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# THE ZION HERALD

## December 2022

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*"Happy are those whose strength is in God, in whose heart are the highways to Zion." Psalm 84:5*

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### The Pastor's Ponderings



For the last few months, I've been introducing the social justice statements from the ELCA. A logical extension of the ELCA's social statement on criminal justice is the statement on The Death Penalty, originally adopted by churchwide assembly in 1991. You can read the entire statement on the ELCA's webpage:

<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Death-Penalty>

The death penalty is still active in the state of Indiana. According to <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/> there are currently 8 individuals on death row and the most recent execution was in 2009.

Like all ELCA social justice statements, leaders and members may have a variety of points of view. The social statement is not intended to be "binding" or signal any sort of requirement for membership. Still, the clarity this social statement is very straight forward: the ELCA opposes The Death Penalty.

While developing the statement, a few core ideas were discussed:

- 1) We lament, grieve, and are deeply disturbed by violence that has existed in our world from the time of Cain and Abel. It is the calling of every Christian to do everything in their power to work for a world without violence.
- 2) While it could be argued that God's Law permits capital punishment for the crime of murder, the brokenness of our world leads us to believe that capital punishment cannot be administered justly.
- 3) We believe that capital punishment creates a focus on the perpetrator rather than the victim of a crime or their loved ones. This further breaks down societal relationships and victimizes those who have been harmed in a crime.

A report from the State of Indiana (<https://www.in.gov/ipdc/files/Death-Penalty-Facts,-Indiana.pdf>) provides significant information regarding the death penalty in Indiana. The report highlights some of the worrying issues that call into question if the death penalty has been or can be administered justly. (1) There seems to be a pattern where crimes against white victims are more likely to be death penalty cases. (2) There have been two individuals

# December Readings

December 4

*2nd Sunday of Advent*

- Isaiah 11:1-10
- Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
- Romans 15:4-13
- Matthew 3:1-12

December 11

*3rd Sunday of Advent*

- Isaiah 35:1-10
- Psalm 146:5-10
- James 5:7-10
- Matthew 11:2-11

December 18

*4th Sunday of Advent*

- Isaiah 7:10-16
- Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
- Romans 1:1-7
- Matthew 1:18-25

December 24

*Christmas Eve*

- Isaiah 9:2-7
- Psalm 96
- Titus 2:11-14
- Luke 1:1-14

December 25

*Christmas Day*

- Isaiah 62:6-12
- Psalm 97
- Titus 3:4-7
- Luke 2:8-20



sentenced to death who were later acquitted in new trials – one due to witness perjury at the first trial, another due to poor representation.

What can you do? While a system of “payback” for heinous crimes may feel “fair” consider what the impact of the death penalty is on society. Research indicates that states with an active death penalty do not have less violent crime. In Indiana, the cost of a death penalty case is about 10 times more of a life-without-parole case. Other research shows that social sins of poverty, racism, disability discrimination, etc. put the accused at higher risk to receive the death penalty. How can you advocate for other sentencing including Life-without-Parole or various forms of Restorative Justice (for information, see <https://restorativejustice.org/>) As always, please let me know if you would like to sit down and discuss any of the ELCA’s social statements.

In Christian Love,  
*Pastor Sharilyn*



Thank you to our newly elected church council! They will start their tenure on January 1, 2023.

Elder/President: *Cindy Knot*

Elder/VP: *Mark Prout*

Secretary: *Paige Walker*

Treasurer: *Libby Stroble*

Trustee: *Neil Stroble*

Deacon: *Scott Clamme*

Cemetery Trustee: *Chris Stroble*



*Wednesday Evening  
Advent Worship - 7PM*

# *Holy Darkness*

November 30 - Darkness is Holy  
December 7 - Dark Places are Sacred  
December 14 - Darkness Holds Promise  
December 21 - Darkness Holds God

The theme of this year's mid-week advent worship welcomes the darkness of the long Advent nights as a place where we encounter the beauty and mystery of God. Our scriptures and music will highlight imagery in which darkness is filled with the glory of God.

There are a few songs you might not be familiar with during this worship. You can listen to the playlist with the music using the QR code.



A light meal will be served at 6:00pm in Fellowship Hall beforehand. If you would like to contribute to these meals (soup, sandwiches, desserts), please sign up in the narthex.

## December Birthdays

- Betty Hendricks.....12-2
- Owen Ehlers.....12-3
- Cindy Knot.....12-3
- Peggy Willmann.....12-5
- Kelly Ford.....12-7
- Ashley Armstrong.....12-11
- Brady Monce.....12-14
- Vikki Armstrong.....12-22
- Shelly McCammon.....12-22
- Mark Grile.....12-23
- Mary Ehlers.....12-27

## New Address

Elonda Pethtel is moving from Hartford City to be closer to her family in Ohio. Her new address is:

Elonda Pethtel  
Swan Creek Rm 103  
5916 Cresthaven Ln  
Toledo, OH 43614

## A Word of Thanks

The Langdon family wishes to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, kind words, etc. during Larry's illness and death.

