



CHURCH KEY

A NEWSLETTER THAT OPENS PEOPLE
TO THE MINISTRIES OF



ZION'S UNION
CHURCH MAXATAWNY

**329 Church Road
Kutztown, Pennsylvania
610-683-7485**

a Federated Church of
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
and
The United Church of Christ

**December
2022**

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REMINDERS

- ◆ The cost for a vase of flowers is \$20.00 and the cost to be a bulletin sponsor is \$8.00. **Bulletin prices changing to \$10.00 January 1st.** Payment may be given to Jane Warmkessel or put the money in an envelope with your name, date, and what you are paying for and place in the offering plate.
- ◆ Any checks written out for the offering, altar flowers, or bulletins should be made payable to **Zion's Union Church Maxatawny.**
- ◆ **Any checks for the cemetery should be made out to Maxatawny Zion Cemetery Company, Inc., not to the church.**
- ◆ We have DVDs of regular worship services available for use at home. Contact the church office if you would like to borrow one.
- ◆ Let the church office know if you have been admitted to the hospital. The hospitals **DO NOT** notify the church if members have been hospitalized.
- ◆ Zion's Union Church Maxatawny's website is www.zionsunion.org. Check out our website.
- ◆ Zion's has a prayer chain. If you would like to add a name to the Prayer Chain call Mary Laub at 610-248-2801.
- ◆ Sports cleats are not allowed in the church.
- ◆ Refreshments should be kept on the first floor of the church.

DECEMBER AND JANUARY WORSHIP

December 4	Second Sunday of Advent	HC	SS 9:00	church 10:15
December 11	3 rd Advent/Christmas Pageant		SS 9:00	church 10:15
December 18	4 th Advent/Choir Musicale		SS 9:00	church 10:15
December 24	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	HC		7:30 P.M.
December 25	Christmas Day			church 10:15
January 1	Epiphany	HC	SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 8	Baptism Christ/Installation		SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 15	2 nd Sunday after Epiphany		SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 22	3 rd Sunday after Epiphany		SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 29	4 th Sunday after Epiphany		SS 9:00	church 10:15

FLOWER/BULLETIN

Sponsors are still needed for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The cost to be a bulletin sponsor will increase to \$10.00 (\$20.00 for both bulletins) beginning January 1st. The price to sponsor Altar Flowers will remain at \$20.00 per vase (\$40.00 for both vases.)



The new book for 2023 is now available in the Gathering Area. Sign up for those special dates. You may also call the church to sign up or leave a message on the answering machine.

PILLOW CASE AND PLASTIC BAGS PROJECTS

The plastic bags and pillow case projects have been put on hold. Please do not bring any of these items to the church until after the New Year.

SERVICE VIDEOS

A video recording of our worship service will be uploaded to our church website (zionsunion.org) by early Sunday afternoon and can be viewed for the rest of the week. Prior services can be viewed on Youtube — type “Zion’s Union Church” into the Youtube search bar.

ORGAN RESTORATION UPDATE as of November 1, 2022

Total Restoration Cost - \$346,000

Designated Memorials & Estates Received - \$53,410.13

Donations Received - \$94,291

Investments Used for Expenses - \$100,570

Checking Account Money Used for Expenses - \$23,000

Investment Gains - \$58,000

Total Funds Into Organ Restoration Fund - \$330,671.13

PAVING PROJECT as of November 1, 2022

Estimated Cost - \$46,000

Monies received - \$17,200.00 (donation)

\$ 35.00 (Memorial designation)

\$ 2,445.00 (Apple Dumpling Sale 2022)

\$ 1,631.26 (Apple Dumpling Sale 2022)

Total received - \$21,626.26

READERS, USHERS, GREETERS, SECURITY

Schedules for readers, ushers, greeters, and security are on the upstairs bulletin board. A schedule is also included in each newsletter.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Worship service/Sunday School/activities cancellation:
www.wfmz.com (click on “storm center update”) (**please note:**
worship delays or closings will be listed on WFMZ website and
not on Channel 69 except for extreme weekend weather
conditions) or call the church office (610-683-7485). A
message will be on the answering machine.



BETHANY'S BRIGHTER FUTURE FUND

On **November 27th** and **December 4th** baskets will be in the back of the church and the Gathering Area of the church for any monetary donations for the Bethany Children's Home Brighter Future Fund to purchase items for the residents for Christmas.



