



# ZION CHURCH NEWS

BLOW THE TRUMPET IN ZION, DECLARE A HOLY FAST, CALL A SACRED ASSEMBLY. (JOEL 2:15)

2021 JANUARY

## Sunday Services

Due to the rise in Covid-19 cases in our area and current guidance by Governor Hogan, the State of Maryland, and our conference and denomination, Zion Reformed continues to meet virtually-only for all activities. Your health and welfare continue to be of paramount importance to us!

You can watch Pastor Katie's sermons on our website [www.ZionReformed.church](http://www.ZionReformed.church). New sermons are posted Sunday mornings at 11:00 am. You can also view past sermons on our YouTube Channel accessible from the website, and enjoy them over and over again at your leisure.

## Words Of Faith and Strength

Don't panic! God is with you. There's no need to fear, I'll give you strength. I'll help you. I, your God, have a firm grip on you and I am not letting go. (-Isaiah 41:10,13) Storms without God will break you. Storms with God will build you. Only the presence of God in your heart can cast away all sadness, bitterness, worry, fears and anxiety. Only HE is able to make all things new. In 2020, you may have lost it all. You may have lost yourself, some friends, or someone you were in love with. Whatever it is that you've lost, I declare, 2021 is the year you bounce back and God replaces it all with better. God is saying to you today, "Everything will work out. I'm in complete control. I know what the medical report says. I know what the financial situation looks like. I see people coming against you. I know how big your dreams are. And hear me clearly; I will not fail you." Believe and Receive... Have FAITH in Him.



### Prayer For Anxiety & Worry

Dear Lord, we ask for your help to calm those who are feeling anxious, stressed, worried or fearful. Please touch them and slow their racing thoughts. May they find rest in body, mind and spirit. Help them to release their burdens and to remember that you are firmly in control. May they feel your nearness and be filled with your peace. In the mighty name of Jesus we ask.

Amen.

VOLUME 62 ISSUE 1

# JANUARY

### TOPICS OF INTEREST

- Pastor's Pen 2
- Parish Nurse Article 8
- Consistory Highlights 7
- Zion Book Club 4
- New Member Welcome 9
- Special Announcements 11

### IN THIS ISSUE

- Sunday Morning Schedule 2
- Helping Hands 3
- Treasurer's Report 4
- Birthdays & Anniversaries 5
- Calendar of Events 5
- Just for Kids 10

### ZION REFORMED UCC

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Like us on Facebook: @ZionRUCC

# Pastor's Pen

***“God has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11)***

There's something special about the New Year. As you stand on the cusp between the past and the future, your imagination can soar. What will 2021 bring to you and your family? What are the possibilities that the future can hold? This is a time when many of us begin to make plans and resolutions for how we will improve our lives: 2021 will surely be the year that we all lose weight, exercise more, build lasting relationships with family and friends, pray more, drink less. ... 2021 will surely be the year that we can gather together with loved ones and worship together in our beloved sanctuary. This year will surely be a year of hope and change!

Looking back to last year – What resolutions did you make? How many were you able to keep? How many of your hopes and plans came to fruition? So much has happened over the last twelve months, so it would be understandable if you struggle to remember what you resolved to do. Yet, if you are like most of us, your success rate is low! Breaking resolutions is as much of a tradition as making them. But the author of Ecclesiastes reminds us that everything has a season... everything happens in its own time. Our hopes and plans may not work the way we want them to, but God's hopes and plans continue. God knows us and has known us from the beginning: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...” God tells Jeremiah. God knows us and God loves us... and God's plans for us are beyond our imagination!

So this New Year, as you form your personal plans and resolutions, take a moment to thank God for all the gifts we have already received and the dreams that God has for each of us.

