



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

**September
2024**

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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



As we prepare for the end of summer and transition into fall, Zion's Union Church is excited to welcome everyone back. Pastor Jessica Hainley will lead worship on September 1, and on September 8, we invite you to celebrate returning to our fall schedules and welcome new members. Baptism Sunday will be on September 15, and Temple Talk Sunday will be a perfect opportunity to hear about a committee during worship and gather for snacks and conversation after.

Throughout the month, our mission is to support Harvest Home, a cause that unites us to help reduce hunger in our community, with a blessing of our generous donations at the end of the month. Additionally, I invite you to share time with me for the first Tuesday Bible Study, where we'll discuss the first chapter of 2nd Samuel. This will be an excellent opportunity to delve deeper into the scriptures and enrich our understanding.

Mid-Week Reflections with Linda will begin on Wednesday, September 4, offering us a chance to reflect on our faith and share our experiences. Many committees have included gatherings on the calendar, giving us the opportunity to come together in grace and love. By participating in the mission and ministries of Zion's Union Church, you help us explore new ways to enhance God's blooming garden of disciples. Sharing this experience with your friends and family takes our ministry into the world!

Growing in grace we pray for God's guidance. I am truly looking forward to experiencing our first fall season together!

In Christian love,
Pastor Melissa

SPECIAL SUNDAYS IN SEPTEMBER:

- **September 1** – Sunday School Promotion Day.
- **September 1** – Pastor Jessica Hainley supply pastor.
- **September 8** – Sunday School Grandparents Day.
- **September 8** – Youth Choir practice resumes at 8:45 A.M.
- **September 8** – Apple Dumpling Festival meeting after the service.
- **September 15** – Cemetery Board meeting at 9:00 A.M.
- **September 15** – Temple Talk & Refreshments by Sr. Choir.
- **September 22** – Apple Dumpling Festival meeting after the service.

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER WORSHIP

| | | | |
|--------------|--|---------|--------------|
| September 1 | 15 th Sunday after Pentecost/HC | SS 9:00 | church 10:15 |
| September 8 | 16 th Pentecost/New Members | SS 9:00 | church 10:15 |
| September 15 | 17 th Pentecost/Baptism | SS 9:00 | church 10:15 |
| September 22 | 18 th Sunday after Pentecost | SS 9:00 | church 10:15 |
| September 29 | 19 th Pentecost/Harvest Home | SS 9:00 | church 10:15 |
| October 6 | 20 th Sunday after Pentecost/HC | SS 9:00 | church 10:15 |
| October 13 | 21 st Sunday after Pentecost | SS 9:00 | church 10:15 |
| October 20 | 22 nd Sunday after Pentecost | SS 9:00 | church 10:15 |
| October 27 | 23 rd Pentecost/Reformation | SS 9:00 | church 10:15 |

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.

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.

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 | | |

2024-2025 CONFIRMATION PROGRAM

Zion’s Union Confirmation Program for those in grade 7 and beyond and Years 1 & 2 will begin anew this year with a **mandatory Youth & Parent Meeting after worship on Sunday, September 22nd**. There are currently openings in our



year 1 program for those considering Confirmation! Please reach out to Pastor Melissa to sign up your child today! pastormburkhart@gmail.com or 717-951-3016. This year our Confirmation Program will have elements of meetings outside of Sunday Morning with the Pastor and volunteers, retreats, and components of Sunday School, Worship, and service hours. **(a registration form is included in the newsletter.)**

Sunday School for grades 7 & 8 starts on Promotion Sunday, **September 1st at 9 AM** in the Multipurpose Room. Come and Connect with your peers while engaging in Bible Adventures that will enhance the Confirmation Program, while also providing a fun, interactive way to learn about the Bible. Volunteers will lead the class using the Connect Sparkhouse Curriculum.

CHOIR NEWS

Sr. Choir resumes practice on **September 5th at 6:30 P.M.** The Youth Choir resumes practices on **Sunday morning at 8:45 A.M.** beginning **September 8th**.

MUMS FOR HARVEST HOME



The church will be decorating the sanctuary with mums on **September 29th** for our Harvest Home service. The cost is \$7.00 per mum. A tear off sign-up sheet is below and may be placed in the offering plate during worship. See Karen Warmkessel to pay for your mums. You may also mail the sign-up sheet and payment to the church. Any checks should be made out to Zion’s Union Church Maxatawny. Deadline to order your mums is **September 15th**.

MUMS SIGN UP

NAME

NUMBER OF MUMS

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

.....

