



Zion's News & Notes

December
2018

Zion Lutheran Church

Zion News & Notes

Zion News & Notes is published each month by the church office. It includes news of upcoming events, thank you notes, a calendar, archives, photos and many other items of interest. Our newsletters are also available on our website: www.zionluth.com.

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A Few Words From Pastor David

A Few Words from Pastor David

On our recent trip to Jordan, Israel, and Egypt, Dena and I visited the Bethlehem area and the Church of the Nativity. I learned something new that I want to share with you, namely, what early church tradition says the first Christmas most likely actually looked like. NEWS FLASH – SPOILER ALERT early church tradition has it that Jesus very probably wasn't born in a barn/stable in the sense we usually think of them; that is, made of wood.

In ancient Israel, natural caves were used as living spaces and also places to shelter flocks and herds. In the area of Bethlehem, the rocky hills provided many caves for shelter. Most structures were built of stone since it was abundant, whereas wood for lumber was scarce. Even today, homes there are built of stone or cement. There is a spot in Bethlehem called the Shepherd's Fields where tourists, like us, can go to get a glimpse of the natural look of the land, despite the growing city of Bethlehem's expansion across what once was a picturesque and peaceful landscape of hills used for grazing.

A cave is available there to go inside to get out of the hot summer heat or the cold winter rains, and to get a better idea of how first century people used caves to shelter animals. Dena and I along with our group went in, milled around, and said a prayer while we were there. I couldn't help but think about how crowded, stuffy, and smelly the cave would have been with not only the holy family, but also several animals. The "stable" where Mary and Joseph spent the night of Jesus' birth was most likely much like the cave at the shepherd's field, perhaps underneath the fully occupied "inn," which would have been constructed over it and above ground.

The cave where tradition asserts Jesus was born is beneath the Church of the Nativity, which was first built around 327 CE by Constantine the Great and his mother St. Helena to honor Jesus' birth. This cave is accessible to pilgrims by stepping down a short set of stairs (and lots of pushing and shoving) to a grotto beneath the altar of the church's main sanctuary. A metal star surrounded by marble slabs marks the spot where the blessed event took place. In other parts of the grotto, the cave walls are still visible, although mostly covered with tapestries. The "manger" for the baby Jesus, which also would have been hewn of stone, is very close by, but in its own part of the cave. FYI – many such mangers have been excavated around the country.

Isn't it interesting how our geographic and cultural backgrounds affect our understanding of the Christmas story? We, who live where wood is plentiful, where "stables" for sheltering animals are primarily constructed of wood and above ground, and are from a northern European heritage, imagine Jesus to have been born in one type of structure, namely, a wooden stable/barn and placed in a wooden manger, whereas, those who actually have lived, and currently live, in and around Bethlehem, understand Jesus' birth much differently. Be that as it may, I think one main point both traditions make is that in Jesus, God the Creator of the universe, entered the world in lowliness and humility, not majesty and exaltation as would have been expected of a great Roman god. This is a radical notion and would have been shocking in Luke's day. Along this line, how many of us would expect or even be open to having God to come to us as a baby born in a homeless shelter or rescue mission? Yet, such is an essential characteristic of the God we worship: solidarity with the lowly in means and/or status and the humble. May we ponder in our hearts this Advent/Christmas the radical nature of God' entrance into our world, including how earthy it was; that in Jesus, God likely entered the world not even on the surface of the earth, but beneath it. How might this affect our self-understanding and our treatment of others?

May you have a blessed Advent and Christmas

Pastor David

Announcements

BIBLE STUDY: Pr. David conducts Bible study Wednesdays, at 10 AM & 6:30 PM in the Fireside Room. We're looking at 1st Maccabees. Questions, contact Pastor at pastor@zionluth.com or 315-732-4110. *All are welcome.*

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
TITHE.LY: We are so happy to see you using this convenient tool to give, we appreciate all of you so much. Just go to our website and click on donate to give electronically.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
HELP NEEDED: Zion's Christmas tree will be delivered and set up the evening of Thursday, Dec. 6, time TBD. Please bring work gloves. The tree is again being donated by the Grove's - thanks, Carole and Ed! It's usually a big tree, so we need lots of help!

