

 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

 **Those serving this month**

**Sunday Worship Hours**

**10:15 a.m. – Sanctuary**

**December 3 - Worship with Trinity at Zion’s, 10:15 a.m.**

**9:00 - Intergenerational Sunday School every Sunday except December 17**

**Special Services & Events**

**Cookie Walk – December 2**

**Consistory Meeting -**

December 11, 7:00 p.m.

**Advent Bible Study –** December 13 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. at Zion’s

**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 -**

December 22 at 12:00 p.m.

﻿Dear Congregation:

We enter the last month of 2023 with full anticipation of winter weather and the holy season of Advent/Christmas.  It has been an eventful year of ministry, mission and care for our family of God in 2023.  I continue to be thrilled that we have opened our facilities to the CCLU after school program.  This vital ministry improves the lives of the children in our community and makes a healthier environment in Pottstown.  Additionally, we are providing space to store “Toys for Tots” to be distributed in our city at Christmas.  These are important outreach programs that make this a better place to live.

Recently, we experienced wonderful fellowship while peeling potatoes and making potato filling as well as ham salad.  These “work” opportunities are more valuable for the good will they promote than the funds they raise.  (But, of course, by God’s direction we put the funds to good use!)  Our Christmas Cookie Walk—Cookies and More, will prove to provide similar fun occasions on December 2 in our Chapel Building.  Many thanks to all the cookie makers. 🙏🏾

We have received new members this year who enhance our expression of the body of Christ beyond measure.  Praise be to God for the good things happening in our midst.

Perhaps most important of all is our continuing partnership and Joint Worship services with Trinity on the first Sunday each month.  We see great potential in these joint efforts which may also include programs with Emmanuel Lutheran Church in the future.  Our three congregations have begun such discussions.  As they say, “Stay tuned!”

Please note these things this month:

—Zion’s is invited to a special concert with the ***Coventry Singers*** at Trinity UCC on December 3 at 3 PM.  This will follow our Joint Worship that morning at Zion’s.

—On Sunday Christmas Eve (December 24) Zion’s will conduct ***only*** an evening candlelight service at 6:30 PM.  This means there will be no Sunday morning service on Christmas Eve.  (BTW:  I am looking for a “Mary and Joseph” to carry baby Jesus in to lay Him in the manger when we read Luke 2 on Christmas Eve.  If you have grandchildren or know of others who might like to do this, please let me know.  We call this the Blessing of the Crèche which adds a lot to our service.  Thanks.)

God bless you as we look forward to serving our living Savior into a new year—2024!

Merry Christmas!

Pastor & Diane

***The Tymes* – December 2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Altar Guild:** **Everyone****Financial****Secretary:** **December 3 – Elaine Richards****December 10, 17, 24, 31 – Julie Rhoads** | **December 3**  **Joint Worship** **at Zion’s** **Pastor Marti Preaching**Lectionary Readings:Isaiah 64: 1-9 (Laura Clattenburg)I Corinthians 1: 3-9 (Laura)Mark 13: 24-37Sermon:  by Pastor Marti (Advent I)(3:00 PM Coventry Singers Concert at Trinity) | **December 10** **With Pastor Kris**Lectionary Readings:Isaiah 40: 1-11 (Susie Hayden)2 Peter 3: 8-15a (Susie)Mark 1: 1-8Theme: “Messengers of Hope” | **December 17****Advent III****Confirmation Class meets**Lectionary Readings:Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11 (Mary Cresswell)I Thessalonians 5: 16-24 (Mary)John 1: 6-28Sermon: “The Spirit of the Lord is Upon You” | **December 24****Christmas Eve** **Evening Candlelight Service only, 6:30 p.m.**Lectionary Readings:Isaiah 62: 6-12 (Dusty Rhoads)Titus 3: 4-7 (Dusty)Luke 2: 1-20Sermon: “Salvation is Born” | **December 31****New Year’s Eve**Lectionary Readings:Isaiah 61: 10–62: 3 (Craig Strunk)Galatians 4: 4-7 (Craig)Luke 2: 22-40Sermon:  “Child of God—2024” |
| **Financial Assistants** | Louise Griffiths | Craig Strunk | Susan Embody | Joan Miller | Joan Miller |
| **Head Usher/ Ushers** | Jen Young – Head Usher; Jim Whisler, Dusty Rhoads | Dusty Rhoads | Jim Miller | Craig Strunk | Susan Embody |

