

ZION'S HEAVENLY

Look for:

- *Worship Schedule
- *Acolyte Schedule
- *Music Schedule
- *Announcements
- *Youth Group News



- *Exciting Events
- *Monthly Calendar of Events
- *Birthday Calendar
- *Synod & Conference News
- And Much More!**

HAPPENINGS



NEWSLETTER



Photo by Gayle Mateyak

*234 Years of worshipping the
Lord with each other....*

**ZION'S STONE CHURCH OF
WEST PENN TOWNSHIP**
A Federated ELCA & UCC Church

45 Cemetery Rd
New Ringgold, PA 17960

570-386-5111

www.zionstonechurch.org

Rev. Russell Campbell, Pastor

Cell # **610-737-2634**

zionstch@ptd.net

revarc@ptd.net

Come Worship with Us!

9:00am – Sunday Worship Service

(1st Sunday of the month is Holy Communion)

10:15am – Sunday School

For All Ages

5:00pm – 1st & 3rd Saturday Night Worship Services

(1st Saturday Night of the month we will have communion)

As of April 2005,

Zion's Stone Church Lutheran Congregation and Zion's Stone Church United Church of Christ Congregation enter into a shared ministry. Keeping both heritages in the Sunday Worship Service each week.



CHURCH STAFF...



Pastor: Rev. Russell Campbell

Pastor Russ's Office Hours:

Monday: 3:00pm – 7:00pm

Thursday: 10:00am – 4:00pm

Cell Phone # 610-737-2634

Pastor's Home Email: revarc@ptd.net

Pastor's Church Email: zionstch@ptd.net

Church Administrator/Treasurer:

Charlotte Fritz Office Hours:

Monday 12:00 noon to 3:00pm

Wednesday and Thursday 9:00am to 3:00pm

Charlotte's Office Email: zsofc@ptd.net

(Please use this email for information for Charlotte.)

Church Secretary

Amy Mogish Office Hours:

Monday – 9:00am – 3:00pm

Tuesday – 9:00am – 3:00pm

Amy's Office Email: ZSCSecretary@ptd.net

(Please use this email for information for Amy)

(Office is closed on Friday's)



Church Office Phone Number:

570-386-5111 – When calling use:

prompt #2 for Pastor

prompt #3 for Amy

prompt #4 for Charlotte

Check us out on Facebook!

Thanks to Sarah Martinez
for being our Facebook Coordinator!

Zion's Stone Website

www.zionstonechurch.org

Card Care coordinator:

Nancy Meiser - 570-205-9267

Music Director/Organist:

Erin Zelinski – 570-205-3511

Sexton(s):

Fred (& Donna) Gimbi

Home # 570-386-2888

Fred's Cell #570-573-7642

Genealogy Requests:

Todd Cheese

Cell: 570-778-3641

Todd's email:

CheeseT@icloud.com

WORSHIP MARCH 2024

Sunday, April 7, 2024 – 2nd Sunday after Easter
w/Holy Communion – Pew & w/1st Holy Communion
9:00am - Worship Service
Sermon Title: “Getting Where We’re Going”
Acts 4:32-35 1 John 1:1-22
John 20:19-31

Sunday, April 14, 2024 – 3rd - Sunday after Easter
9:00am – Worship Service
w/Young People’s Time and King’s Kids
Sermon Title: “Good News’d”
Acts 3:12-19 1 John 3:1-7
Luke 24:36b-48

Sunday, April 21, 2024 – 4th - Sunday after Easter
9:00am – Youth Sunday Worship Service
The Youth Group will conduct the Worship Service

Sunday, April 28, 2024 – 5th Sunday after Easter
9:00am – Worship Service
Sermon Title: “Starting on the First Pull”
Acts 8:26-40 1 John 4:7-21
John 15:1-8

Congratulations to...

Bryce Bailey, son of Kevin & Nikki Bailey,
Mason Lupkin, son of James & Marianne Lupkin
on receiving their 1st Holy Communion on
Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024 and to
Ella Balliet, Daughter of Steve & Jenny Balliet
who will receive her 1st Holy Communion on
Sunday, April 7, 2024





Zion's Stone Church Board Meeting - Monday, February 12, 2024

X Pastor Russell	X Erin Zeigler	X Sam Schaefer
X Gary Clemson	X Dan Metzger	X Darlene Gruver
X Rick Zelinski	X Brady Miller	
X Scot Dietrich	X Gene Schaeffer	



(X)=Board Member Present

Congregation present: Charlotte Fritz

Call to Order: Pastor Russ opened the meeting with a prayer.

President Sam Schaefer opened the meeting with a few suggestions as follows:

Do your best to attend all Church services, especially holidays and communion days.