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
CHRISTMAS DECORATING PARTY: Friday, December 7 at 6 PM. Come help Zion celebrate the holidays by making our church look festive by attending our annual **Decorating Party!** Snacks and drinks will be provided, or bring your favorite if you like. Many helpers are needed.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
AMAZON SMILE: Christmas shopping season is upon us! If you're ordering through Amazon, please use [smile.Amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). They will donate a portion to us. Shop for the charity, "Zion Lutheran Church" scroll down to page 4, and select our location in New Hartford, NY.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
BOOK CLUB: Will meet Thursday, Dec. 6 and Thursday, Dec. 20 at 5 PM to finish reading the book by David Brooks called "The Road to Character." Please see Fran Holzberger or Kim Marscher if you have questions.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
PRAYER GROUP: Pastor David leads a contemplative prayer group on Wednesdays from 5:30–6:15 PM in the Fireside Room for anyone who wishes to deepen their spiritual life.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
ANNUAL REPORT: If you are responsible for a report for Zion's 2018 Annual Report, please submit it to the office by December 31. Please email your reports to Sara at office@zionluth.com.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
1 SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS/LESSONS & CAROLS: Sunday, December 30th - the Paris Hill Brass Quintet will make their second Christmas season visit to Zion by playing for the 10 AM service, followed by a short concert in our sanctuary. Try to attend this year for a Christmas treat for yourself!

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
RETIREMENT TEA: Whether or not you're retired, please come on Thursday, Dec. 13 at 2 PM for a Retirement to enjoy hot/cold drinks, pie, and each other's company. The talk will be on preparing for the future at Zion, with a focus on bequests. Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex if you can come.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
YOUNG FAMILIES DINNER: Join us for a family dinner and "worshipful play" for families with pre-K Children. Stay tuned for the date, either Thursday, Dec. 6th or 13th at 6 PM, we'll send out an announcement!

Birthdays/Youth

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS Happy Blessed Birthday!

Pr. Janet Griffiths	3	Sarah Berntson	15	Wendy Stevens	23
Hannah Barrett	4	Peter Burkdorf	15	Lisa Lucas-Myers	25
Carolyn Dzwonkas	4	Kevin Besler	16	Scott Miller	26
Esy McCarthy	4	Rebecca Burkdorf	16	Mae Parker	27
Kim Manino	7	Julie Sullivan	16	Ann McCarthy	28
Sean Scarafile	7	Holly Kulawy	17	Norm Jeche, Jr.	29
Ron Kowalczyk	8	Helga Morrison	17	Barbara Granato	30
Karen Mannella-Daniel	8	Barbara Reinshagen	17	Evangeline Gwilt	30
Danielle Semeraro	8	Stephen Grove	19	Laura Hilt	30
Mark Rettig	8	Jodie Engstrom	21	David McCarthy	30
Ruth LaManque	10	Carole Grove	22	Sara Nicholls	30
Tammy Miller	10	Klara Kohlbrenner	23		
Caleb Hunter	12	Jim Schieble	23		

ZION CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SCHEDULE 2018

Students: K – Grade 6 Sundays: 11:15 – 12:00



January

December

2) Ornaments

9) Christmas Pageant practice

16) Christmas Pageant/celebration

23) No class (Christmas Break)

30) No class (Christmas Break)

6) Dig in-Jesus Heals a lame Man by a Pool

13) Dig in-Jesus Heals a Lame man by a Pool

20) Benchmark/Craft

27) Dig In-A Roman Officer
Demonstrates Faith

Youth Christian Education

Youth, 7th grade through 12th grade, are invited to meet in the youth room following the 10am service on Sundays to learn and grow in their Christian faith.

