

The Mount Zion Messenger of Good Tidings

Mount Zion Church + Finksburg, Md. + Since 1856

A United Methodist Congregation

3006 Old Westminster Pike, Post Office Box 755

Finksburg, Maryland 21048

Church Office Phone 410-517-2300

Web Address www.mtzionumc-finksburg.org

Wm. Louis Piel, Pastor + Home 410-751-9049

+The January 2017 Edition+

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**The January Church Newsletter Is Given In Loving Memory of
Dottie Long By Her Daughter Jeannie Duba & Family.**

**We also remember those shut-in & homebound
members & friends who have died in the
past year!**

Making Peace, Love and Joy a Reality!

The Carroll County Times

Published Saturday, December 31, 2016

(Published under the title "We can all make peace, love, and joy a reality")

(Or should it read "Can We all make peace, love and joy a reality?")

Wm. Louis Piel

Our neighbor George, who by coincidence has a neighbor also named George, recently commented on the holiday flag on his home. There are a lot of holiday flags at this time of the year but this one apparently drew his attention. The word on the flag was "Merry Christmas," but what caught his eye were the additional words "Peace, Love, Joy."

I am sure that these are admirable words for his neighbor. But they are also meaningful words of hope for the inhabitants of the world community.

During this holiday season we sang a song of peace – "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." A song of love – "Love came down at Christmas." A song of joy "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

The concern that George has is how do you take the words "peace, love, joy" off of a holiday flag and translate them into daily action? It is a lot easier to sing a song or put up a banner than it is to live out these words in life. If it was easy it would have been accomplished long before now.

While peace may be desirable even wonderful we must admit there are a lot of people who really don't want peace or love or joy to work. Could the list include those who love power in order to abuse power, those who believe their view of God is always the correct one and every other interpretation is heretical, the military-industrial complex, those who "have" and believe the "have nots" should be kept in their place, those who believe Christmas is a day that has come and gone and as long as I am filled with joy that is all that matters and the list goes on.

In the well-known prayer called "Our Lord's Prayer" (which was never intended to be used as a popular prayer but rather as a guide on how to pray) there is a powerful line that goes "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It is as if Jesus is saying the "peace, love and joy" that you find in heaven must be how humans are to live together on earth. Rather than being raptured off of the earth we are called to be so raptured right here and now that "peace, love and joy" are a reality.

Thomas Moore in his book "The Soul of Christmas" writes "each of us is as lowly as the manger and yet any of us could have sufficient power of vision and soul to make a huge difference in the future of the cosmos.

Will our planet die out in mutual savagery or will it become glorious because it has found a way toward peace and community?"

The question is where does the "sufficient power of vision and soul" come from? Certainly not from wishful thinking or dreaming.

First, you have to believe that peace, love and joy are more than admirable words. Rather they are worth devoting your life to make them happen. "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5.9) sounds good on paper but those who affirm this beatitude often travel in uncertain times. Jesus, Gandhi, Martin Luther King and many others gave their lives promoting love and peace for all people. Is it worth the effort? They believed it was!

Second, is the realization that no matter how great is your ability or faith you cannot bring them into reality by yourself. Human ability and achievement only go so far. If your heart and mind say "yes" to changing the world then the Spirit known as Emmanuel says I will be with you to make it happen even to the end of the age.

Third, and maybe the most important is that the celebration of Christmas is about new birth and responsible power which comes through the Bethlehem manger and from the Spirit for all who desire to change the community and the world. This is the reason why Christmas is not only for those who follow Jesus but is for everyone! This is why shepherds hurried to the manger. This is why the angels sang. This is why astrologers in the east saw a star, packed their bags and moved out.

The next time you pass by a house flag that promotes community ask yourself what can I do to make it a reality? The next time you hear or see the words "love, joy, peace" ask yourself how can I live them out in my own life?

Let the dialogue continue. We only ask that you think on these things.

