

 Zion’s United Church of Christ

 209 Chestnut Street

 Pottstown, PA 19464

 (610) 323-3637

 Rev. Austin Chinault, II - Pastor

 Keith Clattenburg – Organist/Choir Director

 Laura Clattenburg – Music Coordinator

 Kimberly Kulesa - Office Administrator

 Frank Moser - Custodian

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**Recap 2017- 2024, Zion’s UCC (continued)**
**February 2020**

I pick up on my seven-year ministry at Zion’s in February 2020.  I had just returned from an awesome pilgrimage to the Holy Land sponsored by the Knights Templar and our local lodge in Pottstown.  The world was about to learn of the horrific nature of the COVID-19 pandemic.  I was exposed to the virus in Israel, on the airplane and in New York City.  Completely unaware at the time, I became ill for the first month upon my return, but did not experience any serious breathing problems.  Diane also was ill with similar symptoms.

By March 2020, we were no longer worshipping in the sanctuary due to the safety concerns for our members during the pandemic.  This raised serious questions about how we would worship, carry out our ministry—and for the future of Zion’s.  We had very limited technological skills and were not live-streaming nor on Zoom.  So we began to investigate how to broadcast our services through the internet, with a very steep learning curve!  Many members stepped up to help, it was a real team effort led by Keith and Laura—and my wife Diane.  Chase, Isa, Adrienne, Dave, Dusty, Joan, Jim, Brian, Dan, Tony and others were always willing to help keep our church alive in Sunday School, worship and fellowship.  The congregation viewed the videos, worshiped at home and gathered elements to commune in an emergency situation.  They shared the links with others so that our worship participation actually increased during the pandemic!  Once again God provided for our needs in the wilderness.

What joy there was at that Easter of 2021 when we gathered in the parking lot for an outdoor communion as we tenderly worked our way back into our blessed sanctuary.

Our faithful members mailed in their offerings so that we did not suffer sever financial hardship during this difficult time.  The COVID pandemic presented serious challenges to Zion’s UCC, yet in some ways we became stronger and developed new ways to communicate the gospel that would not have happened otherwise.  “God works for good in all things through those who love God.”

As we are coming through and learning to live with COVID, several important new ministries have developed:

We formed a partnership with Trinity to worship together the first Sunday each month by alternating facilities.  This arrangement has been in place for nearly two years and I love these services.  The attendance, the music, the lively worship and the fellowship are a real Godsend!  (Continued on page 3)

**Sunday Worship Hours**

**10:15 a.m. – Sanctuary**

**9:00 – Intergenerational Sunday School**

**April 7 - Worship with Trinity at Zion’s, 10:15 a.m.**

**Special Services & Events**

**Consistory Meeting -**

April 8, 7:00 p.m.

**Ping Pong and Pizza –** Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.

**Handbell Choir Rehearsal -**

Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.

**Choir Rehearsal –** Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.

**Community Meal at Emmanuel Lutheran -**

April 26 at 12:00 p.m.

***The Tymes* – April 2024**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Altar Guild:** **Julie Rhoads****Financial****Secretary:** **Elaine Richards** | **April 7** **Joint worship at Zion’s**Lectionary Readings:Psalm 1331 John 1: 1-2: 2John 20: 19-31Sermon: by Rev. John Folk | **April 14****Pastor Kris**Lectionary Readings: Acts 3: 12-191 John 3: 1-7Luke 24: 36b-48Sermon:“Christ Among Us” by Pastor Kris | **April 21**Lectionary Readings:Psalm 231 John 3: 16-24John 10: 11-18Sermon:  “Enfolded by Love”  | **April 28**Lectionary Readings:Acts 8: 26-401 John 4: 7-21John 15: 1-8Sermon:  “The Christ Connection” |
| **Financial Assistants** | Julie Rhoads | Dusty Rhoads | Diane Andres | Brenda Ross |
| **Head Usher/ Ushers** | Craig Strunk, Head Usher; Joan Miller, Dusty Rhoads | Susan Embody | Jim Miller | Jen Young |

**Pastor Recap 2017-2024,**

**Zion’s UCC – Continued**

What joy when Keith and Bill play piano and organ together.  They are a perfect team and add so much to our worship life.  This cooperation is a highlight of my time as your pastor.

We developed a covenant with the CCLU (Spanish speaking community) of Pottstown, so that their headquarters and after school program are located in our Chapel Building.  To me this is huge and a sacred use of our building space.  It is one of the most important things to take place during the years of my ministry.  Thank you, Zion’s.

Three other ministries have also served our community in very important ways.  Your commitment to serve people without housing in Pottstown has been wonderful.  We opened our doors when Kork ran the Shelter when I first arrived.  And now we are strong supporters of Beacon of Hope.

We opened our doors to Toys for Tots when they needed a staging area before Christmas.  This is a tremendous ministry that reaches hundreds (perhaps thousands) of children in Pottstown and our surrounding area.  You have a strong positive impact on the lives of many families.

