

Zion News

11609 Frankstown Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

March, 2023

www.zionpennhills.org

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

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



Pastor's Page:

40 days.

40 days to turn and be turned.

40 days when we try, as best we can, to still the mad rush of events around us, to seek out silence and simplicity, to deny ourselves some measure of those frivolous purchases and pleasures which serve only to distract and divert us from the deeper truths of reality.

We need Lent now more than ever, it seems.

In a world of distractions and drama and noise, Lent is a time for simplicity. And stillness and peace and quiet. We give things up not merely out of tradition nor from a desire to challenge ourselves, but because fasting and almsgiving free us to dispense with the secondary things of life in order that we may focus on the first things: gratitude, silence, generosity, faith, prayer, worship of God and love of neighbor.

Vespers (Wednesday evenings @ 7pm) give us opportunity for quiet contemplation and serenity in song. And when the world begins to fall away, when we let go of the distractions that clutter our days, we find ourselves drawn to holiness—to the journey of Lent and eventually to the blessings of Holy Week and the coming of Easter.

Midweek Bible Study (Wednesday afternoons @ 1pm) give us opportunity for further exploration into the Lenten disciplines by means of Esau McCaulley's recent book, "Lent: The Season of Repentance and Renewal." Called to live fuller and deeper into the season, we are reminded of the depths of sin and of God's deeper love for us still.

The Stewardship Committee's theme for the season: Stewards of God's Love give opportunity for us to examine our hearts and minds week in and week out of Lent through the lens of: the Gospel, creation and the environment, home and possessions, families, body/mind/spirit, and faith in order that we may make amends and return to the Lord our God for that has been given and done for us.

My prayer for all of us as Lent reaches its climax at the end of this month is for simple joys and for quiet, honest pleasures. May we give up that which distracts us, which fogs our minds and our souls, obscuring from us the things in life that truly matter.

And with clear minds, and hearts, and souls may we walk along with Christ the long road of His Passion: from the Hosannas of Palm Sunday, through the trials and terrors of Maundy Thursday, the Cross at Golgotha on Good Friday, to come at last to the Resurrection joys of Easter Morning.

Let us leave behind all that which hinders us, and gather together at the Table, beneath the Cross, and before the empty Tomb.

Peace,
Pastor Martha

Pastoral Care: If you know of anyone who is in the hospital or would like a visit and communion, please contact Pastor Martha at: 406-565-3592 or the Church office: 412-242-2626.

Pastor Martha Family Leave Absence: Back in November, the church council approved Pastor Martha to take 8 weeks of family leave after the birth of her new baby. Due to Baby Hanssen's potential arrival on April 2nd, her family leave will potentially begin on Saturday April 1st and go through Wednesday, May 31st. (*I say potentially, because, baby could come early, baby could come late. You know how these things go...*)

What does that mean for pastoral care and coverage during that time? I'm so glad you asked! Thanks to the gift of Zion having multiple retired pastors in the congregation, we will have pastoral needs covered during Pastor Martha's absence. Each will also be compensated according to what they are covering and frequency, which was already built into the Zion 2023 Budget line item: "Pastor's Parental Leave Expenses," in case you are wondering.

Pastoral Coverage will be the following:

Pastor Neumann (412-822-7652) will be the "local interim" or "Monday-Saturday" pastoral coverage for Zion during April and May. He will be available for set days/times in the office as well as hospital visits and funerals. He will also preach and preside at worship on Palm Sunday (April 2nd) and Maundy Thursday (April 6th).

Pastor Hauser will preach and preside at worship on Good Friday (April 7th), Easter Sunday (April 9th), April 23rd and April 30th.

Pastor Marburger will preach and preside at worship during the entire month of May.

Zion will also be blessed to welcome **Pastor Brian Bennett** of the LUC (along with campus ministry students) as he leads worship on Sunday April 16th.

If you have questions, please reach out to either Pastor Martha or Kathy Gaberson (Council VP). Special thanks to each of these pastors, the Zion church council, and all of you for your support and care these last several months. It is a true blessing and gift.