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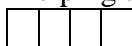
The Beauty of Music

At Mount Zion music is a vital part of our Sunday morning gathering. Many times the musical word is more powerful than the spoken word. We give thanks to our congregation that loves music of all kinds, traditional, contemporary, folk, gospel, country and everything in between. We are also grateful, for our choir members who faithfully lead our congregation in worship beside sharing a special song or anthem with us. Their faithfulness in rehearsals was evident in the recent Advent/Christmas musical they gave to us as a Christmas gift. We are also grateful to our church musicians. To Leslie Gabler who not only directs our choir but leads on organ and clavichord as well. We also give thanks for the eight years that Shelby MacFarlane played the church organ and led us in worship.

Music – food for the soul!

ARC Christmas Cards 2016 and ?? 2017

Did you know that we sold over \$200 worth of Christmas/Holiday handmade cards this year made by the residents of the local ARC program? This fine program for those with intellectual and physical disabilities has a new home in Westminster. Same familiar location but "wow" what a building! If you haven't taken the time to stop by you really should do it soon. The reason we put the ?? 2017 on the title is because those who make the cards need you to donate those beautiful Christmas (and any other type of card) to ARC. The more cards you turn in the more cards they can make for you. We have a box in the Social Hall for your donation. Don't just throw them away. Share them with a wonderful program helping those with disabilities.



+ It's January and It's All Happening at Mount Zion +

New Year Sunday, January 1st.

A special worship experience as we begin a new year! Share the Sacrament of Holy Communion and make a new commitment to a spiritual resolution as you break bread. A lot of fun following morning worship as the congregation has been invited to bring something of a “good-luck” nature in the way of food to share.

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The Christian Season of Epiphany.

The twelve days of Christmas ends on January 6th. We then move into a new season of the church year called Epiphany. The word means “a manifestation” of the good news of Jesus. This season lasts until Ash Wednesday which comes this year on March 1st and is the beginning of the Lenten season. On the first and second Sunday of Epiphany we use the color of white but the rest of the season the color is green for growing in the faith. You will notice that the Christmas decorations called monograms have been taken off of our sanctuary tree and the green tree with white lights are a reminder of spiritual growth and that Jesus is “the light of the world.” The story of the Baptism of Jesus and the visit of the Magi are two of the well known Biblical accounts of this season.

The Baptism of Jesus and the Renewal of our Baptismal Vows

On the second Sunday of January (January 8th) each year we share in the story of the Baptism of Jesus by his cousin John called the Baptizer. This can be found in Matthew chapter three and also in Luke chapter three. While we do not believe in re-baptizing people we do believe that from time to time we need to rededicate ourselves to the baptismal vows. In this special worship service you will be given the opportunity to reaffirm your vows and then come to the font and touch the water as you hear the words “*remember your baptism and be thankful.*” Remember what God has done for you – remember what God is doing for you – remember that God will do for you. Each worshipper will receive a special sea shell as a reminder of this important day.

Human Relations Sunday, January 15th

The emphasis on this Sunday will be on how human beings can learn to live with one another in peace and harmony. This is not easy especially in our own nation and the world today. Remember “*we love because he first loved us!*” (I John 4.19).

The Body of Christ Jesus is One!

On Sunday, January 22nd we dwell spiritually and Biblically on what does our faith say about living together as believers (I Corinthians 12) with love and joy. Many times those who follow Jesus are our own worst enemies. Are there key beliefs that bind us together? This is also called “The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.”

(Over)

+ It's Happening at Mount Zion +

The Astrologers Are Coming!

It took the magi (often called Wise Men) to make the long trip from Persia (?) to Bethlehem and by the time they arrived Jesus was living in a house (Matthew 2). What is the meaning of their travels, their visit and the unusual gifts they brought? What about the star? A new perspective on this well-known Biblical story! Sunday morning, January 29th. Were there really three? Why did they make the trip? What does story say to us two-thousand years later?

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Coming in February

Our Annual Soup-er Bowl Sunday!

Mark down the date of Sunday, February 5th for our “annual ‘soup-er bowl’ Sunday. If you can bring a crock-pot of your favorite soup to share please get in touch with Barbara Hayes (410-857-8461) or sign up on the Social Hall bulletin board. Let her know what you plan to bring. We could also us bread that morning for our after worship fellowship. Always a great morning. Holy Communion will be administered as part of morning worship.

