



SPRUCE RUN *Fellowship*

SPRUCE RUN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN ZION CHURCH

Fall 2023 Vol. 68, No.3

From the Pastor's Pen



About 8 years ago, The Lily Foundation surveyed nearly every congregation in America and discovered that the biggest deterrent for Pastors to perform good ministry was the burden of seminary debt.. So, they invested some real money into paying down seminary and bible college debt across denominations (they partnered with everyone from the Russian Orthodox to Independent Pentecostals) with a program called the National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. Within the ELCA, Lilly partnered with two Synods that were as different as can be, the Southwestern Minnesota Synod (home of Laura Ingalls Wilder) and the New Jersey Synod (home of

Continued on page 5...

A Message from the Council President

You may have noticed a new green and white donation bin for new and almost new clothes and linens in the lower parking lot. This is a new addition as a result of a partnership we have entered into with American Recycling Resources (ARR). They are a "for profit" company who works with non-profit organizations that provide locations for their bins. In exchange for using our space, they will pay us each month for using our space. So in turn, it becomes a charitable endeavor since we benefit from the monthly income which will be in the neighborhood of \$50 to \$75 per month.

ARR will come on a regular basis to empty the bin and will come as needed if we notice any abnormal items being left or if the bin is full before the normal pickup. We don't have a long term commitment to this program, but Council felt we should be open to new sources of revenue and we can gain \$600+ per year with little time or investment on our part. We will evaluate the effectiveness of the program in about six months to determine if we want to continue this long term.

American Recycling Resources has existed for 20 years and has operated this program for around 7 years. They work with charitable organizations such as St. Vincent DePaul in Maryland and Children's Specialized Hospital in Lakewood where they donate new and almost new clothing. And they work with a variety of organizations and industries to recycle the clothing and goods that they collect.

I hope you will help to support this new project by donating your used clothing and linens.

Thank you and God Bless!

News from Our Committees & Interest Groups

Tuesday Quilters

We are busy working on lots of great items for Jingle Bell Junction. Come see us on a Tuesday morning from 9-12. You may even want to join us! We would love to have someone join us that enjoys ironing!

North Hunterdon Food Pantry

It has been a pretty quiet summer for the food pantry. We continue to distribute about 2700+ pounds of food per month to approximately 35 families which consists of about 65 adults and 30 children. Karen was fortunate enough to have school age volunteers bag our clients selections all summer, and had a group clean up some of the weeds we had on the patio and some of the old boxes on the sidewalk. This really improved the appearance of the pantry. We were very lucky to have someone donate two new air conditioners to the pantry. We are very fortunate now to have an air conditioner in each room.

We are now again required to have inspections in the pantry

to obtain our licenses. We had the new Norwescap Senior Director, the State of New Jersey Department of Agriculture, and the Administrative Assistant and Food Sourcing Network Manager from Norwescap all walk through and inspect our pantry. We are proud to say that each department that visited had only compliments for our pantry. We have been required to obtain an exterminator. We also had a SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) representative visit and assist our clients for a couple of months, explaining the program and actually signing clients up to the program and then following up the next month with the clients.

In the next couple of months we will be preparing for the holiday distributions.

Please follow us on Facebook 'North Hunterdon Food Pantry' for new food drives and events that we are taking part in, If you know of anyone that might be in need of assistance, please have them contact the pantry. We turn no one away if you are in need.

Thank you,
Gail, Karen, Janet and Sue

Family Promise

We completed our second summer hosting week, and we were able to extend our assistance to the guests in the Family Promise program by covering an additional unclaimed summer week. Great job everyone! Because FP was in a week of turn over, we were only needed to supply one family with grocery gift cards for the week of August 13. Of course, we had collected enough support for multiple families, so we offered to supply gift cards for the next available open week, which was September 10th.

For the week of September 10th, we again provided gift cards for just one family, leaving us with a surplus of cards and money. I contacted the FP office to ask what needs they had that we may be able to fill. They responded by saying that they support families from the program for a year after they move into their new home and are in need of grocery gift cards and gift cards to buy school clothes. As a team effort of Spruce Run Lutheran Church, St. John Neumann Church and Thrivent seed money, we were able to provide \$400 in ShopRite gift cards and \$400 towards the purchase of school clothes. FP was extremely appreciative.

