



THE MT. ZION MESSENGER

THE GOOD NEWSletter

Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 33 Oak Street, Springfield, MA 01109

Phone: 413-785-5664

E-mail: wearemtzion@gmail.com

Website: wearemtzion.com

Volume 25; Issue 9

Rev. Dr. Atu White, Pastor

February 2024

WEEKLY SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY 2024

Worship Service Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

*In-Person or Livestreamed
on Facebook.com; YouTube.com; and
on our website, wearemtzion.com*

If you desire special prayer or would like to join Mt. Zion,
call the Church following service until 12 noon.

~~~~~

#### **Prayer & Meditation Call Wednesdays from 12 noon to 12:10 p.m.**

The Dial-in Number is (470) 480-9021.

~~~~~

***Bible Study Wednesday, February 7th at 7:00 p.m.**

*In-Person or Livestreamed on
Facebook.com; YouTube.com; and
on our website, wearemtzion.com*

***NOTE:** This month, Bible Study will only be
held on the
first Wednesday of the month,
February 7th.

After that, we are invited and encouraged to
participate in the
Pastors' Council's Lenten Services.

(Lenten Service schedule is inside this newsletter.)

IN-PERSON SERVICES

In-Person worship services start at
10:00 a.m. each Sunday.

Masks are optional.

Those who are not attending services in the
sanctuary, can continue to worship via
live streaming. (See article to the left.)

MT. ZION TURNS 47!

In late 1976, a small group of Christians, mostly from Faith Baptist Church in Springfield, decided the time and spirit was right to form a new church. On **February 6, 1977**, the group was officially set aside as Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Greater Springfield. This month marks Mt. Zion's 47th Church Anniversary!

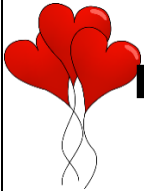
From humble beginnings of just 42 members, Mt. Zion has seen membership topple over 600. Four (4) pastors have led the Church; we have been housed in three (3) different facilities; and by God's grace, we have survived both a fire and a pandemic. Mt. Zion has provided thousands of meals to the hungry, made numerous financial donations to support community events and organizations, and held hundreds of drives, programs & activities to benefit local residents.

God has been faithful to Mt. Zion! We must continue to be faithful to Him. All that we have accomplished is only because of His Goodness and Mercy toward us. So, for today, and days to come, we thank God for these 47 years!!!

Happy 47th Anniversary, Mt. Zion!

Note: We will celebrate this milestone in October.

For a complete Church history, visit our website at



HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- February 1.....Sis. Zyina Volkinski
- February 2.....Sis. Patricia Grundy
- February 2.....Sis. Lavone Johnson
- February 3.....Bro. Darrell Coppedge, Sr.
- February 5...Sis. Shanice Coppedge-Nicholas
- February 11.....Bro. Linwood Garner
- February 12.....Sis. Priscilla White
- February 16.....Sis. Narvis Handford
- February 18.....Bro. Timothy Morris
- February 19.....Bro. Alfonso Shaver
- February 21.....Bro. Maxwell Maddox
- February 24.....Sis. Adrieann Gabriel
- February 25.....Sis. Patricia Nulls
- February 26.....Sis. Delores Culp
- February 28.....Sis. Faye Caldwell
- February 28.....Sis. Patrice Caudle



HAPPY FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARY

- February 9.....Sis. Phyllis Tolbert
& Bro. John Tolbert

HOW TO GROW HAPPINESS

By Michele Rossi

Step 1:

Plant yourself deep in a bed of faith, and pack it down solid and tight.
Drench daily with positive thinking and keep saturated just right.
Mulch often with forgiveness, for this will help you grow.

Quickly remove any seeds of worry, for they will soon germinate, and keep out the weeds of despair.
Nourish disappointments with hope whenever it is needed,
And always stay cool and shaded when you feel irritated or heated.
Trim away guilt and depression for they create decay,
And cultivate with happy memories as often as every day.

Step 2:

Harvest the lessons of the past; just dig, pick, and hoe.
And nurture the roots of the present for now is when you flourish and grow.
Start planting for the future; set your goals in a row.
Spade the bed well for all your dreams to grow.

Step 3:

Remember that grief is a natural predator, so learn to tolerate some damage.
Protect your garden with daily prayers, for this will help you manage.
Bury the criticism and complaining for they are injurious pests.

Sow the seeds of love wherever you may go—
for joy, love, and laughter are surely bound to grow.
Although the thorns of life may be here to stay,
Just sprout a smile along the way...and be thankful for what you have today!

