & 10 during Sunday School.

Dress rehearsal during Sunday School on Dec. 17.

Children's choir practice starts on Dec. 3 - Sunday's from 9:45-10 am (prior to Sunday School).

Christmas Eve - Join us for our regular worship service at 11 am and then for our candlelight service at 7 pm.

Christmas Alternative Giving

Zion's Alternative Giving partner this year is [Solar Under The Sun](#) who envisions a reality where every person on the planet has access to clean, sustainable, life-changing energy. Give a gift to a friend, coworker or relative as you donate to an overseas mission program - [click here to learn more.](#)

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 at the church, [online](#), or by mail throughout the month of December as you are able.

**ZION'S MISSION:
TO SHARE THE
GOSPEL OF CHRIST
IN SUCH A WAY THAT
WE FIND GOD,
GROW OUR FAITH,
DISCOVER OUR
PURPOSE AND MAKE
A DIFFERENCE**

Worship online [via Zoom](#)
Meeting ID: 876 0291 7867
Password: Peace

Sunday Service: 11am
Sunday School: 9:45am
Adult class [via Zoom](#)
Meeting ID:
876 0291 7867
Password: Peace

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





grateful

Pastor and social justice provocateur John Pavlovitz in a lecture in 2021 offered three wise suggestions for self-care in tough times: Use social media sparingly and only to perpetuate goodness and speak truth; root yourself in community because being with other people can heal us; and cultivate gratitude and nurture hope like a gardener. I particularly liked his last suggestion to focus on gratitude and hope. So, I am writing to you to offer my gratitude.

I am grateful for all of you who come to church on Tuesday evenings for Zion's ministries to our home community. And I am thankful for those who potluck together on Wednesday evenings; it warms my heart to see church members intentionally having dinner. I am also grateful to the people who agreed years ago to be on the Church Search Committee and their spiritually based-advice to hire me. It feels so right. I am grateful for the volunteers who have stepped up to keep our Education programs going and for our new marvelous confirmation class and Tina Shafer's help leading the class.

I am grateful for the new faces I see in church and the warm welcome you extend to them. I am grateful for all the people who are returning to church in person. I am grateful for those who watch online and share our hope that that option will improve. I am grateful for all who are pledging the treasure, time and talent to God's work at Zion. I am grateful for the music leadership of the church. I am grateful for the upcoming patient work organizing the children's Christmas pageant for December and particularly Barb Hendershot who authored the play. I am grateful for Becky Hohman and her willingness to serve on the Consistory and all those who continue to serve.

I could go on and on, which is how gratitude works. Once you start counting your blessings, your cup will overflow. Mostly though, I am grateful for the Zion Reformed UCC – who we are and all we do to spread God's love in the world. From this well of gratitude comes my hope: my hope that we will continue to be the kind of church that makes the world better when times are tough.

Yours with faith and gratitude,

Pastor Scott



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 – 11am in the sanctuary and virtually at www.zionreformed.church/worshiplive

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

Wednesday Night Potluck Dinners – Dec 6,13, 20 at 6pm

4-H Club – Dec. 7, 14, 21 at 4:30pm in the Burhans Room

Choir Practice – Dec. 7, 14, 21 at 5:30pm

Staff Team Meeting – Tuesdays at 12:00am in the Burhans Room

CE Team Meeting – 12/11 at 5:30pm

Executive Team Meeting – 12/28 at 2pm

Consistory Meeting – 12/11 at 7pm in the Burhans Room

Easycise Exercise Class – 12/9 at 9am

December Birthdays

Matthew Cook	12/1	Anissa Wade	12/20
Richard Owens	12/2	David Ridenour	12/21
John Dwyer	12/5	Carol Miller-Schultz	12/22
Jeanne Stoner	12/10	Ralph Sellers	12/23
Koda Bell	12/12	Atlee Mooers	12/23
Carol France	12/13	Sandra Rhodes	12/24
Scherry Sellers	12/15	Mackenzie Ridenour	12/29
Howard Kaylor	12/20		

December Anniversaries

Peggy and Bob Lowman	12/7	Susan and Richard Lohman	12/29
Karen and Wells Ridenour	12/12		



We celebrate Zion Reformed UCC's generosity! 33 Thanksgiving meals were given away during the Tuesday Ministries complete with turkeys.

Consistory Highlights

This month's Consistory meeting was filled with lots of great news and lots of new activities.

President Kim shared that Zion and Zion's 4-H club have been thanked for the donations of time and resources for the Heavenly Sleep Project. This project builds beds for children who do not have beds. Zion also received 400 lbs. of food for our Tuesday Night Ministries. Pastor Scott, Kim, and Jean shared their thoughts about their participation in the UCC Association and Conference Fall meetings. Zion was well represented at these meetings. Kim pointed out that there are some new faces on Sundays and our Sunday worship numbers are going up.

Pastor Scott shared the visits he has been making to members and the various activities that he has been involved with at Zion, all in addition to planning and presenting Sunday Worship each week. Susie reported that the Pastoral Relations Team has met with Scott and there have been no concerns.

