

January 5, 2021

Good Day Friends of Zion,

Happy New Year!

We hope everyone enjoyed the holiday and we look forward to 2021!

Zion has suspended indoor worship due to the elevated Covid-19 numbers in the county and we look forward to re-opening the sanctuary for indoor worship as soon as it is safe to do so!!

Please Note: The leadership at Zion continues to monitor the recent surge in COVID case incidence. Safety measures will be maintained and it was our hope to stay open, but we must suspend indoor worship for the time being. Zion's church office will remain open for the time being as we continue to monitor the case numbers in the county and state. For more information about Zion's COVID compliance feel free to call Lois Ahalt at 301-514-5735.

Worship opportunities at Zion thru January 31st

A weekly worship service will be recorded each week and posted on the website prior to Sunday Morning. A link to the service will be on the frontpage of our website and on our Facebook page.

Call Committee Update

The next step in the Call process is for us to hold a Congregation Meeting to call for a vote to accept this Clergy Couple to receive our Call. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we will not be able to hold this meeting in person. The Clergy Couple will preach our Sunday, January 17, 2021 church service through our Vimeo live stream feed and transmitted on our FM transmitter, listening in your car in the church parking lots on channel 89.9. Information for this service will be on our website and in our weekly communications. (The snow date for this service will be Sunday, January 24th, 2021) Due to the confidentiality of the call process, the names of the potential clergy couple cannot be released publicly at this time. We encourage you to sign up for one of the meet and greet sessions for January 16th so you can will have the opportunity to meet them prior to their call sermon on January 17th.

Following the service, our Synod coordinator, Pastor Robin Simpson-Litton, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership and Mobility, along with Shelly Gladhill, Church Council President, will jointly run a congregational meeting for the sole purpose of voting on the Call of the Clergy Couple. This meeting will be conducted via Zoom. A link for members to log in on their computers or call in by phone will be sent out prior to the meeting.

After the meeting is called, all members of the congregation will have one-hour to drive to our church parking lot and place their ballots for the vote on the Clergy Couple in voting bins that will be located at the church. These bins are large enough that you will be able to drive up and simply place your ballots in them without leaving your vehicle. Members of the congregation are required to bring their own ballot for the vote. No absentee ballots are allowed and a member of the church staff will be present to verify membership for all individuals prior to placing their ballots in the voting bins.

After the one-hour time limit has passed, two members of the congregation who are pre-selected by the church council will count the ballots and report the results. These results will be reported live via Zoom.

Please note: All members should have received a letter explaining the call process, along with ballots for each member in your household. If you did not receive the letter or ballots, please contact Wendi Kishimoto: wendik@zionmiddletown.org or 301-371-6500

Meet and Greet sessions with the Pastoral Couple Candidates!

We are pleased to offer eight Zoom sessions with the Pastoral Couple Candidates on Saturday, January 16th the day before the call sermon service on the 17th. Each session will last 30 minutes. If you are interested, contact the church office to sign up for the session you desire at office@zionmiddletown.org or 301-371-6500 before Wednesday January 13th. The following Sessions will be available on a first come first serve basis.

We realize this is not how this is normally done, but is needed due to the current Covid-19 situation. The meeting times are:

9 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. – 10: 30 a.m. - 1 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Staff Re-alignment at Zion

As of January 1, 2021, Wendi Kishimoto began her new role as Church Administrator/Youth and Family Director. Jim Hoover started in his new role of Facilities Administrator looking after the properties and overseeing contracts etc. Jim will continue to be involved in Social Media and Audio/Visual needs. His new role has reduced working hours in preparation for his full retirement on December 31st, 2021.

Annual Report Submissions – Deadline January 11th

All committee chairs are encouraged to submit a report for Zion's 2020 annual report. If you need an example of a report submitted in a previous year, please contact Wendi Kishimoto. Reports can be submitted to Wendi: wendik@zionmiddletown.org

Drive-up Communion Offered on Sundays

Drive-up communion will be offered by Pastor Bob on Sundays from 11 a.m. – Noon. He will be by the handicap ramp next to church parking lot, properly masked and protected to ensure your safety.

