



NEWS from the pews

Mount Zion United Methodist Church
Finksburg, Maryland



The monthly newsletter for our members and friends

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023

CALENDAR

JANUARY

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

9:55 a.m. - Sunday Service
Communion Sunday

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3

7:30 p.m. - Finance Committee

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

9:55 a.m. - Sunday Service

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10

7:30 p.m. - Church Trustees

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

9:55 a.m. - Sunday Service

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17

7:30 p.m. - Church Council

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

9:55 a.m. - Sunday Service

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

9:55 a.m. - Sunday Service

FEBRUARY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5

9:55 a.m. - Sunday Service
Communion Sunday

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

9:55 a.m. - Sunday Service

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

9:55 a.m. - Sunday Service

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

2 p.m. - Ash Wednesday service
7 p.m. - Ash Wednesday service

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

9:55 a.m. - Sunday Service

Notes from the Pastor



Rev. Wm. Louis Piel

Christmas Is Not Over

For many, the celebration of Christmas has come and gone. But for those of us who want to go deeper and celebrate "nativity," the message is as current as the morning news.

We believe Christmas is more than one day on the calendar.

For many faithful followers of Jesus, it is a way of life.

We don't actually know the date of Jesus' birth but we do know that the Romans celebrated the winter solstice on December 25th. When Emperor Constantine made Christianity legal the church accepted that date. Jesus was associated with "light."

Jesus said he was the light of the world (John 8.12) A "light" that the darkness of the world has never (and will never) put out.

As I suggested to our congregations at Christmas Eve worship seriously consider that "every day" is the birthday of Jesus. Since we don't know the exact date, every day is our opportunity to experience the "new birth" that Jesus offers to us.

It is not enough simply to go to Bethlehem. Or sing a hymn about Bethlehem. We must get inside of the significance of Bethlehem and in a real sense get inside the manger ourselves.

What was (what is) it like to experience birth and be totally dependent on others for life? We asked our Christmas Eve congregations "what does Jesus want for Christmas?"

Actually, don't forget it is his birthday not mine or yours.

Jesus wants us to accept his love totally and then, as we "follow him," share it with others, especially the un-loveable as we build bridges of understanding and be makers of peace.

As we have said so many times in morning worship, we are called (Matthew 6.10) to bring heaven down to the earth.

It would be a lot easier for Jesus to get us into heaven than his desire to get heaven into us. Yet, that is exactly what he desires. Maybe accepting this challenge is giving Jesus what he really wants for Christmas.

Grace and peace,



JANUARY

- 2 Kim Fitzwater
- 5 Bonnie Graham
- 8 Renee Clifford
- 13 Lee McDonough
- 16 Barbara Menchey
- 18 Marc Binkley
- 23 Lisa Tingler
- 25 Amanda Cobb-Crock
- 26 Barbara Hayes
- 28 Willa Johnson
LaDonna Schemm
Fred Hurt

FEBRUARY

- 7 Nancy Cross
- 9 Gerri Rhodes
- 10 Debbie Hockett
- 17 Justin Bussard
- 21 Thelma Otto
- 25 Cindy Hunter



JANUARY

- 6 Lori & Mark Lesky
Heather & Dan Bussard
- 20 Clara & James Kirby

FEBRUARY

None

PRAYER MINISTRY

As followers of Jesus, it is very important that we stay in touch with each other. Remember to call, send cards, visit, and pray for these members of our church family who are under the weather.

Virginia Hoy (at Transitions Rehab in Gettysburg) • **Charles Cooper** (father of Gerri Rhodes) • **Bill Hoy** • **Mary Moores** • **Stuart Campbell** • **Marty Brown** • **Joan Tighe** • **Joe Puckhaber** • **Marvin Levy** • **Greg Anderson** • **Charlotte Green** • **Bob Hayes**

The Eyler family (death of Lydia and prayers for Gwyneth) • **Greg Imhoff** • **Ruth Pitroff** • **Mary Watson** • **Wayne Wray** • **Connor Ohl** • **Jesse Feeser** • **Melanie Imhoff** • **Robert Tighe** • **Den Gray and family** • **Bekah** (a new mom)

At Home or in Care Homes:

- **Peggy Wade** 20031 Rudy Serra Drive, 3A, Sykesville MD 21784
- **Jane Phenecie**, 2662 Stoney-break Road, Warfordsburg, PA 17267
- **Tommy DeMoss**, c/o Gerald DeMoss, 1604 St. Paul Street, Hampstead, MD 21074



Help us keep our Prayer Ministry up to date! Please report any prayer concerns to **Barbara Menchey** at 410-861-8827 or **Bob Hayes** at 410-596-9004 or bbhayes@verizon.net.