Submitted by Sis. Andrea Dixon

FEBRUARY 2024 MEETINGS

The following meeting will be held in person at the Church:

DEACON MINISTRY

The Deacon Ministry will meet on **Saturday, February 10th at 10 a.m.**
Deacons & Deaconesses should attend.

MISSIONARY MINISTRY

The Missionary Ministry will meet on **Saturday, February 17th at 11 a.m.**
All Missionaries should be present.

USHERS MINISTRY

The Ushers Ministry will meet on **Saturday, February 24th at 11 a.m.**
All Ushers should attend.

MAN CAVE FELLOWSHIP

Man Cave will meet on **Friday, February 23rd at 6 p.m.**
Scripture: Mark 13:33
Topic: "Will You Be Ready?"
All Men are invited to attend.

SHE SHED FELLOWSHIP

She Shed will meet on **Friday, February 23rd at 6 p.m.**
Scripture: 2 Kings 4:1-7
Topic: "I Am Her"
All Women are invited to attend.

CHOIR REHEARSALS

Mass Choir

Wednesday, Feb. 7th—6 p.m.
Wednesday, February 28th—6 p.m.

Male Chorus

Wednesday, February 14th—6 p.m.
Saturday, February 17th—11 a.m.

Children's Choir

Thursday, February 8th—6 p.m.

PASTOR'S FEBRUARY PREACHING ENGAGEMENT

Due to inclement weather on the afternoon of Sunday, January 28th, the preaching engagement by our Pastor, **Dr. Atu White**, at New Creations Discipleship Ministries, was postponed. The new date is **Sunday, February 11th at 4:00 p.m.** All who can, please plan to accompany Pastor White to this service. Bishop Charles Pink is Pastor of New Creations Discipleship Ministries, which is located at 893 Boston Road, Springfield.

Debt Reduction Campaign!

Written by Sis. Gwen Ozenne

There's still plenty of time to fill out your commitment form! Sign up in the Welcome Center after service.

Our goal is to pay off our mortgage in 2 years. We still need individuals & groups to sign up!

We will be in the Welcome Center to answer any questions you may have. No act of kindness no matter how small is ever wasted!!!

GIVING STATEMENTS AVAILABLE

2023 Giving Statements were either handed out on Sunday, January 28th, or mailed to home addresses on Monday, January 29th.

If you made financial donations in 2023, have NOT received a statement and would like one, or if you have a question about your statement, you can call the Church at (413) 785-5664 and leave your name and telephone number, or see the Church Financial Secretary, **Sis Phyllis Tolbert**.

MINISTRY LEADERS' MEETING

On Sunday, February 4th, immediately following morning service, there will be a meeting of all Ministry Leaders.

If you currently serve as a leader of a Ministry, or if a Ministry you previously led has not restarted but you'd like it to, please plan to attend this important meeting.

SOUP KITCHEN TURNS 25!

The Mt. Zion Soup Kitchen opened its doors for the very first time in February 1999. The goal was to help feed those in our community who were hungry. This month, the Soup Kitchen marks 25 years of service.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, the Soup Kitchen had to cease meeting weekly. The Ministry has, however, continued to provide, on a limited basis, food for various Church activities and events and food to individuals in need. The staff also helps sort and distribute non-perishable items that have been donated to the Church from other organizations to community residents.

As these very important activities continue, the fervent prayer of the Soup Kitchen Ministry as well as the Church at large is that this vital Ministry will be back in full operation (i.e., serving meals on a weekly basis to those in need) again soon.



February is Free Fitness Saturdays

Each Saturday this month, here at Mt. Zion, from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. free fitness classes will be offered. Classes are for men, women, and children of all ages and abilities. Here's the schedule:

February 3rd:

- ❖ Chair Exercise
Instructor, Tracey Thomas

February 10th:

- ❖ Chair Exercise
Instructor, Tracey Thomas

February 17th:

- ❖ Situational Awareness
Instructor, Ms. Roberson

February 24th:

- ❖ Dance Fitness Workshop
*Instructor, Rooted Essence
Dance & Healing Art*

Hope to see you there!

Super Bowl Sunday

February 11th

"Sport Your Sport"

For some people, Sunday, February 11th is Super Bowl Sunday. Here at Mt. Zion, it's "Sport Your Sport" Sunday.



Come to the 10:00 a.m. worship service on February 11th and wear your favorite sport team's t-shirt, sweatshirt, jersey, or any other apparel. It can be from high school, college, or the pros, and it can be from any sport--football, baseball, basketball, soccer, etc. Let everyone know what sport (and team) you cheer for!

