



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

**March
2021**

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REMINDERS

- ◆ The cost for a vase of flowers is \$18.00 and the cost to be a bulletin sponsor is \$8.00. 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 in the rear of the church. The sign-up book and envelopes are currently in the church office. Contact the church office to access them.
- ◆ 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 Marion Angstadt.
- ◆ Sports cleats are not allowed in the church.
- ◆ Refreshments should be kept on the first floor of the church.

THE PASTOR'S PAGE



I am certain that with all the snow and ice we've been hit with this winter (and having to be "locked down" on top of it) that everyone is really looking forward to spring. Every year as winter changes to spring, I get to thinking about how the changing of the seasons mirrors our human life cycle. In late fall, as winter approaches, the world around us starts to feel cold, gray, and bleak. Everything that was fresh and green withers and dies. It's a yearly reminder that we must all someday face what poets have called the "autumn of our lives." Like the leaves that change color in fall, as we get older our hair turns gray. Like the flowers that wrinkle and fade, our skin begins to wrinkle and our health begins to fade. And as we reach the winter of our lives, we see many of our friends and loved ones dying off like the flowers in winter. Like the changing of the seasons, as the winter of our lives approaches things sometimes feel cold, bleak, and dreary.

But there is one thing that always helps us to struggle through each and every winter, and that is the promise of spring. When we're shoveling ourselves out after a snowstorm we like to remind ourselves that, "Spring is just around corner!" What gets us through the cold, harsh winter is the *certainty* that spring is coming; and with it, warmth, sunshine, beauty, and *new life*. And what can get us through the often bleak winter of our lives is God's sure and certain promise that a bright and glorious *new life* is just around the corner for us. That is the great hope that Christ's death and resurrection holds out to us.

But one of the great tragedies of the times in which we live is that our modern scientific worldview has taken away this hope for many people. Many people today think that belief in life after death is just mere wishful thinking and nothing more. But we moderns are certainly not the first skeptics. In his first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul was writing to a group of early Christians who were having a hard time believing that there was really life after death. Here is what Paul said to them:

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. . . If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile . . . Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. [1 Cor. 15:12-19]

Very stark, but very true words. When you get right down to it, the single most important question we all face in life is this: Is the hope of eternal life just

a wishful fantasy, or is it a genuine hope that we can cling to with all certainty in the winter of our lives? Paul addressed the doubts of the Corinthians by pointing to what was for him an absolute fact—Christ’s resurrection. Paul points to the huge number of witnesses who had seen the resurrected Christ: *“He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time . . . then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles”* [1 Cor. 15:5-7].

But what is most significant for Paul is not Christ’s resurrection in and of itself, but what its implications are *for us*. In his letter to the Romans, Paul put it this way: *“For if we have been united with Christ in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his”* [Romans 6:5]. But, as Paul also honestly said to the skeptics in Corinth, if Christ did not rise from the dead, then there is no hope: *“If the dead are not raised, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die’”* [1 Cor. 15:32]. But if we believe that God raised Christ from the dead, then we can with all conviction say along with Paul: *“Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? . . . Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* [1 Cor. 15:54-57].

Looking with hope to a joyous Easter victory celebration over death and disease,

Pastor Jeff

MARCH AND APRIL WORSHIP (tentative)

March 7	Third Sunday in Lent	church 10:15
March 14	Fourth Sunday in Lent	church 10:15
March 21	Fifth Sunday in Lent	church 10:15
March 28	Palm/Passion Sunday	church 10:15
April 1	Maundy Thursday	7:00 P.M.
April 2	Good Friday	7:00 P.M.
April 4	Easter Dawn Service	6.00 A.M.
April 4	Easter Service	10:15 A.M.
April 11	Second Sunday of Easter	church 10:15
April 18	Third Sunday of Easter	church 10:15
April 25	Fourth Sunday of Easter	church 10:15

