



SPRUCE RUN

Fellowship

SPRUCE RUN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN ZION CHURCH

Winter 2018 Vol. 64, No. 4

Pastor's Corner



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we put together our winter edition of the Fellowship each year, I often mention the several events, joys, and sorrows our church family experienced since the last edition. I'm going to forego that this time around for two reasons: (1) others responsible for reporting activities and information to the congregation will do so in this newsletter, and (2) members and friends of Spruce Run Lutheran receive "blurbs" online regarding weekly activities. In short, if you have been attending church, hearing the announcements, taking home the flyers include in the bulletins, and receiving the weekly notices via email, you know what's happening at Spruce Run.

You know ...
... there are great family activities going on at your church home.

... we have a new handbell director who has already increased the interest and participation of our young people in our music ministry!

Continued on page 10...

A Message from the Council President

Decision 2019

Unlike political elections, we have a real say in what affects our Church family. There are no political parties, no hanging chads, no Russian interference - just our family deciding what is right for us. The proposal to go to one worship service (Sunday School at 9 and Worship at 10) has generated many comments pro and con. I'm glad I've had the chance to speak with many of you personally on the subject. I have to say that I had one opinion early on, but that was changed as I listened to everyone I could. Originally, the Council thought we could get input, and take a vote, but we did not have consensus so we decided to put the topic up to vote at the January annual meeting and let the Congregation decide. If you care one way or another, I strongly urge you to attend the meeting. Voting by proxy is not allowed, so you need to be there for your vote to count. If the outcome of the vote is not what you personally desire, please don't lose faith. Either way, you will have all the opportunities you have now to be involved in serving our Lord. Please consider this prayerfully and keep coming to worship and keep sharing your ideas and concerns with me and the rest of the Council.

Yours in Christ,

Lori Terry

Christmas Eve Preludes



Be sure to arrive EARLY Christmas Eve! Starting about a half hour before both services you will be treated to lovely musical selections by our Celebration Choir, the Handbell Choir, and children from our church!

December - February Celebrations

As we go through lists for the Fellowship, we find that there are names of people who have moved away or who have not attended worship or any church activities. "Celebrations" is not meant to be an official membership list. If there is a name of someone who wishes that their name be removed, please let us know.

Birthdays



December

- 1 Ruth Kopf
- 3 Kaitlin Overton
- 5 George Pugh
- 7 Rich Balzer
- 8 Deborah Timmerman
Olivia Gorton
- 9 Rosemarie Adickes
Jen Desch
- 10 Olga Lanning
- 14 Laine Henry
- 15 Barbara Hankinson
- 18 Polly Tyndall
- 27 George Armbrrecht
- 29 Erik Henriksen
- 30 Ginny Ettlemyer
- 31 Andrew Fielding
Kelsey Shebey

January

- 1 Emily Smith
- 3 Mary Lomerson
- 4 Kaitlyn D'Alessio
- 7 Emily (Groendyke) Iacucci
- 8 Timothy Naumovitz
- 9 Michael Ettlemyer
- 10 Shaun Adickes
Maggie Desch
Lee Worster
- 11 Christine Jones
- 15 Emalina Ascenzo
- 23 Louise Fraser
- 24 Anthony Jones
Janet Monroe
- 25 David Glahn
- 28 Richard Henry
- 30 Lillian Balzer
- 31 Roslind Jensen

February

- 1 Doug Downs
Rebecca Fraser
- 3 Denise Fishburn
- 4 Annaleigh Mrozek
- 6 Timothy Peare
- 8 Joseph Codis
- 9 Dale Monroe, Jr.
- 10 Jacob Baranek
- 11 Jameson Paul Tyers
- 19 Jennifer Mansilla
Bernice Mayer
- 21 David Adickes
- 24 Gary Thomas Ettlemyer
- 26 Frank J. Schmelz
- 27 Debbie Eustace
Melissa Mayberry

Baptism Anniversaries

December

- 5 Mackenzie Dastis
- 10 Dakota Jones
- 15 Gretchen Apgar
Ruth Kopf
- 16 Leslie Talochino
- 24 Christopher Kisch
- 30 Deborah Timmerman

