

Dear Members of Mt. Zion,

During this Advent season I want to express a special thanks to those who volunteer to serve on the shepherd ministry teams here at Mt. Zion. Every month, a selected shepherding team agrees to follow up and support families by sending cards, providing meals to those who are sick and/or recovering from surgery or dealing with grief. Throughout this year, the shepherding teams have also organized receptions for families down in the fellowship hall after Memorial Services which are held at the church. This is a tremendous support to grieving families. These teams are our first responders for the church. If you like to know more about this important ministry and want to get involved, please reach out to Betty Cashmark by calling the church office to get her contact information.

This season, we are reminded again of how the shepherds played a significant role in the Christmas story. We read in the Gospel of Luke, "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, watching over their flocks at night . . . and an angel of the Lord appeared to them . . . and said, 'I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people'" (Luke 2:8-10).

We are very blessed to have shepherds right here at Mt. Zion that are still watching over their flocks because they have in a real way "gone to Bethlehem" and have witnessed God's greatest gift to the world. You are one of the reasons the Christmas story is lived out all year long. Thank you shepherds!

Grace & Peace,

Gary

Sunday Worship

December 16, 2018

Scripture Lessons: Zephaniah 3:14-20/Philippians 3:4-7/Luke 3:7-18

Message: "A Time of Joyous Hope"

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

Shepherding Team #3 Is On Call This Week, December 16th through December 22nd. Contact Betty Cashmark.

Please find your 2019 Giving Envelopes in the West Narthex. Need envelopes? Don't need envelopes? Have unused envelopes to give back? See Will Scott .

HEARING AID? If you have a hearing aid with the "telecoil" feature you can pick up a telecoil at the West side of the A/V booth. We only have one at this time, but if there is enough interest we can expand. If you're not sure, talk to a sound tech and we'll do our best to help.

The Ginny White Circle will meet on Wednesday, December 19 at 11:30 in Conference Room Two. Suzanne Perry is chairman and Lesley Morrison is in charge of Devotions. Following the meeting, we will have lunch at Kings Contrivance at 12:30. Please RSVP to Suzanne by Tuesday noon.

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 Year's.

BRRR COLD NIGHTS ... WARM PAJAMAS NEEDED FOR BETTER BEDTIMES!!! In January, our Mt Zion Family will have the opportunity to reach out to children served by the Pajama Program (www.pajamaprogram.org) Many of these children are in group foster homes, shelters and dealing with unfortunate situations in their young lives. We can help provide a happier bedtime with our donation of New pajamas and story books for a cozier ending to their day. New Pajamas and Books will be collected January 6 through January 20, 2019. All sizes are needed from Infants through Teens. These will be distributed to children in need in our local Maryland/Delaware/DC area. On behalf of the kids your donation will be helping thank you, thank you, thank you! Contact: Karen Williams, PJ Program Coordinator

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 at wwuy2k@aol.com. **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.

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 McAdoo.

