

Zion News

May, 2022

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

Pastor's Page

It was morning, the first day of the week, that the women and a few of the disciples went to the tomb to visit the Lord. And, as we remember the rest of the story, it was there that they discovered that Jesus had been resurrected, "just as he said!" And, thus, begins the season we call Easter; the 50 days that we remember Christ's resurrection and appearance to all of the people and his eventual ascension to the Father in heaven.

The Easter narrative makes us fully aware of what happened on the first day of the week. Women went to Jesus' tomb and found he was not dead; he was raised. The news spread throughout that first day of the week with Jesus appearing to his disciples and two people on the road to Emmaus. The good news of Easter morning changes lives and expectations, but for our world today, what are we to make of Easter on the second day of the week?

On the day after Easter Sunday, with the chorus of "Jesus Christ is risen today!" fresh in its ears, we and the rest of the world returned to work. Back to the daily struggle of earthly life. For many people, that means back to grief or worry or broken relationships, and for some death looming on the horizon.

Amid the sufferings and stresses that occur in our daily lives and in the lives of people around the world, it is hard to forget the good news of Easter. Or to have doubts. Or to wrestle with certain aspects of the Christian faith. Even if things are going well for you, think about what we confess when we come together on Sundays: that the Creator of the heavens and the earth not only knows we exist but cares deeply about our ups and downs, our hopes and dreams, and all the rest. And yet we come together and in hearing the Word, partaking of the Sacraments, and by being joined to those around us through prayer and song, we receive this thing that we call faith.

For some of you it's easy to believe the good news of Easter morning. For some of you, it is all the more difficult. No matter if believing comes naturally to you or not, I'd like to invite you during this Easter season to write down one thing you have a question about regarding the Christian faith. Who knows, maybe the question will be the first thing that comes to mind. Or something you've wondered about for years.

Maybe it will be rather trivial (why did God create creepy, crawly things?) Maybe it will be something monumental – why is my loved one in such constant pain? No matter what the question, jot something down and hand it to me at church, or slip it in my mailbox, or underneath my door, and let's wrestle with these questions together. (No need to add your name, either, and I promise it won't end up in a sermon!)

Whatever you are wrestling with, know that you are not alone. And you are not alone to wrestle with it all by yourself. Gathered together around Word and Sacrament, we're gathered as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to share our hopes and dreams, our questions and curiosities, and everything in-between.

May this season of Easter be for you a time to reflect and give thanks for the good news that in Christ, the dead are raised, sins are forgiven, and "peace be with you," is given to all people, including yourself!

For Christ *is* risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Peace,
Pastor

Deacon's Desk

On Sunday I asked our kids what some of the signs of Easter are and while naming them, one did say butterflies. I do love butterflies. I love that they can be calm and serene as they rest on a leaf and playfully flirtatious when with another. But of course they are a symbol of Easter because the caterpillar emerging from what looks like a deathlike state to be reborn as something new screams metaphor for the resurrection. The butterfly truly represents the transitions that we all go through at different points in our life. The caterpillar in its cocoon spends its time in goo, the mess, the ick. The only way for transition to happen is to go through the mess, the growing pains, the not so pretty work of becoming something new. That metempsychosis is a metaphor for all of us, personally and as a community. Right now, it can feel like our Zion community is living in that muck, visioning what we can do to grow, to be more present in the community, and to thrive, but in the end we will emerge into a beautiful butterfly.

Thank you: Thank you to all who participated in the Youth Group's House Egging. We egged a total of 12 houses, and hid 300 eggs. Thank you for supporting efforts to go to the next ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans in 2024.



Due to the recent cancellation of the ELCA's National Youth Gathering, Lutherlyn added a Senior High week during the time that our youth were to be away! Zion's youth: Brooke, Leia, and Izzy will be headed to camp the week of July 24th – 29th for adventures and fun and faith-building time with other youth and God. Thank you again for your support of them through your prayers and financial support!



