



*For the Members and Friends of Zion Lutheran Church
December 2024*

The Long Valley Lutheran

Sundays in December

Worship alternates between contemporary and traditional styles, is live-streamed on [Zion's YouTube channel](#). The worship bulletin, readings and music are [located on our website](#).

December 1, First Sunday of Advent

8:30 AM Sunday School

9:30 AM Service of Holy Communion

December 8, Second Sunday of Advent

8:30 AM Sunday School

9:30 AM Service of Holy Communion,

December 15, Third Sunday of Advent

8:30 AM Sunday School ?

9:30 AM Service of Holy Communion

10:30AM Christmas Pageant

11:30AM Potluck Brunch

December 22, Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:30 AM Service of Holy Communion– Christmas Cantata

December 29, First Sunday of Christmas

9:30 AM Service of Holy Communion

Zion Lutheran Church, 11 Schooley's Mountain Rd., Long Valley, NJ 07853
phone: (908) 876-3547; e-mail: zionlongvalley@gmail.com; website: zionlongvalley.org

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

11 Schooley's Mountain Rd.

Long Valley, NJ 07853

Tel: (908) 876-3547

E-mail: zionlongvalley@gmail.com

Website: zionlongvalley.org



Like us on Facebook at
"Zion Lutheran Church, Long Valley"

Pastor: Pastor Ingrid Wengert
Cell: (215) 692-2091
Email: Ingridfathwengert@gmail.com

Parish Secretary: Sarah Scudese

Minister of Music: Marilyn Hibler

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

9:30AM Worship with live-stream.

**CONGREGATION COUNCIL
MEMBERS/OFFICERS:**

President: Tom Scudese
Vice President: Eric Snyder
Secretary: Jeanne Howell
Treasurer: Ron Schulz

Members:
Burt Horner
Marcia Horner
Ben Johnston
Elaine Kesler
Karen Newquist
Larry Salvatore
Christine Stabile

**LONG VALLEY CHRISTIAN
NURSERY SCHOOL**

11 Schooley's Mountain Rd.

Long Valley, NJ 07853

Tel: (908) 876-4115

Fax: (908) 876-4959

E-Mail: longvalleychristian@gmail.com

Website: longvalleychristian.com

LVCNS Director..... Meghan Bridge
Bus. Administrator....Cyndy Thompson

Office Hours

Parish Secretary Sarah

M-Fr from 9:00AM ish to 1PM ish

*Our hours are flexible, please call ahead to make sure
we are here.*

(908) 876-3547 or zionlongvalley@gmail.com

Pastor Ingrid

M-Th mornings

Pastor Ingrid's day off each week is Friday.

(215) 692-2091 or ingridfathwengert@gmail.com

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The deadline for the
**January Newsletter is
December 23rd**



Articles may be sent to the church
office via email at

**zionlongvalley@gmail.com, or left in Sarah
Scudese's mail box in the Parish Center.**

**Your prompt attention to the deadline is
greatly appreciated!**

Christmas has been loved, ignored and even *illegal* at different times in the world's history.



Nobody actually knows when Jesus was born.

In the 4th century, Christians chose the date. It would be during the darkest time of year. It would be the date Romans celebrated the birth of their sun god. December 25 would make a good date to celebrate the birth of our *Christian* God, the One of whom it was written “in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.” John 1:4

Christmas was a minor festival in the church year for its first thousand+ years. *Easter* is the primary Christian festival and the reason for ALL church seasons! :) Pentecost is probably the second oldest holy day. Then, in the 4th century came the celebration of Christ's birth on 12/25, and soon after Epiphany on 1/6 (when the foreign magi search for the babe). In the 6th century, Christmas was extended to Epiphany and became the 12-day season that we know.

By the 16th century Reformation, Christmas had become a prominent celebration. However, it was handed down through the years with many regional pagan and folk traditions mixed in with it – from yule logs to evergreens to elves or spirits. In the 17th century a zealous Protestant group, the English Puritans, condemned the celebration of Christmas, considering it a Roman Catholic invention with the "trappings of popery." In the new world, the Pilgrims *outlawed* Christmas celebrations in Boston in 1659. The ban was revoked by 1681 but it took 200 years for Christmas to become popular in the Boston region. Further south, Christian residents of New York and Virginia observed Christmas freely because among the settlers were German Moravians. Then again, after the American Revolution, Christmas fell out of favor in the United States as it was considered “too English.”

