

Welcome!

The
desert
shall
rejoice
and
blossom

ISAIAH 35:1



Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

101 N. Greenwood Street, Tamaqua, PA 18252

(570) 668-2180 - Email: zionlcof@verizon.net

Our Mission: Zion proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ through Word and Sacrament as Gospel messengers in the community. We seek to be instruments through which God transforms lives and strengthens relationships within families and within our community of believers

The Third Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2022 ~ 9:00 am

The Liturgy of Word and Sacrament

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

**Congregation please stand*

The Pre-service Music

~ The Gathering ~

* The Confession and Forgiveness

BLESSED BE THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, WHO ALONE DOES WONDROUS THINGS.

Blessed be God's name forever. Amen.

BELOVED, NOW IS THE TIME TO WAKE FROM SLEEP. LET US CONFRONT OUR SINS, AND CONFESS THEM TO THE ONE WHO IS MERCIFUL AND JUST.

Silence is kept for reflection.

GOD OF NEW BEGINNINGS,

we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign. We have strayed from your paths. We prepare for war instead of peace. We dishonor one another and your creation. Purify us with your refining fire and set us again on your way of love, that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance, and welcome your coming among us. Amen.

PEOPLE OF GOD, A NEW THING IS GROWING IN OUR MIDST, A TENDER BRANCH, A LIVING SIGN. BY WATER AND THE SPIRIT YOU ARE JOINED TO THIS WONDER. YOU HAVE PUT ON + CHRIST, AND YOUR SINS HAVE BEEN WASHED AWAY. REJOICE IN THE WAY OF THE LORD.

Amen.

* The Gathering Hymn

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

No. 26

* The Greeting

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE REFINING FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH SURPASSES UNDERSTANDING, BE WITH YOU ALL.

And also with you.

* The Kyrie Eleison *(music on page 57 of LBW)*

IN PEACE, LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

(Sung) **Lord, have mercy.**

FOR THE PEACE FROM ABOVE, AND FOR OUR SALVATION, LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

Lord, have mercy.

FOR THE PEACE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE CHURCH OF GOD, AND FOR THE UNITY OF ALL, LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

Lord, have mercy.

FOR THIS HOLY HOUSE, AND FOR ALL WHO OFFER HERE THEIR WORSHIP AND PRAISE, LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

Lord, have mercy.

HELP, SAVE, COMFORT, AND DEFEND US, GRACIOUS LORD.

Amen.

* The Prayer of the Day

THE LORD BE WITH YOU

(Sung) And also with you.

LET US PRAY:

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

~The Word~

The First Lesson Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

(After the reading)

THE WORD OF THE LORD

Thanks be to God.

The Candle Lighting

choir only **All creation lies in waiting, in the stillness of the night,
With hope anticipating the Advent of Eternal Light.**

ADVENT IS A TIME TO PREPARE.

Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

DURING ADVENT WE PREPARE OUR EYES TO SEE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST.

Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

DURING ADVENT WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS TO RECEIVE THE WORD OF CHRIST.

Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

DURING ADVENT WE PREPARE TO SHARE THE JOY OF CHRIST.

Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

DURING ADVENT WE PREPARE TO EMBRACE THE PROMISE OF CHRIST

Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

THIS MORNING WE LIGHT THREE CANDLES. THE FIRST CANDLE REMINDS US THAT ADVENT IS A TIME TO WAIT UPON THE LORD. WE WAIT FOR THE UNFOLDING OF GOD'S PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD'S TIME. THE SECOND CANDLE REMINDS US THAT ADVENT IS ALSO A TIME TO WATCH. DURING ADVENT, WE EAGERLY WATCH FOR GOD'S PRESENCE AND WORK IN OUR WORLD. AS WE LIGHT THE THIRD CANDLE WE ALSO REMEMBER THAT ADVENT IS A TIME TO PREPARE. DURING ADVENT, WE PREPARE OURSELVES IN HEART, SOUL, AND STRENGTH TO WELCOME OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST, WHO WAS AND IS, AND IS TO COME. LET EACH OF US ASK GOD TO PREPARE US TO CELEBRATE THE GLORY OF CHRISTMAS.

Sung All: **We prepare in hope for the morning Light,
for the love of Christ to illuminate the night.
We prepare with joy for the Savior's birth;
we prepare in hope for peace on earth.**

GOD IN HEAVEN, AS WE CONTINUE OUR ADVENT JOURNEY, HELP US TO BE PEOPLE WHO WAIT FOR YOU, WATCH FOR YOU, AND THROUGH YOUR SPIRIT BE PREPARED FOR YOU. CONTINUE TO SHINE YOUR LIGHT IN OUR LIVES AS WE LOOK AT ALL YOU HAVE DON, ALL YOU ARE DOING, AND ALL YOU WILL DO.

