

ZION NEWS

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

A TIME TO SOW

I am ready for Spring and so is the world around me. The trees are full of blossoms and they seem to be bursting with buds. By the time this newsletter reaches your hands we will be in the full season of Spring. Farmers and gardeners will have tilled to soil for another growing season.

Growing things certainly is a satisfying task. One of the parts of farm life that I miss the most is planting season. By mid-April, we had started planting corn and were usually finished by mid-May. After the seeds were in the ground it was a matter of keeping an eye on the weeds, praying for sufficient rains, and watching the corn grow.

Sharon and I also had a garden; however, most of its care was given by Sharon. We planted what most people plant in a home garden; onions, lettuce, carrots, peas, beans, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage, and so on. Nothing is more satisfying than going out to the garden, picking fresh vegetables, and preparing a delicious meal.

The month of May will usher in the season of planting. On Sunday, May 12, as part of worship I will be blessings the seeds and soil. It is so fitting, in our modern world, that we remain connected religiously with the seasons of planting and harvesting. It would be so easy, in this world where family farms are diminishing and corporate farms are the norm, where suburbia is swallowing our rural landscape, to lose the connection that we as a people have to the land. More and more, our planting and harvesting takes place when we go to the grocery store and buy what it is we need. As the suburban world encroaches upon us, this will be a scenario common to the majority of residents of our area.

Many times, Jesus would use agrarian images as methods of teaching those who would listen. The parable of the "Sower" clearly describes the perils of a farmer who is trying to establish a crop. It is also a story about how vulnerable the word of God is when it is trying to become established in the hearts of those who hear. Those who listened to Jesus understood the importance of a productive fig tree, a well-cared for vineyard, and the necessity to separate chaff from grain. Jesus used these images as a way to connect with those who listened. These images served as the vehicle for his word.

Besides being useful as a means of telling the story, images of planting and harvesting also illustrate a fundamental understanding of God's creation. This world we live in is alive. God created it that way. God created humanity and the earth to exist in harmony, with one interacting with the other to produce good things. And in the midst of the interaction, there is the hand of God.

As we go about our planting this spring, let us all remember the sacredness of what we are about. We are carrying out a practice that has gone on for literally thousands of years. Let us all find time in our busy schedules to thank and praise God for our fertile soil and the bounty that it will produce. Let us also take time to see, and touch, and smell the beauty that spring brings. God's Blessings, Pastor Pat



May Greeters

05/05 Susan Etchberger
05/12 Sharon Eaton
05/19 Owen Bentz &
Kaydence Brandt
05/26 Christine Bashore

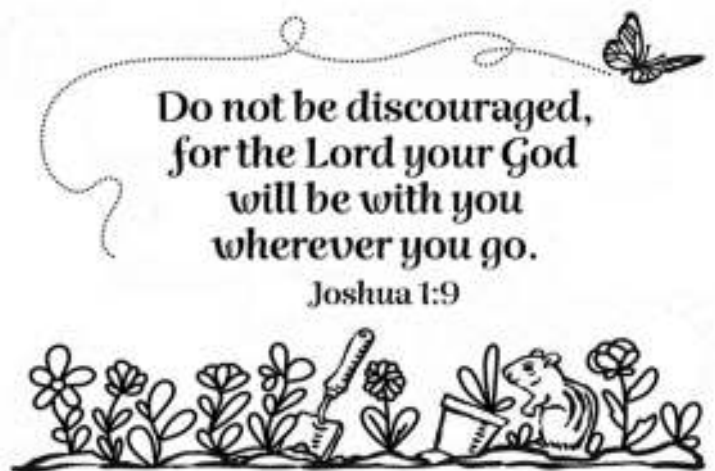


Bingo Kitchen May 10, 2024

3:30 – 7:30 pm
Bernie Himmelberger Ruth Himmelberger Beth Machmer
4:30 – 8:30 pm

Bakers –	Alice Hartman Susan Harbonic Sandy Readinger <i>Baker Needed</i>
Hot Pot –	Shirley Breininger Joan Hartman Beth Machmer

Any questions about the Bingo kitchen please speak with Amber Brown, 717-644-3448



GENTLE RAIN PRESCHOOL SPRING FUNDRAISER



Plum Creek Cinnamon Sugar Soft Pretzels - \$8.79

Plum Creek Original Soft Pretzels - \$7.99

All pretzels are sold frozen and each box contains 3 pretzels.

You can purchase as many boxes as you'd like!

