

ZIONNEWS

For the Members, Family and Friends of Zion Blue Mountain United Church of Christ



Robert Frost is my favorite poet. But my favorite Frost saying is a quote, “Good fences make good neighbors.” When I lived on the farm good fences were essential. They kept my cattle away from my neighbor’s cattle and vice versa. Good fences also protected corn crops, gardens and flower beds. If farming neighbors had problems, most often it was because the fences were not “good”.

Sharon and I have not lived on the farm for 38 years. As soon as we left the farm Frost saying about good fences took on a new meaning. We have lived in five different developments over the past 38 years with neighbors all around. With some of my neighbors I wished I had good fences, “horse high, bull strong and hog tight” as the saying goes.

In Stone Croft Village we are surrounded by good neighbors. We look after each other. My neighbor across the street is my “go-to-guy” whenever I have heavy lifting. The Weis family who operates the neighboring dairy have three teenage boys who have been extraordinary help to us. They mow our lawn and weed-eat our bank. They baby sit Jasper when we are away. I’m not sure what we would do without them.

My vision of the church is that we are good neighbors to those who live around us. As we make our way into the New Year, I hope we are prepared to reflect the love of Christ to all our neighbors. It is an important image for the church to maintain. We are the body of Christ. And as we live in community with our neighbors my prayer is that they know the love of a good neighbor.

Christ Peace, Pastor Pat



In case of inclement weather this winter we will do everything possible to hold worship. We ask you to use wisdom in choosing whether or not to attend. Should we need to cancel, an announcement will be placed on WFMZ-TV, the Church Website, Zion Blue Mountain UCC Facebook page, or our answering machine. We will also try to email information as soon as we know it.

Strausstown Union Cemetery is looking for anyone interested in the cemetery to serve on their board. Meetings are held on an as needed basis on the first Tuesday of the month. Please speak with Brad Faust or Todd Moyer if you would be interested in helping.

2025 Consistory Installation
Sunday Jan. 19

All members should be present for the installation if possible.

Deacons: Candie Riehl, Robin Faust, Barry Driesbach

Elders: Pat Moyer, Brad Faust, Bryan Houpt, Susan Etchberger

Trustees: Kerry Holzman, Jon Schaeffer, Dan Brown

- 01/01 Bruce Wagner
- 01/02 Michael Eaton
- 01/05 Barry Bentz
- 01/10 Elmer Breidigan
- 01/11 Jeff Newhouse
- 01/11 Cindy Emore
- 01/14 Melissa Miller
- 01/18 Kelly Holzman
- 01/19 Beverly Schrack
- 01/22 Mildred Long
- 01/23 Cindy Berger
- 01/23 Amy Shanaman
- 01/25 Ross Baver
- 01/26 Brian Kominsky
- 01/28 Rose Freed
- Joyce Deisemann
- 01/30 Ronald Emerich

 01/04 Sandy & John Gilmer – 11 years



THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN OUR MISSION TO PROVIDE BAGGED LUNCHES TO NEW JOURNEY. BECAUSE OF YOUR GENEROSITY WE HAVE PROVIDED 1200 LUNCHES IN 2024. WE HOPE TO CONTINUE THIS MISSION GOING FORWARD INTO 2025!



Bingo Kitchen January 10, 2025

January
3:30 – 7:30 pm
Ruth Himmelberger
Joyce Deisemann
Joan Hartman
4:30 – 8:30 pm
Bonnie Herb
Amy Yeager
Alice Hartman

Bakers –	Lori Rentschler Steve Shollenberger Lisa Shupp Joan Hartman
Hot Pot –	Joan Hartman Bonnie Herb Joyce Deisemann

January Greeters:

- 01/05 Joyce Deisemann
- 01/12 Bonnie Herb
- 01/19 Rose Freed
- 01/26 Lori Rentschler

**Thank you to the Christmas Cantata participants! You all received so many compliments! It was a pleasure working with all of you. Hope to see you all again.
~Barry**



2025 Food Pantry

JANUARY ITEM – Peanut Butter, Cereal or Breakfast Bars

The majority of the food for the pantry is purchased through Helping Harvest (formerly the Greater Berks Food Bank). Members of Zion and several other churches in the area also donate those items that we are not able to purchase at Helping Harvest. Each month the pantry requests a specific requested item for donation; this month we are collecting non-perishable breakfast items. Although we have specifically requested items, we accept all non-perishable food items, as well as toiletries for donation at any time. Those wishing to donate items can drop them off at Zion Blue Mountain UCC, 6573 Old Route 22, Bernville, Monday-Thursday, between the hours of 9AM-2PM and Sunday Mornings. All food must be unopened and packaged well.

Monetary donations are also gratefully accepted to help defray our food costs. The cost of delivery of food for a month is \$90.

Zion's Pantry distributes food on the third Thursday of each month from 4:00pm-6:30 PM. Volunteers are always needed to help unpack the truckload of food when deliveries are made at 9:00 AM that day, or during the hours when the pantry is open. If you would like to volunteer, please contact us at sread49@gmail.com or kcbamachmer@comcast.net. Or speak with Sandy Readinger or Beth Machmer.

Do you need our services? Or know someone who does? To register, please call 610-488-7361, leave your name and phone number and someone will return your call as soon as possible to begin the registration process. Clients are eligible for food assistance based on meeting the income guidelines set by Helping Harvest.

