

Zion Evangelical  
Lutheran  
Church

# The Echoes

December 2025

## Prepare: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love

Another year of preparations - cleaning, shopping, decorating, baking - the Advent seasons brings so much anticipation. While the secular celebrations can be exciting and pleasant, they aren't the "reason for the season".

As Christians, we anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus - a king sent to us, unlike any other. A baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger; born of a lowly family, in a foreign city. This king didn't look like the king for which ancient Israel had been preparing, but he is still the king we look to for guidance and encouragement today.

As the years unfold, we anticipate Jesus' return. We prepare ourselves unlike the ways we have prepared for other things. Jesus calls us to prepare with hope, peace, joy, and love. To see goodness in the stranger, to turn spears into pruning hooks, to encourage the oppressed, to be kind in the face of adversity. This Advent season, let us prepare our hearts and our minds for the coming of Christ. The first Sunday of Advent's gospel reminded us we do not know when this may be. So we must be ready - attentively and diligently preparing for Christ's return - in what we say, what we do, and how we live.

We hope you will find time to prepare your hearts in worship with us this season. If you have been here every Sunday or if you haven't been to Zion in years, we look forward to seeing you - all are always welcome. Reach out to one another, invite others to come to worship with you - you never know who might need the invitation to prepare their hearts this Christmas.

*Glory to God in the highest heaven.*

*and on earth peace among those whom he favors!* Luke 2:14

*Prepare the  
way of the*

*Lord:*

*make his paths*

*straight.*

*Matthew 3:36*

# December 2025 ...

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 9:00 - Yoga  7:30 Dartball	2  6:30 Busy Hands	3 10:00 Bible Study  6:00 Outreach 7:00 Choir 7:00 AA	4	5	6
7 9:00 Worship w/Holy Communion 10 - Sunday School, Catechism, Coffee Hour 11 - Christian Ed Hall Rented -afternoon 7:00 - AA	8 9:30 - Yoga  7:30 Dartball	9	10 10:00 Bible Study  7:00 Choir 7:00 AA	11  4:45 Caroling with Firemen 6:00 Blue Christmas Rehearsal	12	13
14 9:00 Worship 10 - Sunday School, Catechism, Coffee Hour  7:00 - Blue Christmas 7:00 - AA	15 9:00 - Yoga  7:30 Dartball	16	17 10:00 Bible Study  7:00 Choir 7:00 AA	18  7:00 Toledo Symphony Concert at Grace Lutheran, Fremont	19	20 10:30-Noon Birthday Party for Jesus
21 9:00 Worship w/Holy Communion 10 - Sunday School, Catechism, Coffee Hour 11 - Christian Ed 7:00 - AA	22 9:00 - Yoga	23	24 7:00 Worship -Youth & Adult Choirs sing 11 Worship w/ Holy Communion	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27 Hall Rented
28 9:00 Worship 10 - Sunday School, Catechism, Coffee Hour  7:00 - AA	29 9:00 - Yoga	30	31  7:00 AA			

## Zion Church Council Minutes – November 11, 2025

Zion Council met in the Barb Moellman Media Center on Tuesday, November 11, 2025 at 7:10 pm. Rusty Burket opened the meeting with prayer and devotions. Those in attendance were: Rusty Burket, Dave Myerholtz, Becky Teal, Beth Schlea, Julia Popp, Carrie Strausbaugh, Connie Davies, and Dan Henery. Stacie Marquart and Jill Allport were absent. Dave moved, Beth seconded, to approve the agenda as given. Motion approved.

**Secretary's Report:** Connie moved, seconded by Carrie, to approve the Secretary's minutes as written. Motion approved.

**Financial Report:** Dave moved, Julia seconded, to accept the financial reports as written. Motion approved. They will be filed for audit.

**Old Business:** The Homeschool request to use the building on Fridays was discussed. Since there were several questions remaining, Dave moved, seconded by Julia to invite Amanda Cobb to the December Council meeting. Becky Teal is to contact Amanda with the invitation.

