



Zion Lutheran Monthly

December 2011



WELCOME TO ADVENT!

This year at Zion we've got an exciting sermon series for our midweek Advent services: "Advent According to the Four Gospels." Did you know that the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) deal with the time before Jesus came differently? (Very differently, in some cases.) During our midweek services we'll be taking a look at how the four gospels each deal uniquely with the time before Christ's first coming. We'll be worshipping at 7:00pm on Wednesdays starting on November 30th and continuing through the Advent season. Like last year, dinner will be served at 6:00 before all of our Advent services. I hope you and your family will be able to make it to these services!

As stated above, we're in the Advent season of the Church Year. Advent is the season when we remember the events that took place to prepare people for Christ's first coming (Christmas) and look forward to his second coming (Parousia, End of the Age, Apocalypse, etc). When Jesus came for the first time his coming was announced by angels. When Jesus began his ministry as an adult, John the Baptist prepared his way. But when it comes to Christ's Second Advent (at the End of the Age), people will not be prepped by angels or a prophet of biblical proportions; they will be prepared by people like you and me. And the good news for us is that it is the Good News that prepares people for the second coming of Christ! The Gospel of our salvation: the death and resurrection of Christ, the free gift of forgiveness and God's unmerited favor given without cost through faith in Jesus Christ is what prepares people for Jesus' coming at the End of the Age. Just as the angels announced the first coming of Christ with songs of praise, our message to the world about Christ's second coming is also cause for a celebration! Christ is coming soon! Alleluia!

Yours, In Christ,
Pastor Duncan



Alissa and I would like to thank the congregation for their generosity at the recent Baby Shower. The parsonage storage spaces are packed to the gills with diapers, wipes, and things that this long-time bachelor cannot identify, but will clearly have a positive impact on our parenting of Baby McLellan. We are blessed to live and serve in the midst of a congregation of so many generous and thoughtful people. Thank you!

-Pastor Duncan and Alissa McLellan

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Advent Services:
Wed - Dec 7, 14, 21
Dinner @ 6:00
Service @ 7:00

Christmas Program:
Sun - Dec 18
Dinner @ 5:30
Program @ 7:00

Christmas Eve Service:
Sat - Dec 24
Service @ 7:00

Christmas Day Service:
Sun - Dec 25
Service @ 8:00 & 10:30

New Year's Eve Service:
Sat - Dec 31
Service @ 7:00

Church, Mission & Synod (CMS) & Plate Finances



As of November 26, 2011, we are estimating \$6,391.00 cash on hand. All bills through November 26th have been paid.

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| October Income | \$32,754.00 |
| October Expenses | \$39,995.00 |
| Unfavorable to Income | \$ -7,241.00 |



The unfavorable monthly expenses were due to paying off the new carpet in the church and parsonage. The funds to cover these expenses will be transferred from the trustee and carpet accounts to cover the expenses. Continue to pray for Zion that we are able to grow our outreach ministry.

- Bob Schmidt, Chairman

Thanksgiving Offering - Outreach



The Church Council agreed to use the Thanksgiving offering to support three outreach opportunities: Bridgeville Food Bank, the new Pittsburgh Community Lutheran High School and a young boy named Ian Loewe from Pastor McLellan's former church in Nebraska who is fighting cancer without health insurance. For more information on Ian go to Youtube to see the video about Ian:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IANIGqXwLOA>

- Bob Schmidt, Chairman

Website Anniversary

Zion's updated website was launched on Christmas eve, 2010 and it has succeeded well beyond our expectations. We've had close to 30,000 page views since the site launched (that excludes hits by robot search engines that catalog the internet). So we're talking real people viewing our content ... 30,000 views! We've posted over 100 Sermons and Gospel readings as audio recordings (Podcasts), which you can subscribe to, and there have been well over 400 daily posts (in less than a year).

Visitors can also access Sunday or mid-week service bulletins, monthly calendars and the newsletter. Other popular content includes What We Believe, Bible Study notes, VBS information, a photo gallery, quizzes and a number of videos. We also have an up-to-date "This Week at Zion" section (on the main page) for a quick overview of what's going on this week at Zion.