Continued on page 7...

Council Meeting Highlights

May 9, 2023

- Discussions are underway for a joint venture VBS with other local churches.
- Re-establishing the Stewardship Committee is a priority. A committee chair is needed.
- Available grants through the NJ SYNOD are being researched.
- A letter of thanks was received from the ELCA for SRLC's disaster relief donation designated for the areas in Africa impacted by drought.
- The summer worship schedule (Sunday worship beginning at 9:00 am) will begin June 3, 2023.
- The re-introduction of Cottage Meetings will be discussed.
- Leasing of extra space is still being evaluated.
- Membership rolls are being reviewed and updated.
- Installation of solar panels is being researched.
- Building security will be enhanced and will be implemented in stages.

- SRLC & the Food Pantry will participate in the 2023 Lebanon Township Community Day. Gail Vajda will be the coordinator.
- The annual NJ SYNOD assembly meeting is on May 13, 2023. Pastor Chris, Sue O'Brien & Erik Henriksen will attend.

June 13, 2023

- The EMU grant application for enhanced security, improved energy efficiency & improved recording/broadcasting of worship services has been submitted.
- Quote received for replacing classroom & office windows.
- Quote received for outdoor security camera.
- Quote received for improved video capability.
- The "Fund for Mission" grant requirements are being reviewed.
- VBS will be done in partnership with High Bridge Reformed Church. Details to follow.
- There will be 2 outdoor services during the summer – July & August. Both will be held at Finn Road Park in Pittstown.

- Rally day will be September 10 – service to be held at Lebanon Township Memorial park.
- Christmas Eve is on a Sunday. There will be 2 services – 10:00 am with the Sunday School pageant & 7:00 pm candlelight. Communion will be available at both services.
- The first cottage meetings are scheduled.
- Leasing of extra space is on hold.

July 11, 2023

- SRLC was awarded the EMU grant. This is contingent on SRLC meeting a required match.
- A "Fund for Mission" grant will be pursued. Purpose must be community based.
- "Wisdom from Spruce Run" sessions will occur in July.
- SRLC is in the contractor's queue for having the windows & trimwork replaced.
- VBS will occur July 24, July 31 & August 7 and will be in partnership with High Bridge Reformed Church.
- The first two cottage meetings took place & were well received by the participants.

Continued on page 4...

Council Meeting Highlights

Continued from page 3

- Initial review of the membership rolls was completed. Over 30 letters were sent to lapsed members.
- One final meeting is needed to complete the financial audit through 2021.
- A clothing recycling bin provided by ARR (American Recycling Resources) is being evaluated.

August 8, 2023

- High Bridge Reformed church will be joining the outdoor Ecumenical service on August 20, 2023, at Finn Road Park.
- The funeral for Robin Halozan will be held at SRLC August 26, 2023.
- SRLC is in the contractor's queue for having the windows & trim work replaced.
- Breakfast will be served August 13, 2023 immediately following worship service.
- The Food Pantry will host an Open House September 9, 2023.
- Rally Day is September 10, 2023. Worship service will be held at Lebanon Township Memorial Park. The annual picnic will be held immediately following the worship service.

- Lebanon Township Community Day is September 23, 2023. SRLC will have 2 spots – one for the food pantry and the other for the church. The church will have a ring toss game with prizes & superheroes photo op.
- Jeff Smith will chair the Stewardship Committee.
- Christmas Eve is on a Sunday. There will be 2 services – 10:00 am with the parent &

7:00 pm candlelight. Communion will be available at both services.

