

# Zion News

11609 Frankstown Rd  
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

February, 2023

[www.zionpennhills.org](http://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:

*“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid.” Matthew 5:13-14*

Here we are at the beginning of February. And I don't know about you, but I always find this time of the year to be a bit odd. There are no major holidays to celebrate with big groups of people. The weather changes from one shade of gray to another with chilling wind and flurries here and there. Thank goodness, the sun still shines from time to time.

Sometimes, the monotony of this time of year coupled with the same dreary weather day-in-and-day out, or week after week, can get to be a bit, well, tiresome, even if it gives us the opportunity to catch our breath after the beginning of the year.

For me, this year, it is less of a monotony and more of “the train has left the station” that is these final two months of pregnancy and all of the work and preparation and anticipation that go along with it. No matter if you are in a state of hurry or one of a slow crawl, there is still much for us to soak up and learn during these remaining weeks in this the season of the Time after Epiphany.

For instance, we will hear Jesus describe to the disciples all about their new life in Christ, namely comparing it to being one of both salt and light.

Jesus' first illustration of the Christian life was salt. Salt had two purposes: it was a preservative, and it was a seasoning. Jesus focuses on the second with his illustration. The low-quality salt of Jesus' day could actually lose its saltiness—and without its flavor, it really lost its character. It wasn't good for seasoning, and it wasn't good for preserving, and you couldn't even throw it away in a field because it would kill vegetation. About all it was good for was to be thrown along a well-worn path where nothing would be planted or grown.

Jesus' second illustration of the Christian life was light. It goes without saying that light's character is to make things visible. The light of the sun makes a city on a hillside visible to everyone who looks up during the day, much like how a good sunrise or sunset can illumine downtown Pittsburgh. And, of course, the light of a lamp makes a room visible to everyone who occupies it at night. To light an oil lamp in Jesus' day and then hide it under a basket would defeat the purpose of the lamp. Its character is to shine not to hide.

Salt and light both have a particular character. To ignore their character makes them useless. Salt without flavor is useless, and a hidden light is useless. Jesus uses these pictures as illustrations of the Christian life. Christians are salt in the world. They “season” the world by their good works done in faith and by their verbal expressions of faith.

And Christians are light in the world. They “enlighten” the world by their public confession of faith and by lives that reveal hearts of faith. Shining, if you will, so that others may see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven. May Christ use you as both salt and light in the world, proclaiming forgiveness in his name and living out God's Word in both words and in deeds.

*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.



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 February 11th** and if you are able to help with set-up on Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup> from 9am-12pm in the Community Room or during the pantry on the 11<sup>th</sup> 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.

**February's collection item is shampoo.** The bin is in the gathering space by the coat rack. Thank you for all the donations of soap in January. I know it is much appreciated by the recipients. That is the only item we are collecting for February. March will be a new product. When enough items have been collected, the pantry recipients will be able to select what they need. Thank you in advance for your generosity towards those who need some help.



**First Annual Chili Cook-Off:** Mark your calendars for **Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>** immediately following the service, we will gather in the Gathering Space to sample some of the world's best chili offerings. So start practicing your best chili recipe and be willing to share with the congregation. You should prepare and bring it in a crockpot along with any additions you feel are needed, i.e., cornbread, shredded cheddar, etc. A Chili Champion will be crowned—maybe it will be you. You do not have to prepare chili to participate, we need your votes to be counted to select a winner. If you have any questions, please ask Pastor, Gail Snyder, or Cindy Pierce.  
May the BEST Chili recipe win!



### **MARDI GRAS 2023**

After worship on Sunday February 19<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate Mardi Gras in the Gathering Space. We will bury the Alleluia down in the columbarium and then feast on pastries and goodies before our Lenten fast begins on Ash Wednesday.



Our Zion family,

There will be a memorial service for Mark Schneider here at Zion on **February 18, 2023** at 11:00 AM. Mark grew up in this church and, along with his wife and daughters, continued to worship and participate in the life and mission of Zion before moving to Alabama in 1988 and then to Florida in 1995. Please join us in remembering Mark and celebrating his life.

The family of Mark Schneider

Ash Wednesday



Remember that you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.

ECCLESIASTES 3:20

## ASHES-TO-GO 2023

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return...”

Pastor Martha will be offering ashes-to-go in front of Zion on Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup> from 1pm-3pm. If you or someone you know is unable to make it to church that evening for ashes, feel free to stop by for a blessing to receive your ashes.



MISSION  
ENDOWMENT  
FUND

On Sunday February 12<sup>th</sup>, Ryan Ebner, our regional gift planner for the SWPA synod, will be present with us during worship and Adult Forum time afterwards. He will be on hand to answer questions as to how you can not only give to Zions' Mission Endowment Fund but also other charitable organizations. Let us welcome Ryan to Zion on February 12<sup>th</sup>!