January

- 13 Cecelia Ossi
- 29 Paul Smith

February

- 1 Doug Downs
- 8 Cadence Grieder
- 15 Emily Smith
- 22 Matthew Smith
- 24 Vienna Rose DiRe
- 28 Andrew Curtis



Wedding Anniversaries

December

- 5 Jen & Peter Desch
- 17 Kim & John D'Alessio

January

- 3 Lee & Art Worster
- 9 Janet & Dale Monroe, Sr.
- 17 Rosemarie & David Adickes

February

- 14 Dave & Dottie Wilson
- 20 Lori & Jim Terry
- 28 Nancy & Walter Bibinger



News from Our Committees and Interest Groups

Sunday School

Rally Day on 9/9/18 got us off to a great start, with 19 children signed up for classes. Now we are settling into our routine and enjoying learning about the love of God through Jesus Christ. We continue to collect pennies in our Birthday bank, so come celebrate your special day with us during our opening. The collection will be donated to the Food Pantry at the end of the school year. We are also collecting Coins for Christ and the 5th-6th grade class will be making a poster of our goals and progress. Look for it on the Sunday School Bulletin Board. Special thanks goes to the LYO for throwing us a wonderful Halloween Party, but now we are gearing up for the Christmas Pageant! See our schedule through February below and remember that our program is open to all children from 3 year olds in preschool to 6th graders and all members of the congregation are welcome to join in our celebrations throughout the year. If you would like to volunteer your time, talent, or treasure to our program, please call me at 908-638-5624 or email at slrauschen@hotmail.com

Yours in Christ,
Sharon Hogan
Sunday School Superintendent

Our Winter Schedule:

- December 2nd** Christmas Pageant Rehearsal – Meet in sanctuary.
- December 9th** Christmas Pageant 11:00 Rehearsal 9:30 – Meet in sanctuary.
- December 16th** Christmas Party – Bring a treat!
- December 23th** Class Canceled – Merry Christmas!
- December 30th** Class Canceled – Happy New Year!

- January 20th** Class Canceled – Congregation Meeting
- February 3rd** Sunday School sponsors Coffee Hour – Bring a treat!
- February 17th** Presidents Weekend – Class canceled

Jingle Bell Junction

Another Jingle Bell Junction is over. So much baking, cooking, decorating and cleaning up. All makes for a great day. So many people to thank. I need to thank all of you. Without the whole church helping the day would not happen. Our crafters/vendors come back every year because of the fellowship they feel. A special thank you to Denise Fishburn for making the kitchen run smoothly. The ladies in the kitchen and the ladies who have cleaned, peeled and chopped the day before are wonderful. God bless each and every one of you. A special thank you to my husband and son. Until next year, May we all feel the blessings of God. Merry Christmas,
Sara

Family Promise/IHN

Our final hosting of 2018 is right around the corner and even though this is a busy time of year, we still need many faithful volunteers. “There is a wide choice of things that you can do for God and neighbor in your church community if you have the good will. With good will you also find the necessary time for such projects even though you may have to cut and pare in other directions.” (Stewardship, August 2016) Yes, you have choices to make with how to best balance your time. Giving some time to help with our next hosting for Family Promise is time you can feel good about giving!

Isn't giving of your time an excellent present to give your neighbor? What a great opportunity for a family, a couple, or friends to do something

meaningful together. You may also sign up solo as well! We will make sure there are always two adults on each shift. If you are new and want to be paired with a seasoned helper, just let me know. We also offer free training for anyone who would like to learn more about the program and how to volunteer.

What is needed for a successful hosting? We need for people to stay at church with our guests for a couple hours at a time, for meals to be prepared and brought to church, for overnight hosts to sleep in their private room on a comfortable air mattress, and for set up and clean up helpers. We encourage volunteers to interact with our guests, help out with the kids, have conversation or partake in activities, BUT you don't have to. If you prefer, you may simply be present as a chaperone to keep on eye out for the safety of the building and the guests.

We are hosting December 9-16. Sign up sheets are in the Lounge, or you can use the online sign up on our website. Please reach out to Wendy (973-568-5168) if you have any questions.

