

Zion Lutheran Church
557 Perry Highway
Harmony, PA 16037
Church phone: 724-452-8886
zion557@zoominternet.net
www.zioninharmony.com

Pastor Erin Evans
cell 412-580-7773
erineboyer3@gmail.com

Office Hours
Tuesday: 8:30 a.m.-Noon
Thursday: 8:30 a.m.-Noon
Friday 8:30 a.m.-11 a.m.

A Note From the Pastor

No where in the Bible are we told they are kings, or that there are three, or that they "of orient are." (For your future reference, rugs are oriental, not people.). Matthew's Gospel says that they are from the east - which could be any number of nations and regions, but in the nativities I've seen, they look like they range from Arabic to Chinese to African.

Christian tradition and art have added decorative embroidery to their story by adding their number (three), names (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar), motives (kings coming to honor the King), and colorful modes of transportation (camels). The term Magi, comes from Magus, which was a priestly caste of ancient Persia. Their religion was Zoroastrianism, an ancient religion in the area long before Islam. Their reputed power over the natural world, and even demons, gave rise to the word Magic.

They were neither kings nor wise men. Maybe they earned the title wise men because of their skills in interpreting dreams and understanding astrology. They were well known for telling fortunes and preparing daily horoscopes. They were scholars of their day and enjoyed access to the Persian emperor. Zoroastrianism is one of the oldest religions in the world which is still active in Iran today.

The primary prophet for Zoroastrianism is Zoroaster. Zoroastrians believe that he was miraculously conceived in the womb of a 15-year-old Persian virgin. Like Jesus, Zoroaster started his ministry at the age of 30 after he defeated all Satan's temptations. He predicts that "other virgins would conceive additional divinely appointed prophets as history unfolded." Zoroastrian priests believe that they could foretell these miraculous births by reading the stars. Like the Jews, Zoroastrian priests were anticipating the birth of the true Savior. Isn't that strange - what was God up to there?

The feast of Epiphany on January 6 begins a season— extending into the beginning of Lent— in which we celebrate God's manifestation in Christ Jesus. The revealing of who God is to the nations - through the light of Christ. Jesus lit up the darkness for all people, grasping and groping for some sort of understanding of who God is and why they exist. Jesus was the light to the nations, showing what exactly God was up to. And these strange priests were among the first to witness it.


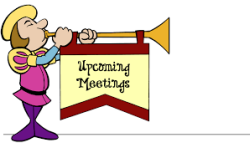





When celebrations of Epiphany began in the third century, it traditionally marked his manifestation to Gentiles through the Magi. A light to all nations, not just Israel. And that is vitally important for us to hear. Jesus was born, not just for the people of God. But the people not-of-God too.

Jesus was to be a light, not just for those who sing "This Little Light of Mine" - but for those who's very origins are in darkness. For those who are still confused and for those who follow a different religion entirely. They're invited too. Do you think that these Zoroastrian priests from afar fit in under the radar in this Little Jewish Town of Bethlehem?

The story of these strange unnamed magi following a star with a little bit of Zoroastrian prophecy and inappropriate baby gifts is a good one for those who feel like they don't fit, don't know where they're going, or what's gonna be there when they get there. Unexpected foreigners with different customs, language, and clothing. Perhaps your ancestors were once literally in that position, but we may struggle with situations and climates in our own homes and nations where we don't fit or just have to trust the light we're following in the midst of darkness. Perhaps our welcome of those who don't share our religion or customs allows them to see the light of that little star reflected through us.

Like the Magi with a star - God draws us with his light. With hints and glimpses and reflections of goodness and grace in this world. When you see that, you see God. In the season of Epiphany we celebrate Jesus as the light to the nations - plural. All nations. The Good news is for everyone.

