

Zion News

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November 2023

www.zionpennhills.org

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

“Live in the present, not in the past and not in the future.”

It's a saying that we are all familiar with. To live for today. To not burden ourselves or daydream about what once was or what could have been in our lives. To not become too preoccupied with what we hope will happen in the future. Instead, to live today for the sake of today.



Yet, here we are, entering the month of November and the tail end of the Fall season. It's a challenge to keep hope going as the last leaf falls off the tree, as the first crunch of the ground swallows life beneath us – as nature moves this time of the year in Pittsburgh, in the U.S., and around the world.

It's a struggle to keep faithful or even to keep your spirits up as more of night takes over the day, as darkness creeps more and more into the light, as the temperatures continue to drop, and eventually snow accumulates everywhere from our driveways and sidewalks, to our lawns and flowerbeds, and on our streets.

I don't know about all of you, but it takes me a few days to adjust to the fact that it's becoming darker and darker in the morning hours and that it's becoming darker and darker at night, especially the time right before we adjust our clocks back for Daylight Savings Time.

Let's be honest, depending on your current reality, it can be very easy to dwell on the past or to spend too much time worrying or daydreaming about the future. It's much more of a challenge to only stay in the present, especially depending on the day when that present provides its own series of challenges or worries to occupy the busy days and anxious nights. Instead, to let today's worries and troubles be enough for today. And to leave tomorrow's concerns for tomorrow.

Given that we are coming on the heels of the impending holiday season when family dynamics are (usually) amplified or those who are gravely ill tend to succumb to their diseases, this can be a challenging time even for those who usually find themselves on clear and open paths. Where a well-worn tried and true way of life, where each course is well thought out and planned, it suddenly faced with rocks and cracks or unfortunately a chasm or two.

Our texts this month are all about the present, namely the promise of hope and resurrection and life and blessings which are given and bestowed in the present tense. The texts that we will have this month will all point to a hope and a promise which is given and bestowed to you and I, today. In the present. Not in the past and not in the future, but today.

The texts that we will hear in worship on Sunday mornings this month will beckon us to hear, in no uncertain terms, that it is in just this time that the faithful (you and me and all believers in Christ) are called to be what they and we are: namely, faithful. Having already been grasped by the One who will never ever let us go, we cling to faith that not only sustains us but which raises the dead.

We are called to remember the dead in hope, just as we will on All Saints Sunday on November 5th. We are called to not be alarmed when faced with warnings and signs that Christ is coming soon, which we will hear about on November 19th. We will be called to worship at the feet of Christ who is King and Lord over all, as we will on November 26th for Christ the King Sunday.

We are to give thanks for all that is life in the very heart and breath and soul of the month of November, just as the abundance of the season of Fall passes through our fingertips and we are ushered into the season of winter. We are to hope. And to have joy. And to trust. In the present tense and, yes, even in the month of November.

Peace,
Pastor Martha



THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We want to extend our deepest thanks and appreciation to all of you on the occasion of our son, Edward's, baptism last month. Your presence (both in person and online) and kind words on this important day in his life of faith as he officially joined the family of God means the world to us. In addition, your generous hospitality towards our guest presider, Bishop Kurt Kusserow, is also greatly appreciated. Special thanks also to Charlotte Murray and Tammy Belohlavek for putting together an amazing hospitality hour afterwards in which everyone was well fed!

~ Pastor Martha and Pastor Dave



All Saints Sunday 2023

Join us for worship on **Sunday November 5th** as we remember all the saints of Zion who have joined the Church Triumphant since the last All Saints Sunday. We will light candles and join in prayer during our worship together. You all are welcome to bring in a photo of a loved one as well (no matter when they joined the Church Triumphant) and we will display them in the Sanctuary during the service.



FOOD PANTRY THANK YOU PARTY!

