

# ZION NEWS

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

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## *A New Year*

*It was Christmas Eve 1967, and I received a gift from Santa, my first wristwatch. It was a Bulova and it was one of those watches that had the date window over the number "3". I am not sure why I remember this gift, but I do. It was a family tradition that we opened our gifts on Christmas Eve. We would go to church for the Christmas Eve service, come home and open our presents.*

*I remember going to bed that night excited about my new watch, anticipating when the date would switch from "December 24" to "December 25" in the window. In my mind's eye, I imagined that the "25" would have decorations, perhaps it would be surrounded by holly or some other form of Christmas adornment. Needless to say, I was very disappointed when "25" was just "25", nothing special at all.*

*That experience has always been in the back of my mind when I hear people talk about the coming of a New Year, words like, "I'll be glad when 2025 is over and we get into a New Year. The fact of the matter is, when December 31 becomes January 1, nothing magical happens, but you already knew that. Whatever we leave behind in 2025 will be waiting for us in 2026.*

*There is a saying that goes "Time heals all wounds." Perhaps time does heal all wounds, but the problem is that it may take more time to heal for some than it does for others. There is another saying that goes, "It isn't time that heals all wounds, it is faith." I like this saying much better. In this New Year, I will cling to my faith as I have done for most of 2025. I know that the God that I worship is a God of hope and healing. I invite you, my Zion Blue Mountain family to walk with me, boldly into the New Year, trusting in God with a faith that cannot be shaken.*

*Blessings, Pastor Pat*



In case of inclement weather this winter we will do everything possible to hold worship. We ask you to use wisdom in choosing whether or not to attend. Should we need to cancel, an announcement will be placed on 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.

**CONSISTORY HAS VOTED TO ADOPT A POLICY FOR DELAYED SERVICES INSTEAD OF CANCELLING. THIS WOULD MOVE WORSHIP TO 10:30 AM. IF IT SNOWS A SMALL AMOUNT, IT GIVES TIME FOR EVERYONE TO CLEAN UP AND SHOVEL, AND ROAD CREWS TO DO THEIR JOB IN CLEARING AND SALTING OUR PARKING LOT AND LOCAL ROADS. STAY TUNED!!**

**IF WE ARE RUNNING ON DELAYED SERVICE TIME PLEASE NOTE WORSHIP WILL BE AT 10:30 AM.**

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

01/01 Bruce Wagner  
 01/02 Michael Eaton  
 01/05 Barry Bentz  
 01/11 Cindy Emore  
 01/14 Melissa Miller  
 01/19 Beverly Schrack  
 01/23 Cindy Berger  
 01/25 Ross Baver  
 01/28 Rose Freed  
           Joyce Deisemann  
 01/30 Ronald Emerich  
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 01/04 Sandy & John Gilmer – 12years

### 2026 Consistory Installation Sunday Jan. 18

All members should be present for the installation if possible.

**Deacons:** Candie Riehl, Barry Driesbach,  
 Audrey Kirkhoff, Deb Hosler

**Elders:** Pat Moyer, Susan Etchberger

**Trustees:** Kerry Holzman, Steve Shollenberger

**Lay Delegates:** Christine Bashore, Molly Daub

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO VOLUNTEERED IN OUR MISSIONS, THROUGH MATERIAL, MONETARY, OR PHYSICAL DONATIONS, THESE MISSIONS AND FUNDRAISERS ARE NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOU!



## *Bingo Kitchen January 9, 2026*

|                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>January</b>                                  |
| <b>3:30 – 7:30 pm</b>                           |
| <b><i>Need Help</i></b>                         |
| <b><i>Sign up sheet is in the Sanctuary</i></b> |
| <b>4:30 – 8:30 pm</b>                           |
| <b><i>Need Help</i></b>                         |
|                                                 |
|                                                 |

|                  |                                                                                                |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bakers –</b>  | Gail Hamm<br>Elaine Hamm<br>Lolly Leshar<br>Joan Hartman                                       |
| <b>Hot Pot –</b> | Gail Hamm – Mac & Cheese<br>Joan Hartman – Chicken Corn Noodle<br>Barry Driesbach – Ham & Bean |

### **January Greeters:**

- 01/04      Rose Freed
- 01/11      Christine Bashore
- 01/18      Janice Blatt
- 01/25      Candie Riehl

*If you would like to sign up, an online option is available. If you cannot access it, please speak with Lisa to arrange an alternative. If no one signs up for a particular Sunday someone will be assigned at random.*

### **The Year**

The Year is closed, the record made,  
The last deed done, the last word said.  
The memory alone remains  
Of all its joys, its griefs, its gains.  
And now with purpose full and clear,  
We turn to meet another year.