Amen.

The Second Lesson James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

(After the reading)

THE WORD OF THE LORD

Thanks be to God.

*** The Gospel Acclamation** *(Alleluia Verse LWB p. 62)*

Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.

*** The Holy Gospel St. Matthew 11:2-11**

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

(Before the Gospel)

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW THE 11TH CHAPTER:

(sung) **Glory to you, O Lord.**

(After the Gospel)

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD

(sung) **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The Sermon

Pastor Cindy White

*** The Hymn of the Day** **“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”**

Add. Hymnal No. 2

**Come, thou long expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.**

**Born Thy people to deliver, Born a child and yet a king;
Born to reign in us forever, Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal spirit Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit Raise us to Thy glorious throne.**

*** The Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

* **The Prayers of Intercession**

AS WE PREPARE FOR THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE, LET US PRAY FOR A WORLD THAT YEARNS FOR NEW HOPE.

A brief silence.

GRACIOUS GOD, WE REJOICE IN THE GIFTS OF YOUR SPIRIT. EQUIP THE GLOBAL CHURCH TO MAGNIFY YOUR LOVE AND PEACE IN EVERY LAND. WE PRAY FOR THE WORK OF THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION AND ELCA GLOBAL MISSION. GOD, IN YOUR MERCY,

hear our prayer.

ABUNDANT GOD, WE REJOICE IN YOUR CREATION. REVIVE LANDS WE HAVE SQUANDERED AND DEPLETED. MAKE GARDENS FLOURISH IN CITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS. CLEANSE POLLUTED AIR AND WATER SO LIVING THINGS MAY BREATHE, DRINK, AND PRAISE YOU. GOD, IN YOUR MERCY,

hear our prayer.

RIGHTEOUS GOD, WE REJOICE IN YOUR JUSTICE. END RACISM AND OPPRESSION. DELIVER ALL WHO ARE UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED OR PERSECUTED. RECONCILE NATIONS AND PEOPLES IN CONFLICT. HELP US PRAY FOR OUR ENEMIES. GOD, IN YOUR MERCY,

hear our prayer.

HEALING GOD, WE REJOICE IN YOUR COMPASSION. COMFORT ANY IN DISTRESS BECAUSE OF WORRY, ILLNESS, OR LOSS ESPECIALLY KATHRYN, CAROLYN, MARLIN, KIM, JOHN, DENA, TIM, CINDY, ROBERT, GEORGE, PAT, DEREK, ELIZABETH, MARY, CHRIS, NANCY, RALPH, JOSEPH, EVA, AND ALL OUR MEMBERS WHO ARE HOMEBOUND. STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT HEALTH CARE WORKERS, RESCUE TEAMS, CRISIS COUNSELORS, AND ALL WHO RISK THEMSELVES TO KEEP OTHERS SAFE. GOD, IN YOUR MERCY,

hear our prayer.

ABIDING GOD, WE REJOICE IN YOUR COMPANY. GIVE US CALM AND PATIENT HEARTS AS WE GATHER WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS. KEEP US MINDFUL OF THOSE FOR WHOM THIS SEASON IS NOT HAPPY. CONSOLE THE GRIEVING AND SURROUND THEM WITH LOVING SUPPORT. GOD, IN YOUR MERCY,

hear our prayer.

FAITHFUL GOD, WE REJOICE WITH MARY, MOTHER OF OUR LORD, AND WITH ALL THE SAINTS, THAT YOUR MERCY ENDURES FOR ALL GENERATIONS. LOOK WITH FAVOR ON THOSE WHO HAVE DIED AND LEAD US TO JOYFULLY SING OF YOUR EVERLASTING PROMISES. GOD, IN YOUR MERCY,

hear our prayer.

GOD OF GRACE AND MERCY, (PLEASE SHARE ANY PERSONAL PRAYER PETITIONS) HEAR OUR PETITIONS THAT WE SPEAK OUT LOUD AND THE ONES THAT WE HOLD IN OUR HEARTS. GOD, IN YOUR MERCY,

hear our prayer.

GOD OF OUR LONGING, YOU KNOW OUR DEEPEST NEEDS. BY YOUR SPIRIT, GATHER OUR PRAYERS AND JOIN THEM WITH THE PRAYERS OF ALL YOUR CHILDREN. IN JESUS' NAME WE PRAY.

Amen.

* **The Peace of Christ**

THE PEACE OF THE LORD BE WITH YOU ALWAYS.