As a token of the pantry's gratefulness and gratitude towards all of you who help month in and month out with Zion's Pantry, a thank-you party has been planned for **Saturday November 4th** from 1pm-3pm down in the Community Room! We could not accomplish the work and service that we are able without the time, energy, and dedication of our pantry volunteers and so we wish to celebrate YOU and all of your efforts to serve those in need in our community and beyond. Beverages will be provided and we are asking that you bring your favorite appetizer to share. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Sallie Lazar at 412-260-3800 or sallielazar@gmail.com as soon as you can. Thank you!



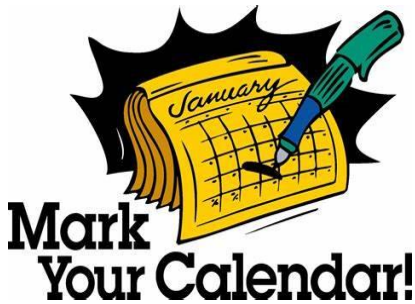
ZION BOOK CLUB

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.

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



Zion Apartment Update: The Property Committee is looking for volunteers to help get the apartment ready to be rented. Deep cleaning and touch up painting is needed. Please call, text, or email Marc Schuler 412-738-5709 and 724marc@gmail.com



Parish Life Upcoming Events –

It's hard to believe that the fall season is quickly passing by and the holidays will soon be upon us! Parish Life has a busy fall & winter scheduled ahead for the remainder of the year. We will be seeking folks to assist with many of our upcoming events. Please look for the sign-up sheets in the Narthex within the next couple of weeks!

Sunday, November 12th we will host our first Veteran's Day luncheon in the Parish Hall right after worship from 11:30am – 1:00pm. We are working to extend an invitation to not only our congregation, but the local community by reaching out to area VFW & Legion locations.

Friday, November 24th we will host our annual Community Thanksgiving Meal in the Parish Hall. As always, many hands make light work! We'll be looking for volunteers for set-up, teardown and working the meal. This year the meal will be from 12:00pm – 3:00pm.

Sunday, December 17th we will carol at local nursing homes. Andrew has graciously stepped up to help with this event. We'll be looking for singers to bring joy to those in the area. We will update with more information in the December newsletter.

Wednesday, December 20th we will host our Blue Christmas / Longest Night meal prior to the Blue Christmas Service. More information to follow!

Feel free to reach out to Parish Life with any questions.

Joe Balaban – Co-Chair 724-591-6955 joe22880@gmail.com

Charlotte Murray – Co-Chair 412-327-2764 cmurray23@verizon.net



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, November 11th** and if you are able to help with set-up on Friday, November 10th from 9am-12pm in the Community Room or during the pantry on the 12^h 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: For the rest of this year, we will not be specifying which items we are collecting each month. Instead, we will at any time gladly accept your donations of soap, shampoo, deodorant, cleaning products or any other personal care product. The collection bin is in the narthex by the coat rack. Please put the food pantry on your shopping list! Thank you so much.



Hospitality Volunteers Needed! Do you enjoy a nice treat after worship on Sunday mornings? Don't we all! Unfortunately, we are in desperate need of volunteers to offer to bring something to share with others. No need to make something super fancy – just a little something to offer on a Sunday of your choosing. (No need to even make the coffee – a member of Parish Life will be on hand to help!) If you are able to help, you can reach out to a member of Parish Life and/or simply sign up on the calendar hanging by the kiosk in the Gathering Space! Thank you!



Daylight Savings: Just a reminder to turn your clocks back **Saturday, November 4!** Enjoy that extra hour of sleep.