Happy New Year,
Pastor Erin

	<p>January 4 – Dennis Barkley January 15 – Pastor Susie Esseck January 21 – Loree White</p>
	<p>January 7 – Worship 10 a.m. January 9 – Council 6 p.m.</p>
	<p>January 5 – Frank Porter January 12 – Diane Goehring January 19 – Vicki Moyer January 26 – Edie Brain</p>
	<p>January 5 – Doug Trimble January 12 – Marsha Davis January 19 – Pam Ferrainolo January 26 – Joanne Porter</p>
	<p>January 5 – Chris & Doug Trimble January 12 – Carla Wright & Sally Measel January 19 – Bill Gasior & Marsha Davis January 26 – Carla Wright & Sally Measel</p>
	<p>January 5 – Chris Trimble January 12 – Bill Gasior January 19 – Bill Gasior January 26 – Chris Trimble</p>
	<p>January 5 – January 12 – January 19 – January 26 -- Trimble</p>



Thank you to everyone who came out to help on a very cold night with Miracle on Main. Once the tent was up and the tarps put around it, it was at least bearable. Unfortunately with the weather, we did not have near the amount of people as we usually do. The people who did come enjoyed our free hot cocoa, hot cider (thank you Tom Davis for the contribution), and warm waffles. Thank you to everyone who contributed to helping both churches to be able to give all of this to the community for free. It's always a wonderful evening to see Zelig come alive for the Christmas season.



On December 3, thirty women from Zion and St. Paul gathered once again to celebrate a time of fellowship. This is such a wonderful night to get together to learn a little more about each other. We had a delicious Italian meal along with some scrumptious desserts. Next year we will gather at St. Paul's. We hope that more of our ladies will join us. Just a reminder MEN: There is a men's night in June so that you guys can get together and learn more about each other.



As another year comes to a close, I want to thank everyone who helps to keep our church moving forward. Megan Houk, for keeping the office going and everyone kept informed about what is happening. Vicki Moyer, for keeping the church and hall looking beautiful. This takes a lot of time and effort and she has done it for so many years. We are truly blessed to have her. Tom Bickert who keeps the money of the church working to help our church today and for the future. This is a full-time job that we are very glad to have Tom doing. Frank Porter, Al Stevens and Doug Trimble for doing all the little and big maintenance items that come up to keep our church and property a welcoming place. Nancy Williamson and Pastor Brewer, for providing us with such beautiful music each week. Without these two people our service just wouldn't be the same. Pastor Erin Evans, for coming to our church to help us get ready for the next phase of our church life. She has been there helping us to see what we are able to do as a church and as a place in our community. The members of church council who every day work to keep the church working for each and every member of Zion. Especially during this time of transition. Lastly, all of the people of the church. It takes each of us doing our part to keep the church a viable part of our lives and as part of the community. No matter how small the part you do, it is important. Without each of you the church would not be here. May the New Year find each of you continuing to be surrounded by God's blessings!



Thank you to everyone who came out to ring the bell at Bilo for the Salvation Army. It was a very cold day, but at least the wind had stopped blowing. Each year we help to raise the funds to help those less fortunate than us. It's wonderful to see you step forward to help in this small way that helps make a big difference in so many lives.



The new calendar for sponsorship of the bulletins is hanging on the bulletin board outside the office. The cost of the bulletins is \$15 per week. You can sponsor a week in memory of someone, in honor of someone or to the glory to God. This helps to keep down the cost of printing the whole service in the bulletin.



Let us welcome baby girl AnnMarie Edita daughter of Kara and Tyler Probst and granddaughter of Vicki Moyer. She was born December 10, 2024.

January 2025 Calendar					
ZION		ST. PAUL		ZHLM	
January 5 10 a.m.	Combined Service at Zion	January 5 10 a.m.	Combined Service at Zion	January 5 10 a.m.	Combined Service at Zion
January 7 10 a.m.	Worship				
January 9 6 p.m.	Council				

PRAYER CONCERNS

ZHLM: Burt McFadden, Cheri Mihalik, Brian Ward, Gracie McClelland, Cole Nasky, Mark Nasky, Cindy Latch, Cory Latch, John Komidar, Pat Brickner, Peg Kaltenbach, Pete Kirkpatrick, Don McDonough, Michael, Carolyn Kristophel, Earl Goehring, Diane Goehring, Martin Matscherz, and Linda Schall.

Zion’s Shut-Ins: Arlene Cameron, Sally K. Davis, Pat Givens, Eleanor Dindinger, and Fay Collins.