The Outreach Team noted that the cost of new Zion car magnets, new Zion stickers/clings for the doors, and new Zion flags will be covered by Zion's advertising budget. Lapel pins can be ordered at a cost of \$3.50 each. Costs for short and long sleeved T-shirts and sweatshirts will be announced soon.

Megan shared the CE Team report and announced that there are 4 confirmands in the Confirmation class. These four confirmands will be covering the Sunday acolyte duties. A children's choir, which will sing in worship 4 times during the current Sunday School season, is being formed. New Sunday School curriculum is being reviewed.

The ONA Team report was shared by Calvin. He said the updated Zion website now identifies Zion as an ONA church. A few suggestions and additions were offered but overall, everyone was very pleased with the new look. Check it out yourself at www.zionreformed.church

Stewardship Sunday was November 12. Pastor Scott shared a draft letter to the Congregation about Stewardship Sunday which will be mailed out next week to congregation members. Expect a phone call and/or a follow-up postcard reminding you of the importance of stewardship. Information about automatic withdrawals be included in the mailing as a way to make the donation process easier for folks.

Pastor Scott pointed out that the weekly Soup Kitchen teams are overwhelmed by the carryout demands. The carryout process was started during the pandemic. However, since the advent of vaccines and medications to better treat covid, carryout meals are no longer needed. It also is unclear if these carry meals are truly going to those in need. After much discussion, it was agreed that we will end the carryout process as of November 30. This information will be posted for all visitors to see. Pastor Scott will investigate any situations where carryout might be appropriate. For the most part, our Food Pantry and other community resources should be able to address valid carryout needs.

Each year Zion has offered the Tree of Lights as an alternative Christmas gift idea. Pastor Scott added the idea of the Solar Under the Sun project which Ruth Dwyer is part of. Kim also suggested the Heavenly Sleep project and the \$10 Holiday Dinner boxes. So now you have several gift giving options for the holidays.

The Properties Committee has been very busy improving the look of the Memorial Garden and cemetery areas. Please take a look at the work that has been completed and what is currently being worked on. Rich explained the need to continue to repair and right the headstones that have been negatively impacted by weathering, aging, and eroding. The Consistory felt that Zion has a responsibility to maintain the graveyard especially given the history related to our cemetery. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to continue this work and to add this as a line item to the proposed 2024 budget.

Lisa reviewed the key points in the proposed 2024 budget such as the employee increase, the addition of the graveyard restoration project, the organ sound board repair number which represents half of the cost for the new sound board, and the addition of a line item for the Soup Kitchen. The Consistory approved the proposed 2024 budget as amended during the meeting. It will be presented to the Congregation for a vote at the

Keep December Safe - A Parish Nurse Note

December is a busy month, but don't be so busy that you are not safe. The month of December is one the most dangerous times for car accidents, household accidents and house fires. Ice and snow can be a factor in dangerous driving as well as drunk or drowsy driving. Never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs (even some prescription ones). The busyness of the season can lead to fatigue and increased stress, both factors in drowsy and distracted driving. Keep cell phones off or out of sight when driving to avoid inattentive driving. Always have an emergency car kit with you that includes jumper cables, a flashlight with extra batteries, rags, bottled water, a first aid kit, blankets, and a cell phone charger. Letting others know your travel plans is also a great idea. Remember to ALWAYS wear your seat belt.

Decorating for the holidays also requires safe practices. Be aware of the types of seasonal plants, such as mistletoe, holly berries, and amaryllis that are poisonous; place them out of reach of children and pets. Be sure to use the proper size ladder if you are decorating outside and always have another adult nearby to assist you.



If you use an artificial Christmas tree, it should be labeled as fire resistant. Real trees must be watered regularly and checked for needle dryness. Keep your tree at least 3 feet from heat sources and fireplaces. Be sure that exits and doorways are not blocked by your tree. Keep breakable ornaments out of reach of small children and pets. Inspect your Christmas lights for broken bulbs and frayed or broken wires. Follow the recommendations for stringing light strands together to avoid over-loaded outlets. Do not place electrical cords under rugs or in walkways. Use only lights designated for outdoor use outside and keep plugs off the ground and away from puddles and snow. Turn off your decorations when you are not home or when you are sleeping.

There also tends to be an increase in house fires and accidents during the holiday season. Candles are a beautiful addition to the holidays but be careful! Place candles where children, pets, and guests will not knock them over. NEVER leave a lit candle unattended. Consider using flameless candles instead of those that burn. If you are going to use your fireplace, be sure that the chimney is clean. Never burn wrapping paper or discarded real tree branches in your fireplace. Space heaters should not be left unattended; it only takes a short time for drapes or papers to ignite if your heater is too close to combustibles. Be cautious if you decide to fry a turkey for your Christmas dinner; follow the directions carefully and never leave it unattended. Also, be sure that your smoke detector is working; if you don't have one, buy one or check with your local fire department.

Food poisoning can also be a hazard during the holidays. If you are preparing food, wash your hands frequently. Keep raw meat totally separate from fresh produce; use separate cutting boards for cooked and uncooked foods. Leftovers should be refrigerated within two hours of being served.