We want to keep interruptions at a minimum. (Refrain from side conversations).

If something very important concerns your committee, please discuss it at your committee meeting and bring it to the next board meeting where it will be discussed then vote on it or table it.

Also, all committee reports should not be overly lengthy. If your report lasts too long, you will be asked to take your report back to a committee meeting for further review.

Most work should be done at committee meetings.

A report is not necessary at every board meeting. If there is nothing new, just state "no report".

Pastor's Report: Pastor's report reviewed, on file. Bible study will be discontinued until after Easter as well as Saturday evening services. Upcoming events mentioned. No one in hospital at present.

Secretary's Report: Presented and Reviewed. Motion to accept: Scot 2nd Dan

Treasurer's Report: Presented and Reviewed. Accounts stable. Motion to accept: Rick 2nd Brady

Committee Reports: (Board Representative in parentheses)

Worship and Music(Rick Zelinski)-Choirs will continue to perform until Erin's maternity leave begins. Hymn recordings can be used for maternity leave. Eileen Meiser is also willing to help. Erin will be talking to Blair Miller and Bill Clause since they helped out during Erin's previous maternity leave. Kyle Snyder already has hymn and special music recordings for Holy Week.

Property(Scot Dietrich)-Clean up on Saturday (weather permitting) around the sign on Rt 309.

Finance(GaryClemson)-Included with Treasurer's Report to switch fuel oil delivery from Countryside to Rarick. Motion to accept: Scot 2nd Rick
Delivery due this week.

CE/Sunday School (Rick Zelinski)-Easter egg hunt is scheduled for Saturday March [30 @ 2pm...rain](#), snow or shine. Special offering for Cystic Fibrosis on April 21(Youth Sunday). Vacation Bible School will be held in June –dates and theme to be determined. Volunteers needed for Bible School. No Sunday school on May 26(Memorial Day). Last day for Sunday School classes is June 9. (no SS in summer).

Youth Group (Dan Metzger and Charlotte Fritz) – Plan to go to Hershey Escape Room and Chocolate World and dinner February 25th. The 30 hour famine is April 19th to 20th. Youth will be in charge of Church service on Youth Sunday April 21st.

Outreach/Evangelism (Amanda, Nancy and Dan) Fundraising sold 100 pizzas.

Fundraising (Charlotte Fritz and Erin Zeigler)- Discussion to revamp Church kitchen making more space available. Recommended labeling and reorganizing the kitchen cupboards. The fundraising committee will discuss changes with other members using the kitchen and see if they're in agreement.
Motion to accept: Scot 2nd Dan

Personnel(Gary Clemson)-Need to update and clarify Erin's contract.
Chairperson of each committee needs to verify if members are still active.

Safety/Security(Blair Miller)-Will have committee meeting first week of March.
Window film not completed.

Other Committees/Misc-nothing presented.

New Business:

Food Pantry under change in leadership. Per Charlotte last check from us was not cashed. March Congregational Meeting is March 10, 2024
Erin suggested possibility for an outside lift to be installed for handicapped. Scot to work with Erin on obtaining information,

Old Business:

Carpeting project ongoing. Waiting for estimates.
Revisit Erin's contract for clarification.



Next Church Board Meeting is Monday March 11, 2024 at 6:30pm
The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Board Secretary, Darlene Gruver

NEWSLETTER SUBMITTALS...

Please help the office staff be efficient by having all newsletter submittals emailed to the church office (or placed in the newsletter submittal boxes) by the newsletter deadline, the **Third Sunday** of each month.

If you would like your wedding announcement or if you have a loved one who has entered into eternal life, thank you messages, etc., please contact the office by the newsletter deadline or we may not be able to publish your information until the next month. *Thank You!*

NEWSLETTER SPONSORSHIPS... \$20.00 per month

If you are interested in sponsoring the newsletter, Email Charlotte, zscofc@ptd.net, your wording for the newsletter or place your envelope in your packet marked Newsletter Sponsor. The newsletter is printed one time per month except for the July/August newsletter which is a combined newsletter.

ALTAR FLOWER SPONSORSHIPS... We are have a new Florist!, Forget-Me-Not Florist in Orwigsburg. The new cost of Altar Flowers are \$55.00 & Rosebuds are \$13.00-\$28.00 (depends on if you order Altar Flowers with it) All Flower Orders must be recived at least **1 week in advance**. If you are interest in sponsoring altar flowers please call the office at (570) 386-5111 prompt #3, **before 12 pm on Tuesday. Leave a message** with your telephone number and the exact wording you would like to see it printed on the slides.

Lectors are needed for every Sunday.

