



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

**January
2025**

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REMINDERS

- ◆ The cost for a vase of flowers is \$20.00 and the cost to be a bulletin sponsor is \$10.00. Payment may be given to Karen Warmkessel or Tara Berger 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.**
- ◆ 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.

PASTOR'S CORNER



Proverbs 16:9 states "In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps."

A New Year often brings a time for reflecting on New Year's resolutions. This process usually begins in December, as people contemplate various goals—ranging from losing extra holiday weight to setting healthier habits. The excitement of a new year pushes us forward, but when we encounter our first or second setback, our resolve can quickly diminish. While some succeed with their January resolutions—like setting goals and deadlines—others may be motivated by significant life events or health issues, making January a great time for new beginnings.

One effective way to stay on track with your resolutions is by using a goal calendar, particularly one that focuses on reading the Bible throughout the year. This approach encourages consistent engagement with our faith and offers flexibility; it only requires a small amount of designated time each day. If you happen to miss a day, that's okay—you can easily catch up the next day. Remember, the aim with all resolutions is progress, not perfection.

Reading the Bible in a year with friends can also be beneficial. Having a group of people to support one another can make a significant difference, especially when life gets busy and taking on one more commitment feels overwhelming. If this interests you, let's connect and share resources so we can encourage each other in our daily reading. Even pastors need this intentional time and community support! Sharing your experiences with your resolutions, can also inspire and support others in our community.

Regardless of your resolutions this year, or if you have none, setting goals for your God-given purpose includes asking Jesus to lead us in our daily endeavors and finding ways to pay our blessings forward. Whether through a *Read the Bible in a Year* calendar or a plan that inspires us to reach out to our brothers and sisters in Christ, may this new year draw you and others closer to God.

In Christ's service,
Pastor Melissa

ACOLYTES, READERS, USHERS, GREETERS, SHEPHERDS

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

SPECIAL SUNDAYS IN JANUARY:

- **January 5** – Youth Choir practice at 8:45 A.M.
- **January 5** – Confirmation class during Sunday School.
- **January 5** – Epiphany Sunday.
- **January 5** – Open House from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M.
- **January 12** – Youth Choir practice at 8:45 A.M.
- **January 12** – Baptism of Our Lord, Installation Sunday.
- **January 12** – Xavier Kayhart baptism.
- **January 12** – Safety Committee meeting after the service.
- **January 19** – Youth Choir practice at 8:45 A.M.
- **January 19** – Confirmation class during Sunday School.
- **January 19** – Temple Talk and Refreshments by the Women In Zion.
- **January 26** – Confirmation class during Sunday School.
- **January 26** – Youth led service.
- **January 26** – 200th Anniversary Committee meeting after the service.

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY WORSHIP

January 5	Epiphany Sunday HC	SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 12	Baptism of Lord/Baptism/Install.	SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 19	2 nd Sunday after Epiphany	SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 26	3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	SS 9:00	church 10:15
February 2	4 th Sunday after Epiphany	SS 9:00	church 10:15
February 9	5 th Sunday after Epiphany	SS 9:00	church 10:15
February 16	6 th Sunday after Epiphany	SS 9:00	church 10:15
February 23	7 th Sunday after Epiphany	SS 9:00	church 10:15

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.



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.

CHURCH BOARD MEETING

November 26, 2024

- December 8th, following church, is our congregational meeting to elect two new board members and approve the 2025 budget.
- We will be participating in the Hope Rescue winter clothing drive. We will be collecting winter clothing items only from January 4th – January 12th.
- We will be participating in the Kutztown Historical Society church tour on January 5th between 1:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M.
- The Miller Blood Mobile will be back at Zion’s beginning this spring. Our goal is to have the blood mobile here twice this year.

KUTZTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY TOUR OF CHURCHES

Our church will be part of a church tour event sponsored by the Kutztown Historical Society on Sunday, **January 5th** from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. to enjoy our holiday decorations and historic background. Lori Arndt, Jim Laub, and Nancy Fulton will be meeting to plan our churches presentations that day. Suggestions are welcome as well as volunteers to greet visitors or give tours. See page 12 for more information.

FLOWER/BULLETIN

The 2025 Flower and Bulletin sponsor book is now available. Sign up for your special dates in 2025.

The price to sponsor Altar Flowers will be \$20.00 per vase (\$40.00 for both vases.) The cost to be a bulletin sponsor will be \$10.00 (\$20.00 to sponsor both bulletins).