PRAYER REQUESTS

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

Janet Geiger, Pat Miller, Beatrice Bennecoff, Carolyn Wilttrout, Tracey Lutz, Dave Merkel, Cindy Nowotarski, Marian Stettler, Lisa Walker, Loretta Flicker, Marlene Costello, Barry Miller, Kay Weidner, Bill Howard, Nikki Phillips, Joe Karaisz, Janet Fegely, Anna Bortz, Lucille Zettlemoyer, Gloria Haas, Richard Warmkessel, Steve O'Neil, Ralph & Helen Noll, Mary Kutz, Marilyn & Bill Bird, Lowell Thomas, Karen Weaver, Sylvia Heckler, Gladys Leibold, Althea Moyer, Donna Slotter, Leora Haas, Donna VanDeCar, Mary Jane Williams, Elaine Seaman, Mr. & Mrs. Kermit Kemp, Beverly Keller, Brandon Hamm, Karen Ames, Taylor Moyer, Betty Wilttrout, Joyce Kemp, Ian Miller, Tom Seifert, Elia, Victoria Slotter, Donna Rabert, Deb, Lisa Szarko, Arthur Sell, Niki Nolte, Jamie Jordan, Christopher Mercardo, Jo Corrado, Rayann Roth, Michele Rodriquez, Sue Zimmerman, Renee Wolfe, Kim Markham, Valerie, Drew & Mary Jane Stump, Caitlin Dickey, Frank Knight, Christy Ryan, Lorraine Miller, Judy Redman, Betty Houck, Mary Fox, Larry Hockman, Mary, Betsy, Gary Deder, Gary Sell, Russell Peden, family of Richard Derr, family of Edna Maurer, family of Arlene Oswald, family of Ed VanDeCar, family of Richard Graff, family of Margaret Witman, family of Kenneth Angstadt.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT SOME OF THE EVENTS IN THIS NEWSLETTER MAY NOT HAPPEN DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

Because no committees, organizations, or groups are planning to meet in the building, no monthly calendar is included in the newsletter.

SERVICE VIDEOS

A video recording of our worship service will be uploaded to our church website (zionsunion.org) by early Sunday morning 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.

HELP RESTORE OUR “GRAND OLD LADY”

If you are able, prayerfully consider making a contribution to help pay for the major renovation of our historic Möller pipe organ. Purchased by our forefathers in 1928 (during the Great Depression) at a cost of \$6,000 (almost a million dollars today!), this “grand old lady” celebrated her 92nd birthday in May. She has served us faithfully, but is now having “breathing difficulties” caused by the aging of her wood, leather, and electronic parts. Help us give her a much-needed transplant of her worn-out parts so she can continue to help us lift up our voices in worship and praise for the next century. Mail contributions to the church in the organ envelope included in January’s Church Key or any other envelope. Make any checks out to “Zion’s Union Church Maxatawny”. Put “organ fund” on the memo line.

FLOWER/BULLETIN BOOK

The 2021 Flower and Bulletin sponsor book is available. Call the church office Fridays to sign up for your special dates in 2021. We will continue to take sign-ups for the Altar Flowers and/or Bulletins even though we are not having in-person services. That way we will have sponsors available when the church does resume in-person services. Please do not pay for your flowers or bulletins until we are having services again. You will not be responsible for any flowers and/or bulletins that were sponsored while the church is not having in-person services. Thank you for your co-operation.



SIMPLY GIVING

As we go into 2021, we now have 21 families in our congregation taking advantage of this Direct Deposit program. In the past year, we have received \$38,932 in Current Income and \$9,868 in Benevolence Income through this incentive. This income was a big help in allowing us to keep up with the continuing expenses of the church, even though we were not physically there the majority of the time. Enrollment is easy and can be done anytime throughout the year. Amount adjustments can also be made at any point throughout the year. Information on the program and enrollment forms are on the bulletin board upstairs or any questions may be directed to Peggy Morgan.

FOOD DRIVE

There are still many families in our area struggling so the Church Board has decided to once again have a Lenten food drive to benefit Friend, Inc. It will work differently this year as we are still not physically back in church. Collection of items will run from **February 17th until April 4th**. There will be collection bins outside the main doors **Monday thru Saturday from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.** **They will not be left out overnight or put out when the weather is bad.** Any donated items are appreciated but there is a dire need for canned fruits, vegetables, and meats. We will not be setting a goal this year but items will be counted and the congregation will be kept up to date on how the drive is going. Another way to help is through monetary donations – checks can be made out to the church and designated for “Food Drive” in the subject line. Let’s do what we can to help our neighbors in need.



ANNUAL REPORTS

The 2020 Annual Reports will be available soon at the church or call the church office and one can be mailed to you. Reports will be placed in the mail slots in the Gathering Area for committees, groups, and Church Board to pick up.



SCAM ALERT

Recently some of our members have received emails or text messages asking for gift cards that appear to have come from Pastor Butz. **THESE ARE SCAMS.** If anyone is victim to one of these scams call your local police and report it.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

If you would like to receive an email from the church regarding the cancellation of worship services, please email the church office at zionsunion@verizon.net to be put on the email list. We will not give your email addresses out to anyone. They will only be used for worship service cancellations.

INGATHERING

On the first Sunday of each month the Mission Outreach Committee will continue to collect items to fill bags with food staples for needy children and their families. Thanks so much for your continued support of this important community outreach project. **DO NOT DELIVER** items to the church.



Deliver donations to Cindy O'Neil's home at 250 Church Road, Kutztown.