May each of you have a Blessed and Happy New Year,

Pastor Katie



## Special Services for January

- Jan 3 (11am) Communion Service
- Jan 10 (11am) Consistory 2021 Installation

Children's Sunday  
School at 9:45am  
by Zoom

## Sunday Morning Schedule

### Sunday Services

### 9:45-10:45 am Sunday School Classes

- Adult Sunday School -- Temporarily Postponed
- Young Adult's Sunday School Temporarily Postponed
- Children's Sunday School by Zoom (contact office for more details)

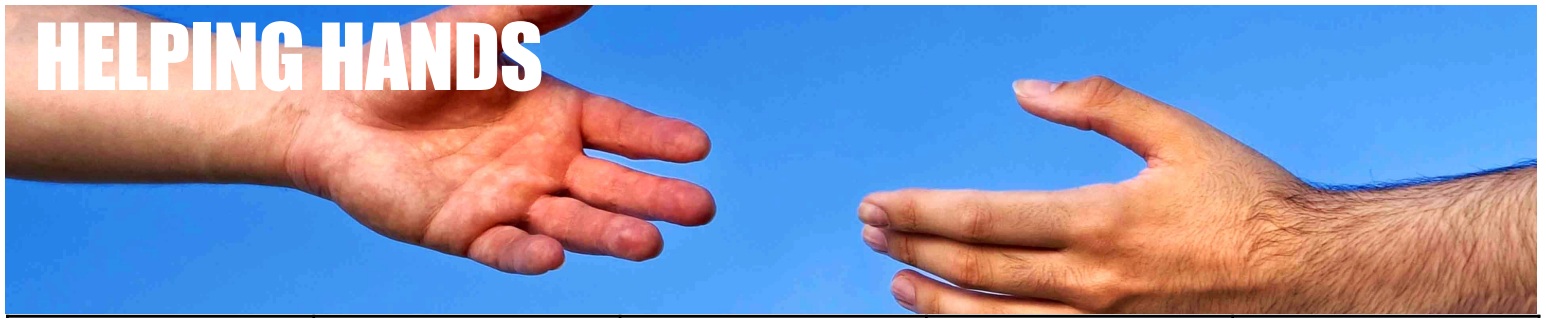
### 11:00 am Worship Service

## UCC Awareness Days in January

Ecumenical Sunday (Jan 24) \* Health & Human Services Sunday (Jan 31)