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	peanut butter	fruit cups
single serve size applesauce	canned tuna	canned soup
single serve cereal	granola bars	fruit snacks
oatmeal packets		

CLOTHING DRIVE

Zion's Union Church Maxatawny will be collecting **used or new winter gloves, scarves, and coats** for Hope Rescue Mission in Reading from January 5 – 12, 2025. Donations can be dropped off at the church on **Sundays, January 5th and 12th from 9:00 A.M. to 10:00 A.M., as well as from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. on January 6th, 8th, 10th, 11th.**



MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

Monday Night Bible Study continues **January 6th at 6:30 P.M.** Currently the group is studying 2 Samuel and, on this night, will be discussing King David and chapters 13-15. Please come and share in a lively discussion on the topics of each chapter, wrestle with the affairs of King David, his family, and the people around him followed by how the text speaks to us in today's time. We have a seat for you!

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.**



INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

The installation of new board members and officers for 2025, Sunday School teachers and officers, and committees and group officers and leaders will be **January 12th** during the worship service.

YOUTH AND CONFIRMATION NEWS

Are you in grades 7-12? Whether confirmed or not, you are invited to Sunday School for the month of January. We will learn about the parts of our worship, why they are important and create our own for the Youth Led Worship on **Sunday, January 26th**. There are speaking and non-speaking parts for the day itself. Your fellow youth need you to come and be a part of the planning and bringing the Word of God to our congregation on the last Sunday in January. Please see Pastor Melissa for more information!

DID YOU KNOW???

Any information for the bulletin or newsletter needs to be submitted in advance so that everything can be processed in a timely manner. For the bulletin, please submit information by 9:00 A.M. Monday morning. For the newsletter, please submit information by the 13th of the month. This gives enough time to get everything organized and printed. Any material submitted later than that will be printed in the next issue. Thanks for your help in providing information for our bulletins and newsletters.

REJOICING SPIRITS WORSHIP SERVICE

Rejoicing Spirits of Eastern Berks County service is at 3:00 P.M. the first Sunday of every month at St. Paul's UCC, 47 S. Whiteoak Street, Kutztown. All are welcome at this no-shush worship service that enriches the lives of all people, especially the differently-abled, their caregivers, families, and friends.

Our next service is January 5th. The theme is Wise Men and the Presiding Pastor is Chris Angstadt. Parking is available in the lot behind the church. For more information contact Charlene Fisher at 610-223-9822 or Erin Webb at 610-894-9949.

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF ZION'S

We will be having our 200th Anniversary meetings the last Sunday of the month following church service. There are a couple dates that may change due to holidays or other events. We will keep everyone posted. The next meeting will be held on **January 26th**. Any questions regarding the 200th Anniversary Committee, or to share your ideas, please see Traci Gehringer or Mandy Graff.

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY IS FEBRUARY 9TH

Wear your team jersey to worship and share your dollars for our Friend, Inc. During the month of January, watch the pot become full of your canned goods and donations. Friend, Inc. gets a lot of donations around Christmas though they appreciate additional items to serve those in our area who need food and supplies. Consider making a Valentine's Day card that could be added to the donations friends of Friend, Inc will receive. Thank you for helping make a difference in the lives of those in need this SOUPER BOWL Sunday!

Pantry Wish List

- Canned Food, Non-Perishable Items
 - Vegetables, Fruit, Bulk Dry Goods (e.g. rice, beans, crackers, cereals)
- Fresh Produce (please call first)
- Baby Diapers, Baby Wipes, Infant Formula, Baby Shampoo
- Cleaning and Disinfecting Supplies
- Laundry Detergent, Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Dish Soap, Toothpaste, Deodorant, Bar Soap, Shampoo, Razors, Body Wash
- Feminine products (cleansing wipes, tampons, & pads)
- Pet Pantry Items
 - Cat food, dry and wet
 - Dog (big and small) food, dry
- Back to School Supplies!
- Grocery Store Gift Cards
- *We are unable to accept donations of used clothing or furniture.*

YOUTH GROUP NUT SALE

Thanks to all who ordered nuts and dried fruit from the Youth Group. Over 200 lbs. of goods were packed.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Youth Group updates are announced during the Sunday School opening and posted in the bulletin

SNACK AND CHAT

We will have lunch in small groups at restaurants in the area. Our Zion's shirts could identify us and hopefully generate interest in our church. The next outings are **January 8th at 1760 House** and **February 12th at Jaks**. Notify Nancy Fulton if you are able to attend.

PLASTIC BAGS PROJECT

The group will meet **January 8th, January 22nd, February 12th, and February 26th** from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. to weave plastic bags into mats. Contact Tanya Schaedel at 484-705-5533 or Carol Leiby at 484-695-8318. Plastic bags may be brought to church and deposited in the box in the Gathering Area. **ONLY plastic bags that are used at the register when checking out are wanted. We are unable to use produce bags, plastic from cases of water, toilet paper plastic, etc.**

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP GROUP

The Senior Fellowship Group will meet **January 27th and February 24th** at 12 noon. Persons attending should bring a bag lunch. Dessert and beverages will be provided. Games and cards 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 Loretta Flicker if you or someone you know would benefit from this ministry.