Who will win the Mount Zion NFL “Super-Bowl Prize?”

Using our “official forms” you must turn in your selection for the two teams that will play this year in the NFL Super Bowl by Sunday, January 8th. Two years ago we had several winners but last year we fell short. You could win the “big” prize! Share your football skills with us!

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The Power of Prayer + *Our Prayer Ministry*

Our Mount Zion Prayer Ministry is one of our church foundational blocks of faith. Lives are touched through the power of prayer. We encourage all of our people to pray. We list prayer concerns in our worship bulletin every Sunday morning. We also have “Prayer

Warriors” who believe in and practice *intercessory prayer*. For more information call Barbara Menchey 410-861-8827. Bob Hayes keeps our email prayer list up to date. 410-857-8461. If you know of someone that needs a personal contact from our Pastor please call Rev. Piel 410-751-9049 immediately! If you would like to put someone on the Prayer Chain please call Barbara Menchey.

Feed Our Goat! Sometimes It Gets Hungry!

Our “goat” is really our collector for important items needed on a regular basis for the Shepherd’s Staff Christian ministry. Our “wooden goat” sits just inside the door of the Social Hall and this is where you can “fill the goat.” We urge our people if possible to purchase one needed item each time you go to the grocery store. We urge you to purchase the “most needed” items that are listed below.

The “most needed” items are: Toilet Paper, powdered laundry detergent, Small sizes of deodorant, shampoo, also trash bags, dish soap, Pine Sol, paper towels, diapers and Pull-ups of all sizes. All items go to the Blessings Closet at the Shepherd’s Staff Christian Ministry. Thanks!!

The Approved Operating (Current Expenses) Budget for 2017

On recommendation from the Committee on Finance and from input from many church committees and sources the new Operating Budget for 2017 was approved at the Church Council meeting in November.

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It is a very conservative budget considering how the cost of living has risen in the past year. We will need \$2,021.18 per week to meet our budget. This is only a \$31.06 weekly increase over our 2016 budget. This past November on Consecration Sunday each member and friend of Mount Zion was asked if they would increase their weekly giving by \$1.00 or more.

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This past year like in previous years there are those on the church rolls as members where we do not have any record of financial giving. If you are not now supporting the church with your financial gifts we prayerfully ask that in this new year you make a new start. We will only make our budget and the programs and ministry of Mount Zion if we all work together.

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If you would like a copy of the new budget listing figures for insurance, gas & electric, cleaning, telephone, maintenance, salaries, mission/outreach, conference connection, paper/printing, Sunday school materials, refuse service and related items please contact the church treasurer Robert Hayes or the Pastor and one will be made available for you. We can also mail out the sheet directly to you if you would

The Upper Room Daily Devotional Guide for January & February

Is given to the Glory of God by.....

- (1) George & LaDonna Schemm in honor of George W., Mike and Aubrey Schemm.
- (2) Debbie Hockett in honor and memory of all those who have served our country both in the military and police officers.
- (3) Ron & Joan Resch in memory of their parents Milton & Helen Wirth and George & Gerty Waxter.

A Brief Look at "End of the Year Church Finances"

Although we have gone to press with this issue of the church newsletter before the Committee on Finance has met for their January meeting there are several important things we report.

First, we give thanks to God for those members and friends of Mount Zion who have financially supported the church and its many programs this past year. Many of you have gone the extra mile in your giving. Many of you are retired or are living on fixed incomes and you still support the ministry of our church. We also give "thanks" for those of you who live out of town and still contribute to Mount Zion. Thank you!

Second, according to our Church Treasurer all local church bills have been paid in full.

Third, thanks to the faithfulness of our people we ended the year with a financial surplus in the budget.

Fourth, a number of persons, couples made strong "end of the year" financial gifts, this is especially true for the Community Service Fund of the congregation.

Five, for the eighth year in a row we have paid in full our financial obligation (apportionment) to the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Six, special financial gifts like for the monthly newsletter, worship bulletins, special causes or items have allowed us to provide special gifts for the congregation.

Seven, the annual offering from our yearly Anniversary Sunday in June has helped us build up our Educational Fund which not only provides Christian material for our congregation but also has helped us to support community programs especially for children and youth.