## Congregational Council - October 18, 2022

**Present:** Cindy Knote, Neil Stroble, Libby Stroble, Pastor Sharilyn, Paige Walker, Mark Prout

**Absent:** Drew Walker

### A. Opening

1. Call Meeting to Order - Mark Prout at 7:00pm
2. Devotions by Cindy Knote

### B. Secretary's Report

1. Amend/Approve minutes from last Council meeting
  - a. Motion to approve by Neil, 2nd by Cindy, Approved by All
2. Correspondence
  - a. None
3. Add Items to Agenda
  - a. None

### C. Pastor's Report

1. Meet & Know Members
  - a. Pastoral Care Visits: 7
2. Youth Education Program
  - a. Confirmation continues
  - b. In communication with Purdue Extension regarding possible VBS @ Fair
3. Outreach Program
  - a. Reformation Sunday 2022 - "Homecoming" Sunday
  - b. Living Grace Mental Health Support Group
  - c. Client Consultation Board, Health Community Alliance of East Central Indiana
4. Community Partnerships
  - a. Ongoing local ministerium
  - b. Performing hospital rounds at IU Blackford once a week
  - c. Rotating jail ministry
  - d. Greater partnership likely with First Presbyterian
  - e. Possible "community chaplain" initiative with other local pastors
5. Other Initiatives
  - a. "Tell Your Story" (Spring/Summer/Fall 2022) - Ongoing. I still need additional volunteers to share. Please consider doing so as members of council.
  - b. Time & Talents - Request that all members of council complete one. Please encourage all members to complete one also.
  - c. Reformation Day Reunion: Looking for a volunteer to help organize a potluck.

### D. Committee Reports

1. Parish Education & Youth - Drew
  - a. None
2. Worship/Music/Memorial - Libby
  - a. Meeting next week
3. Mission & Ministry - Cindy
  - a. Meeting next week

### E. Council Reports

1. Deacon
  - a. Attendance and Holy Communion Report: mid 40s
  - b. Assistance Requests: 1 for groceries
2. Elders
  - a. None
3. Trustee
  - a. AC estimate is in the works.

4. Treasurer

a. Report (as of October 14)

Deacon's Fund Checking	745.51
Deacon's Fund Saving	66.26
General Fund, Thrivent Invested	76,982.75
General Fund, VIA Checking	12,867.92
General Fund, VIA Membership	56.30
General Fund, VIA Money Market	55,421.06
Memorial Fund, VIA Checking	17,501.42
Memorial Fund, VIA Money Market	3,655.33
Mission Invest., Memorial Fund	7,043.37
ZLCW Kitchen Fund Savings	1,723.07
ZLCW Kitchen Fund Checking	150.00
TOTAL ASSETS	176,212.99

F. Business

1. Blackford County Healthcare Initiative: Pastor discussed insurance coverages. Council looked at possible agreement and made suggestions for possible changes.
2. Budget Committee: Treasurer is chair along with President, Trustee, and Pastor will meet this week.
3. Thanksgiving Offering: Wernle