Lenten  
Soup Suppers

## LENT SOUP SUPPERS ARE BACK!

Our midweek Lenten soup suppers are back at Zion! Each Wednesday during Lent (February 22<sup>nd</sup>, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>), join us down in the Parish Hall 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 begins on Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup> with Ash Wednesday. Come for a hot bowl of soup from 5pm-6:30pm down in the Parish Hall. Then join us for Ash Wednesday 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 Esasu 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!

## 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.



**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 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please send them via e-mail to: [julie@zionpennhills.org](mailto:julie@zionpennhills.org).



## 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  
Barry & Charlotte Fraser

### Mission Endowment:

Kathy Gaberson      Linda Neumann  
Charlotte Murray      Pastor

### 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:

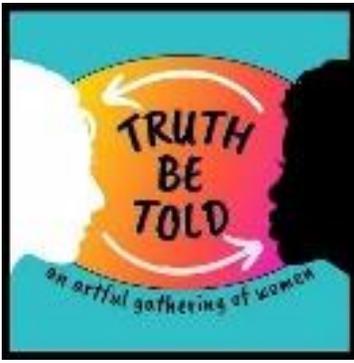
Tammy Belohlavek  
Joe Balaban (Liaison)  
Debbie Marks  
Barry Fraser

### 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



Fourteen women artists came together for over a year and shared stories and life experiences around the topic of racism and how they were impacted as artists. Inspired from their group conversations, 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. Several of Zion's members attended their art exhibit while it was in Pittsburgh and were greatly moved.

Though not as tremendous as seeing the actual artwork, we are pleased that we have been able to secure photos of this artwork and to be able to share these photos here at Zion. This will also advance our goal to be more inclusive in our artwork.

One of the 14 artists will be shared each month along with her chosen word and a description of her work. This month, the artist is Beverly Poitier-Henderson. She is the daughter of Sydney Poitier! Her chosen word is "DESPAIR." See the attachment for a description. Also, a large photo of Beverly's art will be on display in the Gathering Space for the month of February.

## DESPAIR

Despair is the loss of all hope that a situation will change.

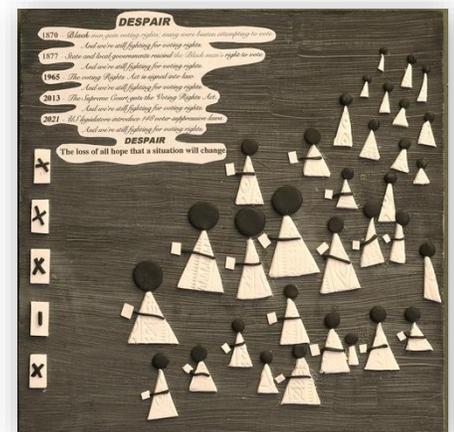
In 1965 Black men and women walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge for the right to vote in America, and they were met and beaten bloody by police. In 2021, Governors and other elected officials passed laws denying Black and Brown people the right and ability to vote.

The titles of "writer", "producer" and "jewelry designer" all apply, but "artist" best describes Beverly Poitier-Henderson. While teaching theatre at the Performing Arts High School in Atlanta, Beverly cast students based on talent rather than race. Their acting abilities were far more important than the color of their skin. Though she loved teaching, writing and producing were her first loves.

She published a novella *Nana*, and turned to producing documentaries and live events honoring the icons of the Civil Rights Movement and the work of Georgia nonprofits. As an antidote to the high stress of production, Beverly designs and creates jewelry. Her favorite medium is polymer clay.

"Creating art soothes my soul. Art pricks my conscious. Art causes me to think, to ponder to question and daydream. Art gives me hope. I know a piece is finished when it makes me genuinely smile. For me art is life's expression of itself."

The bowed heads at the polls depict Beverly's despair that racism in America will never end. It is only recently that she came to this conclusion. The atmosphere, animosity, and blatant attacks on people of color say plainly that racism in America is part and parcel of who we are, and for that she is truly sorry.



## The Building Accessibility/ Accessibility and Inclusion task force



The Building Accessibility Task Force recently asked the Zion church council to approve 2 requests.

1. The task force wants to apply for a grant through the Disability Ministries of the ELCA. The purpose of the grant would be to purchase and install 2 sets of automatic doors (at the gathering space and at the entrance to the community 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, so we may also try to access a zero interest loan through the Lutheran Extension Society. Council made and passed a motion to approve the submission of a grant application to the ELCA Disability Ministries for the purchase of accessible doors at the above-noted three entrances to the church.

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.

