

DEC. 2023

Zions NewZflash

NEWSLETTER OF ZIONS CHURCH

Dear friends!

Imagine. One more month. Pregnant for eight months, and this is finally the month the birth is going to occur. Imagine.

For those who are parents or who have friends who are about to become parents for the very first time, we know what they can't even begin to imagine – how dramatically their lives are about to change in one month.

They will know a dimension of love that they could never before imagine. They will experience all kinds of intrusions into all kinds of normal life activities – like sleeping, eating, socializing, and minor and major car rides. Everything will be much more complex and challenging, mixed together with great pleasure and joy and amusement.

Imagine. One more month for Mary to give birth to Jesus. How the lives of Mary and Joseph are about to change.

As will the life of someone in your world. Someone in the space of our world, in our church, in our community, in our county, in our state, in our country, in our world, someone is going to take a step of faith and invite Jesus into their lives. How much are their lives about to change? Unbelievably.

Or not. Sometimes people pray the prayer and invite Christ into their lives, but Jesus' entrance is limited. It's as if he comes into the entry way of our home but allowed to come no further. That's not the way it's supposed to be. Jesus' entrance into our lives is supposed to be exactly like that of a baby's entrance. Total. Complete. All encompassing!

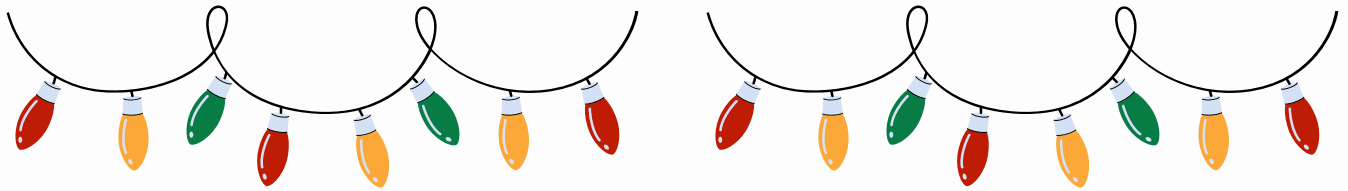
Everything about Joseph and Mary's lives were going to be changed by Jesus entrance into their world, and that's the Lord's desire for that person in our world, and for that matter, for you, and for me. Jesus wants to be completely immersed in our lives, affecting every aspect of our lives just as comprehensively as a baby.

Has it been that way for you? Have you allowed Jesus to be completely immersed in your life recently?

This Christmas, let's all pray for people to fully open the door of their lives to Jesus and let us do the same.

That's the greatest thing I want for Christmas this year – more of Jesus in my life! And I pray the same for you!

Open your life fully to Jesus,
Randy



Zion's Bells: Handbells

It's Tuesday...Handbell Rehearsal Night!

Last month, I shared how handbell ringing is a sport and requires TEAMWORK! Let's delve into this teamwork thing a bit more!!! I arrive at approximately 4:30 p.m. to set up the tables, pads, book risers, books, mallets, choirchimes, and handbells in order to be ready for our ringers who arrive at 6 p.m. They come... sometimes tired from a busy day, sometimes frustrated, sometimes with lots more to do after rehearsal is over. But they come with a smile on their face and ready to get to work! They are sincere, talented and dedicated to their commitment of ringing bells. I appreciate and love them more than words can say! And while churches in the area are searching for ringers, WE ARE BLESSED with 12 wonderful ringers and a fantastic sub who is ready to fill in whenever needed. (It's easy to take so much for granted, when there is so much to be grateful for!!!) I thank the Lord for this amazing, loving group!

Did you know that it takes HOURS to perfect a song that takes only minutes to play?!! It takes time to get those eighth-note runs coordinated between the ringers...time to get the martellatos syncopated correctly...and the list goes on! We work diligently to perfect a song. Why? We do it because God gave us the talent as a gift and we want to give our gifts back to Him...we want to GIVE GOD THE GLORY!!!

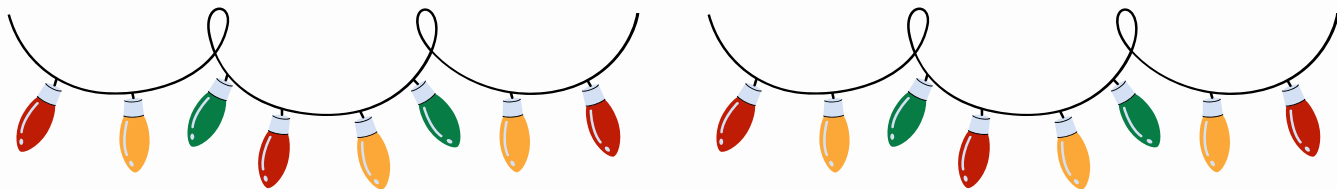
We are working on some beautiful Christmas music which we would like to share with you during the prelude on December 17 at the 8:15 a.m. service. All we ask is that you respectfully listen and appreciate the time and effort given to create these songs!