Your continued expression of grace, mercy, love, patience and flexibility is inspiring!

Blessings,
Wendy

LYO

We are off and running on another busy year for the LYO group. So far this year, we've hosted a “Thank You” Breakfast, Soup & Salad Luncheon, Halloween party for Sunday School, went to play Laser Tag and sold wreaths and ornaments at Jingle Bell Junction. We will have our LYO Christmas Party in a few weeks. Of course, our Super Bowl sub sale will be coming up in February.

Continued on page 5...

Council Meeting Highlights



July 17, 2018

- With deep regrets, Rose-Marie Green has submitted her resignation from Council.
- The defibrillator donated by the Tuesday Quilters has been delivered.
- All paperwork related to the water treatment system has been submitted to the State of NJ.

August 14, 2018

- In response to the search for a new handbell director, an excellent candidate has been identified – Charlotte Steiner. The Worship & Music Committee recommends extending an offer to employment. Council motioned to extend the offer.
- Modifying the Sunday worship schedule to a single service was discussed. This will be revisited in November and will be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting in January 2019.
- Preschool enrollment for the 2018-2019 is low. The staff is committed to the program, and has proposed many ways to cut costs and still allow the program to continue. Council motioned to continue the preschool for the 2018-2019 term implementing the cost savings proposed by the preschool staff.

September 18, 2018

- Elke Naumovitz will discuss with Sharon Hogan & Denise Fishburn possible uses for the donations that were given in memory of Carole Fishburn for the SRLC Sunday school.
- The annual picnic will be held on September 20, 2018 at Lebanon Township Memorial Park. The Blessing of the Animals will be done during the picnic.
- The preschool teacher salaries were reviewed.
- SRLC received a \$650 donation from the QuickChek Festival of Ballooning organizers for volunteer hours provided.
- Pork & Oyster dinner is scheduled for November 3, 2018.
- The open council position will not be filled until January.
- In addition to Charlotte Steiner directing the handbell choir, she will also be working with the Sunday school children to develop a children's choir.
- A letter was received from the State of NJ regarding the water treatment system noting we are non-compliant for the water containing too many dissolved minerals.

October 9, 2018

- Pork & Oyster dinner is scheduled for November 3, 2018.
- Jingle Bell Junction is scheduled for November 17, 2018.
- Brad Cox notified council that he will not continue the role of Financial Committee chair in 2019.
- There is a large hornet nest on the lower parking lot side of the church that has to be cared for.
- Recessed lights in the sanctuary are in need of repair.
- Church grounds clean-up is scheduled for November 3, 2018.
- Modification of the water treatment system was completed and dissolved minerals values are now within state limits. 🍷

Stewardship

Haven't turned in your Generosity Pledge Card yet?

Use this link to print one out.

<https://goo.gl/PEMLQ7>

A STEWARDSHIP OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The pledge:
a goal, a reminder, a way of life.



The 2019 pledge drive begins with a mailing on November 12, 2018 and ends with the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 20, 2019.

Committees ...

Continued from page 3

Finance Committee

Greetings! We have had another busy year, and I hope that this finds you all well.

Our budgeting was pretty accurate for this past year, but we had some unplanned infrastructure expenses, particularly in relation to water treatment, and income has not kept pace with expenditures. A proposed budget for FY 2019 is in the works, and more information will be forthcoming at our Congregational Meeting in January. In the meantime, if you are aware of or anticipate anything that should be considered for the budget, such as any one-time expenses or a changing need for a committee, please email me at brad.cox@comcast.net with that information!!

Yours in Christ,
Brad Cox,
Chair, Finance Committee

Altar Guild

Serving in the Altar Guild can be one of the most meaningful ways to serve in the church. Altar Guild members prepare the altar for worship each week and between services on Sunday. They care for the silver and other vessels used on the altar, the cloth hangings, the vestments, baptismal items, candles, and other items that adorn worship seasonally. This is the ministry of tangible prayer in which service through material objects comes through in our worship.

The guild was blessed to have Jan Heeckt serve for many years. In August, Jan embarked on a new life journey. Her gentle care as an altar guild member is greatly missed.