**New Business:** Hannah Mapus has been approved by the Northwestern Ohio Synod to serve Zion as a Synod Authorized Minister. She will begin on November 24, 2025 in this role. Hannah has been approved to administer the Sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion) on a provisional basis. Pastor Henry Seibert will serve as the Supervising Pastor for Hannah. Hannah's background and training for this position will be shared at the Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 16, 2025. Dave moved, seconded by Beth, to accept Hannah as our Synod Authorized Minister. All approved and were very positive about this next step in Zion's transition.

At the Congregational Meeting, Zion leaders will provide closure on Pastor Matthew's leaving, discuss the Synod Authorized Minister and what that entails, and review the capital campaign and explain the next step (resealing) for the parking lot. Zion has much to be thankful for and it is hoped we can go forward in a very positive way.

### **Ministry of Outreach:**

Cheer Bags - to be taken December 21 - Sunday School students are decorating the bags.

Items include: cookies, candy, tissues, lotion, lip balm, pens

Birthday Party for Jesus - December 20 at Zion - children ages 3-10 to attend

Bounce house, crafts

Donations for Hope Heartbeat, Fremont

Kids' Night Out went well - 24 children attended

Trunk-or-Treat went well - ran out of food and out of candy

Visitation Ministry and Home Communion is going well.

The Craft Show was successful.

Busy Hands sent 10 quilts, 200 health kits, and \$50 for shipping to Lutheran World Relief.

Busy Hands was commended for their recent work on quilts. Ten quilts are already being prepared to send next year.

# Council Minutes, continued

## Ministry of Property Management

Parking lot resurfacing and striping has been completed.

Thank you to our volunteers for

Cleaning of yard and trimming of bushes at both the church and parsonage.

Power washing, cleaning, and re-staining of Zion church sign

Interior cleaning and touchups to parsonage

Executive Committee Minutes were shared.

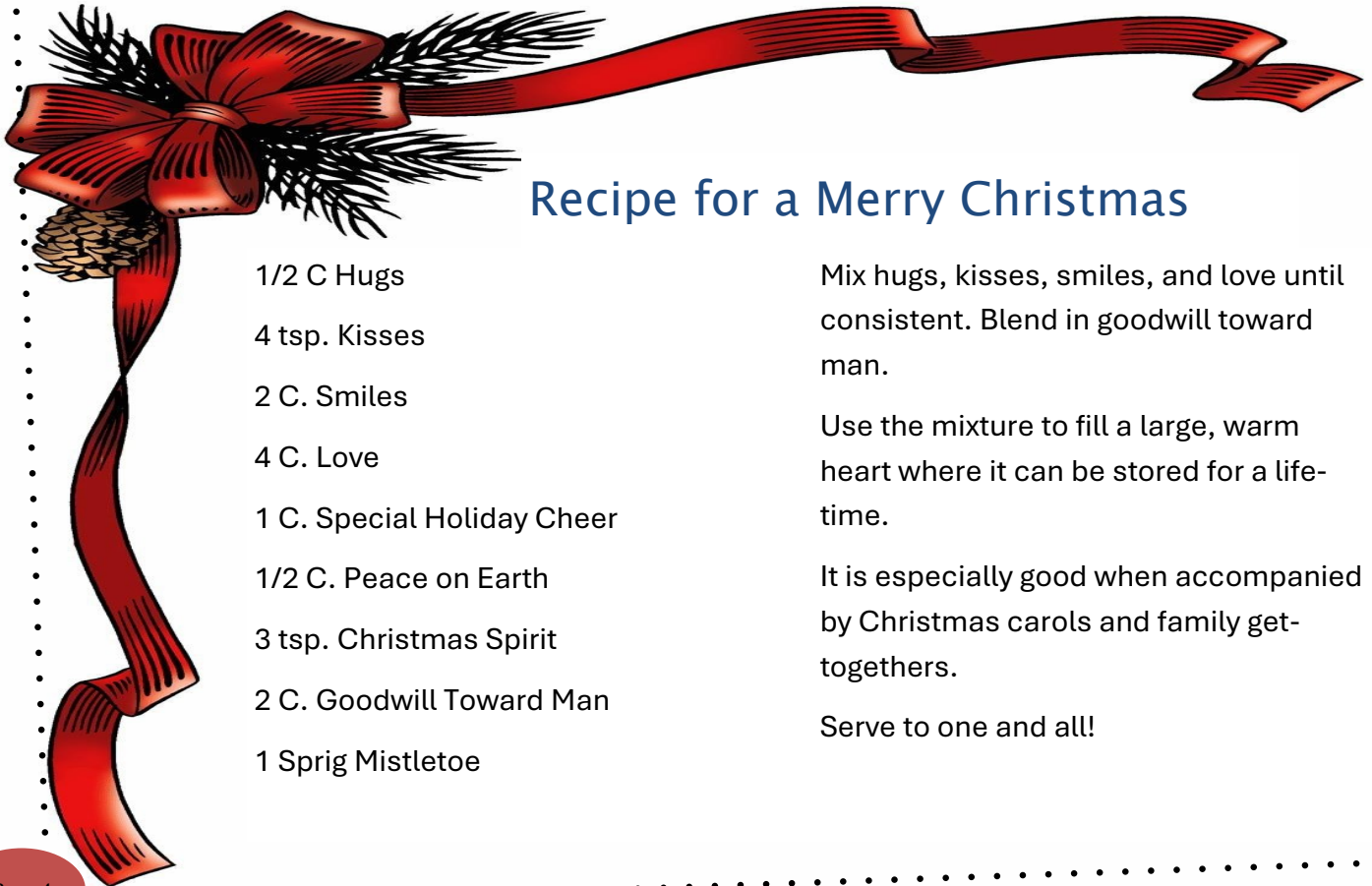
Correspondence was shared.