Please sign up in the Narthex. If you or someone you know would like to be a LECTOR ... New volunteers are always welcome.

Acolytes...Last year's class and current confirmation classes please sign up on the calendar in the Narthex. Two acolytes are needed for each Sunday. Please arrive by 8:50am to prepare.

Do you have a new Address or Telephone &/or Cell Phone Number?

Please notify the office either through email (zscofc@ptd.net) or phone (570-386-5111) with your new information. This way we can keep in touch with you and provide you with important information regarding the church. Thank you!

Auditorum Bookings:



The Auditorum is open for events. Please contact the church office use prompt #3 (Amy) or #4 (Charlotte) if you would like to book the Auditorum for your birthday parties, wedding rehearsal dinners, anniversary parties, etc. You will need to sign a contact and return it with the event rental fee 2 weeks prior your event date.

(All the clip art printed in this newsletter was taken from google clip art.)

2024 WORSHIP ATTENDANCE FIGURES...

February 3 (Sat.) – 13
 February 4 – 124
 February 11 – 105
 February 14 (Ash Wed.) - 59
 February 17 – Sat. (Cancelled)
 February 18 – 109
 February 21 – (Lent) 98
 February 25 - 98
 February 28 – 16 – (Lent)

March 3 - 130
 March 6 - 33 - Mid Week Lent
 March 10 - 97
 March 13 - 24 - Mid Week Lent
 March 17 - 117
 March 20 - 24 - Mid Week Lent
 March 24 - 140 - Psalm Sunday
 March 28 - - Maundy Thurs.
 March 29 - - Good Friday
 March 31 - - Easter Dawn
 March 31 - - Easter 9:00am

 <p><i>Grateful Givers</i></p>	<h2 style="margin: 0;">FINANCIAL REPORT</h2>	 <p>Remember Your Offerings</p>
<h3 style="color: green; margin: 0;">2024 February</h3>		
<p>Current Giving:</p>		
<p>Total Income Budgeted for 2024-----\$ 234,908.37</p>		
<p>Total Benevolence income for 2024 -----\$ 11,500.00</p>		
<p>Total Income plus Benevolence ----- \$ 246,408.37</p>		
<p>(In order to meet our spending plan, we need to receive these amounts,)</p>		
<p>Monthly Income & Benevolence</p>	<p>Gain/ (-Loss)</p>	<p>Weekly Budgeted Income & Benevolence (\$ 4,517.46 - per week) (\$19,575.70 - per month)</p>
<p>\$20,019.13</p>	<p>\$443.43</p>	

Thank you for your continued support of
 Zion's Stone Church!



SPECIAL THANK YOU...

(The church receives thank you letters from other organizations that we support through Benevolence giving throughout the year.)

Many thanks to the people of our Zion's church for their kindness and thoughtfulness at Christmas. The warm robe and the beautifully crocheted afghan and the many goodies are much appreciated. Since I am learning to crochet myself, I can really appreciate all the work involved in making the afghan. God's blessings upon you!

Beverley Knoebel

The Fundraising Committee would like to thank everyone that supported the Church Filling Sale in March. We really appreciate your support, whether it was helping prepare, pack the food, helping in the kitchen, donating supplies, or buying filling. 100% of all Fundraising donations go back into the church for building improvements. This year the Board is looking into buying new carpet for the Sanctuary and we have committed to help pay for a portion of it. All of this is not possible without your support, Thanks agin!

Dear Church Family, Thank you all for the beautiful card. The Dr said all went well in the knee replacement surgery. Now the healing is under way. All things turnout with the Power of Prayers and that is a good thing. Also thank you all for the cards sent to me. The Prayers and taking time out for others is appreciated. Bless you all. May the good Lord be with you All! **Love, Pearl Christman**



**The April Newsletter
is sponsored in honor of the 91st
birthday of Dorothy Fritz, which she
will celebrate it on April 13th.**

Mark your Calendars:

The Old Fashion Church Social will be held on Sunday, July 28, 2024 and it will be held at the Church from 11:00am – 7:00pm.

VBS – The date as been set to June 24 – 28, 2024. The theme is Scuba!

The Fall Festival and Trunk or Treat will be held on Saturday, October 19, 2024. More details will follow in the next few months about these events and other events in 2024.

THURSDAY MORNINGS

&

THURSDAY NIGHTS

w/The Rev. Russell Campbell

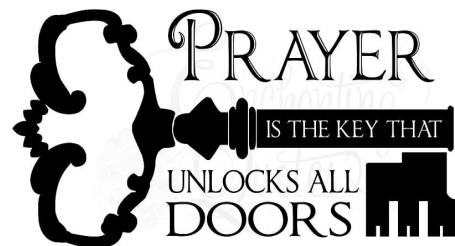
Bible Studies will resume on
Thursday, April 11th at

10:00am & 6:45pm

Hope to see you there!