Pickup Information:

*Orders are due no later than May 3. Pick up orders at church on May 19 before or after worship.
(6573 Old U.S. 22, Strausstown, PA 19559)*



Confirmation
Sunday May 19 at 9 am



**"Next year let's buy two carnations
for the oldest mother."**

5/3 Sandy Behm
5/4 Grant Miller
Diane Heflich
5/7 Julie Newhouse
5/8 Esther Sweigert
5/10 Brian Binner
5/11 Diane Moorhead
5/14 Rachael Kirkhoff
5/16 Laura Keener
5/17 Alexis Deisemann
5/18 Jon Schaeffer
Jaylene Leshner
5/23 Andrea Gebely
5/24 Bob Kline Jr.
5/26 Morgan Miller
5/27 Rita Bentz
5/28 Audrey Kirkhoff



Bernie & Ruth Himmelberger married 56 years on May 11

David & Alice Breidigan married 47 years on May 22

Jeff & Julie Newhouse married 19 years on May 25

Bob & Holly Kline married 44 years on May 31

Randy & Robin Sebastian married 44 years on May 31



Thank you for all the prayers and cards and for the visit from Pastor Pat. I appreciate everyone's thoughts of me while I continue to recover. ~Margaret Luckenbill



**“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.”
– Ecclesiastes 3:1**

It is finally safe to put the snowblower away. At this point, we certainly hope we don't see any more of that white stuff for many months! The season has dramatically changed in the last few weeks, and for many of us, it is a most welcome change.

The changes in our weather aren't the only seasons that we experience in our life. In fact, King Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes that “for everything there is a season.” Take time to read the whole chapter of Ecclesiastes 3. Solomon gives many examples of “changing seasons” in that chapter. Our life in its entirety is but a season in the greater concept of time. There is a planting season and a harvest season, times of sadness and times of laughter, seasons to save and store, and there are times to spend and give.

For many of us, the warmer weather isn't the only change of season happening right now. Couples are getting married and marriage begins a new season of life! Some are expecting babies, we have graduating seniors who are ending this season of life and heading off to college in the fall, and there are college seniors who are graduating and taking jobs. These are just a few of the ways that our lives change over the course of time, and these kinds of things happen all through life!

At the end of his list of seasons in Ecclesiastes 3, Solomon says that this is the business God has given to mankind and that He has made everything beautiful in its time. You know, these kinds of changes are often wonderful, but there are also changing seasons that are painful and filled with sorrow. Those seasons can last days or weeks, months or even years! One of the main points of the book of Ecclesiastes is that God is in control through all these seasons of life and that He is good to us. It may not always look like it, but God sees things from a different angle, a better and eternal perspective, and He makes everything beautiful in its time!

Because of that, Solomon says in [Ecclesiastes 3:12-13](#) that the best thing for mankind in whatever we do in any season is to be joyful, “do good” as long as we live, and take pleasure in our toil or work, whatever it is. He says that this is God's gift to man. In other words, He's in control so enjoy yourselves! Isn't that kind of a fun thought?!

Sometimes changes in our life cause fear. By nature, we don't always like change. If that's you, whether you're graduating from high school or college, getting married or having a baby, moving or retiring, remember that God is in control, He's good to you, and He'll take care of you, so enjoy whatever God has in store for your next season of life!



Following my trip to Ghana, I have selected several mission projects that I am hoping you would be willing to provide ongoing support.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church Clinic. The clinic services the city of Ho with a population of 100,00 people. The clinic needs new lab equipment especially for testing blood. Most of their patients are pregnant women. Having the ability to do lab work on site instead of sending in a way which would expedite the treatment of women at risk. The clinic would also like to expand their facility to provide more treatment and bed space.



The Women's Resource Center The E.P Church activity center is a vocational institute founded by Mrs. Brigitte Hoffmann in 1997, at the time Mr. Hans Hoffmann (her husband) was the development Consultant of the E.P Church at the E.P Church Head Quarters. Supported by her spouse and the Bremen Mission, Mrs. Hoffmann constructed the initial infrastructure and provided the initial equipment and tools for the Centre. Mrs. Brigitte Hoffmann shared her vision within the context of the Mission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church "Bringing light to where there is Darkness".

The clinic provides wholistic training for teenage mothers and older female youth to enhance their livelihood. Empower trainees against abuses of women and child labor. Develop trainees in technical/vocational skills. Shape the knowledge and skills of the target group to advocate and lobby for their rights and advancement in education. Helps to eradicate illiteracy among trainees. Empower the trainees to create wealth through small business creation.



The students are taught how to cook. The kitchen they have is very antiquated and in need of a serious upgrade. Our contributions would go toward helping with this very worthwhile project.

School Uniform Project

All children in Ghana attending school are required to wear uniforms. The Northern Region of Ghana is less developed than the South, therefore the residents are very poor. Some of the children will not attend school because their uniform is tattered, and they cannot afford a new one. The Evangelical Presbyterian church is collecting funds to buy any needy child a school uniform. They only cost \$5. While in Ghana I gave \$2400 to this project but their needs are ongoing.

I will be returning to Ghana in 2025. I will be taking a group with me. If you or someone you know would be interested in going with me, please contact me for more information.

The date will be between July 8 and August 8 for two weeks.



**DONATE YOUR EGG
CARTONS TO ZBM
FOOD PANTRY**





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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.