

Zion News

11609 Frankstown Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15235
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May, 2023

www.zionpennhills.org

<https://www.facebook.com/zionpennhills/>

The church in the heart of Penn Hills that is the heart of Penn Hills



Dear Friends,

I encourage you as earnestly as I can to participate in our synod's Racial Justice Training events. Your presence alone demonstrates your desire to learn about and to help heal the deep wounds of race-based injustice in our nation. Your active participation in the events will contribute to our collective ability to be a positive influence in neighborhoods across our synod. And if in any way your heart is moved to live differently because of your participation, the love of Christ will be more fully known among us. For embodying Jesus' love in our own lives and actions is the very nature of our life and mission.

Bishop Kurt F. Kusserow

THURSDAY, MAY 4

-or-

SATURDAY, MAY 6

9 AM - 3 PM

Zion Lutheran Church

11609 Frankstown Road Pittsburgh, PA, 15235

SWPASYNOD.ORG/CALENDAR/RJT23

We are called to be a church that embraces each person and confronts racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, age, gender, familial, sexual orientation, physical, personal and class barriers that can manifest as unjust treatment, inequalities, exclusion, and violence. Our synod is committed to equipping leaders to recognize and understand the complexities and implications of racism and racial issues and is offering training in the areas of anti-racism and racial justice.

Racial Justice Training equips leaders (rostered and lay) to face the challenges of racism in a diverse, complex and changing world by providing tools and resources that foster healthy and holy conversations. Each workshop addresses these aspects of racism:

1. Talking about Race: language and vocabulary
2. History and systemic racism in the United States, and
3. How to begin conversations and actions in your ministry context.

Cost is \$20 per person and covers lunch, refreshments, and materials.

Attending either of these trainings fulfills the ELCA church wide assembly's directive that rostered ministers participate in racial justice training every two years.



Thank you to all who helped to prepare for and serve at the Food Pantry last month! We ended up serving over 100 household clients through drive-through and it was thanks to all of your efforts setting up, serving, and cleaning up that it all happened!

Our next pantry meets on **Saturday, May 13** and if you are able to help with set-up on Friday, May 12th from 9am-12pm in the Community Room or during the pantry on the 13th from 8:30am-12:00pm, that would be most appreciated! Thank you again for all of your time, efforts, prayers and support towards making a difference in our local community and beyond!

Food Pantry Donations: We all know the price of food has increased. You've also probably noticed that the price of health and beauty products has risen too. While the food pantry gets most of its food from the Pittsburgh Community Food Bank at a reduced cost (cheaper than what you could buy it at the store), we don't get shampoo, body wash, laundry detergent, etc.

Food Pantry Donation for May: We will be collecting toothpaste and denture cleaning tablets. As always, thank you for your gifts!



Newsletter Deadline: Do you have an idea for an article, update on a project, or a photo from a Zion event or a shout-out or thank you? We would love to have it! All articles are due by the 20th of each month. Please send them via e-mail to: julie@zionpennhills.org.



Good Shepherd/Health Ministries:

On behalf of the Health Ministry, I am also making a request for your help. If you know of a member of our Zion family who should be added to the card list, who may need additional help with health resources or who would like home communion, please share that information. You can contact Rhonda Pope, Pastor Martha or Julie Nieser to move that connection forward. Let's work together to stay connected with our Zion family members.

The Congregation Council's Call for Special Congregation Meetings

Sunday, April 30 – A special meeting of the congregation is called for the purpose of opening the nominations for Council and voting members to the Synod Assembly.

Sunday, May 28 – A special meeting of the congregation is called for the purpose of closing the nominations for Council and electing the voting members to the Synod Assembly.

Sunday, June 11 – A special meeting of the congregation is called for the purpose of adopting the updated Constitution and Bylaws for this congregation. The updates are posted in the narthex and are recommended for adoption by the Congregation Council.

Sunday, June 25 – The Annual Meeting of this congregation will be held after the service.

Please note these dates on your calendar so that you are present to participate in the various actions necessary for the functioning of our congregation. Thank you.



