

Zion Lutheran Church  
557 Perry Highway  
Harmony, PA 16037  
724-452-8886

*"To be together growing in Christ, to be His message to others"*

[www.zioninharmony.com](http://www.zioninharmony.com)

Email: [zion557@zoominternet.net](mailto:zion557@zoominternet.net)

## Hopeless?



What is hope? I have been asking myself this question of late, perhaps because Oak Grove Confirmation families and sponsors recently attended a worship service with Abiding Ministries in the Allentown neighborhood in Pittsburgh. We worshiped together, ate together, and then had a tour of the community. Later that night I watched the documentary *Alt-Right: Age of Rage* (which you can find on Netflix). This experience of Abiding followed by the documentary was jarring. I don't suppose it taught me anything I did not already know but it has put me in a bit of a funk--which brings me back to my question, "What is hope?" Naturally I went to Google for the definition.... According to the Web dictionary, hope is defined as "a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen."

I wonder then what we are supposed to be hoping for.... What are the people of Abiding, who daily experience poverty, hoping for? What is the "Right" or "Left" hoping for? What are you hoping for? What are we expecting to happen? What is our hope? What motivates us into the future?

Furthermore, is hope an illusion? Is hope real? Is it something that humans have fabricated so that we might be optimistic in times when there is nothing going right? Is it an illusion that we have created to pull us away from the reality that is right in front of our faces? Do we hope because we don't want to cope with reality?

In which case, I am not so sure that I see the value of hope. Or that I put any merit in hope. There is no future event, dream, goal, or expectation interesting enough for me to want to move towards. I've never been much for goals – life is meant to live not envision.... I grow tired of politicians and activists talking about the future as if they know something about it or that they control it. That said, I do strive to become a better neighbor, Pastor, father, and husband; to care for others, to love, to challenge myself to engage people with an open mind and open heart. However, I don't do this for some future event or dream or expectation. I do not do what I do for some perceived hope, not the hope of heaven nor the fear of hell. I do it for what has already been done. I put my trust and confidence in what has already been done for me in love. I believe that is called faith. So perhaps I'm hopeless but faithful?

To be clear, I put faith in the person of Jesus. In the record of how he lived, died, and came back from the dead. In the words that history gives us through the writings of witnesses, who were so transformed by what they saw that they could never be the same. I put my faith in a series of events that transpired some 2,000 years ago. And in faith I act for today and for tomorrow. I've never seen hope make the world better or change lives for the better but I have seen faith transform lives and give purpose to meaninglessness. Not that I am a man without hope, but rather that hope does not motivate me. I am motivated by faith, moved by faith, empowered by faith, driven to act by faith. Hope is fine but faith makes a difference.

Just a thought.  
Pastor Nathaneil



Thursday, March 14 7:00 Council meets  
 Sunday, March 17 Worship & Music Team meets following church  
 Wednesday, March 20 10:00 WELCA meets  
 Saturday, March 23 8:00 Men's Bible Study

Spring ahead! Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 10, so don't forget to turn your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed Saturday night!



## The Bunny Hop



Our annual "Bunny Hop" will begin the first week of March! Please vote for your favorite bunny by placing food on the table in the narthex behind each bunny. All food will benefit our Food Cupboard.



Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$350 given 1/15/19 to Shriners Hospital for Children. Your caring and generosity has the power to change lives—and let kids get back to just being kids!

Warmest wishes,

Alison Petty, Director of Planned & Major Giving Operations

I would like to thank those who helped with painting the fellowship hall, office, restrooms, and entry: Tom Davis, Eric Painter, and Frank Porter.

Also, many thanks to Zachary Porter for helping with the water cleanup and cleaning the carpeting after the water line broke.

Al Stephens, Property Chair

Dear Members of Zion Lutheran,

On behalf of the Zelenople Service Unit, we want to extend our sincere appreciation to you and your volunteers for cheerfully ringing the bells for our Salvation Army Kettle Campaign this past Christmas season. We had an extremely successful campaign that will help many people from our area who find themselves in need, and we could not have done it without you!

