

**WELCOME TO**  
**Old Zionsville United Church of Christ**  
**5981 Fountain Road, P.O. Box 215**  
**Old Zionsville, PA 18068**

Email: [ozuccoffice@ptd.net](mailto:ozuccoffice@ptd.net) Web page: [www.oldzionsucc.org](http://www.oldzionsucc.org)

Church Office: 610-966-3601

Pastor: 610-393-3522 or 610-966-3436

Rev. Lori Esslinger

Pastor

David Carlson

Organist

November 19, 2023

10:15 a.m.

*\*those who are able may stand*

**Covenant Sunday**

A Celebration of the Covenant Among Congregations and  
the Penn Northeast Conference

Prelude: "Come Unto Me" Rasley

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Candles

Call to Worship (Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21 adapted)

Leader: The Holy One is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**People: The Holy One is good to all, with compassion for all God's creation.**

Leader: The Holy One upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.

**People: The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.**

Leader: You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.

**People: The Holy One is just in all ways and always kind.**

Leader: The Holy One is near to all who call on God, to all who call in truth.

**People: The Holy One fulfills the desire of all who are in fear and also hears their cry and saves them.**

Leader: The Holy One watches over all who love the Divine Presence and will make wickedness no more.

**All: My mouth will speak the praise of the Holy One, and all flesh will bless God's holy name forever and ever.**

Invocation (based on Isaiah 55:1) (unison)

**Hear, everyone who thirsts; come to the waters; and we who have need come, receive the abundance of substance provided freely for our bodies and souls. Incline our ears, and let us come to God to**

**listen, so that we may live. Our Creator makes an everlasting covenant with us as God has with our ancestors. We ask for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in this sacred space, so we can recommit ourselves through word, love and action to our everlasting covenant with our God in Jesus' Name. Amen.**

\*Opening Hymn: "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation"

p.403

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Leader: As we gather in worship, let us take this moment to consider our needs for transformation and forgiveness. I invite you to quietly reflect on our need for grace. **(moment of silence.)**

Leader: Dear God, the creator of all things based on love,

**People: you created us in your image of love. There have been times we have fallen short of that love, not only to you but to each other and all of creation. I ask for your forgiveness and from you, present today, my siblings, sisters and brothers in Christ. I thank you for the comforting strength and compassion of the Holy Spirit to do better in bringing love and grace and all I do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

Words of Grace (Assurance of Pardon)

Scripture tells us if we are "kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, God in Christ has forgiven us". Rest assured, my friends, our sins are forgiven. Amen.

\*Hymn: "Called as Partners in Christ's Service"

insert

Scripture: Matthew 25:14-30

p.860

Reflection

Today is PNEC Covenant Sunday. This is the Sunday set aside to help congregations understand more deeply the covenant we share among the settings of the United Church of Christ. We often think of ourselves as autonomous, when in fact, we are interdependent in covenant with each other. The local congregation is the center of our denomination, and as such makes decisions for itself. Yet, it is in relationship with the conference and the national setting which strive to support the local congregations in their work. On this Sunday, we honor that covenant. We hope you will consider providing support to the Conference as it strives to support your congregation through programs, search and call, crisis intervention, and ongoing coaching for improving the congregations outreach and ministry. The Generosity Team of the Penn Northeast Conference thanks you for your gift.

Reception of New Members

insert

Invitation to Generosity

Romans 14:7 tells us, "We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves." We are in covenant with God and joined in community with one another. Let us give of our resources as those who live for the good and well-being of all.

Offertory: "Thanks Be to Thee"

Handel

\* Presentation of our Gifts and The Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

\*Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (unison)

**Merciful God, receive our humble offerings as a testimony to your provision and a demonstration of our love. May they be magnified and multiplied for the benefit of our community and all creation. Amen.**

Choir Anthem: "All Things Bright and Beautiful"

Gilpin

Dedication of Our OCWM Gifts

The Pastoral Prayer....The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

\*Closing Hymn: "The Servant Song"

p.424

\*Benediction

May the love of God assure you, the hope of God guide you, and the peace of God sustain you as you go receiving and extending God's grace in the world.

\*Three Fold Amen

\*Extinguishing of the Candles

\*Postlude: "We Plow the Fields and Scatter"

Mansfield



Please bring your papers with your sins and misgivings written on them to the chimnea out on the front lawn. I will be there with the lighter to ignite them to send them in smoke to our God.

