

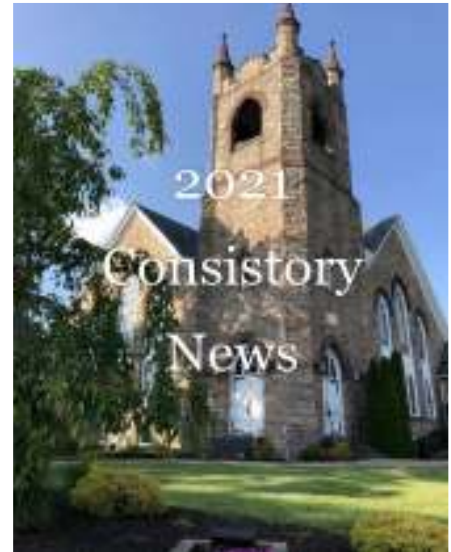
ZION NEWS

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

Dear Friends in Christ,

For so many, too many people, 2020 brought confusion, fear, loss and loneliness. But through it all, we knew that God was with us, and so were the people of Christ at Zion Blue Mountain, working with each other to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the broader community.

During that difficult year we learned some useful things to help us now and in the future. We (including those of us of a certain age) realized that communications technology can be downright handy in keeping us safe while spreading God's Good News further than we can just in our sanctuary. We learned how to feed more people and build community while being physically safe. And we learned that while "the way things have always been done" is still a powerful, even necessary force, circumstances have given us new room to grow spiritually and in fellowship with one another (even if socially distanced).



So in 2021 Consistory and Pastor Jason will look at how we can better engage the congregation in outreach to itself (including visitations when it's safe), make even better use of technology, strengthen our relationships in the community around us and generally reexamine what the Purpose of the Church stated in our bylaws means in 2021. Will Consistory and Pastor Jason do this alone? Most definitely not. Our church and its work belong to all of us, and your ideas, your suggestions, and your work are necessary and welcome.

Here are the members and officers of Consistory for 2021. Please join us for their installation during church service on January 31:

Elders: Debbie Carles, Karen Miller (President), Todd Moyer (Vice President)
Deacons: Caroline Bashore, Dan Brown, Cindy Emore, Audrey Kirkoff (Treasurer)
Trustees: Brian Houpt, Bernie Himmelberger, Kerry Holzman, Steve Shollenberger
Consistory Secretary: Lisa Shupp

And always remember: God is Great! God is Good! All the time!

Yours in Christ,
Karen Miller



I've been thinking a lot about our future for several months now. It's not an easy thing to do with much uncertainty.

When will political divides be put aside for neighborly love as Jesus commands? Will they ever? When will this pandemic end? When can I (we) get a vaccine? How will people "return" to life as it was before the pandemic? Will we? Should we? There are so many questions that can create quite a lot of anxiety when we feel the need for the answers to come to us.

I intentionally spend time on the Blue Mountain from time to time. I use the excuse of hunting, exercise, or scouting for hunting season often. In reality though, that time centers me, and always has. The Appalachian Range is as ancient as they come. Springs from that mountain have been running into the valleys below (and eventually the ocean) for eons. Providing so much along the way without any thought to it at all. It is just streams, trees, rocks; just being what they are intended to be. Yet, they have a tremendous impact on so much. Much of it unnoticed or taken for granted, but no less meaningful.

While we will be looking at new ways to handle eternal concerns in our future such as: integrating technology, (re)building relationships, and forming our spiritual lives across generations; I suspect we will be centering ourselves as well throughout this year, and even longer. Just being church as we are intended to be. Relying upon ancient foundations of faith, that just like the bedrock of our mountain, are continually shaping and being reshaped. Accepting into it the passing of some things, and springing forth new life.

While any church's bylaws certainly need updating from time to time, I find great wisdom in the stated purpose of our church. I have said this before, but it is worth repeating, I believe we should individually, and communally, take a close look at this.