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 March 11th** and if you are able to help with set-up on Friday, March 10th from 9am-12pm in the Community Room or during the pantry on the 11th 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 March: The item we will be collecting for March to help out our food pantry recipients is cleaning products. This can be anything from tub cleaner, to laundry or dish detergent. Thank you for the great response to this call for help. It is greatly appreciated by all who benefit from your generosity!



LENT SOUP SUPPERS ARE BACK!

Our midweek Lenten soup suppers are back at Zion! Each Wednesday during Lent (March 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th), join us in the Gathering Space from 5:00pm-6:30pm for soup, salad, and bread before Midweek Lenten Worship. These meals are open to Zion Members and the public – so invite your friends and neighbors and gather around a hot meal at Zion. Have a good soup to share? Sign-up in the Narthex starting later this month for a slot. Suggested donation for the meal of \$5/meal.



LENT 2023

Our 40-Day Lenten journey began on Wednesday February 22nd with Ash Wednesday and continues throughout the season of Lent. On Wednesday evenings, come for a hot bowl of soup from 5:30pm-6:30pm in the Gathering Space. Then join us for worship at 7pm in the Sanctuary.

We will worship each Wednesday evening in Lent at 7pm in the Sanctuary. This year, we will be praying Evening Prayer from the ELW together. Join us for a time of singing and praying (or simply meditating if you wish) as we enter into this penitential season together.

Midweek Lent Bible Study and Worship: Join us on Wednesdays at 1pm in the Gerhard Lounge and over Zoom for a time of worship and study together. This year, we will be using Esau McCaulley's book, "Lent: The Season of Repentance and Renewal" to aid us in our study together. Copies may be purchased on your own, otherwise, if you are in need of a copy, please let Pastor Martha know so that one can be ordered for you!

40 Days as Stewards

During the 40 days of Lent, the Stewardship Committee will lead the congregation in reflecting some of the ways in which we live our lives as stewards of all that God has given us. We ask you to join us as we strive to be good stewards of God's love and grace in the various aspects of our lives. During the 40 days of Lent, we will strive to grow deeper as we ponder how we are:

- Stewards of the Gospel and God's Love
- Stewards of Creation and the Environment
- Stewards of our Home and Possessions
- Stewards of our Families
- Stewards of our Body, Mind and Spirit
- Stewards of our faith [during Holy Week]

Stay tuned to Zion's weekly bulletin where reflections for the weeks during Lent will be presented. Then check the "Family and Friends of Zion Lutheran Church in Penn Hills" Facebook page for questions to ponder.



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.

Communion Distribution During Worship: Starting this month and ongoing, Zion will move to an alternating schedule in terms of how we distribute communion during worship. On the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, we will distribute communion at the bottom of the chancel steps/on the floor. On the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month, we will distribute communion at the railing. Those in need of communion in their pews will still be able to receive it there – please let an usher know! Questions? Please see Pastor Martha



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 (Chair)

Charlotte Murray

Gail Snyder

Mark Mauro

Tony Lamorte

Sue Clydesdale

Christian Education Committee:

Ashley Faas (Chair)

Deb Rall

Chris Dippold (Liaison)

Health Ministry:

Kathy Conrad (co-chair)

Rhonda Pope (Liaison and co-chair)

Rachel Dolney

Sandra Short

Mission Endowment:

Kathy Gaberson Linda Neumann

Charlotte Murray Pastor

Mike Patchen

Property Committee:

Marc Schuler Ray Rall

Joe Balaban

Tom Felmley

Pat Pope

Music and Worship Committee:

Andrew Sabol

Gail Snyder

Cindy Pierce

Tom Felmley

Pat Hauser

Debbie Marks

Brenda Wolfe

Pastor

Parish Life:

Joe Balaban (Liaison)

Barry & Charlotte Fraser

Tammy Belohlavek (Chair)

Debbie Marks

Alona Snyder

Charlotte Murray

Stewardship:

Sue Clydesdale

Charlotte Murray

Jeannette Christensen

Pastor Martha

Kathy Gaberson (Council VP)