**TODAY'S ALTAR FLOWERS** are given by Michael and Jane Bedell in honor of their Wedding Anniversary on November 21st.

**TODAY'S BULLETINS** are sponsored by Len and Judy Hoch.

**TODAY'S GREETER** is Chris Schell.

**TODAY'S LITURGIST** is Les Schoenberger.

RESTROOMS ARE AVAILABLE on the main floor of the Church and downstairs. Bulletin MAGNIFIER SHEETS can be found on the sound system.

Our church is equipped with an Assistive Listening System. You provide your own headphones which can be connected to the transmitter which will allow you to more clearly hear the Worship Service or any program being offered in the Sanctuary. See anyone at the sound booth to inquire.



All loose offering in today's offering plate will go to our Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Thank you.

**Brunch after Worship Today** at the Merc. **Lunch Bunch** will be Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 12 noon at East Penn Diner. These events are open to anyone wishing to join us for good food and conversation!

The Outlook Committee is selling **Fruit/Nut Rolls** to help with parking lot repairs. Order forms can be found at the entrances and they need to be returned by **TODAY**. You may place your completed order form in the Offering plate, give to Brenda Shoemaker or Bobby Schmeltzle, or call/email the church office with your order. Thank you!

**Poinsettia** orders are now being accepted for our Christmas season. You may choose red, pink or white and they are \$7.00 for a 6" pot. Order forms can be found on our Sound System and must be received by November 29<sup>th</sup>.

**AFT** is still looking for a sturdy clothing rack. Thank you! If you know anyone that could use a Wedding Gown, ATF has a very pretty one, brand new with tags still on, size 14. See Millie.

**ATF is asking to please hold any donations till after Thanksgiving. Thank You.**

December Soup is **Ground Beef Vegetable** and will be sold by the quart along with **Ham and Cheese Sandwiches**. Orders forms can be found at the entrances to the Church and must be received by Sunday, December 3, 2023.

Orders may be placed in the Offering Plate, call Annie or the Church office, or emailing the church office. Pick up will be on Thursday, December 14 in our downstairs social hall between 4:00-6:00 p.m. Sandwiches would be great to sell at work for Friday lunch. For those wishing to take orders at work you will find a sign up sheet on the Sound System.

**Announcing: Advent Bible Study** - 9 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. each Sunday morning in Advent, Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24, and Epiphany lesson on Jan. 7! Bring your Bible. We will meet in the Lower Social Hall. All Welcome. No previous Bible Study experience necessary!

**Angel Tree Project** - This year you can choose an ornament from the Angel Tree, purchase the item and return it to the Church by Sunday, December 3 **OR** you can go to the website [Kindnessprojectlv.org](http://Kindnessprojectlv.org) and purchase an item listed on one of the ornaments, or whatever else you choose. To purchase on the website, click on "To donate click here" and then click on "Amazon wish list-- Lehigh Valley wishlist" -- purchase an item of your choice and when checking out select The Kindness Project address for shipping. Thanks for your participation!

**Week of November 19-25, 2023:**

Pastor Lori will have office hours on Wednesday from 10am-3pm.

Other times by appointment.

Church Secretary Hours: Monday- 10am-3pm

(please call before coming)

Sexton: Richard Shoemaker (with Thanks to his wife, Brenda)

Scouts – Monday @ 6pm

GriefShare – Tuesday @ 1pm (last session)

Consistory – Tuesday @ 7pm

**Next Sunday** – 9:00am Sunday School

10:15am Worship

**Total Offerings from November 12, 2023:**

General Offerings: \$1,377.00

Mission: \$67.00

Communion: \$10.00

Utilities: \$55.00

Parking Lot: \$10.00

Cemetery: \$4.00

Attendance: 63

# Reception of New Members

## The Invitation

Leader: We invite to come forward those who wish to affirm their baptism by uniting with us in the household of faith:

**Lisa Talecki**  
**Richard Yeakel, Jr.**

## The Address

Leader: Friends in Christ, we all are received into the Church through the sacrament of baptism. These people have found nurture and support in the midst of the family of Christ. Through prayer and study, they have been led by the Holy Spirit to affirm their baptism, and to claim in our presence their covenantal relationship with Christ and the members of the church. They are here for service to Jesus Christ, using the gifts which the Holy Spirit bestows.

Pastor: Hear the words of Jesus: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Anyone who abides in me, and I in that person, is the one who bears much fruit. abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

If you

Leader: Lisa and Richard, do you desire to affirm your baptism into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?

**Candidates: I do.**

Leader: Do you renounce the powers of evil and desire the freedom of new life in Christ?

**Candidates: I do.**

Leader: Do you profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

**Candidates: I do.**

Leader: Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be Christ's disciples, to follow in the way of our Savior, to resist oppression and evil, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?