HISTORY BOOK

The Church History Book is now available in the Gathering Area after the service. The cost is \$15.00. Any checks should be made out to "Zion's Union Church Maxatawny". Please put "History Book" on the memo line. If you are unable to come to the worship services, books can be picked during the week. Please call the church office to make sure someone is there.

SIMPLY GIVING PROGRAM

Any amount changes that are to be made for 2023 need to be submitted to Peggy Morgan by the middle of December to insure they are in place by the beginning of January. New members are welcome any time throughout the year. Information and enrollment forms are on the Bulletin Board upstairs.

CHOIR MUSICALE

Anyone interested in performing a vocal solo or instrument for the Choir Musicale on **December 18th**, contact Theresa Grim no later than **December 1st**.

ANGEL TREE PROJECT

Gifts are to be returned unwrapped. They can be placed in a box or gift bag. Donations of wrapping paper are welcome as well as monetary donations which will be sent to the Salvation Army for the sole purpose of purchasing gifts. Make any checks out to "Salvation Army" with "Angel Tree" on the memo line. **Gifts are due back by December 4th**.



YOUTH GROUP NUT SALE

Deadline to order nuts from the Youth Group is **December 4th**. Prices are: salted or unsalted peanuts - \$4.00 and cashews, mixed nuts, or dried fruit - \$8.00. Order your nuts from any Youth Group Member. Orders will be ready for pick-up **December 11th**.



INGATHERING

On the first Sunday of each month the Mission Outreach Committee will continue to collect items to fill backpacks with food staples for needy children and their families in the area. Please participate by dropping off non-perishable items from the list below in the container provided in the Gathering Area.



single serve size macaroni and cheese
single serve size applesauce
single serve cereal
oatmeal packets

peanut butter
canned tuna
granola bars

fruit cups
canned soup
fruit snacks

SENIOR MEAL

The Youth Group will be hosting a senior meal at 6:15 P.M. prior to the Advent Social on **December 4th**. If you are interested in attending, please leave Richard Haas or Sharon Leiby know.

ADVENT SOCIAL

The Youth Group will be having their Advent Social on **December 4th** at 7:00 P.M. The congregation is welcome to join them for some fun and fellowship during the Advent season.



CHILDREN'S SERMONS

There have been several requests, by the congregation, to have a Children's Sermon every week. We are looking for volunteers that are willing to do the Children's Sermon on a rotating basis. See Traci Gehringer to volunteer.

HOPE RECUE MISSIONCLOTHING DRIVE

Zion's will be collecting used clothing for Hope Rescue Mission in Reading. Coats, hats, sweaters, gloves, pants, shirts, shoes, and other items of clothing will be collected for men, women, and children from **December 1st through December 15th**. A container will be placed in the Gathering area beginning December 1st. These items provide clothing for men at Hope Rescue shelter and for women and children at Lighthouse shelter.

LIVE NATIVITY

Zion's Outdoor Live Nativity will be held **December 10th** (rain/snow date December 17th). Shows will be held every half hour from 5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. (last show at 7 P.M.).



Volunteers are needed (sign-up sheet on the bulletin board): actors (no speaking parts), help with refreshments, and parking cars. Please come out to support this special event as we tell the Christmas story of the birth of Jesus. A night of Christmas carols, actors reenacting Christ's birth including live animals, and hot chocolate and cookies. See Sue Haas (610-207-3738) with any questions.

SEARCH TEAM NEWS

The Search Team is thankful for your continued prayers! With the profile behind us, we would like to take some time to share the Search Data Meeting results. Join us for that review on Sunday, **December 11th**, during church.

SUNDAY SCHOOL PAGEANT

Please join us for the Sunday School Christmas Pageant during the church service on **December 11th**.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our annual Congregational Meeting to elect Board Members and to approve the annual operating budget will be held **December 11th** immediately following the worship service. Please consider attending this important meeting.

SEXTON NEEDED

The church is in need of a person to take over the sexton position at the church. Contact Nancy Fulton if you are interested.

“CHRISTMAS TIME AT FRIEND”

Any young church members ages 12 thru college age (22) are welcome to help at Friend for their annual “Christmas” night on **Thursday, December 15th**. Times are 4:00 to 7:00 P.M. Come and go as it suits. An advisor will be there. Hand out turkeys and gift boxes and help carry gifts to vehicles. Dress in warm clothing. Gloves may be a good idea.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP 2022



The Church Board has decided there will only be one Christmas Eve service this year. It will be a traditional Candlelight Service of Holy Communion at **7:30 P.M.** Worship will include the singing of familiar carols, the retelling of the story of our Lord’s birth, the distribution of Holy Communion, and will end with all in attendance sharing a candlelight celebration of praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus.