Currently, everyone seems to love the season of Christmas! It's been embraced by non-religious people who have redefined it for themselves and made their own non-religious traditions. Even the preparation season of Advent has become so popular that you can find Advent calendars filled with anything from beauty items to artisanal olive oils!

Some have said that Christians should try to reclaim Christmas or strive to “Keep Christ in Christmas.” However, didn't we begin by borrowing the date and sharing it with the Roman Empire?!

In the end, Christmas isn't really ours to control. It's God's gift to believers. It's that celebration that once again Jesus is born in you and me. See, what we celebrate at Christmas is not merely Jesus' birthday – but *our* birthday in Christ; that is, that Christ is born in us and gives us new life - no matter what's going on in the world.

God bring new life to *you* this Advent and Christmas!



Please remember in your prayers all of our parish family and friends who suffer physically, emotionally, and are battling life altering conditions. Lord Jesus, who went about doing good and healing all, we ask you to bless our friends who are sick. Give them strength in body, courage in spirit, and patience in pain. Let them recover their health, so that restored, they may joyfully praise your name, for you and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

We pray for:

Family of James and Lori Andershonis: *Beverly Vecchione*

Friends and family of Jeanette Baker: *Frank Baker Jr., Alex Cunningham, Gunhild Ljung, Linda Quinn*

Family of Annie Clay: *Nanny Holloway, Dorthe Royster*

Friend of Ellen Blaine: *Keith Correll, Carl Gerhard*

Family of Sheila Blaine: *Eleanor Lundy, Denise Rodriguez, Logan Rodriguez*

Friends and family of Charlie & Marcia Davidson: *Gail Boyle*

Family & friends of Corey & Courtney Derr: *Ralph Derr,*

Family of Cathy DiLello: *Russell Dilello*

Family of Bill & Patricia Hibler: *Patricia Glancy-Wurtemberg*

Family of Burt & Marcia Horner: *Bruce Adams, Rae Hoffman, Joann Yanchek*

Family of Jeanne Howell: *Tami Ochs, Jack Steffen*

Friend of Beth Johnson: *Tammy Jackman*

Family of Lori Prussack: *Richard Prussack*

Family of Barbara Rennie: *Krista Gundersen, Alan Rennie*

Friends and family of Betty Rush: *Amy Burd, Kirk Klein, Mancuso family, Pastor Martin Travis*

Family of Ron & Barb Schulz: *Richard Schulz*

Family of Brad & Malainie Stoma: *Judy Stoma*

Family of Linda Tucker: *Linda Spangler, Larry Tucker*

Friend & family of Dottie Weis: *Richard Bosley, Betton Caws, Matt Dunbar*

Members of Zion:

Ellen Blaine, Annie Clay, Marcia Davidson, Donna East, Jay Kay, Jane Moore, John Resotka, Reinhard Schwartz

*Prayer requests will also appear in the insert each week.
Please contact the church office for
additions, to make updates, or with questions.*

Christmas Worship Schedule

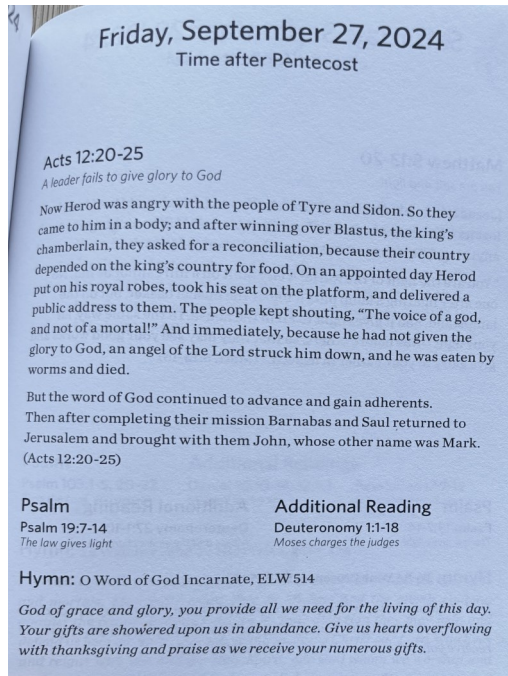
12/24

Christmas Eve

4:00PM Family-friendly service of Holy Communion with candlelight

8:00PM Live-streamed Service of Holy Communion with candlelight

Don't forget to pick up your Poinsettias after worship on Christmas Eve.