November Birthdays

11/2	Nathan Clydesdale	11/28	Breanna Smith
11/11	Kristi Thompson	11/29	Kristen Williams
11/12	Sue Baumann	11/30	Rhonda Pope
11/13	Kay Clydesdale		
11/21	Fred Ross		
11/24	Callie Bostwick		
11/28	Linda Mitnik		

Anniversaries

11/03/2018	Kristen & Aaron Williams
11/17/2007	Christine & Bob Clydesdale, Jr.
11/20/1999	Megan & Bob Houghtelin
11/29/2008	Kristi & Darren Thompson

**The Thomas Childcare and Learning Academy:
A Conversation with Valisa Thomas-Dutrieuille**

Disenchanted with the corporate world and encouraged by her soon-to-retire mother to join her home daycare program, Valisa Thomas-Dutrieuille stepped into the world of childcare and never looked back. Out of that decision grew the Thomas Child Care Learning Academy at 10739 Frankstown Road. Then looking to expand program services, Valisa reached out to Jace Ransom, School Age Youth Manager for Allegheny Co, who introduced her to Pastor Martha. After thorough investigation, the second site was established at Zion, and the two-site program now accommodates seventy-five children. Each site is designed to offer different opportunities.

The first site houses infants to children age five – an all-day caring center. The Zion site offers before-and-after-school care for children in kindergarten through age thirteen. Eligibility for the programs is based on the parents’ need for care to complement their work or school schedules.

Here at Zion the program uses space on the first floor of the apartment building behind the church, the parish hall and former Kindergarten room in the church building. A day consists of children being dropped off, fed breakfast, transported by Penn Hills school buses to their schools, returning them to Zion in midafternoon. If circumstances require school to be closed, the children can spend the day at the Zion site. A summer day camp was offered this year. Looking to expand again, Valisa has identified a third site which will offer programming for multiple age groups. There is no formal timeline for that third site.

For Zion and the Thomas Child Care Learning Academy, this is a win/win situation. Our large space, not having been used for many days of the week couple with the growing child care needs in the community have come together to serve Penn Hills and beyond.

Submitted by, Pat Hauser



Zion now has a fully accessible entrance! On October 19, 2023 automatic door openers were added to both sets of doors at the gathering space entrance. These doors are operated by pressing the blue metal plates located near the doors. Thank you to those who donated to the doors project, and to the Accessibility and Inclusivity task force for their work in identifying the need for an accessible entrance and facilitating the behind the scenes work to make it a reality.



It takes a village... You've likely heard this phrase in reference to raising children. It could be applied equally well to the work of worshipping God together in a liturgical church! **It takes a village to worship in community.**

We Lutherans believe that liturgy (the "work of the people") is best served by the active participation of everyone assembled at any given service. While we set pastors apart as presiders over our sacraments and their sound preaching is fundamental to our tradition, we understand that they are acting on behalf of all the baptized when they lead worship. While we deeply value the long-standing tradition of Lutheran worship music, we understand that the central form of worship music is assembly singing (not organ preludes or choir anthems).

If a worship service feels like a concert or a theatrical production, with the action happening "on stage" and the worshippers taking it all in like an audience, we've missed the mark!

One way that we work against entertainment-style worship is by involving a variety of people in leadership and behind-the-scenes preparation. **Here are a few key roles at Zion that need YOUR help NOW:**

- **Assisting Minister:** This is the primary lay leader in any worship service. In short, they assist in two ways: assisting the assembly by leading certain portions of the liturgy on their behalf, and assisting the pastor in a variety of ways. Assisting ministers read scripture, lead prayers, and distribute communion. At Zion, we typically schedule an assisting minister for a month of Sundays at a time.
- **Tech Team:** Our tech team serves in a variety of ways to share our worship online and to make sure the worship leaders are heard during the service. You could operate a camera, run the sound board, or help with the Facebook stream.
- **Lector:** *This is a new and easy way to get involved in worship at Zion!* A lector will be assigned one scripture reading to read during a worship service. The reading will be sent to you well in advance so that you can practice ahead of the service. Scheduling is flexible!
- **Altar Guild:** The altar guild helps to prepare the altar and communion vessels for each service and occasionally helps with other behind-the-scenes tasks. Altar guild members are trained on what to do with clear instructions laid out for each Sunday. Altar guild members are scheduled in teams of two, so you'll always have someone with you to work with!