Eight, the extra mile giving to the new Building Fund continues to provide funds for maintenance, repairs, and upgrades that would not be possible simply using funds from the Operating Budget.

Parish Nurse's Corner: A Simple New Year's Resolution

Is it worth making a New Year's resolution especially considering the statistical information?

1. **You're not alone in making resolutions:** Approximately 45% of Americans make at least one resolution in January.
2. Whether it's a lack of willpower or unrealistic goals that are to blame, **most people have difficulty sticking to their New Year's resolutions.** Just 8% of people who make them will still be committed to them by the end of the year.
3. **January is a critical month:** For many people, the first month after making a resolution is the hardest, but if you can get through it, you significantly up the odds of it becoming a permanent change. Unfortunately, roughly 1 in 3 people won't even last 31 days, so you really have to buckle down and keep your eyes on the prize if you want to still be going strong by February.
4. **It takes three months to make a change in your behavior** thus if you can tough it out for 90 days, you've got a much better shot at making the change permanent. Nearly 40% of people who make resolutions forget about them by March, but the dropout rate levels off substantially after that point.

So you ask yourself is it worth it?

Ephesians 4:22-24 shows that major changes must occur when we are converted to serve God:

²² *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;* ²³ *to be made new in the attitude of your minds;* ²⁴ *and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. NIV*

Old practices and attitudes must be replaced by new ones. Christians must learn good habits like Bible study, prayer, love, faith, patience, attending church meetings, giving, teaching others, etc. We must also eliminate bad habits like foul language, uncontrolled temper, gambling, drugs, smoking, drinking, gossip, lying, pornography, sexual promiscuity, etc.

Thus **I challenge you** make a new year's resolution on one item and be commitment for 3 months:

1. **Body:** Improve overall health whether losing weight, exercise or eating healthier.
2. **Mind:** Provide time for mental rest: reading, relaxing with a pet or taking a bath.
3. **Social:** Spend times with friends: Karaoke or social time with church family
4. **Spirituality:** Commit to the church: either to faithfully tithe, pray for those on the prayer list or support one of the church's outreach project: feed the goat, provide funds for the Upper Room or newsletter

Psalm 37:23-24, NKJV. "The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the LORD upholds *him with His hand.*"

Lynn Jones, R.N.

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A Thought! + Mike Slaughter "Christmas is not your birthday"

"How we spend our money reveals our ultimate values; it is a demonstration of what we truly worship. How we handle money is a window into our true character. Storing up treasures on earth without being rich toward God means that life is all about me, my family and my family's needs and wants."

QUESTION??

***When was the last time that you invited someone to worship or fellowship with you?
More people come to the church by personal invitation than by any other way!***

Our January Volunteers

Our January Church Newsletter is given in loving memory of Dorothy Long by her daughter Jeannie Dupa and in honor memory of all of our home-bound members and friends.

The January Worship Bulletins are given by Teresa Tighe in honor of her husband Bill.

January Ushers. Bob & Barbara Hayes, Substitute Ushers Pan Roos, Ruth Pitroff, Sarah Jane Taylor, Dwight Jones, Mark Fraser, Carlton Gabler, Bruce Carson. First Sunday Communion Ushers are Doug Bosley, Jim Bosley.

Our Thanks to those who have signed up to coordinate "after worship refreshments in January. & February See Linda King for more information if you would like to simply put out refreshments.

The Upper Room Daily Devotional Guide for January & February is given to the Glory of God by (1) George & LaDonna Schemm in honor of George W, Mike and Aubrey Schemm (2) By Debbie Hockett in honor and memory of all those who served our country both in the military and police officers (3) By Ron & Joan Resch in memory of their parents Milton & Helen Wirth & George & Gerty Waxter.

Holy Communion Supplies for January & February are given by Mary Ellen Barnes in memory of her husband Kenny and supplied by the Worship Committee

We are missing birthday and wedding anniversary information dates for a number of friends and members of the congregation. Please see the Pastor for a form where you can list your special dates! We thank you!