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		

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME



Daylight Savings Time begins **March 14th**. Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed Saturday night.

CEMETERY CLEAN UP



ALL flower arrangements must be removed from the cemetery by the 3rd Saturday of March. The only exceptions will be the arrangements attached to the top of the tombstones. Cemetery clean-up will take place **March 21st** (weather permitting).



HELPING HAND FUND

The Helping Hand Fund was established to provide financial support for individuals in the congregation who may be experiencing unexpected challenges in their lives. Contributions received go to replenish the fund. Any contributions to the Helping Hand Fund may be mailed to the church. Make check out to "Zion's Union Church Maxatawny". Please put "Helping Hand" on the memo line.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

While we are all missing our Sunday School friends and teachers, the officers have decided we will need to postpone our opening again. Hopefully once church is back on a regular in person schedule, we will then discuss our plans to start up Sunday School again. In the meantime, please find Sunday school lessons and activity pages on the church website.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Our Youth Group has again been selected to receive a donation from the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Kutztown. A check was received for \$1,500.00 to use toward the current activities of the Youth Group and also toward expenses of the upcoming Gathering in 2022.

This generous donation is based, in part, on the programs of the Youth Group which benefit our church and our community.

EASTER FLOWERS

We are offering people the chance to order flowers for Easter. If the church is open for Easter we will use the flowers to decorate the sanctuary. If the church is not open for Easter services, you will be able to pick up your flowers at the church after Easter. Prices are \$8.00 for tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths and \$10.00 for lilies. Any checks should be made out to Zion's Union Church Maxatawny. All orders and payment should be mailed to the church by **March 21st**. Please put "attention Karen" on the outside of the envelope.



EASTER FLOWER SIGN UP

NAMEPHONE

IN HONOR OF or IN MEMORY OF (*circle one*)

NUMBER OF FLOWERS: *Please place number of each on the line.*

..... TULIPS

..... DAFFODILS

..... HYACINTHS

..... LILIES

OPPORTUNITY HOUSE

The Mission Outreach Committee will be supplying the evening meal at Opportunity House on **April 7th**. Volunteers are needed to prepare the meal. Donations of meatloaf, mashed potatoes, green beans, and fresh fruit are needed. Anyone wanting to donate something can contact Cindy O'Neil.

THE LONG-AWAITED COOKBOOK

The Women In Zion cookbook is available to purchase. Cost of the cookbook is \$12.00. Checks should be made out to "Women In Zion". Contact Nancy Fulton if you are interested in purchasing a cookbook.



WOMEN IN ZION

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

NO MEETINGS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.



CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

The Cancer Support Group **WILL NOT MEET** until further notice.

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP GROUP

There are no plans for the Senior Fellowship Group to meet.

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.

SCRABBLE

Scrabble has been cancelled until further notice.

AUDIT NOTICE TO ALL ORGANIZATIONS

Please remember: All organizations in the church should do an internal audit of their books, as stated in the Federated Constitution, by the end of March.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Samantha Hassler was wished Happy Birthday by the WFMZ Morning Crew.
- Ashley DeLong made Distinguished Honor roll for the 2nd quarter at Brandywine Heights.
- Lauren DeLong made the Dean's List at Kutztown University.
- Katelyn DeLong made Distinguished Honors during the second quarter at Brandywine Heights.
- Katelyn DeLong won 1st place in FBLA's Region 9 Business Calculations competition.

FROM THE MAILBOX

Dear Congregation,

Thank you for your collection of food throughout the year for our Food Pantry. Your wonderful donations helped local families have a great year and holiday season! From the clients, staff, and Board of Friend, Inc. Community Services, we sincerely thank you and wish you a successful 2021!



Thank you for all the prayers for Richard throughout his many health issues the last few years.

Shirley Derr

A “small” note meant in a “big” way to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, and calls of concern!

Janet Geiger

CHURCH BOARD MEETING

January 26, 2021

- We will hold a Lenten Food Drive collecting both food and cash donations for Friend, Inc. There will be containers outside the Gathering Area door for depositing donations of food. Also donations by check should be made out to the church with “Food Drive” in the memo. All donations will be forwarded to Friend, Inc. The drive will commence on Ash Wednesday, February 17th and run through Easter Sunday April 4th. All this information will be posted on our Facebook page – Zions Union Church Maxatawny.
- The signed contract for Emery Brothers to begin work on the organ was completed along with a down payment of \$58,000.
- Task force is closely monitoring the COVID numbers which are slowly dropping. The numbers must be at 10 or lower for both Berks and Lehigh counties for us to reopen. Once the numbers are close to 10 planning for reopening will begin.
- The PPP loan has been forgiven. We will not have to repay it.
- We will schedule a congregational meeting as soon as we reopen for services.
- Attention: The board is seeking a member volunteer to serve a vacated position. Prayerfully consider serving your church.

