



SPRUCE RUN

# Fellowship

SPRUCE RUN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN ZION CHURCH

Advent 2021 Vol. 67, No.6

## From the Pastor's Pen



### Luke's Gospel

One of the quirks of being a liturgical Christian is that the new church year begins a little more than a month before the secular new year. To digest this last year, we held a Christ the King Liturgical Review service, telling our whole story in one service of colors, readings, and music.

We have finished up Year B of our three-year cycle of bible readings. Year B focused on Mark's Gospel, Hebrew Scriptures connected to King David, and the letters to the Ephesians and Corinthians. Now we're in year C; its focus is on Luke's Gospel, the Prophets (especially Jeremiah) and John's letter of Revelation, as well as Paul's letter to the Galatians. We'll be spending a lot of time in Luke, partially because it is my favorite Gospel and partially because the lectionary gives us so MUCH of it, especially compared with Mark's Gospel in year B. And let me tell you, Luke tells the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a particular accent!

## *A Message from the Council President*

As we are quickly approaching the celebration of the birth of our Lord, let's take a few moments to review the joy we have been experiencing in the past month.

Jingle Bell Junction gave us a chance to celebrate with the community. We had a wonderful turnout. Many members gave of their time and talents to make it a great success!

We just had our first Caroling Capers where we sang and mingled for an afternoon of fun and fellowship. It was a wonderful afternoon and proof that we can gather together, sing, eat, and have fun (even with masks on)!

On December 19th, the Sunday School is going to share the news of the birth of Jesus in a play during worship. Please join us for the joyful gathering!

God Bless!

*Janet*



*Sunday, December 19, 2021 at 10 AM*

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When Luke tells the Christmas story, he writes of shepherds, not Magi and angels, not stars. When we spend time with John the Baptist at the river in Luke's Gospel, he spells out what being prepared for Jesus looks like in rather concrete terms. Luke, more than the other Gospel writers, insists that the good news he is sharing with us is for ALL people. He breaks barriers of gender, race, religion, and time itself so that all those who are lost are found by Jesus. He also challenges Christians to: deepen their faith with persistent prayer, practice a generosity that ensures that everyone has enough, and live in a way that social status doesn't overwhelm the equality we have in Christ.

I hope and pray Luke's account of the Gospel finds us when we are lost and shapes our year in such a way that we can more fully be God's good news to this hurting world.

In Christ's Peace,

*Pastor Chris*

**CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

President: Janet Ledoux.....537-6974  
 Vice President: Jeff Smith.....617-5351  
 Secretary: Sonia Cordova.....537-2418  
 Treasurer: George Creasy.....537-4034  
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**Witness**

Sonia Cordova.....537-2418

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**Learning**

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**Altar Guild**

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**North Hunterdon Food Pantry**

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**Tuesday Quilters**

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**Family Promise**

Chair: Wendy DiNapoli..973-568-5168

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Qingyang (Kelly) Ye

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**First and Second Grade**

**Third and Fourth Grade**

**Fifth and Sixth Grade**

**Seventh Grade (Confirmation I)**

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 Rob Ossi.....638-5805

**Eighth Grade (Confirmation II)**

PastorChrisHalverson.....537-4824

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### ShopRite Giftcard Program

The church receives a percentage of all ShopRite gift cards sold. This is a very easy way to financially support our church.

Please contact Sara or Denise if you would like to purchase some.



Support Spruce Run while shopping on Amazon! Be sure to select Spruce Run Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church as your Amazon Smile Charity. Shop using the Amazon app or by typing smile.amazon.com to ensure Spruce Run receives credit for your purchases.

# *The message of the season: Christ is Coming!*

Here we are, in the season of Advent, this time where we prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ.

### **Longest Night — December 21st at 7 pm**

We do so by being present with people in their sorrows—we mourn with those who mourn and celebrate with those who celebrate. This year we'll be present with the folk in our community who are grieving by holding a "Longest Night" worship service. This is a "Christmas in a minor key" kind of service, where people for whom this Christmas is filled with questions and sadness can meet the God of the manger without having to fake a happy face.



### **Christmas Eve — December 24th 4:30 pm and 7 pm**

We do this when we celebrate the birth of Christ in worship—Glory to God in the highest heavens and peace on earth, goodwill to all people! This year we will hold two Christmas Eve services.



### **Epiphany — January 6th 7 pm**

We do this by proclaiming that Jesus' title, God With Us, is about God's blessings for all of us—the good news of Christmas culminates in the message of the Magi to Mary and all the world! This year we will celebrate the end of the 12 days of Christmas at our Epiphany service.

