



## A Message from Pastor Mathew

Dead is dead. But, is it? As we move into the midst of the Easter season, we are constantly reminded that while dead is dead, it wasn't for one man. On the day of Pentecost, which is in few weeks, Peter preached to a large crowd of people. Within his sermon, he uttered these words: "But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." Acts 2:24.

When I read this verse, it reveals a few things to me. The words "freeing him" tell me that death is an agonizing prison. The words, "impossible... to keep its hold" tell me that death has a very strong and firm grip. Finally, the words, "God raised him" tell me that Jesus was dead but God brought him back to new and renewed life. That empty tomb is something of a marvel. It was no match for Jesus. It could not keep him. Dead is dead, but not for Jesus. Do you realize that Christianity is the only faith whose leader's burial place is empty? We serve the one who defeated death so that we do not taste it.

Judging from Peter's words here death is nothing enjoyable. Using his words it appears that death is a prison and probably not like the prison system in our country. I don't imagine death having three square meals a day, time to think, getting a job, improving your strength and having visitors. Peter says Jesus was freed from agony. It appears that death has a very firm grip that we cannot escape. It's not as if we can try it out and then decide we don't like it and choose something else. Once we're there, it's like a seatbelt that has locked itself in place when you press hard on the brake pedal. That's quite a firm grip and not one that you can get away from. Though death is a prison and has a strong grip, it's no match for God. Jesus was dead but God brought him back to life. God raised him, Peter said. God goes even further to share this freedom with us. We will not taste that agony. We will not be restrained by that strong grip. God will raise us to life too.

We have been made for eternity. Our faith is a living faith. Our savior is a living savior. We may believe dead is dead but because of Jesus, this is no longer true. Let us live into this Easter season knowing that our Savior is alive and so is our faith. Let's be surprised that he who is with us is not dead but alive.

God's peace to you this month!  
~ Pastor Mathew



*Now God has not  
only raised the  
Lord, but will also  
raise us up through  
His power.  
1 Corinthians 6:14*

### 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 Anita Reck*

God has other plans. How many times have we heard that?

It's often said that when we make plans, God laughs. Sometimes, we make plans without considering God at all. Other times, we think our plans make sense with what we think God wants to do with our lives. But sometimes He has something bigger and better in mind for us.

In my case, after a tumultuous year for me personally in 2023, here I am, Zion's President in 2024. I thank you for your trust that I will take Zion forward doing God's will and God's work. We have wonderful and committed members of the Council of Elders and great people serving on Zion's ministries. Together, we will work on implementing God's vision for Zion, including updating the already-established Strategic Plan developed by previous councils.

Pastor Mathew and I have discussed spiritual and practical goals for Zion this year and will continue to work together for Zion. We are already working on what the congregation had directed COE to do at the annual meeting. A Bylaws and Constitution review/revision committee has been formed and is hard at work to make sure those 2 important documents are up to date and in agreement with each other. A Staff Handbook committee is reviewing the staff handbook and will be recommending changes or additions to that document so that it agrees with human resources regulations and with our Bylaws and Constitution. In addition, the VBS committee, under the direction of Dan Fisher, is gearing up and getting ready for our annual summer Vacation Bible School neighborhood outreach.

But what is most exciting is that Zion will be celebrating the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding in 2025. According to NALC records, Zion was founded on August 25, 1800! We will celebrate the weekend of August 23-24, 2025. As is always the case in churches, **a committee has been formed** to spearhead the celebration of this historic event. It is very early in the planning process, but I would encourage anyone who has suggestions or is willing to help to contact Shari Dodge at [secretary@zcbrentwood.org](mailto:secretary@zcbrentwood.org).

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### Council of Elders (COE) -- Open Position

Due to the resignation of Hal Donachy from COE, the COE is looking to appoint a Zion member to serve as a temporary COE member until elections take place in November 2024. In November, the congregation will elect a member to serve out the remainder of his term through 2025.