SCRABBLE

Scrabble will meet the third Monday of the month at 1:30 P.M. at the Lutheran Hoe in the social area near Sylvia’s room.

WOMEN IN ZION

A group of Christian women in service, mission, and study for the benefit of all.

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|-------------|---|
| December 10 | Pack cookies at 9:00 A.M. |
| December 11 | Deliver cookies before and after the service. |
| December 12 | Cookie Exchange, Christmas Games,
Ornament Exchange at 1:00 P.M. |



*For more information contact Linda Ballew-Johnson
(484-553-1981) or Loretta Flicker (610-683-3627)*

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP GROUP

The Senior Fellowship Group will meet **December 26th and January 23rd** at 12 noon. Persons attending should bring a bag lunch. Dessert and beverages will be provided. Games provide entertainment for the afternoon. Guests are always welcome.



PRAYER SHAWL



Comforting wraps are still available to all who are in need. Please alert the church office or talk to Loretta Flicker or Karen Howard if you or someone you know would benefit from this ministry.

YOUTH GROUP

Activity Schedule:

December 4	5:00 P.M. Practice for Advent Social
December 4	6:15 P.M. Senior Meal
December 4	7:00 P.M. Advent Social
December 9	6:30 P.M. Pack nut orders
December 11	Pick-up nut orders (for those not taken Friday night)
December 15	4:00-7:00 P.M. Friend, Inc. – assist with food and gift distribution
January 8	Bowling



Our usual times are 1:00-3:00 PM, Youth Group updates are announced during the Sunday School opening and posted in the bulletin
Schedule for January-May 2023 coming by year end

YOUTH GROUP THANK YOU

The Youth Group wishes to again thank the congregation for their continued support. You help change the lives of the young people of this church.

“Jesus did not come to make God’s love possible, but to make God’s love visible.”
—Author Unknown

FRIEND THANK YOU

Over 30 Holiday Boxes of Food Items were donated to “Friend” by our congregation. The Friend organization and families affected wish to thank all who contributed.

They will continue to accept boxes to be handed out for Christmas up until **December 14th**. The list of items suggested are in the Gathering Area. Boxes can be put there for delivery when completed.

CHURCH BOARD MEETING

October 25, 2022

1. The Board approved the church profile as compiled by the search committee. It will be submitted to the Synod and Conference to be published on their web sites.
2. We are looking for a sexton to replace the wonderful job Diana has been doing. Anyone interested, please see Nancy Fulton.
3. The first two weeks of December we will be collecting clothing for the Hope Rescue Mission Women and Children Shelter.
4. The board accepted the 2023 budget as submitted by the Finance Committee.
5. The Zion’s History book has been proofed and is expected to be delivered in the next two weeks.
6. The Christmas Day service will be a hymn sing as we joyously celebrate the birth of our Lord.
7. We will be purchasing 3 Advent banners for display from the outside light poles during Advent.
8. 428 Apple Dumplings using 7 bushels of apples generated a profit of \$1,631.28 towards the parking lot resurfacing.
9. Church lights have been left on throughout the church including the sanctuary. The are to be turned off when not in use.

ANNUAL REPORTS

As the year comes to an end, so does the time for all organizations, groups, and committees to get their annual report information into the church office. All information for the annual report **MUST** be in the church office by **January 15th**.



DID YOU KNOW

- Cayden Ciccone-Haas plays soccer for Kutztown High School.
- Ashley DeLong achieved Distinguished Honors for the 1st quarter at Brandywine Heights High School.
- Ashley DeLong was named to the All-Division 4 Team for Girls' Soccer.
- Archer and Arden Scaffidi both performed the drums, with their respective school bands, at Brandywine Heights annual Veteran's Day Service.
- Archer and Arden Scaffidi are swimming the 2022-2023 winter season with the Boyertown Navy Seals.
- Archer Scaffidi achieved Distinguished Honor Roll for the 1st quarter at Brandywine Heights High School.
- Arden Scaffidi achieved Honor Roll for the 1st quarter at Brandywine Heights Middle School.