And also with you.

~The Meal~

The Offering and Offertory

Zion members, please use your envelopes for contributions so that your offering may be officially recorded. Please mail your envelopes to Zion Lutheran Church 101 N. Greenwood Street Tamaqua, PA 18252 or visit ziontamaqua.com for our Vanco option.

* **The Offertory Procession** Tune: “O Come Lord Jesus”

**Oh, come Lord Jesus, be our guest and let your gifts to us be blest.
Keep us forever in your sight and be our joy, our hearts delight.**

**Oh, come Lord Jesus be our guest and let your gifts to us be blest.
Come deep within our hearts to dwell that we may all your goodness tell.**

* **The Offertory Prayer**

LET US PRAY: ETERNAL GOD, YOU MAKE THE DESERT BLOOM AND SEND SPRINGS OF WATER TO THIRSTY GROUND. RECEIVE THESE SIMPLE GIFTS OF BREAD, WINE, AND MONEY, AND MAKE US MESSENGERS OF YOUR MERCY AND LOVE FOR ALL IN NEED OF YOUR HEALING AND JUSTICE. WE ASK THIS THROUGH CHRIST OUR SAVIOR.

Amen.

* **The Great Thanksgiving**

* **The Preface and Sanctus** (*music on page 68 of LBW*)

THE LORD BE WITH YOU

(Sung) **And also with you.**

LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS.

We lift them to the Lord.

LET US GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD OUR GOD.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

IT IS INDEED RIGHT.....THEIR UNENDING HYMN: (*LBW page 69*)

(Sung) **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might:**

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

* **The Prayer of Thanksgiving**

HOLY ONE, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, THE GIVER OF LIFE: BLESSED ARE YOU FOR THE BIRTH OF CREATION...BLESSED ARE YOU FOR YOUR SON JESUS, THE WORD MADE FLESH.

IN THE NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED, OUR LORD JESUS TOOK BREAD, AND GAVE THANKS...DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

AGAIN, AFTER SUPPER, HE TOOK THE CUP, GAVE THANKS...DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

LET US PROCLAIM THE MYSTERY OF FAITH:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

WITH THIS BREAD AND CUP WE REMEMBER YOUR WORD DWELLING AMONG US, FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH. WE REMEMBER OUR NEW BIRTH IN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. WE LOOK WITH HOPE FOR HIS COMING.

Come, Lord Jesus.

HOLY GOD, WE LONG FOR YOUR SPIRIT. COME AMONG US. BLESS THIS MEAL. MAY YOUR WORD TAKE FLESH IN US. AWAKEN YOUR PEOPLE. FILL US WITH YOUR LIGHT. BRING THE GIFT OF PEACE ON EARTH.

Come Holy Spirit.

ALL PRAISE AND GLORY ARE YOURS, HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL, WORD OF GOD INCARNATE, POWER OF THE MOST HIGH, ONE GOD, NOW AND FOREVER.

Amen.

*** The Lord's Prayer**

JESUS, REMEMBER US IN YOUR KINGDOM; AND TEACH US TO PRAY:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

*** The Invitation to the Holy Meal**

BE STRONG, DO NOT FEAR! HERE IS YOUR GOD, WHO HAS COME TO SAVE YOU.

*** The Agnus Dei "Lamb of God" (LBW page 72)**

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

The Distribution

All who are baptized and believe that Christ is truly present in the Sacrament are welcome to commune when we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Zion members, please complete a Communion card once a year for our records.

*** The Post-Communion Blessing**

THE BODY AND BLOOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST STRENGTHEN YOU AND KEEP YOU IN HIS GRACE.
Amen.

*** The Post Communion Canticle "Magnificat"**

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.

For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

He hath showed strength with his arm;

He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,

He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree.

He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.

Glory be to the Father: and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

*** The Post Communion Prayer**

LET US PRAY: FAITHFUL GOD, IN THIS MEAL YOU HAVE REMEMBERED YOUR MERCY, BRINGING HEAVEN TO EARTH IN THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST. AS WE WAIT FOR THE DAY WHEN ALL YOUR PROMISES WILL BE FULFILLED, SUSTAIN US AND STRENGTHEN US BY THIS HOLY MYSTERY. GUIDE US TOWARD YOUR PROMISED FUTURE, COMING TO BIRTH IN JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR AND LORD.

Amen.

The Senior Choir Anthem “When Will the Little King Come?” – Schram

~The Sending~

*** The Blessing**

GOD THE ETERNAL WORD, WHO DWELLS WITH US IN JESUS, AND WHO HOLDS US IN THE GRACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, ✚ BLESS YOU NOW AND FOREVER.

