

To the folks and friends of Mt. Zion,

The countryside and the neighborhoods in which we live are beginning to look different. As I was driving at night through the county, I noticed a lot of houses with Christmas lights shining in the darkness. Traveling a dark road is when light is needed the most.

As we wait for Christmas to come, we find ourselves in a dark place in our world. We hear the sounds of saber rattling as the threats of war and conflict grow more pronounced by the leaders of the world. Politicians find it tempting to be more interested in power and position than in seeking the common good for all. Opioid Addiction grows rampant as some folks have lost hope that the future offers for them a better way of life.

Yet, Light shines in the darkness. That's how the Christmas story begins. As the gospel of John proclaims: "*A light shines in the darkness; and the darkness has not overcome it.*"

I invite you to join as Mt. Zion journeys the '*Road to Christmas*'. In so many ways, we, too, are sojourners traveling on the road looking for the light.

Grace & Peace,

Gary

Sunday Morning Worship December 3, 2017 **First Sunday of Advent** – Communion

Lesson: Mark 13:24-37

Sermon "The World Is Coming to a - Beginning"

Advent & Christmas Theme

"The Road to Christmas"

December 3, 2017 First Sunday of Advent - Signs leading to the Road

Sermon Title: "*The World Is Coming to a - Beginning*" Mark 13:32-37

December 10, 2017 Second Sunday of Advent - The Preparer of the Road

Sermon Title: "*Blazing a Trail or Trailing a Blaze?*" Mark 1:1-8

December 17, 2017 Third Sunday of Advent - The Purpose of the Road

Sermon Title: "*John's Opening Act*" John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24, 2017 Fourth Sunday of Advent - The Travelers on the Road

Sermon Title: "*Room For Those on the Outside*" Matthew 1:18-25

Only one service on Sunday morning at 10 a.m.

December 24, 2017 Christmas Eve - The Road that Leads Home

Sermon Title "*God News for You!*" 4 pm Luke 2:1-7

Sermon Title "*God's Unlikely Entrance*" 7 pm & 9 pm Luke 2:1-7

Here are some **events and opportunities** for you to get connected in the church:

Shepherding Team #3 Is On Call This Week, December 3rd to December 9th. Contact Betty Cashmark.

UMM will be selling nuts (various types) in the fellowship hall between services (10-11am) from now until Christmas, or until supply lasts.

A huge note of gratitude for all those bakers and buyers who helped the Mt. Zion United Methodist Women raise \$591.00 toward our Mission Pledges!!

This years Advent Study is Christmas: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly. We currently have 3 options - Wednesdays at 7:00pm with Pastor Gary & Monday Mornings at 10:00am starting 12/4; Sundays at 10:10 with the Drop in Class starting 12/3. or if you would like to host a group - we are still looking for facilitators. Books will be available in Fellowship Hall

Calling all cooks and those who like to eat! Join our Cooking Group once a month and cook a meal to eat as well as enough to freeze for use by the Shepherding teams. If you are interested, please contact Debra Leiss.

SAGE Brigade: Friday, December 15th at Noon. We will enjoy our Christmas celebration together. Please join the group for lunch and fellowship and bring a side dish or dessert to share. Contact Debbie Burgio for more information.

Operation Christmas Child a Big Success! Sincere thanks to everyone who donated filled boxes – a total of 90!! They are on their way to children around the world and Missions has given \$540 from the Missions Legacy Fund to pay for The Greatest Journey lesson materials for 90 children to hear about our loving Savior, Jesus Christ. Well done, good and faithful servants!

The Care Giver's Group meets the 3rd Sunday of every month between services, in the church library. Contact Judy H. Johnson..

Seated Chair Class in the Chapel on Wednesday mornings 9:30-10:00. Join us as we build strength, increase flexibility and balance in 30 minutes. **No class on the following dates:** Dec. 20, Dec. 27*, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar.21, Apr. 18, May 16, June 20. *Class vote. Contact: Bettye Ames or Front Office.

Pajamas Needed!! Nights are getting colder and the need for new pajamas is getting greater for children without the security of a stable home who are living in shelters, long-term foster care and group homes. Winter is the coldest January thru March but, unfortunately, this is when the PJ Program receives the lowest number of donations. Please donate New Pajamas (sizes Infants through Teens) and/or new storybooks. Collection at Mt Zion January 1 thru January 15, 2018. Distribution in Maryland is by the Pajama Program (www.pajamaprogram.org). Let's not let the season of giving end when the nights are the coldest! Contact: Karen Williams

Please find our Love offering letter attached.