Thank You,

Linda Hartman and the Members of Zion's Bells

Choir

The choir will be singing on December 17th at the 8:15 AM service. The name of the song is Go Tell it on the Mountain. This is a very familiar Christmas hymn. Please consider coming out to help sing. Rehearsal will be on Thursday, December 14th at 7:15 PM in the choir room. Please contact Sharon Stump if you are interested at 610-756-3476 or email sls2horses@gmail.com.



Decorated Christmas Cookie & Cookie Swap

Friday - 12-8-23 - Journey Cafe - Doors open at 6:30pm - Activity begins at 7:00pm
Admission for this event is \$5.00 per person, and it's open to all women and children.

During this giving season, we are requesting donations of diapers, baby items, or gift cards to Aldi's to bless new families of *Life's Choices*.

Our hosts will be preparing sugar cookies and icings for you to decorate and keep, so it is important that you RSVP so we can be adequately prepared for everyone. RSVP at <http://www.inspiredsisters.org/2023/11/13/decorated-christmas-cookie-cookie-swap/>

Are you ready to "wow" your friends and family with your cookie-decorating talents this holiday season?

You will need to bring:

- 2 dozen of your favorite already-baked cookies from your own personal recipe book along with a few copies of that recipe to share, and a large container. These cookies will be for the "Cookie Swap" part of the activity – you bring 2 dozen, and you get to take home any combination of 2 dozen cookies from the "Swap" table.
- A large, flat/wide container for the cookies you will be decorating (since the icing may not be dry yet and your cookies cannot be stacked, a wide and flat container is best).
- Your admission cost of \$5 each (for you, and for each guest you are bringing to the activity).
- Your smile and willingness to make new friends.
- If you would like to bless a family this season, your donation of diapers or other baby items, or an Aldi's gift card.

*Light refreshments and a few snacks will be available, but you're welcome to bring an item to share.

*The cookies pictured below are for example-purposes only and may not be part of the cookie decorating activity.



Christmas Eve Worship Services

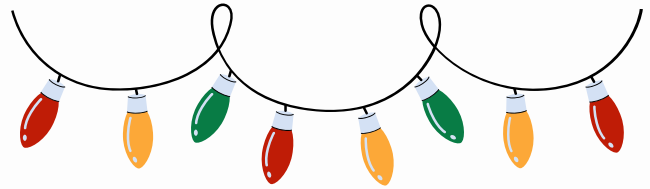
DECEMBER 23 & 24

The Christmas Eve worship services are returning again this year. "Christmas on Broadway" will be presented on Saturday evening, December 23 at 7 pm, and Sunday evening, December 24 at 5 and 7:15 pm. The Traditional Christmas worship service with communion will happen at our 9:15 pm worship service. Each of the services will include a time of candle lighting with carols. Further, we will livestream the 7:15 and 9:15 services on December 24. These will be wonderful services and we hope you can join us to share in these times of worship and reflection. We'd love to have you join us in celebrating the birth of our Savior and would be delighted if you invited a friend. Please pray for the movement of the Holy Spirit in all of our Christmas events.

Z-Lights

The annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sun, December 10, 2023 at 12 PM, after the 3rd worship service.

The 2024 budget will be presented at this meeting, in addition to voting on Consistory members and 2 large donations to FaithCare and Life's Choices, as part of the church's typical end-of-year giving.



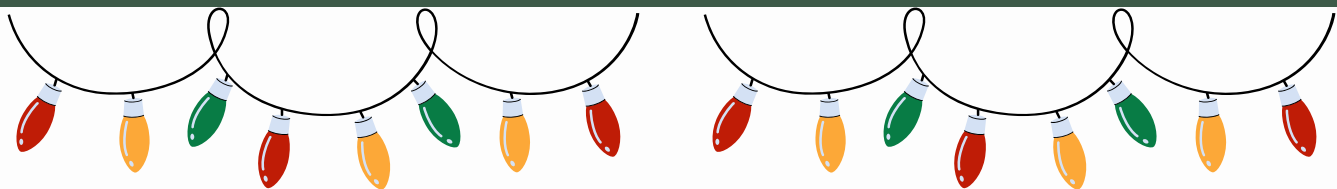
Sunday, Dec. 24th Worship Services

There will only be one service on Sunday, December 24th at 9:00 am. There will be no Sunday School this day.

