



### *A Message from Pastor Mathew*

Like many of you, after the Easter Sunday fanfare I began to wonder. Just how will the Holy Spirit work in peoples' hearts in such a way that they would come again. While I can easily be overcome by my human desire to measure the success of ministry with numbers, I sat down and suddenly I was driven to say something that came from a deeper place of faith and pastoral care. I took to Facebook and wrote something for all to read. I'll share some of it with you.

*"I saw people in church last weekend that I see every week, some I don't see very often, and others I've never seen before and I pray I spoke a message that brought hope to everyone's heart. What I will say now is that trying to start or keep a habit of church-going isn't easy."*

*"Why do I say this? Because I've been around enough to know that God isn't just a switch we flip and suddenly things are different. Because I know we still have doubts or fears or frustrations or broken hearts. Because I know that church can be a turn off. Because I know church people can be mean or unwelcoming (even if they don't intend to be). Because sometimes being in church can be more uncomfortable than not going. And yet, I still believe in God who calls us to come together. I believe in God who, even though we don't understand many things, still loves us and desires us to pursue Him amid all the barriers. I believe in God who, even when we disagree with Him, wants us to put our trust in Him."*

*"While I may not know everyone's circumstances, I know going to church is hard. But, I want to come alongside anyone and everyone who comes through those doors as well as those who struggle to do so because you matter. Your life is invaluable. You are loved."*

That all said, I pray that we would all be able to speak grace to those who don't see the communal gathering of the faithful as something integral, important, and transformative. Let's come alongside those who we wish were in the pews with us rather than give up on them or push the ball back in their court. The spirit of invitation and welcome as well as the spirit of community must be at the forefront of who we are. While worship is the true and only mission of God's church, until Christ comes again and everything is made right, the second part of the mission is to go and get those who are not there. They won't come unless they hear the calling of the Holy Spirit. Let's help them hear that call.

God's Peace,  
Pastor Mathew



*"He is not here,  
for He has  
risen,  
as he said."*

*Matthew 28:6*

#### **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

## ***A Message from Pastor Bill***

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### ***Christ is Risen! Alleluia! Christ is Risen indeed. Alleluia!***

Christians have been making this age-old cry 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 noticed that this was decidedly 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's triumph over the grave was met initially not with shouts of acclamation and praise but rather 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 in the flesh, 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 see and grasp God's wondrous act of re-creation and renewal.

Such may also be the case with us. Many leave the joy of Easter services to return home to headlines about inflation or terrorism, difficulties in relationships or fear for a loved one struggling with illness or addiction. These present 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 also testimony to our confidence that God's love continues to transform the world, that fear is not the dominant reality in our world and that death is no match for the abundant life Christ brings.

So, I encourage you, in the weeks after Easter (Easter is a seven week-long season), pause before you join your voice to those around you to contemplate the fierce courage of believers who have confessed 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 only 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 just adorn our liturgy but to transform our lives. For Easter not only marks Jesus's 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 open, and where life and light promise to illumine even the darkest of roads.

### ***For Christ is Risen! Alleluia!***

Alive in Christ, Pastor Bill +

## In Our Prayers

Joshua Alukonis  
David Detwiler  
Mary Ann Dunlap  
Corey Fischer  
Zack Glenn  
Casey Hirsh  
George Langford  
Karen Matalavage  
John Reed  
Glenn Ribblett  
Suzanne Roberts  
Sara Smerkar  
Sandy Valenson

## SUMMER SERMON SERIES

Beginning in June, Pastor Mathew will lead a sermon series on some of the events depicted on the stained glass windows above the sanctuary entrance. Each story can be a window through which we look at our past, examine our present and prepare for the future as Christ's Church here at Zion.

## A WALK IN THE(OLOGY) PARK

Pastor Mathew is looking to start a small group this summer every other Wednesday or Thursday evening at his home.

