



SPRUCE RUN *Fellowship*

SPRUCE RUN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN ZION CHURCH

Advent 2023 Vol. 68, No. 4

From the Pastor's Pen



Inviting Someone to Church without Losing all of your Marbles

I have some excellent news. The contents of our "God Conversation" marble jars have almost flipped. You might remember last year I filled up a jar with 120 marbles and set a second empty one next to it, and each time someone in the congregation has a God conversation— listening to what God is up to in someone's life, talking about their faith, having a back and forth about deep-seated values and convictions— and tells me about it, I have moved a marble from one jar to another.



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A Message from the Council President

The Faithful Journey team has continued its learning journey with the fellow congregations from the northwest Jersey Synod. Our latest training was focused on developing a challenge statement for our congregation. Basically a "how might we" approach a challenge facing us.

We came up with a need to expand the engagement of our members beyond a core group of people who typically get involved in our activities. We realize many things have changed in peoples' lives since Covid and priorities may have changed. But we also need to make room for more leadership and involvement in the church's activities.

Our congregation is made up of kind, magnetic people who have a wide variety of gifts and talents. We need to find ways to utilize these talents to enhance the quality of our church. How do we get more people to feel comfortable volunteering and how do we encourage more people to join in activities?

We are open to your suggestions and ideas! Please seek out any of the members of the Faithful Journey team with your thoughts. As a reminder the team members are: Pastor Chris, Sonia Cordova, George Creasy, Mary Gaydick, Janet Ledoux, Laura Mortensen and Karen Smith.

Have a Blessed Christmas!
Janet



CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

Please join our Chancel Choir on Dec. 3 at 4:15 pm at the Lebanon Township Municipal Building, 530 W Hill Road in Glen Gardner for the lighting of the Christmas Tree. Rumor has it that Santa Claus may make an appearance! Come join the fun!

News from Our Committees & Interest Groups

North Hunterdon Food Pantry

This is a busy season for the food pantry. We loaded the pantry freezer with 40 turkeys for the Thanksgiving distribution. The special Thanksgiving bags included along with a turkey, all the necessary items to prepare a full Thanksgiving meal including the Pumpkin Bread prepared by a local Girl Scout group. We had 32 families receive the special bags along with their regular monthly distribution. Again, all our dedicated regular volunteers arrived and helped. Also volunteering to pack the special bags and the regular monthly distribution bags were two very enthusiastic Girl Scout groups. They did a wonderful job.

Now we are preparing for the Christmas distribution which again will include a special Christmas distribution bag along with the regular distribution. The Knights of Columbus in Long Valley has again this year donated 20 turkeys for our pantry freezer. We hope to contact our Girl Scouts again to help shelve groceries and pack the distribution bags.

Karen has prepared the 'Reverse Advent Calendar' again this year. Watch for announcements in the bulletin and on FaceBook for suggested items that the pantry needs.

Our neighbors, friends, clubs and organizations continue to donate to the pantry which is always appreciated, and we would like to thank them all for their generosity.

Happy Holidays,
Gail, Karen, Janet and Sue

Jingle Bell Junction

Thank you to everyone who made this year's Jingle Bell Junction a big success.

Everyone was happy, cheerful and in the holiday mood. To everyone who baked, cut, peeled, diced, shopped, rang bells, worked in the kitchen, and all other parts of JBJ... thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

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 giving tree for the residents at Newton's Guest Home.

Worship & Music

The committee continues to address any concerns regarding the liturgy and worship life of our congregation. We are always looking for more volunteers for the Altar Guild, Lectors, and Ushers, but especially need more volunteers for Worship Assistants. If anyone is interested in serving, has any questions, or wants to help in any other way, please reach out to anyone on the committee.

On November 21, we had our first Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship with 5 churches (including Spruce Run) at the High Bridge Reformed Church. It was an evening of thanksgiving and praise and fellowship after the service. It was a wonderful evening.

The Advent Season (Setting 3 will be used) is now upon us and we hope to see you during the our Holiday Services/Events:

Dec 10 – (2-4 pm) Caroling Capers
– carols, appetizers & desserts!

Dec 21 – (7 pm) Longest Night

Dec 24 – (10 am)
Christmas Pageant

Dec 24 – (7 pm)
Traditional Candlelight Worship

Our next Worship and Music Committee meeting is planned for end of January/ beginning of February 2024.

Judi Mansilla

Council Meeting Highlights

September 12, 2023

To date, over half has been received for the congregation match required for the Synod Excellence in Ministry Unleashed (EMU) grant.

Invoice for winter snowplowing was not received until July.

Pastor presided over the funeral of Robin Halozan at SRLC. Over 100 people were in attendance.

Pastor will be attending a continuing education seminar, "Kindling Faith: Sacred Places Transitions." Will gather information on sharing/leasing extra space within the church building.

Pastor has a new Synod commitment – Facilitator for First Call Theological Education.

Pastor will conduct the first worship service at Rolling Hills care facility October 15.

Pastor will be on vacation Sunday, December 31. A worship lead is needed for this service.

It was discussed that outside worship services should have a rain date, or a way to provide notification to move back to the church building.

Worship & Music

Blessing of the animals will be October 8.

A multi-church ecumenical Thanksgiving service will be held prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. Details to follow.

The first week of Advent is December 3. Setting 3 will be used.

The solemn Longest Night service will be held Thursday, December 21 at SRLC which will include a special musical presentation.

