

Zion Mennonite Church Newsletter

Phone: 419-445-3796 ~ E-mail: church.zionmc@gmail.com ~ www.zionmennonitechurch.com
300 Short Buehrer Road Archbold, OH 43502 ~ Church office hours: Monday– Friday 8:00 am—12:00 pm

Pastor Sue Short 419-346-7827
Pastor John David Thacker 419-572-0340
Child's World Preschool: 419-445-6034
LAMP: 419-445-0728

March 3, 2024

Elder Chair Mike Zimmerman 419-966-7363
Elder Greg Nofziger 419-583-6769
Elder Suz Wirick 419-966-2266
Elder Barb Yoder 567-694-3112

Zion Activities this Week

Sunday, March 3

8:30 am ~ Sojourners
9:00 am ~ Choir
9:30 am ~ Worship (sanctuary & zoom)
10:45 am ~ Sunday School

Tuesday, March 5

9:00 am ~ Staff Meeting
7:00 pm ~ Spiritual Practices: *Journaling*

Wednesday, March 6

6:00 pm ~ ZOW (Preschool-5th)
7:00 pm ~ CHAOS (6th-8th)
7:00 pm ~ MYF (high school)

Thursday, March 7

6:30 am ~ Men's Prayer
7:00 pm ~ Scripture & Theology Class: *The History of Israel: Empires and Exile*
7:00 pm ~ Choir Practice
7:00 pm ~ AA (310)

Saturday, March 9

9:00 am ~ Men's Breakfast

Sunday, March 10 ~ Daylight Saving Time begins

8:30 am ~ Sojourners
9:30 am ~ Worship (sanctuary & zoom)
10:45 am ~ Sunday School

Nursery Workers

March 3: Rachel Aeschliman, Ella Richer
March 10: Mike Zimmerman, Keegan Wyse

Happy Birthday

March 3 ~ Joyce Frey
March 4 ~ John Baer, Steven Ringenberg,
Sharon Stuckey
March 6 ~ Barnaby Wyse
March 7 ~ Hannah Short
March 9 ~ Bailey Short-Dickmann

Attendance & Offering

February 25th: 95
January offering was \$22,404.

Order of Service

Prelude ~ Bonnie Stuckey
Welcome & Announcements ~ Karen Rodriguez
Interlude ~ Choir
Call to Worship & Prayer ~ Karen Rodriguez
Hymn ~ Julia Richer
"Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song" (VT 581)
Offering/Offertory ~ Karen/Bonnie
Children's Time ~ Cheryl Britsch
Hymn ~ Julia Richer
"I Bind My Heart This Tide" (VT 556)
Prayer of Confession
Words of Assurance
Scripture ~ Exodus 20:1-17
Hymn ~ Julia Richer
"Lead On, O Cloud Of Presence" (VT 194)
Sermon ~ John David Thacker
Sharing Our Stories ~ Charlene Beck
Hymn ~ Julia Richer
"Guide My Feet" (vs 1,4)
Prayer for Church & World ~ John David Thacker
Sending Song ~ Julia Richer
"Siyahamba (We Are Marching)" (VT 793)
Benediction ~ John David Thacker

Office News

John David and Sue will be at Ohio Conference Annual Assembly on Friday, March 1st and Saturday, March 2nd. They will return on Saturday evening.



By God's Grace, Zion Mennonite Church will be a House of Peace where all people are invited to share Christ's love with each other and the world.

Upcoming Worship

Lent 2024 (begins February 18th) - "Christ Among Us": This year's Lenten texts focus on covenants. They point to God's history of reaching out to continue in relationship with God's people. Time and time again, humanity fails to follow these covenants, yet God's mercy and grace remain. Christ is among us, reminding us of who we are - God's beloved.