 

**Consistory Highlights**

Consistory met on Monday, November 13th. Pastor Chinault has asked Consistory to be able to participate in a mission trip to Costa Rica from January 9 to the 21, 2024. Consistory approved his request. Pastor Kris will cover the worship service for him. It was decided that we will hold our Christmas Eve service at 7pm, music starting at 6:30pm. We will ask Trinity if they plan to hold a morning service that day that we can join with them. Brenda read a thank you note from Pastor Austin and Diane thanking Zion’s for all the support during his father’s illness and passing. Most Consistory members (still waiting to hear from one person) have agreed to serve another year except for Connie Griesemer. In addition, Louise Griffiths has agreed to serve. Installation for Consistory will be during our January 7, 2024 worship service. Our Congregational meeting will be held immediately after the worship service on November 19th. Joan informed us there will be an Advent workshop with the children and anyone else interested during Sunday School on November 26th. Finally, representatives from Narcotics Anonymous were present at the beginning of the meeting to ask if they could hold a leadership meeting in our building one Sunday a month. We have requested they provide us with proof they are covered by insurance and an agreement will be drawn up between Zion’s and NA. They have offered to compensate us each time they are here, amount to be determined. In addition, a member from Zion’s will need to present each month to unlock the building, stay during the meeting and then lock up when they are done. Several Consistory members have already volunteered to do this.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Ross, Secretary

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

The deadline for the January issue of the Tymes is December 19th. Please send articles to: zionsuccoffice@comcast.net

**SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS**

Sunday School for youth and adults will be held at 9:00 am. The third week of the month will be Confirmation Class for the youth and there is no Sunday School that week. We are an intergenerational class and meet in the classroom next to the office in the chapel building. Lessons are usually based on the weekly lectionary with great discussions. All are welcome!

A special thank you to our youth and several adults who gathered to make Christmas cards for our shut-ins this year.

Also, thank you to Susan Embody for making the nativity pieces and Jim Griesemer who made the stables to complete the creches given to our youth over the years. Your dedication to this ongoing gift to our youth is greatly appreciated!

Joan L Miller, Superintendent

**2024 Offering Envelopes**

The 2024 envelopes are available. **Please, stop by the church office and take yours to help save on mailing costs.** Kim is in the office on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings. The remainder will be mailed towards the end of December. If you do not receive yours by the New Year, please, call the church office.

**Cluster News**

Are you interested in donating holiday gifts? We invite you to join us in our mission by donating age-appropriate holiday gifts for children up to 17 years old. Please note, donated gift cards will be made available to families with teens. Donated gift cards should not exceed $25 in value and be for local stores that are accessible to families. Suggested stores are: Ulta, Target, Walmart, Family Dollar, Ross, TJ Max, Burlington, Bath and Body.

All holiday gift donations will be accepted at our Outreach Center located at 57 North Franklin Street in Pottstown. Wednesday, December 6th at 4:00 p.m. is the delivery deadline. Please contact Patricia at pshepherd@pottstowncluster.org or call 610-970-5995 to sign up as a holiday gift donor and schedule a delivery date and time.

**2023 Offering Information**

Please note that all 2023 donation envelopes received in the office by Tuesday, January 2, 2024. All donations after this date will be recorded as 2024 donations.

**Food Security**

Every Monday at 4:00 p.m. balanced meals food boxes are distributed free to anyone in need.  The location is Bethel Community Church of Pottstown, 575 N. Keim St. Pottstown. This ministry is supported through the Pottstown Ministerium.  Please pass the word to anyone with a need for food.

**Advent Christmas Offering**

Your Advent/Christmas offering envelope is enclosed with this newsletter. Your continued support of Zion’s UCC will be greatly appreciated.