If you are interested in any of these roles, feel free to speak with Pastor Martha, Andrew, or someone who's already doing the role. We will provide any necessary instructions and training and get you started.

Upcoming Special Music at Zion

Sunday, November 12

- **Pickup Choir** – all are welcome to come sing a fun and easy arrangement of the spiritual "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning." Meet at 8:30 am in the Sanctuary.
- **Trombonist Alex Ortiz** from Duquesne University and our own Mary Sabol (viola) play Bach's "Zion hört die Wächter singen, BWV 140."

Sunday, November 26 – Christ the King Sunday

- **Zion Church Choir** sings Carson Cooman's setting of the *Te Deum*
- **Trumpet player Kevin Vargas**



Zion Lutheran Church Budgeted Finances as of September 30th:

Offering income for the first three quarters of the year totaled \$164,000 while expenses equaled \$191,000. Support from other sources totaling \$41,000 (namely rental of church space to outside groups including TCC&LA) maintain a modest \$14,000 surplus. Absent these outside sources, and expense control that is \$24,000 below year-to-date budget, operating costs would exceed income.

Zion Council is reviewing congregational input from the three listening sessions related to the IRS Employee Retention Credit payroll tax credit received totaling approximately \$58,200. Proceeds currently reside in Zion's Thrivent account. Of the \$43,000 insurance claim proceeds received for the winter apartment building leak, \$30,000 has been spent to date with remaining expenditures to prepare the unit for rent not anticipated to be material. A broker has been secured to secure a tenant in 2024.

Borrowings were reduced further in September to slightly more than \$11,000, 58% of which is on an interest-free, monthly repayment schedule.

2024 budget planning continues with the intention of delivering a 2nd draft for Council's review in November and December approval.



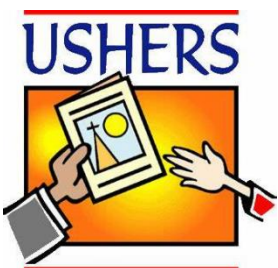
Decorating of the Chrismon Tree: We will be scheduling for the week after Thanksgiving. If you would like to participate in this activity, please call Pat Hauser at 412-826-5993.



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.

Usher Schedule:

Sunday, November 05	Marc Schuler	Joe Balaban
Sunday, November 12	Mark Mauro	Janet Mauro
Sunday, November 19	Tony Lamorte	Ray Rall
Sunday, November 26	Mark Mauro	Janet Mauro
Sunday, December 03	Marc Schuler	Joe Balaban
Sunday, December 10	Mark Mauro	Janet Mauro
Sunday, December 17	Tony Lamorte	Ray Rall
Sunday, December 24	Tony Lamorte	Joe Balaban





WHO'S WHO OF ZION LEADERSHIP

Church Council 2023-2024:

Pastor Martha McCreight (President)
Tom Felmley (Vice-President)
Kathy Gaberson (Secretary)
Mike Patchen (Treasurer)
Sue Clydesdale (Financial Secretary)
Debbie Rall (Stewardship Secretary)
Tom Felmley (Communications Chair and Music and Worship Liaison)
Chris Dippold (Christian Education Liaison)
Joe Balaban (Parish Life & Facilities Liaison)
Marc Schuler (Property Chair)
Mark Mauro (Budget & Finance Chair)
Jeannette Christensen
Rhonda Pope (Health Ministry co-chair and Liaison)
Brenda Wolfe

Budget and Finance Committee

Mark Mauro (Chair)
Sue Clydesdale
Charlotte Murray
Mike Patchen
Pat Pope
Debbie Rall
Gail Snyder

Christian Education Committee:

Ashley Faas (Chair)
Debbie Rall
Chris Dippold (Liaison)
Janet Mauro
Mary Lou D'Ambrosio

Health Ministry:

Rhonda Pope (Co-chair and Liaison)
Rachel Dolney
Sandra Short
Shirley McClure
Laura Patchen

