



Zion Lutheran Monthly



December 2014

Christmas Is Not a Christian Holiday

When you title your lead article for your congregation's December newsletter something so controversial, you better follow it up with A-game material. Christmas is not a Christian holiday. But how could it not be; after all, it has the word CHRIST in it?!

Well, first, there's history. In 1870, President Grant declared Christmas to be a National Holiday. A fact for which Federal Employees remain grateful. School children are also glad that Christmas is recognized as a holiday at the local level. (Give us time, kids; we'll try to get them to give you Reformation Day off. October 31st. And yes, I know there's competition for that day.)

But there's also sound doctrine behind wanting Christmas not to be recognized as a Christian holiday. If we say that Christmas is a Christian holiday, what we are saying is that people who do not identify as Christians should not celebrate the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. But people who do not identify themselves as Christians should celebrate the birth of Jesus, even if their understanding of what his birth means still needs some work.

The Jesus whose birth we celebrate on the holiday called Christmas would go on to live a perfect life, die miserably on the cross, conquer death in his resurrection, ascend into heaven, and send the Holy Spirit to bring all people to faith and repentance. And he is the same Son of God who will come again to judge the living and the dead, to whom all knees shall bow, and who reigns forever and ever.

If his grace and mercy, love and compassion extends to all people, why would we say that his birth should only be celebrated by a few? Our call as Christians is not to keep the uninformed from celebrating the birth of the one we know has saved them from sin and death, but to give them the reason why his birth is worth celebrating.

God bless you as you celebrate the birth of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

-Pastor Duncan

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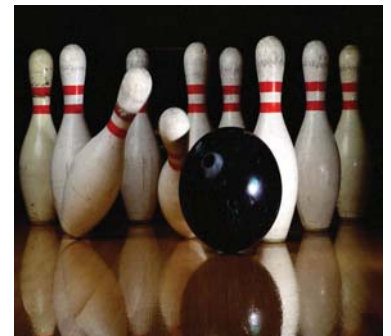
Bowling Schedule!

Week 7: Friday, Dec. 5

Week 8 Friday, Dec. 19

All games are played at
6:30pm at

AMF Mt. Lebanon Lanes



Reach out to our Shut-In's This Christmas Season

Tom Bicusky – 3275 Washington Pike Bridgeville PA 15017

Don Jones – 313 Liberty St. Bridgeville PA 15017

Ruth Miller – 615 N. Pike Road PC Rm 107 C Cabot PA 16023

Iola Schmidt – 249 West McMurray Road #203 Canonsburg PA 15317

Doris Oelschlager – 1043 Coolidge Street Bridgeville PA 15017

Jim Lynch – 550 Taylor Drive, McMurray, PA 15317

Norma Lynch – Strabane Woods, 319 Wellness Way, Room 223, Washington, PA 15301

Norm & Helen Erbrecht – 104 Twin Ponds Lane Bridgeville PA 15017

George & Florence Boehme – Paramount Senior Living 240 Cedar Hill Drive McMurray PA 15317

During the Christmas Season our Shut-in members would love to hear from you. Please consider sending a quick note to wish these members a Very Merry Christmas!



Christmas Decorating



We can use your help decorating the sanctuary for Christmas. Come for Bible Breakfast (men and women are welcome) at 8:00am on December 6th and stay for a couple of hours (or whatever time you can spare) to help decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season. All are welcome!

Chairman's Report

Church, Mission & Synod (CMS) & Plate Finances

<i>October</i> Income	\$34,513.00
<i>October</i> Expenses	<u>49,907.00</u>
Unfavorable to Income	(\$15,456.00)

Transferring of funds to the Kingdom Fund, parking lot repairs, catch up on outstanding bills from previous months and a decrease in CMS giving for October caused the unfavorable result.

As of December 2014, we are estimating zero cash on hand in the General Fund. All bills through November have been paid.

Continue to pray for Zion that we are able to grow our community outreach ministry, support local charities and Christian education for youth and adults. May God guide us in using these gifts and our talents this coming year.

Bob Schmidt
Chairman



Preschool News

Greetings from the Preschool! We hope everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving. We have been busy little Pilgrims and Indians. As we usually do in November, we asked the children to bring in food items for the Bridgeville 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. Wow....the children were certainly up to the challenge. We were able to send bags and bags of food to help those less fortunate. It made the children feel good to know that they were helping little children and their families. Children truly are amazing in their capacity to understand real topics when presented in a way that relates to them.

The Spaghetti Dinner and Art Show was a huge success again this year. We served over 350 people! Thank you to all who helped to make this event possible. We could not do it without you. Money from this fundraiser will help fund the new reception area in the school lobby. Look for some exciting changes in that area in January.

December will be filled with lots of fun Christmas activities. In addition to our Christmas parties, kids praise, Chapel, Lunch Bunch Moms Morning Out and our Christmas programs, we will host two "Shopping days". This is a time when parents can leave their children at school until 2:00 (with pizza, games and a movie, I might add) while their moms and dads have some shopping time "kid free". I'm sure it doesn't come as a surprise that this is very popular! The best part is that the kids love to stay at school longer with their wonderful teachers.

