November 2026 *Volume 45 Issue 10*

ZIONEWS

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

OFFICIAL CALL

Zion's UCC Annual Congregational Meeting, **November 15, 2026**
Following the 9:00 AM worship service.

• 2027 Budget: Presentation of the proposed budget for the coming year.
• Nominating Report
• Sexton House: An update and information regarding the future of the Sexton House, followed by a congregational vote on its future.





Join us as we gather for a special All Saints Sunday service, Sunday November1 — a time to remember, honor, and celebrate the lives of the faithful who have gone before us.

All are welcome to light a candle in memory of a loved one.

Come be part of a community rooted in hope, remembrance, and resurrection.

"Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses…" – Hebrews 12:1

Gratitude

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. Psalm 100:4

Thanksgiving is more than a holiday marked by family gatherings, festive meals, and cherished traditions. According to Psalm 100:4, thanksgiving is a way of entering into God's presence. The psalmist invites us to come before God with grateful hearts, recognizing that every good gift comes from the Lord.

Gratitude has a way of changing our perspective. When we focus on what we lack, it is easy to become discouraged or anxious. But when we pause to count God's blessings, we begin to see evidence of God's faithfulness all around us. We remember answered prayers, unexpected provisions, moments of comfort, and the gift of people who walk alongside us in life's journey.

Psalm 100 was written as a song of joyful worship. It reminds us that gratitude is not reserved for the easy seasons of life. Rather, thanksgiving is a spiritual practice that helps us trust God in every season. Even when challenges arise, we can give thanks for God's steadfast love, which never fails, and for God's faithfulness, which endures through every generation.

As a congregation, we have many reasons to be thankful. We give thanks for the ways God has sustained our church, for opportunities to worship and serve together, for the friendships we share, and for the hope we find in Christ. Each act of kindness, every prayer offered, and every moment of ministry is a reminder of God's work among us.

This month, let us intentionally cultivate grateful hearts. Take a few moments each day to thank God for specific blessings. Share words of appreciation with family members, friends, and fellow church members. Offer a prayer of gratitude before meals, during quiet moments, or as you begin and end each day.

As we enter God's presence with thanksgiving and praise, may our hearts be renewed with joy. And may our gratitude become a witness to the goodness of God, drawing us closer to the One who welcomes us through His gates with love. Blessings, Pastor Pat



NOVEMBER 1st

Holiday Gift Card Fundraiser

If you are thinking about purchasing gift cards for friends or family for the holidays, why not support the church at the same time. Complete an order form (call the church office if you would like one), return it to the church office with payment and pick up your cards the next week. SIMPLE!

GREETERS

11/01 Susan Harbonic
11/08 Sandy Readinger
11/15 Melissa Miller
11/22 Janice Blatt
11/29 Chrys Heck



This holiday season we are again partnering with **The Salvation Army's Angel Tree program** to bring joy to children and families in need.



Choose a tag from the Angel Tree in the Narthex
Purchase a gift(s) listed on the tag
Return it unwrapped

Let's share the love of Christ through generosity and kindness.
Be someone's angel this Christmas!

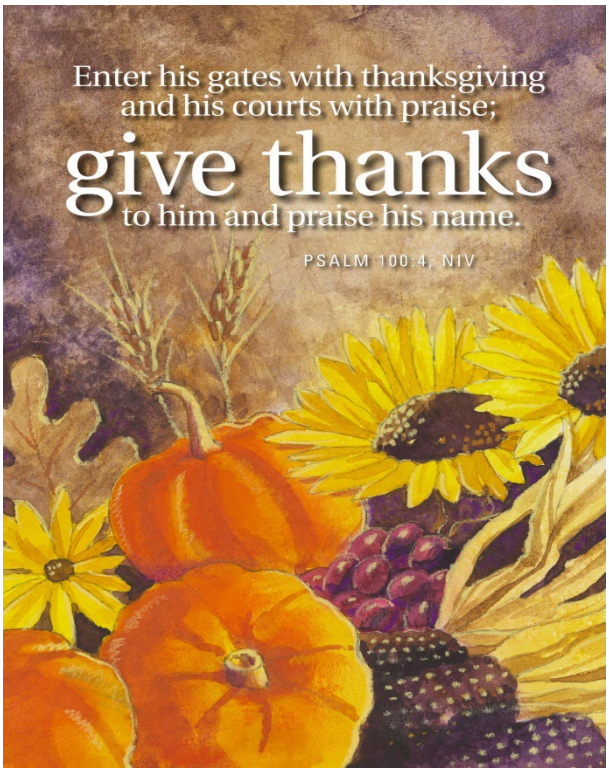
Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me Matthew 25:40

We are looking to purchase new remote candles for our Christmas candelabras and front candelabras. We invite anyone interested to make a memorial donation in honor or memory of a loved one to help cover the cost of these candles.