Mutual Ministry Committee (Pastor):

Kathy Gaberson (Council VP)

Mark Mauro

Tony LaMorte

Brenda Wolfe

Gail Snyder

Cindy Pierce

Accessibility and Inclusion Task Force

Laura Patchen (chair)

Kathy Gaberson

Pastor Hauser

Kathy Conrad

Tom Felmley

Rhonda Pope

Pastor

Marc Schuler

CYNTHIA TINAPPLE



FEEL

Life has taught Cynthia that being present with feelings is the only way through change of any sort. She has read current literature about racism and fancies herself not-a-racist, and bristles at the harsh realities of privilege and ignorance spelled out on printed pages. Through the texts she has read, she experienced anger, disbelief, sadness, fear, shame, and more, and says that sitting with uncomfortable feelings makes us available for transformation.



“I parked my car in a Black area of town just to see what my body would say to me. I needed to sit with the emotional turmoil baked into the cake of “me” by my white upbringing. Once we acknowledge feelings we can begin change and growth. We all had to let go of old ways of being and knowing. We let go of one trapeze before we grabbed the next. That was scary.”

“Because we are a gathering of artists, we were sustained by each other and by our art. I hope that the intense feelings that transformed us are apparent in our exhibit.”

Cynthia Tinapple has written 4000 blog posts, 500 newsletters, and two books that showcase polymer art and aim to persuade artists

to throw more of themselves into their work. She has shared the power of this art form everywhere from prisons to third-world women’s projects.

Every small, subtle decision we make while creating art is part of the process and a reflection of ourselves. It is our way of speaking out and sharing a sensibility, mood, or feeling. Our preferences reflect our unique identities in the colors, shapes, and themes we choose. Creativity is a superpower.

Cynthia values process over product and encourages artists to consider where they want their creativity to lead them. She collaborates with her husband, Blair Davis, and together they inlay polymer in turned vessels and furniture using wood from their Ohio neighborhood.

Evening Prayer for Lent

This Lenten season, our midweek worship services on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary will follow the liturgy for Evening Prayer, which begins in Evangelical Lutheran Worship on page 309. On occasion, Mary and I have been blessed to pray and sing Evening Prayer together in our home on Saturday evenings. With the lights dimmed, focusing on the glow of a candle, we experience a great sense of peace and nearness to God. It has been a great gift for our prayer lives, and I hope it will be for you as well.

Background

Evening Prayer, or *Vespers*, is one of the principal liturgies of daily prayer in the church along with Morning Prayer (*Matins*) and Night Prayer (*Compline*). The history of these liturgies is long, dating back to the earliest days of the church when Jesus’ earliest followers continued the Jewish tradition of praying at the principal hours of the day. Eventually, this practice grew into a complex system of readings, psalms, and proper texts that only monks

room) and one single automatic door at the entrance to the office area in order to make those entrances accessible. There will only be 5 awards made, and so we pray (and keep our fingers crossed!) that we may be awarded one of the grants. As of the publication of this newsletter, we are still awaiting to hear if our reviewed grant application has been approved.

2. Our committee's second request was to change the name of our task force. The task force is currently called the Building Accessibility task force. As we have delved further into our work, we have realized that our scope is broader than our name implies. We asked that church council make a motion to approve a name change to The Accessibility and Inclusion task force. This would better reflect what we are trying to accomplish: to make the word of God more readily available to people in any way that would facilitate that and to include people with a wide variety of needs. Council approved the name change.

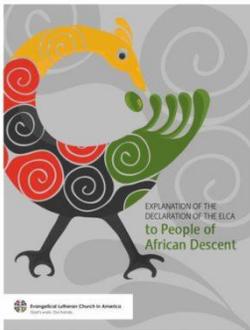
3. Further avenues of inclusion have been discussed by the task force at their last meeting on February 23rd. One such idea is in regards to those who are in need of listening assistance during worship. To that end, a "listening session" (no pun intended!) has been scheduled for after worship on **Sunday March 5th** to meet the needs of those of you who use listening devices during worship. If you are one of those individuals, please plan to stay briefly after worship to meet with a couple of the task force members to solicit feedback and discern how those needs may best be met, if they are not being met already. Thank you!