We will keep a name on the prayer list for 30 days, but you can renew it by contacting Barbara Menchey or Bob Hayes.

An Attitude of Gratitude!

We are grateful to those of you who are not able to be in Sunday worship attendance yet continue to financially support the ongoing ministry and outreach of the Mount Zion congregation.

Thank you to **Barb and Bob Hayes**, who are serving as our ushers in January and **Joyce Iglehart** and **Lew Wimmer**, who will serve as our ushers in February.

The January/February Newsletter is sponsored by **Barb and Bob Hayes**.

The January/February issue of **The Upper Room** is given by **Gerri & Allen Rhodes** in memory of Mary Elizabeth Cooper, and Allen's daughter, Michelle Nickleson. Get your free copy of this Daily Devotional Guide! Both regular and large print are available.

WORSHIP WITH US!

Please make a resolution to be faithful in your worship attendance, whether in person or by watching our weekly video.

Every Sunday you have a choice ... We ask you to choose "church worship." The WORSHIP OF GOD is foundation for our church (or it should be!).

We know you have a busy schedule and you have a choice every Sunday to worship or not! We ask you to recommit yourself to "faithfulness" in congregational worship every Sunday or watch the weekly video as your schedule permits. Minimize worship and you will minimize your faith.

We are grateful to Mark Hemler, Peggy James, Jerry Knop, and Kathy Rixham for their tireless efforts to record, post, and distribute these videos every week. If you want to watch current and past videos, please visit (and subscribe to) our YouTube channel at: <https://bit.ly/3z1Oz16>.

Choose worship ... one way or another.

Welcome to Mount Zion!

Pastor Lou Piel
410-751-9049
jul01@verizon.net

Leslie Gabler,
Director of Music

A United Methodist
community congregation
since 1856



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MOUNT ZION WORSHIP JANUARY & FEBRUARY

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2023

First Sunday After Christmas Day
The Sacrament of Holy Communion
Mary & Joseph were "faithful." What does that mean for me?

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

First Sunday After Epiphany
The Baptism of the Lord, Matthew 3.11-17, Mark 1.9-11
The Congregational Renewal of our Baptismal Vow

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

Second Sunday After Epiphany
Jesus is the Light of the World, John 8.12
The Light Shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. What does it mean to be a child of the light?

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

Third Sunday After Epiphany
The Temptations of Jesus in the Wilderness, Matthew 4.1-11
"That They All May Be One" (Jesus) John 17.20
Ecumenical Sunday – The Unity or Disunity of the Christian Church

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany
The Visit of the Magi, Matthew 2.1-23
The Implications of their Visit for Our Lives Today!

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5

The Sacrament of Holy Communion
Taking a Biblical and critical look at the "Commandments"
The "Commandments" of Jesus

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Taking a Biblical and critical look at the "Commandments"
The Ten Commandments given to Moses, which our Pastor calls "rules for the journey" (part 1)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Taking a Biblical and critical look at the "Commandments"
The Ten Commandments given to Moses (part 2)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Ash Wednesday, the Season of Lent begins
Special worship services at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in our sanctuary

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

The 250th anniversary of the hymn "Amazing Grace"
Studying this wonderful old hymn to deepen our faith today





NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS 2023

By Melanie Stranix

Psalm 37:65 says "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause, like the noonday sun."

As a child, I remember learning to make a list of New Year Resolutions each December. We were told to enact these resolutions on January 1 and try to follow them through the whole year. I remember thinking... **THE WHOLE YEAR!?**

A Google search taught me that the ancient Babylonians started this practice well over 3,000 years ago. I'm fairly certain it's been well refined over the years and that Christians, as well as other religions, were a big part of the process.

I think that the start of a new year does give us that golden opportunity for a fresh start. It's not that the dates of December 31 or January 1 are special. It's that word NEW that can make things look very different going forward. Think NEW day, NEW year.

Some people make resolutions to "fix" themselves. Quitting smoking, exercising more, and losing weight are things we've probably all had on our list at one time or another. Many of our resolutions relate to physical aspects of our lives. Maybe this year, we should try to make a list that covers the spiritual side of things.



So here's a list of suggestions (credit Google), which I think is pretty complete and in sync with our Christian faith.

- Pray for God's help in choosing which resolutions to make. Reading the Bible and praying daily are the easy ones. Try to put in place a form of motivation to keep you going.
- Pray for God's strength to make those goals achievable and rely on that strength to help you make those goals achievable,
- Find a way to hold yourself accountable. This could be done by finding a prayer partner or group. Journaling is also a way to keep yourself accountable.
- Don't allow yourself to become discouraged by the occasional failures you meet along the road. They can be motivational too.
- Pray for God's wisdom to guide you toward fulfillment of your goals.