Food Pantry: The post office motto, “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.” has echoed in our food pantry volunteers ears the last 3 months. Whether it has been a blizzard, high winds or hail, we have continued to meet the growing need in our community brought on by higher food prices. Those price hikes also affect how much and what kinds of food we are able to procure and distribute to our clients each month. The prices of meat and paper products including the bags that we use to prepack items has hit us particularly hard. With a little bit of imagination and resourcefulness we have continued to rise to the occasion and feed roughly 300 of our neighbors each month. If you are interested in volunteering, please let Deacon Amy know.



Calling all members of Zion Lutheran Church: Do you have an interest in the inner-workings of the church? Do you have gifts for leadership and want to have more of a voice? Or do you at least enjoy a meeting that involves tasty treats and witty banter?

The time has come to submit nominations for 4 positions on council, 1 position on the Mission Endowment Committee and 2 for synod assembly representatives. Council meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7pm, Mission Endowment meets once a quarter (at the discretion of the chair of the committee), and Synod Assembly will be a mix of virtual and in-person June 16th-18th. If you have interest in serving in any of these capacities or would like more information, please see Deb Rall (council VP) or Pr Martha for more information. **Nominations will close on Sunday May 8th.**

Did you know that a new task force has been organized to improve our building's accessibility? The task force's mission/purpose statement is: To make Zion Lutheran Church equally accessible to all who enter the building. This includes not only mobility impairments, but also anything that impedes someone's ability to participate in activities at Zion. The task force will report the findings and make suggestions to the Church Council. For more information, please see Kathy Gaberson, Marc Schuler or Laura Patchen.



75th Anniversary: On Wednesday, April 20th, 2022, Zion Lutheran Church will be celebrating its 75th anniversary as a congregation!

In honor of that milestone, the anniversary committee has been working on events and celebrations to mark the anniversary throughout the year. For starters, will have birthday cake after worship on Sunday April 24th. A celebration worship service with Bishop Kusserow and catered cookout is being planned for Sunday September 25th. Invitations to preach or be present in worship on a given Sunday will be going out shortly to predecessor pastors of Zion. A small anniversary gift is being procured for each member of the congregation. A hymn festival is being planned. An ice cream social is being planned in the summer. And, of course, dedication of the new All Creation Sings hymnal supplements during worship will be part of the celebration! Stay tuned to the newsletter, E-News, and bulletin for upcoming events! Let's celebrate what God has done through the members of Zion for the sake of the surrounding community of Penn Hills and beyond and what God is continuing to do through each and every one of you! Thanks be to God!

Financial Status 1st Quarter 2022

As expected, the months of January and February before the new Personnel budget kicked in played havoc with our income and expense reports. March reports have settled in and look better.

For instance, at the end of February we had used \$16,690 YTD from our reserves (called the Carryover Fund) and had a \$40,178 balance in the checking account. At the end of March, we were able to replace \$2,938 in our reserves after paying all our bills, and the balance in the checking account is \$43,116. Keep in mind though that the \$5,000 that Council approved be transferred into the General Operating Fund from the Food Pantry Fund (that was also called out on the budget approved by the congregation) was part of this good news this month. We are at least on a better track now, but we have a long way to go!

Members are encouraged to keep their faith promises up to date and give on a regular basis. Every penny counts! If you need help determining how your giving is keeping up with your promises or what you have donated to Zion, please contact Sue Clydesdale who is our Stewardship Secretary, and she can print a report for you.

You may mail in your offerings or donate online at zionpennhills.org and click on the tab "Donate." The latter is a very safe process run by Vanco Payment Solutions. This is not a "homegrown" system! Your information is encrypted. People can see more about your bank account when you use a check than when you use this system! Vanco also offers Zion an app for your smartphone called Vanco Mobile. Your donations using envelopes or Vanco are all recorded in our accounting system and are included in your statements.

WE LIVE AS STEWARDS

Stewardship is the way that we use all of our resources-ourselves, our time and our possessions-to love God and our neighbor.

