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“A Month to Regather and Renew”

Church Family,

January ended with snow and ice that kept us apart on a Sunday when many of us were ready to gather. It is surprising how one missed week can unsettle our rhythm. We feel the absence, not because of obligation, but because worshiping together anchors us. When we are scattered, something in us longs to come home.

As we step into February, I invite you to see this month as a fresh chance to regather with purpose. Winter may slow us down, but it does not stop the Spirit from drawing us back to God and back to one another.

A Season to Reconnect

February gives us a clean slate. It is a shorter month, but it is full of opportunity.

- To rebuild the habits that ground our faith
- To show up for worship with renewed commitment
- To pray for one another with intention
- To lean into the community that strengthens us

Let us use this month to steady our steps again.

Souper-Bowl Fellowship on the Second Sunday

On the second Sunday of February, we will gather after worship for our Souper-Bowl Fellowship. It is simple and warm, with soup, bread, and conversation. Yet it remains one of the most meaningful things we do.

This is a chance to sit with someone new and to reconnect with someone you have not seen in a while. It is a moment to offer encouragement to someone who may be carrying more than they let on. Most of all, it is an opportunity to strengthen the bonds that make Mt. Zion feel like home.

Bring your appetite and your willingness to share life together.

Ash Wednesday Service on February 18 at 7 pm

Later in the month, we will begin the holy season of Lent. Our Ash Wednesday service will be held on February 18 at 7 pm. This service invites us to slow down, to reflect honestly, and to remember that God meets us in every season of life. The ashes remind us of our need for grace, and the worship invites us to begin the journey toward Easter with humility and hope.



FEB 18 @ 7:00PM



The Season of Lent

Lent begins on February 18 and continues through April 2. These weeks invite us into a slower, more reflective posture. Lent is a season that gently asks us to pay attention to our souls. It encourages us to look at our lives with honesty, to notice what has been drawing us closer to God and what has been pulling us away. It is a time to open our hearts, to listen more carefully for the voice of Christ, and to make space for God to do something new within us.

Some people choose to add a spiritual practice during Lent, while others choose to let go of something that has been distracting or draining. Some focus on prayer, others on Scripture, and others on acts of compassion. However you choose to walk through this season, the invitation is the same. Come with openness. Come with curiosity. Come with a desire to grow. And trust that God will meet you along the way.

A Challenge for February

I want to offer you a gentle but meaningful challenge.

Choose one intentional act of faith each week.

Just one.

It could be:

- Attending worship every Sunday this month
- Praying daily for someone in our church
- Inviting a neighbor or friend to join you
- Writing a note of encouragement
- Serving in a ministry you have been considering

Small steps, taken with consistency, shape us more than we realize.

Looking Ahead with Hope

Even when weather interrupts our plans, God continues to work in us. Even when we feel scattered, Christ gathers us again. I am grateful for each of you, for your faithfulness, your resilience, and your love for this church.

Let us step into February with open hearts, renewed commitment, and a shared desire to grow in Christ together.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Shawn

A message from Joyce Mirfin:

I wish to thank everyone in the Mt. Zion family for the prayers and well wishes following my recent fall, surgery and hospital stay. I have a long road ahead of me, but I'm fortunate to have the necessary medical equipment and an amazing private nurse (Jim) here at home. Please know how much I appreciate all of you.

FEBRUARY CHURCH MEETINGS (Open To All) – Tuesday in Social Hall

- Feb 3 – Finance / Trustees Meeting
Jim Mirfin Chairperson Finance & Dan Armacost Chairperson Trustees
 - Feb 17 – Church Council Meeting – Dan Armacost Chairperson
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A CALL FOR COATS Although the date has passed you can still donate new winter coats. By appointment only 410-857-5944. Coats can be purchased locally or from our Amazon Wishlist [amzn.to/318LTYI](https://www.amazon.com/wishlist/ref=wl_cr_text). Winter is here. Can you help someone?

NEW CHILDREN'S PAJAMAS for kids hospitalized with cancer. You can still donate. It is still winter. Pajamas will be donated to Josh's Jammies a non-profit organization. Donations go to children hospitalized at Sinai Hospital, Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital, and University of Maryland Hospital NICU and PICU units. Important: give pajamas to Barbara Hayes