Rusty adjourned the meeting. All prayed The Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting will be December 9, 2025 at 7 pm.

Reporting next month: Staff Assistance and Worship & Music

Respectfully Submitted, Becky Teal



## Recipe for a Merry Christmas

1/2 C Hugs

4 tsp. Kisses

2 C. Smiles

4 C. Love

1 C. Special Holiday Cheer

1/2 C. Peace on Earth

3 tsp. Christmas Spirit

2 C. Goodwill Toward Man

1 Sprig Mistletoe

Mix hugs, kisses, smiles, and love until consistent. Blend in goodwill toward man.

Use the mixture to fill a large, warm heart where it can be stored for a lifetime.

It is especially good when accompanied by Christmas carols and family get-togethers.

Serve to one and all!

## GAMA Minutes

On Wednesday, November 19, 2025, the Gibsonburg Area Ministerial Association met at St. Michael's Catholic Church. Those present were: Pastor Michael Holcomb, Father Tad Oxley, Pastor Charlene Miller, Intern John Austen, Karen Peck, Patti Wasserman, Sue Sleek, and Becky Teal. Pastor Miller called the meeting to order and offered a prayer. Minutes from the Oct. 15 minutes were approved as printed.

Food Pantry Report: Patti gave the report in the absence of Gerry Williams. In the month of October 10 vouchers and 28 boxes were given. This helped a total of 88 people. At the Community Thanksgiving Service, 46 Thanksgiving boxes were given, helping 131 people.

SNAP Benefit Update: Holly McGough, from the Hungry Bear, has been giving free meals on Tuesdays and Fridays to SNAP Benefit Receivers. Since SNAP has been reinstated it is unclear if she will continue with this practice.

The Thanksgiving Community Worship Service was Sunday, Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:00. It was very poorly attended. Thank you to Janis Fisher for making cookies and dessert bars for the event.

Blue Christmas Worship Service will be Sunday, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at Zion. A fellowship time will be held in the hall after the service. This is a great time to support those who are grieving and let them know someone cares.