+ Send A Greeting in January

January Birthdays, 2 Kim Fitzwater, 5 Bonnie Graham, 6 Ted Frantum, 13 Lee McDonough, 16 Barbara Menchey, 23 Lisa Tingler, 26 Barbara Hayes, 28 Willa Johnson, 28 LaDonna Schemm, 30 Amanda Cobb-Crock.

January Anniversaries: 4 Carlton & Leslie Gabler, 6 Mark & Lori Lesky, 6 Dan & Heather Bussard, 20 James & Clara Kirby.

Did we miss anyone? If so, call 410-751-9049 or email julo1@verizon.net. Thank you)

(Important Note. Who did we miss? We are always trying to keep our listing of birthdays and wedding anniversaries up to date. If we have missed anyone please report it in writing to the Pastor or email him . Thank you.;

We Can Still Use Those who would like to sponsor the monthly church newsletter or monthly worship bulletins. This is a very nice way to honor or remember a loved one. Please see our Pastor for more information and months that we need sponsors.

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!

Calendars for 2017! We still have several of the Mount Zion church calendars available for 2017.

Thanks to George & LaDonna Schemm for making them available for us. If you would like one simply let the Pastor know. We can even mail it to our homebound and shut-in friends.

We Also Would Like to Thank the Eline Funeral Home located right here in Finksburg for also providing beautiful 2017 calendars for our congregation free of charge. They are on a table as you enter the Social Hall.

A Special "Thank You!" to everyone who supported the annual special offering for our United Methodist Board of Child Care. Over \$1,500 was raised to purchase gifts for the young people in one of the cottages. Thank you for your support!

Important Church Meetings in January

All meetings are held in the Sunday school room

The Committee on Finance meets on Tuesday evening, January 3rd at 7:30 p.m.

The Church Trustees meet on Tuesday evening, January 10th at 7:30 p.m.

The Church Council meets on Tuesday evening, January 17th at 7:30 p.m.

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It Is Impossible to thank everyone, friend and member alike for their volunteer service to our church over this past year – we have so many! We run the danger of forgetting someone or some group but let us risk with a few important notes: + Thanks to our church choir members who faithfully week after week provide music and lead the congregation in singing + Thanks to our Church Trustees who make our building fund dollars go much farther than usual with their volunteer efforts – and the leadership of Bill Tighe, Dan Armacost, Bruce Carson and others. + The Worship Committee led by Joan Tighe for season after season making our church building look nice and festive. + The Finance Committee including our Church Treasurer, money counters, Financial Secretary who behind the scenes without a lot of fan-fair provide an accurate accounting of our financial giving. + Those who on a regular basis assume responsibly for helping to coordinate the “after worship fellowship time” in the Social Hall + For those who behind the scenes make sure our church building is clean and in order week after week along with cutting the grass in the summer months. + For our webmaster, Kathy Rixham who keeps our web page up to date and informative. + For those on the Prayer Chain who take very seriously their role in intercessory prayer for others many of whom they do not know personally but know they need a prayer warrior.+ For those who faithfully send a greeting card to those who are homebound or shut-in or are unable to get to the church building. + To those who are just “friendly” especially on Sunday mornings and simply welcome one another especially those who are visiting the church so they feel they would like to come back. + (*and the list goes on.....*)

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There are a lot of things to do on Sunday mornings instead of joining in the congregational worship of God!

Each one of us has to make a choice – should I worship God with my sisters and brothers this morning, or should I

Congregational worship of God is foundational to our church. If you want to kill a church there is no faster way than by skipping the worship services.

This new year + Choose God! + Choose congregational worship! Let your family and your neighbors know that you have chosen God above everything else that you could do on a Sunday morning!

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+ Every Week at Mount Zion In the Social Hall +
Mount Zion Cares!

Every Tuesday Evening (Note change of day) Boy Scout Troop #1750 meets at 7:00 p.m. This fine group of young men are part of the scouting program that has been so effective in moral training. For more information on the Scout program please call Scoutmaster David Yingling 443-340-5592.

Every Thursday Evening the Alcoholic Anonymous program has a meeting. It is open to all. For more information please contact our Pastor.

Every Saturday & Sunday Evening the Narcotics Anonymous program meets. It is open to all. For more information please contact our Pastor.

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