Sunday, March 3 - Lent 3: "Christ Among Us, Showing Us Justice"

(Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; John 2:13-22; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25)

Sunday, March 10 - Lent 4: "Christ Among Us, the Way of Mercy"

(Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107: 1-3, 17-22; John 3:14-21; Ephesians 2:1-10)

Sunday, March 17 - Lent 5: "Christ Among Us, the New Covenant"

(Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 119:9-16; John 12:20-33; Hebrews 5:5-10)

Wednesday, March 20: Taize Prayer Service - 7:00pm

Sunday, March 24 - Lent 6, PALM SUNDAY: "Christ Among Us, the Way of a Servant"

(Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Mark 11:1-11/John 12:12-16; Philippians 2:5-11)

****The new hymnals have arrived! If you pre-ordered a copy, contact Bethany in the church office to arrange for pick up and payment.**

Prayers for the Global Church

Mennonite Education Agency:

Hesston (Kan.) College: Please pray for the Hesston College Bel Canto Singers as they begin their spring concert tour. May they bring joy to the audience with their beautiful voices and make lasting memories.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.: Pray for head coach David Bertholf and the Bethel College women's golf team in their inaugural season of play.

Goshen (Ind.) College: Pray for Goshen College students in Voices of the Earth as they return from their Choir Tour today.

Mennonite Mission Network: Tomorrow, members of the Central Plains Mennonite Conference will begin a week-long Just Peace Pilgrimage, organized by Mennonite Mission Network. Pray for open minds and hearts as participants focus on the struggle for civil rights in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi, and how Jesus is calling his followers to respond.

Ohio Conference invites you to cover its upcoming Annual Conference Assembly on March 1-2 in prayer. Please pray for everyone involved, including Dan Miller, Interim Conference Minister; Ken Sims, Moderator; Paula Snyder Belousek, Assistant Moderator; Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi, Conference Consultant; and Meghan Larissa Good, guest speaker. Pray for the Spirit to be present as delegates discern, worship, learn and fellowship together.

Weeknight Classes

Tuesday, 7PM, Sanctuary: *Spiritual Practices: Journaling*

Bring your journal or favorite pen if you have one. We will explore journaling as a spiritual practice.

Thursday, 7PM, Fellowship Hall: *The History of Israel: Empires and Exile*

Learn about the impact the gentile conquests of Israel and the Babylonian captivity had on Israel's faith and practice.

Book Nook

Music-related books from our Library:

- “Sing for Peace” by Lois Lensk
- “Chatter with the Angels” by Linda Richer & Anita Stolfzfus
- “Stories of Favorite Hymns” by Kathleen Blanchard
- “Reach out to Touch” 25 Love and Peace Ballads by Geraldine Gross Harder
- “Heartsongs” by Mattie Stepanek
- “Journey through Heartsongs” by Mattie Stepanek
- “Hope through Heartsongs” by Mattie Stepanek
- “Melodious Accord” by Alice Parker
- “Crusade Hymn Stories” by Cliff Barrows
- “Why Not Celebrate!” by Sara Wenger Shenk
- “Singing a Mennonite Voice” by Marlene Kropf and Ken Nafziger

Last Chance!!

Last chance to sign up for MEN’S BREAKFAST at 9 am on March 9th in the Fellowship Hall at Zion, today, **Sunday March 3**. The event is free and guests are welcome. Please sign up across from the mailboxes, or contact the office.

Don’t Forget

On the Level announcement: The February edition of *On the Level* is now available from Mennonite Disaster Service. In our current issue: Kevin King shares his insights on Jesus passion for sharing meals, learn how MDS volunteers are finding additional work along the Texas border, and find out why one woman says MDS is the light of Canada. Click on this link to read more: <https://conta.cc/49pNHoc>

Annual Conference Assembly preview: This weekend, Friday, March 1st and Saturday, March 2nd, pastors and delegates from around Ohio Conference will gather at Sharon Mennonite Church (Plain City, OH) for Annual Conference Assembly 2024. John David Thacker, Sue Short, and Barb Yoder will be serving as delegates from Zion. For the past two years, the Conference Leadership Team, pastors, and delegates have been providing feedback toward an overhaul of the Conference's structure. This is a healthy practice that organizations do periodically to ensure that their structure fits the current needs of the organization. Zion had a period of discernment and restructuring several years ago along similar lines. This year's voting will be whether or not to approve these strategic restructuring changes, and the subsequent wording to the constitution which would reflect these changes. Some of the proposed changes include items such as reducing the number of required meetings for volunteer leaders, merging committees which are working toward similar goals, and restructuring some paid leadership roles. Additionally, Tony Doehrmann recently announced his retirement from serving as Regional Pastor, and some of these staffing changes reflect a shift in the work that he had previously done. There are a few paper copies of the documents on the table across from the mailboxes. You may also contact the church office to have copies emailed to you.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Great Lakes is seeking a Church and Community Liaison. This role will be responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships with congregations and constituent groups in the Great Lakes region. This includes speaking in churches, representing MCC in various settings and promoting and encouraging the utilization of MCC programs, resources and materials. This position may be remote or hybrid in the Great Lakes region where MCC U.S. is a registered employer. For more information and to apply by March 10, visit mcc.org/gl-church-community.