WHO'S WHO OF ZION LEADERSHIP

Church Council 2022-2023:

Pastor Martha McCreight (President)
Kathy Gaberson (VP)
Lauren Fitzroy (Secretary)
Charlotte Murray (Treasurer)
Tony Lamorte (Financial Secretary)
Sue Clydesdale (Stewardship Secretary and Budget and Finance Liaison)
Kathy Conrad (Parish Nurse)
Tom Felmley (Communications Chair and Music and Worship Liaison)
Chris Dippold (Youth Ministry Liaison)
Joe Balaban (Parish Life Liaison)
Marc Schuler (Property Chair)
Mark Mauro
Ashley Faas (Christian Education Chair)
Jeannette Christensen (Executive Committee Member at Large)
Rhonda Pope (Health Ministry co-chair and Liaison)

Budget and Finance Committee

Pat Pope
Charlotte Murray
Gail Snyder
Mark Mauro
Tony Lamorte
Sue Clydesdale

Christian Education Committee:

Ashley Faas
Deb Rall
Chris Dippold (Liaison)

Health Ministry:

Kathy Conrad
Rhonda Pope (Liaison)
Rachel Dolney
Sandra Short
Shirley McClure

Property Committee:

Marc Schuler Ray Rall
Joe Balaban
Tom Felmley
Pat Pope
Carl Haftl

Music and Worship Committee:

Andrew Sabol
Gail Snyder
Cindy Pierce
Tom Felmley
Pat Hauser
Debbie Marks
Brenda Wolfe
Pastor

Parish Life:

Tammy Belohlavek
Joe Balaban (Liaison)
Debbie Marks

Stewardship:

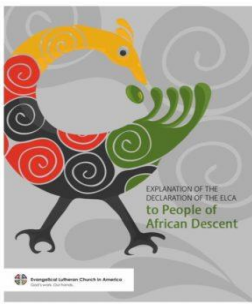
Sue Clydesdale
Charlotte Murray
Jeannette Christensen
Pastor Martha

Mutual Ministry Committee (Pastor):

Kathy Gaberson (Council VP)
Mark Mauro
Tony LaMorte
Brenda Wolfe
Gail Snyder
Cindy Pierce

Mission Endowment:

Kathy Gaberson Linda Neumann
Charlotte Murray Pastor



ADULT FORUM: During the Adult Forum focusing on people of African descent we participants encountered aspects of American history and the Church in America about which we were not aware. Ephesians 4:15 talks about “speaking the truth in love”; to accomplish that we must first know the truth. The next Adult Forum will meet on Sundays after worship to read and discuss *The Color of Compromise* which address the American Church’s complicity in racism. The Adult Forum began on Sunday, April 16, and will end on Sunday, May 28th. If you are interested, please contact Rhonda Pope.



Church Work Day

Property Work Day at Zion: We will have a work day on **Saturday, May 20th from 8-11am**. We will be doing things inside and outside. If you are able, please donate some of your time to help make Zion more beautiful. Thank you!

Prayer Healing SERVICE

Are you interested in assisting with our Healing Services? This service consists of praying for a person and anointing their head with oil in the sign of the cross as a blessing. Ideally we would like to have 5 volunteers for this service so that we can have two “teams of two” stationed at the foot of the stairs (one for prayer and the other for anointing) and another person who can walk into the congregation to serve anyone who cannot come forward. These services are usually scheduled 4 times a year on the 5th Sunday. The future dates are April 30th, July 30th, and October 29th



The annual **Pittsburgh Pastoral Care Conference** is scheduled for Friday, May 12th from 9 a.m.-4:00 p.m. This conference is for *clergy, pastors, laity, counselors, social workers, nurses, teachers, volunteers and others in the flock helping those needing healing and recovery*. This year’s theme is **Resilience, Joy and Living in the Present Moment**. Tod Bolsinger, MDiv, PhD will be the keynote speaker. Many of you may remember him as the author of *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* which Zion’s church council studied. For more information or to register go to <https://www.pghpcc.org/>.

ZION BOOK CLUB

Book club meets the third Monday of every month at 1:00 pm, usually in the Gerhard Lounge. However, in the months of January, February, and March, we will meet from home via Zoom. Feel free to read with us and join us for discussion any time you choose; bring a friend as well. If you need information, contact Rhonda Pope.

5/15: *The German Wife* by Kelly Rimmer

6/19: *We Are Not Like Them* by Christine Pride & Joe Piazza

7/19: *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah

8/21: *Radium Girls* by Kate Moore

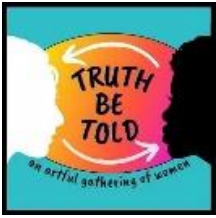
9/18: *The Real Minerva* by Mary Sharrat

10/16: *South to America* by Imani Penny

11/20: *Fruit of the Drunken Tree* by Ingrid

Rojas Contreras





Fourteen women artists came together for over a year and shared stories and life experiences around the topic of racism. Each artist chose a word of importance to her and designed a 10” X 10” canvas around that word. Many of them created additional artwork being displayed around the country.