(Spoken) Amen.

*** The Sending**

GO IN PEACE. CHRIST IS NEAR.

Thanks be to God.

*** The Sending Hymn**

“My Lord, What a Morning”

WOV No. 627

(Refrain) **My Lord, what a morning; my Lord, what a morning;
Oh, my Lord, what a morning, when the stars begin to fall.**

**You’ll hear the trumpet sound, to wake the nations underground,
Looking to my God’s right hand, when the stars begin to fall. *(Refrain)***

**You’ll hear the sinner cry, to wake the nations underground,
Looking to my God’s right hand, when the stars begin to fall. *(Refrain)***

**You’ll hear the Christian shout, to wake the nations underground,
Looking to my God’s right hand, when the stars begin to fall. *(Refrain)***

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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December 18, 2022 readings are:

Isaiah 7:10-16
Romans 1:1-7

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Matthew 1:18-25

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 10-11, 2022

**If you need assistance, please see one of the ushers in the back of the church; Large Print Bulletins are available. Grape juice is available in the tray for those who wish not to partake of the wine. Please Silence your cell phones during service. A Family Room is available for use during or after services, located across from the office. A changing station is available for your convenience in the restroom across the hall from the Family Room. We respectfully ask that you refrain from taking photos during the service. Opportunities are always available after the service. Welcome visitors please sign our guest book. Thank you.*

GIFTS GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD

THE CANDLES are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of Rose Miller & “Pap” Trakes by Mike & Kathy Miller & family

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of the 23rd birthday of McKayla Ann Wall by Lauren, Jesse, Nicholas & Kallia

THE BULLETINS are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of James & Kathleen Valentine by Mark & Charlene Valentine & family

CURRENT FUND DONATIONS are given to the Glory of God and

In loving memory of my mother Margaret I. Leader on her December 15th birthday by Sharon Haldeman

In loving memory of the December 13th birthday of McKayla Ann Wall by gram and pap, Louise & Dave Schock

In honor of the December 15th birthday of Kallia Wall by gram and pap, Louise & Dave Schock

ENDOWMENT FUND DONATIONS are given to the Glory of God and

In honor of Ron, Tony, and Doug Jr Springer's Birthdays by Judy

In loving memory of Eugene Springer by Judy

In loving memory of family & friends by Bill & Lori Krell

The 2023 sponsorship sign-ups are now on the bulletin board.

Please remember the following in your prayers: Dr. Kathryn Kropp, Carolyn and Marlin Tirpak, Kim and John Eckert, Dena and Tim Phillips, Cindy Collura, Robert Dolbin, George Bozosi, Pat Brown, Derek Hill, Elizabeth Zimmerman, Mary Richards, Mrs. Chris Miller, Nancy Betz, Ralph Derr, Joseph Harvilla, Eva (Mitzi) Koomar, John Lattanzi, and all our members who are homebound.

Welcome!!

Parish office phone and fax is 570-668-2180.

Parish office email address is zionlcof@verizon.net

Parish website is www.ziontamaqua.com

Parish Office Hours- Monday & Wednesday: 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Tuesday: 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Zion's 2022 Church Council officers: Michael Haspe, President, Brian Lawfer, Vice-President, Tiffany Warden, Secretary, Dave Gensure, Treasurer, and Ann Marie Hadesty, Financial Secretary. Other members of Council include: Judy Brennan, Sam Caley, Arlene Derr, Ernie Henritz, Glenn Fritzing, Steve Ristila and Mary Ruth Taylor; if you have suggestions or concerns, please seek out a member of Council so that we can promptly address the needs of the congregation.

This Week in Our Church

Please note if you have signed up for Altar Flowers, Bulletins or Candles please fill out a sponsor form. Forms should be filled out when placing your name on the sign-up sheet. Thank you.

SUNDAY, December 11, 2022, *The Third Sunday in Advent*

8:00 Confirmation Class
9:00 The Service of Word & Sacrament
10:15 Christian Education

WEDNESDAY

6:00 NA Meeting

THURSDAY

7:00 Senior Choir Rehearsal

FRIDAY

5:30 Diaper Prep

SATURDAY

9:00 Diaper Distribution
5:30 Saturday Evening Worship/ Blue Christmas

NEXT SUNDAY, December 18, 2022, *The Fourth Sunday in Advent*

8:00 Confirmation Class
9:00 The Service of Word & Sacrament/ Ministry of Music
10:15 Christian Education

Supporting Zion's Ministries

“Empowered and inspired by God to bring others to Christ”