The group will take a very casual walk through some deeper Lutheran and Christian theological works. If you've wanted to take this next step but are not sure how to start, this is it. Topics could include the Book of Concord as well as works by C.S. Lewis, D. Bonhoeffer and St Augustine. If you may be interested, contact Pastor Mathew.



## MAY BAPTISMAL BIRTHDAYS

Nico Puglin	May 6, 2007
Christopher Dodge	May 10, 2008
Molly Hedrick	May 12, 2019
Samuel Grice	May 13, 2018
Ludy Hedrick	May 14, 2017
Anna Pierce	May 15, 2022
Mya Schneider	May 19, 2019
Brooklyn Nagel	May 21, 2011
Bjorn Brodland	May 26, 2024
Shiloh Koeppel	May 27, 2018
Dean Langholz	May 30, 2021

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



## PALM SUNDAY & EASTER



*Christ is Risen! Alleluia!*



## NALC Disaster Response Packing Event



Sixty-five youth and adults packed 180 "Health Kits" for NALC Disaster Relief.

## Internet Safety: Social Media and Cyberbullying Lunch & Learn



Special thanks to the Baldwin Police Department for an informative presentation.

## NALC Women's Spring Gathering



Zion women joined 28 women of the Mid-Northeast Mission District to celebrate spring, listen to a presentation by Frontier Harvest Ministries and enjoy lunch. This gathering was held at St Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Butler, PA.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for NALC CONVOCATION

The NALC Convocation will be held in Pittsburgh on **August 3-8, 2025** at the Omni William Penn Hotel. As the host Mission District, we have been asked to help staff this event with volunteers. Orientation and training is provided for each role. Below are the general descriptions of volunteer positions.

**Hosts:** Serve as greeters and provide information to attendees; are stationed at places throughout the hotel facility to help attendees find meeting rooms, restrooms, meal area(s) and the display area.

**Registration:** Serve to welcome and check in attendees; includes distributing materials, nametags, voting equipment.

**Display Assistants:** Assist various ministries with getting materials to the display area, setting up displays and finding their way around the hotel.

**Ushers:** Check credentials at doors and provide information and assistance at all general sessions; serve as ushers during worship services.

**First Aid/Medical Response:** Individuals trained in First Aid and/or Medical Response who can provide minor first aid and/or assistance or direction in case of a medical emergency.

**Camera Operators Audio/Video:** Work closely with the Technology Director to operate cameras during worship or plenary sessions. Zooming, panning, focusing, and framing video shots per the director's request. A short amount of training provided. Mostly standing.

If you are available and willing to volunteer, please contact Lane Magera ([lsmagera@yahoo.com](mailto:lsmagera@yahoo.com)) to be added to the list of volunteers.



### VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2025

6/23 - 27/2025 9 AM - 12 Noon  
Special Program Friday Evening

#### Trusting Jesus in a Wild World

Join us as we travel north to Alaska  
on an exciting adventure with Jesus!



Cool and fun events are planned as we build on our faith foundation and learn about this wonderful planet that God created for us. We also have a special guest visiting us this year.

Children from pre-school through 5th grade are welcome to join us. You can register by scanning the QR Code below or by calling the church office. There is no registration fee.

Adult and child (6th grade and higher) volunteers are needed. Volunteers can register using the QR Code to right.

If you have any questions, contact Dan Fisher ([danfish169@gmail.com](mailto:danfish169@gmail.com)).

**Looking forward to seeing you in Alaska!**



# Senior Spring Brunch

Wednesday, **May 28<sup>th</sup>**  
10:30 – 1:00pm

RSVP at  
[zlcbrentwood.org](http://zlcbrentwood.org)  
or call the church office.



A SPECIAL THANKS TO THOSE  
WHO SERVED ON ZION'S  
SPRING CLEAN-UP DAY!



## Resurrection Walk at South Park Gazebo

Zion youth walked the participants through the events of Holy Week and ended with a loud shout of, "Happy Easter" which rang through the park!



See Zion Facebook page for more pictures.