"IN *Happy*
MOMENTS,
PRAISE GOD.
IN DIFFICULT MOMENTS,
SEEK *God.*
IN QUIET
MOMENTS,
trust GOD.
IN EVERY MOMENT,
THANK *God.*"



SATURDAY WORSHIP SERVICES...

Worship Services for April 2024

will resume on **April 6th**

at 5:00pm

Starting at 4:00pm there will be a Soup/Dessert meal and then after the light supper the Worship Service will begin.



Thank you to our Director of Music
Erin Zelinski
for sharing her musical talents
with us during worship!



6:15 pm Thursdays

Please Note:
Bell choir will practice on April 4th
and play in Church on April 7th.
This will be their last practice
and performance until they resume
again in August.



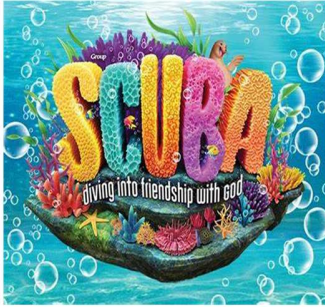
6:45pm Thursdays

Sr. Choir will practice on April 4th &
April 11th and continue to sing in
Church and then they will
have the summer off as well and will
resume in August.

We would like to wish Erin & Rick Zelinski with a safe, easy & fast (lol) delivery! Please keep Erin (Rick & Reese) in your prayers. Erin is due in April and we couldn't be happier for Her & Rick. And Reese is going to be a big sister! Erin will be on maternity leave during for a couple of weeks. May God continue to bless your growing family!

baby *angel*
blue **snails**
ships *it's a boy*
special **delivery**
newborn

Sunday School News...



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

June 24-28 6:30-8:30 pm

SCUBA (by Group)

Go deep into an amazing undersea adventure and experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God! At SCUBA Kids will be immersed in God's Word and discover what living water is really all about!

SCUBA is for kids from **Age 3** to completed **5th Grade** and will be held right here at **Zion's**. **APRIL IS REGISTRATION MONTH for Kids and Volunteers!!** Register on-line at myvbs.org/zionstonechurch or **pick up a form** at church or Sunday school. VBS information/registration forms will also be available on the church's web page in April. Sooo...“Dive in” and Join us!!

Thank you to everyone who helped with our Egg Hunt... to the Sunday school teachers, to Marianne Storch for filling all the eggs, to Robbie Ebert for donating candy, and to all the families and kids who came out to celebrate the promise of Easter with us. And thank you to the Fundraising Committee for arranging their filling pick-up around the hunt.

April 21 CF Special Offering - to support one of our favorite teams Courageous Cousins (Benjamin Hehn and his cousin Aidan)
Help us raise money to fight CYSTIC FIBROSIS
Offering baskets will be in the church and Sunday school

May 26 No Sunday school classes - Take time to honor the memory of our veterans - Attend a Memorial Day service!



March 10, 2024

Youth Group Meeting Notes

Members Present:

Bradyn Brothers, Kyrsten Derr, Elizabeth Davenport, Sarah Davenport, Madelyn Miller, Karma Gold, Tyler Buchman, Emily Buchman, Henry Mylecraine, Lillian Huegal (Member in Training)

Advisors Present:

Charlotte Fritz, Darryl Fritz, Karen Wood, Kyle Snyder, Dave Snyder, Adele Snyder, Marianne Storch, Dorothy Knowlan

Secretary's Report given by Karma

Treasurer's Report given by Charlotte

Old Business

- The 30 Hour Famine will be held on April 19th at 7pm-April 20th at 8pm. The Youth Group members will be staying overnight and we are asking that you bring friends. If you have any friends interested in coming, please let Charlotte know ASAP. A parent must sign a consent form for you to participate. Please bring old clothes, jackets, and sneakers as well as toiletries and sleeping bags. We will have dinner at the end of the famine. You must also bring donation envelopes. All checks should be payable to YTYF (Youth Together Youth Forever).
- Youth Sunday will be on April 21st. Jobs were discussed at the meeting and they will be gone over again. Greeters should be there at 8:15.
- Souper Bowl Sunday - We donated 121 cans and \$127 to the New Ringgold Food Pantry.

New Business

- On August 11 at 5 pm, we will be having a Youth Group Picnic at West Penn Park. We are planning on inviting the youth groups of the sister churches.
- The Easter Egg Hunt will be on March 30 at 2 pm if you are willing to help out.
- Our next meeting will be held on April 14th, 2024 at 7 pm.
 - Dorothy will bring show n' tell.
 - Maddy will bring the snack.
 - Bradyn will bring the drink.