Food Pantry is an important ministry of Zion Blue Mountain United Church of Christ. Jesus called us to feed the hungry, and we are doing our best to fulfill that call.

I was so grateful of all the cards delivered to me for Christmas. Butch and I appreciate all of your prayers and well wishes, it truly means a lot. ~

Butch & Cindy Berger

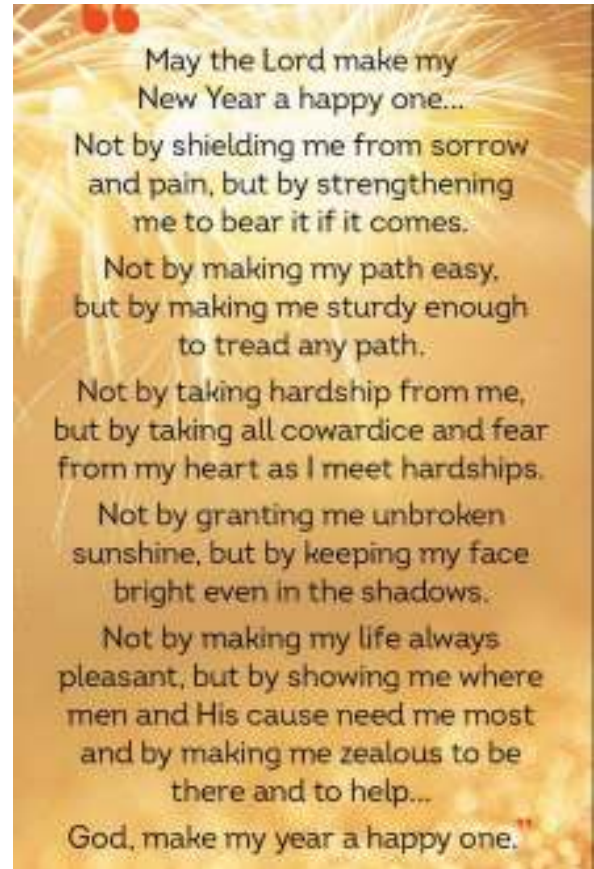
**THANK
YOU!**




"Attendance is down again this morning.
If we want to continue calling ourselves a congregation,
we're going to have to congregate."



Another successful event! The once again annual ticket auction brought in some amazing items to be won! I would like to thank the event team - Susan & Barry Harbonic, Steph Miller, Deb Hosler, Pat Moyer and Sharon Eaton for all their time and hard work to make this happen. A huge thank you to all who donated items. Without you this would not be possible!!! Keep an eye out for items to get ready for next year's event! Have a safe and Happy New Year!



O Lord, let my
New Year's resolution
be to 
follow you
more closely
and to
trust in your
loving guidance.

We hope you and yours have felt closer to Christ during Christmastide and the joy of the season, regardless of any worldly concerns or circumstances. Our Advent and Christmas worship was filled with blessings, including a great turnout of 130 people for the Christmas Eve service. It is well worth remembering that Jesus is "the reason for the season" which should bring us joy because it is the Lord's joy to bring us His salvation.

During this season, we should be reminded of Dr. Seuss' popular 1966 short film "How the Grinch Stole Christmas". The Grinch thinks that Christmas is all about the superficial - decorations, presents, feasting - and that if he steals all of it there will be no Christmas. But to his surprise the residents of Whoville come out and sing their joy on Christmas Day anyway. This leads him to consider "maybe Christmas...doesn't come from a store, maybe Christmas *perhaps* means a little bit more" and his heart grows to three times its size.

This is all well and good, and as a general theme for a commercial is a positive message for anyone watching it. However, the good Doctor, the film creator Chuck Jones, the Grinch, the FCB, the viewers, et al, are still missing out on a clear explanation of what that "a little bit more is". It is nothing less than a LOT more, it's the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah! Otherwise after the presents are opened, and the feast has been eaten, and the family and friends go home, we have the winter doldrums.

Consider "What is the MORE that Jesus revealed to me this Christmastide?" Your joy will continue as we collectively move forward together, in what is turning out to be the gloomiest of weather...

And speaking of moving forward, your hardworking volunteers and staff are already setting their eyes on Lent and Holy Week. We hope for us to have an exciting and spiritually powerful season focused on Christ, even as our Advent and Christ-mass time was. Consider Zion's traditions and resources and speak your heart's desire for this season, and pray for God to have his hand on all of it.

Grace and Peace, The Staff and Worship Committee of Zion Blue Mountain UCC



Zion (Blue Mountain) Church
PO Box 98 (6573 Old Rt. 22)
Strausstown, PA 19559

Staff

Pastor: Rev. Patrick Morris (revpmorris55@gmail.com)

Office Administrator: Lisa Shupp (lshupp@zionbluemountainucc.org)

Consistory

Elders: Susan Etbberger, Bryan Houpt, Brad Faust

Deacons: Candie Riehl (Vice President), Barry Driesbach, Dan Brown (President), Robin Faust

Trustees: Kerry Holzman, Bernie Himmelberger, Jon Schaeffer

Contact Information

Pastor: 610-207-7361

Office Phone: 610-488-7361

Website: www.zionbluemountainucc.org

ZIONEWS is published monthly to keep our congregation and friends informed of current events, ministry opportunities, and other pertinent information. We reserve the right to print any letter or article, unless, in the opinion of the elders, it is unsuitable for the newsletter. We also reserve the right to edit or alter any article for length and content.