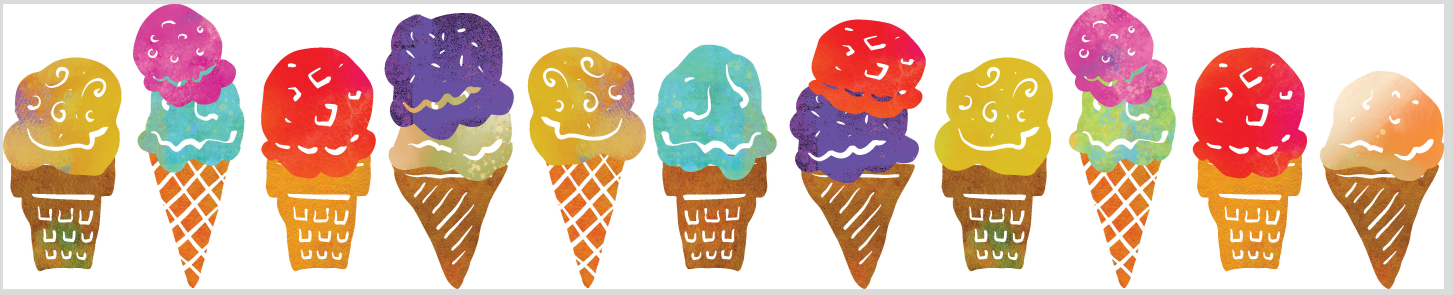
# HELPING HANDS



JANUARY 3	JANUARY 10	JANUARY 17	JANUARY 24	JANUARY 31
<b>Lector:</b> Amber Nilson  <b>Soup Kitchen:</b> 1/5 Team 1	<b>Lector:</b> Barb Hendershot  <b>Soup Kitchen:</b> 1/12 Team 2	<b>Lector:</b> Carol Mooers  <b>Soup Kitchen:</b> 1/19 Team 3	<b>Lector:</b> Carroll Sager  <b>Soup Kitchen:</b> 1/26 Team 4	<b>Lector:</b> Open Rotation  <b>Soup Kitchen:</b> 2/2 Team 1
FEBRUARY 7	FEBRUARY 14	FEBRUARY 17	FEBRUARY 21	FEBRUARY 28
<b>Lector:</b> Rae Smith  <b>Soup Kitchen:</b> 2/9 Team 2	<b>Lector:</b> Aaron Kelly  <b>Soup Kitchen:</b> 2/16 Team 3	<b>Lector:</b> Amber Nilson  <b>Ash Wednesday</b> (Lent Begins)	<b>Lector:</b> Barb Hendershot  <b>Soup Kitchen:</b> 2/23 Team 4	<b>Lector:</b> Carol Mooers  <b>Soup Kitchen:</b> 3/2 Team 1

If you are a Helping Hands ministry volunteer, remember to check the monthly newsletter for the upcoming schedule. If you are unavailable on your scheduled Sunday, please find a replacement or call the church office by Wednesday of that week so that a replacement can be found.

\* Unavailable at time of Printing



# Church Happenings

## Zion Book Club

The Zion Book Club did not meet in December. All Book Club members are to choose their own book and bring a synopsis to share at January's Book club meeting on January 15, 2021.

*Soup Kitchen is Every Tuesday from 5:00 pm - 6:15 pm. If you would like to volunteer please contact the church admin.*

## New Piano Fund Donations Needed

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the piano fund! Your contributions will help to enhance our music program and recital program for generations to come. We have not yet reached our goal but sincerely appreciate all of the contributions made so far. Call Darlene in the church office Monday through Friday or see the music director for more information.

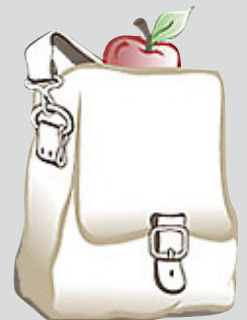


## ALTAR FLOWERS

We have started using artificial flowers on the altar in place of the real flowers. The only time we will be using real flowers will be at Christmas, Easter Sunday, and the Sunday before Decorative Day in May. Real flowers used on those days will be removed and taken to the cemetery and placed on the family lot known as "The Family Lot" at Rose Hill Cemetery by the flower committee. The monthly coordinators or Scherry Sellers will place artificial flowers each month on the altar.

## Micah's Backpacks

We have started our 10th year in September. If anyone would like to help, please see Scherry Sellers. All donations are welcome — food and monetary!



*At this time we currently have 20 children from Bester Elementary School we deliver to every Friday.*

## Treasurer's Report

MONTHLY FIGURES	November 2020	Year to Date 2020
Income	\$11,345.75	\$489,057.18
Transfer from Special Funds	\$25,000.00	\$420,000.00
Expenses	-35,746.98	-512,847.95
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$598.77</b>	<b>\$396,209.23</b>

# CHURCH CALENDAR

## January 2021

January 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

FRI 1/1	New Year's Day (Office Closed)	-----
SUN 1/3	Sunday School (Children via Zoom)	9:45 am
	Sunday Worship Service	11:00 am
MON 1/4	Consistory Meeting	7:00 pm
TUE 1/5	Soup Kitchen	5:00 pm
THU 1/7	4-H Club Meeting via ZOOM	4:30 pm
SUN 1/10	Sunday School (Children via Zoom)	9:45 am
	Worship Service	11:00 am
TUE 1/12	Soup Kitchen	5:00 pm
THU 1/14	4-H Club Meeting via ZOOM	4:30 pm
SUN 1/17	Sunday School (Children via Zoom)	9:45 am
	Worship Service	11:00 am
MON 1/18	February Newsletter Deadline	12:00 pm
	<i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i>	-----
TUE 1/19	Soup Kitchen	5:00 pm
THU 1/21	4-H Club Meeting via ZOOM	4:30 pm
SUN 1/24	Sunday School (Children via Zoom)	9:45 am
TUE 1/26	Soup Kitchen	5:00 pm
THU 1/28	4-H Club Meeting via ZOOM	4:30 pm
SUN 1/31	Food Collection ( <i>Micah's Backpack, local food bank</i> )	-----



- I/3 Jenna Hott
- I/17 Brooks Grosh  
Aiden Grosh
- I/20 Thelma Summers
- I/21 Chris Shaffer
- I/22 Holly Bell  
Scott Richardson
- I/25 Sarah Kalkbrenner
- I/26 Louise Danzer
- I/29 Linda Kelly  
Benjamin Kelly
- I/31 Jessica Green

### ANNOUNCEMENT

Consistory Election Votes Due by Noon, January 3rd. Installation of new officers on January 10th during worship service.



## Zion Consistory Highlights

We didn't see it coming. When we discovered the cracks in the Sanctuary plaster in January, we didn't grasp the gravity of the situation. When the coronavirus pandemic emerged in March, we didn't immediately comprehend the import of the emerging situation. Needless to say, it's been quite a year...

The end of 2020 provides a natural opportunity to take stock of the year's accomplishments and look forward to the promise of the new year. Though we performed the needed emergency truss repairs to prevent the rapid deterioration of our historic sanctuary, the extent of work needed to stave off water from entering our building has now been brought to light. The needed repairs and deferred maintenance includes: re-pointing of the bell tower masonry, repositioning of a bell tower hatch, replacement of hidden gutter membranes and downspouts, repairing and repainting of soffits, fascia, and gussets, and finally, plaster repair and repainting of the sanctuary. The air conditioning system in the church office, Pastor's office, and Pastor's Parlor (installed in 1984) is in need of replacement. Quotes for these projects have been approved by the Consistory and the projected costs have been incorporated into the 2021 Annual Budget. Amid the COVID-19 situation, we will not have the opportunity to review the Annual Budget at a Congregational Dinner as is customary for us. If you would like to receive a copy of the 2021 Annual Budget and a list of the quoted capital projects, please contact the church office.

As was the case with every other church in America this year, we needed to remain connected during this historic pandemic. In response, we improved our website and expanded our presence on Facebook to assist with the flow of information. We learned how to conduct Consistory meetings via a group telephone conference and on Zoom. Most importantly, we began broadcasting our worship services which have been viewed virtually 1,340 times between the onset of the pandemic and the time of writing of this article. Right now, we are uniquely positioned to share God's message outside of our church walls in ways not previously possible and to carry the torch forward long after social distancing is behind us.

Our sanctuary audiovisual installation project is primarily completed. The Central Atlantic UCC Conference is supporting our efforts by awarding Zion a Trinity Trust Grant for \$5,000 which will be issued to us in quarterly installments throughout 2021.

Restoration work has been completed on 17 gravestones and monuments in the cemetery. The cost of this has been covered by a Bowman Community Foundation Grant.

Zion has submitted an application for a \$1,000 Recovery Grant from the Central Atlantic Conference which if awarded, will be applied toward our 2021 Soup Kitchen expenses.

The inability to maintain a stable internet signal inside of our building has been a long-standing problem. Last month Tele-Plus and our Multimedia Technician, Michael Jones, successfully diagnosed and resolved our router conflict issues. We now appear to have a sustainable, stable, internet signal (hallelujah to that!). Tele-Plus be working with us again in 2021 to rewire the ethernet cable ends to the TV monitors in the sanctuary and complete upgrades on our network infrastructure, expanding our internet service coverage to the Burhan's Room, the Youth Classrooms and the Fellowship Hall (aka, the Soup Kitchen).

