

Gathered, Empowered, Sent



# GOOD NEWS from Zion's

a quarterly update highlighting God's work in and through our congregation

December 2021

Dear Members and Friends of Zion's:

In this week of Thanksgiving, at the end of our congregation's *month* of Giving-Thanks, I want to take a few minutes to express my gratitude for your partnership in ministry, and to publicly *Give Thanks* for the ways God is moving in our congregation to share the love of Christ in our community and world. Here's a snapshot of the ministry that has happened in and through Zion's this fall.

We continued, and this week conclude, our **2021 Ministry of Healthcare Encouragement** with a collection of cards, and delivery of goodies to two separate units at Penn State Hershey Medical Center (September and December), the Lebanon Valley Home in Annville (October), and Northern Lebanon Fire and Emergency Services (November). This has been a HUGE undertaking made possible by our Mission Ministry (formerly "Evangelism") Committee, Thrivent Action Team cards, a 2020 grant from our Touching Tomorrow Endowment Fund and *by your faithfulness* in providing so many cards of support and encouragement. I wish I had kept a count of how many cards we received and distributed, but I'm confident it was *at least* 250 individual cards. While our healthcare workers received a fair amount of attention at the beginning of the pandemic, many have reported in recent months that support had waned, and so they were especially grateful for our cards and treats. THANK YOU for making this ministry possible.



Treats and cards of thanks were shared through our ministry of Healthcare Encouragement



Box City participants bringing awareness to homelessness

After over a year's hiatus, in September we resumed **in-person learning opportunities** for Sunday School children and our Confirmation class. It has been *so good* to gather, learn from one another, pray, laugh, and grow. Children and youth who had reached certain milestones **received age-appropriate Bibles** on Reformation Sunday as an encouragement to keep learning and growing, and on All Saints Sunday we celebrated with Coltin Bush as he received his **first**

**Holy Communion**. In October, some of our youth also participated in a "**Homeless Awareness Campout**" at St. John's UCC sponsored by the Jonestown Council of Churches. We built tents out of cardboard boxes, learned about the growing problem of homelessness in our community, played games, worshiped around the campfire, and spent the night outdoors. Throughout the night, we also collected food for JOY Pantry.

November was filled with many opportunities to Give-Thanks for God's many, and varied blessings. Twenty-seven members of our community contributed devotions to our **in-house November devotional**, honoring the saints in our lives, ordinary people through whom God has worked to encourage, care for, and teach us. The first batch of 25 **lawn signs** proclaiming "Let us lives be filled with both thanks and giving" were claimed so quickly, and so deeply appreciated, and someone offered to purchase another 25 signs, which were all given away the following Sunday. We pray that these signs are a source of encouragement, both for you, and for all who find them, helping us to recognize that God's blessings are many, even when the days are difficult.





On All Saints Sunday we **received six new members** into our congregation, including two infants who were welcomed into the body of Christ through the waters of Holy Baptism. Together we gave thanks to God for God’s faithfulness to, and work through, the **Koinonia class** that is ending after nearly sixty years together. What a witness! Zion’s Congregational Care team also put together **care packages** for our college and seminary students, providing study snacks, and a tangible sign of God’s continued care for them, even while they’re away from this community.

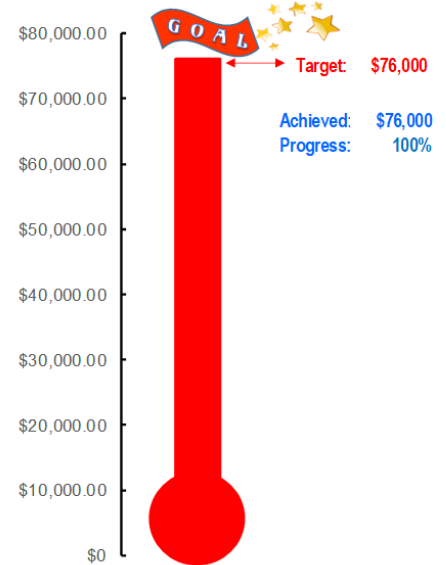
We also gave thanks, in November, for your **continued financial generosity**. Your regular giving helps to make possible all of the above and the behind the scenes work that isn’t seen. Your *above and beyond* giving to **Zion’s Renew, Restore, Remain capital campaign** over the past twelve months has allowed us to *pay off* that loan two years ahead of our goal, which frees us to dream big about other ministries! Your generosity in contributing books, and then *buying* books, also helped to raise \$425 for **Zion’s Preschool Scholarship Fund**, which will go right back into our community, helping provide early education to children in need.

As we look toward the season of Advent, a season of HOPE and JOY, we anticipate the good work God will continue to do through our congregation. Specifically, we are still collecting **Touching Tomorrow endowment**

**grant applications** to distribute the \$37,000 we have

been entrusted with this year, and look forward to celebrating with you those local and global grant recipients. We also invite you to share HOPE and JOY through our two Advent projects this year: the **Angel Tree** to benefit local children, and **Bundles of Hope** Baby Care Kits to care for infants born into poverty around the world. More information about both initiatives is in the newsletter.

Zion's Lutheran Church  
*Renew, Restore, Remain Campaign*



Now that COVID vaccines and boosters are available for everyone who chooses down to age five, with HOPE and JOY we also anticipate resuming some of the activities we have stepped away from during this pandemic. I look forward to sharing with you all that God has in store for Zion’s during 2022, and I continue to be so grateful for your partnership in ministry.

In hope,  
*Pastor Caitlin*