The total cost is $356 for 100 candles. A dedication honoring those remembered through this gift will take place before Christmas.

What a beautiful way to remember a loved one while helping to enhance our worship services for years to come.

If you are interested in making a memorial donation, please call or email the church office. 610-488-7361 or lshupp@zionbluemountainucc.org with who the donation will be made in honor or memory of.







"Since you can't get up early, I brought the church to you."

Monthly Bingo November 13

November
3:30 – 7:30 pm
Robin Faust
Connie Kreiser
Joyce Deisemann
Joan Hartman

November
4:30 – 8:15 pm
Bryan Houpt

Hot Pot	Hot Pot	Hot Pot	Baker	Baker	Baker	Baker
Barry Driesbach *Chili*	Joyce Deisemann Broccoli & Cheddar	Joan Hartman	Rose Freed	Amber Brown	Mary Ann Eckhoff	Robin Faust



NOVEMBER

birthdays & anniversaries

11/7 Dan Brown
11/8 Scott Daub
11/13 Lori Rentschler
11/17 George Brown
11/20 Byrd Wagner
11/24 Gail Hamm
11/26 Judy Stafford
Michael Miller
11/28 Susan Harbonic

11/21 Mike & Sharon George married 45 years

A box has been placed in the narthex for homebound persons, and those in assisted living homes. Our goal is to fill the box with Christmas cards thus giving some cheer to the recipients that cannot attend church for various reasons.

Cards may be placed in box from Sunday, November 8th to Sunday, December 13th. There will be an additional box for items to take to the shut ins. If you can donate any of the following items:

Small hand lotion
Chap stick
Large Print Activity Books
Pen & small pad of paper
Hard Candies
Travel packs of tissues



Cards and a small gift will be taken to shut-ins during the Christmas Season.

Nancy Fitzgerald
Doris Moyer
Peg Wagner
Annie Phillips
Helen Shirey
Alan & Janice Anthony
Laura Keener
Ruth Zerbe
Marian Long
Esther Sweigart
Sarah Bentz

POINSETTIA ORDERS

WE MUST ORDER A MINIMUM OF 20 POINSETTIAS TO ENSURE DELIVERY

THE LAST DAY TO ORDER IS DECEMBER 13TH.

pick up after Christmas Eve Service

$10.00 each

indicate how many of each color

RED _____ WHITE _____

NAME _____PHONE _____

IN HONOR OR IN MEMORY (CIRCLE ONE)

_____

_____



As we enter the season of Thanksgiving, we are reminded to reflect on our many blessings and give thanks to God for all He has provided. Thanksgiving is a special time to appreciate the things we sometimes take for granted, such as warm homes, plenty of food, and the love and support of family, friends, and our school community.

Here at **Gentle Rain Preschool**, we have so much to be thankful for! We are especially grateful for our wonderful students and their supportive families, our dedicated staff and volunteers, our Board of Directors, and the entire church community that continues to support and encourage our program.

Autumn has been filled with exciting activities and wonderful learning experiences. Our community helpers unit has brought many special visitors to the preschool, including firefighters, EMTs, police officers, librarians, and even a trained service dog! The children have enjoyed learning about the important roles these helpers play in our community. We are also making the most of our outdoor time before the colder weather arrives. At the end of October, each class will celebrate with a fun-filled Fall Festival complete with plenty of food and activities.

We are looking forward to our annual Thanksgiving feast, complete with all the trimmings, on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. After the holiday break, we will begin preparing in earnest for our Christmas program, which we look forward to sharing with our students' parents and families.