I'm hoping that I can make a valiant attempt to achieve the new goals or resolutions that I decide to set for myself this year. Let me end this with a prayer to all of our church family for a blessed 2023 filled with God's love and grace.

LEND YOUR VOICE TO THE FAITHFUL FEW!

By Leslie Gabler

Music is an integral part of worship. We are given talents to share so why not lend your voice to the "Faithful Few?"

We rehearse from 6:30 to 7:30 on Wednesday evenings. We gather at 9:00 a.m. to prepare for Sunday worship.

And if you think our rehearsals are boring ... check out the photo below. There's never a dull moment!



MISSIONS REPORT

By Barb Hayes

Mount Zion helped make Christmas a little more merry for 9 families, thanks to this congregation's generous donations of grocery items and cash for our holiday Missions effort!

In January and February, we will be collecting items for the **Cold Weather Shelter**, such as:

- Cans of soup or chili (with easy-open tops)
- Cheese and/or peanut butter crackers
- Individually wrapped breakfast bars or granola bars
- Coffee, creamer, and sugar
- Warm hats and gloves
- Warm socks (men's and women's)
- Lip balm
- NEW men's and women's underwear (all sizes)
- Fleece jackets
- Sweatshirts and sweatpants

Remember, we are always collecting personal hygiene items for the **Shepherd's Staff**.

Please place your donations in the Goat, or contact **Barb Hayes** for pick-up.

GOD'S WORK FOR HIS PEOPLE

By Joyce Mirfin

As they say, the Lord works in mysterious ways.

I have been doing some internet research lately and have had an opportunity to learn a bit about Araminta "Minty" Ross, the woman that we know as **Harriet Tubman**, born into slavery sometime between 1815 and 1825.

As a teenager, she was severely injured when she was accidentally hit in the head with a metal weight. Afterwards, she experienced painful headaches and seizures and began to experience visions and vivid dreams, which she interpreted as revelations from God. These resulted in her passionate faith and commitment to do God's work. She was inspired by the Old Testament tales of deliverance, which guided her actions throughout her life.

As an escaped slave herself, Tubman made use of the network known as the Underground Railroad, leading other escaped slaves along the Choptank River here in Maryland and into Pennsylvania, a journey of nearly 90 miles.

Over 11 years, Tubman returned repeatedly to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, rescuing some 70 enslaved people in about 13 expeditions.

Had she never suffered that head injury, the woman nicknamed "Moses" may have never been inspired to lead those 70 slaves to freedom as she claimed that God influenced her to do.

Consider how differently history may have evolved had she avoided being hit by that metal weight. Consider her impact on the lives of her fellow slaves.

If you ever need an example of the mysterious ways that God works in even the most humble of us, look no further than the incredible work of this amazing woman.



ONLINE GIVING

Are you tired of writing checks or bringing cash to the service? Do you keep forgetting to bring your envelope? Consider the convenience of online giving! It's fast, easy, and safe! You can give one time or set up recurring gifts.

For questions or help, contact Mark Hemler at 410-299-7517 or Mark.Hemler428@gmail.com.

You can give your offering online, using a credit card, a debit card, or a bank ACH transaction at the following website:

mtzionumcfinksburg.breezechms.com/give/online.

ARE YOU A WRITER?

Do you like to read? Do you like to write? Are you a poet? If you can answer YES to any of these questions, we want to know about it.

We've had some members of the congregation come forward and volunteer to write for the newsletter. We're looking for more!

An article about your faith journey, a poem, a book review of a Christian book/biography/work of fiction will work too. Share your knowledge with the rest of us! See **Barb Hayes** or **Melanie Stranix** for information.



HELP FILL THE GOAT!

The need is year-round! Shepherd's Staff *always* needs your donations of paper towels, toilet paper, clothes soap, deodorant, and other personal items, like body wash, shampoo, shaving cream, toothbrushes and toothpaste, dental floss, lotions, etc.

Also, please bring non-perishable food items to donate on the first Sunday of every month. Place all donations in the "goat" in the social hall.

I Love This Church!

I love its history and heritage!

I love its vision and future!

I love the spirit of Jesus which is in the hearts and lives of our members and friends!

We aren't perfect but we are pressing on to be more "Christ-like" every day!

I love this church!



Happy New Year!

You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.

- C. S. Lewis

Mount Zion United Methodist Church

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**Our
Jan.-Feb. 2023
Newsletter!**