Habitat for Humanity Home in Helena is scheduled to be dedicated on Saturday, November 22 at 11:00 AM.

### News from Area Churches:

Church Without Walls - Pastor Miller has been very busy and now also presides over two churches in Risingsun.

Gibsonburg Community Church - The meals and Bible Study continue to be well attended.

First English Lutheran Church - Nearing the end of showing The Chosen for this year. They will be having mid-week services for Advent. These will be at 7:00 PM on the Wednesdays in Advent. Lydia's Closet is the first Saturday of each month. Clothing, mostly for children, is available at no charge. There is a limit to how many each person is allowed.

St. Michael's/St. Mary's Catholic Churches - They are busy filling the Operation Christmas shoeboxes with gifts for children. The Hard as Nails program has been moved to Jan. or Feb.

Shiloh Global Methodist Church - Had a successful Trunk or Treat, Road Rally, Chili supper, and Operation Christmas Shoebox collection. Their Veteran's Brunch honored 48 Veterans. They continue Bible Study and have given Bibles to those without one.

Zion Lutheran Church - Had a successful Trunk or Treat. Hannah Mapus has been assigned to be our Synod Assigned Minister for one year.

Liason Reports - Patti reported that the Ugly Sweater Run will be December 13 starting at the village town hall. Entry fee is a new, unwrapped toy or unperishable food donation. These will be given to area families to help brighten their Christmas and to the Gibsonburg Food Bank. Gibsonburg is looking for a Youth Director. Contact Marc Glotzbecker or someone at Town Hall if interested.

## Thank you

Thank you to all who helped decorate the sanctuary and narthex for the Advent and Christmas seasons. You are a blessing.

May the sights and sounds that fill Zion always revere our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



## Cheer Bags



Outreach Ministry will again be assembling Cheer bags this December. We are increasing the number of bags, due to last year's overwhelming response.

Please let the church office know of someone you wish to add to our list and if you will deliver or have a member of our team deliver. The plan is to distribute the bags on Sunday, December 21.

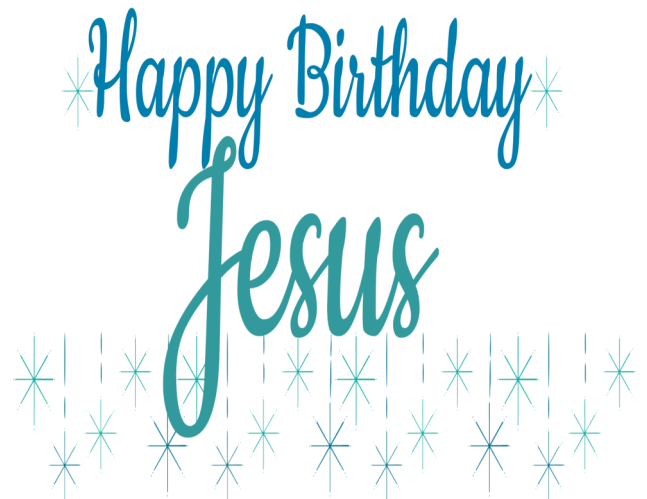
Check out the donation board on ways to contribute, posted near the kitchen.

See Rose Widmer if you have any questions.

## Birthday Party for Jesus

Outreach Ministry is planning a Birthday Party for Jesus on Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup> 10:30 - noon in the fellowship hall. This is for all children of the community ages 3-10. There will be a bounce house, cupcakes to decorate, crafts, and the First Christmas Story to share. We are asking participants to bring a NEW unwrapped infant item for donation to Heartbeat Hope Medical Pregnancy Center in Fremont. Items such as diapers, diaper wipes, infant clothes, baby soap and lotion. Please sign up to volunteer on the table outside the sanctuary. Check out the donation board on ways to contribute, posted near the kitchen.

See Rose Widmer if you have any questions.



## Stewardship Ministry

Are we in the mindset that everything we have is because of God? God is the creator and owner of all the things we have. We are on this earth because God wants us here. The things we have is because God wants us to have them, everything belongs to him. It has been instilled in us that if we work hard enough, we can have what we want, but if God does not want us to have it, then we will not get it. It is all up to God in what we get in our lives.

