



A Message from Pastor Mathew

**How the
GRINCH
Learned the
Magnificat**



As I was going through my various Advent and Christmas resources, I remembered a sermon I happened upon written by a Lutheran Pastor in Minneapolis entitled, "How the Grinch Learned the Magnificat." I was instantly intrigued by the title and the graphic to go with it (included so you can see it too) so I opened it up to see what I could glean

from it. What followed after I opened up the sermon was a whimsical tale that took the story of the Grinch who stole Christmas to a very different level. Set in a typical Dr. Seuss rhyme, the sermon seemed to pick up the story of the Grinch a year or two after the story many of us know quite well. The story begins this way,

*All the Whos down in Whoville loved the Magnificat,
but the Grinch, still learning his lesson, did NOT.
"I'm confused," the Grinch said, "At first it seems sweet
That God looks at the lowly and thinks that they're neat.*

*"But Mary says God takes the strength from the strong,
And sends rich away empty, and well, that seems wrong.
I thought God loved us all, exactly the same.
Choosing some over others sounds like a shame."*

As the story goes on, the Grinch tells his problems to Cindy Lou Who. Cindy Lou turns out to be the one to help the Grinch learn the importance of the Magnificat and why Whomankind love it so much. The Grinch's problem is that the Magnificat doesn't seem very Christmas-y.

We know the Magnificat as the song Mary sang while pregnant with Jesus but if we look closely at the words, they don't really speak to the notions of Christmas that we, the wealthy of the world, tend to gravitate toward. As a result, we tend to leave this song alone and focus on more Jesus-related music, our more familiar Christmas carols. Until now, that is.

For us, this song of Mary challenges us to consider our responsibility toward the less fortunate and to emphasize God's concern for the oppressed. It leads us toward the importance of humility and the call to share our resources. It calls us, regardless of our wealth or status, to a deeper understanding of God's grace and just how significant Jesus' coming would be for a world oppressed by sin. This is as Christmas-y as Christmas gets and the Magnificat becomes the first Christmas carol ever sung.

God continues to work through the words that were spoken in this great song. God is still blessing his children. God is still doing mighty acts. God is still bringing balance to a top-heavy world. If you have never paid much attention to Mary's song, the Magnificat, I encourage you to spend some time with it this Advent. You can find it in *Luke 1:46-55*.

God's peace



*She will bear a son,
and you shall call his
name Jesus, for he will
save his people from
their sins.*

Matthew 1:21

**OUR MISSION:
WHY WE EXIST**

To bring people into a covenantal relationship with the Lord (*Matthew 28:19-20*), and to equip them for personal growth and impact.
(*Ephesians 4:11-26*)

COE President's Message *by Hal Donachy*

James 3

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ²We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

³When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹²My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Two Kinds of Wisdom

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

God's Peace and Joy!

Prayer Concerns

Eric Bedont
 Corey Fischer
 Bill Greiner
 Pat Jason
 George Langford
 Jennifer Meyer
 Shirley Mosticone
 Janice Reed
 Glenn Ribblett
 Suzanne Roberts
 Pat Sheridan
 Sandy Valenson

2024 Council of Elders

Hal Donachy
 Steele Roberts
 Stephen Gilg
 **Shari Dodge
 *Dan Fisher
 *Anita Reck
 *Karen Stoddart

*newly elected
 **fulfilling a 1 year term vacated by Colin Neill

The new COE members will be installed at Sunday Service on 1/14/24.

Pray without ceasing for Zion and Zion's leadership as we begin a new church year.

Praise His name for
 He is the living God,
 He was born
 to save us all.

DECEMBER BAPTISMAL BIRTHDAYS

Alec Warden	12/4/2005
Ladaya Wiskeman	12/9/2007
Aidan Banahasky	12/18/2022
Ashley Dodge	12/31/2006

*If we are missing your child's baptism date, please advise the church office.



All Saints Day November 5, 2023

Remembering the saints who have gone before us.

"But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." John 4:14



Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

Advent

Evening Prayer

Wednesdays at

7:00 P.M.

December 6, 13 & 20

Heritage Room



JOIN PASTOR MATHEW'S CLASS

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES FOR THE COMING OF JESUS

WEDNESDAYS, DECEMBER 6, 13 & 20
7:30 P.M. IN THE LIBRARY

YOU'RE INVITED!!!



Zion Youth

Where: Zion Lutheran Church

Date: Friday, December 8, 2023

Time: 6:30 PM—10:00 PM

RSVP: To Youth@zicbrentwood.org by 12/1

We will go shopping for the first hour to buy items for children who have to go into foster care unexpectedly. Then we will return to the church for food, fun and karaoke!

Please bring a snack or drink to share. Pizza will be provided!