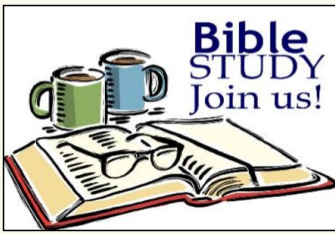


A Daily Devotional for 2025

A suggestion for daily reading and prayer for 2025 is [“Bread for the Day: Daily Bible Readings & Prayers for 2025.”](#) It’s published by Augsburg Fortress but also found on Amazon. The daily readings are taken from our current hymnal and in some way connected with the readings for Sunday.

Appointed Worship Readings for December

Worship Date	Old or New Testament Readings	Psalm	Gospel
December 1,	Jeremiah 33:14-16/1 Thessalonians 3:9-13	Psalm 25:1-10	Luke 21:25-36
December 8,	Malachi 3:1-4 / Philippians 1:3-11	Luke 1:68-69	Luke 3:1-6
December 15,	Zaphaniah 3:14-20 / Philippians 4:4-7	Isaiah 12:2-6	Luke 3:7-18
December 22,	Micah 5:2-5a / Hebrews 10:5-10	Psalm 80:1-7	Luke 1:39-45[46-55]
December 29,	1 Samuel 2:18-20,26 / Colossians 3:12-17	Psalm 148	Luke 2:41-52



TUESDAY AFTERNOON BIBLE STUDY

We will meet for bible study in the Faith Hall Splash room at 1:30pm.
We are studying women of the bible this fall
There will be no bible study on 12/24 or 12/31



On November 10th we celebrated the baptism of
Teagan Shakespeare
Daughter of
Kyle and Ashlie Shakespeare
Congratulations!

Teagan wore her mothers baptism dress:)



Please help us decorate our sanctuary for Christmas

Poinsettias can be purchased to decorate the sanctuary at Christmas. Please complete the attached form by December 15th.
Order form [here](#).



*Dear Zion Members,
Thank you for the condolences and prayers. They mean so much to the entire family. It lifts our hearts to know that we are not alone during this time and have the support of the Zion members. We are truly blessed.*

Marie, Ed, Michael & Edward Strebel.



**TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT
ACTIVITY PROJECTED THRU END OF NOVEMBER 2024**

OPERATING	Actual Yr-to-Date Oct 2024	Estimated Month of Nov 2024	Estimated YTD Nov '24 (This Year)	Actual YTD Nov '23 (Last Year)	(Un) Favor Variance	Notes
Income	\$229,303	\$33,260	\$262,562	\$228,034	\$34,529	A
Expenses						
Payroll-Related	\$123,176	\$11,988	\$135,164	\$131,491	(\$3,673)	B
Administrative	\$92,910	\$7,021	\$99,931	\$100,485	\$554	C
Committees	\$18,210	(\$208)	\$18,002	\$17,693	(\$309)	D
Total Expenses	\$234,296	\$18,802	\$253,097	\$249,669	(\$3,428)	
Net Operating Income/(Loss)	(\$4,993)	\$14,458	\$9,465	(\$21,636)	\$31,101	
Cash Balance End of Mo.					\$0	

Operating Notes: (Un)Favorable Year-to-Date variances: 2024 versus 2023

- A. Includes a one-time generous offering in November
- B. Pastor and employees were given 5% increases
- C. Favorable variances for Utilities \$2,423, Repairs \$839 and Cleaning service \$1,288; offset in part by higher snow removal (\$1,651) and increased Insurance rates (\$1,776)
- D. Worship & Music (\$585) incurred costs that are normally cyclical over 2 or 3 years, all hitting in 2024.

Treasurer's Observations on Operating P&L:

A significant one-time offering received in November along with our careful spending has helped to make the year-to-date November 2024 operating "income" a positive. But we need to continue our pattern of financial diligence in order to keep our bottom line positive and/or at breakeven (our target), especially into 2025.