Our Christmas program will be on two days again this year due to the number of students and their families who attend. We would love for you to come and enjoy a night of beautiful Christmas music sung by our preschool children. What a joy it is to hear the good news of Christ's birth through the voices of these little children. The program dates are Monday December 8th and Tuesday December 9th. Hope to see you there.

Blessings,

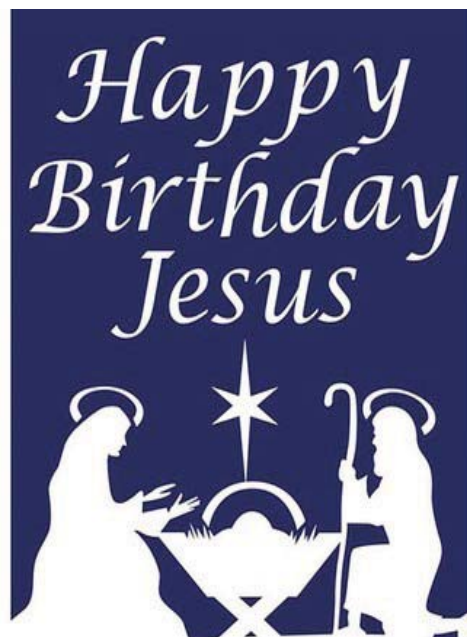
Tracey Harris
Director





1 Laurie Eckels
2 John Coyle
2 Abigale Morgan
2 Sharon Oechslein
3 William Bishop
3 Linda Seibel
5 Benjamin Ackerman
5 James Goodge
5 Dick Wible
6 Lucas Dill
10 Megan Glasser
10 Michael Kozak
11 Heather Nicodemus
12 Paul Green
12 Michael Oechslein
13 Opal Miller
13 Susan Stone
17 John Gresh
17 Alyssa Schroeder
18 Bob Spotti
23 Adam Elikor

23 Megan Pasquini
24 Jeremy Dyczewski
24 Michael Dyczewski
25 Jesus
27 Kay Case
27 Rebecca Quinlan
28 Sarah McLellan
28 Allyson Morgan
29 Kathleen Derosa
29 Leah Ludeman
29 Riese Smidt
30 Jordan James



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Sunday, December 7th - Full Practice with songs and parts, costume fitting (9:20-10:10am)

Saturday, December 13th - DRESS REHEARSAL, costume fitting - mandatory (10:00-11:30am)

Sunday, December 14th - Final DRESS REHEARSAL (9:20-10:10am) Operation Bags of Love collections begin today.

Sunday, December 14th - "CHRISTMAS BY THE BOOK" PROGRAM 7pm (children to report to school lobby at 6:40pm)

Sunday, December 21st - Christmas Party (9:20 - 10:15 am)

Sunday, December 28th - NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

FEBRUARY MISSION MONTH

Operation: Stars and Stripes - we will start collecting items for U.S. troops overseas to put in our "Bags of Love" beginning Sunday, December 14th. HELP us reach our goal to collect at least 250 of the following items:

- Gallon-sized ZipLok bags
- Ramen Noodles
- Drink Mix Singles (Propel, Gatorade, Coffee)
- Monetary donations to help pay for Bible pamphlets and shipping costs. (Please make checks payable to: Zion Lutheran Church and label with "Sunday School OSS")

Zion Welcome Bags - the welcome bags for our visitors and new members were a huge hit and the kids will be putting more together this year! Last years items included water bottles with Zion's logo, Divine Chocolates, Zion pens, a page from the Sunday school and Welcome to Zion materials. More information on how you can help will be coming soon!



SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

December

DATE	TIME	GREETERS	ACOLYTES
December 7	8:00 AM	Bob & Nancy Spotti	Nathan Morgan
	10:30 AM	Bill & Susie Bishop & family	Jennifer Fitzgerald
December 10	7:00 PM	Ushers	Elder
December 14	8:00 AM	Wayne & Barb Oechslein	Augie Bishop
	10:30 AM	John & Kari Gresh & family	Lara Luedeman
December 17	7:00 PM	Ushers	Elder
December 21	8:00 AM	Bill & Melanie Becker	Jennifer Fitzgerald
	10:30 AM	Jay & Kim Anderson	Carley Rockovich
December 24	7:00 PM	TBA	Jennifer Fitzgerald/TBA Crucifer: Mitchell Fitzgerald
December 25	10:00 AM	TBA	TBA
December 28	8:00 AM	George, Jane & Michael Kozak	Nathan Morgan
	10:30 AM	Elsie DallaPiazza	Chris Yellig
December 31	7:00 PM	Ushers	Elder
January 4	8:00 AM	Gene & Sharon Koop	Josiah Ackerman
	10:30 AM	Jim & Marylou Neill	Lara Luedeman
January 11	8:00 AM	Joyce Wood	Jennifer Fitzgerald
	10:30 AM	Janet & Marian Oelschlager	Carley Rockovich

EDERS	Frank Vallelunga John Gielarowski
ALTAR GUILD	Janet Oelschlager Marian Oelschlager Molly Oelschlager
USHERS @ 8:00 am	Carl Bauer, Gene Koop, Ron Meier, Jack Oelschlager
Ushers @ 10:30 am	Josh Gielarowski, Chuck LaJeu-nesse, Loren Ludeman, Jim Oelschalger

January

EDERS	TBD
ALTAR GUILD	Elsie DallaPiazza Mary Hutula
USHERS @ 8:00 am	Kathleen Conn, Bill Schrag, Janet & Larry Zreliak
Ushers @ 10:30 am	Neil Ackerman, Steve Gauer, Kari & John Gresh

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@zlcg.org of the



Free Coffee Friday Volunteers Needed

Coming in February At Zion, we like our coffee best when it is **FREE!**



But We NEED your help to make this happen!