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 three of Zion's Adult Forum on the **ELCA Declaration to People of African Descent** focused on the third paragraph of the Declaration. "The ELCA teaches that racism is a sin and that racism denies the reconciling work of the cross. Rooted in slavery, racism is manifested through the history of Jim Crow policies, racial segregation, the terror of lynching, extrajudicial killings by law enforcement, and the disproportionate incarceration of people of color. 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. Institutional racism currently exists in the ELCA through

discriminatory treatment within the call process; inequitable compensation of clergy of color; divestment from black communities and congregations; systemic policies and organizational practices; and failure to fully include the gifts of leadership and worship styles of people of African descent."

Much of our study revolved around definitions of racism, developing a greater awareness of a much broader meaning of racism than previously recognized, and then beginning to understand the impact of racism. The broader definition of racism included individual prejudice, cultural privilege, and institutional power. As **individuals** many white people do not see ourselves as racist. We do not act in a manner to hurt or harm someone of another race; nor do we wish to limit their chances in life. Yet there may be occasions in our limited encounters when previous biases and stereotypes enter our minds. **Cultural racism** expands the sphere of meaning to be examined. Whiteness has become the norm for values and societal expectations about how we interact, communicate, and exist in this world; that sets serious limits for other cultures. **Institutional racism** involves policies and practices that limit equitable access and participation within a wide range of institutions: health care, housing, employment, education, incarceration, voting rights, banking, government services. Taken together these systems of racism limit the possibilities, opportunities, and life chances for all people of color.

As Christians we need to recognize that the legacy of slavery still exists in today's world in the form of systemic racism. There is much about racism that we, as white people, are not even aware of. Let us work to better educate ourselves about how systemic racism functions and share what we have learned with others. Then, rather than remaining silently complicit, we can speak up to point out what is happening and advocate for change. In Matthew 7:12 Jesus gives us a path for moving forward: "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you."

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



- |                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Diana Ansell           | 15 Hunter Krantz    |
| 2 Sallie Lazar           | 18 Tracy Shimko     |
| 3 Tammy Belohlavek       | 18 Rylee Bostwick   |
| 6 Cassie Short           | 19 Sandra Short     |
| 6 Randall Marburger      | 21 Charles Dolney   |
| 8 Tracie Stiffler        | 21 Linda Neumann    |
| 9 Christopher Hendershot | 23 Donna Federoff   |
| 10 Kyra Short            | 24 Samantha Lamorte |
| 13 Jane Reimers          | 26 Sarah Meyers     |
| 15 Joshua Shifflett      |                     |

### Anniversaries

- 2/13/1960 Ed & Jan Barnett
- 2/15/1964 Don & Tonie Cook
- 2/25/1956 Paul & Mary Lou Feathers



**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 and New Budget for 2023**

On December 31, 2022, we finished the year with \$52,616 in our checking account (the General Operating Fund). To put that in perspective, that balance is large enough to cover two months of expenses and that is good. We spent \$268,933 of the \$286,431 budget for 2022.

At the January 8 congregational meeting, we approved the budget for 2023. That budget total is \$286,450 (just \$19 more than last year) with \$21,082 in Benevolence to the SWPA Synod and our missionary sponsorship, \$170,398 for Personnel, \$75,100 for Property, \$7,150 for Administration, and \$12,720 for Ministry Programming. Our projected income for 2023 is \$290,539 which is made up of \$228,739 from anticipated donations and \$61,800 from the apartment income and the Thomas Child Care & Learning Academy. Donations alone are no longer able to meet our expenses. The good news is that we have approved a balanced budget in which the projected income is slightly greater (about \$4,000) than the proposed expenses.

The budget for 2023 includes a new line for \$3,000 for Pastor's parental leave expenses to cover the costs of pulpit supply on Sundays and a local supply pastor for any needed pastoral care. The only other new item on the budget is \$3,000 for pest control in Property's budget. That contributed to the largest increase in the overall budget which was for Property expenses. Our utilities, insurance, and maintenance costs are increasing significantly.

At the congregational meeting, we also looked at our debt. The only debt Zion has is for Major Maintenance which is \$16,419 as of December 31, 2022, with \$6,014 owed on our line of credit and \$10,405 on the interest-free Lutheran Extension Society loan. Your donations to Major Maintenance are used to pay off those loans.

The congregation was informed about the status of the storm water project for which the congregation approved \$20,000 using the line of credit as an initial start to the project at the June 2022 congregational meeting. The Municipality of Penn Hills had informed us that our storm water can no longer flow over our back hill or onto McDonald's back hill. That money has not yet been spent, but Council is now reviewing an engineering proposal that covers the plan, drawings, permits, approval from the municipality, etc. Any balance in the approved \$20,000 will go to performing the actual project. The congregation approved another \$25,000 for the actual work to be performed making the total project estimated at \$45,000. Council will approve the actual bids. Copies of the 2023 budget, the end-of-year Treasurer's report of expenses, and the report on Major Maintenance are in the tract rack in the Gathering Space. You can also call the office for copies.