In His Service,
Gail DeRemer



The annual "*Hanging of the Greens*" will take place on Saturday, December 15th, at 9:00 AM. This is a wonderful opportunity to help beautify our sanctuary for the upcoming Christmas season. Coffee, hot chocolate, & bagels are always provided.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

President: Lori Terry.....973-216-8971
Vice President: Danielle Beyers.....996-6379
Secretary: Sonia Cordova.....537-2418
Treasurer: Gail DeRemer.....689-0943
Financial Secretary:
Paul Henriksen.....835-9522
Pastor: Rev. Gary V. Ettlemyer ... 537-2333
Richard Glahn.....236-2771
Mary Lomerson.....537-7377
Jeff Smith.....617-5351
Anthony DiRe..... 537-4398
Rich Balzer.....574-5239
Doug Lanning..... 201-755-1306
Elke Naumovitz..... 238-0988
Janet Ledoux.....537-6974

COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND LIAISON

Evangelism & Social

Liaison: Sonia Cordova.....537-2418

Finance

Chair: Brad Cox 638-8533

Parish Education

Chair: Lori Terry.....832-1573

Preschool

Chair: Pastor.....537-2333

Property

Anthony DiRe..... 537-4398

Staff Support

Chair: Ruth Ruediger.....638-6661

Stewardship

Chair: George Creasy.....537-4034

IHN/Family Promise

Chair: Wendy DiNapoli.....973-568-5168

Worship and Music

Chair: Ruth Ruediger638-6661

Liaison: Sonia Cordova.....537-2418

Altar Guild

Chair: TBD

Kitchen

Chair: Eileen Clancy735-4612

North Hunterdon Food Pantry

Chair: Ruth Ruediger638-6661

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Superintendent

Sharon Hogan.....638-5624

Music

Candice Peare.....534-9862

Pre-K and Kindergarten

Lisa Ficano.....238-3725

Cecelia Ossi.....638-5805

First and Second Grade

Bennett Clifford.....238-0126

Andrew Fielding.....537-7195

Third and Fourth Grade

Beverly Fielding.....537-7195

Janine Ascenzo.....832-8944

Fifth and Sixth Grade

Jane Heeckt 238-0126

Seventh Grade (Confirmation I)

Patrick Clifford238-0126

George Creasy537-4034

Eighth Grade (Confirmation II)

Pastor Ettlemyer537-2333

STAFF

Pastor:

Rev. Gary V. Ettlemyer.....537-2333

Music Director:

Candice Peare.....534-9862

Handbell Choir Director:

Charlotte Steiner.....973-943-8216

Secretary:

Karen Smith.....537-4824

Sextons:

Rosemarie Adickes689-1895

Sara Armbrrecht689-0716

FELLOWSHIP EDITORIAL STAFF

Jane Creasy537-4034

Karen Smith.....537-4824

The Opportunity to Serve

December 2018 - February 2019

December 2

First Sunday of Advent

8:15 a.m.

Ushers.....Gene Armbrecht
Sara Armbrecht
Acolyte.....Emily Smith
Crucifer.....Paul Smith
Lector.....Emily Smith
Worship Assistant.....Judi Mansilla

11:00 a.m.

Ushers.....Danielle Beyers
Acolyte.....Lucas Beyers
Crucifer.....Madeline Beyers
Lector.....Patrick Clifford
Worship Assistant.....Patrick Clifford

December 23

Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:15 a.m.

Ushers.....Janet Ledoux
Bob DeRemer
Acolyte.....Matthias Ossi
Crucifer.....Cecelia Ossi
Lector.....Roslind Jensen
Worship Assistant.....Rob Ossi

11:00 a.m.

Ushers.....Lori Terry
Acolyte.....
Crucifer.....
Lector.....
Worship Assistant.....

December 30

First Sunday after Christmas

9:30 a.m.

Ushers.....Gail Vajda
Janet Ledoux
Acolyte.....Adele Ossi
Crucifer.....Lucia Ossi
Lector.....Gail DeRemer
Worship Assistant.....George Creasy

December 9

Second Sunday of Advent

8:15 a.m.