Received 12/4/22 in support of Zion Ministries:

From our gifts	\$1,622.00
From Thrift Store	\$0.00
From Culinary	\$0.00
From (other)	\$0.00

Received for Endowment: \$35.00

Received for Capital Campaign: \$509.00

Received year-to-date for Zion's mission/ministries:

From offering/gifts/memorials:	\$120,590.39
From Thrift Store:	\$7,725.66
From Endowment:	\$44,000.00
From Culinary:	\$11,145.00
From Schlitzer Fund:	\$3,295.09

Year-to-date total for Zion's mission/ministries: \$186,756.14

Upcoming Events

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service 4:00 & 9:00 pm **No** 5:30 pm Service

December 25 & January 1 – 9:00 am Service

January 1 – New Year's Pork and Sauerkraut Dinner

Attention old acolytes or anyone else who would like to try to serve. I need more acolytes than the ones we have for both Christmas Eve services. If you would be willing, either 4 pm or 9 pm, call Melody with your name, telephone number, and time of service. I will get back to you. Thank you, Art

Tree of Memories - Memories can be of a loved one who has gone to God, or photo of a significant memory or life event that is important to your family. Photos should be cut square and be 1.5in. x 1.5in. Photos should be placed in an envelope and placed in the Tree of Memories box in the gathering room. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Thompson at njflip62@gmail.com or by calling 570-778-2604.

Happy New Year 2023– Zion will host a Community Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner New Year's Day, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm or sell-out. No Take outs - Eat -in only. A Free will offering will be accepted. Everyone Welcome!!

Our Blessing Thrift Store will be closed in December and January and will re-open February 2023. We would like to thank all the people that helped make this Outreach a success from the generosity of the donations that we receive, to the helpers who organize the goods, and the people who bake and donate food items. Please keep this Outreach in your prayers. And have a Blessed Holiday Season. Thank you, Outreach Committee

“Serving people at the Blessing Thrift sales has shown me the great need that people have for the simple things which most of us take for granted. It is a blessing to see the joy that people have upon leaving with their purchases and knowing that I helped to make their lives better.”- Lori Krell

There are many ways we can serve. Do you have an hour per week to spare? An hour per month? Is Wednesday a free night? An hour on Sunday, after church? As we prepare for the new year, we are looking forward to the many ministries that our church will provide to its members and to the community. In order to continue to meet our vision, like we do with the Blessing Thrift Shop, we need to keep our building in good condition. This involves things as simple as doing a little mopping, dusting, or vacuuming, to more complex things like wiring and lighting upgrades. If you can help, please reach out to Mark Valentine, or call the parish office at 570-668-2180, for more information.

Volunteers Needed! We are in need of lectors and communion assistants and cantors. If you are able to read a lesson or pour the wine for the distribution of communion, or even if you are interested in singing the small parts done by the cantor, please contact Sandy Mehalko (570) 668-4101, or stop by the organ on Sunday mornings. I try to do the schedule for an entire year, but will certainly find person to fill in if you are unable to serve your scheduled date. The lessons are sent to you ahead of time so you can look over them. Please consider serving in one of these ministries. Thank you, Sandy.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services - You are invited to join us for our Christmas Eve services at 4:00 pm & 9:00 pm. Both services will include the Liturgy of Word and Sacrament, Carols, Prayer and Candlelight. Please join us for the observance of the Nativity of Our Lord.

Generosity update - So far, we've had 39 intent cards returned and 32 of those cards reflect an increase in generosity during the coming year. We need 21 more cards to unleash that \$2,000 challenge gift to Zion to support ministries like Christian Education and Stephen Ministries. Your card counts. Learn more about our generosity project on our website and Facebook page.

Thank God and thank you for your continuous giving to the Capital Campaign. We have successfully paid back the entire amount we borrowed from our Endowment Fund. \$175,000.00 was borrowed for the second stage of our restoration on 9/17/2019 and on 12/03/2022 it has been completely paid back plus \$5,480.14 in interest to the Endowment fund. While we take this moment to celebrate, we pray that you will continue to fulfill your pledge and offerings to the Capital Campaign Fund. The future money given to the fund will be used as "seed money" for the next step in restoration.

Blue Christmas service ~ The holidays can be difficult times for anyone who has suffered loss or hurt. Many congregations across the country now offer a "Blue Christmas" to recognize that reality. A service of comfort, it is a way we can recognize the depth of the season and help process those negative feelings that might be held within during the holidays. By doing so, we can all celebrate more fully, knowing we have acknowledged those who are no longer with us or what we might have left behind. Our Blue Christmas service is Saturday, December 17th at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome.