

# Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

96 East Allendale Road  
Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

**Paul Miller, Vice Pastor**

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Facebook: ZionlutheranSR | [www.zionsr.org](http://www.zionsr.org)

## TRUMPET

June 2020

Newsletter



**THREE IN ONE**





Dear Fellow Members and Friends of Zion,

June 2020

**This Far By Faith.** It is not only the theme for Zion's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in 2021, it is what we believe. Pause and think about those four words. Zion's two hundred years of faithfulness - it is pretty darn awe inspiring. I am incredibly grateful to be part of this congregation, and as our website and Facebook page both say, Our Doors May Be Closed, But Our Hearts Are Open.

Thank you to Erin Smeedy-Atherton and Stephen Perretta for keeping the church current on social media. Thanks to all our members who are checking in on one another via phone, Facetime, Zoom or drive by – it is important for us to remain connected.

At our council meeting on Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, we agreed to form a Gathering Committee of council and non-council members to discern when we will gather again in person. Pastor Paul will lead this group along with Stephen Perretta, Colleen Post, Britt Jannelli, Jean Jones, Krista Petersen, and Jackie Bryan. Rest assured, preparations are being made – hand sanitizing stations and face masks are being ordered. The welfare of the congregation as a collective group is of the utmost importance. As new worship information becomes available, you will be notified. For the immediate future, we will continue with Zoom church services (followed by bible study) every Sunday as well as M-F noon devotionals (Zoom). Any further questions around gathering in-person and indoors can be directed to Pastor Paul.

By the time this is sent, the exterior of the church will be almost finished with the fresh new paint job. Next, we are hoping to get the sprinkler system operational so we can move forward on the beautiful new landscaping around the church and sign. The repair of the church pews is almost finished to be followed by getting the wooden exterior doors on Fellowship Hall refinished. A special thank you to Tom May for completing a roof repair on the Sacristy vent pipe and to Bill Auer for some electrical work in the parsonage.

Since the state mandated shut down, our parish house tenant, Body Positive Works (BPW) had to temporarily close its doors. The owners applied for PPP monies and were approved for a small loan. Council accepted 25% of their loan as payment (the maximum allowed by law) for the months of April, May, and June. BPW plans to reopen, but it will take time to get back to full operation.

Our Parsonage tenant requested we lease the two-car garage to reduce his rent obligation. The garage has been leased for the months of June, July, and August. If you are aware of someone interested in renting the garage (starting in September), please let me know.

Council approved a motion to make donations of \$250 each, to both St. Paul's Episcopal Men's Shelter in Paterson as well at the Mahwah Center for Food Action as part of our promise to Keep Striving to Help Others. Zion will also be sponsoring a Non-Perishable Food Drive beginning June 1<sup>st</sup> through June 12<sup>th</sup> – items may be left on the tables set up on the portico of the church. The boroughs of Saddle River and Upper Saddle River have posted our food drive to their respective websites and Facebook pages. Thank you to Colleen, Tracey and Gavin Post for gathering the food each evening.

Thank you all for your continued support and faithfulness. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out.

Faithfully yours,  
Karin Topp, Council President  
[kd4topps@gmail.com](mailto:kd4topps@gmail.com) / 201-248-9872 cell

**ZION COUNCIL MEMBERS 2020**

Karin Topp	President	<a href="mailto:kd4topps@gmail.com">kd4topps@gmail.com</a>
Stephen Perretta	Vice President	<a href="mailto:speretta@perretta.com">speretta@perretta.com</a>
Robin Hershman	Secretary	<a href="mailto:robinrayeh@aol.com">robinrayeh@aol.com</a>
John Cavanagh	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:cavanag7@optonline.net">cavanag7@optonline.net</a>
Karen Olszewski		<a href="mailto:karen_j_olszewski@msn.com">karen_j_olszewski@msn.com</a>
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Tom May		<a href="mailto:ts.may@verizon.net">ts.may@verizon.net</a>
Pastor Paul Miller		<a href="mailto:pmiller.cos@gmail.com">pmiller.cos@gmail.com</a>

# Online Worship Services with Pastor Paul Miller

**Sunday 10 AM**

**Daily Devotional at Noon (M-F)**

All Worship Services use the following:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/7225302268>

Meeting ID: 722 530 2268

One tap mobile

+16465588656,7225302268# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 722 530 2268





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1930 Highway 33, Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

### Returning to In-Person Gatherings

As people whose lives are formed and re-formed by Scripture, we find ourselves turning again and again to the stories of our faith ancestors found therein. During this time of the COVID19 pandemic, I have looked at the end of the story of Joseph and his brothers wondering how God is using our current situation for good. I have wandered with the Israelites in the wilderness thinking perhaps this time is our wilderness school. I have re-read the stories of the early church in Acts thinking perhaps our future as a church will look a lot more like the house-churches of the first century. I have waited with the apostles for the Risen Christ to come among us. In all of these accounts, one thing becomes clear – God pursues us, claims us, and is with us, no matter our circumstance! Even at times of rebellion and sinfulness, especially in times of despair and hopelessness, God makes a way out of no way and showers us with grace and love.