Giving to Zion can be done through traditional Sunday offerings, mailed checks, Vanco, and now also Venmo .

If you are 70.5 or older, have an IRA and do not itemize on your tax return, please inquire about making pre-tax offerings to Zion (QCD) -- it will save you taxes!

NON- OPERATING	Notes	12/31/23 Balance	FORECASTED			11/30/24 Balance
			For the 11 months Jan thru Nov 2024			
			Receipts	Payments	Transfers	
Ministries	D	\$26,389	\$23,653	\$12,077	\$229	\$38,194
Seasonal events & other		\$1,819	\$2,630	\$1,783	(\$37)	\$2,629
Property and Capital-related		\$500	\$395	\$3,373	\$2,478	\$0
Mortgage	E, F	\$46,522	\$41,409	\$42,900	\$0	\$45,032
Unrestricted Funds		\$46,719	\$14,124	\$1,663	(\$1,670)	\$57,510
Current Memorial Funds		\$29,384	\$2,125	\$1,334	\$0	\$30,176
Restricted Memorial Funds		\$103,163	\$1,388	\$78	(\$1,000)	\$103,474
Total	G	\$254,496	\$85,725	\$63,207	\$0	\$277,014

Non-Operating Notes:

- D. The Ort Farm event in 2024 accounts for most of the revenues and payments for Ministries;
- E. Principal balance of the Mortgage on 11/30/24 is \$137,635.73; it is funded \$45,032 for the next 11+ months thanks in part to a significant and generous donation made in November.
- F. Mortgage payments for YTD October total \$42,900, consisting of \$34,960 principal plus \$ 7,940 interest.
- G. The Non-Operating balance is \$277,014: \$57,453 is in checking with the remainder conservatively invested.
- H. The Livestreaming equipment loan with the NJ Synod is now fully forgiven (i.e. the balance is zero).

Respectfully submitted, Ron Schulz (Treasurer)





Social Ministry Events



M.L.K. Community Morning of Service

When: Mon, Jan 20th from 10am-Noon
Where: Long Valley Presbyterian Church
39 Bartley Rd, Long Valley



Supporting Faith Kitchen, Dover

“Providing nutritious meals for the hungry in our community”

Donations Needed for Snack Packs (Assembled at the Event)

- Chewey Granola bars (no nuts)
- Oranges
- Kleenex packs
- Candy bars (no nuts)
- Beef Jerky
- Rasins
- Snack food (non perishable /no nuts)
- Crackers

Donations collected at participating congregations through January 19th

Church of Messiah Episcopal; Highlands Presbyterian; Long Valley Presbyterian; Our Lady of the Mountain; St. Luke Parish; St. Mark the Evangelist; Valley View Chapel; Zion Lutheran Church



Social Ministry Events



Thank you, to every one who donated and helped pack our shoe boxes.

We packed 50 shoeboxes this year to be sent all over the world.



From the Congregation Council



An update from Council on Stewardship's 'Estimate of Giving' efforts.

The good news is that the estimates of giving show an increase in giving of over 10%!

However, we face a unique situation this year: A very generous household has moved away, and we need to make up that gap in giving in order to support all of the current ministries that we do. Right now, the gap looks to be almost \$18,000, even with the increases in giving. So we are appealing to those who have provided Estimates, those who have not provided Estimates, and those who give through Simply Giving; basically, the entire congregation, so that we all share responsibility to do what we can (if we are able) to close the estimated \$18,000 budget shortfall.

This will allow us to support our current staff, utilities, and all of the ministries that we do as a congregation (which the staff & buildings help make possible).

If you have any questions, please contact Ron Schulz.

Christmas Tree Lighting 2024



A big thank you to all the concert participants! Mayor Matt Murello for his warm greetings. The LVCNS children for starting off the evening. All the talented high school groups: The Loreleis, The Noteworthies & The Howlers. The WMC Jazz Combo, WMC String Quartet. The Celebration Praise Band from Trinity Methodist church in Hackettstown. And our own Zion Vocal choir and Handbell Choir. A special thank you to Jeanette Baker for organizing all our music groups!!

