

ZIONNEWS

For the Members, Family and Friends of Zion Blue Mountain United Church of Christ

By now the landfill is full of holiday ribbons and wrapping paper. Soon, the 12 days of Christmas are past. For churches that observe it, Watch Night celebrations, too, are over and a new year has come.

By my time keeper, the church calendar, the new year came on December 3rd, not on January 1. See, the church keeps time in a different way than the world. Sunday is not the last day of the weekend, it is the first day of the week. The year turns, not on New Year's Eve, but as we anticipate the birth of our Savior.

Now we are in the season called Epiphany. The liturgical color is white. Epiphany comes from the Greek word 'Manifestation.' Early on in the Christian church Easter, Pentecost, and Epiphany were the primary celebrations. In more orthodox traditions it is the time when the baptismal water is blessed (to be used during the entire year). Originally it was the celebration of the Baptism of our Lord, but down through the ages it has become associated with his being revealed to the Gentiles in the persons of the Magi. After Epiphany, the season is marked by the color green, because it is 'Common Time.'

So what exactly is it that we are supposed to gain in our observance of the Epiphany season? Well, one thing that the season does is to remind us that none of these celebrations are intended to be a single day in isolation of every other day. This season is a progression that moves from the manger in Bethlehem to the banks of the Jordan River. It intends to evoke a response. It reminds us that God's promises are not only dependable, but that they are incarnate, carried in flesh and bone and activity in and for our world.

We get out of it, of course, what we put into it. But, for many Christians, the product of observing Epiphany is a reminder of God's unlimited love and mercy, which He has extended to all of humankind through the revealing of His Son, and of the hope of salvation that is now demonstrated for all who come to him in faith. For me that means practicing my faith: Community worship, service, personal prayer. For others it may look different, but these basic elements are actions, not thoughts alone.

On a personal note, Becky and I want to thank everyone for the cards and Christmas cheer shared with us during Advent.

See ya in church,

Pastor Jon

It is hard to believe it is 2018. We saw a lot of changes in 2017. We welcomed Interim Pastor Jon Fogle to Zions. Although 2017 started out a bit bumpy I feel we ended on a good note. It has been good to see some familiar faces back in our congregation, we have missed you. We are striving to revitalize our worship as we go into the New Year with music and special services. We are already looking toward Lent in February.

The Consistory looks forward to serving our congregation in the coming year. If you have anything that you have a concern about, a suggestion, or perhaps a new idea don't hesitate to tell a consistory member. We are here for you.

Going forward we are going to be putting together some ideas of what we are looking for in a new minister. We are going to be asking Pastor Jon for his guidance as we strive to find a good match for our church. We are going to take our time so that we can have best opportunity to get the best candidate for our church. There are some areas we too need to work on so that we can grow spiritually as we begin our journey towards a new beginning. Pastor Jon has said he will stay with us and help us as long as necessary to get us where we need to be in order to start our search. In February we will have the pleasure of Pastor Sharon Morris, PSEC Associate Minister, joining us to preach on Sunday February 18, she will then meet with the Consistory after worship to begin the discussion of transitioning into new Pastoral leadership.

Sincerely, Doris Wagner

WORSHIP DUTIES

Please check the Narthex for new sign-up sheets for greeters, readers, flower and bulletin sponsors!

01/01 Bruce Wagner
Sarah Dodge
01/02 Michael Eaton
01/05 Barry Bentz
01/07 Janet Wilhelm
01/08 Karen Miller
01/10 Elmer Breidigan
01/11 Jeff Newhouse
01/11 Cindy Emore
01/14 Melissa Miller
01/15 Lainie Binner
01/18 Kelly Holzman
01/19 Beverly Schrack
01/22 Mildred Long
01/23 Cindy Berger



Amy Shanaman
01/24 Linda Reed
01/24 Wilbur Bentz
01/25 Ross Baver
01/26 Brian Kominsky
01/28 Rose Freed
01/28 Joyce Deisemann
01/29 Barry Miller
01/29 Mark Wessner
01/30 Ronald Emerich
01/30 Brent Himmelberger

ANNIVERSARIES

01/04 Sandy & John Gilmer
01/25 Barry & Karen Miller

Thank you to everyone in the congregation who donated items for our Chinese Auction. It was another successful fundraiser! All the baskets were beautifully done and we had a great response in the bidding. If you won a basket congratulations and enjoy! The fundraising committee looks forward to another successful year and we all wish you a Happy New Year!



If you have not yet received 2018 offering envelopes and would like them please call the church office – 610-488-7361

Thank You

A decorative graphic of holly leaves and red berries is positioned at the bottom left of the "Thank You" text.

Thank you to EVERYONE who helped with the Live Nativity, it was our 34th year for the presentation. We hope it will continue for many years.

~ The Worship Committee



Blood Drive!

Sunday January 14th

9 am - 1 pm

Contact Audrey Kirkhoff to sign up 610-488-7790

Bingo Kitchen January 12

4 – 7 pm	7- close
Ruth Himmelberger	Keith Hamm
Bernie Himmelberger	Sherry Wessner
Beth Machmer	Shirley Breininger
Lisa Shupp	Karen Miller
5-8 pm Needed	



Hot Pot – Lisa Shupp, Steve Shollenberger

January 21st

Bakers – Anne Binner
Lolly Leshar
Susan Harbonic
Joan Hartman

**Installation at the 10:30 service
Retreat following worship**

lunch provided

Dinner
is better when we eat
Together

Free Community Dinner

Shepherd's pie, vegetable, roll and dessert

Friday February 16 4-7 pm

Everyone welcome!



Comfort Card Shower:

Please shower Traci & Sonny Kramer with your thoughts and words of comfort!

Traci & Sonny Kramer
279 Shartlesville Road
Bernville PA 19506



Thank you to everyone who bought gifts for the Salvation Army Angel tree. We were given 75 tags and we were able to fulfill 66 wishes. Thank you again and God Bless!

Winter gift

“God ... does great things beyond our knowing. He says to the snow, ‘Fall to the earth’; likewise to his heavy, drenching rain. He shuts up all humankind indoors, so that all people may know his work” (Job 37:5-7).

Snow, ice and cold can make winter a hassle. “Snow days” due to a blizzard may thrill students but usually inconvenience parents. But now and then, winter blankets the earth so heavily that it seems to quiet everything. We’re granted permission to hunker down at home, snuggle close with family or pets, enjoy a book or movie, make cocoa or cookies, and rest. It’s like a surprise Sabbath — the gift of grace-time — when no one’s expected to get out the door or the driveway.

Perhaps indeed, as Job declared, God sees fit on such days to put our busyness on hold and shut us all indoors so we pause and remember his work — his place — in our lives. Praise God for snow days!



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Staff

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Consistory

Elders: Doris Wagner (President), Anne Binner, Ruth Himmelberger, Cathy Diggan

Deacons: Sharon Eaton, Wendy Schutt, Susan Harbonic, Melissa Miller

Trustees: Jon Schaeffer, Keith Hamm, Brad Faust

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ZIONNEWS is published monthly to keep our congregation and friends informed of current events, ministry opportunities, and other pertinent information. We reserve the right to print any letter or article, unless, in the opinion of the elders, it is unsuitable for the newsletter. We also reserve the right to edit or alter any article for length and content.