HARVEST HOME COLLECTIONS

On Sunday, **September 29th** we will observe our annual Harvest Home celebration. It is a time that we offer thanks to God for providing us with “daily bread” during a time that we are surrounded by the plantings of spring being harvested. We show our thankfulness for that not only by gathering for worship on that day, but also by giving actual offerings of non-perishable food items and supplies for infants that we then donate to a local food pantry. Those donations extend our appreciation to God beyond that one morning, as we give help in the lives of those of our local communities who might not be quite as blessed by those basic things as we are. Here’s the collection schedule for the Sundays in September.



- Sunday, September 1st** – cans/bottles of vegetables, fruits, soups, meats
- Sunday, September 8th** – boxed items of cereals, pastas, rice products
- Sunday, September 15th** – diapers, boxed/bottled baby foods and cereal, as well as other supplies for infants
- Sunday, September 22nd** – any other non-perishable food items
- Sunday, September 29th** – any other non-perishable food items

We are also collecting Weis gift cards throughout the month that will be used to purchase turkeys for holidays for needy families.

ALSO – please consider attaching a dollar bill to each item you donate. The monies collected can multiply the offerings we give many times over. Food banks have connections to places to purchase food in “bulk” and so our individual dollars buy many more supplies. Containers for your Harvest Home offerings are located in the Gathering Area.

NEIGHBORS IN NEED



Sunday, **October 6th**, we will be receiving the Neighbors In Need special mission offering. Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. In 2024, the Neighbors in Need theme is **“Mental Health Justice For All!”**

FIRST TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

First Tuesday Bible Study will resume on **September 3rd from 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.** We will discuss the first chapter of 2nd Samuel. All are welcome.

FROM THE MAILBOX

Dear Zion's Union Church,

Thank you so much for your support in our work! It is such a blessing to see God's faithful promise to care for the poor and those in need, in action, through the support from generous partners like you! Your kindness has a profound impact that will echo through generations to come. Thank you for being a faithful partner in fighting homelessness. We look forward to your next clothing drive for the Mission and Lighthouse! May you be blessed by blessing others!



Thank you,
Diane Schenk
Director of Hope Thrift Distributions

Dear Zion's,

Thank you everyone who sent me cards and prayers during my recovery from a full knee replacement. You can always count on the Zion's Maxatawny congregation to lift you up.

Thanks again,
Kim Miller

Zion's Union Church,

Heartfelt Thanks. Thank you so much for the certificate and gift card for my graduation. I appreciate all of the support!

Best,
Sydney Sheetz

Thank you for all of your prayers, cards, and kind words in the recent death of our sister.

Sharon and Carol Leiby

Thank you all for the prayers, calls, and cards of concern and encouragement. It has been a long road to recovery, but it helps to know my church family is here for me. God bless and love you all!

Tracey Lutz

THE KINDNESS PROJECT DONATION DRIVE

The Kindness Project is a non-profit organization that was established to support the growing needs of foster and adoptive families throughout Eastern PA. TKP fills a much-need niche to support children and teens who are coming into foster homes with immediate needs. They offer “The Kindness Exchange” which is a special boutique where families have the opportunity to obtain clothing, shoes, baby equipment, furniture, diapers, formula, hygiene items, school supplies, and other necessary supplies at no cost. They rely strictly on in-kind donations and monetary contributions.

WIZ hosted a baby shower in August and collected baby items for TKP. A representative from their organization will be the speaker at our November 10th ThankOffering Service. *Throughout the month of October*, we will be collecting items to donate to this most worthy cause. This will be a collection of items for all age children...clothes, shoes, baby essentials (diapers, bedding, bibs, pacifiers), duffle bags, hygiene items (deodorant, hair products, lotions, body wash, make-up), gift cards. Pajamas, sweats, shoes, and hoodies are always in demand.

As of 2024, there are almost 15,000 PA children in foster care and the numbers continue to grow. Every donation makes a difference. We ask that you prayerfully consider helping WIZ out with this project. Thank you for your generosity and community spirit.

VETERANS RECOGNITION

During the WIZ Thank Offering Service on November 10th, veterans will be recognized and honored. Pictures of members who are currently serving or have previously served in the Armed Forces will be displayed in the Gathering Area. Photos can be brought to church and put in the WIZ mailbox or sent to Linda Ballew-Johnson at lbj11@ptd.net. The name of the person as well as the branch of the service in which they served should be written on the back of the photo. Photos with members dressed in their uniforms would be appreciated, if available. Photos of the photos may be taken to submit. Photos will be returned after the service. Deceased members should also be included, if photos are available.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

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

SANCTUARY IMPROVEMENT TEAM FORMED

It's exciting news! A Sanctuary Improvement Team has been formed as an extension of the Property Committee and Church Board proactively looking to take care of our beloved church building. This team was born out of a desire to assure that all updates to the sanctuary are evaluated and considered before carpet is eventually purchased to match the newly renovated balcony. Additionally, this team is looking at how our sanctuary has evolved over the years in preparation of our 200th anniversary. Please join this team in spirit as they prayerfully discern what possibilities could bring Zion Maxatawny Church attendees more meaningful worship opportunities in our beautiful sanctuary going forward.