Ushers.....Gail Vajda
Amy Henry
Acolyte.....Lainee Henry
Crucifer.....
Lector.....Janet Ledoux
Worship Assistant.....Janet Ledoux

11:00 a.m.

Ushers.....Lori Terry
Acolyte.....Grace Hogan
Crucifer.....Grace Hogan
Lector.....Anne Sainz
Worship Assistant.....George Creasy

December 24

Christmas Eve

7:30 p.m.

Ushers.....Gene Armbrecht
Sara Armbrecht
Acolyte.....Lucia Ossi
Crucifer.....Gemma Ossi
Lector.....Sara Armbrecht
Worship Assistant.....George Creasy

11:00 p.m.

Ushers.....Matt Cordova
Jon Cordova
Acolyte.....
Crucifer.....
Lector.....Gail DeRemer
Worship Assistant.....

January 6

Epiphany of Our Lord

8:15 a.m.

Ushers.....Gene Armbrecht
Sara Armbrecht
Acolyte.....Emily Smith
Crucifer.....Emily Smith
Lector.....Judi Mansilla
Worship Assistant.....Judi Mansilla

11:00 a.m.

Ushers.....Matt Cordova
Acolyte.....Grace Hogan
Crucifer.....Grace Hogan
Lector.....Anne Sainz
Worship Assistant.....

December 16

Third Sunday of Advent

8:15 a.m.

Ushers.....Mary Gaydick
Sara Armbrecht
Acolyte.....Emily Smith
Crucifer.....Paul Smith
Lector.....Paul Smith
Worship Assistant.....Wayne Gaydick

11:00 a.m.

Ushers.....Matt Cordova
Acolyte.....
Crucifer.....
Lector.....Ruth Ruediger
Worship Assistant.....

December 25

Christmas Day

9:30 a.m.

Ushers.....Bob DeRemer
Acolyte.....
Crucifer.....
Lector.....Ruth Ruediger
Worship Assistant.....Gail DeRemer



January 13

Baptism of Our Lord

8:15 a.m.

Ushers.....Amy Henry
Sara Armbrecht
Acolyte.....Lainee Henry
Crucifer.....Paul Smith
Lector.....Janet Ledoux
Worship Assistant.....Janet Ledoux

11:00 a.m.

Ushers.....Lori Terry
Danielle Beyers
Acolyte.....Lucas Beyers
Crucifer.....Madeline Beyers
Lector.....Ruth Ruediger
Worship Assistant.....Patty Cox

Committees...

Continued from page 5

Vacation Bible School



June 25-28, 2018

VBS Theme

“Created by God &
Built for a Purpose”

was a creative week of fun!

The children explored God’s Word and His plan for each of us. God has a purpose for you too!

A special thanks to everyone who sponsored our 2018 VBS with Thrivent dollars and to those who gave their time and talent! Thank you: Faith Evers and Karen and Paul Smith for your special leadership!

Gail DeRemer

Preschool

It has been and continues to be very busy during October, November and into December for the preschool. We hosted two field trips, one to the pumpkin patch and the other to a wonderful play at Raritan Valley Community College. The children saw the play, The Rainbow Fish, and had fun seeing their classmates outside of school. We also celebrated Halloween with a student parade in costumes and visited the parents’ decorated trunks for a special trunk-or-treat. We then had a combined party for all the classes with the help

of the classroom parents. The children had so much fun playing games, making an art project and having delicious treats made by the parents.

November has kept us busy getting ready for Thanksgiving and preparing to present our holiday show in December. We had a fun feast for the children who were dressed in full-turkey costumes. Each class made something to share at the feast, making it feel just like the first Thanksgiving.

We had our one and only Butterbraid fundraiser, which was a great success! We raised over \$600 for our school, and we could not have done this without the support of our wonderful families. Thank you to everyone who participated. These funds help defer our operating costs in the classrooms and some upgrades to our playground safety.

Our holiday show this year is based on the book, The Hat by Jan Brett. The show is scheduled for Thursday, December 20 at 9:00 a.m. The children will have fun dressed up as one of the animals in the book and will sing some terrific songs that follow the story. All are welcome to come by and check it out.