So, I'd like to take the very first statement in our purpose, "to worship God," and ask you to consider some questions around that. Why do we worship God? When do we? Where? Is it confined to the parameters we have set? What does it mean to worship God? Would Jesus and his early followers (devout Jews and Gentiles) recognize, or be familiar with, most Christian worship?

"And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and they only shall you serve.' " – Luke 4:8

Be well Church! ~ Pastor Jason

2/1 Alex Bentz
2/5 Olivia Leshner
2/9 Doris Moyer
2/11 Barbara Spohn
2/12 Kermit Wagner
2/14 Jim Schutt
2/19 George Stankiewitch
Alyssa Dietrich
2/20 Steve Shollenberger
Pam Guinther
2/21 Scott Sechler Jr.
2/23 Mike Kamp
2/26 Ivy Bentz
2/28 Barbara Grimes



ANNIVERSARIES

Terry & Sharon Kominsky married 34 years on February 14

SHROVE TUESDAY

Pancake & Sausage Drive Thru

February 16
5 pm – 7 pm

Adults \$8

Children \$4



ASH WEDNESDAY

February 17 5:00 – 9:00 am

drive thru ashes



We will be accepting donations of canned soup in honor of “Souper Bowl” Sunday. Please drop off your can(s) of soup in the Food Pantry Donation Box during the month of February.



By comparing love to everything from oxygen and fire to wind and war, songs and poetry emphasize its immense power — for good or for ill. Christian author Patrick Morley uses metaphors that focus on love’s practicality in everyday life: “Love is the glue that holds us together and the oil that keeps us from rubbing each other the wrong way.” He also calls love “the WD-40 of relationships” because it “can seep into tight places where logic, threats and even promises just can’t seem to penetrate.”

St. Augustine, who predated WD-40 by centuries, knew that love not only eases friction in personal interactions but, with God’s help, can change hearts and lives. “Love all [people], even your enemies,” he advises. “Love them, not because they are your brothers, but that they may become your brothers. Thus you will ever burn with fraternal love, both for him who is already your brother and for your enemy, that he may by loving become your brother.”