- The first round of cottage meetings were completed & well received.
- A sign is needed for Sunday School to post outside the church noting "all welcome" and how to register.
- Erik Henriksen & Gene Ambrecht will chair the 250th Anniversary Committee.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

President: Janet Ledoux
Vice President: Erik Henriksen
Secretary: Sonia Cordova
Treasurer: George Creasy
Financial Secretary: Paul Henriksen
Rosemarie (Posie) Adickes
Gene Ambrecht
Danielle Beyers
Brad Cox
Richard Glahn
Judi Mansilla
Laura Mortensen
Sue O'Brien
Gail Vajda

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Superintendent

Laura Mortensen

Seventh Grade (Confirmation I)

George Creasy & Rob Ossi

Eighth Grade (Confirmation II)

Pastor Chris Halverson

STAFF

Pastor: Chris Halverson
Music Director: Candice Peare
Handbell Director: Qingyang (Kelly) Ye
Secretary: Karen Smith
Sextons: Rosemarie Adickes
Sara Ambrecht

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & LIAISON

Fellowship & Outreach

Danielle Beyers & Gail Vajda

Youth

Laura Mortensen

Building Discernment

Erik Henriksen

Holistic Stewardship

Rosemarie Adickes

Worship and Music

Matt Gaydick & Judi Mansilla

Altar Guild

Judi Mansilla

North Hunterdon Food Pantry

Gail Vajda

Tuesday Quilters

Rose-Marie Green

Family Promise

Wendy DiNapoli

FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

Jane Creasy & Karen Smith

WEBSITE

Mark Creasy & Karen Smith

Bruce Springsteen) to create a program called Excellence in Ministry Unleashed (EMU). Since then EMU has shifted its focus to assisting clergy and congregations with managing, and talking about, money. This last week I attended a continuing education event put on by EMU that was led by Bonnie Ives Marden who wrote the book, or at least a book, on church finances and best practices for stewardship. It was an intense event that started by focusing on putting together a list of projects that need funding or other resources, who might have some of those resources, and what exactly we should ask those people for. Then Mrs. Marden threw us all for a loop; she gave us 20 minutes to contact as many of those people as possible and do the ask we had written down—right there the event went from a theoretical exercise to an in the trenches act of ministry. Now there were 50 Rostered Leaders at this event. In those 20 minutes, we ended up asking for \$134,000 of money and in-kind donations! And that was the major take away from the event—you gotta do the ask!

And even before this event, we

as a congregation exercised those ask muscles. We'd received a matching fund grant from EMU, if we raised \$5,000 EMU would pitch in \$7,000. Lisa and I started us off by giving a 10th of what we needed, \$500, and you all were incredibly generous; in just a few weeks and with a single ask and a follow-up letter, we raised the remaining \$4,500! With that money, we are able to: replace the rain damaged windows in the office and a classroom, install a security system that fits the recommendations by the local police after the break-in, and upgrade from using cell phones to tape worship to a less intrusive camera system. On top of that, I'm heading off to another continuing education event run by Partners for Sacred Places. This organization's focus is helping historic congregations: identify and lean into the ways our congregation matters to the community we are in, find partners who share our values (both religious or secular) to share our building with, and do all of this without losing sight of who we are and how we are called by Jesus to be in ministry here. The Council and I hope this conference will

answer some questions we have about protecting the congregation's tax exempt status while also using some of our unused space more creatively and sustain our congregation well past our 250th anniversary.

In summary, I'm bringing back information to the council and the congregation at large, that will help us ask in a faithful way that encourages generosity, and discern how to share our building in ways that are legal and consistent with our identity.

In Christ's Peace,
Pastor Chris



ShopRite gift cards are available. Please reach out to Sara or Denise if you would like to purchase some. Remember this is a very easy way to financially support our church.

SEASONAL PSALMS

This year we will be singing Psalm 25 for the 4 Sundays in Advent. Since Rob Ossi has had experience doing this in other churches, he has written a summary of how this can be effective in a church service.

Psalms are the Word of God - pure Scripture. The Book of Psalms is the songbook of the Bible, and the Holy Spirit is the songwriter. As a boy, Jesus would have memorized and learned many if not all of the Psalms. Our congregation is what we sing!

Benefits of Using Seasonal Psalms:

- Using a seasonal Psalm for several consecutive weeks, depending on the length of the season, enables the worshiper to learn and memorize the Scripture referenced in that particular Psalm.
- Enables the worshiper to embrace the beauty of the music set to that seasonal Psalm, bringing out the richness of Scripture and offering us a more authentic picture of God.