Please contact me if you have any questions or if you'd like to join our task force.

Laura Patchen, Co-chair of the Accessibility and Inclusion Task Force

(585)739-2505, Laurapatchen@gmail.com

NOW IS THE TIME



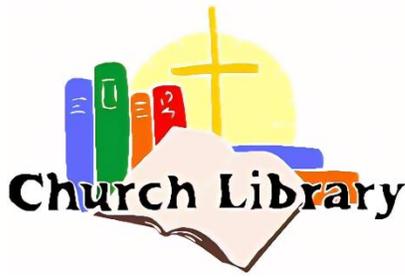
Study session four of Zion's Adult Forum on the **ELCA Declaration to People of African Descent** focused on the third sentence of paragraph three of the Declaration. "Descendants of formerly enslaved Africans are still denied equal access and opportunity in church and society while white people collectively benefit from unequal access, opportunity, and power." This session addressed the meaning of white privilege, something a bit difficult to recognize for those of us who are white. Also addressed were the meaning and impact of white supremacy in culture and thinking.

Everyone has various identities which include socioeconomic class, age, level of education, gender and sexual identity, physical or mental ability, ethnicity, immigrant experience, religious background, and even other possibilities. Each of these identities has sets of advantages as well as disadvantages. Racism as a system of structural advantage views white people differently from people of African descent. These unearned privileges "have come to whites simply because we are members of a dominant group"; the privileges run deep and are structured to be invisible. These privileges for white people were established over the course of our U.S. history and are embedded in the systems of racism. Laws of exclusion for people of color are largely invisible to white people because we experience no negative impact from such laws in our lives. Laws providing access and opportunity, such as the G. I. Bill and FHA loans, carry the illusion that they are available to all. In reality the more than one million Black veterans of World War II faced discrimination that reduced or denied them these benefits. These policies, practices, attitudes, and actions woven into the institutions of U. S. society negatively impact the daily lives of people of color, yet remain largely invisible to white people.

The challenge for us is to determine a response to this information. Where do we go from here? My first hope is that we will not continue the earlier Lutheran behavior of "quietism" where we sit passively on the sidelines and become complicit in maintaining the status quo of injustice to other children of God. Another hope is that we begin to ask questions in an effort to seek the truth of social justice issues and work for racial justice, socioeconomic equity, and racial reconciliation. Let us educate ourselves and pray for the courage to speak out and act from God's love. Let us remember the words from Micah 6:8 "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

I am available for any questions, comments, or conversation. I am also gathering materials to be available in Zion's library. Rhonda Pope

What's new in Zion's library?



There are three new books for adult readers to investigate: *Prayers for Healing: 365 Blessings, Poems, & Meditations from around the World*, *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism* by Jemar Tisby, and *Jesus and Disability: A Guide to Creating an Inclusive Church* by Chris H. Hulshof. *Prayers for Healing* is an interfaith book providing various religious and cultural texts that touch on our pain and inspire the healer within all of us to be reminded of hope and faith so that we may live a deeper, more meaningful, and fully self-expressed life. In *The Color of Compromise* author

Jemar Tisby takes readers back to the roots of sustained racism and injustice in the American church. Identifying the cultural and institutional tables that must be flipped to bring about progress, Tisby provides an in-depth diagnosis for a racially divided American church and suggests ways to foster a more equitable and inclusive environment among God's people. *Jesus and Disability* explores how Jesus's involvement with the disabled can be instrumental in laying a foundation for disability-inclusive church leadership and practice. The book provides a blueprint for how pastors and congregations can become disability friendly in the church and in the broader community. In addition, there is a DVD titled *The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song* hosted by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. as shown on PBS. The history of the Black Church, an institution at the heart of the African American experience, is chronicled from the period of enslavement to present day.