Thank you to all the cookie makers, we had a great cookie reception. Cub Scout Pack 136 for the bake sale benefitting LVCAP. The LVJWC amazing Ginger Bread House competition. And of course thank you Ort Farms for loaning Santa your Tractor and wagon!



Parish Life



December 15th Christmas Sunday School Pageant



Hello from all of us in Sunday School. We're here to tell you about our Christmas pageant. On Dec 15th at 10:30AM we will have a carol sing PLUS some instrumentals from kids who are musicians. Our play at 10:45AM tells the age old story of when Jesus was born.

There will be a rehearsal on Saturday 14th at 9-11AM

If there are any children who would like to play an instrument, please let Marge Scudese know!



Christmas Pageant Potluck

There will be a potluck brunch in Faith Hall after the play. Please bring a dish to share, entree side or desert. All are welcome, to dine with the actors of the play!! There will be a signup in the narthex.



WTHS Xmas House Tour & Luncheon at Zion

12/14 11AM-2PM

After a five year hiatus the Washington Township Historical Society (WTHS) Christmas house tour is back on *December 14th!* Zion will host the luncheon in Faith Hall, 11AM-2PM If you are interested in helping at the luncheon please contact [Jance](#).

We also need soup makers. Please see [recipes here](#).



Monthly Morning Mom's Group

If you'd like to get together with other moms for conversation & encouragement, [let Pastor Ingrid know](#). They will be meeting once a month at 9AM. The next meeting will be on *Monday December 15th*



Parish Life



Dear Pastor Ingrid & Church family.

Thank you so much for all your condolences during my moms journey to heaven. Your support means a lot & I really appreciate your kind words & prayers. I am grateful for you!



Pam & Bob.



Clean-Up Day

A big thank you to everyone that came out to help clean up around the church. Especially our Boy Scout Troop, Pack 136!



Zion Property

Preserving the Past, while Bridging the future



Year End Property Report 2024

Completed Work at Zion:

1. Annual fire inspection of the doors and safety exit signs, and batteries are completed in Faith Hall and the church and education wings
2. Lighting in Faith Hall: ceiling lights where needed are upgraded to LED's . We will continue to R&R them and upgrade them in the future. The majority of them have been replaced and upgraded creating better lighting and are more energy efficient LED's.
3. New exit signs in the Sanctuary
4. Thanks to Thrivent for monies from their Grant Program to help offset the cost of multiple projects throughout the church. Anyone who is a Thrivent member may apply for grants for Zion projects and is encouraged to do so. If you are not a member, you may apply for \$20 per year and will then become a member for that year. Please see Sarah if you need assistance to do so, and it's always for a great cause for those of us that serve others. Thank you for that.
5. Grounds cleanup for Spring and Fall was completed. Thanks to Brian Bumpus and the Cub Scouts for helping organize this event and to those from Zion who showed up to help.
6. Flowers were planted in the whiskey barrels and the swale are is being revamped for better maintenance and aesthetics.
7. Pot holes in exit driveway are repaired.
8. Remember that the Bat houses are installed on campus as part of an Eagle Scout project. This is also part of a conservation effort to save and preserve bats in NJ. If you are there at dusk, you may see them coming and going from them.
9. Electric receptacles have been installed to replace the one extension cord that supplies power to the entire AV system and computers when services are ongoing.
10. New lock for the dumpster is in place to prevent, we hope, people from coming into our property to dump their garbage and construction materials. Schools have the same problem in town, and surveillance is the key for now, as well as prevention measures.
11. Weed and Feed has been installed. Hopefully our grass will start looking a bit healthier as we move along this year. In the Spring we will be adding reseeding and fertilizer to the menu for the church.
12. New railings have been added to the church front porch office building. Thank you, George and others who helped, make this happen.
13. Front porch to the office building has also been painted.
14. Fire and smoke alarm system has been installed in the basement of the office building. New NJ regulations for evacuation procedures require this install.
15. Painting the office facia over the porch has been done. Our insurance company is now a little bit happier, I think. Thank you to the Scudese family!
16. Extensive work has been done to the Parsonage which included new windowpanes in many rooms, washing and cleaning the entire building, painting both inside and out, as well as general cleanup of the property. We will have new church members. Thank you all: Ron, George, Sarah, Ingrid, Judy and Brian and Marcia.
17. Fire inspection of the Parsonage went well.
18. Boilers in all the buildings have been serviced and inspected. We continue to benefit from the triple high efficiency boilers in the church and sanctuary.