FROM THE RECORD BOOK

Richard R. Derr, age 79, died February 2, 2021 in Mertztown. There were no services.

Edward R. Van De Car, age 72, died February 4, 2021 in Allentown. Service was held privately by the family.

Arlene M. Oswald, age 92, died February 4, 2021 in Mertztown. Immediate family only service was held February 9, 2021 in Ludwick Funeral Home, Kutztown by Rev. Jeffrey J. Butz. Interment was in Zion Maxatawny Union Cemetery, Kutztown.

Kenneth R. Angstadt, 81, died February 11, 2021 in Allentown. Private service on February 15, 2021 by Rev. Jeffrey J. Butz. Interment in Zion Maxatawny Union Cemetery, Kutztown.

BILINGUAL PA GERMAN AND ENGLISH BOOK

Mary Laub published another bilingual book, *Uff der Bauerei: Der Bsuch* (On the Farm: The Visit) which is the 4th in the Uff der Bauerei series. This story continues with Henny, die Katz (the cat) and Spunky, der Hund (the dog). In this story, children visit on the farm and create challenges. What happens? Find out how Henny and Spunky help. And Spunky's favorite dog biscuit recipe is even included in the book! To facilitate learning the Pennsylvania German language, Book 4 has an expanded Glossary with page numbers to easily locate words within the story. Like in previous books, the story is written in PA German with a phonetic spelling and an English translation underneath. An illustration matches the text and there is an audio recording of the story which can be downloaded for free or a CD can be purchased separately. Books can be purchased locally at Dietrich's Meats (they also sell the CDs), Leid's Saddlery, Wooden Bridge Dry Goods, and Burkholder's Farm Market on Topton Road. Books and CDs can be purchased online at Amazon.com and Masthof.com or from Mary. Books are \$10 and CDs are \$5. You can contact Mary at 610-248-2801 or jmlaub@aol.com.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event in-person worship services should resume, worship service cancellations can be found at 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.



PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN ZAMMELAAF VIRTUAL EVENT:

The Pennsylvania German Zammelaaf will sponsor a virtual event this year using their Facebook page. The event will be posted on the Facebook page beginning March 20 until March 27, 2021. There will be two presenters and also 'Eppes fer Yunge' (Something for Youth). Lynn Otto, local historian, will present, 'A Walk With Conrad Weiser.' Doug Madenford and Chris LaRose will present, 'Ask a PA Dutchman.' On March 20 at 1:00 p.m., 'Ask a PA Dutchman' will be a live presentation so viewers can participate virtually. The Pennsylvania German Zammelaaf sponsors an annual event. But, due to COVID concerns, an in-person event is not possible this year. For more information, contact zammelaaf@gmail.com.

CHAPLAIN ON THE FRONT LINE

Ministering to some 700 National Guard and Army troops during New York City's severe COVID-19 outbreak might seem daunting. But not to Anthony Stephens, an ELCA pastor and an Army chaplain. Since 2016, Stephens has served as senior chaplain to Joint Task Force Empire Shield, part of the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs. The task force protects the city's bridges, airports, tunnels, and train stations from security threats, and has also responded to the COVID-19 outbreak. Stephens helped troops deal with their anxiety over serving on the front lines and possibly contracting the virus. He also counseled those with family members or friends who were sick, jobless, or challenged by other hardships. "In many ways, there's a feeling of defenselessness against this virus," Stephens said. "We were all exposed before social distancing, and we can't escape that. There's a sense that you can wash your hands just so many times; that we're in God's hands now." With a Master of Divinity from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Stephens maintains a private counseling practice and, as a pastor, chaplain and counselor, has ministered to people in parishes, prisons, hospitals, counseling centers, and the military. Of all his assignments, the closest to his heart is his current role as a New York Army National Guard chaplain, where he holds the rank of major. "Back in seminary, a Navy recruiter showed up and we talked and prayed," Stephens said. "I knew I'd be called someday to military chaplaincy." Mission Support funds contribute to ELCA chaplain ministry. His diverse ministry experiences have equipped him to address the troops' spiritual needs. "Nothing that I've done in my life has been wasted. My experiences have been used in sermons, to be less judgmental and to give me perspective".

Stories of Faith in Action [ELCA.org/SOFIA](https://www.elca.org/SOFIA)



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.

March 7	Holy Communion (tentative)
April 4 (6:00)	Holy Communion (tentative)
April 4 (10:15)	Holy Communion (tentative)



APRIL NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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