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.

PLASTIC BAGS PROJECT

The group will meet **September 18th, October 2, and October 16th** from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. to weave plastic bags into mats. All are encouraged to participate. 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 leaving are wanted. We are unable to use produce bags, plastic from cases of water, toilet paper plastic, etc.** If anyone can flatten the bags and cut at home, please find a weaver and we will show you after a church service how quick the bags can be prepared. It's a great activity while watching tv, relaxing.

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP GROUP

The Senior Fellowship Group will meet **September 23rd and October 28th** 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.



WOMEN IN ZION

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

- September 9 Meeting at 1:00 P.M., Nancy Fulton's trip to New Zealand and Australia.
- October 7 Meeting at 12 noon. Pot luck lunch, Pollyanna reveal, Choose new one.
- October 22 Meal at Bern Church.



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

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 **September 11th at Jaks** and **October 9th at Jaks**. Notify Nancy Fulton if you are able to attend.

APPLE DUMPLING FESTIVAL

Apple Dumpling Festival - **October 12th from 9:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.** We will be taking pre-orders of apple dumplings the month of September before and after service. The cost remains \$5.00 each. We are also seeking raffle donations and crafters. We have secured two food trucks, **Top of the Hill Grill and The Perk-up Truck**. On **September 22nd** I will post a sign up for help during the week of the festival with setting up the all-purpose room, helping crafters bring in their products and of course making apple dumplings. We are looking forward to a great event. Any questions, please contact Traci Gehringer at 610-349-8434.

Our meetings are **September 8th, September 22nd, and October 6th**.

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. **September 1st** the theme is Promises of God and facilitator is Keith Wuchter.

MYSTERY VOLUNTEER

He was born in Sellersville, PA and grew up in the out skirts of Kutztown. He rode bike a lot, played baseball, and collected beer cans. He graduated from Kutztown High School and went to some colleges, Northampton Community College, and RACC.

When he was 15, his brother and some friends and he rode their bikes to Harrisburg to watch ice jams and had to get a van ride home.

He is not married but is engaged to a wonderful, caring person.

He has worked most of his life in maintenance positions.

He has 2 brothers and 3 children.

His 2 dogs, one was 18 years old and the other 17 years old, went to heaven last year.

His hobbies include hiking, biking, and woodworking and he is on 2 committees at Zion's.

MYSTERY MEMBERS

She was born in Kutztown and he was born in Baltimore, Maryland. She went to high school and he went to high school and trade school. When they got married and were returning from their honeymoon, he got a ticket for speeding.

She was employed at Kutztown Area School District for 40 years in the cafeteria and as a secretary. He was in the finance field.

They have many, many, many family members. They have no pets.

Her hobbies include sending greeting cards to brighten someone's day, baking, and walking. He enjoys gardening.

They both taught Sunday School and were on the choir for many years. He served on a call committee and she is active in WIZ and serves on several committees.

SENIOR DINNER

The Senior Dinner is being planned for **November 3rd**, following the worship service. Members of the congregation who are over 70 years of age will be invited to attend, as well as individuals who were confirmed 54, 53, and 50 years ago. Anyone willing to assist should notify Lori Arndt at 610-334-6427 or Nancy Fulton at 484-357-8024.

CHURCH BOARD MEETING

June 25, 2024

- On August 24th the board will be having a retreat to focus on strategy and annual plan.
- On August 4th there will be a congregational meeting regarding the heating system update.

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF ZION'S

In December 2026, we will be celebrating the 200th Anniversary of our church. Committees are being organized to plan this special event. Members who are interested in helping with the plans for the celebration should notify Greg Haas.

REGISTER TAPES

Radcliffe's Super Value and Redner's Market provide a one percent rebate to Zion's based on receipts submitted to them during the year. **For the church to receive credit from Redner's Market, members and friends must obtain a card from the courtesy desk to enroll in the "Save A Tape Program". The card is presented at the register prior to checking out for the rebate to be valid as indicated by the "Save A Tape" notation on the receipt.**

Radcliffe's does not require a card to enroll in the program. Tapes for both Radcliffe's and Redner's may be deposited in the boxes in the rear of the church.

FROM THE RECORD BOOK

Funerals: *Darlene M. Schuler*, 71, of Allentown, PA, died July 24, 2024.