"Encourage not Discourage."

Respectfully Submitted By: Bradyn Brothers, Youth Group Newsletter Coordinator

30 Hour Famine

Once again the Youth Group of Zion's Stone Church will be participating in World Visions 30 Hour Famine on **Friday, April 19th 7:00pm – Saturday, April 20th 8:00pm.**

They will also participate/run the Worship Service on Sunday, April 21st at 9:00am. They will show the congregation a portion of the events they had to do during the famine on Friday & Saturday. The Youth Group kids and Advisors will have to starve for 30 hours to get a feeling of what other kids go through on a day to day basis.

The reality of famine

First, the bad news. The world is experiencing its worst hunger crisis in decades. Conflict, COVID-19, and climate change are driving a deadly combination across the world.

Defining famine

The word famine means extreme scarcity of food. But it's more than that—it's the absolute worst-case scenario for a food crisis.

Famine also has a technical definition used by the humanitarian community. To declare a famine, the following three things must all happen:

- » At least **20% of households** in the area face extreme food shortages with limited ability to cope.
- » More than **30% of children** suffer from acute malnutrition.
- » Hunger causes more than **two deaths each day** for every 10,000 people.
- » The number of people facing hunger **doubled in 2020 and is now 270 million.**
- » **One in eight people** in the developing world do not have enough to eat. One in eight. And it's children who suffer most.
- » **6,000+ kids under age 5 die from preventable hunger-related causes daily.** In a week, that would be enough children to fill the stadium where the Houston Astros play. *If that many children died just about any other way, we'd call it an indescribable tragedy ... but when they, individually, fade away and die in their mother's arms, we miss it.*

Come Join us in Worship on Sunday, April 21st!

Hope to see you all there!
We will have a special offering on Sunday, April 13th, if anyone would like to donate to the Famine.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Matthew 5:6 (NIV)

