

Dear Members of Mt. Zion,

During the month of December the dates on our personal calendars fill up quickly with things to do – gifts to buy, parties to attend, and end-of-the-year work projects that need to be completed. Needless to say, December is a busy time for all of us.

Yet in the hurriedness of this time the church has set aside four Sundays before Christmas (Advent Sundays) and the days between each Sabbath (the Advent Season) as a time for us to reflect and prepare for the spiritual meanings of Christ's birth.

I invite you to join our Sunday morning Advent Study based on the theme "Advent: The Gift of New Hope". The class will be held in the fellowship hall and begin at 10:10 a.m. Since our volunteers will be making sandwiches this coming Sunday in the hall, we will draw the partition across the room in order to create space for our class and to allow our volunteers to participate in their mission work for the homeless.

No study book is needed to join the class. Each class will explore the selective lectionary readings for each Advent Sunday. This Sunday the readings will be from Malachi, Philippians, and Luke. The specific passages are listed below for you to read beforehand.

Grace & Peace,

Gary

Sunday Worship

December 9, 2018

Scripture Lessons: Malachi 3:1-4/Philippians 1:3-11/Luke 3:1-6

Message: "Hope for Walking the Straight Path"

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

Shepherding Team #2 Is On Call This Week, December 9th through December 15th. Contact Betty Cashmark.

The UMW is sending out a really huge "thank you" to all "bakers and buyers" who participated with our Annual Thanksgiving Bake Sale!! All \$700.00 plus raised is used for our Mission Pledges!!

Ladies Night Out. Come for a lovely evening of fellowship, gift exchanging, refreshments and Christmas music on Friday evening, **December 7 at 7 pm in our chapel.** All are invited! Please bring a wrapped unlabeled \$10-\$15 gift to share in an always fun game!!(it's ok if you don't do this part) The lovely and spirited ladies of Hopkins UMC are also invited, and as always add so much joy to our celebration! Please join us you'll be "jingle bell happy" you did!

We will be having live Nativity on December 9th. 5 pm

UMM Christmas Social, Sunday December 9, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM at Will & Jill Scott's house. UMM plus spouses/partners invited. Eat some dinner before arrival, then bring snack/appetizer to share; Will & Jill provide dessert. Also, suggest bringing unwrapped children's gift for charity. Register .

Love Offering for our Pastors: As we move into the Advent season and prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ Child, you are invited to share a love offering as a way of showing our appreciation for our ministers, Gary Sheffield-James and Pastor Ken Dunnington. If you would like to contribute to the love offering, please make your check payable to: **Mt. Zion United Methodist Church (note in the memo section of your check that it is for your "Love Offering.")** You may mail your love offering to the church, attention: Valerie Pierce, Treasurer, by close of business on Monday, **December 17th.** Alternately, if you would prefer to give your gift with the offering on Sunday morning, you may place your cash or check in the collection plate on any Sunday through December 16th. Please use one of the giving envelopes in the pew, writing your name or envelope number, and "Love Offering" on the envelope. The gifts will be presented to Pastor's Gary and Ken on Sunday, December 23rd. Wishing you the Peace of Christ in this Christmas season, Steve Dennis, Lay Leader and Karyn Vice, Chair, SPRC

SAGE Brigade: Friday, December 14th at Noon our new neighbors from Arbor Trellis in Fulton will be sharing lunch and leading in the making of a Christmas centerpiece for you to take home. This will be a delicious and fun meeting with friends. Add to your Christmas spirit and join us. RSVP Debbie Burgio,

Winter Shelter is now underway and First United Methodist Church on Main Street in Laurel has a great need for additional overnight help next week. They need one or more overnights for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights (December 9 - 15). If you can help contact Rod Barr Mt. Zion will host the shelter from March 3 - 10 with signups beginning after New Years.

Safeguarding Houses of Worship - In our continuing efforts to ensure that Mt. Zion is a safe, secure environment for our church community, last month we conducted a safety walk-thru of the church complex with the Howard County Police Department. As a result, there are a number of recommendations that the Trustees are reviewing for implementation. One of those security recommendation, is that during the Sunday worship hours, the rear (side) door to the church should remain locked. Therefore, **beginning Sunday, December 2nd, the rear/side door to the church will remain locked during Sunday worship hours.** We will soon be posting a sign on those doors alerting people that they will be locked. If you have any concerns, please contact the church office and one of the Trustees will contact you. Note: This does not impact the entrance to the kitchen which shares the same parking area.

The Monday Morning Bible Study Class invites you to participate in this "season of giving" by donating to the International Heifer Project , a non-profit organization that works with others to alleviate hunger, poverty and environmental degradation. HPI helps impoverished families become self reliant by providing food and income producing animals and training Last year your kind and generous donations added up to \$940.00 and we were able to purchase **Two Water Buffalo, Three Goats and Four flocks of Chicks!** Thank you in advance for your gifts of the heart Cash or checks to Mt. Zion UMC marked Heifer donation will be gratefully accepted! Questions:

Cherub Choir: The Cherub Choir is starting for any preschool aged child. We will be learning Sunday School songs. We will meet on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays in the month from 9:45 am to 10:00 am in the Chapel. Contact Amy Ciliberti. **There will be no Cherub choir Sunday, Dec. 16th. We will meet on the 9th and 23rd.**

Reservoir High School students with special needs complete jobs for the school system and community members. Our class is working on developing pre-work skills. We need more work to do and hope that you can help us. We can complete mailings (and drop it off at the post office upon request) We can label, collate, fold papers, fold brochures, file papers alphabetically, put together folders, hole punch, count out tickets or other items, shred documents, scan documents, **stuff goodie bags and wrap gifts.** This is just a sample of work we have done in the past. Please ask us if you have any other job you think we can help with-we are open to most possibilities. All of our services are **FREE.** You can drop work off at Reservoir High School (please make arrangements in advance) or we can pick it up and return it to you. We look forward to working with you! Please contact **Grace Dellinger**

Save the Date! Marriage Enrichment Retreat: February 15-17, 2019 in Ocean City, MD. Make plans now to enjoy this winter weekend getaway with your spouse! This year's theme is "Love to Last a Lifetime: Letting God Lead the Way." **Location:** Dunes Manor Hotel Ocean City, MD. **Cost:** \$350/couple (includes accommodations Friday and Saturday nights, 2 meals on Saturday and brunch on Sunday). Registration Brochures will be available in November. For more information contact Barb Jacques at The marriage retreat is a sponsored by Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, Triadelphia Seventh Day Adventist Church, and Maranatha Seventh Day Adventist Church.

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

A Shoe box to collect Box Tops for Education is being placed in the church entry way. The local elementary school collects them to earn money to purchase items for their school. They will be collected and donated. Thank You, Marcy McAadoo.