Finally, bigger and better things are on the way when you consider our "Read the Bible in a Year" program. Each and every day, we will have the complete daily text posted along with an optional audio recording of the days readings. All of which will be accessible on desktop computers, tablet computers and smart phones. Please share this link with friends and relatives -- www.zlcb.org/bible



If you have information that you would like posted to the website, suggestions or comments, please e-mail to webmaster@zlcb.org.



| | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Laurie Eckels | 2 Sharon Oechslein | 12 Paul Green | 27 Rebekah Quinlan |
| 2 John Coyle | 3 William (Augie) Bishop | 12 Michael Oechslein | 28 Allyson Morgan |
| 2 Abigale Morgan | 3 Linda Seibel | 13 Susan Stone | 29 Kathleen Derosa |
| | 5 Benjamin Ackerman | 18 Bob Spotti | 29 Leah Luedeman |
| | 5 Steve Dibert | 23 Adam Elikor | 29 Riese Smidt |
| | 5 Dick Wible | 23 Megan Pasquini | 30 Jordan James |
| | 7 William Kammerer | 27 Kay Lynn Case | |
| | 10 Mike Kozak | | |

Notes From the Preschool

Greetings from the Preschool! We hope everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving. We have been busy little Pilgrims and Indians this November....I'm not even sure where I should start! I think I'll start with our very generous donations to the Bridgeville Area Food Bank. During the month of November we asked the children to bring in food items for the food bank. We explained that the food bank is where people who don't have enough money to buy food can go and get food. They brought in so much food that we were able to send 16 bags to the food bank. It made the children feel good to know that they were helping little children just like them. Children are truly amazing in their capacity to understand real topics when presented in a way that relates to them.

We also did our first mission project in November. The project was called Operation Christmas Child. Since 1993 Operation Christmas Child has shared the Good News of God's love with children worldwide who are living in desperate circumstances. Simple gifts such as school supplies, toys, and personal items were collected and packed into shoeboxes. The gift shoeboxes are

then distributed around the world, representing the love and hope of Jesus Christ to the children who receive them. Each classroom collected items...so many items that we filled 14 shoeboxes, and then I took them to the drop-off location to make their final journey across the world! Zion's preschool children learned that it is truly greater to give than to receive!

The Easter Seals organization also made a visit to Zion in November. The PreK and Stepping Stones children attended a Disability Awareness Program. Easter Seals sent 3 instructors who brought with them wheelchairs, crutches, voice machines, seeing eye dogs(stuffed, of course) and a whole bunch of other interesting items for the children to view and experiment with. The program taught the kids that people come in all different shapes, sizes, colors and some with disabilities. They learned not to be afraid just because someone has a wheelchair, or walks with crutches....that we were all created by God, each, our



own special way, and that they should try to help people with a disability when possible. The program was very interactive and greatly held the kids attention.

We ended our month with our Thanksgiving Feasts. Everyone brought in a special snack to share with their classmates, all while giving thanks to God.

Our Christmas program is on December 15th at 7:00pm. Please come and hear our beautiful voices.

“Lord, please help my children to develop a desire to see your glory declared among the nations, your marvelous deeds among all peoples” (Ps.96:3)

Blessings,
Tracey Harris

Sunday School Christmas Program & Dinner

Sunday, December 18th

The Interaction Committee and the Sunday School teachers are combining their Christmas celebrations for one BIG evening for the entire family.



Dinner will be catered and served under the direction of the Interaction Committee beginning at 5:30 p.m. We are asking families to bring a Christmas finger dessert to share. The program will begin at 7:00 p.m. followed by desserts, punch, and fellowship in the undercroft.

The cost of the dinner is \$8.50 per adult and \$3.50 per child ages 5-11. Children under 5 are free. Please pay for your dinner(s) when you turn in your reservation form. Reservation forms can be found on the Narthex and Greenhouse tables. Checks should be made payable to Zion Lutheran Church with “Christmas Party” on the memo line. Any additional “free-will” donations will be gratefully accepted as these dinner charges do not cover our costs. Please return the reservation form and payment to the box marked “Church Christmas Party” in the narthex.