Vignettes from Zion's History: Happy New Year! A Service for Sylvester

Saint Sylvester, the Roman Catholic pope from 314 until his death on December 31, 335, was canonized for his role in recording the Nicene Creed, curing the Emperor Constantine of leprosy, and inspiring the construction of several cathedrals, including St. Peter's in Rome. Over time, New Year's Eve became known as Saint Sylvester's Day in the Anglican, Lutheran, Eastern Orthodox, Reformed, and Catholic faiths. Changes in the Gregorian calendar in 1582 established the year's last day as December 31, setting the stage for Saint Sylvester commemorations/celebrations.

Watch-night services in German Lutheran churches, and New Year's rites the following day, formed a part of Sylvester (sometimes spelled "Silvester") observances. Fireworks, which brightened the sky during the long German winter nights, accompanied the religious events, as did partying and other boisterous undertakings. Unique regional Sylvester eve customs emerged. Some Germans ate sauerkraut and lentil soup, a combination that supposedly brought prosperity. Other *Deutschers* dined on carp and kept one of the fish's scales in their wallets to insure that their billfolds contained plentiful cash. Another popular, enduring custom was *bleigiessen*, where New Year's revelers melted lead on spoons and dropped the molten metal into cold water. Participants then forecast the future based on shapes the re-solidified lead formed. German-speaking Austrians in Vienna took leashed pigs for strolls in the city, believing that the activity brought good fortune.

Germans brought their New Year's religious customs to North America. In 1900, *The Lutheran Witness* told of how Redeemer Church, in Milwaukee, held a Sylvester service in their sanctuary at 8:00, followed by refreshments and a watch-night service. Online searches reveal records of Sylvester services at scattered locations throughout the 20th century. Thornhill Lutheran Church in the suburbs of Toronto, Ontario, remained loyal to its German New Year's heritage until 2016. The congregation sponsored an annual *Deutscher Silvestergottesdienst mit Abendmahl* (German Silvester Service with communion) on December 31. Since then, this event has been called a "New Year's Service." Hymns were selected from the *Jahreswende* (change of year) subdivision of the church's bilingual hymnal. Thornhill's newsletters still contain a few German notices and, while English dominates Sundays' liturgies, *Deutsche* services are held monthly. Pastor Peter Lisinki stated that his congregation was gradually eliminating German worship to broaden its appeal as an English-speaking church.

Few records of Zion's New Year's traditions exist. Fultonhistory.com documents Sylvester services at our church during the 1890s and early 1900s. The strong Germanic character of our congregation prior to those years would imply that these rites occurred earlier, but no newspaper confirmations emerged. The last publicized Zion "Sylvester Eve" service was an English rite in 1924. This 11:15 service was followed by German worship at 10:15 on New Year's Day. Zion sponsored these two services during the 1920s, but only the January 1 celebration in the 1930s. *The Messenger*, our church's newsletter, cited these observances. The German Sylvester label was probably dropped after 1924 as the church slowly Americanized. Zion's New Year's Day service was discontinued by 1940.

On the occasion of this holiday season, and in honor of our congregation's history, I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year - *ein Fröhliche Weihnachten und Glückliches Neujahr!*

Additional notes: Pastor Peter Lisinki and former Pastor Sebastian Meadows-Helmer provided historical information about Thornhill Lutheran Church. Gerda Beckerman contributed some timely translations. My sincere thanks go to them.

Next month: Pastor John Sprock and Utica's Ecumenical Movement

News & Notes

The Angel & Mitten Trees

The **Angel tree** and the **Mitten tree** have been put up in the narthex! The organizations receiving the gifts are The Thea Bowman Center and the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees. Choose an angel from the tree and return the gifts unwrapped with the angel tag taped to it and place under the tree. Suggested donation is around \$20. The last day to return your items is Sunday, December 16th.

The **mitten tree** is ready to welcome your handmade or purchased mittens, gloves, hats and scarves to place on the tree. The last day to add your items to the tree is Sunday, December 16th. Any questions see Deb Murdock.