Zion’s CareBag ministry to the infusion center of Pottstown is extremely important.  The testimony of many who have received these gifts speaks to the spiritual strength they deliver to people facing severe physical issues.  In these, and many other, ways you are sharing the love and compassion of Christ to a world in need of “good news.”

I could go on to mention ping pong fellowship, my love for visitation and home communion, the passing of so many beloved Saints whom we miss, and all the fun we had in so many different settings—

Continued - but you get the idea.  It has been a great 7 years.  You are a wonderful congregation filled with dedicated and beautiful people.  We love you and will miss you and will continue to pray for you as we hope you pray for us.  And someday, God has promised we will be together forever in the eternal bliss of the everlasting arms.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Austin and Diane

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**Consistory Highlights**

Consistory met on Monday, March 11th. The main focus for Consistory at this time is to find a replacement for Pastor Austin, who is retiring at the end of April. A transition team has been formed and is moving forward to accomplish this. We will also be making changes to our Facebook page for or livestream since at the present time it is listed under Diane Chinault. We will be changing this to Zion’s name. We will be asking for a few volunteers willing to help with the live stream each week. We also plan to update our website which has not been done in many years. Our next meeting will be held on April 8th.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Ross, Secretary

 **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

The deadline for the May issue of the Tymes is April 20th. Please send articles to: zionsuccoffice@comcast.net

**SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS**

There will be no Sunday School during April. We will be using this time to help our youth with their Confirmation education. We will meet in the Chapel building in the classroom next to the office at 9:00 am.

Joan L Miller, Superintendent

 **Pottstown Happenings**

What is happening in the borough and a Pottstown newsletter can be accessed at [www.Pottstown.org](http://www.Pottstown.org)

 **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

 April 5 - Barbara Ziegler

 14 – David Bartolini

 15 - Virginia Gaudiello

 Laura Clattenburg

 18 - Vickie Kulp

 19 - Carroll Bechtel, III

 29 - Barry Embody

 **Happy Anniversary !**

 Craig and Sandy Strunk

 20 years on April 17

 Tom Craver and Rev. Jan Rose

 36 years on April 30

**UPDATE ON 2023 POTATO FILLING SALE**

Thank you to all who helped organize, make and those who purchased the Potato Filling made in November 2023. The profits to date are $1,294.75.

**UPDATE ON 2023 COOKIE WALK**

Thank you to the many bakers, crafts persons, and cookie buyers who made the Cookie Walk very successful in our first year undertaking this event. Thank you also to those who organized this event to ensure it ran smoothly. The profits for this event were $1,610.30.

**Redner’s Receipts!**

Please place your **Redner’s Save-a-Tape** **receipts** in the box in the lobby of the Sunday School building. We need the entire register tape in order to get credit. Also’ it has to have the words Save-a-Tape on it. Redner’s will donate 1% of sales to our church.

Placing your grocery receipts in the box is an easy way to help Zion’s!!

**Redner’s and Giant Market**

 **Gift Cards Sales**

Members and friends may purchase a Giant and/or Redner’s Gift card to use for groceries or gas. Denominations of cards come in $25, $50, or $100. There is no charge to you but our church receives 5% of the grocery card purchase price.

Gift cards to Redner’s or Giant are available Sundays in the Christian Education building or during the week through the church office.

**Announcement**

We are looking for volunteers to help stream our Sunday morning services online.  We will need camera operators and computer operators.  It is our plan to create a schedule that rotates through the month.  If you are interested in helping, please reach out to Brian Miller at 484-941-4842 or bmiller121611@gmail.com.

**Cluster News**

Please call 610-970-5995 to schedule a delivery date in advance to dropping off donations.

Donations are accepted at our Outreach Center located at 57 N. Franklin Street in Pottstown Monday – Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

We are currently only accepting the items listed below. If you have questions, please call 610-970-5995.

Our housing team is in need of move-in items:

toilet paper
paper towels
trash bags
trash cans
linens (twin and queen sets)
bath towels and wash clothes
laundry detergent
dish soap
dish towels
cleaning supplies
pots/pans, utensils
broom/dust pan
mop/ mop bucket

***CareBag List for Pottstown Infusion Center***

Church folks are crocheting, sewing, kitting and diamond painting items for the Pottstown Infusion Cancer Center. There is a display in the narthex of the sanctuary of a sample Care Bag. Some of the items included are prayer shawls or lap blankets, knitted hats, scarves, word searches, journal books, coloring books, colored pencils, nail clippers, angel key chains, travel size hand lotion, travel size Biotine mouthwash, ChapStick, and inspirational notes.

Monetary contributions are also welcome to purchase supplies. There is a bin in the narthex as well as one in the entryway ofthe Chapel Building for contributions.