The planning committee is working very hard to make this a pleasurable evening for **EVERYONE** in the congregation. We are looking forward to a BIG turnout, so see you at the **ALL CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTY** on December 18th.

Membership Update



Over a year ago the elders of Zion Lutheran Church, under the direction of the Pastor, began a process to define “self-exclusion” and work backwards to prevent people from falling into this category. When people commit to membership in our church, they promise to support the congregation with their time, talent and treasure; they promise to attend worship and receive the sacrament of Holy Communion regularly. It is understandable that members of the church cannot attend worship every week. For some people, it is hard to get to church more than once a month. And while it is HIGHLY recommended and beneficial to make worship a weekly priority, the ins and outs of life sometimes prevent even the most well-intentioned Christian from making this a reality.

For those who are physically unable to attend worship, home visits are arranged and done on a monthly basis. (If you fit this category and would like a visit from the Pastor including in-home Communion, please contact the Church Office!) For those who work on Sunday, mid-week services in Advent and Lent are available. (We are looking at making a mid-week worship opportunity available on a continuing basis down the road.) With this in mind, the Elders defined “self-exclusion” as being absent from all worship services for one year. (Members of the Armed Forces and College Students were exempted from this policy.)

After three months of having this policy in place, the Elders received an attendance report from the Church Secretary, listing those members who had not recorded an attendance for the previous three months. Calls and e-mails were sent to these members, saying they were missed and that, if there was something wrong, we would like to know about it and expressed our concern for their spiritual well-being. The same process was undertaken at the six and nine month periods of inactivity. A final attempt at communication was made at the one-year mark of inactivity.

The good news is that the list of “inactives” at the end of the year was remarkably small for the size of our congregation and when compared to the first list we received at the three-month mark. Unfortunately, a number of people did fall into this category. And, after unanimous approval from the Board of Elders and Church Council, they were removed from the rolls of the church. Of those removed, the most recent recorded attendance was in December of 2008; many had no recorded attendance at all. One family had joined another congregation and forgot to terminate their membership at Zion. Another family had moved.

It is never a good thing to see people move away from participation in the corporate body of Christ. But we can take heart and be encouraged that membership in a congregation is not synonymous with salvation. People were removed from our membership rolls because of their failure to meet the requirements of membership, not because we believe they have lost their salvation. That being said, I ask that you pray for those who have been away from corporate worship for an uncomfortably long period of time; pray that they may see the value in worshipping the God of their salvation and coming together to receive gifts from their Savior Jesus.

-Pastor Duncan



Service Participants

December

Greeters & Acolytes

| DATE | TIME | GREETERS | ACOLYTES |
|-------------|----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| December 4 | 8:00 am | Carl & Karen Bauer | Sara Vallelunga |
| | 10:30 am | Neil Ackerman | Ryan Harris |
| December 7 | 7:00 pm | | Sydney Harris |
| December 11 | 8:00 am | Bob & Shelly James | Missy Radovich |
| | 10:30 am | The Gauger Family | Mitchell Fitzgerald |
| December 14 | 7:00 pm | | Jennifer Fitzgerald |
| December 18 | 8:00 am | Ron & Judy Meier | TBD |
| | 10:30 am | Jim & Marylou Neill | Ryan Harris |
| December 21 | 7:00 pm | | Joshua Gielarowski |
| December 24 | 7:00 pm | Gielarowski Family Crucifer: Steven Kovach | Joshua Gielarowski Ryan Harris |
| December 25 | 8:00 am | B & M Miller, Millie Thielet | Anthony Vallelunga |
| | 10:30 am | Dick & Carolyn Wible | TBD |
| December 31 | 7:00 pm | Bill & Carole Schrag | TBD |
| January 1 | 8:00 am | Bill & Melanie Becker | TBD |
| | 10:30 am | Clara Hayes | Josiah Ackerman |
| January 8 | 8:00 am | Susen & Missy Radovich | Missy Radovich |
| | 10:30 am | Fitzgerald Family | Sydney Harris |