Psalm24: 1-3 The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.



## 2025 Advent Season Worship

December 7 - 9:00am Worship - Advent 2 with Holy Communion

December 14 - 9:00am Worship - Advent 3 with Youth Program

7:00pm Blue Christmas Service

December 21 - 9:00am Worship - Advent 4 with Holy Communion

December 24 - Christmas Eve      Family Service at 7:00 pm

Formal Service with Holy Communion at 11:00 pm

December 28 - 9:00am Worship -Christmas Sunday - Service of Lessons and Carols

## Christmas Caroling with Firemen

We have been invited, by GAMA, to sing Christmas carols as the firemen drive through town and deliver cookies! Please meet at St. Michael's parking lot at 4:45pm Thursday, December 11th. The SCRAP trolley will be used to transport the carolers. Bundle up and bring your voices to spread good cheer throughout the village. Cookies, coffee, and cocoa will be served at St. Michael's after the event. May there be peace on earth!



## Worship and Winter Weather

**If Sandusky County declares a LEVEL 3 Snow Emergency, worship at Zion will be cancelled. For other levels or weather advisories, please use your discretion when travelling to church. We want all our church family to remain safe throughout the winter season. Updates may be found on Zion's Facebook page.**

## Blue Christmas Service

We are inviting all to a Blue Christmas Service here at Zion on Sunday, December 14 at 7:00pm. This is a special time for those who might be experiencing a challenging season due to the loss of a loved one. You don't have to have experienced loss within the last year to attend; this service is open to all. Coming to help other can be a beautiful way to support them in a challenging time. Refreshments will be offered after the service.

Hope to see you there.



## Christian Sympathy

We extend our Christian sympathy to the family and friends of Jody Angelone.

Jody joined the saints triumphant on Monday, November 17. Her funeral service and luncheon was held at Zion on Saturday, November 22nd.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with arrangements for the service and luncheon. Thank you to all who donated dishes and their time to help with the luncheon. Funeral dinners are an important ministry which furthers the gospel of Jesus. We are grateful to all who helped in any way.



## Giving Tree



Now that the winter weather is here, we are especially grateful for items that keep us warm. Would you please consider donating socks, hats, and gloves to those who are in need? The items can be placed on the tree in the narthex.

Thank you for your generosity!

## Financial Fitness Focus

### November 2025:

November Gross Income:	\$34,411.23
November Gross Expenses:	<u>\$15,607.09</u>
	\$18,804.14
(Income designated for the Parking Lot:	\$3,566.80)

### As of 11/30/2025:

Year-to-Date Income:	\$337,236.44
Year-to-Date Expenses:	<u>\$333,564.80</u>
	\$3,671.64

## Congregational Connections

So many members of our Zion family participate in activities outside the congregation. Each month, this section of The Echoes will feature events happening in and around Gibsonburg that may have our Christian brothers and sisters participating. Like traditional families, showing support of our loved ones is important. Let us continue to show support and lift up each member of our Zion family, both in prayers and in cheers! Ask them for more information - we'd love to see you there showing support!

**Gibsonburg HS Boys' Basketball** - Bryson Marinoff

- Home games: 12/12 at 5:30pm, 12/18 at 5:30pm, 12/20 at 3:30pm, 12/27 at 5:30pm

**Gibsonburg HS Girls' Basketball** - Elly Evarts, Bo Evarts

- Home games: 12/6 at 5:30pm, 12/11 at 5:30pm, 12/19 at 5:30pm

**Gibsonburg HS Band and Choir Concert** - Miles Thomas, Lincoln Thomas, Amaya Marinoff, Claire Mapus, Sofia Rogers, Hannah Crispen, Jacob Aelker, Lucas Aelker,