**Beacon of Hope Homeless**

**Shelter 2023-2024 Donations**

Pottstown Beacon of Hope, in collaboration with borough leadership, St. Paul’s UCC, St. James Lutheran, Bethel Community Church, Congregation Hesed Shel Emet, First Baptist

Church, Christ’s Episcopal Church, and First Presbyterian Church, has an overnight warming center for the winter season. From November 1, 2023, to May 1, 2024, the center will operate daily from 7 pm to 7 am, providing a warm refuge for individuals experiencing homelessness, rotating between houses of faith and churches each month.

If you interested in volunteering, purchasing merchandise, browsing our Amazon Wishlist, making a donation visit the website: [www.pottstownbeaconofhope.org](http://www.pottstownbeaconofhope.org) or call 424-625-1818 for more information. You can send your gifts to Zion’s (marked homeless donation), made payable to Zion’s UCC. We will forward the donations received to Beacon of Hope to help with this important ministry to our neighbors.

**From the Conference Minister:**

 (taken from the PSEC eNews dated March 19)

Several weeks ago, I sent out letters of invitation to the retired clergy event happening April 17th at St. James UCC in Limerick. Among the many responses to those was one from Rev. Bob Polk, who will turn 96 this May. He sent a very kind note with a copy of his new memoir titled Fly in The Buttermilk: One Black Man's Odyssey ([https://a.co/d/7Mhbaz3](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001FTCsN_qjGaEfX-EdJuZWxGhwxX14c_O9NB7kGfN0MjMvGPHcKOQtITToRrZSRVMl05ZSjIIVt7T2XXHC5r_8n4Gc7wmq4_4qkYoat80OuB19hdSMmnOBmVcpr7ZILTgCvPHHkjuFgrt178LP9eDBTg==&c=ax1y73HNzhTgeK6lXqkFauUWwicrXZK_s8HbTc_NpLo_WSMNXSNeMQ==&ch=g7MVmjub2f1oZSOC8BFWOPUcIX1aGEzId6oDGii09Gw_aZnuD4vTLw==)). In it, Rev. Polk describes his time from 1955-1960 as the 48th official black resident (as he was told) of the state of North Dakota. It is, he says, ‘the story of a young, black, urban, recently graduated seminary student who dared to accept his first call as a pastor to a tiny and decidedly white, rural parish.’ He also shares stories of his time as Youth Director at the Minot YMCA for over 300 teens in the nearly all white state of North Dakota. He wonders whether his presence made a difference in the lives of the white youth and adults he met (I am beyond confident that it did).

I’ve only started to read the book and I look forward to the possibility of conversation with Bob about it. But even from the Preface, it was not much of a leap to see the connections between the courage, vulnerability, patience and grace required of him as he embarked on his ministry in Minot and the courage, vulnerability, patience and grace required by Jesus as he embarked on his journey to Jerusalem. Moving into places where people are different and even threatening takes guts. That is where God constantly called our ancestors in faith. Their faith inspires us still — as do the people in our day who continue to follow their lead. People like Rev. Bob Polk.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus moves forward toward enemies who plot his death. He also goes to Jerusalem to fail his followers. He moves towards confrontation, pain, and the reality that he would let down friends and acquaintances who laid many lofty expectations upon him. But he went anyway.

If we’re going to do great things, we need to be willing to dare to do great things. This demands us to bear risk: risking failure, risking disappointing others, and disappointing ourselves. Even risking our safety. I look for the people who do that and rejoice when I meet them. They are in our pews and in our pulpits; in our Associations and Conferences and around our United Church of Christ. With that assurance, I can face the horrors of Holy Week certain that we may live in a Good Friday world.

‘But Sunday’s coming.’

May God bless you on your journey,

Rev. Bill Worley

Conference Minister

|  | **April 2024** |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sun** | **Mon** | **Tue** | **Wed** | **Thu** | **Fri** | **Sat** |
|  | 1  | 2  | 3 Wednesday Crew, QuiltersPing Pong and Pizza, 5:30 pm, Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 pmChoir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm | 4  | 5  | 6  |
| 7 Service with Trinity at Zion’s, 10:15 amCommunion | 8 Consistory Meeting, 7:00 pm | 9  | 10 Wednesday Crew, QuiltersPing Pong and Pizza, 5:30 pm, Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 pmChoir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm | 11  | 12  | 13  |
| 14  | 15 Tax Day (Taxes Due) | 16  | 17 Wednesday Crew, QuiltersPing Pong and Pizza, 5:30 pm, Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 pmChoir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm | 18  | 19  | 20 May newsletter deadline  |
| 21  | 22 Earth Day | 23  | 24 Administrative ProfessionalsWednesday Crew, QuiltersPing Pong and Pizza, 5:30 pm, Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 pmChoir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm | 25  | 26 Arbor DayCommunity Meal at Emmanuel, 12:00 pm | 27  |
| 28 Pastor Austin’s last Sunday | 29  | 30  |  |

**Zion’s United Church of Christ**

**209 Chestnut Street**

**Pottstown, PA 19464**



 **Newsletter**

He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said.

Come, see the place where he lay.

Matthew 28: 6-7