This month, we feature Debbie Maier Jacknin. Her artwork features stained glass. Her chosen word is “LEGACY.” See the attachment for a description. Large photos of Debbie’s art will be on display in the Gathering Space for the month of May. This display will advance our goal to be more inclusive in our artwork here at Zion. Please take note of the side view of the frame that will be on display in the Gathering Space and not on this attachment. It asks: “Was I a racist? A bystander? An ally? Did I do all I can? Can one person make a difference? Did I? Will you? “

DEBBIE MAIER JACKNIN LEGACY

“Life is tough and we often are faced with hard choices and decisions. How do we handle those? How does one want to be remembered?”



“When I think of my legacy, it has so many layers including one that relates to racism. When I die, if someone looked back at my life, would they say I was a racist? Would they say I was a bystander? Would they say I did something? But, the word means so much more to me. I have a granddaughter. What kind of world are we leaving for her and her generation?”

“Have I done all I can do? Have you?”

Debbie Maier Jacknin is a stained glass, mosaic and polymer clay artist

currently living and working in Pittsburgh, PA. Her artwork combines her passion for social issues and inspirational messages with her love of nature, sailing, water, and Western Pennsylvania. Often working in an impressionistic style, Debbie strives to create a sense of luminescent beauty while tackling provocative subjects.

Reusing materials when possible, Debbie’s mosaics have been created on everything from old windows to microwave plates. She often uses leftover scraps from stained glass artists and stones from local creeks.

Debbie co-owns Songbird Artistry, a boutique located in Pittsburgh, PA with her daughters. Her work is included in collections across the United States.





May Birthdays

5/6	Theodore Stolp	5/17	Alice Bartley
	Charlotte Fraser	5/22	Katie Kozak
	Mark Mauro	5/23	Kaylee Belohlavek
5/9	Jonah Rickus	5/24	Charles Long
5/10	Cindy Pierce	5/26	Reid Wolfe
	Carol Stephany	5/28	Alyson Stover
	Kurt Kalkstein	5/29	Stan Yoder
5/11	Maryan Yoder	5/30	Lauren Fitzroy
5/13	Connor Clydesdale		
5/15	Aaron Snyder		
5/16	Ed Barnett		

Anniversaries

5/02/1987	Kathleen & Paul Gaberson
5/15/1999	Carol & John Carter
5/18/1974	Mary Lou & Al D'Ambrosio
5/26/1989	Tricia & Brian Ford
5/28/1977	Jeffrey & Sandra Durick



Financial Status on March 31, 2023

On March 31, the General Operating Fund (which is used solely for budgeted expenses) had a balance of \$58,582 which is a \$435 gain from last month. Donations toward budget expenditures through March 31 were \$56,550. The Thomas Child Car & Learning Academy (TCC&LA) contributions also go to the General Operating Fund. Those contributions as of March 31 were \$12,450 which helped us meet our budget expenses of \$65,125 as of March 31.

Donations to ULLA, the Food Pantry Fund, memorial funds, the Anniversary Fund, the Guest Musicians Fund, the Youth Ministry Fund, the Zion Mission Trip Fund, etc., are special funds that reside in our Thrivent Brokerage account to protect them from being used for budgeted expenses. Zion also has separate assets to hold our Mission Endowment Fund and our Original Endowment Fund.

We had to borrow from our line of credit in March to pay for the engineering drawings for the stormwater runoff project on the back hill as approved by the congregation. There may be some additional fees. When the bid for the actual work begins, we will investigate borrowing from the Lutheran Church Extension Society (LCES) which is interest free. As of March 31, the amount owed on the line of credit is \$12,433 and the amount owed on the current LCES loan is \$9,154. Therefore, our total debt is \$21,597. Both are paid off with your donations to the Major Maintenance Fund.

Passages: Intersections of the Sacred in Cairo Egypt

April 2023

Easter Greetings! Pastor Christie here. Hoping this finds you all well! We are doing find in Egypt as we marked the Easter Holiday and are coming up on Eid.

We had something pretty amazing happen here at church on Easter Sunday and no I'm not talking about our Easter celebration although that was amazing in its own right. Due to the Easter holiday, StARS services were closed to clients so the English speaking congregation and the Nuer Presbyterian Congregation have the whole site to hold big worship services with food and music and flowers. About an hour or so after I had left for the day (the Nuer were well into their service) a pregnant woman arrived at our gate thinking that StARS was open that day. She was in labor and had been turned away at one of the local hospitals due to lack of funds (this is sadly more common than not for refugees), not knowing what else to do, she came to StARS hoping for some financial help so she could return to the hospital to deliver her baby. As she approached it was clear she needed help and so Yusef, our guard immediately helped her inside. Her labor had become more intense on the trip over and before there was time to call anyone, she was having the baby. The Nuer congregation pastor later shared with me that Yuself had come into their worship service and alerted them to what was happening. They immediately stopped everything and came right out.