- December 4, Band @ 6:30 pm and Choir @ 7:30pm

**Zion's Dartball Team** -

- Mondays, 7:30pm: all away games: 12/1 at Clyde, 12/8 at Oak Harbor, 12/15 at Elmore

**Fremont Ballet School Winter Performances** - Claire Mapus

- Saturday, 12/6 Downtown Fremont Amphitheater 5:15pm

Please call or email the office if you have events or suggestions to add to this column. We'd love to learn more about our church family's interests. Also, if you'd rather not be listed, please let the office know.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith"

-Galatians 6:10

## JOY

On November 21st, JOY traveled to West Unity, Ohio to browse and buy at the Holly Jolly Christmas Shops. The group had a wonderful time exploring a new place and enjoyed lunch there too.

The December outing for JOY will be the Toledo Symphony Orchestra Concert at Grace Lutheran Church in Fremont on Thursday, December 18th at 7:00pm. The group will meet at 6:00pm in Zion's parking lot to carpool. If you're planning to go and would like to share a ride, please tell the office or Becky Teal.

We hope you will join in the JOY events. The group has a wonderful time exploring and sharing in fellowship with one another. Stay tuned for the next adventure!

## Zion Church Council Leaders

President: Rusty Burkett

Vice President: David Myerholtz

Secretary: Becky Teal

Treasurer: Beth Schlea

Christian Ed Ministry: Carrie Strausbaugh

Outreach Ministry: Julia Popp

Property Ministry: Tom Fisher

Staff Assistance Ministry: Connie Davies

Stewardship Ministry: Stacie Marquart

Worship & Music Ministry: Jill Allport

## Acolytes, Readers, and Worship Leaders

### Sunday, December 7

A - Grayson Burkett

R - Stephen Marquart and Mason Miles

WL - Rev. Cindy Ritter

### Wednesday, December 24, 7:00pm

A - Jacoby Evarts

R - Jeff Lemke and Sofia Rogers

WL - Hannah Mapus

### Sunday, December 14

A - Keegan Strausbaugh

R - David Myerholtz and Owen Kirwen

WL - Hannah Mapus & Children's Program

### Wednesday, December 24, 11:00pm

A - Braxton Maenle

R - Kim Marinoff and Brynn Mapus

WL - Hannah Mapus

### Sunday, December 21

A - Claire Mapus

R - Beth Schlea and Brynn Mapus

WL - Hannah Mapus

### Sunday, December 28

A - Derek Reed

R - Bo Evarts and Bella Stevens

WL - Hannah Mapus

## December Birthdays

1 - Kevin Brant  
Ashley Gerwin

4 - Curtis Bursiek  
Duane Gerwin  
Andrea Pritt

5 - Tim Fisher

8 - Beth Schlea

9 - Alex Fairbanks

12 - Joyce Hansen  
Brandon Murray

13 - Lori Cramer

14 - Alexa Evarts

17 - Lilliam Schroeder



20 - Julie Villarreal

23 - Holly Murray

28 - Ben Gunder  
Bryson Marinoff

31 - Courtney Velliquette



Zion Evangelical Lutheran  
Church  
500 S Brentwood Drive  
Gibsonburg, OH 43431  
Phone: 419-637-2812  
Email: zionlutherangib@gmail.com  
www.zionlutherangibsonburg.org

A family living for Christ  
in all we do.



PRAYING THAT THIS  
**CHRISTMAS**

FINDS YOU WITH PLENTY OF  
PEACE, HOPE, LOVE AND JOY.

Deadline for donations:  
December 18, 2025

Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

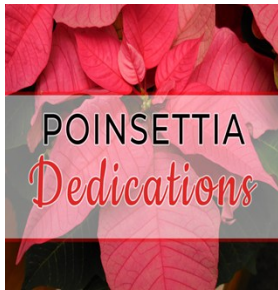
In Loving Memory of (Deceased):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of (Living):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Checks may be made  
payable to:  
Zion Lutheran Church



Please include donation with form and  
send to the church office:  
500 S. Brentwood Dr.  
Gibsonburg, OH 43431