If you are interested in serving on COE in this temporary position, please contact Anita Reck at [President@zcbrentwood.org](mailto:President@zcbrentwood.org)

## **An Easter Message from Pastor Bill, Visitation Pastor**

**Christ is Risen! Alleluia! Christ is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**

This is the age-old cry Christians have been making for nearly 2000 years, ever since word first spread that death could not hold onto God's chosen One. To those of us who have grown up in the church, the Easter acclamation is as familiar as it is ancient. Yet I wonder whether we say this too easily and too quickly.

Have you ever noticed that this was not the first response of Jesus' earliest followers? In fact, whatever differences in detail the four Gospels present in their stories of Christ's cross and resurrection, they are uniform in their description that the news of Jesus' triumph over the grave was met initially not with shouts of acclamation and praise but with skepticism, doubt, and disbelief. In Luke's account, not only do the disciples dismiss the witness of the women who were greeted by angels with the news of Christ's resurrection, but even after Jesus meets them fully alive, they believed he was a ghost and continued to doubt and wonder as they were simultaneously overcome by joy.

Why was it so difficult for Jesus' earliest followers - those who knew him most intimately and had heard him speak of his death and resurrection on several occasions - to believe their own eyes? Simply because death and fear were so present in their lives that they had a hard time believing God could overcome them. In short, they were too mired in the destruction that attends the fallen creation to grasp God's wondrous act of re-creation and renewal.

Such is often the case, I would suggest, with us. Many leave the joy of Easter services only to return home to headlines about terrorism, war, difficulties in relationships at work or home, or fear for a loved one struggling with illness or addiction. And these omnipresent realities overwhelm us to the point that while we confess that Christ is risen at church, we live in the world as if he had remained in the tomb.

Which is why I wonder if we utter the words of the ancient acclamation too easily. For the cry that "*Christ is Risen*" is not only a confession about something that happened long ago, it is testimony to our confidence that God's love continues to transform the world, that fear should not be the dominant reality in our world, and that death is no match for the abundant life Christ brings.

In the weeks after Easter (a seven week-long season), please pause before you join your voice to those that God's love and life are stronger than hate, fear, or death. And then say those words with abandon, trusting that God continues to create light from darkness and breathe life where death once dominated.

But don't stop at church. When you watch fearsome headlines, say those words again, even out loud. And when you struggle with a relationship or worry about a loved one, repeat them to yourself. These words were not meant to only adorn our liturgy but to transform our lives. For Easter not only marks Jesus' triumph over the grave but also invites us to enter into an entirely new reality where God's grace makes all things possible, where the future is forever guaranteed, and where life and light promise to illumine even the darkest of roads.

**For Christ is Risen, Alleluia! Christ is Risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Alive in Christ, Pastor Bill+

## Prayer Concerns

Kevin Barrett  
Marilyn & David Detwiler  
Corey Fischer  
Casey Hirsh  
Pat Jason  
George Langford  
Jennifer Meyer  
Glen Ribblett  
Dani Richey  
Pat Sheridan

**VACATION  
BIBLE  
SCHOOL  
June 24-28, 2024  
SCUBA**



Join us for an amazing undersea adventure and experience the never ending love of God!

Registration is open for children preschool through fifth grade.

Registration is also open for teen and adult volunteers.

Register using QR code below or via Zion Website.



For questions, contact  
Dan Fisher at  
danfish169@gmail.com  
Or  
412-884-3247

## DISCOVER ZION

**SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2024**

**12:00 PM—3:00 PM**

Interested in learning more about Christ and Zion? Join us in the Fellowship Hall to learn more about what we believe, how we deepen and strengthen our Christian relationships with each other, how we teach from the bible, minister to the community and learn more about God.

Register by calling the church office at 412-881-5512 or visit Zion's website at [zlc Brentwood.org/discoverzion](http://zlc Brentwood.org/discoverzion)

A meal will be served at the conclusion.

## APRIL BAPTISMAL BIRTHDAYS

Margaret Brecht	April 1, 2012
Bradley Moore	April 11, 2021
Robert (Charlie) Rankin	April 13, 2019
Lorelai Runevitch	April 13, 2019
Angelia Robinson	April 15, 2007
Kenzie Banahasky	April 25, 2021
Emerson Douglass	April 25, 2021

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

# Save the Date

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**“THE CHOSEN” VIDEO SERIES Summer Movie Night**  
**Wednesdays, July 10-August 28, 2024 7:00 –8:30 PM**

Join the Ministry of Disciple Life to view Season 2 of “The Chosen” followed by discussion and fellowship.