G. Closing

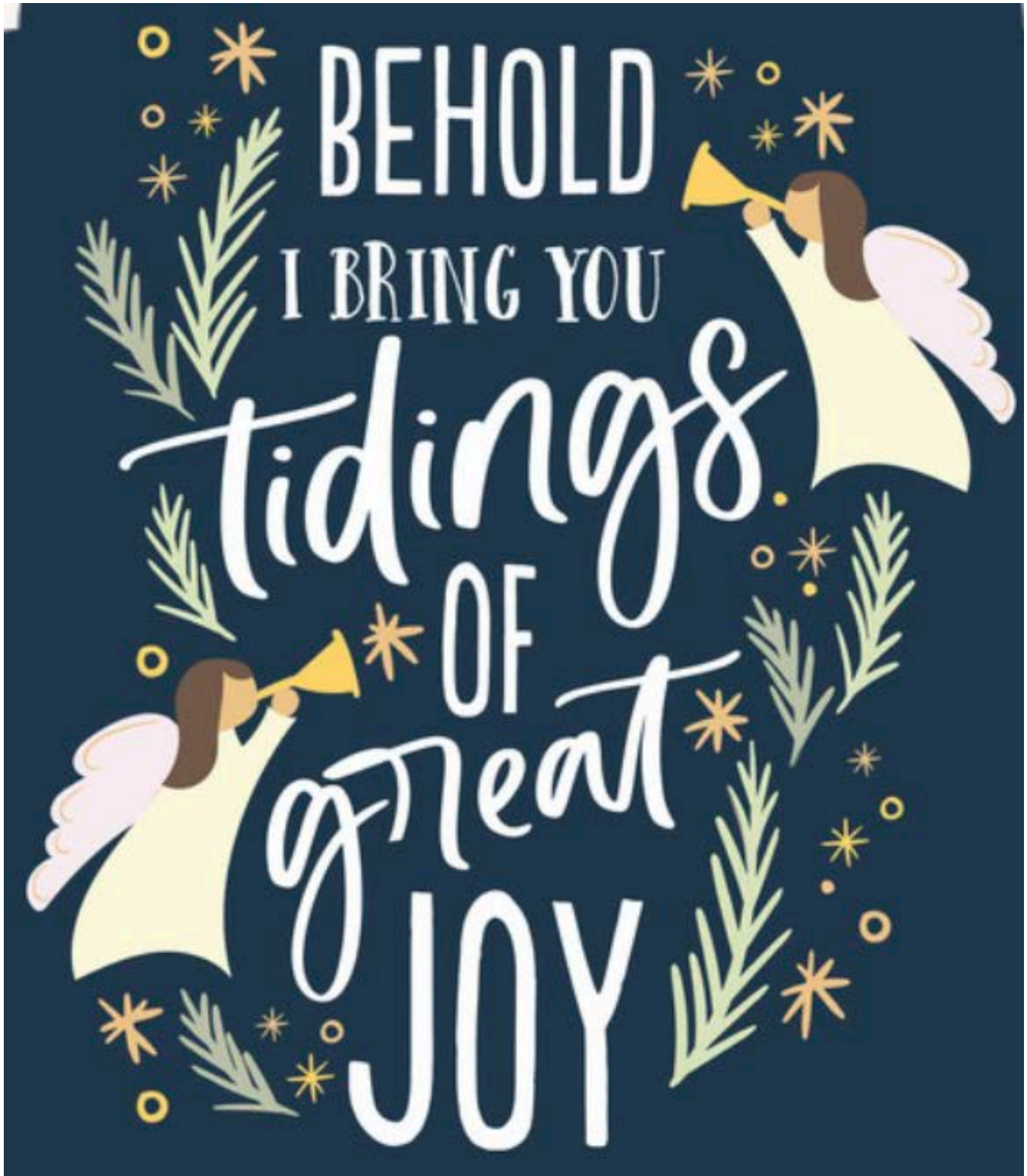
1. Lord's Prayer at 7:40pm
2. Next Meeting: November 15, 2022 at 7:00pm with devotions by Paige Walker



**DECEMBER 20, 2022 - 5:30pm at FIRST PRESBYTERIAN**

While Christmas is a time where we as a church celebrate and prepare for the arrival of Jesus, Christmas can be a challenging time of year for those who are struggling. When life circumstances don't take a break for the holiday and that means people are often coping with challenges like loneliness, broken relationships, poor health, grief, unemployment, etc. "Blue Christmas" or "Longest Night" gatherings are designed to keep a quiet, sacred space for people in the midst of lament. Pastor Maria and the members of First Presbyterian Church have extended an invitation to Zion Lutheran and everyone in and around Hartford City to gather for prayer and words of comfort.







# December 2022



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 Education Hour 9:30am Worship & Communion 10:30am	5 Bible Study at Deja Brew 8am Living Grace Support 6:30pm	6	7 Midweek Advent Service 7pm	8	9	10
11 Education Hour 9:30am Worship 10:30am	12 Bible Study at Deja Brew 8am Living Grace Support 6:30pm	13 Piecemakers 9am W/M/M Committee Meeting 7pm	14 Midweek Advent Service 7pm	15	16	17
18 Education Hour 9:30am (No Confirm) Worship & Communion 10:30am	19 Bible Study at Deja Brew 8am Living Grace Support 6:30pm	20 Blue Christmas at First Presb. 5:30pm Council Meeting 7pm	21 Midweek Advent Service 7pm	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service with Communion 7pm
25 Worship & Communion 10:30am	26 Informal Bible Study at Deja Brew 8am	27	28	29	30	31  <b>NEW YEARS EVE</b>



308 S Monroe St  
Hartford City, IN 47348

Sharilyn Wendt, Pastor  
Church Office: 765-348-3157  
zionluth.hc@gmail.com  
www.zionhc.org

Education Hour 9:30am  
Worship 10:30am

## December 2022

### Council Members

President & Elder	Mark Prout
Vice President & Elder	Cindy Knot
Secretary	Paige Walker
Treasurer	Libby Stroble
Deacon	Drew Walker
Trustee	Neil Stroble

### Pastor Sharilyn's Information

Cell Phone: 812-272-2936  
Email: sharilyn.wendt@gmail.com

Office Hours:  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 9am-Noon  
Other Times by Appointment  
Please call first to be sure she is in!

### Sunday Servants

#### Lector

December 4 - Sandy Langdon  
December 11 - Neil Stroble  
December 18 - Michelle Walker  
December 24 - Michelle, Paige  
December 25 - Linda Baker

#### Acolyte

December 4 - Clamme Family  
December 11 - Walker Family  
December 18 - Clamme Family  
December 24 - Walker Family  
December 25 -

#### Assisting Minister

December 4 - Jody Stanley  
December 18 - Mark Prout  
December 24 - Jody Stanley