Our enrollment continues to rise with two new students that started in November and one who will be starting the first week of December. This brings us to a total of 14 children enrolled! We continue to spread the word about our wonderful school and hope that our enrollment continues to grow!

We would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at Spruce Run Preschool!

Tuesday Quilters

We hosted a training class on how to use the defibrillator that we purchased for the church. Dane Fishburn shared his expertise with all in attendance on what to do and how to use the device.

Pork & Oyster

A Pork & Oyster dinner was another great success this year, thanks to all the volunteers and the donations. There were so many things to do and everyone had a special part. Special thanks goes out to Chef Harold Moore and his professional crew.

We served 95 dinners - that includes sit-down and take-out. The total profit was \$2,380.50.

Thank you to all and God bless,
Eileen Clancy
Chairperson



A reminder that we are here the first and second Sundays of the month with Shop Rite gift cards. If you need anything in between, please reach out to us. Please remember that a portion of each card is profit for the church.

Thank you,
Sara and Denise

Righteous Recipes

Broccoli Cheddar Soup

1 tablespoon butter
1/2 large chopped white onion
1/4 cup melted butter
1/4 cup flour
2 cups milk
2 cups chicken stock
1 1/2 cups coarsely chopped broccoli florets
1 cup matchstick-cut carrots
1 stalk celery, thinly sliced
2 1/2 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
salt and ground black pepper to taste

Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté onion in hot butter until translucent, about 5 minutes. Set aside.

Whisk 1/4 cup melted butter and flour together in a large saucepan over medium-low heat; cook until flour loses its granular texture, adding 1 to 2 tablespoons of milk if necessary to keep the flour from burning, 3 to 4 minutes.

Gradually pour milk into flour mixture while whisking constantly. Stir chicken stock into milk mixture. Bring to a simmer; cook until flour taste is gone and mixture is thickened, about 20 minutes. Add broccoli, carrots, sautéed onion, and celery; simmer until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes.

Stir Cheddar cheese into vegetable mixture until cheese melts. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Submitted by Karen Smith

Spruce Run Lutheran Church Milestones



We rejoice at the birth of

Aiden Scott Iacucci on October 10, 2018, infant son of David and Emily Groendyke Iacucci, grandson of Tom and Rita Groendyke. Aiden joins his sister, Amelia.



Everyone enjoys beautiful music during the Christmas season! On Christmas Eve, we traditionally begin our Christmas Eve service with inspirational Christmas music. We would like to invite everyone in the congregation to join us in participating in this annual event. Whether you sing, play an instrument or just listen, please come and be a part of this wonderful evening! All those joining us with voices or instruments, please let Candy Peare know by December 10th. We look forward to seeing you!

Pastor's Corner...

Continued from page 1

... we had our Annual Pork Roast and Oyster Dressing dinner and that it was a success once again because of the hard work of people like Eileen Clancy, Gail and Bob DeRemer, Erik Henriksen, and many others.

... our annual Jingle Bell Junction is upon us and that Sara Armbrecht and others are working hard to make it a success again this year!

... this is the time of year when we start formulating our proposed budget for the coming year.

... our Stewardship Program is under way.

... we have had another IHN/Family Promise hosting.

... we still actively operate and support the North Hunterdon Food Pantry.

In short, our church family is successfully carrying out its mission and ministry in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in our community and in the world. All of these things are signs that the congregation is alive and well and that there are many people who work hard to keep our church humming along, making Christ known. That's the good side of things!

However, there is a not-so-good side of things in the life of Spruce Run Lutheran, and they need to be prayerfully addressed by each and every person who would refer to himself of herself as a "member." What I will be saying is not unique to our church; its typical of what is going on in many other churches, Lutheran and otherwise.

O Come All Ye Faithful...

Come join a merry group in Christmas Caroling to our home bound friends. We will meet at 4:30 PM on Sunday, December 16th in the upper parking lot at church and drive together to make our visits. All voices are welcome regardless of ability. It's the joy you bring that makes this a special experience!

Hot chocolate and cookies will be served at church following caroling.