WOMEN IN ZION

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

January 13 Meeting at 1:00 P.M. Chair exercises.
February 10 Meeting at 1:00 P.M. Lenten Challenge,
personality games.



For more information contact Linda Ballew-Johnson (484-553-1981)

WIZ THANK YOU

WIZ would like to thank the congregation for their generous donations to our Kindness Project initiative. We collected \$390 on Thankoffering Sunday, which was matched for a total of \$780 sent to help local families who are fostering children. In addition, there was a big selection of clothes, supplies, and personal hygiene items also collected. They were very appreciative.

FROM THE RECORD BOOK

Baptism: *Ava Grace Fegely*, daughter of Jacob M. Fegely and Shanna R. (Mason) Fegely was baptism on December 8, 2024 by Pastor Melissa Burkhart.

MYSTERY VOLUNTEER(S)

Our Mystery Volunteers for December were Kevin and LaRee Fegely.

I was born a long, long, time ago in St. Joes' Hospital in Reading.

I never went to kindergarten which might explain why I am the way I am. I met my spouse in high school. I chased my boyfriend until I caught him, I guess that I walked slower than he could run.

We have 2 children. We also had several rabbits, cats, and dogs. I have had several jobs and Technical School training.

I enjoyed several craft projects, such as reading, baking, sewing, and many more projects.

I have been involved in almost every project here at church. Just name a project and they would say "Ask _____, she'll do it." Now you can guess who I am.

MYSTERY MEMBER(S)

Our Mystery Members for December were Robbie and Hillary Zoccola.

Born in Pottsville, Yuengling City, the mystery member for January grew up in Schuylkill County. He attended a one-room school until 9th grade. His dad was a carpenter, painter, farmer, taxidermist, and huckster who sold fruit, vegetables, meats, and eggs on a market route, assisted by his son. His mom worked in a shirt factory; she was a single mother to him, his two brothers, and a sister following the death of his father when he was 15 years old.

After high school, he graduated from college with a BS in Biology, pursued a professional degree and had his own business, locally, for 34 years. He was a Navy veteran.

After meeting his wife roller skating, they shared 57 years of marriage. They enjoyed boating, snow skiing, water skiing, traveling, camping, playing pinochle and haase. They worked together to flip houses. She was a teacher and had a real estate license. When they were dating and visited his mother for the very first time, she caused the toilet to clog and a plumber was needed to alleviate the problem.

He has two married sons, six grandchildren, and one great grandchild. Pets included dogs, Blackie and Pumpkin. His hobbies include wood-working, flying, hunting, fishing, traveling, repairing tractors, mowing grass, sports cars, doing electrical and plumbing work, and learning to play the electric piano. In the future he hopes to learn to play his father's banjo.

While in high school, he taught Sunday School and sang in the choir. At Zion's, he regularly attends events and worship services.

GROUNDHOG LODGE FOR YOUTH

The Pennsylvania German Zammelaaf organization will sponsor a Grundsau Lodscher fer Yunge (Groundhog Lodge for Youth) on Saturday, **February 1, 2025** from 1:30-3:00 P.M. at the Zion UMC Church of Iona, 1920 South 5th Avenue, Lebanon, PA 17042. This event is perfect for youth ages 5-12 and is free, with donations being accepted. All youth must be accompanied by an adult. Note that this year there will be a special groundhog guest! Safety guidelines will be observed. There is limited availability. For reservations contact pgalice2@gmail.com or 1-717- 933-5511 by **January 18, 2025**.

The snow date is Sunday, February 8, 2025. Check the Facebook page at zammelaaf@gmail.com for more information and updates in case of inclement weather. For more information contact Mary Laub.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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

Elaine Heffner, Loretta Flicker, David Herber, Cooper Kellum, Tracey Lutz, Bonnie Haas, Bill & Karen Howard, Irene Isamoyer, Jamey Webb, Liz Jones, Julia Mohn, Owen Shorette, Walter & Doris Dietrich, John & Marlene Costello, Barry & Ann Miller, Marilyn & Bill Bird, Marian Stettler, Gladys Leibold, Donna Slotter, Karen Weaver, Randy Warmkessel, Donna VanDeCar, David Grim, John Laird, Mike & Julia, Helen Noll, Jeanne, Aiden, Brooke, Emory, Bev, Eric, Jenni Juntunen, James Ely, Mason, Jamie Albanese, Alexis, Deb P., Beth S., Jim, Jeremy Crum, Chris Pinkerton, Laurel Rudy, Grayson Rudy, Livvy Rudy, Chad, Chris, Laura G., Keith Egley, Leila, Vera, Bruce Fritzingler, Sherri Gehringer, Ian Miller, Ely, Rosemary LaFratte, Paige Sechler, Joanne Pauley, Owen Lamendola, Sarah Johnson, Chris Szarko, Victoria Slotter, Regen Zimmerman, Donna Rabert, Tom Seifert, Rayann Roth, Lorraine Miller, Christopher Mercardo, Elia, Christy Ryan, Michele Rodriquez, Judy Redman, Frank Knight, Mary, Betsy, family of Laura Youse, family of Donna Ludwig.