Blood drive at Ruyhley Park: If you are able, come give blood at the Red Cross blood drive March 5th from 11am until 5pm. To make an appointment, please call 1.800.733.2767 or go online at redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor code: RUIHLEYPARK. See the bulletin boards for more information.

Our children’s time focus during Lent is on prayer. Please join the children and youth and add your Lenten prayers to the prayer tree in the narthex.

Spiritual Leadership Team minutes

February 12, 2024

Opening: Barb led the opening with a look at the introduction and first chapter of the book *Divine Gravity* by Meghan Larissa Good. Annual Conference Assembly delegates were given this book in preparation for Annual Conference, as Meghan Good will be the guest speaker. The book examines factors that caused change in the church, and the ways scripture has been interpreted through the years. We spent some time discussing one of the questions Good posed: What do you think would change practically in the church if we rediscovered the core truth that God looks like Jesus?

Attendance trends: John David had created a document with attendance statistics dating back to 2010. The data was mostly what we would have expected: a dip during Covid, increasing numbers in 2021, but still not rising back to pre-Covid numbers. Decreasing church attendance seems to be happening in most churches in the area. The document showed both in-person and Zoom attendance. Since not everyone turns on their camera while on Zoom, it's difficult to count how many people each Zoom screen represents. During Covid, some churches began calculating online attendance by counting each screen as 1.5 people. Another way of looking at attendance overall might be to look at mailboxes, thinking about how many people are represented by each mailbox and how many might be regular attenders. There was discussion about possibly reporting the number of Zoom screens with the attendance in the newsletter.

Number of elders: It's been about six months since we first looked at how, and if, we might add another elder to the current elder team. The Gifts Discernment team felt decreasing the number of elders based on a decreased number at church was reasonable. During the last six months, we have not faced any major issues that created a problem for only four elders. We agreed that if we are not adding an additional elder, we could continue tapping shoulders to help with communion and prayer. This is also a beneficial way to involve more people in worship. We will need to find a new elder to begin in the fall when Mike's term ends. At our next meeting, we'll go through the elder's ministry description to make sure the responsibilities are clear for someone who would be considering the position. We will also start discerning names to recommend to Gifts Discernment, and will be available to help talk with people.

Review of our January SLT Retreat Notes: After reviewing the notes Sue had compiled, we noted that the discussion of attendance trends earlier in our meeting seemed to connect well with some of the conversation at retreat. At the retreat, we had discussed the ways our culture often pushes us towards the idea of being 'big, busy and productive.' Maybe God's invitation is actually 'small, simple, and slow' - for more "being" instead of "doing." Instead of worrying about whether the church is a "success," it might be more important to remember that the church belongs to Jesus and he will care for it. It's our job to listen to where he may be leading us. Leadership can model a sense of peace through focusing on Jesus, instead of worrying about attendance or programming. At our retreat, we considered ways the SLT could encourage prayer in the congregation, and we continued to discuss ideas at this meeting. One idea was to have two SLT members available after worship each week during Lent for prayer. We imagined that people might bring concerns for themselves, for others in their circle, or for the world - basically anything that was on a person's heart. We will try this approach and see where it leads.

Ohio Conference ACA - We will put a note in the newsletter, and make an announcement, to preview what the delegates will be discussing at ACA on March 1 -2. Delegates will also plan to report back to the congregation afterward about their experience.

Facilitating new visions: We will get information out about the facilitating new visions form. Mike will put something in the newsletter; Barb will announce to the congregation; and it will be placed in people's mailboxes.

Pastoral Concerns were discussed.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 19th