St. Paul’s Shut-Ins: David Peeples, Marliss Loveridge, Martha Henry, and Susan Deitrich

Those In The Military & Reserves: Zachory Boozel, Technical Sergeant John Burgh, Jeffrey Hock, Kristen Latch, Josh Miller, Jeff Petty, Ryne Rhodes, Jeffrey Shaffer, Matt Van Arsdale, James Schott, Adam Reichert, Aaron Reichert, Andrew Reichert, Landon Peeples (Air Force), Granger Peeples (Army), and Jaydon Peeples (Army).



BUTLER COUNTY FOOD CUPBOARD

January food cupboard needs: Cereal, canned chicken, canned tuna, macaroni & cheese, pasta, ramen noodles, canned veggies, canned soup, stuffing mix, PB& J.

Place your donation in the collection box located in the church narthex. Food donations can also be dropped off at Zion Lutheran Church.

- Volunteers are needed on the following days:
 - Second Tuesday of the month to stock shelves, 9 a.m.– noon
 - Third Monday of the month, 9 a.m. Unload Food Bank delivery truck
 - Third Tuesday of the month, 9 a.m. Pack food; 5 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., hand out food.
- If you would like to volunteer, please contact Phyllis Metz at 724- 452-5993.



Minutes of Council Meeting Thursday, December 12, 2024

In Attendance: Pr. Erin Evans attended by Zoom.
Bill Gasior, Sally Measel, Chris Trimble, Doug Trimble, Carla Wright.
Absent: Tom Bickert and Sthela Holly.

The meeting was opened with Devotions and Prayer by Sally, written by Pr. Jono Adams from St. James ELC in Ligonier. There were three ladies in the congregation who felt called “to do something with Stewardship.” They worked on ideas much as Zion has done collecting funds for various causes including ELCA Good Gifts. Excitement from a few people can lead to a congregation taking ownership and exceeding original set goals. May the Holy Spirit guide us and give us the nurturing that we need to allow ideas to take root and flourish.

Secretary's Report – Motion to accept was made by Chris and seconded by Carla.

Treasurer's Report:

Contributions by envelope and plate, as well as rental income, for November (three Sundays) totaled \$9,290, compared to the budgeted amount of \$8,848. This was \$442 MORE than needed to meet monthly budget. For the year, contributions and rental income total \$117,053, compared to our budgeted amount of \$103,964. Giving and rental income year-to-date is \$13,089 MORE than budgeted. The average weekly attendance for the three Sundays at Zion in November was 36.

ZHLM Pastors Report for November 2024:

Home Communion Visits: Arlene Cameron, Mark and Gailyn Matscherz

Hospital Visits: Denny Barkley, Burt McFadden, Linda Flora

Pastoral Check-ins: 5

Meetings:

St. Paul Council
Zion Council
St. Paul Worship
Zion Worship
ZHLM Joint Council Meeting

- Volunteering at Passavant Home for Christmas decorating
- Finished up Revelation Bible Study
- Prepared for Advent and Christmas worship
- Prepared for Evening Prayer Longest Night
- Prep. for Miracle on Main
- Regular work for Sundays: check over bulletins, add new announcements, sermon prep, children's worship prep, etc....

- Compiled and introduced *The Steward* - seasonal/quarterly full-color publication to report on our ZHLM activities. Next issue will be Lent (including all the things we've done this winter - and advertising for our soup suppers and holy week schedule).