"The Stories"

Each week we will celebrate the life and ministry of a key person of faith in the Bible. There will be (online) Bible studies each week as we share helpful insights into these founders of the faith. A recorded session of the weekly study will also be made available via our website (available at any time). Join "The Stories" Bible Study Zoom Meeting live (Tuesday at 7pm, Thursday at 10am). <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87021213846> or dial **301 715 8592** and use meeting ID: **870 2121 3846**

January 10th - Mary Magdalene

There will be a recorded presentation available each Sunday at 11am. The same study will also be available on Zoom on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. & Thursdays at 10 a.m. The recorded session of the weekly study and print summary will be available via our website (*available at any time*).

Online Giving Information - Online giving is much easier and cost effective. Sign up online or contact our Treasurer, Deb Reichelt, who can easily help set it up if desired. Reach her at treasurer@zionmiddletown.org or leave a message at 301-371-6500

Church Offering Envelope update!

The Church Offering Envelopes are being mailed. Members should have received their envelopes for the first quarter of 2021 this past week. Going forward they will arrive in an earlier time frame since this was the initial mailing and we are experiencing postal service delays!

Volunteers for Altar Guild

The Altar Guild has recently lost several members. Currently we are not performing a number of the activities that we usually do because of Covid-19. As a result, we are getting by with the members that are currently on the Altar Guild. However, at some point we will be performing all the Altar Guild activities that are required to support the Church. Seriously, being on the Altar Guild does not take a whole lot of your time and you get to work with a great group of ladies. Men are welcome too! Please consider joining our group; we need you. If you are interested please contact Jo Ann Poffinberger (joannbp66@comcast.net or 301-797-8967) or Shirley Ferguson (sferguson12@comcast.net or 301-662-7775).

Middletown Clothes Closet Update and New Email Address!

The Clothes Closet Store Front will operate on an appointment only basis in order to ensure the safety of volunteers and those seeking assistance at Zion's Clothes Closet.

Beginning January 1, 2021, those wishing to visit for the Store Front will need to make an appointment by emailing pstaples9395@gmail.com or calling/texting Patricia Staples at 301-606-0041. There are many volunteers who live in Middletown and are happy to meet anyone who would like to visit. Donations will continue to be accepted. If a donation receipt is needed, email Patricia at pstaples9395@gmail.com or text/call. Volunteers who would like to continue to assist with Sorting at the Clothes Closet are encouraged to continue to volunteer when able. It is not necessary to only volunteer on Monday mornings. THANK YOU to all volunteers.

Zion Worship Service Viewing:

To view our weekly recorded Worship Service anytime during the week after noon on Sunday, you can just click on the web page link at www.zionmiddletown.org and it will take you directly to the video.

Zion Prayer List 01-05-2021

Requests remain on the prayer list for 30 days unless requested otherwise.

Marty Appleby, Glenn Stroupe, Dennis Kim, Donna Jean Brandenburg, Greg, Jim and Paula Pearson, Liz Kurtz, Jill Shockley, Christa Grunwald, Matthew Perkins, Cathy Smith, Cathy Kehoe, Ruby Pyles, Carolyn Albright, Morissa Travers, Jackie Bello, Ruth Davis, Cindy Keller, Randy Andersson, Jessica Catechis, Heidi Witmer, Sherri Myers, Fletcher Robinson, Janet Young, Glen Burris, Matthew Schaffert, Mike Mauro, Mike Lawrence, Naomi Hayes, Ray Murphy, Janice Wisner, Ricky Routzahn, Priscilla Hughes, Gene Appleby, Addison Hopson, Tristan Vail, Kevin Kinna, Marianna Bere, Amii Fritz, Mitchell Bidle, David Shupe, Deb Kahihikolo

Please be sure the church is notified if you are hospitalized and if you wish to be placed on the prayer list or would like visitation.

Have a Blessed Week,

The Pastor and Staff of Zion Lutheran Church