REJOICING SPIRITS WORSHIP SERVICE

Rejoicing Spirits of Eastern Berks County service is at 3:00 P.M. **Sunday, December 4, 2022** at St. Paul's UCC, 47 S. Whiteoak St. Kutztown, PA. All are welcome at this no-shush worship that enriches the lives of all people, especially those with disabilities. Rejoicing Spirits includes music and joyous singing, brief, meaningful messages, and the chance to connect with others. Learn more at rejoicingspirits.org or contact Karen Raudenbush at raudyk@gmail.com or phone at 610-608-8290.

KUTZTOWN COMMUNITY CHOIR CHRISTMAS CHORAL CONCERT

The Kutztown Community Choir will present their annual Christmas concert on Sunday, **December 11th** at 3:00 P.M. at Trinity Lutheran Church, 357 W. Main St., Kutztown. The musical selections include festive, fun, and inspirational selections such as *A Festive Christmas Celebration*; *Still, Still, Still*; and *Sing We Now of Christmas*. *Modimo* and *Carols of Scandinavia* add an international flavor to our holiday celebration. In what has become an audience favorite, the concert will once again conclude with the *Hallelujah Chorus*, from Händel's Messiah, in which the audience is invited to join the choir. Please join us for an afternoon that is sure to delight.



FROM THE MAILBOX

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for the wonderful gift of the newly published History of a Remarkable Church 1826-2022. We have already enjoyed looking through the many photos and information. We were so happy to see this awesome end product of many years efforts.



Blessings,

Lisa Jones, Sue Heckler, Sylvia Heckler

Your gift of \$280.00 from the Harvest Home collection will go a long way towards helping individuals and families through out northeastern Berks County by alleviating hunger, mitigating financial crisis, providing money management education, job placement assistance, and other life sustaining support including referrals to outside agencies such as Safe Berks, Family Guidance Center, and Maternal and Family services.

With Sincere Thanks and Deep Respect,
Jim Reece, Executive Director, Friend, Inc.

STORMS OF LIFE

At some point in life most of us face many types of health, financial, family or other serious problem. Recently, it seems that “storm clouds” have encircled many due to lost jobs, poor health and the economic situation in our country. It would be quite easy to begin counting our problems instead of our blessings.

Life is precious. It was given each of us by God. He understands that we face difficulties in this short sojourn on earth. Yet, trials and sufferings are a part of life itself, brought on by the sin in the world since Adam and Eve.

Tragedies may come, jobs may be lost, diseases may rack our bodies, or business losses may cause financial disasters. There may be times when we feel we are all alone and overcome by life’s difficulties. God did not promise to take away our troubles. But, He did promise that the Lord would never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). When trials surround us, He offers comfort and hope through His Word (Romans 15:4). He gives us peace through Christ (John 16:4; Philippians 4:7). If we are in Christ then nothing can separate us from God’s love (Romans 8:35-39).

When the storms of life comes our way, let us call to mind the words of the apostle Peter, “casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

John K. Wills
Owingsville, KY

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PRAYER REQUESTS

We ask God's blessings upon those who are ill, recovering from surgery, homebound, or have asked for our prayers:

Liz Jones, Lori Arndt, Ellie Merkel, Randy Warmkessel, Owen Shorette, Elaine Heffner, Marilyn & Bill Bird, Kay Weidner, Walter Dietrich, John & Marlene Costello, Betty Dietrich, Beatrice Bennecoff, Barry Miller, Carolyn Wiltrout, Arlan Berger, Marian Stettler, Bill & Karen Howard, Joe Karaisz, Anna Bortz, Ralph & Helen Noll, Mary Kutz, Karen Weaver, Sylvia Heckler, Gladys Leibold, Donna Slotter, Leora Haas, Donna VanDeCar, Bishop deForest, Mick O'Neil, Paige Sechler, Linda Menges, Owen Lamendola, Rosemary LaFratte, Ukrainians, Randy Schlegel, Karen Bower, Kevin Moyer, Joanne Pauley, Mary Jane Schlenker, Sarah Johnson, Elia, Michael Zimmerman, Regen Zimmerman, Ian Miller, Karen Ames, Elaine Seaman, Victoria Slotter, Jo Corrado, Donna Rabert, Tom Seifert, Rayann Roth, Lisa & Chris Szarko, Arthur Sell, Lorraine Miller, Renee Wolfe, Christopher Mercardo, Kim Markham, Valerie, Mary Fox, Sue Zimmerman, Michele Rodriguez, Christy Ryan, Frank Knight, Betty Houck, Judy Redman, Mary, Betsy, Gary Sell, family of Carmela Quell, family of Dolores Schmoyer, family of Ellen Nissley, family of Lennia Mertz.