# *The Longest Night*

December 21, 2021

7 PM

This service will be a time and place where you can find a spiritual space to grieve and just *be* as you are!

Spruce Run Lutheran Church  
442 West Hill Road  
Glen Gardner, NJ 08826  
[www.SpruceRunLutheran.com](http://www.SpruceRunLutheran.com)

On December 21st, 7pm we will be holding a Longest Night service. This is an Advent/Christmas themed service done in a “minor key,” so to speak, acknowledging that the Holiday season is hard for a lot of people. This is especially true for folk going through new firsts, for example the first Thanksgiving without a parent or the first Christmas without a spouse. I hope this service will be a time and place where you can find a spiritual space to grieve and to just be as you are!

## A STEWARDSHIP FOR CHANGE

The pledge:

a goal, a reminder, a way of life.



### **A Goal:**

The number 35% has been thrown around a lot in Church circles. That's the average decline in attendance, participation, and monetary giving in congregations across the country since the Pandemic hit. Spruce Run is right there with most other congregations—our attendance is a little under the average, our giving a smidge over the average.

As you look at your pledge for 2022, please consider increasing your gifts of time, talents, and possessions, so we can be the Church our neighbors need us to be going forward. A 35% increase in giving seems like too much to ask, but please take time to reflect on what a 10% increase in giving would look like for you, a 3.5% increase, or a 1% increase.

### **A Reminder:**

One key assumption we make about our stewardship is that we are not giving away something that is ours, instead we are giving what God has first given us. Stewardship is an act of gratitude for what we ourselves have first received.

### **A Way of Life:**

The things we do in worship matter for many reasons, but one of them is because they are practice for what we do out in the world in our day to day life. What does your life look like when the generosity you practice in worship—releasing your time, talents, and possessions—flows out into the rest of your week, into your jobs and roles in society, and into your relationships?

# *Jingle Bell Junction*

On the Friday morning before Thanksgiving, Spruce Run was alive with activity. Cookies and other food were being prepared in the kitchen, craft tables were being set up, and anticipation was in the air. After a year's reprieve, Jingle Bell Junction was back!

The next morning, the community, both congregants and neighbors from outside our walls, came in to sample food and buy crafts. We got to again see the many talents and interpretations of Christmas joy and festivity on display. Wreaths, toys, quilts, pens, jewelry, tie-dye, and so much good food. Thanks be to God for such bustle and excitement!




# Caroling Capers

Last Sunday afternoon, we gathered together for fun, food, and fellowship. It felt so good to be together doing something that felt familiar! We sang some carols, had some appetizers and desserts and then returned to the sanctuary for more music. A special thank you to our pianist, Rob, and guest musician, Gene, for leading us in festive songs. All who participated are looking forward to more fellowship events like this in the new year!



# 2021 Reverse Advent Calendar

The North Hunterdon Food Pantry helps many families each month. Typically after the holidays, our shelves are almost empty. Please consider finding a box, basket or bag and filling it with the suggested items (or other items) each day as you count the days until Christmas. Your box will be empty when you start, but by Christmas Eve it will be filled and will help our neighbors who might otherwise be hungry or need some of these suggested items.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov 28 Strawberry or Grape Jelly	Nov 29 Minute Rice	Nov 30 Cookies	Dec 1 Juice Boxes	Dec 2 Bag of Sugar	Dec 3 Bottle of Shampoo/ Conditioner	Dec 4 Coffee &/or Tea
Dec 5 Jar of Applesauce	Dec 6 Cake Mix & Icing	Dec 7 Container of Salt or Pepper	Dec 8 Canned Ravioli	Dec 9 Bottle of Syrup	Dec 10 Dish Detergent	Dec 11 Paper Towels or Napkins
Dec 12 Condiments: Ketchup, Mustard, Mayo	Dec 13 Box of Pancake Mix	Dec 14 Can of Spam or Hash	Dec 15 Laundry Soap	Dec 16 Can of Chicken or Tuna	Dec 17 Bottle of Apple Juice	Dec 18 Can of Sweet Potatoes
Dec 19 Oatmeal	Dec 20 Pasta Sauce	Dec 21 Jar of Pickles	Dec 22 Bottle of Body Wash	Dec 23 Cleaning Products	Dec 24 Bring your box to church!	



All donations benefit the North Hunterdon Food Pantry.



# 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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[www.SpruceRunLutheran.com](http://www.SpruceRunLutheran.com)

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in your faith, so that in the power of the Holy Spirit you may be rich in hope.”*

Romans 15:13

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