Property Committee:

Marc Schuler (Chair)
Tony Lamorte
Tom Felmley
Pat Pope
Ray Rall
Curt Baumann
Reid Wolfe

Music and Worship Committee:

Andrew Sabol (Chair)
Gail Snyder
Cindy Pierce
Tom Felmley (Liaison)
Pat Hauser
Brenda Wolfe
Pastor Martha (Liaison)

Parish Life:

Tammy Belohlavek
Joe Balaban (Liaison and Co-chair)
Charlotte Murray (Co-chair)
Rachel Dolney

Stewardship:

Pastor Martha (Chair)
Debbie Rall (Stewardship Secretary)
Jeannette Christensen
Kathy Gaberson
Charlotte Murray

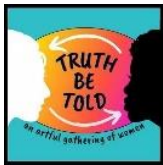
Mutual Ministry Committee:

Tom Felmley (Council Vice-President)
Mark Mauro
Brenda Wolfe
Gail Snyder
Cindy Pierce
Pastor Martha

Mission Endowment:

Pastor Martha (Chair)
Mike Patchen (Treasurer)

Kathy Gaberson
Linda Neumann
Mark Mauro



Fourteen women artists came together for more than a year to share stories and life experiences 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 Kathleen Anderson. Her chosen word is “REPARATIONS.” Her 10” X 10” canvas focuses on reparations for the inequalities caused by institutional racism. She refers to five centuries that Euro-American/White members of U.S. society have been the recipients of wealth and/or privilege coming from Afro-American/Black labor and social positioning.

Two other pieces of her art are included. One is a neckpiece featuring brass Ghanaian bauble beads, crystals, and cowrie shells in addition to her hand-crafted polymer clay pieces. The other is a HeartBox designed to hold heartfelt and inspirational messages.

Large photos of Kathleen’s art will be on display in the Gathering Space for the month of November. This display will advance our goal to be more inclusive in our artwork here at Zion.

**KATHLEEN ANDERSON
REPARATIONS**

For five centuries Euro-American/White members of US society have been the recipients of wealth and/or privilege coming from Afro-American/Black labor and social positioning. Reparations for these inequalities will help to repair the damage caused by this institutional racism and have been earned by Black citizens of the United States.



Kathleen and about sixty others from an assortment of nationalities went on a journey. They walked about twenty miles per day over thirteen months, an “Interfaith Pilgrimage of the Middle Passage,” and it was on this trip that she realized that craft-art is not just what she does, but it’s who she is. Now, she strives to clearly bring her artistic voice into form, to discern and describe “Black American” as wearable and functional art.

In response to the popular 1920s song *Every Race Has A Flag But The Coon*, Marvis Garvey created the red, black, and green striped flag still in popular use today as representative of Black Americans. The reversible red, black, and green neckpiece (right) shown features brass Ghanaian bauble beads, crystals, and cowrie shells. The remaining components are hand crafted by Kathleen using polymer clay.



A HeartBox™ is designed to hold heartfelt and inspirational messages on business card sized notes and also makes a great container for jewelry and other beloved treasures. The HeartBox™ is an ideal gift to say “I love you” from the heart. This HeartBox™ (left) includes a transferred image of a painting from Kathleen’s collaboration with artist LaShun Beal. Pictured in the design is the Ghanaian Adrianna symbol “Bese Saka” (cola nut) which stands for affluence, power, abundance, plenty, togetherness, and unity.



Kathleen Anderson is an award-winning artist who has exhibited her work on the national scene. Kathleen handcrafts limited edition and one-of-a-kind adornment pieces for women and men, eyeglass boxes, key fobs, kaleidoscopes and her original HeartBox™ collection. Kathleen incorporates only the strongest, most durable translucent and opaque clay in her artwork. She strives to bring her artistic voice clearly into form to discern and describe "Black American" as wearable and functional art.