Zion's
Angel & Mitten
trees 2018



Reminder: The liaison between Zion and Pastor David is the Mutual Ministry Committee, consisting of Mark Thompson, Shirley Eadline, and Bob & Bonnie Loomis. If you have nay concerns at/with Zion, please contact Pastor David or a member of the committee and it/they will be considered.

ELCA Good Gifts—ELCA.org/goodgifts

Wondering what to get someone who “has everything?” How about gifts that grow the church, fight hunger, and transform lives? The ELCA has meaningful gifts for everyone on your list. Go to their website and give a gift in someone else’s honor by 1. Choosing your gift. 2. Getting a card. 3. Noticing that 90% of your money directly supports the program. (or call 800-638-3522) [ELCA Good Gifts](http://ELCA.org/goodgifts) is your opportunity to provide critical support to the ministries and programs that mean the most to you and the people you love. God’s global barnyard supply’s gifts like: chicks, cows, pigs, goats, water, fruit-tree seeding and more.



News & Notes

Zion's Choir



Zion's choir will rehearse at 9 AM on December 9th and 23rd, and sing for the 10 AM services on those days.

The choir will also rehearse on Sunday, December 16th after worship (11:15-noon.) On Christmas Eve, December 24th, the choir will warm up at 9:30 PM for the 10 PM service.

***Please mark your calendar** for Jan. 20, 12:30 p.m. Following worship and coffee hour, we will host a potluck lunch with 5 - 6 families from the Muslim community. This luncheon emerged out of the Women's gathering in Sept. The purpose of the lunch will be to learn more about one another and to build relationships and bridges between us. During the Sept. gathering, two Muslim women talked about their faith and what it was like being a Muslim in the U. S. and a majority Christian country. It was a very positive afternoon for many, and we thought it would be good to extend a similar opportunity to our respective faith communities. So, please mark the date on your calendar and plan to attend. The Jan. newsletter will include additional details for this wonderful opportunity to get to know our Muslim "neighbors".*

Mohawk Valley Choral Society

The Choral Society will perform Handel's oratorio Messiah on Sunday, December 9, at 2:00 pm at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, 2222 Genesee St., Utica.

The 75-member Mohawk Valley Choral Society, will be under the direction of Randy Davis who is celebrating his 30th year of conducting the Choral Society.

Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door and will be available at Center Stage Pianos in the New Hartford Shopping Center, the Mohawk Valley Center for the Arts in Little Falls, and Weisser's Jewelers in Herkimer. Or you can reserve tickets by emailing mail@mvchoral.org or by calling 315.826.3092.

Classical music since 1982

Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:19

News & Notes

Continue to bring your cans/bottles to Zion, to support the Utica Food Pantries. The bins are in the coat room downstairs.

Ed Grove returns these for us.

Thank You!



DONATION SCALE

Supplies & food total for October was 185 lbs!

As I was delivering our donations to the food pantry, a lady with a small cart of just a little food was leaving, and upon seeing the toilet paper said, "OH MY, can I have a roll?" (One roll, mind you!) There was a pkg of Zest soap, prompting "Can I possibly also get some nice bath soap?" She got a bar and was actually joyous, until she saw a small bottle of laundry soap and said, 'WOW, I could sure use that to wash my clothes.' She left with a little food and a blessing of life-enhancing 'necessities' that we so often take for granted.

First hand feedback that our donations **go beyond** the ordinary and are **so appreciated!** -Ed Grove

Congratulations to Robert Berkhoudt for graduating from Army Basic Training on November 16th! He will be stationed at Fort Drum as a Combat Engineer.



PRAY

SEND PEACE

BE PRESENT

DONATE FOOD

BE THE LIGHT

WRAP SOMEONE IN A HUG

JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

If you need a **Christmas food basket**, or know someone who does, please give the information to Pastor David or Sara. Contributions may be made by putting funds in a green envelope and designate funds to Food Ministry.



Thank you!!