Visitation and a Memorial Service by Rev. Melissa A. Burkhart was July 30, 2024 in Hildenbrand Funeral Home, Kutztown. Interment was in Hope Cemetery, Kutztown.

Mary E. Kutz, 92, of Lyons Station, PA, died August 5, 2024.

Visitation and Memorial Service by Rev. Melissa Burkhart was August 15, 2024 in Zion's Union Church Maxatawny. Interment was in Zion Maxatawny Union Cemetery, Kutztown.

THE KEYSTONE WORKING GROUP AND POSSIBLE MERGER OF THE FOUR PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCES INTO ONE

The Keystone Working Group has been discussing a potential merger involving all four conferences of the United Church of Christ for nearly two years. This merge would help raise awareness and provide support for current ministries and resources, as well as create opportunities for new ministries to receive support from a wider geographic area. These new initiatives might focus on justice or mercy, and reach a more diverse and inclusive audience, and much more.

Additionally, because together, we are stronger. The funds from OCWM (Our Churches Wider Mission) are decreasing as our churches are reducing and planning for the future. It is more conducive to sustainable growth to merge rather than needing to find a way when there is less of one. God called us to be One Church, One Body, One in Christ, and One in Love.

There are five associations within the PSEC. We are part of the Covenant Association of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference. In the fall, we hold meetings with other congregations, within each association sending two delegates and the pastor. These designated individuals will participate in the Conference and Association meetings to gather information, vote and share information with our congregation. Lisa Krause, Linda Ballew-Johnson (ELCA Synod meeting), and I provided reports from our respective Spring Meetings.

As the vote on merging all four conferences approaches on November 9, it is crucial for the Zion's Union congregation to fully understand what this merger could mean for us. The Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, including the Associate Minister of Search and Call, Rev. Kevin McLemore, Brea Rarick, and Conference Minister Rev. Bill Worley, have been essential in our congregation's search for a new pastor.

Each of the four conferences will vote separately at their own Fall Conference Meeting on November 9 for the merger as the Keystone Conference. Information on the strategic planning subject to a "yes" vote can be found at <https://psec.org/keystone/>. Here you can find meeting summaries, merger process details, General Synod Resolution, and supporting documents on the PSEC website. Fall town hall meetings will provide more information about the November 9 vote and the merger. Support and resources are available to help as we prepare for the vote.

I am happy to answer your questions. It's important for our church to be informed about the broader UCC community and send knowledgeable delegates to vote in its best interest.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pastor Melissa Burkhart

PRAAYER REQUESTS

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

Donald Mertz, 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, John Laird, Karen Cochran, Bev, Eric, Jenni Juntunen, James Ely, Jamie Albanese, Alexis, Jim, Deb P., Beth S., Drew Stump, Linda Carter, Sparky Grace, Chris Pinkerton, Laurel Rudy, Grayson Rudy, Livvy Rudy, Sherry S., Joseph Karaisz Sr., Jeremy Crum, Chad, Chris, Laura G., Keith Egley, Mark Miller, Leila, Bruce Fritzinger, Sherri Gehringer, Vera, Ian Miller, Ely, Rosemary LaFratte, Paige Sechler, Owen Lamendola, Elia, Joanne Pauley, Sarah Johnson, Chris Szarko, Victoria Slotter, Regen Zimmerman, Karen Ames, Donna Rabert, Tom Seifert, Rayann Roth, Valerie, Lorraine Miller, Christopher Mercardo, Christy Ryan, Michele Rodriquez, Judy Redman, Frank Knight, Betty Houck, Mary, Betsy, family of Yvonne Alesi, family of Darlene Schuler, family of Mary Kutz.

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.

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.

| | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| September 7 | James Laub |
| September 8 | Linda Ballew-Johnson |
| September 11 | Patricia Kutz |
| September 18 | George Leiby |
| September 20 | Bettina (Tina) Ehrig |
| September 22 | David Merkel |
| September 24 | Evelyn Dietz |
| September 24 | Sharon Bennecoff |



| | |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| September 25 | Roger Bollinger |
| September 27 | Barry Miller |
| September 27 | David Ehrig |
| October 3 | Dean Wetzel |
| October 8 | Patti Derr |
| October 13 | Paul Heffner |
| October 22 | Grace Haas |
| October 23 | William & Karen Howard (59 wed) |
| October 23 | Mary Laub |
| October 26 | Larry Stamm |
| October 30 | Richard & Grace Haas (59 wed) |
| October 30 | Jean Harter |

OUR SYMPATHIES TO...

... the family of Yvone Alesi.
... the family of Mary Kutz.

... the family of Darlene Schuler.



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.

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| September 1 | Pew Holy Communion |
| October 6 | Altar Holy Communion |



OCTOBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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