Spruce Run Lutheran Handbell Choir 2023 - 2024



The bells are ringing! From mid-September through mid-June, the Spruce Run Lutheran Handbell Choir will be rehearsing every Sunday after worship (until no later than noon), and all are welcome to join. Even if you can't read music or have never played an instrument, no experience is required so, yes, you can join the Handbell Choir! We will provide music for the service every other Sunday from the balcony. If you want to join us anytime, contact me, Kelly, or reach out to a handbell choir member!

We will also do some more ringing (and singing - with everyone who would be in the spirit) on the day of Jingle Bell Junction. Please stay tuned for Sara's video for the schedule of the day and join us!

- Allows the congregation to gain a vast amount of Scripture stored in their minds and hearts, the DNA of peoples' lives.
- Worshipers will be able to participate fully with the rest of the congregation in singing the psalm, even without any books or worship aids, since they have come to know that Psalm - as opposed to using the Psalm setting of that day which is often new territory where worshipers tend to focus more on just getting through the technical

logistics of the Psalm rather than having more meaningful and deeper experience.

- Worshipers will find themselves humming and/or singing the Psalms outside of church on Sundays.
- Worshipers will quickly learn the scripture and musical setting, making it truly a "sung prayer."

Hopefully everyone will enjoy this and we can do another seasonal Psalm in the future!

Other FP updates:

1. Due to construction delays and ongoing road work in front of The Promise Center, there is not a date set for the Volunteer Day or the Soft Opening that were previously cancelled.

2. AS stated in the FP

September newsletter: "Grow your own goodness and make an impact with our Sow the Seeds project! Sow the Seeds is a fundraising initiative that offers community members the opportunity to honor a loved one and support our cause at the same time. Purchase a leaf on our "Giving Tree" and see your generosity come to beautiful life at the soft opening of The Promise Center! Each leaf represents a donation of \$250 towards better serving families. Will you help us dedicate 100 leaves?" Reach out to the FP office if you would like to help.

Our next hosting is the week of November 26th. Keep the prayers coming that the Promise Center is up and running by then so we can provide more hands on support and the families will have a designated temporary home.

Reach out with any questions.
Blessings,
Wendy

Jingle Bell Junction

The date is fast approaching.

The crafters have all been notified and they are sending in their responses. It is time to get ready to Jingle all of the way to Jingle Bell Junction. Tell your neighbors, friends and family the date: November 18, 2023 from 9 am -3 pm.

Get your recipes ready....we need cookies for the cookie table and baked goods for the baked good table. The response that we had last year for both tables was outstanding. Set-up is the day before at 7 pm and clean-up starts on Saturday at 3:15 pm. Come hungry and ready to shop. This is a church wide event that we love and so does the community! If you have any questions, please contact me at 908-319-5055.

Sara

WELCA

We meet the third Wednesday of each month from 12-3 pm. We start with lunch - bring your own sandwich, drinks and dessert are provided. We have a short business meeting and end with a Bible study. All women are invited to attend.

Watch for the Operation Christmas Child boxes and the giving tree.

Recipes from the Congregation

Pumpkin Dump Cake

- 1 (29 oz) can pumpkin purée
- 1 (12 oz) can evaporated milk
- 3 large eggs
- 1/2 c packed brown sugar
- 1/2 c white sugar
- 1 t ground cinnamon
- 1/2 t ground ginger
- 1/4 t ground cloves
- 1/2 t salt
- 1 (15.25 oz) pkg spice cake mix
- 1/2 c coarsely chopped pecans
- 1/2 c melted butter

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease 9" X 13" pan.

2. Combine pumpkin, eggs, evaporated milk, and both sugars in a large bowl. Stir in cinnamon, ginger, cloves and salt. Pour into prepared pan. Sprinkle dry cake mix evenly over pumpkin filling. Sprinkle pecans over cake mix. Drizzle melted butter over top.