DECEMBER DATE REMINDER



DATE	ACTIVITY	INFORMATION
December 1, 2023	RSVP to Youth Karaoke Party	
December 2, 2023 11:30 AM & 12:30 PM	Zion's Music Ministry Performances	South Hills Village Mall
December 4, 2023	Angel Tree Program	Return the wrapped gifts to the Heritage Room with the original tag attached.
December 6, 2023 10:20 AM—1:00 PM	Senior Brunch	For those registered: Zion's Fellowship Hall
December 8, 2023	Poinsettias Order Deadline	The plants may be picked up 12/26-29 9a-3p
December 8, 2023 6:30 PM—10 PM	Youth Karaoke Party and Foster Love Program	Zion Youth will be purchasing gifts for children ages 8-12. Monetary donations are greatly appreciated. Shopping first hour then party.
December 16, 2023	Sarris Candy	Pick-up orders at church. Online orders can be submitted until December 15, 2023 at SarrisCandiesFundraising.com using <u>Group ID# 10-1370</u>
December 23, 2023	5 P service	Will be held in the Heritage Room
December 24, 2023	10:30 A service	Will be held in the Heritage Room
December 24, 2023 CHRISTMAS EVE	Services will be held at: 5 P 8P 11P	<p>Please join us for Christmas Eve Services.</p> <p>The Sunday School Children will lead us in worship & sing in costume at the 5 PM service.</p> 

2023 NALC Convocation October 21, 2023 Bedford, PA



At the 2023 NALC Convocation, Pastor Mathew and Shari Dodge accepted positions on the Camp board for the NALC Mission District. Dean Nila Cogan installed them in a short worship service.

November 18 & 19, 2023 Council of Elders Election



Pie Donations

Thank you for your pie donations that helped the Light of Life Rescue Mission bring Thanksgiving meals to so many. Pastor joined Dan and Val Fisher to deliver 92 pies.



LEAF RAKING

On 11/11/23, the Property and Youth Ministries worked together to offer leaf raking service to those in need within our church and community. **THANK YOU** for sharing the love of Jesus!



Thanksgiving Pie and Fellowship

11/22/23 following Thanksgiving Eve Worship



WNALC (Women of the North American Luther Church)
November 11, 2023 Smicksburg, PA



Shari Dodge, Lane Magera, Sherry Galland, Cassandra Pierce and Karen Stoddart represented Zion at this district women's gathering.

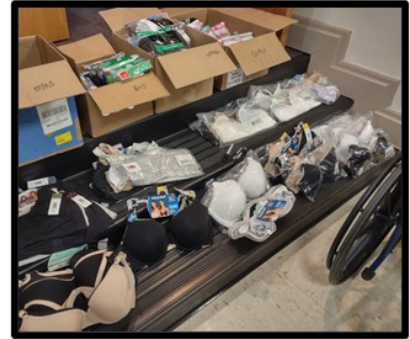
Community Clothes Exchange 2023



Left: new items table in February

Right: new item stack in February

Below: Volunteers hallway set up in August, clothes piles on tables all double before we start!



For the third year, Zion hosted four Community Clothes Exchange Events run by a Whitehall community member. It is a blessing from God to support this program through use of the Fellowship Hall, advertising and social media, providing volunteers, and donations of new socks, underwear, and bras for our community in need. Zion still continues to strengthen a reputa-

tion in our local community as a church that acts. Some at events have even inquired about worship and opportunities Zion offers.

Giveaway events continue to be hosted quarterly where recently over 83 families went home with numerous bags of FREE gently used clothing and shoes for infants through adults. School supplies collected at VBS were given to anyone who needed them. This number has almost tripled from 30 families helped in 10/2020 at the first event hosted at Zion. Many attendees come with lists of needs from neighbors, friends, and family who are unable to attend the event to shop so the true reach of this program is unquantifiable.

For sanitary reasons used socks, underwear, and bras are not handed out. This year, through \$3,600 from Zion's Benevolent Memorial Fund, 409 new packages were provided. A \$250 Thrivent Action Team grant from a Zion member, provided an additional 26 new packages. Zion members have continued supporting through the new sock, underwear, and bra drive every quarter. With additional volunteers, we have been able to slow down how quickly the new item table is cleared out, giving the right size that they need, and spreading the new items out to serve more families over the first hour. The need is so great in our community and there is always much further we can go to meet it.

Current funding can typically only purchase one package of an item in each size for every event. Inflation continues to play a role in more of the community seeking help among rising costs as well as each package costing more than they have before. The dignity and joy able to be brought to recipients is priceless and all Zion members are invited to help serve at these events or even just stop by to check out how Zion is living and sharing the love of Jesus through our support of this community program.

Community Clothes Exchange Mission:

"The program works to build our community by connecting through clothes. The hope is to help every member of our community feel a little more secure, a little more comfortable, and a whole lot more accepted."