Sincerely,

Rhonda Eppinger & Sue Collins

Dear Church Members,

Habitat for Humanity of Butler County would like to thank you for your generous donation. Your continued support of our organization helps us to continue our mission of building homes for families in need of decent affordable housing. We have completed the house we were building in Worth Township in June for the Jamison Family. We hope to begin a new home this summer. Please continue to keep us in your prayers and to support our cause.

Sincerely,

Judy Kercovich, secretary

## Serving Zion this month



### Ushers

March 3: Tom Brain  
March 10: Oscar Domhoff  
March 17: Jessica Gasior  
March 24: Carl Miller  
March 31: Peg Kaltenbach



### Greeters

March 3: Steven & Michelle Rock  
March 10: Dale & Carla Wright  
March 17: Chris & Doug Trimble  
March 24: Alice Rubright & Vicki Moyer  
March 31: Earl & Diane Goehring



### Money Counters

March 3: Shirley Fichter & Debbie Muders  
March 10: Sally Measel & Evelyn Stephens  
March 17: Pat Pflug & Linda Armstrong  
March 24: Bill Gasior & Al Stephens  
March 31: George Measel & Bill Gasior



### Bulletin Sponsors

March 3: Stephens  
March 10: Trimble  
March 17: Stephens  
March 24: Painter  
March 31: Barkley

- If you are unable to serve on your Sunday, please trade with someone.
- Bulletins may be sponsored with a donation of \$15 per week, to offset the cost of the bulletins, and can be given to the glory of God, in memory of someone, or in honor of someone. Note "Bulletins" in the memo section of your check, and please call Melissa in the office if you'd like to sponsor the bulletins.
- Flowers may be given on the altar any Sunday. There are forms on the bulletin board in the office hallway for both flowers and bulletins. Ask Melissa if you have questions.



Ash Wednesday is on March 6<sup>th</sup>. There will be an 11:00 service at Zion, with Pastor Susie presiding (followed by lunch); and a 7:00 p.m. service at St. Paul Lutheran Church, with Pastor Bev presiding.

### “Renewing Hope”

This year the mid-week services at Zion will be a contemplative, meditative, renewing, and calming experience of scripture, song, and prayer with moments of silence to let your heart and mind open to the word of God.

In this world of hustle and bustle and electronics ruling our lives, this is a time to renew your soul in a beautiful setting of candles and dim lighting.

We invite you to join us for this beautiful service from the brothers of Taize’, France, which was begun in 1940.

**This year we will be sharing our midweek services with St. Paul Lutheran Church, alternating weeks.**

Please refer to the church calendar and/or weekly bulletins for where the service will be each week. We will begin at 6:15 for a Soup and Salad Supper (bring your place setting please) followed by the Taize’ service in the sanctuary. We will end at 7:30.



## HOLY WEEK



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

***Palm Sunday*** Pastor Susie will lead us in worship. She will be reading the Passion. The service will begin at our normal 10:30 worship time.

***Maundy Thursday*** Pastor Susie will once again be with us. The service will include the stripping of the altar, and will begin at 7:00.

***Good Friday*** Services will begin at 7:00 at **St. Paul Lutheran Church**.

***Easter Sunday*** Pastor Susie will serve at both of our Easter services. The Sunrise Service will begin at 7:30. The second service will begin at 10:30. Please note, there will be no Sunday School on Easter.

***Easter Breakfast*** In between the services we will once again have breakfast. We will have breakfast casserole, muffins, Danish and juice. We invite all that attend the early service to stay for a time of fellowship and we also invite those going to the late service to join us also. We will be ready for breakfast around 8:45am. By the time you are done with breakfast the second service will be ready to start. So whether you come early or late, everyone is invited to have breakfast together. Hope to see you all on that glorious day of Jesus’ resurrection. *There will be no fellowship hour after the 10:30 service.*

Order forms for Easter flowers will be available soon in the weekly bulletins and also on our website, [www.zioninharmony.com](http://www.zioninharmony.com).