There will be 2 services Christmas Eve, both offering communion – 10:00 am (with pageant) & 7:00 pm (with extended musical offerings). The choir will sing at both services.

A letter was received from Lutheran Social Ministries thanking SRLC for our gifts of school backpacks.

Lebanon Township Community Day is Saturday, September 23 from 1:00 – 6:00 pm. The church and the food pantry will each have a table.

This year's Sunday School curriculum will cover Old Testament heroes.

Families of prospective Confirmation students will be contacted. Classes will be scheduled based on response.

First Communion classes will be scheduled.

Jeff Smith will chair the Holistic Stewardship committee. The first meeting will be scheduled for later this month. The goal is to kick off the stewardship campaign prior to the holiday season.

Having a clothing recycling bin at SRLC is being investigated.

Installing a columbarium niche wall in God's Acre cemetery was introduced.

Ideas for the 250th anniversary celebration are being gathered.

October 10, 2023

The church mission statement is critical to the "why" of the congregation. The SRLC mission statement is in need of updating.

A letter was received from Synod Council thanking SRLC for our 2023 mission support.

It is recommended that SRLC send thank you notes when special donations are received by the church. The availability of note cards is being checked.

Outdoor fall clean-up is scheduled for November 11.

The front steps are in need of power washing.

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Two outreach ideas were proposed – reinventing “Harvest Home” as a takeout event & some type of food truck/music event.

The first confirmation class will take place this week via ZOOM with one student. There are potentially 3 other students that may join.

The Stewardship Committee will begin to present temple talks on Sundays before worship.

The ecumenical Thanksgiving service is scheduled for Tuesday, November 21 @ 7:00 am and will be hosted by the High Bridge Reformed Church. Four local churches will be participating.

Another round of cottage meetings will be held after Christmas. Host volunteers are needed.

A new camera for broadcasting has been ordered. Install date to be determined.

The annual meeting will be held Sunday, January 28, 2024, with a snow date of February 4. A potluck luncheon will be held immediately following the meeting.

A celebration will be held for Bernice Mayer’s 100th birthday in February.

GAME NIGHT

Join us for food, fun
& fellowship!

December 8th
January 19th

6 - 8 pm



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

As of today, we only have 22 marbles in the original container, meaning this congregation has had 98 conversations with our neighbors about God! And from what folk have told me, we've found out some interesting things. Some people we've talked to have been hurt by the church, others sincerely believe in pagan gods, and still others desperately wish they could worship in a Christian community, but inconsistent work schedules and overwhelming obligations, make corporate worship a luxury they cannot afford. We've talked with people of strong convictions without any religious background, Jews with whom we share much, and even found out longtime friends were Lutheran, but had never talked faith with them before.

I encouraged us to have God Conversations for two reasons. First, because the Acts of the Apostles demonstrates clearly that the Church's main job is to catch up with what the Holy Spirit is already doing in the world, and talking to people about faith is an excellent way to notice what God is already up to.

Second, because Lutherans have this problem—Lutheran Laryngitis. The average Lutheran invites someone to church every 22 years, but the average person only accepts such an invitation every three times it is offered... so the average Lutheran successfully invites someone to church once, maybe twice, in their lifetime. When asked why they don't invite people to church, the answer is that they imagine it will be awkward, and that they don't have practice. Well guess what, we've had 98 chances to get over being awkward, and 98 instances where we as a congregation practiced talking about the faith!

And we're coming up on some pretty important holy days in the church calendar, each one an opportunity for conversation and invitation: We're in the season of Advent, a season of waiting, what do you wait for? We're heading into Christmas, what was your favorite Christmas experience? Epiphany opens up God's presence among us to everyone, where do you see God at work these days? Our Longest night service will be on December 21 st at 7pm, would you like to join us for a

quiet time to grieve and remember? We'll be holding a Christmas pageant on Christmas Eve morning at 10am, and our traditional candlelight service on Christmas Eve at 7pm—come on out and watch. Come join me at our Epiphany Crafting event on January 6 th . I hope these God conversations point us to where God is at work, and have taught us to invite our neighbors to join us in celebrating the works of God to which this holy season points.

In Christ's Peace,
Pastor Chris



The WELCA giving tree is up and tags with gift suggestions for the residents at Newton's Guest Home are available.

Please be sure to indicate which name you have taken on the sign-up sheet next to the tree. All gifts need to be at church by December 17th.

Caroling Capers



December 10, 2023

3 - 5 pm

*Bring an appetizer
or dessert to share.*

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

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

Recipes from the Congregation

Lemon Garlic Dip

- 1/2 cup raw almonds (or other nut)
- 1/2 cup non-dairy milk (more if needed)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon low-sodium soy sauce



1. In a blender or food processor, combine almonds, non-dairy milk, garlic powder, nutritional yeast, mustard, lemon juice, vinegar and soy sauce. Blend until smooth.
2. Serve as a dip on a platter of Crudité's. I especially like it with broccoli.

Submitted by: Anne Sainz

The Longest Night

December 21, 2023

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

On December 21st, 7 pm we will be holding a Longest Night service. This is an Advent/Christmas themed service acknowledges 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!



Epiphany Craft

January 6, 2024

7:00 pm

Join us to make an epiphany craft.
Please let us know if you will attend so
we can have the right number of crafts.



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.

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



*"I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness
known through all generations."* -Psalm 89:1

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