In short, church attendance is down. Families are not attending church as much as "family units." Parents and children are not attending worship together regularly. There has been an increase in the number of parents who are bringing children to Sunday School but only staying until classes are over, and not attending church with their children. Parents of confirmands are not following through with their commitments to attend church with their newly confirmed young people.

The low church attendance at both services has caused people to question the validity of having two worship services each Sunday. One only has to look around at worship on Sundays to see why this issue has been raised again. This is not a new topic. Indeed, several years ago the number of worship services was raised but an increase in attendance forestalled addressing the issue. The Congregation Council has taken up the topic once again. Even within the Council there is divided opinion on what should be done. Some Council persons report

they've had people tell them to keep two services, while others report people saying we should go to one service. As a result, the Council has basically agreed that if a change is made, it should be done by the congregation. Truthfully, I feel the Council should make no recommendations but rather leave it up to the congregation to make the decision. There is divided sentiment on whether or not to have only one service each week. This is something that everyone should pray about. The decision on what to do should be based on what is good for the congregation as a whole, and not only on convenience and individual preferences.

Church "volunteerism" is the lowest it has been in many years. Compared to the total number of members, only a relatively small number of the congregation attends and monetarily supports the main fundraising activities of our church, including the Pork & Oyster Dressing Dinner, Jingle Bell Junction. (This is one reason why we didn't continue doing the Pig Roast again this year.)

In recent weeks I have received two emails from the Bishop of our Synod regarding the state of our synod's congregations and clergy roster. In short, approximately one third of the congregations in New Jersey are without pastors and are in the call process. Churches that are without pastors might commonly find themselves without a pastor for two or three years, possibly more! There are churches being closed each year. Our Bishop has asked pastors to consider helping nearby churches that are without pastors by conducting worship for them because there are simply not enough "supply" pastors to go around.

If we take all of the above to heart, I have to say that I'm worried! I believe the good people of Spruce Run have shown themselves to be supportive and active and interested in the future of our church. At the same time, I've seen more and more people just not quite trying to be consistent at worship attendance and volunteering for all of the good activities and opportunities for fellowship we offer. For example, our Tuesday Quilters have purchased a Cardiac Defibrillator for our church and we had a special teaching session on its use. Our instructor was none other than our own Dane Fishburn, who is a certified instructor and professional EMT/AMT. This was a great program. It was held after church, and included lunch – all for free. It was a great time and an important one, but only a handful of people attended. One attempt at

a fall cleanup produced only a very small handful of workers. When an idea for a new and different activity is brought up, we often hear, "That's a good idea, but will people volunteer or support it?"

With the fall season having arrived and the worship and fellowship activities at church in full swing, I have a couple of questions to ask of all who consider themselves members:

- (1) are you doing as much as you can to add to the life and the fellowship of your church family through your presence and support of its activities?
- (2) Are you willing to make an extra effort to attend worship regularly with your family?
- (3) Are you willing to set an example for your children by encouraging them to attend Sunday School and worship with them?
- (4) Are you willing to renew your effort at working and attending the activities our congregation undertakes

in its outreach through Family Promise and the North Hunterdon Food Pantry?

I believe that all of our work and worship activities require little more than an hour or two of your time and effort per week. Is that too much for you to give in thankfulness to God for your church home and your church family, and for the forgiveness he has shown us in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ? I don't think it's too much to ask at all! Only you can decide if you're doing your best.

Please prayerfully consider how you will respond to the needs of your family, your church family and your own spiritual needs as I remain

Yours in Christ,

Pastor +

Worship Opportunities

Christmas Eve - December 24th 7:30 pm & 11:00 pm

Christmas Day - December 25th 9:30 am

1st Sunday After Christmas - December 30th 9:30 am

Epiphany of Our Lord - January 6th 8:15 am & 11:00 am

Church Picnic

Blessing of the Pets



Jingle Bell Junction



Our Mission

For over two centuries, Spruce Run Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church has existed to draw people into a community of faith which proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament.

As we move into the next century, our sense of hope, strength, and grace—our Lutheran heritage—will nurture our Congregation and we will reach out to the community through Christian education, music, and service.



Fellowship

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“To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.”

Psalm 25:1