From all of us at Gentle Rain Preschool, we wish you and your loved ones a blessed and joyful Thanksgiving filled with gratitude, love, and many special memories! *In His Love, Ms.Amber, Gentle Rain Preschool Director*

Holiday Food Bags

Between now and the December food Pantry distribution there are 20 weeks. Over those weeks we ask that you take a bag and place one item in the bag each week and bring it back on Sunday December 13 when we will bless them. Try to select items from the list, these are luxuries that the pantry rarely offers and would be special.

Instant pudding or jello
Sugar - white or brown
Flour
Shake & Bake or similiar
Ziploc bags or plastic wrap
Aluminum Foil
Oil - olive, corn, canola
Grated Parmesan Cheese
Seasoning or Marinade Packet
Garlic Powder
Onion Powder
baking soda
baking powder
Mustard
Ketchup
Mayonnaise
Salt
Pepper
Pam Spray
Cake mix
Frosting

USE YOUR IMAGINATION!



The Cemetery Board is looking for volunteers to help place wreaths on **Saturday, December 19, 2026**, as part of our Wreaths Across America campaign. We will be honoring the memory of **214 soldiers** by placing wreaths on their graves.

Each wreath costs **$17**, and so far, 100 wreaths have been sponsored. Please consider sponsoring a wreath in honor or memory of a veteran. Every wreath is a meaningful way to remember and honor those who served our country.

To sponsor a wreath:
https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/PASTUC

If you are able to volunteer to help place wreaths, please contact Lisa Shupp, Todd or Pat Moyer, Brad Faust, or Gail Hamm **before December 7**.

Thank you for helping us honor our veterans and remember their service and sacrifice. Every wreath and every helping hand makes a difference!

Consistory News

As we look at the financial condition of our church, we must be honest about the challenges we are facing. Our church is experiencing a decline in weekly giving, and our current offerings are not keeping pace with the expenses required to maintain our church building, support our ministries, and continue the work God has called us to do.

During the summer months, when attendance and weekly offerings typically decrease, we have struggled to meet our financial obligations. In recent months, we have had to rely on our line of credit to help cover some of our general operating expenses. While this has helped us meet our immediate needs, it is not a sustainable solution for the future.

The reality is that our church cannot continue to operate as it has been without increased financial support from our congregation. If weekly giving does not improve, we will face increasingly difficult decisions about the future of our church, its buildings, and the ministries we provide to our community.

Our church is more than a building. It is a place of worship, fellowship, prayer, service, and spiritual growth. Through our congregation and our preschool, we touch lives and serve families in our community. We have a rich history and a meaningful mission, but that mission depends on the willingness of our members to support it.

We ask each member to prayerfully consider their current level of giving and whether they might be able to increase their weekly offering. Even a small increase, when shared by many members, can make a significant difference. Regular, consistent giving allows us to plan responsibly, pay our bills, care for our property, and continue our ministries. We greatly appreciate ALL gifts given to the church but it helps much more if we receive them each week, when you give yearly it is like only receiving one paycheck a year which doesn't stretch very far. That is why we highly recommend automatic giving; you do not have to plan it out you can give what you can each week and not have to remember to give. If you have interest in automatic giving contact the church office at lshupp@zionbluemountainucc.org or speak with Lisa for a form.

Under $5 – 15 people
$5 - $14 – 23 people
$15 - $29 – 23 people
$30 - $49 – 4 people
$50 - $200 – 18 people
SNAPSHOT OF WEEKLY GIVING – this is averaged including one time giving and does not include special offerings. This equals 83 givers; the church sees on average 55 weekly members.

This is a critical time for our congregation. We cannot depend on a few people to carry the financial responsibility for everyone. Each of us has a part to play in securing the future of our church.

AND while this plan may get us through the next few years it cannot sustain us in the longer term. We need a different plan. There needs to be one more element of change in this plan – we need to figure out how to attract NEW members to our church, and that will involve changing how we do church. As members die off, the living members cannot keep increasing their giving – so the solution of increased giving by itself is not a complete solution for us. We need to make a concerted effort to increase our membership AND increase the giving.

We are asking not only for your financial support, but also for your prayers, participation, and renewed commitment to our congregation. With God's guidance and a shared willingness to give, we can work together to strengthen our church and preserve it for future generations.

The future of our church depends on the choices we make today. Let us come together in faith, generosity, and commitment to ensure that our church remains a living and active part of our community.



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Trustees: Kerry Holzman, Bryan Houpt, Steve Shollenberger

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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.