Today I was again in the wilderness with the Israelites, in Chapter 32 of Exodus – not a very happy chapter! Here, the Israelites are tired of waiting as Moses has been gone too long up the mountain. They grow impatient and want to do something! In their restlessness, they convince Aaron to make for them a god they can see and worship. And he does – he fashions a calf made from the gold of their jewelry. The results are disastrous, as we know. Moses is furious, God is displeased, and destruction results. Thankfully, that is not the end of the story.

We know this restlessness! We want to do something that feels familiar. We are tired of waiting for the governor or the CDC or the WHO to say it's ok to return to in-person gatherings. My fear is that we will begin to fashion for ourselves something that resembles "church" but instead becomes something that actually harms us. So I urge you, dear church: stay the course, love your neighbor by staying home, check on each other remotely, and continue worshipping online.

While we don't have a date yet as to when we might return to our buildings, when we are able to return to in-person gatherings, there are many things to consider. Linked to this letter is [guidance from the ELCA](#). It is comprehensive but not exhaustive (though looking at this list can be exhausting). It does not tell you everything you need to do or not do but helps you think through how and when you might carry out ministry in your setting. Gather a group of leaders from your congregation and work through this guidance together to make the best decisions possible.

Here's what I would add to this checklist – pray for wisdom, dwell in God's word, and ask repeatedly, "what is our mission as a congregation in this community and are we serving it?". Think through what your decisions communicate about a God of abundant life. Perhaps congregations in a particular mission cluster will want to make joint decisions about how and when to re-gather. Decisions made one day do not need to be binding as conditions change – councils and worship teams need to be flexible, adaptive, and responsive to current circumstances.

I have a concern for our pastors and deacons with underlying health conditions whose doctors have said they shouldn't return to in-person worship until there is a vaccine for COVID19. How will congregations honor that word? If this is your situation, let's talk to come up with a plan to care for both the rostered minister and the congregation moving forward.

Finally, I know we are in this together doing the best we can to care for the church we love. We will make mistakes and disagree about next steps. And that is okay. When it happens, let's look back and see what we have learned and then move forward with the risk of again making new mistakes and having new disagreements. But through it all, we trust in the God of grace and mercy whose Spirit surrounds and upholds us. It's what we've got, and it is enough.

Bishop Tracie L. Bartholomew



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*God's work. Our hands.*  
1930 Highway 33, Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

May 22, 2020

Dear Friends,

Just this afternoon, President Trump declared houses of worship to be essential and to open this weekend. I would agree that houses of worship are essential. Throughout this pandemic and stay-at-home order, our congregations have continued to provide essential ministry by proclaiming the gospel, feeding the hungry, advocating for the most vulnerable, carrying out Christian education, and being the church for the sake of the world. While we have not gathered in person, we have continued to be open.

The declaration about opening this weekend should not lead you to rush to have in person indoor worship services. I am eager to gather again in person but not at the expense of the most vulnerable among us. Many of our members and most active churchgoers are older which puts them in a high-risk category. Some of our rostered leaders have underlying health conditions, which also puts them in a high-risk category. A number of our buildings do not allow for the physical distancing required (6 feet between non-family groups) to have more than a handful of people present. In NJ, the stay-at-home orders remain in place.

Please follow the guidance we put out last week ([found here](#)) and utilize a congregational planning team to make decisions about how to gather again in person in your building when it is safe to do so. It is better to plan a methodical phased return than to risk causing an outbreak of COVID19.

My prayers are with you as you make these decisions,

Bishop Tracie L. Bartholomew

**Mahwah Center for Food Action**  
**Non-Perishable Food Drive**  
**Sponsored by Zion Lutheran Church**  
**June 1<sup>st</sup> – June 12<sup>th</sup>**



**Collection Located At:**  
**96 E. Allendale Road**  
**Saddle River, NJ 07458**

**Please leave items on tables located in front of church doors.**  
**You may also send donations to the church mailing address.**  
**Please note in memo line: MCFA Collection**

**Thank you for your generous support!**



As we have been unable to be together, in person to worship as a church family, we are sharing three different ways for sending in your offering –

Mail your check to: Zion Lutheran Church  
96 E. Allendale Road  
Saddle River, NJ 07458

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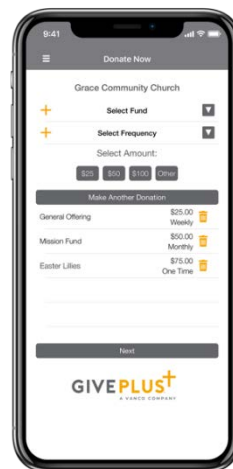
***Make Easter Donations Easy by Giving with Your Smartphone!***

You can support Zion from anywhere at any time...

Simply use the GivePlus Mobile app to give with your smartphone.

Download the free GivePlus app from your phone's app store.

Find our church by ZIP code [07458] or using location finder and Donate!



In less than 5 minutes you can set up an account or give using a guest account.

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**You can also give online at our website**  
**<https://zionsr.org/donate/>**

If you have any questions regarding GivePlus, contact Stephen at [stephen@zionsr.org](mailto:stephen@zionsr.org)