## ***MEALS ON WHEELS***

**Our special offering for March will benefit our local Meals on Wheels program.**

Meals on Wheels is a community service organization. Meals are provided for those members of our community who are unable to get out of the house and go to the grocery store or cook for themselves. The largest benefit from the program is that it enables the elderly to maintain their independence as long as possible and also maintain better health because of a nutritionally balanced diet.

Meals on Wheels has been a part of this community for over 45 years. The kitchen is located in the English Lutheran Church on High Street in Zellenople. The organization is run by volunteers with one paid staff member, the cook. Volunteers pack the lunches and deliver them to the clients. Many of the desserts and fruits are donated by area churches. This helps to keep costs to a minimum and therefore the meals are affordable for those who are on a fixed income. The cost to receive meals is \$20.00 per week. That cost includes one hot and one cold meal per day.

Anyone interested in being involved with Meals on Wheels or learning about the program should call Barb Kaufman @ (724) 452-6676.



Here it is time again to think of those that do not have the happy homes that the rest of us have. For those that are residing at the Voice campus this Easter season we will once again pack bags of goodies for the women and children, as well as all of the necessary ingredients for an Easter meal. We never know exactly how many will be there until right before Easter so we plan for 13 women and 13 children of various ages. It has been found that it is easier for us to purchase the products for these bags since we don't know the children's ages until the last minute. Due to this, we ask if you would like to help offset the costs of the bags that you contribute any amount of money to it. Please either give the money to any member of the WELCA group or put it in an envelope stating that it is for the Easter bags for Voice. This is a large undertaking for the small group of women in WELCA so your contributions are greatly appreciated. Thank you for all your help in making this wonderful season of our Lord a happier time for those less fortunate.



Even though it is still some time away we want you to mark your calendars for the evening that we celebrate all women in our church and their families. You don't have to be a mother, because each of us is a daughter. On May 6<sup>th</sup> we will have an evening of food, fellowship and entertainment. So mark your calendars and come join this wonderful group of women and girls that we call our families here at Zion.



**The Fellowship Team has planned their events for March.**

**March 3:** Birthday and Anniversary Celebration following worship.

**March 10:** Fellowship Hour

**March 17:** St. Patrick's Day luncheon. Irish or not, please join us after the service for some great fellowship and a little Irish food!

**March 24:** Fellowship Hour

**March 31:** Fellowship Hour

## Zelienople-Harmony Community Band Concert



The Zelienople-Harmony Community Band will present its annual Spring concert on Sunday, March 31st, at 2:00 p.m. Trumpeter Wendell Banyay will perform a solo with the band, and the featured group will be a woodwind ensemble from the high school, under the direction of Sara Snyder. The concert will be held in the auditorium at Seneca Valley Intermediate High School, and admission is free, though donations are welcome!

Lenten Fish Fry dinners are underway at the American Legion in Zelienople. These dinners benefit the Zelienople Skate Park, and are held every Friday during Lent.

Zion has volunteered to provide desserts for the Fish Fry on Friday, April 5th. Any type of dessert is welcome, and we are asked to provide 250 servings. If possible, please provide something that can be frozen if need be. If you can help, please sign the sheet on the bulletin board. You can bring your donations to the church by 10:00 Friday morning, or you can take them to the American Legion in Zelienople by 4:00.



### Be Sure To Shine

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven."

- Matthew 5: 14 – 16

Note: Zion Lutheran Church has committed to the SWPA Synod \$12,000.00 for Mission Support for the year 2019. The form was signed by Pastor Nathaneil and myself and mailed on Feb. 14, 2019. This is local outreach beyond our immediate doors. Please give as your heart directs.