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|--------------------------|--|
| ELDERS | David Hutula & Ken Wuerthele |
| ALTAR GUILD | Janet, Marian, & Molly Oelschlager |
| USHERS @ 8:00 am | Kathleen Conn, Bill Schrag, Janet & Larry Zreliak |
| USHERS @ 10:30 am | Steve Gauer, Dan Harris, Loren Luedeman, & Jim Oelschlager |

January

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ELDERS | TBD |
| ALTAR GUILD | Elsie DallaPiazza & Jean Endler |
| USHERS @ 8:00 am | Bill Becker, Brent Miller, Barb & Wayne Oechslein |
| USHERS @ 10:30 am | Ross Chilcott, Sam Dragan, Robert Oelschlager, & Richard Quinlan |

If you are unable to participate on the assigned date, please find your own substitute and notify the church office (412) 221-4776 or secretary@zlc.org of the change.

Dear Members of Zion,

Just 39 days after dad passed away, mom joined him. During this difficult time for our family, our hearts were warmed by all those in the congregation who said prayers, asked how we were doing, sent cards, or visited with us at the funeral home.

We would like to thank all of you as well as Pastor and Alissa for seeing us through this difficult time. We are truly blessed to have you in our lives and cannot thank you enough!

God Bless each and every one of you.

With sincere thanks,
Brent, Marianne and the Miller family

Dear Members of Zion,

I would like to thank all who have chosen an angel from the Bridgeville Area Food Bank Christmas tree.



Please return your unwrapped gift costing around twenty dollars with the gift tag attached by Sunday, DECEMBER 11.

In Christ's Service
Barb Oechslein
Bridgeville Area Food Bank Representative

Zion Lutheran Church

3197 Washington Pike
Bridgeville, PA 15017
Phone: 412-221-4776



Visit **ZLCB.ORG**

For updated information throughout the month.

The Rev. Duncan McLellan



THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Many of us either love that tune or cringe whenever it is played. Whether you love it or not, the Sunday school children have a surprise for YOU!! Did you know that this song was written by some teachers in England to help their students remember the basics of faith? Each of the 12 verses has to do with faith and Christian living. For example, the two turtle doves represent the Old and New Testaments.

On the evening of **Sunday, December 18**, the Sunday school children will perform a new kind of production - a play entitled, "The Twelve Days of Christmas"!! You will hear the meaning of each verse, tied together with wonderful music and a rendition of the Christmas story from the book of Luke. After this program, you will have a renewed affection for "The Twelve Days of Christmas".

We encourage you to join the Sunday school children and celebrate with us the birth of our Savior, Jesus!



ANNOUNCEMENTS



FOOD BANK

Collection for this month's Bridgeville Area Food Bank is **Sunday, December 11th**. The "item of the month" is hot drinks. You are also welcome to help at the Food Bank every third Saturday of the month between 7:45 and 12:00 at Bethany Presbyterian Church.



You may continue to order poinsettias until December 11th to remember the special people in your life and to decorate our altar area for Christmas. Order forms are available on the Narthex and greenhouse tables.

**Poinsettia
ORDERS**

LEAGUE BOWLING

If you can't attend Zion's league bowling on December 23rd, you may "Roll Off" any day prior to Dec. 23rd. Just call the bowling alley in advance (412-854-0600) to check on lane availability. When you arrive, check in at the front desk and tell them you want to "Roll Off for Zion." They will tell you exactly how it works. The complete "Roll Off Policy" is posted on the Zion website at www.zlcb.org/bowling.

**READ THE
BIBLE IN
a YEAR!**

Please consider reading the Bible in a year with us, beginning January 2012. The time you invest will be surprisingly short and the rewards are enormous! We'll be including a reading list in the monthly newsletters beginning with the January edition. Online, we'll post the readings on www.zlcb.org each and every day at 5 a.m. They'll be formatted for viewing on your computer or mobile devices. And one other thing ... you'll have the option to "LISTEN" to each day's reading ... so if you like, listen to the Bible in a year! You'll be glad you did!