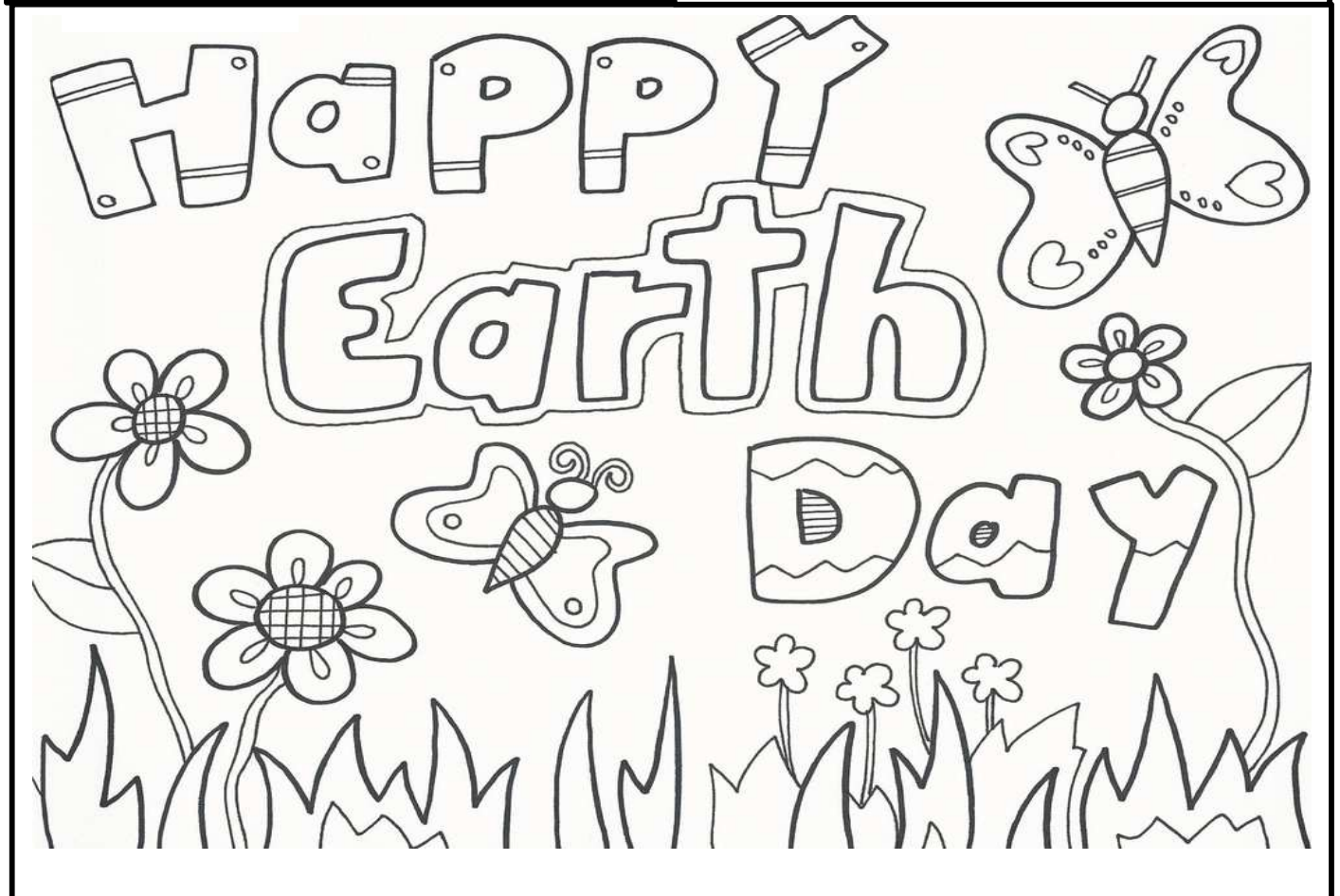
What we've accomplished so far

Here's the good news. In the 30+ years of the 30 Hour Famine Experience, youth groups like yours have come together to help end hunger.

- » **6 million students** experienced a 30 Hour Famine event
- » **68,000 youth groups** have participated
- » And they raised **\$190 million to feed kids** around the world

By giving up food, social media, or other similar sacrifices for the full 30 hours, students have not only experienced a sense of connection with those in need, they've literally helped save lives.

ZION'S COLORING CORNER





Penn Northeast Conference UCC, 431 Delaware Ave., Palmerton, PA 18071

www.pnec.org 610-826-3113; 610-826-5464 FAX

Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates bonnieb@pnec.org

Rev. Christian Creyer christianc@pnec.org

Barbara Jennings barbaraj@pnec.org Patty Rehrig patty@pnec.org

SEND ARTICLES TO BE INCLUDED TO patty@pnec.org

A Letter From The Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, Conference Minister

"The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So, they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord-- the King of Israel!'" (John 12:12-13, NRSV)

Dear Friends,

This Sunday we celebrate Palm Sunday and begin the journey of Holy Week. Palm Sunday is often a joyous occasion with palm branches waving, processions (sometimes of adults and sometimes children), and shouts of "Hosana!" As I reflect on this Sunday and the upcoming week, I wonder what Jesus was feeling, riding on a colt into Jerusalem, proclaimed as the King of Israel. Neither of the gospel selections in the lectionary this week (Mark or John), include the passage from Luke's gospel where the Pharisees demand that Jesus silence the disciples. And you may remember that in the next set of verses, the Pharisees plot to kill Jesus.

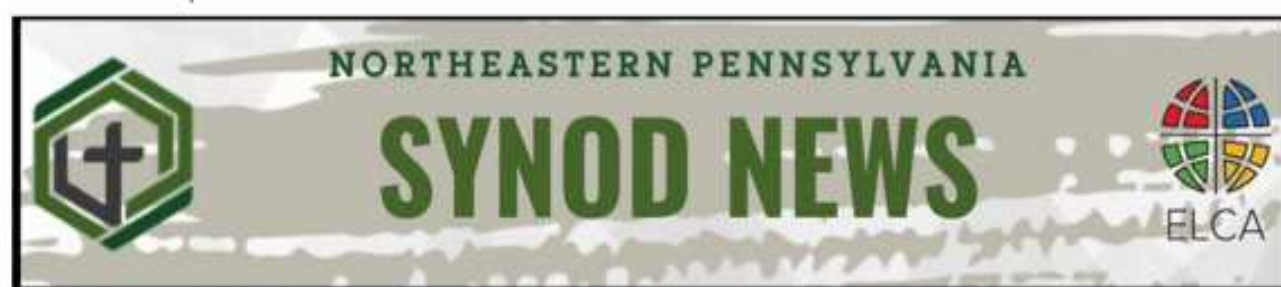
Jesus had engaged with the Pharisees before, and it usually didn't end well. It won't this time either. As we celebrate this Sunday, we know the story – we know what is coming - the betrayal, the arrest, the scourging, the crowd turning on Jesus, the walk to the cross, and the crucifixion. I remind us that the celebration of Palm Sunday and the celebration of Easter have a deep journey of trial and challenge between them and to skip from the celebration of Palm Sunday to the celebration of Easter diminishes the resurrection joy.

In the world we all encounter challenges, many of us encounter betrayal, and we have difficult paths and journeys to take as human beings. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't celebrate the good times – just as Jesus and the disciples do – but it means that we need to remember and reflect that joy is amplified by our experiences of challenge.