Christian Stewardship: Prayerful

Christian stewards acknowledge the greatness and goodness of God through prayer, fellowship, study, worship and reflection. Being prayerful is one of the most powerful keys to "Living the Christian Life." Colossians 4:2 says, "Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart." As followers of Christ, we should be committed to a lifestyle of prayer. Prayer is one of the greatest privileges we have as a Christian. However, we often make prayer something more complicated than it is and as a result miss out on the power of prayer in our lives. Prayer is simply having a conversation with God; you talking to God and God talking to you. God listening to you and you listening to God. Prayer is nothing more and nothing less. Being prayerful is crucial for a believer. Being prayerful is about relationship. We need to make prayer part of our life every day and throughout the day. Prayer should not be reserved just for the most extreme circumstances or when something bad happens and it should not be related to just some religious function. Prayer is about intimacy and relationship. God wants to connect with us. For the Christian praying should be like breathing...just as breathing is the response of physical life to the presence of air so prayer should be a response of spiritual life to the presence of God.

Prayer that flows out the kind of relationship is extremely powerful. James 5:16-18 "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain and it did not rain on the land for three and half years. Again, he prayed and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. God listens to prayers, answers prayer and moves in response to prayer.

Stewardship Team



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Zion has been given an exciting opportunity to partner with the Boys and Girls Club of Western PA for Summer 2022! Chosen as the Penn Hills site for their “Summer of Bold Adventures” summer programming, Zion will host children and youth ages 5-13 for the summer. The “Summer of Bold Adventures” camp runs at Zion from June 20th – August 19th and from 7:30am-6:00pm Monday – Friday!

Have a child/youth that you are interested in registering for this program? You can enroll them at: BGCWPA.org/summercamp2022/

We look forward to seeing children and youth on site as we partner together for the summer!

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.



THE MEMBERS OF ZION LUTHERAN
CHURCH ARE CORDIALLY INVITED
TO

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY
OF PASTOR MARTHA
MCCREIGHT TO PASTOR
DAVID HANSSEN

Saturday May 28th, 2022 at
Heinz Memorial Chapel
10:30am

Treats to be provided after the service



May Birthdays

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

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

May 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 Worship 11:30 CCC Church 6:30-8:00-EAYC	2 1-Alanon 6:30 – Property Team-Gerhard Lounge	3 10-11- Jazzercise 7-Vision & Mission-via Zoom	4 1:00-Bible Study 7-Executive Committee 7-Gamblers Anonymous	5 10-11- Jazzercise 7-Choir 7-Theology after Hours	6 7:30 – Narcotics Anonymous	7
8 9:30 Worship 11:30 CCC Church 6:30-8:00-EAYC	9 1-Alanon	10 10-11- Jazzercise 7- Budget & Finance-Gerhard Lounge	11 1:00-Bible Study 7:30-Council-Chapel 7-Gamblers Anonymous	12 Annual Reports Due! 10-11- Jazzercise 7-Choir 7-Theology after Hours	13 9-11-Food Pantry prep and truck delivery 7:30 – Narcotics Anonymous	14 9-11am-Food Pantry Open-Drive-thru procedure
15 9:30 Worship 11:30 CCC Church 2-4-EAYC Recital-Zion Sanctuary	16 1-Alanon 1-Zion Book Club	17 7am-8pm – Election Day-Community room 10-11- Jazzercise	18 1:00 Bible Study 7-Gamblers Anonymous	19 10-11- Jazzercise 7-Choir 7-Theology after Hours	20 7:30 – Narcotics Anonymous	21
22 9:30 Worship 11:30 CCC Church 6:30-8:30-EAYC	23 1-Alanon	24 10-11- Jazzercise	25 1:00 Bible Study 7-Gamblers Anonymous	26 10-11- Jazzercise 7-Choir 7-Theology after Hours	27 Between 9-11am-Food Truck delivery 7:30 – Narcotics Anonymous	28 Pastor Martha’s wedding at Heinz Chapel at 10:30am
29 9:30 Worship 11:30 CCC Church	30 Office Closed for Memorial Day	31 10-11- Jazzercise				