Also available for investigation are *When will it be Spring?*, a children's book by Catherine Walters and *Blended*, a book for youth by Sharon Draper. I expect the title of *When Will it be Spring* gives all the summary needed for this book, especially in the middle of winter. In *Blended*, the most frequently asked question is "But what are you really?" Isabella often hears this question because her father is black and her mother is white. If you're only seen as half of this and half of that – if people base identity on skin tone – how can you ever feel whole?

Rhonda Pope

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.



1/16: *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton

2/20: *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus

3/20: *The Good Lord Bird* by James McBride

4/17: *Our Missing Hearts* by Celeste Ng

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

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

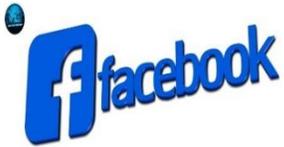


2	Amy Santoriello
4	Bonnie Heinecke
4	Annette Felmley
5	Patricia Hauser
5	Don Cook
5	Jean Betker
6	John Fitzroy
8	Amy Seroky
11	Leia Felmley
13	Lisa Stancliffe
20	Joe Connors
21	Jan Neleigh
23	Robert Beresky
26	Jennifer Fabrizi
26	Noah Clark
27	Izabella Barnes
29	Robert Clydesdale, Jr.
31	Al Stumpf

Anniversaries

3/20/1971 Richard & Linda Neumann

3/30/1996 Amy & Jim Seroky



Please help us stay connected and grow Zion! We need you to post, folks!

It is more important than ever that we work together by doing what we do best: talk to each other and our community. All we need you to do is share, like, and comment on what you see on our Facebook pages. Zion has two ways of communicating over Facebook: a public page and a group.

One, *Zion Lutheran Church* public page faces outward, to the community, and is where we post about events at Zion. It is also where we stream our worship service to members, friends and the world.

Two, Zion has a “group”, *Friends and Family of Zion Lutheran Church in Penn Hills*. This is where we share our internal activities and photos. We also pose thought-provoking questions there and ask for volunteers for tasks as well. All members and friends are welcome, and the more you post, the more we can grow by means of social media.

The best part? Those who “like” either our page and/or group do not have to be members of Zion or residents of Penn Hills/Pittsburgh area. They can be from all over the country and around the world!

So, that sibling who lives in Florida? They can be a part of the Zion community by means of our page and/or group. That friend who lives in California? They, too, can be a part of the Zion community! That grandchild studying abroad in another part of the world? Yep! They, too, can be a part of the Zion community.

If you haven’t taken the opportunity to “like” either or both of our Facebook pages, we invite you to do so by searching for them using the search option on Facebook. From there, you will have access to content found on both the public page and the group. If you have questions, please reach out to a member of council for more information!



Financial Status on January, 31, 2023

On December 31, 2022, we finished the year with \$52,616 in our checking account (the General Operating Fund). With one month into the new year, the checking account now has \$56,527. That is an increase of \$3,900. This is a great start to the new year! Remember this includes income from the Thomas Child Care & Learning Academy. Many expenses are cyclical. Some months we pay more for utilities. Other months we pay more for lawn care. Some months are packed full of events and others not. Some

expenses come due once a year. So, our monthly expenses can vary from month-to-month making an impact on our checking account. Many months we spend \$22,000 to \$24,000 using our budget. In January, we spent \$20,606 on budgeted items which would be considered a low expense month. If we had spent 1/12 of our budget, our income would have fallen short by \$3,026. Thank you for continuing to be generous in your tithes and offerings!

Update on Insurance Claim from Late-December Weather: As most of you are aware, Zion suffered some damage to the youth room, fireside room, and apartment due to the extreme cold temperatures over the Christmas Eve/Christmas Day weekend last year. To that end, we have finally received our disbursement from the insurance company, materials have been ordered, and repairs to these spaces will begin in early March. We hope to have the Thomas Child Care and Learning Academy group (who have temporarily been moved full-time into the Parish Hall and Nursery during the week) back in their normal spaces ASAP as well as the apartment rented with our prospective tenants. Stay tuned for any volunteer needs that we may have as we work to repair these spaces and bring things back to normal. Thank you!



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.