If any names can be removed from the list, please notify the church office.

If you know of other persons in need of prayer and you wish to have a name included in next week's bulletin, please 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.

CHURCH HISTORY BOOK

The Church History Book is still available to be purchased. The cost is \$15.00. Call the church office if you would like one. Any checks should be made out to "Zion's Union Church Maxatawny". Put "History Book" on the memo line.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORIES

The updated Membership Directory is available in the Gathering Area. Pick one up for yourself, family, or others that may not come to worship services. They may also be picked up at the church during the week.

The Kutztown Area Historical Society presents:

The Churches of Kutztown Open House Event

January 5, 2025
1:00-5:00pm

Community members are encouraged to visit as many participating churches as they would like between 1-5pm to see the church buildings, learn more about their history, and enjoy the Christmas decorations.

- Kutztown Bible Fellowship - 15170 Kutztown Rd.
- Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church - 1343 Long Lane Rd.
- St. Barnabas Center of Kutztown - 234 E. Main St.
- St. John's Lutheran Church - 201 E. Main St.
- St. John's UCC - 257 W. Walnut St.
- St. Mary's Catholic Church - 14833 Kutztown Rd.
- St. Paul's UCC - 47 S. Whiteoak St.
- Trinity Lutheran Church - 357 W. Main St.
- Zion's Union Church Maxatawny - 329 Church Rd.

**Be advised - Availability is under the discretion of each church and subject to cancellation.*
Contact KAHS Program Coordinator Stephanie Derstine with questions: 610-533-4987*

LONG-AWAITED GIFT

In today's scripture, the elder (Simeon) meets the infant (Christ Jesus). The image of the old person - wrinkled with the passing of their days and sporting a long, white beard - meeting the new baby - smooth and innocent - has been adapted in the secular world as a fitting image for the passing of the year. As we say goodbye to the old and usher in the new, what rituals do you practice to deepen and enrich your experience of the passing of time? Here are a few ideas. Maybe you have others.

Star Words

It is not known where the tradition of Star Words began, but this tradition is growing year by year among many congregations. In this tradition, words of intention, challenges to grow or spiritual gifts are written on paper stars. Then, each member of the group draws one star to guide them into the new year. Like the Wise Magi who followed the star in the sky to the Christ Child, pray that your word will lead you through the year until you more fully discover Christ's purpose for you.

Watchwords

A watchword is like a star word, except instead of a single word, a passage of scripture is written on each paper. If you choose this one, get curious about the scripture you are given. What words or phrases stick with you? Read it over several times. You may want to find it in the Bible and read it in context. Make this scripture part of your prayer life by praying it every day for a whole year. How does the watchword change as you live with it? How does it change you?

Letting Go of the Past

The new year is a good time to release what is no longer serving you from the past. Set aside some time to take stock of the past year. What were you doing when you felt God's presence and blessings most strongly? After you have written these thoughts down, ask God to bless what has happened in the past and to bless you in helping to release it. You may want to burn or bury the paper as a symbol of cleansing.

Set an Intention of Gratitude

As you step into the New Year, set an intention to express gratitude more often. Maybe you want to list three things you are grateful for before you go to sleep at night. Maybe you would like to wake up with the intention to express gratitude throughout the day. Maybe you want to be more aware of moments through the day when you feel grateful and express those in the moment.

However you prepare for the New Year, be gentle with yourself and choose one you will enjoy. You will be more likely to keep it up, and the practice will be more impactful that way.

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.



January 1	Glenn Bennecoff
January 1	Michael Nowotarski
January 2	Joan Stettler
January 4	Marian Stettler
January 14	Irene Isamoyer
January 17	Walter Dietrich, Jr.
January 22	Kyle Koller
January 30	Elaine Heffner
February 4	Irene Stauffer
February 17	William Bird
February 19	Ted Silliman
February 19	Carol Bauman
February 20	Carol Kane
February 20	Jacqueline Ziegler
February 20	Liz (Elizabeth) Jones
February 21	Theresa Grim

OUR SYMPATHIES TO...

... the family of Laura Youse.

... the family of Donna Ludwig.



MISSION STATEMENT

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

UPCOMING HOLY COMMUNION

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

January 5	Altar Holy Communion
February 2	Pew Holy Communion



FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The next issue of the newsletter will come out the beginning of February. If you have any information to be included in the February newsletter, please have it in the church office by **January 13th**.