Tele-Plus will be installing 13 exterior security cameras in 2021. This will enable visualization of the (Church Street) side of the cemetery, the Fellowship Hall parking area, the parking lot, and the church office entrance.

## Zion Consistory Highlights (continued)

In acknowledgment that church is about our people and not our building, we've begun mailing a Weekly Worship Bulletin (with the message text inserted) to members who don't have digital capability. We've also begun sending Adult Sunday School lessons weekly to those who are interested, and Youth Sunday School participation is now carried out via Zoom. All of this new technology has involved a steep learning curve as we play "catch-up" toward entering the 21st Century. I want to take this opportunity to encourage our faithful members who make regular donations to consider "taking the plunge" by setting up recurrent electronic giving on our website in lieu of mailing in checks. (Come on, it won't be as painful as you're imagining.)

I feel led to share the following thoughts from an article written by Michael Piazza from the Broadway UCC in New York:

"Mainline churches have been merging or closing for several decades. In the wake of this pandemic, that will greatly accelerate because the 'return to normal' will be short-lived, and our churches are biding their time, waiting to get back to the way things were. It isn't happening. Young people of faith have discovered new sources of spiritual nourishment and will be even more disillusioned with moribund institutions. Many congregations have seen the future and are retooling for it. They are paying attention to the implications of what will be the 'new normal' for society. Churches that thrive will adapt to, and even exploit, new cultural realities. Those faith communities are rare, though, because the church and its leadership are among the most change-resistant creatures God ever made. In this case, however, that resistance may prove fatal. A Chinese proverb wishes for us that we 'live in interesting times.' Americans may interpret this as a good thing, and, for a few congregations, it may be. For most, however, it probably will not be. The heat of the sun melts wax and hardens clay. COVID-19 is not a good thing, but, if churches are agile and adaptive, God may well be able to work it for our good (Romans 8:28). If our only plan is to get back to 'normal,' then I doubt even God can save us."

Let us move into 2021 with eager anticipation of embracing a bright and vibrant future for Zion!

Humbly and Sincerely,

*Becky Owens*

Consistory President

## Come and Worship!



Join us *Virtually* Sunday Mornings!

Children's Sunday School @ 11am by Zoom

Worship at 11am on website

.....  
ALL Are Welcome!

Web: [www.zionreformed.church/sermons](http://www.zionreformed.church/sermons)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ZionRUCC](http://www.facebook.com/ZionRUCC)

*That Four Letter Word.....  
A Parish Nurse Note January 2021*

Last year was a trying one. It was a roller coaster that seemed to have more downs than ups. As the New Year starts, we have no idea if it will be better or worse than 2020. What do we do? We get out that four letter word and cling to it like never before!

HOPE. Some define hope as a wish or being optimistic; the Biblical meaning of HOPE is much greater. HOPE is the “confident expectation of what God has promised and its strength is in God’s faithfulness.” HOPE is a promise we can rely on and trust. Being a person of HOPE is good for your health and well being. Feeling HOPE can cause changes in your brain that lead to the release of chemicals capable of blocking pain and increasing healing. Charles Snyder, PhD is a pioneer in HOPE research. His studies show that people who HOPE have greater happiness, better academic achievements, less anxiety and depression and decreased risk of death.

“It is often in the darkest  
skies  
that we see the brightest  
stars.”



Richard Evans

Social support is thought to be a vital component of HOPE. Jon Allen, psychologist at the Houston Psychiatric Hospital relates that the opposite of HOPE is feeling alone and being “invisible.” This feeling of hopelessness is closely associated with suicide. On a brighter note, a 2013 study cited in the Journal of Positive Psychology noted that on average, “a hopeful person does one day a week more work than a less hopeful person.” (No wonder we are tired!!). HOPE is important in so many ways.