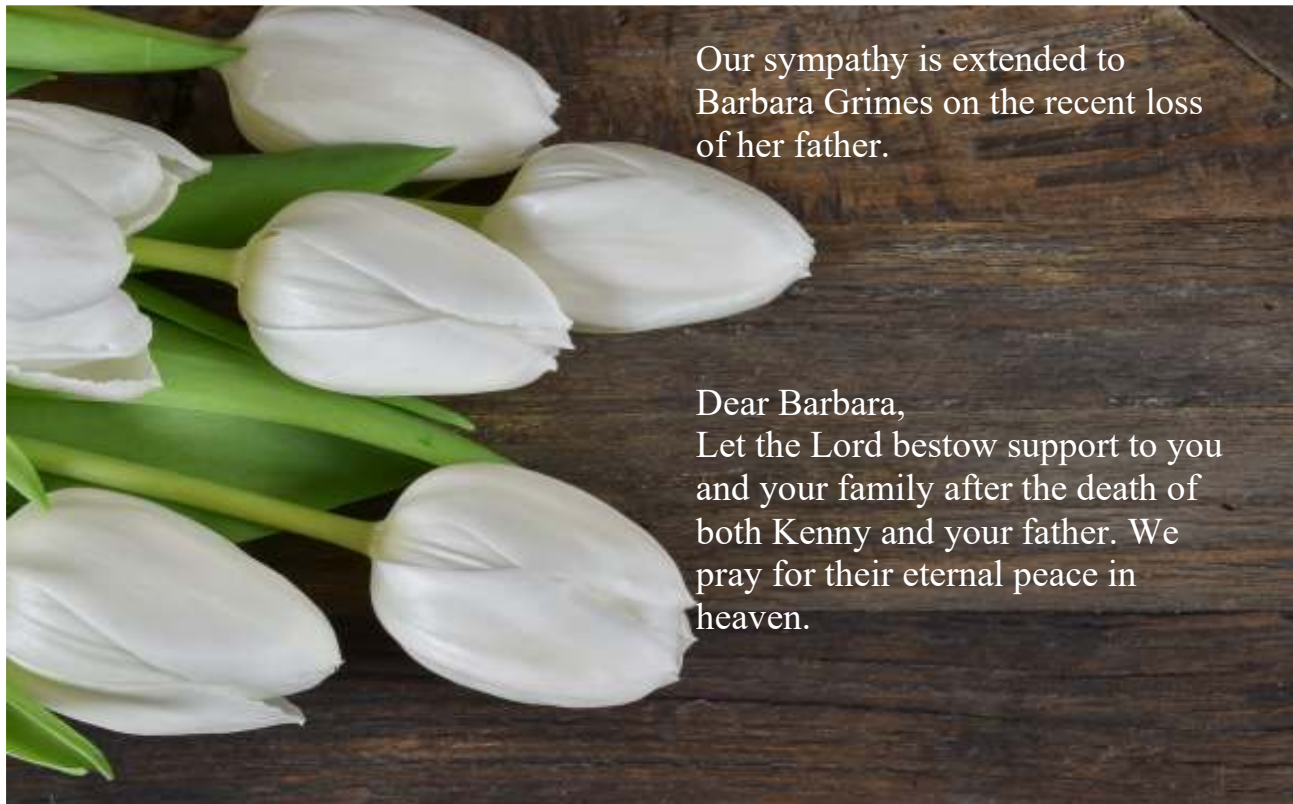
December 2020 Financials

	<i>Month</i>	<i>Actual YTD</i>	<i>Budget YTD</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	\$24,153	\$243,312	\$299,405
<i>Expenditures</i>	\$38,849	\$281,271	\$299,405
	(\$14,696)	(\$37,959)	

These numbers reflect the Preschool closure during the months of March – May 2020 and again in December 2020. Gentle rain preschool is a large part of the church's income. We appreciate and give thanks to everyone who continues to give to the church during the very difficult financial time for everyone.

2021 Offering envelopes are in the church Narthex. If you have not received envelopes but would like them please contact the church office.

2020 Giving statements will be mailed. If you have not received one or feel there has been a mistake please contact Lisa Shupp, lshupp@zionbluemountainucc.org or 610-488-7361



Countdown To:



Ash Wednesday

17th February 2021

Worship with us in person at 7 pm. Social distancing and masks required



Sunday February 7 @ 10 am

You are also invited to take consecrated elements with you to serve others who are unable to travel to the church.

You may drop off a can of soup with the Pastor to support Souper Bowl Sunday

All activities subject to change pending COVID 19 recommendations. Check email and website for updates.

FREE
COMMUNITY Meal

Wednesday
 January 27 & March 3, 2021 5-7 pm

We hope
 you will join us!



F E B R U A R Y




For information about the cancellation of services, check WEEU, WFMZ-TV, the Church Website, Zion Blue Mountain UCC Facebook page, or our answering machine. We will also try to email information as soon as we know it.

PALM SUNDAY
 March 28

GOOD FRIDAY
 April 2

EASTER SUNDAY
 April 4



Zion (Blue Mountain) Church
PO Box 98 (6573 Old Rt. 22)
Strausstown, PA 19559

Staff

Interim Minister: Rev. Jason Stump

Office Administrator: Lisa Shupp (lshupp@zionbluemountainucc.org)

Consistory

Elders: Karen Miller (President), Todd Moyer (Vice President), Deb Carles

Deacons: Audrey Kirkhoff, Cindy Emore, Caroline Bashore, Dan Brown

Trustees: Steve Shollenberger, Bryan Houpt, Kerry Holzman, Bernie Himmelberger

Contact Information

Pastor: 757-630-6577

Office Phone: 610-488-7361

Website: www.zionbluemountainucc.org

ZIONEWS 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.