End-of-Year Updates

Attention All Zion's Church Attendees:

- Please update your Realm account for any changes in address or household status. End of year contribution statements will be sent soon. Update your info at connect.zionschurch.org. If you don't have a computer, please contact the secretary at 610-562-2300 to report changes of address or household status.
- 2024 Offering Envelopes are available for pick up. If you do not have Offering Envelopes and would like some, please complete the request form on the distribution table and envelopes will be made available to you.
- Reimbursement requests for items purchased in 2023 are due no later than Sunday, December 31, 2023 in order to include these items in our financial reports for the year 2023.
- Tithes/Offerings must be postmarked/time stamped December 31, 2023 to be included in the 2023 Annual Giving Statements. All offerings received after this date will be recorded as 2024 contributions.



Spotlight on Missions: FAITHCARE

The mission of FaithCare is to bring: health, hope, & healing.

FaithCare strives to show love and compassion, while meeting physical, as well as spiritual needs.

For decades FaithCare has served hundreds of thousands of individuals physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Much of this has been done through short term mission projects, health fairs, and outreach to the neediest of this world. And while this great work will continue, we have ramped up our focus on building and establishing ongoing care facilities in our urban communities and internationally. Examples include the FaithCare-Hartford Wellness Center which served needy individuals in the inner city of Hartford, CT for over a decade. In addition, the FaithCare-PA Health Center sees patients in the inner city of Reading, PA on a regular basis. The FaithCare-PA Health Center is similarly ramping up our services, expanding visitation days, looking to incorporate additional services, along with opportunities to care for the least of these in our communities.

The FaithCare-Nigeria Hospital is nearly complete. This will be a fully functional, missionary, teaching medical facility. For an exciting video about the hospital, visit <https://bit.ly/3rSIW5Y> or scan this QR code.



We have been given land in Haiti to begin similar progress towards a fully functional, missionary, teaching medical facility in that location. As we embark on establishing enduring facilities that bring Health, Hope, and Healing to the neediest of the needy in the communities and countries we are called to, the following guiding principles should always be kept in perspective:

1. Nobody should be refused care, regardless of their finances, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or any other discriminator.
2. Every person coming for health, hope, and healing should be treated with unconditional love, compassion, and selfless care.
3. Everybody coming to a FaithCare facility should have the opportunity to learn how they can have peace and hope in their life.

Scan the QR code below to understand the general work of FaithCare:



SCAN ME



Ladies Adult Sunday School

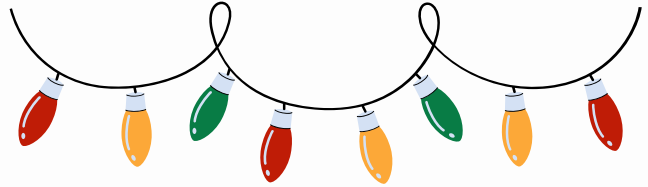
SUNDAYS * 9:40 AM * ROOM 109

Looking to get connected with other women and grow in your relationship with God? Consider joining the women's Sunday School class that meets weekly.

Here's a timeline for the rest of the year. We hope you will consider stopping by!

- November 26th
 - Start new study - Advent by J.D. Greear. A 4 week study as we take a deeper look at Jesus as Emmanuel, our Wonderful Counselor, the Everlasting Father, and the Great I Am. When you know Jesus, you will realize Christmas is more than a nice story - the arrival of JESUS changes EVERYTHING.
- December 17th
 - Finish 4th Advent session.
- December 24th
 - No Sunday School - Christmas Eve. One Church service at 9 am.
- December 31st
 - Breakfast - bring a breakfast item to share if interested!

Can't join us every Sunday? No problem. This study, along with the study guide, is available through our free resource with RightNow Media. We would love to have you join us! Led by Katie Keck.



Thank You

I would like to thank with pleasure the ladies that so beautifully decorate our altar with flowers and their creations: Donna Reber, Melissa Koenig, and Karen Ebeling. You brighten our spirit of worship every Sunday.

-Steph Reichard, Worship Team Leader

Prime Timers

- Saturday, December 2 @ 9 a.m.
 - Friendship Circle Breakfast
 - Perry Restaurant
- Friday, December 8 @ 1 p.m.
 - Prime Timers Council meeting
 - Fellowship Hall
- Friday, December 15 @ 10 a.m.
 - Games/Lunch
 - Journey Café

Annual Report Deadline

All articles to be included in the 2023 Annual Report to the congregation must be submitted to Becky Schroeder, Secretary, by Sunday, January 7, 2024.

Team leaders are asked to prepare a report for their area of responsibility. Call the church office with any questions.