How do we continue to be people of HOPE? There are 23 Bible verses listed in the back of my Bible that refer to HOPE. Reading and remembering them can remind you of God’s promises that will never be broken. Here are a few of my favorites.

Proverbs 13:12 “HOPE deferred makes the heart sick.”

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a HOPE.”

1 Peter 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living HOPE through the rising of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

The Hebrew word HOPE means a cord, as an attachment (Psalm 62:5). Beth Moore says, “Every one of us is hanging on to something or someone for security....if it’s someone or something other than God alone, you’re hanging on by a thread- the wrong thread.” Our HOPE is in the Lord; our HOPE is in believing that God’s promises will happen! If you seem to need a little boost in the HOPE department, recite this prayer:

Dear God,  
I tried my best, but if today I lose my HOPE  
Please tell me that your plans are better than my  
dreams. Amen. - anonymous



Blessings and Health, especially in 2021

Barb Hendershot, RN  
Parish Nurse

Sources: [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)  
Brain Bulletin #47- The Science of Hope  
Crosswalk.com





## **New Member Welcome**

Welcome to the Zion family, our newest member, Michael Jones. He was received as a Zion member during our December 20<sup>th</sup> worship service.

Born and raised in the "Hub City", Michael has lived in Washington County all his life except for his 4-year tour of active duty in the Marine Corps where he was stationed at Camp Lejeune during which time he sailed the Mediterranean on deployment rotation, and also served a deployment rotation to Okinawa, Japan. After honorably serving in the Marine Corps, Michael served 5-years honorably in the Maryland Army National Guard, stationed at the Hagerstown Armory on Roxbury Road.

He currently serves as our Multimedia Specialist, and as Connections Six Eight UCC's Pastoral Administrator. He is pursuing an alternative path to ordination. His dual membership makes him a member of Hagerstown's oldest UCC congregation and of Hagerstown's newest UCC congregation. Michael is co-founder and treasurer of the local non-profit first envisioned by Connections Six Eight, Rise Up Hagerstown, and also serves on the council for the Catoclin Association of the UCC. He enjoys hiking the many trails in Western Maryland as often as he can, spending time with his family, organizing events, singing in the shower, poetry, music, cooking (when he finds the time), and serving others.

Michael is an avid animal lover and cares for the many cats dumped off near his home. He and his Mom are the unofficial "Animal Whisperers" of their neighborhood. They also try to play doctor to any wildlife in distress that they can assist which most often are critters rescued from the rescued stray cats. They have raised baby birds that fell from nests, doctored up chipmunks, turtles, rabbits, groundhogs, mice, moles, and even a sole surviving baby opossum whose mother and siblings were ran over.

It is this sense of compassion that extends into his everyday life that causes Michael to be an advocate for all people without exception as Christ our Savior teaches that is the backbone of his faith and ministry. Welcome to the Zion family Michael, may our time together be long, fruitful, and blessed!



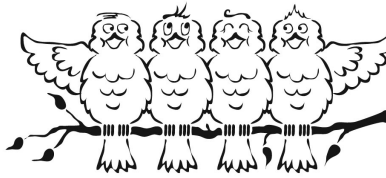
# A famous friendship

In the Bible, Ruth and Naomi are known for their loving friendship.

*Directions: Using the key, fill in the blanks to see what Ruth says to Naomi.*

“

J Q U O W    B E O    E E    E  
 J E A A    E E'    U N O    J Q U O W  
 B E O    N L U A    E    J E A A  
 N L U A    B E O A    N W E N A W  
 J E A A    E W    F A  
 N W E N A W    U N O  
 B E O A    E E    O  
 F A    E E    O    **RUTH 1:16, NIV**



W	A		E	T
B	U	H	D	O
G	R	L	Y	I
	N	S	P	M

Answer: "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God." Ruth 1:16, NIV

## Loving embraces

Express your love and friendship with handcrafted bracelets.