Contact Vicky Thatcher if you are interested at [vlthatcher24@gmail.com](mailto:vlthatcher24@gmail.com)

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## **SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS** **In-Tents Church Camp, Somerset County**

**GRADES 3-5 July 15-17, 2024**  
**2 night Elementary Camp**

**GRADES 6th—12th July 8-12, 2024**  
**Middle and High School Camp**

Pastor Mathew is hoping to get a group together to attend each In-Tents camps for fun, games, campfires, food and Jesus. Please reach out to him by the end of April for more information or to let him know your interest. These camps provide an opportunity for youth to unplug, enjoy nature and deepen their faith.

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## **GAMES NIGHT** (dates pending)

The Ministry of Disciple Life has been contacted about coordinating an indoor games night event in Fellowship Hall. If you or your family would be interested in participating, please contact Jack Reck at [jackhoo76@aol.com](mailto:jackhoo76@aol.com).

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## **CONGREGATIONAL PICNIC**

**August 11, 2024 12N-3:30pm**

**South Park-Woodland Crest Pavillion**

Games, s'mores, great food, fellowship—Bring a dish to share.

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## **MAY SENIOR CITIZEN BRUNCH**

**Wednesday, May 22, 2024 10:30 AM-1:00 PM**

Calling all “Seniors Citizens” for fellowship, food, music and worship.

Come and let us serve you!

**Register at [zlbrentwood.org](http://zlbrentwood.org) or by calling the church office**  
**at 412-881-5512**

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## **COMMUNITY CLOTHING EXCHANGE**

**May 18, 2024 10 AM—2 PM**

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## Multigenerational Packing Event for NALC Disaster Response

Over 50 people of all ages helped join Jesus on His Mission on Palm Sunday by packing flood buckets for NALC Disaster Response during our Faith Education hour. 100 five-gallon buckets were packed with cloth gloves, leather work gloves, rubber cleaning gloves, garbage bags, rags, scrub brushes, paper towels, powdered cleaner, liquid cleaner, bleach, and a prayer card. Younger children paired up with a partner that was 6th grade or older, strengthening our relationships as we worked to serve others. Additional adults handed out the items seated at their stations to assure the correct items were in each bucket and that the lids were secured. The flood buckets were picked up later that week and after making it to the national warehouse in Caldwell, OH were promptly sent to Indiana and Ohio to help victims of tornados in mid-March. This multi-generational event was made possible through Zion's Benevolence as well as a Thrivent Action Team Grant. A time of fellowship was had after our work was done as a thank you and to continue building up relationships in our Zion family. Thank you to all who joined in helping those facing a disaster crisis in our nation.

WHEN YOU GO THROUGH  
*deep*  
*waters*  
I WILL BE WITH YOU  
*Watch 43:2*



## Benevolent Memorial Fund *by John Thatcher*


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Pastor Magera and John Thatcher delivered the BMF \$4,000 donation check to the Castle Shannon Meals on Wheels program on February 8, 2024. Their program has approximately 20 volunteers that deliver roughly 30 meals throughout the Castle Shannon area. This program has been working out of Emmanuel Lutheran and serving the community for over 40 years. Pictured to left are Pastor Magera, director Joann Einloth, Linda Krause, and Peggy Tice. They were very appreciative of the donation

A promotional graphic with a red background and a large yellow flower in the center. The text is written in a white, cursive font. At the bottom right, there is a circular logo with the letters 'ZLC' inside.

Women's Weekly  
Evening  
Bible Study  
JOIN US THURSDAYS 4/4-5/30  
AT 7PM IN THE LIBRARY  
OR ON ZOOM



This study will focus on the Holy Spirit. Register by calling the church office or through the link on Zion's website under faith education then small groups and studies.

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For information on opportunities for small group study or Sunday School see Faith Education on the Zion website.

## PALM SUNDAY



*They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!" John 12:13*



# EASTER SUNDAY