Mileage for November: 279 miles

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Call Committee Update – There is currently nothing to report.
2. Update on AV upgrades – This will be happening in January as we don't want any issues with recording December services, especially Christmas Eve service.
3. Update on Roots Learning Academy – The children will return on Tuesday, January 14, 2025. We will donate rolls of plain newspaper to cover the social hall tables during gluing and other “messy” activities. Vicki will communicate directly with Jessica Gasior if there are any concerns with the use of the building, especially the bathrooms.
4. Freezer Update – The little freezer in the hallway by Pastor's office has been removed and a donation for it received.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Council meetings – will continue to be on Thursday nights at 6 p.m. We may look at a different night for the summer months. The January meeting will be on the 9.
2. Congregational meeting and tureen dinner - will be on Sunday, January 26, 2025, following the Sunday service.
3. ZHLM joint meeting debrief recap –
 - a. We updated the copier contract.
 - b. We worked on sabbatical and leave policies for pastors.
 - c. We approved a \$1,000 buffer to be added to the ZHLM account, \$500 to be put in by each church.
 - d. We switched the month rotation for joint services. Zion will have the first joint service on January 5. It was suggested we have soups for lunch that day.
 - e. We discussed the prayer lists and decided to make one list for the two congregations. The lists will be wiped clean for the start of 2025 so if you have names you want placed on the new list, let Megan in the office know. Pr. Erin suggested that the Worship Assistants read only the first names during services.
4. Pay schedule for Vicki – she is paid every other week and prefers to continue in this way over being paid bimonthly.
5. Butler Eagle Advertisement for the Christmas Eve Services – After some discussion, it was motioned by Carla, seconded by Doug, to put the ad Bill created in both the Butler Eagle and the Cranberry Eagle. The one time ad will be in the December 19 editions at a cost of approximately \$300 from each church. Motion passed. Pr. Erin will also put it on Facebook.
6. Gift cards for employees – Chris will obtain gift cards for Pr. Erin Evans, Megan Houk, Vicki Moyer, Tom Bickert, Nancy Williamson, Pr. Bill Brewer, and also one for Frank Porter for all he does at the church.

7. Other: Miracle on Main – There were waffles left over after this event which has not happened previously. It was a very COLD night, so attendance was down. Carla suggested if it is cold for this event in the future, that pallets with rugs on them be brought rather than standing on the cold hard ground.

“Shop for Free” at SVHS – Items collected were delivered by Chris Trimble, Diane Miller, Jon Alexander, and Phyllis Metz. Health care items are always needed. They will take donations any time. We may have a drive for items once or twice a year going forward. Seniors who have insurance money they are not using for such items could donate towards this cause.

Plastic table coverings – Chris has donated the plastic in previous years, but the cost is getting expensive and we are replacing the plastic more frequently due to the food cupboard and now RLA. Carla motioned, Sally seconded, that Chris purchase the rolls of plastic but be reimbursed. Motion carried.

Items concerning property – Bill will contact the renters in the parsonage to only park where previously discussed and not at their sidewalk. Especially during food cupboard nights, the driveway is being blocked and is only one lane wide with the stakes. Many of the stakes have been knocked over and already need to be replaced. Doug will put flags on them to make them more visible to drivers.

Also, Doug discovered there is a leak in the Narthex again as happened previously. The roof may need to be looked at.

It was discovered that in the recycling bins, there were foil pans with food in them that had molded. We may need to eliminate the recycling bins because it is not a service we currently have at Zion.

TEAM REPORTS:

Property:

11-27-2024: Raked leaves at the parsonage and shut off outside water.

11-30-2024: Shoveled and salted walks.

12-5-2024: Shoveled and salted walks.

Submitted by Frank Porter

Fellowship: No Report

Human Needs and Services: No Report

Worship:

The Worship Team met on December 3, 2024, at 4 p.m. at the church. In attendance were Pastor Erin Evans, Tom Bickert, Joanne Porter, Marsha Davis and Doug Trimble. Pam Ferrainolo was excused due to illness.

Pastor Erin opened the meeting with a prayer.

No concerns were noted by those in attendance. Pastor Erin has been working on the bulletin for our Lessons and Carols service, and will send it for our review once it is complete.

Epiphany is on January 6, so we will celebrate it during the joint service on January 5.

Looking ahead, Ash Wednesday is on March 5, 2025. As in years past, there will be an 11 a.m. service, with lunch to follow, at Zion. St. Paul will host an evening service at 7 p.m. During Lent, Wednesday evening services will alternate between Zion and St. Paul, with content to be determined. Easter is on April 20, with services at normal times.

Setting 10 will be used during Advent and until Lent 2025. Setting 3 will be used through Lent, and we'll go back to Setting 7 again at Easter.

Pastor Erin provided a list of hymns for the January services (see below).