BUILDING FUND PROGRESS

We have recently made more improvements to Zion. We now have a beautifully renovated Fireside Room and newly upgraded upstairs bathrooms, which were much needed. These improvements were paid for by loaning ourselves money from our savings. By making a contribution to Zion's Building Fund, you can help us pay back Zion's savings so that we will be able to continue to make improvements to our church building. This can be done by using the green envelopes in the pews, or by sending your contribution to the church and marking it "**Building Fund**." If you have any questions about this wonderful opportunity to give back to your church, please feel free to ask the council members or Pastor David.

TOTAL BORROWED: \$39,500

TOTAL PAID BACK: \$16,084

TOTAL OWED: \$23,416

Thank you for your contributions!

Thank You Letters

From the Pen of Mae Parker

Snowed in at Christmas
No way in or out
No TV or light to see with
Only thoughts to think
what Christmas is all about

Not the silly things you buy
when you're shopping at the mall
Just the basic story of the Christ child
read by lamplight that is all

Age old story told forever
a story of our savior's birth
It wells within your heart and soul
Find out what's really worth

So shut off your noisy clangor
Sit and hear the Christmas story
about the savior Jesus Christ
brought to you with all your glory

Dear Zion Lutheran Church,
Thank you for donating to Veteran's
and their families in need this holiday
season. We appreciate your support of
our mission, which is to help veteran's
in need.

Thank you!
The staff of the CNYVOC,
Karina, Blake, Jen & Kari

Thank you to everyone who came out for
our **WELCA** event, it was well attended and
we all had a great time.

A special thanks to Patsy Glista for her
Colors of Christmas devotion, and helping
us to decorate the tree with the colors.

And another special thank you to Fran
Holzberger, for **inspiring us** and showing us
ways to create such beautiful bows and
ribbons from wrapping paper!

And to **everyone** who came out to enjoy the
event and brought such wonderful food
dishes to pass, thank you!

Thank you to our **amazing** Newsletter Team!
Phil & Carolyn Renno, Diana Inserra, Janet
Bagnall, Karen Toepp, Barbara Reinshagen.
And to Caryn Carlson and Evon Pinkos,
who also help with both the newsletter and
the bulletins whenever help is needed.
We appreciate you.

Love,
Sara

Thanks to Ted McCarthy for all of his
hard work and dedication getting all of
the holiday baskets ready. Shopping,
preparing boxes, and even delivering
during snow storms!

Thank you!

It's not happy people who are THANKFUL...
It's THANKFUL people who are happy.

Given to the Glory of God

<u>In Memory of:</u>	<u>To:</u>	<u>Given by:</u>
Pastor Edward Wurster & Pastor Mainhard Muehlenberg	Food Ministry	Irma Muehlenberg
John & Anna Gregory	World Hunger	Donald & Wanda Gregory
Carol Daly	Food Bank	Jim Daly
Ellis Rowland	Building Fund	Carlton D. Miller
<u>In Honor of:</u>	<u>To:</u>	<u>Given by:</u>
Zion church	Building Fund	Cheryl & Ben Edmiston
Claudia King	Food Ministry	Kerstin Soykan
Kim Marscher	Your Neighbors	Carolyn Dzwonkas
Gloria Cifonelli	Building Fund	Sara Silva
Carole Grove	Your Neighbors	Henry & Linda Healy



“Not to us, O Lord, not to us
but to your name be the glory,
because of your love and faithfulness.”