The woman was not able to move far and so I am told the elders came and formed a circle around her creating a makeshift birthing room so she'd have privacy. People shared clothing and other items to cover the ground, to make the place as comfortable as they could. The Nuer Deaconesses, some with prior medical experience from their home in South Sudan went into the middle of that circle and with care and love helped her deliver the baby right there in our courtyard.

The paramedics who had been called not long after she arrived, finally got to us and she and her baby, who was a boy, were lifted onto a stretcher and brought to a nearby hospital. Baby boy was healthy and mom was doing fine. StARS staff were also notified and were in contact with the mom quickly to make sure she had all she needed.

I was at home when all this was going on and had received a phone call from the Nuer pastor (presumably while it was all happening) which, I somehow missed. I called back right away but there was no answer. Wondering what was going on (as the Pastor calling me in the middle of an Easter church service is not a usual thing) I sent a WhatsApp message: "is everything ok?" Two hours later the response from the Nuer youth leader: "it's ok Rev. We delivered a baby!" followed by many details.

After a moment of shock, I had to smile (ok I actually wept). Because if you have hung around St. Andrew's long enough it's like "well of course a baby was born in our courtyard on Easter." I was told "they", as in the community gathered there around this mom, decided with her, that his name, in South Sudanese tradition of giving names that mark places and dates, would be Sunday. He is still doing well I'm told and I hope to meet him in the coming days.

Also just as an aside to this story, (because there is no way you can make this up) the mother is Muslim, she is also South Sudanese but comes from another tribe, the Dinka, who have spent many years at war with the Nuer in South Sudan. As their pastor told me, "we don't care about any of that Pastor, here at St. Andrew's we are all family and this woman is part of us."

I have to say, as I have thought about this story over these couple weeks, I realize that there is a lot more to unpack with this event—while my heart is deeply warmed at the thought of a baby being born healthy on Easter and while I'm grateful beyond words for the way the congregation and our staff rallied on behalf of this woman (of course they did) I'm also really devastated on several fronts. Devastated by a system that creates conditions so that pregnant moms from some communities are given all the healthcare they need while moms from other communities feel (or are told as in this case) they are not welcome even in a hospital and even when it's to deliver a baby.

And as we know in our own home country, the United States, this kind of medical divide isn't a whole lot different--again depending on your background and I think at least from what we hear, it's only getting harder. I am also devastated about the way human beings are seemingly satisfied to treat one another in less than human ways. While this event on the one hand gives me faith it also tests my faith all the same.

But I also think about that mom...she also had faith. She had faith in us. Faith that if she came to St. Andrew's, despite what she'd been through, despite differences, despite anything really, she had faith that she'd receive the help she needed, and that faith was affirmed in a hundred different ways--most importantly that she was treated with more dignity and love by the Nuer Deconesses and congregation members than she very well may have been in any other place. And for this, even amidst the very "both/and/messed up injustice" of this situation I will say I am still amazed and I am so grateful.

As I shared this story with a colleague this past week, I ended the conversation with something I deeply believe and this only further affirms: "I think all our houses of faith should be the kinds of places where people feel safe giving birth"—whether that is to babies or ideas or manifestations of our truest selves. I pray that somehow this can be so.

That's all I have for you today my friends. We will send a more extensive newsletter soon, I just wanted for today to share with you this Easter story because perhaps more than any "newsy" bits that we could share, it (I feel anyway) is the heart of this place we currently call home. Your friend in Christ, Pastor Christie (Steve says hi!)

Prayer Request

Please pray for our staff and community members who have family in friends in Sudan. Due to the current fighting happening there. many are injured, facing lack of water and food and things are very difficult right now. We have many staff and congregation members with direct ties in Sudan and so all of STARS and St. Andrew's are monitoring the situation and holding everyone during this time. Thank you.

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How can you support us?

Prayer and encouragement are always welcome and so appreciated!

Financial support is also necessary for us to continue our work. More information about how your congregation can support us can be found at:

<https://community.elca.org/Egypt>

for individuals donations can be shared here:

https://support.elca.org/site/TR/Events/General?px=1066411&pg=personal&fr_id=1370

We would also absolutely love to hear from you! We are also ALWAYS available to participate with congregations online and provide information, sermons, music and more!

Our email addresses are:

Christie.manisto@elca.org

Steven.saari@elca.org

Many thanks to all of you.