—Robert Browning

## **2026 Food Pantry**

Distribution: Third Thursday of the Month 4:30 – 6:30 pm

Set Up and Delivery: 9:00 am

**Volunteers are always appreciated please speak with Beth Machmer (610)451-1441 or Sandy Readinger(610) 334-3597 if you plan to help.**



**Thank you to the Christmas Cantata participants! You all received so many compliments! It was a pleasure working with all of you. Hope to see you all again.**  
~Barry

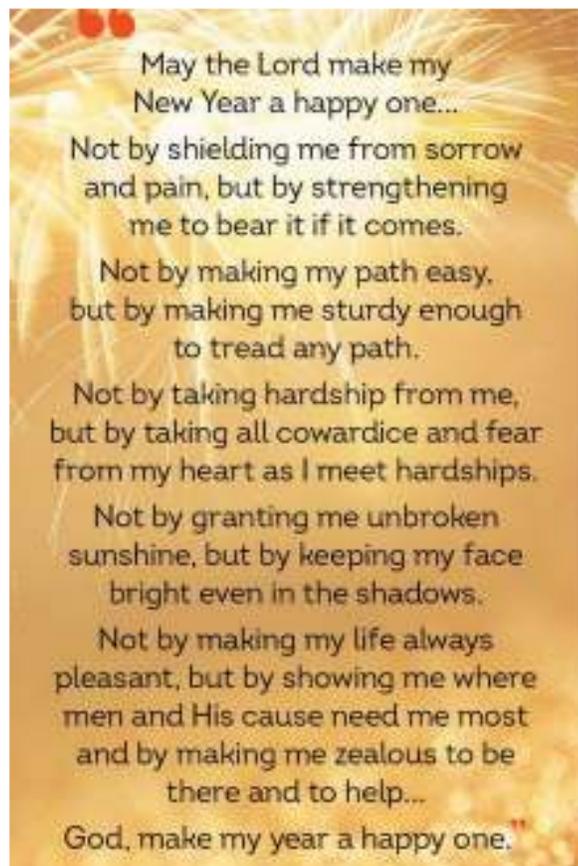
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## **BIBLE STUDY**

Begins Wednesday  
January 7<sup>th</sup> @ 10 am  
Study is "The Call"

Speak with Pastor Pat for a study guide.

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Another successful event! A huge thank you to all who donated items. The ticket auction brought in some amazing items to be won! I would like to thank the event team - Susan Harbonic, Steph Miller, Deb Hosler, Pat Moyer, Rob Deisemann, and Sharon Eaton for all their time and hard work to make this happen. The committee has decided to make this event Biennial (every other year). So look for it again in 2027

## GENTLE RAIN PRESCHOOL

Happy New Year! We are starting 2026 with a lot of excitement, energy and joy. We are lucky we actually get to start the year twice, once on our return to school after summer break and again in the New Year and both times it is exciting. Students will continue to practice their Kindergarten readiness skills in the Pre K classroom. We will continue to focus on letter recognition, writing our names, and learning our numbers and shapes.

We have a staff change as we welcome Ms. Rebecca Dunlap to our staff as our lead teacher in the 3-4 class. She will be starting on our return from the Christmas holiday.

Thank you for celebrating and supporting the preschool program. Together, we are planting seeds of faith, learning and love that will last a lifetime.

The last meeting for the 2025 Consistory was held on December 15, 2025. As of November 30, 2025 YTD worship collections exceeded the budget by \$1188. Preschool receipts were budgeted for \$73,900, and actual receipts total \$79,406 YTD, a positive difference for the budget of \$5506. Fundraising receipts are above budget by \$9330. This is mostly due to Bingo and the unbudgeted gift card calendar. YTD, there is an overall shortfall of \$3,084. That means the general fund operating expenses exceeded the general fund operating receipts. This is primarily because the church paid the 1<sup>st</sup> installment on the Narthex repairs of \$8800, which was funded from receipts received in 2024 and not spent until 2025.

The church repairs are paused due to the temperatures. They will resume when the weather permits.

The Holiday ticket auction, although successful, is a lot of work with a few volunteers. It has been decided to hold the auction every other year to give everyone a break.

We would like to thank all of the outgoing members for their faithfulness and dedication to the church.



## Scripture Keys to a Joyful New Year

**H**old fast to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)

**A**ssemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)

**P**ray earnestly every day (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18)

**P**ray for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)

**Y**ield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

**N**eglect not your talents and opportunities (Galatians 6:10)

**E**xamine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)

**W**ork diligently for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

**Y**ield your members to righteousness (Romans 6:11,16)

**E**xercise yourself in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)

**A**im at sinless perfection (Hebrews 6:1)

**R**edeem the time (Ephesians 5:15, 16)

— Gus Nichols

### Stepping Forward in Faith – January 2026

As we enter January 2026, we are reminded that new beginnings are a gift from God. A new year invites us to pause, reflect, and ask where God is leading us next. While the calendar has turned, God's faithfulness remains constant—guiding us, sustaining us, and calling us forward in hope.

January is often a month of resolutions, but as people of faith, we are invited to think less about self-improvement and more about spiritual renewal. How can we grow closer to God this year? How can we better love our neighbors, serve our community, and reflect Christ in our daily lives?

Scripture reminds us: *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!"* (Isaiah 43:18–19). Whether the past year brought joy, challenge, or change, God meets us here at the start of this new season with grace and fresh purpose.

As a church family, we look ahead with gratitude and expectation. In the months to come, may we be a people rooted in prayer, united in love, and courageous in faith. Let us support one another, welcome newcomers, and remain open to the work God is doing among us.

May 2026 be a year where we listen closely to God's voice, trust in His promises, and walk together in faith.

Grace and peace to you in this new year.



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*Consistory*

*Elders: Susan Etchberger, Pat Moyer*

*Deacons: Candie Riehl, Barry Driesbach*

*Trustees: Kerry Holzman*

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