		October 2018 Treasurer's Report		
	Oct 2018	Year to Date	Budget	Over/Under Budget
Income				
Giving	\$ 12,296.75	\$ 157,085.19	\$ 155,792.00	\$ 1,293.19
Other Income	\$ 2,012.66	\$ 15,758.90	\$ 22,743.78	\$ (6,984.88)
Total Income	\$ 14,309.41	\$ 172,844.09	\$ 178,535.78	\$ (5,691.69)
Total Expense	\$ 27,829.58	\$ 196,451.00	\$ 209,707.61	\$ (13,256.61)
Net Income	\$ (13,520.17)	\$ (23,606.91)	\$ (31,171.83)	\$ 7,564.92

December 2018 Worship Team & Holiday Schedules

Greeters 10:00 AM Service	
December 2	Russ & Fran Holzberger
December 9	
December 16	
December 23	
Christmas Eve	6 PM
Christmas Eve	10 PM
December 30	

Ushers 10:00 AM Service	
December 2	Laura Hilt & Evon Pinkos
December 9	Doreen Nicholls & Jeanne Gymburch
December 16	
December 23	
Christmas Eve	6 PM
Christmas Eve	10 PM
December 30	

Worship Assistant 10:00 AM Service	
December 2	Wendy Stevens
December 9	
December 16	
December 23	
Christmas Eve	6 PM
Christmas Eve	10 PM Curtis Pulliam
December 30	Lessons & Carols

Communion Assistants 10:00 Service	
December 2	Linda Bennett & Bonnie Loomis
December 9	Karen Toepp & Janet Bagnall
December 16	
December 23	
Christmas Eve	6 PM ———
Christmas Eve	10 PM Bob & Bonnie Loomis
December 30	Lessons & Carols

Advent Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 2—Advent 1 Traditional service at 10 AM

Contemporary Service at 6 PM

Sunday, December 9—Advent 2 Hanging of the Greens service at 10 AM

Contemporary Service at 6 PM

Sunday, December 16—Advent 3 Children's Christmas Pageant at 10 AM

Contemporary Service at 6 PM

Sunday, December 23—Advent 4 Traditional service at 10 AM

Christmas Services

Monday, December 24— 6PM Family service with Un-Pageant Christmas Pageant

Monday, December 24— 10 PM Traditional Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 30— 10 AM Lessons & Carols with special guests- The Paris Hill Brass

December

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 9am men's group @Tiffany's
2 <i>Advent 1</i> 10am Traditional worship 6pm Contemporary service	3 12:30 Al-Anon	4	5 10am Bible Study 12:30pm Al-Anon 5:30pm Prayer Group 6:30pm Bible Study	6 6pm Zion Christmas tree is going up! 4:30pm Book Club 5:30pm walking group	7 12:30 Al-Anon 6pm Christmas decorating party	8
9 <i>Advent 2</i> 9am choir rehearsal 10am <i>Hanging of the greens</i> 6pm Contemporary service	10 12:30 Al-Anon	11 5pm NAMI 7pm council mtg	12 10am Bible Study 12:30pm Al-Anon 5:30pm Prayer Group 6:30pm Bible Study	13 2PM Retirement Tea 5:30pm walking group	14 12:30 Al-Anon 7-10pm Railroad group	15
16 <i>Advent 3</i> 10am Christmas Pageant 11:15am choir rehearsal 6pm Contemporary service	17 12:30 Al-Anon	18 11:30 YN board mtg	19 10am Bible Study 12:30pm Al-Anon 5:30pm Prayer Group 6:30pm Bible Study	20 4:30pm Book Club 5:30pm walking group	21 12:30 Al-Anon December solstice will be at 5:23 PM on this day	22
23 <i>Advent 4</i> 10am Traditional worship 9am choir rehearsal	24 6pm Family Christmas Un-Pageant service 9:30pm choir warm up 10pm Traditional Christmas Eve service	25 Merry Christmas! It's a Wonderful Life aired on this day in 1946	26 Office closed	27 5:30pm walking group	28 12:30 Al-Anon	29
30 10 am Lessons & Carols <i>Paris Hill Brass</i>	31 Have a Happy & Safe New Year's Eve!					



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Like us on Facebook at:

Zion Lutheran Church, New Hartford, NY.

*The mission of Zion Lutheran Church is to prayerfully
discern God's call to help people
to become more fully devoted followers of Christ.*



*From God's house to yours,
everyone at Zion wishes you a very*

Merry Christmas

&

A Happy and Prosperous New Year!