3. Bake in preheated oven until edges are slightly browned, 50-60 minutes.

4. Cool.

Submitted by: Candy Peare

PUBlick Theology

We are back to meeting at the Inn at Glen Gardner at 7 pm for the cooler months. Upcoming dates and topics are:

Oct 4 - 8 Stories of Faith

Nov 1 - Review of Wisdom

Dec 6 - Who Was Isaiah?

January 3 - Hopes for 2024



The season of giving is fast approaching. The WELCA giving tree will be up on Thanksgiving weekend. The number of residents at Newton's Guest Home has grown to 15 this year.

Be on the lookout for the tree with names and the things that they may need or wish for. They really appreciate that they are thought of in such a special way.

Sara

Spruce Run Lutheran Church Milestones

We are thrilled to welcome Michelle Myers and Beverly Hockenbury as new members.

We rejoice with the family of Jordan Fellin who was baptized on July 9, 2023.

Our sympathies to the family and friends of Robin Halozan as she entered the Church Triumphant on August 8, 2023.

Save the Date

October 5th - Our first Zoom Bible Study about *8 Stories of Faith* will meet at 7pm. We will be looking at everything from The Creation and Fall and Jeremiah's Unheeded Message to John the Baptist Greatest of Prophets, Least of the Kingdom and The Conflict in Antioch, the Church's Growing Pains.

October 8th - In honor of Francis of Assisi, we will be blessing animals in the lower parking lot on the from 2-4 pm. Please bring all God's creatures great and small.

October 29th - Join us at 10 am in worship for Reformation Sunday to hear what the Holy Spirit was doing during the Lutheran Reformation, and what that might mean for us today!

November 5th - We'll be celebrating All Saints Sunday in worship at 10 am. Come on out and remember the saints in your life!

November 26th - If you've ever wondered about the Christian Calendar, Christ the King Sunday is a not to be missed Sunday! At 10 am, we will celebrate the whole church year, from Advent to All Saints, in one service. We'll be singing some favorite hymns for each season, and learning a thing or two in the process!

Help Bag Hunger

Gail Vajda, Michelle Myers, Karen Smith, and Janet Ledoux as representatives of the North Hunterdon Food Pantry bagged groceries at the Clinton ShopRite on September 22, 2023 as part of their Partners in Caring program where shoppers can round-up their purchase or donate at the register. The ShopRite with the most donations will be rewarded with employees featured on a Cheerios box. We are thrilled to work with such a generous community partner to meet the needs of our clients.



NJ WELCA Bold Woman of the Year

Bernice Mayer was selected by the New Jersey Women of the ELCA as their Bold Woman of the Year. We were excited to celebrate Bernice at the WELCA meeting and thank God for her.



Vacation Bible School

Along with our friends at High Bridge Reformed, we held a VBS Program on Genesis. We had crafts, games, skits, snacks & fun!



Pastor Chris and I attended the NJ Synod on May 13, 2023 at the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton. This was the first in-person Synod since Covid and approximately 400 people attended.

The main events were:

- * Elections for Synod vice-president, secretary, and council positions.

- * 2024 spending plan.

- * A resolution designating the Synod as a Stigma-Free Zone in regard to mental illness.

Attending this assembly was a worthwhile experience and I'm grateful to have had the chance to participate. The next Assembly is scheduled for May 11, 2024 at the Grounds for Sculpture.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sue O'Brien

Blessing of the Animals

October 8, 2023 2- 4 pm



GAME NIGHT

Join us for food, fun
& fellowship!

October 20th
November 10th
December 8th

6 - 8 pm



Advent

Celebrating Advent is an excellent way
to prepare your mind and heart for Christmas.

Join us each week at 10 am in person or online.

December 3 ~ First Week
December 10 ~ Second Week
December 17 ~ Third Week

Christmas Eve Services

Sunday, December 24, 2023
10:00 am Christmas Pageant
7:00 pm Traditional Candlelight

Caroling Capers



December 10, 2023

*Bring an appetizer or
dessert to share*

*Join us for fellowship,
food, and carols.*

Everyone is welcome!

**December 9th
9 AM - 11 AM**

**Decorating our church
for Christmas**



Everyone is invited!