If anyone can be removed from this list, please notify the church office.

If you know of other persons in need of prayer and you wish to have a name included on the list please email the church, call the church office, or leave a message on the answering machine. If you want a name included on Zion's Prayer Chain call Mary Laub at 610-248-2801.

ADDRESS CHANGES

The church is updating addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. If you have recently changed any of the above, have moved, or have children that are no longer living with you and have their own places, please email the church office at zionsunion@verizon.net with the new information.

OUR SYMPATHIES TO

... the family of Carmela Quell.
... the family of Ellen Nissley.

... the family of Dolores Schmoyer.
... the family of Lennia Mertz.

Bolstered by Relationships

Jesús Escamilla knows the power of relationships. Over 15 years, he's seen God provide for his congregation through faithful partners across the church and within his community.

"What God wants, if you believe and trust in how he wants to do it, it will get done," said the pastor of San Gabriel Lutheran Church in Alvarado, Texas.

Escamilla came to San Gabriel in 2006, when future congregants were holding Bible studies weekly in worshipers' homes. To worship, they drove more than 30 miles north to San Miguel Lutheran Church in Fort Worth. He joined the Bible studies, then became the faith community's official worship leader a year later, ministering in homes for both Bible study and worship. In time, the growing faith community needed a building in Alvarado.

"What God wants, if you believe and trust in how he wants to do it, it will get done."

A deal with a local supporter allowed the congregation to begin renting a plot of land, where it worshiped outdoors and eventually built makeshift indoor worship space. "Everyone was dusty, but they didn't care because they had a place to worship — their own place," Escamilla said.

Over time, partnerships with local congregations allowed San Gabriel to build a permanent church. Gifts from Calvary Lutheran

Church in Richland Hills allowed San Gabriel to put in flooring, and pews were donated by St. John Lutheran Church, a closing congregation in nearby Grand Prairie. Later, St. John's council gifted funds that helped San Gabriel take ownership of its land.

Since then, the church has grown, adding a fellowship hall that serves as a community hub for the area's largely Mexican immigrant population. But like so many congregations, San Gabriel struggled to maintain a sense of community during the worst days of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.

The church closed and pivoted to virtual worship on Zoom and Facebook, with Escamilla, lay leaders and a small contingent of choir members recording services in person at the church.

But with virtual worship, collecting offerings became a challenge. Some congregants sent money through the digital-payment network Zelle or even left their offerings in the church mailbox, but many couldn't contribute monetarily. So the church began hosting weekly food sales to raise needed funds and provide members with a way to give back.

Escamilla believes that San Gabriel has been built up by the generosity of others — church members, nearby ELCA congregations and, through Mission Support funds, the ELCA Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod.

"It's been a conjunction of [congregations] working together to help a community that was struggling," he said. "We have this wonderful community that is working together to work with what the Lord wants us to do."



CARD SHOWERS

We are listing those couples married 50 years or more and those people 70 years or older. If we are missing anyone, please call or email the church office.



December 14	Judy Koller
December 16	Diana Gehman
December 17	Elaine Silliman
December 17	Jane Warmkessel
December 18	Michael & Evelyn Dietz (57 wed)
December 25	Sylvia Heckler
December 26	Michael Dietz
January 1	Glenn Bennecoff
January 2	Joan Stettler
January 4	Marian Stettler
January 14	Irene Isamoyer
January 17	Walter Dietrich, Jr.
January 20	Mary Haas
January 22	Kyle Koller
January 30	Roeller Dietrich
January 30	Elaine Heffner

FROM THE RECORD BOOK

FUNERALS: *Lennia A, Mertz*, 87, of Kutztown, died November 1, 2022 in Kutztown. Service was November 7, 2022 in Zion's Union Church Maxatawny by Vicar Jeremiah T. Heydt. Interment was in Zion Maxatawny Union Cemetery, Kutztown.



MISSION STATEMENT

Energized by the Spirit! Humbled by Christ's Grace! Working for God's glory!

UPCOMING HOLY COMMUNIONS

You are invited by Jesus Christ to this awesome feast of the Children of God.

December 4	Altar Holy Communion
December 24 (7:30 PM)	Pew Holy Communion
January 1	Altar Holy Communion



JANUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The next issue of the newsletter will come out the beginning of January. If you have any information to be included in the January newsletter, please have it in the church office by **December 15th**.