Over the last five weeks, all four Conferences in Pennsylvania have participated in a Lenten Bible Study. Thank you to Becky Sausser for her development of the study and thank you to all those who led sessions: Becky Sausser, Nicole and Zach Jackson, Kevin McLemore, Nora Foust, and the Conference Ministers. These were meaningful sessions and allowed us to get to know each other while we delved into study and Lenten preparation. We concluded the study last night with a discussion about betrayal and how it impacts us. We also remembered the servant leadership of Jesus that some of us celebrate through the act of foot washing on Maundy Thursday and the Holy Meal of Communion.

As we celebrate Palm Sunday, as we move through the remainder of Lent, and as we deepen our faith and explore our own journeys through life, I hope we will remember that Jesus, both fully human and fully divine, experienced much of what we experience, including the betrayal of friends, anger targeting him, pain and loss, and also joy at the presence and glory of God and the joy that we, too, anticipate on Resurrection Day.

Blessings my friends, Bonnie



Just Being There: Our Alaska Experience as Sitka Lutheran Church Volunteers

By: Gail Colahan

Sitka is located on the west coast of Baranof Island in the Alaska panhandle. Most of the island lies within the limits of the Tongass National Forest, a temperate rainforest, rich with wildlife and scenic vistas. Inhabited by Tlingit for over 10,000 years, ruled by Russia starting in 1799, then transferred from Russia to the US in 1867, this island community of 8,400 people continues to reflect characteristics of these varied cultures. For over 30 years the abundance of nature, scenery and cultural heritage has attracted cruise ships to Sitka. For most of that time Sitka Lutheran Church (SLC) has supported a summer volunteer program to assist the church in being a welcoming presence amidst a burgeoning tourist presence, which numbered nearly 600,000 in 2023 when we participated as volunteers.

Flash back to June 2019 when we first visited Sitka, not as cruise passengers but as plane travelers on a self-guided tour throughout Southeast Alaska. It just so happened we were in Sitka on Sunday morning so we decided to go to worship after finding an ELCA church within walking distance of our hotel. Entering the church, we read from hallway signage that in 1840 while Sitka was a Russian colony, Finns founded SLC making it the oldest Protestant congregation on the US West Coast. Included with other historical signage hung a poster declaring "Volunteers Wanted". The sign combined with our fascination with the church's origins, its geographic location, and the history and culture of this place prompted us to make further inquiries. We learned about SLC's program inviting volunteers to come to Sitka for a month to welcome summer cruise ship visitors to SLC, with the SLC faith family providing housing and the use of a car during the volunteers' stay. Our intrigue with the idea of such an opportunity prompted us to complete an interest form despite knowing we weren't in a position at the time to make such a commitment.

Four years later we found ourselves in Sitka. Driving into town to open the church, we marveled at vistas of Sitka Sound and surrounding forest-covered land while passing marinas filled with fishing vessels. On days when large cruise ships were in port, Greg greeted visitors outside SLC's front door, enticing them with the smell of freshly popped popcorn and the query, "Did you know that Sitka Lutheran is the oldest Protestant congregation on the west coast?". Gail provided a brief overview of the church's history and pointed out historical objects from the original 1843 church for the curious who ventured inside, and at times drifted into conversations about faith and the church. All visitors received a warm welcome whether they choose to hear the church's history, find solitude in the sanctuary, take a much-needed rest break, or buy some popcorn.

While Greg often felt frustrated when people just walked by with their heads down (probably in part due to the modern façade of SLC's 3rd church building as compared to the original features of the nearby Russian Orthodox Cathedral), he did experience some gratifying encounters - a conversation with a gentleman from China who was interested in talking about the history of Sitka and well-wishers who knew about SLC's volunteer program and just wanted to say hi. On the day we transitioned with the previous volunteers, Greg stood alongside Kurt out in front of the church. A family walking by stopped and

requested a prayer for their child who had a health affliction. Kurt, an ordained pastor, knelt down close to the child in the stroller and proceeded to offer a prayer. Afterwards, the family departed in peace and Greg and Kurt shared their thankfulness in being able to honor the family's request.

On another day with few visitors in town, two seasonal shuttle bus drivers walked into the church. After Gail guided them to the sanctuary to share the church's story, the gentleman asked for time to pray. Sensing the gravity of his request, Gail invited him to stay as long as necessary and indicated she would request visitors quietly respect his being there until he was ready to leave. It was at least a half hour before he and his friend emerged from the sanctuary and shared that his sister was dying and he couldn't be with her and that his time spent in prayer in the church had been the best way for him to face the crisis. Thanks be to God.