JINGLE BELL JUNCTION



November 18, 2023

9 AM - 3 PM

*Shop wonderful crafts!
Come for delicious food!
Bring friends!*

Volunteers are needed to help with many different tasks to help make this day a success. Please contact Sara if you can help in any way!

Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship Service



Wednesday, November 22, 2023

More information to come!

Plant-Based Tasting Social

Come try many different healthy foods, talk with others about the food and learn more about a healthy lifestyle.

The next tasting will be on :

October 22, 2023
4 PM

See guidelines on page 13 for more information.



Whole-Food, Plant-Based Recipe Swap & Tasting Guidelines

What to bring:

- Whole-Food, Plant-Based Food to Share

All dishes must be made only from plant ingredients

No animal products (meat, fish, eggs, dairy, cheese)

No added oil, salt, sugar, syrup, honey, and/or other sweeteners

No processed food

Make food for your family/group plus two more servings

If you are not sure if the dish you plan to make is a whole-food, plant-based compliant dish, you can contact me and I will look at the recipe and suggest ingredient substitutions if needed.

While there is some room for other items on the fringe of a whole-food, plant-based diet, for this gettogether, we focus on sticking with the healthiest foods at the core of every plant-based, whole-food diet. The purpose of the swap is to build a collection of tasted, whole-food, plant-based recipes.

Print out the recipe of what you bring that includes all the ingredients in the dish so people with food allergies will know what is in each dish. Also, people can take a picture of the printed recipe with their phone to add to their collection if they wish.

If you are not ready to cook a plant-based dish, bring some washed and ready to eat fresh fruit or vegetables like grape tomatoes, peeled carrots, sliced peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, or some steamed vegetables (fresh steamed or frozen steamed mix).

We want to minimize set up and clean up so bring everything you will need (your own dinner plate, bowl, cup, utensils (eating and serving), napkins, water to drink, etc. and a placemat if you wish). Plan on taking back everything you bring.

Do not plan on using the church kitchen. If you are bringing a hot dish, bring it already heated.

You can invite anyone to come, but be sure they have a copy of the guidelines to be sure we only have whole-food, plant-based compliant dishes.

For recipe samples, visit my free website. : [Anne Sainz Recipe Box](#)

My email: Anne Sainz: asainzrb@gmail.com

2023 Reverse Advent Calendar Food Box

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
Dec 3	Dec 4	Dec 5	Dec 6	Dec 7	Dec 8	Dec 9
Italian or Ranch Salad Dressing	Paper Towels, Tissues, Toilet Paper	Canned Fruit	Laundry Soap	Dish Detergent	Bag of Sugar	Bottle of Shampoo
Dec 10	Dec 11	Dec 12	Dec 13	Dec 14	Dec 15	Dec 16
Coffee &/or Tea	Box of Cereal	Bar of soap	Container of Salt &/or Pepper	Canned Ravioli	Can of Spam &/or Hash	Can of Chicken &/or Tuna
Dec 17	Dec 18	Dec 19	Dec 20	Dec 21	Dec 22	Dec 23
Toothpaste/ Toothbrush	Condiments: Ketchup, Mustard, Mayo	Instant Potatoes	All Purpose Cleaner	Can of Baked Beans	Deodorant	Bottle of Apple Juice

Drop off times:

Sunday, December 3	11 am - 12 pm
Sunday, December 10	11 am - 12 pm
Sunday, December 17	11 am - 12 pm
Sunday, December 24	11 am - 12 pm
Sunday, December 31	11 am - 12 pm

Dec 24



All donations benefit the North Hunterdon Food Pantry.
Donations can be dropped off at
Spruce Run Lutheran Church
442 W. Hill Road Glen Gardner, NJ 08826

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

Spruce Run Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church
442 West Hill Road
Lebanon Township
Glen Gardner, NJ 08826-3252

www.SpruceRunLutheran.com



*"The Lord will indeed give what is good,
and our land will yield its harvest."*

Psalm 85:12

Subscribe to our YouTube channel and Like and Follow us on Facebook @SRELC