Property continued

New/Future Business:

1. Everyone is asked to be vigilant about turning off lights throughout the properties when they are not in use. Among other things, this saves energy as well as the church unnecessary expense.
2. Speakers in Faith Hall that are part of the PA system are burned out. Members of the Congregation are comparing notes on what we need to do for the future.
3. Lead inspection is in progress.
4. Caulking of thresholds in Faith Hall driveway side will be completed when the weather permits.
5. Patching the chipped paint in the Sanctuary is on the agenda.



LVCNS Monthly Up-Date

In preschool there is nothing we enjoy more than preparing for Christmas. It's a busy time of year. Singing at the community tree lighting, preparing for our programs and making fun festive crafts.

On **December 11/12th**, we will be celebrating Baby Jesus's Birthday in the chapel. We will sing Happy Birthday and celebrate His birthday with cupcakes. Classes will make a special craft to bring home.

We would love to invite you to our Christmas programs on December 18th and 19th. The Pre-K and Tk will be performing the nativity Scene. We will be performing our Christmas programs in the chapel at 9am & 10:30am on both days.

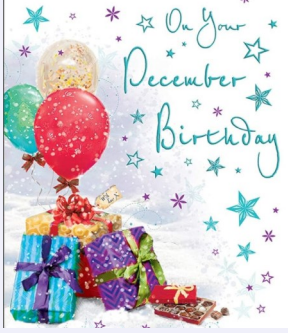
Have a little one at home between the ages of 2 and a half - 6 years old?

SAVE THE DATE~ REGISTRATION for the 2025-2026 school year is coming : **Jan 27th will be Church Members, Jan 29th will be current & former families @7am.**

Plan to be here early. (Jan 30th current families/snow date) **Jan 31st**, New Families can register.

Info to follow on the process for registration. **Only \$50** will secure your placement in, hopefully, your first choice class for 2025-2026. More information about class choices will be coming home in early January.

Thank you to those of you who participated in our Stuff The Car event for LVCAP. We definitely made a huge difference in stocking the shelves. Thank you also for participating in our poinsettia sale. The profit will go directly to the students of Long Valley Christian.



December Birthdays

Hope your birthday twinkles with lights, laughter and warm memories.

Happy Birthday!

2 Taylor Weth

4 Sue Guterl

**6 Lori Andershonis
Amanda Ito**

8 Malainie Hibler Stoma

9 Marcia Davidson

11 Marilyn Spengler

12 George Collard

**15 Ava Lichtenberger
Jean Seewald**

**17 Sheri Sabino
Melissa Sgambati**

18 Barry Buchanan

**22 Harry Bullock
Rob Brobst
Caleb Hooker**

23 Rhea Burke

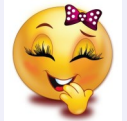
25 Jesus

**26 Meghan Horner Callow
Brooke Edwards**

28 Taylor King

**31 Dave Bataille
Willow Cole**

- ❖ Who hides in the bakery at Christmas? A mince spy!
- ❖ What do gingerbread men use when they break their legs? Candy canes.
- ❖ What do you call a greedy elf? Elfish.
- ❖ Why did Frosty's girlfriend break up with him? He was a total flake!
- ❖ What is it called when a snowman has a temper tantrum? A meltdown.
- ❖ What do you call an elf wearing earmuffs? Whatever you want. He can't hear you, anyway!
- ❖ What do you get when you cross a pig and Christmas tree lights? A piglet!
- ❖ Why don't you ever see Santa in the hospital? Because he has private elf care!



Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas!!!



Zion Lutheran Church
11 Schooleys Mountain Road
Long Valley, New Jersey 07853

December 24, 2024
4PM Family service with candlelight
8PM Traditional service with candlelight



Zion Lutheran Church
The Rev. Ingrid Wengert, Pastor
Church Office: 908-876-3547
Worship Service Sunday 9:30am
Sunday School 8:30AM