In addition to our encounters with visitors, the people of Sitka Lutheran Church blessed us with the warmest of welcomes. Pastor Rudd shared personal and church background and introduced us to Alaska Synod's Bishop Shelly during a SLC hosted Southeast Cluster Meeting. Heather, the secretary who grew up in Sitka, assisted with everything from the latest cruise schedule updates to lending intriguing details and answers to questions about Sitka's more recent history. Sue provided a tour around town to familiarize us with the schools, hospitals, and businesses that are part of the daily life of this area and took us to a refuge for orphaned bear cubs. Paula, another parishioner, gifted us with sweet treats and invited us to her house for a grilled salmon dinner. Wayne guided us through the Alaska wilderness on a glorious hike past cascades and waterfalls to Bear Lake. Harvey and Kathleen, managers of the SLC volunteer program, provided not only a place to stay but enjoyable storytelling over meals and desserts. Even the neighbors extended their welcome with soup and muffins. We were truly humbled by the kindness, generosity, hospitality, and support we received.

Just being there was such a wonderful experience on so many levels - experiencing what it's like to be strangers welcomed into a community, serving as volunteers at SLC, living for 5 weeks on an island in a different environment, exploring the beauty and wonder of the Tongass rainforest and its wildlife, learning about the history and cultures that influenced and characterize Sitka, meeting and talking with people from around the world, and getting to know and become friends with the SLC faith family. We will never know the impact of our being there for most tourists who visited the church. However, SLC parishioners were abundantly grateful and thanked us profusely for assisting in their being a welcoming presence. We also know that the experience had a profound impact on us. Just being there we experienced so many wonderful God moments and blessings - lives touched, joy witnessed, beauty revealed, friendships made. We are so much richer for having had the opportunity to live in a different place and serve as volunteers for Sitka Lutheran Church.




Keynote Speaker: Marie Anne serves as the Senior Director for Building Resilient Communities (BRC) at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Ms. Sliwinski has 20 years of experience working in the non-profit sector, 14 of which are dedicated in international humanitarian and development programs. Ms. Sliwinski oversees BRC, which draws together the ministries of ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, AMMPARO and the ELCA's Social Ministry Organization to share knowledge, collaborate effectively, invest in new ideas and foster new opportunities for the ELCA, partners, companions and neighbors to strive together "for justice and peace in all the earth." Marie Anne holds a master's degree in international relations from the University of Chicago, and currently resides in the Chicago suburb with her husband and two children. **Register today at nepasynod.org/assembly2024/**

ZION'S STONE CHURCH - APRIL 2024 BIRTHDAY CALENDER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Maddy Miller	Steven Christ	Spencer Meiser	Russell Blaker Emma Knittle Briana Rubright	Jimmy Towers	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Todd Tyson, Sr.	Jeanine Hill- Jacob Melissa Hunsicker		Aubrey Oswald		Barbara Lushia Linda Meckes Dawn Rabenold	Dorothy Fritz
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Brentley Kurtz Benson Trexler Hudson Trexler	Stacey Cheese	Judy Rosa Aaron Ruch		Jackie Clemson Marlin Zehner	Brenda Ruch
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	Connor Ruch	Ella Balliet Shirley Lorah Daniel Miller	Kennedy Webb		Neal Houser Leah Crowley	Brandon Miller
28	29	30				
Susan Bonner	Nancy Ketchledge					

ZION'S STONE CHURCH - APRIL 2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
				No Bible Studies until April 11th Choir Rehearsals: 6:15pm - Handbell 6:45pm - Choir		4:00pm - Light Super before the 5pm Service 5:00pm- Saturday Night Worship
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
9:00am - Worship Service w/Holy Communion (Pew) 10:15am - Sunday School 9:00am - With 1 st Holy Communion for Ella Balliet	7:00pm - Board Meeting			10:00am - Bible Study 6:45pm - Bible Study Choir Rehearsal: 6:45pm - Choir (Handbell Choir is off until August.)		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
9:00am - Worship Service w/Young People's Time w/King's Kids Singing 10:15am - Sunday School 7:00PM - Youth Group Meeting				10:00am - Bible Study 6:45pm - Bible Study No Choir Rehearsals until August	7:00pm - Friday Youth Group	8:00pm Saturday 30 Hour Famine (No Saturday Night Worship or Dinner)
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
9:00am - Youth Sunday Service 10:15am - Sunday School 11:30am - News. Deadline				10:00am - Bible Study 6:45pm - Bible Study No Choir Rehearsals until August		
28	29	30				
9:00am - Worship Service 10:15am - Sunday School				10:00am - Bible Study 6:45pm - Bible Study No Choir Rehearsals until August		