**Candidates: I promise with the help of God.**

Leader: Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to grow in the Christian faith, and to be faithful members of the church of Jesus Christ, celebrating Christ's presence, and furthering Christ's mission in all the world?

**Candidates: I promise with the help of God.**

## **Affirmation of Faith**

Leader: Let the congregation stand now, as we unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in God.

Leader: Do you believe in God?

**People: I believe in God.**

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**People: I believe in Jesus Christ.**

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**People: I believe in the Holy Spirit.**

(the congregation may be seated)

Pastor (to all candidates): By our baptism we were made one with the body of Christ, the church. Today we rejoice in our pilgrimage of faith which has brought all of us to this time and place. We give thanks for every community of faith that has been our spiritual home, and we celebrate our presence in this household of faith.

Leader: Do you promise to participate in the life and mission of this family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local church as it serves this community and the world?

**Candidates: I promise, with the help of God.**

## **Welcome and Reception**

Leader: Let us, the members of Old Zionsville United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

**People: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.**

Leader and Representatives: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of Old Zionsville United Church of Christ, we extend to you the hand of Christian love, welcoming you into the company of this local church.

Pastor: Let us pray. O God, we praise you for calling us to faith and for gathering us into the church, the body of Christ. We thank you for your people gathered in this local church and rejoice that you have increased our community of faith. Together may we live in the Spirit, building one another up in love, sharing in the life and worship of the church, and serving the world for the sake of Jesus Christ.

**All: Amen**

## **Benediction**

Pastor: Go in the peace of Christ.

**All: Thanks be to God.**





Today we welcome into the faith and family of Old Zionsville UCC:

**Richard Yeakel, Jr.** - Richard Yeakel, Jr. is no stranger to our congregation. He was baptized here many years ago and has been here to help with dinners and in other various ways over the years. Most recently, after the death of his long time life partner, he has become more involved at the church to share his amazing gift of cooking with us. Richard has other gifts to share too. After High School, he attended a Floral School in Ohio. He worked for Phoebe Floral for several years and Wood Food Services for several years too. Now retired, his love of life, keeping busy and sharing his gifts brings him here to grow in Faith with us.

**Lisa Talecki** – Lisa Talecki, who happens to be Richard's amazing Sister, lives in Center Valley with her husband, John. They have two children, Samantha, lives in Philly works as a financial advisor and Sean attends Drexel University in Philly, studying electrical engineering. After High School, Lisa went on to earn an Associate's Degree in Graphic Design at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. She has worked for the Morning Call in the Advertising department as well as an advertising agency. You can tell by her creative signs and her decorative touches that she is a creative and caring individual. She and John (who is very tall and has to duck in the basement) have been married for 27 years and we are grateful that they have been supporting the church in many ways during the past year or so. We look forward to continuing to grow in faith together.

**Please help to welcome these new members into the fellowship of Old Zionsville UCC!**

## **Living Psalm 111** – written by Maria Mankin

On any given day, God remembers our covenant.  
It's a beautiful thing, especially when the choir is singing its alleluia  
and the stained glass is glinting just right. It's just magnificent  
when we're standing on the right side of the table, mouths full of promise.

God's word of hope and restoration rings out from the pulpit,  
and we are rapt or dozing or distracted by the fact that the pulpit is now just  
another screen, no different from most of our relationships this year.  
A small square, a slight buzz, a delay in the signal to remind us of how far apart  
we are from those who used to make up for our shortcomings.

This covenant, this deep and committed relationship between God and us,  
always seemed like a communal promise,  
full of mercy and compassion,  
and others who could pick up the slack.  
That word – covenant – never even meant  
much more than a rainbow, a spared son,  
a disaster that happened to someone else.

For years though, we've lived in disasters of our own making,  
struggling to get out ahead of them,  
to make some small difference that might allow us to sleep at night,  
and then the earth spit up more obstacles, and the world shut down,  
and we had plenty of time to contemplate our relationship to God, and with God,  
and it was not easy or well-tended,  
not with all those mentions of us instead of me.

But God does not forget a promise made just because we've realized  
how impossible it is to live up to it alone,  
without our neighbors, without those  
who balance us and challenge us and heal us and serve us bread.

God remains.  
God answers us still.  
God poses new questions, and sends us small gifts,  
like the acrid smell of manure before snow,  
the hazy headlights of taxi cabs cutting through fog,  
the surprise of a phone ringing with a friend on the other end.

There are signs, if we look, that God remembers,  
even through our fear and doubt and isolation,  
even as we try to shift the blame,  
even though we fail and fall many times,  
even when we are on the wrong side of the table  
and our mouths are empty and dry.