Sally Measel, Stewardship

## SYNOD ASSEMBLY

JUNE 13-15

### CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION CENTER



If you are interested in attending the Synod Assembly this year, please see Melissa or any council member. We are looking for a man and a woman to send. This is a good way to see what is happening around our Synod, and a wonderful opportunity to serve!

Sunday, June 2: Spring Concert by the Ellwood City Civic Chorale; 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 12: Men's Grill-Out. Rain or shine, hot or cold! 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 11: Dan Schall, 10:30 Worship Service (possibly outdoors)

Sunday December 8: Christmas Concert by the Ellwood City Civic Chorale,  
3:00 p.m.



Mark your calendars, and bring your family, friends, and neighbors!



Minutes of Council Meeting  
Tuesday, February 12, 2019

**Attendees:** Shirley Fichter, Bill Gasior, Sally Measel, Debbie Muders, Pat Pflug, Al Stephens, Evelyn Stephens, Pastor Nathaneil Christman

**Absent:** George Measel

**Devotions:** Pat opened the meeting with devotions written by Pastor Christman titled 'A Stewardship Story Fit for a Queen'. The Pastor is the keeper of the bee hives at Oak Grove Church. One of the hives is genetically resistant to the mites that are destroying the hives in our area. There was a scare recently that the Queen escaped from the hive. If so, all the bees would have perished. Luckily, the Queen returned and that means that all her descendants will live to pollinate the fruits and vegetables in the area. The Pastor felt that this story was like a metaphor for the Word of God spreading through the community and enriching all the inhabitants.

**Secretary's Report:** There were no additions or corrections. Evelyn made a motion to approve the report. Linda seconded. The motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** TREASURER'S REPORT FOR JANUARY 2019:

	<b>1/31/2019</b>	<b>12/31/2018</b>
Checking	\$ 91,799.84	\$ 87,937.61
Petty Cash	25.00	25.00
Cash Balance	\$ 91,824.84	\$ 87,962.61
Less: Capital Improvements	26,810.57	22,300.57
Less: Designated Funds	32,758.80	33,516.77
Less: Payroll Tax Withholding	564.20	564.20
Current Budgeted Funds Available	<b>\$ 31,691.27</b>	<b>\$ 31,581.07</b>

Contributions by envelope and plate for January (4 Sundays) were \$11,154.59. Compared to our budgeted amount of \$700.32 giving was \$4,154.27 more than was needed to meet monthly budget. Receipts exceeded our budgeted amount on three Sundays last month. Envelope giving to date in 2019 totals \$11,154.59 (51 Sundays); there was no church on the third Sunday (January 20<sup>th</sup>) due to the weather and we are \$4,154.27 over budget.

**It is important to understand that although our checking account shows \$91,799.84 most of that money is in designated accounts and can only be used for that specific account. The amount we actually have to pay our bills is \$31,694.27.**

Our average weekly attendance for January was 45.

**PennEnergy** (Formerly Rex Energy) – Miscellaneous (Account #980): Opening Balance was \$4,358.13. December and January receipts were \$703.70. January disbursements were \$123.19 (Cemetery Association). Ending balance for January was \$4,938.64.

**Parsonage Maintenance Loan Balance** is \$12,000 as of January 31, 2019.

We received a thank you letter from Pine Valley for the donation that was given by our Sunday School last year.

Lutherlyn also sent us a thank you letter for our contributions last year.

Our church's property and liability insurance has been paid in full for 2019. Evelyn made a motion to approve the report. Pat seconded. Motion passed.