### What you need:

- Adult help
- Bowl of boiling water
- Wide wooden craft sticks
- Glass cup
- Markers, paint or decorative tape

### What you do:

1. Pour about 3 cups of boiling water into a bowl. Soak sticks in the water about 30 minutes.
2. Remove sticks and slowly, gently bend them into a curve.
3. To maintain the shape, place curved sticks inside a glass cup overnight to dry completely.
4. Remove and decorate the bracelets, which make fun Valentine's Day gifts.

## *Special Announcements:*

***All in-person services are suspended due to rising Covid-19 cases.***

Consistory 2021 Election votes are due by noon on January 3rd. Please make arrangements to have your vote turned in to the office by then. Vote by email or mail, or by web using the link sent to you, or call the office to vote by phone. Votes received after noon on January 3rd cannot be counted so please plan to cast your vote by your preferred method so that it is received in time. If you have any questions or require any assistance please call the office at (301) 739-7244 or email [zionrucc@myactv.net](mailto:zionrucc@myactv.net).

Our Children's Sunday School Class is hosted via Zoom with Kim Ridenour every Sunday at 9:45 am. If you have a young child that would like to participate, please contact the church office by phone at (301) 739-7244 or by email at [zionrucc@myactv.net](mailto:zionrucc@myactv.net).

Arthur Grove Adult Sunday School Class is postponed until in-person services resume.

Young and the Restless (young adult) Sunday School Class is postponed until in-person services resume. Any questions, please contact Richard Cantilena at (678) 559-8297.

***REACH Cold Weather Shelter is looking for volunteers to prepare and serve meals at the shelter. For more information please contact Carroll Sager.***

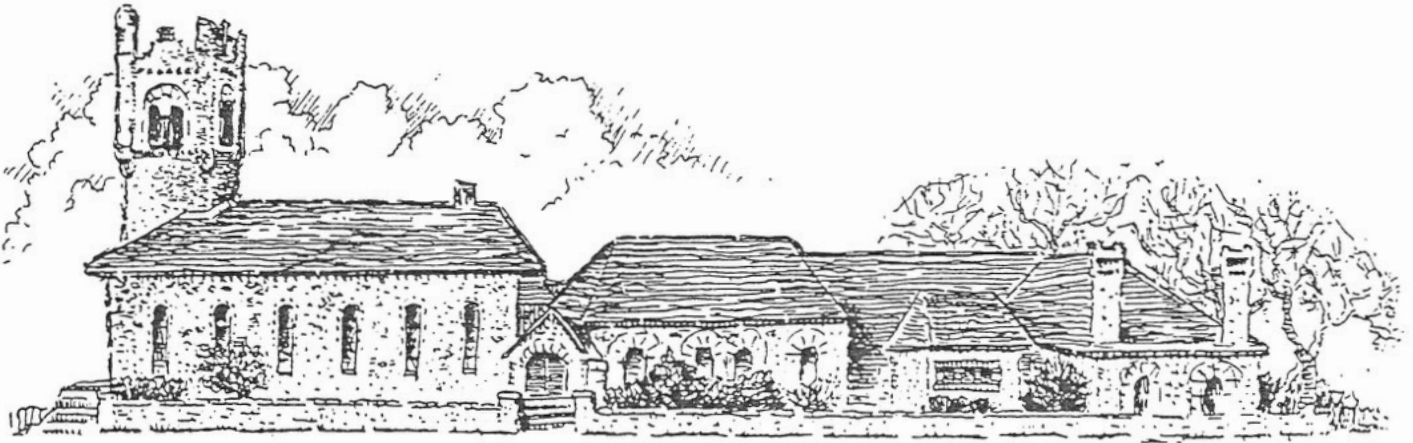
Please contact the church office with any questions regarding these special announcements, or to share any new announcements.

**God Bless and Stay Safe,**

Darlene Covington

Church Administrator

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Zion Reformed United Church of Christ