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4

**Christmas Fund**

**(Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund)**

An envelope for your contribution is enclosed. This fund helps provide for Pension Supplementation to bring those low retirement incomes up to a more sufficient level.

It helps qualified veterans bear the cost of the UCC health plan, as it does for retired lay workers in similar circumstance.

Be a part of providing their “Veterans Benefits.” Contribute generously to the Christmas Fund.

**Cancellations**

We are in the season of snow and ice. If church has been cancelled you can check by calling the church number (610-323-3637) and listening to the message. Cancellations will also be posted on WFMZ Channel 69 TV. Please remember, it is often impossible to properly clear snow and ice from the sidewalks and the parking lot in time for Sunday morning service.

**CCLU - after school program 2023**

**Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos (CCLU)** has been providing an after school/tutoring program at CCLU (209 Chestnut Street, Pottstown, PA) since Monday, September 11, 2023. Tutoring is available FREE to any family by enrolling students.

Tutoring is offered Monday through Thursday from 4:00 - 5:30. Our ‘typical’ schedule is:

**4:00-4:15** - arrival of students: healthy snack provided (fruit, crackers, water) - check in with students as to how their day is / what they did at school

**4:15 - as long as needed**: assist in completion of homework / reading practice

**Remaining time - 5:30**: - culture lessons, games to reinforce learning, play outside (weather permitting).

*\*\*THURSDAYS - 4:45 - 5:30 - at TRINITY REFORMED UCC - Computer Room\*\**

CCLU has been helping between six (6) and fifteen students per session. Students range in grade from kindergarten to seventh grade. The main focus of our program is to provide homework help for the students as well as providing reading practice and mini-lessons on the various cultures of all Hispanics. To date, we have celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15) and Día de Muertos (November 1 & 2).

Board Members, Diane Andrés (Mondays and Tuesdays) and Kim Sheeler (Wednesdays and Thursdays), have been leading the tutoring times. Diane and Kim have been supported by tutors from The Hill School, Owen J Roberts High School, Pottsgrove High School and Ursinus College.

Rebekah Sheeler, Environmental Educator from Nolde Forest in Reading, PA, has provided three different FREE programs to our students focusing on animals’ endemic to Pennsylvania.

 **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

 December 1 – Nelson Paez

 5 - Gary Griffiths

 6 - Patricia Stout

 7 - Tricia Heydt

 8 - Bonnie Baker

 16 - Jim Miller

 18 - Jacob Young

 20 - Mary Cresswell

 25 - Carolyn Mitchell

 31 - Pamela Moss

 **Happy Anniversary !**

 Todd and Linda Miller

 36 years on December 13

 Bob and Audry Stengel

 14 years on December 31

**Christmas Cookie Walk and More! December 2, 2023**

We will be having a cookie sale and are looking for volunteer bakers.  Please contact Sharon Moser if you would like to bake.  We then will be selling our cookies by the pound on Dec 2, 2023.  There will also be specialty items for sale, so if you are not a baker but make chocolate covered pretzels, fudge or some other wonderful tasting goodie, please let us know.

We also would welcome any vendor who would have handmade items for sale, they may set up also.

Please contact Diane Andres or Sharon Moser if you have any questions or would like to volunteer to help.  Thanks!

**Book of Golden Memories**

Those names entered into the Book of Golden Memories on Memorial Sunday, November 12th were: Bonnie Bechtel, Dorothy (Davidheiser) Cannell, Dennis Fry, Thomas Gaudiello, Jeanne Graham, Virginia Slody, and Kaaren Steiner

**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, will be opening 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.

Once open, we will need volunteers to assist with meals, cleaning, driving guests, and organizing of donations.  If you interested in supporting our efforts this winter season, please call 424-625-1818 or visit the website: [www.pottstownbeaconofhope.org](http://www.pottstownbeaconofhope.org) for more information and to sign up to help.

To make a monetary donation you can send your gifts to Zion’s (marked homeless donation), made payable to Zion’s UCC. We will send the donations received to Beacon of Hope to help with this important ministry to our neighbors.