**Pastor's Report:** The pastor committed 24 hours to Zion in January which is 4 hours over the 20 hours he pledges monthly.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:**

**Lenten Services /Meals:** Lenten services will alternate between Zion and St. Paul's. Services will be held at Zion on March 13<sup>th</sup>, March 27<sup>th</sup> and April 10<sup>th</sup>. Council will provide the dinner on March 13<sup>th</sup>, Fellowship on March 27<sup>th</sup> and Carl's pork and sauerkraut on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Lenten services will be held at St. Paul's on March 20<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Dinner will be served at 6:15 with service following at 7:00. The 11:00 Ash Wednesday service will be held at Zion with WELCA providing the lunch. The evening Ash Wednesday service will be held at St. Paul's at 7:00. Both churches will share responsibilities for the services during Holy Week. A list of all services will be listed in the Newsletter and in the weekly bulletin. Easter Sunday services will be held at both churches at their regular times. Chris will provide Easter breakfast.

Council discussed Lenten Denial donations. Since we are only meeting at Zion 3 times this year a goal will not be set. Last year our donations were given for World Hunger. We also donated \$125.00 to the Butler County Relief Initiative to help repair the damage to homes that were flooded in the city of Butler. The council will discuss at a later date what charities will receive a contribution. If anyone has an idea about this, please share it with a member of council for consideration.

**Bunny Hop:** Donations for this event will be given to the Food Cupboard and will begin the first week of March.

**Fish Fry/Desserts:** Zion will once again provide desserts for the Fish Fry at the Legion in Zelienople. Melissa will ask St. Paul's to help out with providing half of the requested cakes, pies and cookies. The Legion will assign the date and at that time we will notify all the great bakers in the congregation.

**Roll Call:** Shirley showed the council a video about this new software specifically designed to simplify Sunday money counting procedures and financial reports. It can also create and update a church directory. For a church with up to 250 members, this would cost \$329.00. There is also a program that can be used at Vacation Bible School for child security to insure each child is released to a person designated by the parent if the parent cannot be there. This is so important to make sure all the children are safe and the church volunteers have the resources to insure their safety. The cost for this feature is \$149.00 for up to 100 children. The website to review this software is [www.bythebook.com](http://www.bythebook.com). The council will discuss the purchase of this software at the next meeting after each member has looked at the video again. This shouldn't be a difficult decision if this software makes Shirley's job easier.

**Team Reports:**

**Every Member Involvement/Meeting Human Needs:** Linda will resume blood pressure checks after the church service on the last Sunday of the month.

**Property:** Cleanup after the broken pipe water damage has been completed. Al will put up the bulletin boards this week.

**Fellowship:** On February 24<sup>th</sup> after the church service, there will be a lunch of Oyster stew, vegetable soup and fruit pies. Evelyn is planning a special lunch for St. Patrick's Day on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Worship:** Pat furnished the council all the details of Lenten and Easter services previously mentioned in this report.

**Christian Education:** Marsha will visit the Synod to gather information about this summer's VBS. The focus of the study will be 'Shipwreck'. The committee will meet to determine the dates of VBS but, tentatively, is set for the last week of July in conjunction with St. Paul's and English.

**March Money Counters:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Shirley and Debbie, 10<sup>th</sup> Sally and Evelyn, 17<sup>th</sup> Pat and Linda, 24<sup>th</sup> Bill and Al, 31<sup>st</sup> George and Bill.

**Devotions for March:** Sally

**Next Council Meeting:** March 14<sup>th</sup>

Al made a motion to adjourn. Evelyn seconded. Motion passed. The council prayed the Lord's Prayer and adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Muders

### Whatever the Weather

No matter the forecast, weather can remind us of God's presence:

\*When it's sunny, remember that Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12)

\*When it's cloudy, remember that God often spoke to and guided his people from a cloud (Exodus 13:21-22)

\*During a thunderstorm, remember the thunder and lightning when God beckoned Moses to Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16)

\*When it rains or snows, remember that God's Word serves his purpose just as precipitation does (Isaiah 55:10-11)

\*When it's windy, remember that "a wind from God" came at Creation (Genesis 1:2), and God's Holy Spirit arrived at Pentecost like a mighty wind (Acts 2:2)