Enjoy this busy holiday season but be sure to stay safe. Have a joyous, healthy, and accident-free Christmas season!

Blessings and Health,
Barb Hendershot, RN
Parish Nurse

Sources:

- nsc.org
- esfi.org



What's Happening

December 1 – Zion Book Club

We will meet at 7pm at the home of Daisy Schlotterbeck to discuss the *The 13th Gift*, a true story. After the unexpected death of her husband, Joanne had no idea how she would keep herself together and be strong for her three children--especially with the holiday season approaching. But 12 days before Christmas, presents begin appearing on her doorstep with notes from their "True Friends." This true story about the power of random acts of kindness will warm the heart, a beautiful reminder of the miracles of Christmas and the gift of family during the holiday season.

December 3rd – Hanging of the Green

Make plans to help us decorate the the trees, windows and doors in the Chapel and Sanctuary after the worship service.

December 10th - Congregational Meeting

The Zion Consistory announces the Winter Congregational Meeting will be held after worship. The agenda will consist of discussing and voting on the 2024 budget, and consistory 2024 nominees. All members are encouraged to participate in this important business meeting! Budget proposals will be mailed out to members or can be picked- up for review from the vestibule.

December 10th – Holiday Workshop

Join us for this great time of Christmas preparation! There will be different activity stations - for example pine arrangement, ornaments, crafts, etc. Please sign up in the chapel or online (<https://tinyurl.com/4rcm4exf>) so we can plan accordingly.

December 21st – Longest Night Service 7pm

The Christmas season isn't always easy. The service is a chance to join together in solidarity to bring the hurt, loneliness and grief to God trusting that we will meet God in that space.

December 26th - Tour of Worship Houses 3-7pm

A wonderful opportunity to see the interiors of historic downtown Hagerstown houses of worship. Learn about the architecture and ecumenical heritage from docents and guides. Music, refreshments and local art will be featured at some locations. Zion is one of the stops on the tour and we will be serving cookies and punch, please consider donating 2 dozen of cookies to share.

Zion T-Shirts are coming! Watch the weekly email for a link to order. We will also have a printed order form in the Chapel. Zion logo on the front and this on the back:



TREASURER'S REPORT

	October	Year-to-Date
Income	\$4,778	\$59,896.68
Transfers	\$25,000	\$250,000
Expenses	\$22,220.52	\$305,408.96
Net Income	\$7,557.48	\$4,487.72

Date	Lector	Ushers
Dec. 3	Amber Nilson	Domenick Gerlando Barb Hendershot Matt McDonald William Wantz
Dec. 10	Barb Hendershot	William Brewer Calvin Livingston Jean Simmons Gerald Saum
Dec. 17	Calvin Livingston	Burnie Clutz Susan Clutz Becky Hohman John Schnebly
Dec. 24	Carol Mooers	Frank Ebersole Carol Mooers Missie LaBombard Rich Owens
Dec. 31	Jean Simmons	Domenick Gerlando Barb Hendershot Matt McDonald William Wantz



The kingdom is finally to be identified as the Lord Jesus himself. When we say “Come, Lord Jesus” on this Christmas Day, we are preferring his Lordship to any other loyalty system or any other final frame of reference. If Jesus is Lord, than Caesar is not! If Jesus is Lord, then the economy and stock market are not! If Jesus is Lord, then my house and possessions, family and job are not! If Jesus is Lord, than I am not! That multileveled implication was obvious to first-century members of the Roman Empire because the phrase “Caesar is Lord” was the empire’s loyalty test and political bumper sticker. They, and others, knew they had changed “parties” when they welcomed Jesus as Lord instead of the Roman emperor as their savior.

- *Richard Rohr*

<p>Pastor: Rev. Dr. E. Scott Winnette Admin Assistant: Rae Smith Multimedia Specialist: Brandon Hackett Music Director/Organist: Claire-Marie Moblard Choir Director: Byron L. Stay Treasurer: Lisa Saum Special Funds Treasurer: Carol Mooers Parish Nurse: Barb Hendershot</p> <p>Consistory Elders: Kim Ridenour, Carroll Sager, Tina Shafer, Susie Clutz and Carol Mooers</p> <p>Consistory Deacons: Rich Owens and Calvin Livingston, Megan Shroyer, Matt McDonald, and Jean Simmons</p>	<p>Zion News is published monthly by Zion Reformed United Church of Christ 201 North Potomac Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740.</p> <p>Office Hours: Monday – Friday 9 am – 12:00 pm Telephone: 301-739-7244 Email: zionrucc@myactv.net Website: www.zionreformed.church</p> <p>Deadline for articles is the 15th of each month prior to the month of publication. All articles are subject to editing for space.</p> <p>The medical information in this newsletter is provided without any representations or warranties, express or implied. You must not rely on the information in this newsletter as an alternative to medical advice from your doctor or other professional healthcare provider.</p>
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Hagerstown, MD 21740
201 North Potomac Street

ZION REFORMED UCC



Zion Reformed United Church of Christ