**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.

**Remembering Our Shut-Ins**

The Holiday Season is upon us and it is a great time to remember our friends and family who are unable to join us. A little greeting can go a long way. If we have missed anyone, call the church office.

 Doris Evenstad

 Room 203A

 225 Evergreen Road

 Pottstown, PA 19464

Ruth Hardaker

Room 122B

225 Evergreen Rd. Room

Pottstown, PA 19464

 Eleanor Mauger

 Keystone Villa #120

 1180 Ben Franklin Hwy East

 Douglassville, PA 19518

 Dan and Lois Oister

1135 Claire Drive

Birdsboro, PA 19508

 Paul Steffy

 1135 Claire Drive

 Birdsboro, PA 19508

 Joan Clouser

 Arcadia @ Limerick Point

 Apt. 3013, 51 W. Arcadia Drive

 Limerick. PA 19468

 Lee Steiner

 829 Worth Blvd.

 Pottstown, PA 19465

 Dave and Pat Stout

 738 White Pine Lane

 Pottstown, PA 19464

 Bob Mackie

 1252 Lynn Drive

 Pottstown, PA 19464

 Betty Hawthorne

 318 Summer Grove Lane

 Pottstown, PA 19464

 Marsha Biehl

 525 Master Street

 Pottstown PA 19464

 Continued -

 Barbara Ziegler

 1089 Hale Street

 Pottstown, PA 19464

 Dorcas Keiffer

 11 Christy Court

 Birdsboro, PA 19508

**The Crismon Christmas Tree**

**The idea of a Chrismon Christmas Tree originated at Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia in 1957.**

**Chrismon’s are religious symbols representing aspects of the Christian Faith. Colors are traditionally white and gold. A total of 28 symbols are derived from the Chrismon, meaning “Christ Monogram.”**

**In the mid 1960’s Zion’s ladies decided to create a Chrismon Tree to adorn the sanctuary during the Christmas season. Patterns were supplied along with beads, glue, wires. We met weekly in the Chapel for fellowship and to work on selected symbols. After many years of use, our creations saw the effects of time and were no longer used on the Crismon Tree. Today the Sanctuary Christmas tree is adorned with white lights and flowers. Here are a few of the Chrismon’s that were created by the talented ladies of Zion’s.**

**Dove Clam Shell Butterfly**

   

 **Cross Star** Grapes





|  | **December 2023** |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sun** | **Mon** | **Tue** | **Wed** | **Thu** | **Fri** | **Sat** |
|  |  |  |  |  | 1  | 2 Cookie Walk |
| 3 CommunionWorship Service with Trinity at Zion’s3:00 PM Coventry Singers Concert at Trinity | 4  | 5  | 6 Wednesday CrewQuiltersPing Pong and Pizza, 5:30 pmHandbell Rehearsal,6:30 pmChoir Rehearsal, 7:00 pm | 7  | 8  | 9  |
| 10  | 11 Consistory Meeting, 7:00 pm | 12  | 13 Wednesday CrewQuiltersBible Study, 12:00 to 1:00 pm at Zion’sPing Pong and Pizza, 5:30 pmHandbell Rehearsal,6:30 pmChoir Rehearsal, 7:00 pm | 14 Updated final order date for Christmas Poinsettias  | 15  | 16  |
| 17  | 18  | 19 January newsletter deadline | 20 Wednesday CrewQuiltersPing Pong and Pizza, 5:30 pmHandbell Rehearsal,6:30 pmChoir Rehearsal, 7:00 pm | 21 Start of Winter (Winter Solstice) | 22 Community Meal at Emmanuel, 12:00 pm | 23  |
| 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service6:30 pm | 25 Christmas | 26  | 27 Wednesday CrewQuiltersPing Pong and Pizza, 5:30 pmHandbell Rehearsal,6:30 pmChoir Rehearsal, 7:00 pm | 28  | 29  | 30  |
| 31  |  |

**Zion’s United Church of Christ**

**209 Chestnut Street**

**Pottstown, PA 19464**



 **Newsletter**

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous,

and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Psalm 32: 11