Why? To reach out in a small, imperfect way with the love of Christ to the people in our community. You'll be on the front lines of ministry and be the direct link between people we don't know, who Christ died for, and our congregation.

Contact Pastor or the Church office if you would like to help!

Children's Church

Coming in January, we will be offering an alternate worship experience for our youngest members at the 10:30 service. Dismissing the little ones during the Sermon Hymn, we will have age-appropriate learning experiences for them during the sermon, creed and offering in the preschool lobby. We will have them back with the parents before the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

We are looking for teams of 3-4 people to help lead activities during this 20 minute time period. Please let Pastor Duncan or the Church

Office know if you are interested.



Confirmation!

Don't forget, we have our afternoon session on Baptism December 7th after the 10:30am. service. We'll be meeting in the Conference Room. And yes, you will be fed. Very, very well fed!



BRIDGEVILLE FOOD BANK NEWS

Starting November 16, you will have the opportunity to participate in purchasing a gift of clothing or toy for a child registered with the Bridgeville Area Food Bank. If you wish to participate, choose an angel gift tag from the tree set up in the back of the church. Each gift tag is marked with an age and size for clothing. If the tag has child's age and gender only, the gift should be a toy. Your unwrapped gift costing around twenty dollars will need to be returned with the gift tag attached no later than Sunday, **DECEMBER 14**.

Zion Lutheran Church is a part of the area ministerial. The ministerial is formed by many local churches in the surrounding Bridgeville area. Volunteers representing the area churches come together to serve the people in need who live in the South Fayette and Chartiers Valley School districts. Our ministry is ongoing throughout the year and serves around one hundred-twenty families each month.

There are many ways in which you are able to support the food bank throughout the year. You may bring non-perishable food and place it in the Narthex. Financially, you may give a monetary donation with the check written to the Bridgeville Area Food Bank. . The third Saturday of the month between 8:00 AM and 12:00 PM is when we set-up and assist recipients in the distribution of food at the Bethany Presbyterian Church on Washington Pike. We would welcome your help.

If you have any questions about the food bank please don't hesitate to ask.

In Christ's Service,

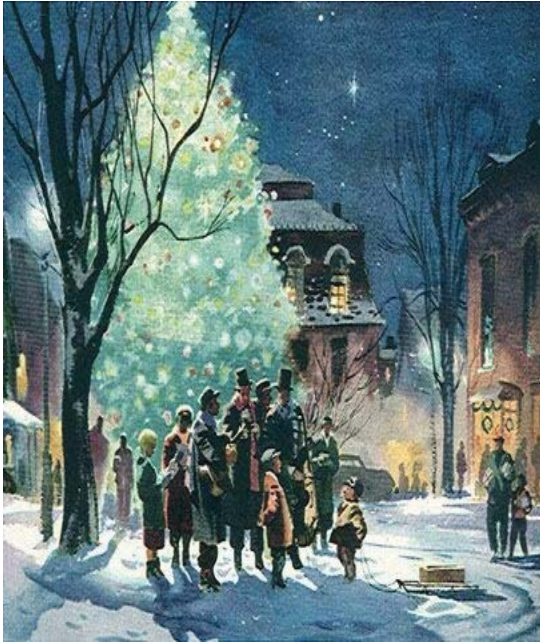
Barbara Oechslein

Bridgeville Area Food Bank Representative

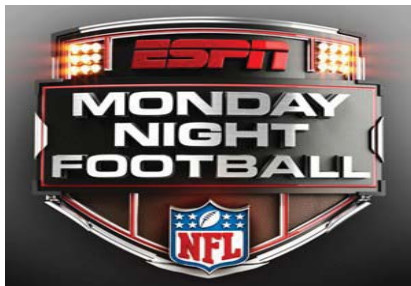


Christmas Caroling

Do you like to sing? Do you want to spread Christmas cheer to the members of Zion? Then please join us as we go Christmas caroling to our shut-ins. We will be caroling on Sunday December 7th



from 5:30-7:30pm. We will meet in the church basement. This is a great way to share a taste of Christmas with our shut-ins who will not be able to attend Christmas services.



Monday Night Football

Join us at Pizzaz (Rt. 19 in McMurray) Monday nights at 8:00pm to watch the game, check our Fantasy Football Scores, and enjoy an evening of fellowship.

FOOD BANK

Collection for this month's Bridgeville area food bank is Sunday, December 14. 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 7:45am and 12:00pm at Bethany Presbyterian Church.