Worship assistants for January are as follows:

January 5: Joint Service at Zion (10 a.m.); Doug Trimble will be the reader; hymns are WOV 646, ELW 301 and 302.

January 12: Christ's baptism; Marsha Davis; hymns are ELW 456, 451, and 454.

January 19: Wedding at Cana; Pam Ferrainolo; hymns are ELW 462, 310, and 836.

January 26: Isaiah – scripture fulfilled; Joanne Porter; hymns are ELW 314, 311, and 239.

Our next joint service will be on February 2 at 10 a.m., at St. Paul.

The next regular Worship Team meeting will be on Tuesday, January 7, at 10 a.m.

We closed our meeting with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Doug Trimble

NOTE: At December 12 Council meeting, Pr. Erin suggested we serve communion by intinction on Christmas Eve. We agreed. This has been done previously. Carla suggested having cookies to handout on Christmas Eve (in place of the Jesus' birthday cake we did for many years). Bill suggested we look into purchasing the cookies.

Christian Education: No Report

Stewardship:

Thanksgiving cards were signed by the congregation and sent to the shut-ins. Christmas cards are being signed right now and will be sent next Monday.

I want to thank everyone who came to the church on November 29 to help decorate the social hall, put up the tree in the sanctuary and put out the Nativity. Within less than two hours, everything was done. Thank you to Vicki for everything she had already done to beautify the sanctuary. Many hands made for less work for everyone and was an enjoyable time together.

On December 3, thirty ladies from the two churches gathered to have an evening of food, fun and fellowship. This special night helps the ladies get to know each other better as we continue our journey together as ZHLM.

The 2025 envelopes have arrived and will be put out this coming Sunday.

Submitted by Chris Trimble

The next Council meeting will be Thursday, January 9, 2025, 6 p.m.

Devotions for next meeting: Carla

Offering Counters/Recorders for January are as follows:

January 5: Chris and Doug	Chris
January 12: Carla and Sally	Bill
January 19: Bill and Marsha	Bill
January 26: Carla and Sally	Chris

Motion to Adjourn was made by Carla and seconded by Doug followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Sally Measel, Council Secretary

2025 Greeters

1/5/2025	Frank Porter
1/12/2025	Diane Goehring
1/19/2025	Vicki Moyer
1/26/2025	Edie Brain
2/2/2025	at St. Paul
2/9/2025	Michelle Mulbauer
2/16/2025	Alice Rubright
2/23/2025	Jessica Gasior
3/2/2025	Carla Wright
3/9/2025	Chris Trimble
3/16/2025	Vicki Moyer
3/23/2025	Edie Brain
3/30/2025	Pat Pflug
4/6/2025	At St. Paul
4/13/2025	Chris Trimble
4/20/2025	Patty Cekella
4/27/2025	Joanne Porter
5/4/2025	Linda Armstrong
5/11/2025	Jessica Gasior
5/18/2025	Bill Gasior
5/25/2025	Joretta Kennedy
6/1/2025	At. St. Paul
6/8/2025	Don Grubbs
6/15/2025	Pam Ferrainolo
6/22/2025	Marsha Davis
6/29/2025	Debbie Mudders
7/6/2025	Tom Bickert
7/13/2025	Dave Kennedy
7/20/2025	Pat Pflug
7/27/2025	Frank Porter
8/3/2025	at St. Paul
8/10/2025	Tom Brain
8/17/2025	Doug Trimble
8/24/2025	Evelyn Stephens
8/31/2025	Loree White
9/7/2025	Edie Brain
9/14/2025	Frank Porter
9/21/2025	Chris Trimble
9/28/2025	Oscar Domhoff
10/5/2025	at St. Paul
10/12/2025	Peg Kaltenbach
10/19/2025	Cindy Latch
10/26/2025	Jessica Gasior
11/2/2025	Marsha Davis
11/9/2025	Vicki Moyer

11/16/2025	Doug Trimble
11/23/2025	Gary Rader
11/30/2025	Donna Hall
12/7/2025	at St. Paul
12/14/2025	Debbie Mudders
12/21/2025	Tom Bickert
12/28/2025	Pam Ferrainolo