

Dear Members of Mt. Zion,

Happy New Year Everyone! On my vacation, our family visited New York City for a couple days. We attended some wonderful events – some that provided us with laughter and awe (a Comedy Show and a National Geographic Exhibit on Oceanography) and others that left us in somber reflection and respectful remembrance (the 9/11 Memorial and Museum).

As we enter this New Year, I can tell you that I am not an excellent prognosticator of knowing what the future will bring us; nor do I have a crystal ball that magically forecasts what we can expect to happen (And I am not really sure I would want to be able to do that anyway). However, it would be fair to say that we will probably face a mixture of what I experienced in my short stay in that city that never sleeps. We will experience moments that will bring us laughter and awe and we will know those times that bring us somber reflection and respectful remembrance.

As your pastor, I am thankful that I was able to share with you in the story of Christmas, a story that reminds us that God comes to us in the one called “Emmanuel”, meaning God with us. The child born on that day so long ago will grow up, mature and grow in wisdom and stature. He will be the total embodiment of God’s grace and he will demonstrate through his life how we might live. While you and I can’t expect life to perfectly respond to our wishes, we are able to celebrate and give thanks to a God who show us perfect love in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As people of faith, we can have hope in the One who holds the future. That’s the Good News! As the writer of Hebrews so eloquently states: *“Jesus Christ is the same **Yesterday and Today and Forever.**”*

May God blessings work through us as we travel with one another through this New Year.

Grace & Peace,

Gary

**Sunday Worship**

January 6, 2019

Scripture Lesson:

Matthew 2:1-11

Message:

“Traveling Through the New Year”

On Sunday, January 13, Pastor Gary will leading a **Facilitator’s Training Event** at 12:30 p.m. in Conference Room 2 at Mt. Zion Church. (**Note:** This is a reminder only for those who have agreed to be facilitators for the four sessions designed to help us understand the work of the “Commission on the Way Forward”.)

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

**Shepherding Team #6 Is On Call This Week, January 6<sup>th</sup> through January 12<sup>th</sup>**. Contact Crystal Zimmerman

**There will be NO KID’s Zone on January 6th!**

**If you have not already done so, please mark your calendar for the Laity Discussion on A Way Forward.** This event will be held at the Mission Center on Saturday, January 5, 2019 from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm. Rev. Rod Miller will lead the discussion and you will have the opportunity to hear and discuss what is slated to take place at General Conference in February. This session is open to all laity and pastors. [Register today.](#)

**Church-wide Discussion on the Way Forward.** Starting January 20 from 2pm - 4pm; Mt. Zion will hold a 4 week series of discussions on the Way Forward. This series will review the 3 plans The United Methodist Church has identified, each as a potential "way forward" regarding the church's policy on human sexuality (including the issue of same sex marriage and ordination of homosexuals). For more information, please see the December Pointer article. This discussion series is an introduction to a conversation that may well affect the future of The United Methodist Church as we know it. The United Methodist Church will hold a special General Council session in February to address this issue and determine how we go forward or whether we go forward as a denomination. We invite everyone to join us to understand the direction of the church and explore what it means on a personal and corporate level. To ensure we have room for everyone, please RSVP to Debra

**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](http://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:

**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.

**Cherub Choir:** The Cherub Choir is starting for any preschool aged child. We will be learning Sunday School songs. We will meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays in the month from 9:45 am to 10:00 am in the Chapel. Contact Amy Ciliberti There will be no Cherub choir on January 13<sup>th</sup>. There will be choir on January 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your assistance.

**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. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.