If you don't have any sports apparel or a special team, dress comfortably and come anyway. It'll be fun!!

MY STORY

As was announced in Bible Study at the end of last year and at last month's Annual Business Meeting, this year, members are encouraged to share their personal experience of how they received salvation. Each Sunday, at our 10 a.m. service, one member will take 2-3 minutes to recount their faith journey.

*Last month, we heard from three (3) Mt. Zionites. Unfortunately, space in the Newsletter will not allow us to print their entire story, but below are their opening words. **Each of their full and powerful stories can be heard on our website, wearemtzion.com, on the dates indicated.** We encourage you to listen to each.*

*If you would like to share your journey to salvation, please see **Min. James Coppedge** to get on the schedule.*

January 14: Bro. Ronnie Williams

It began when I was a child living in Chicago. My mother would read the Bible to us. Revelations was my favorite book: I loved the angels. My mother passed away when I was eleven years old, and I was angry with God. I wanted to know why He would do this to me. As a teenager, I did not like going to church and found myself enlisting in the Marine Corps. I still did not want any involvement in church until one day my brother-in-law's brother invited me to church...

January 21: Sis. Jean Frazier

His journey with me began just like the words God spoke to Jeremiah, "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb." My journey began 24,029 days ago, on April 8, 1958, the day of my birth (thank you Google). How, you ask, can you say that your journey started the day you were born? Easy, I grew up with His presence in my life. I could have said "grew up in church," which would have been true, but it was more than that. I can't remember a time when God was not part of my life, when the Word was not preached or taught. When a scripture was not spoken, or a prayer not whispered. I learned at any early age that God can do all things, and that He loves and cares about me. You can often hear me say. "I am God's favorite child"...

January 28: Sis. Camilla Coppedge

I remember growing up with my aunt, Mother Vernice Daniels, who is now 98 years old. My mom took me to Auntie's while she went to work. What I remember at her house is always being on my knees praying. Sometimes 3-5 times a day and if we weren't, my Auntie would be in the kitchen talking to herself. "Auntie," I would ask, "who are you talking to?" She would say, "Jesus." "I don't see no Jesus." She would say, "Sug, I see Him." I would say, "Ok." On Sundays we would go to church early in the morning. At the altar sometimes I would fall asleep, and Mothers and Elders would be praying, running around the Church, and touch you on your shoulder, calling out to God. That's about another 2 hours. Then we would go downstairs in the church and eat. Then back to another service for 2-3 hours. What I remember there was no drums, organs, or pianos. It was handclapping, foot stumping, maybe a tambourine...

MOBILE FOOD TRUCK

The Western Mass Food Bank Mobile Food truck will be in the Union Street



parking lot on **Friday, February 23rd** from **1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Fresh produce and other items are free and available to all, regardless of income. Come and invite family & friends.

PARKING LOT REMINDER

We have three (3) on-site parking lots at our facility:

Orleans Street,
Union Street,
& Oak Street.

If marked-off spaces are full in one lot, use one of the other two (2) lots.

Please do not create spaces.



Just a reminder...

On the 2nd Sunday of each month (this month, which will be **Sunday, February 11th**), the Youth Ministry will hold Children's Church simultaneously with our regular worship service—at 10:00 a.m. Bring your children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, and even neighborhood kids between the ages of 5 and 11 to have their own worship experience, filled with learning activities, crafts, and snacks. (Note: Let a Youth Ministry Leader know if your child has any food allergies).

If you have questions or want to volunteer to help, see Youth Ministry Leader, **Sis. Pamela Medlock**

CALLING ALL YOUNG SCHOLARS

Elementary & secondary school students are encouraged to turn in their A's for the 1st marking period and be rewarded for their work.

To qualify, students **MUST...**

- Be a member of Mt. Zion or a regular Mt. Zion attendee
- Be an **ACTIVE** member in at least one (1) Church ministry
- Be in grades 1-12
- Provide a copy of an official report card for the 1st marking period and a completed Young Scholars form.

The **DEADLINE** to submit the grades and the form to **Sis. Pamela Medlock** (see next paragraph) is **Thursday, February 15th**, Young Scholars will receive their awards on the 4th Sunday of this month, February 25th.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Awards will not be given without a copy of the student's grades and a completed Young Scholars form. Forms are available at the Church or can be requested via the Church's e-mail.

COLLEGE SCHOLARS

Mt. Zion members who are currently attending college are eligible for a College Scholars award. Complete and submit a College Scholars form, along with your 1st semester grades, to Sis. Medlock, or e-mail them to the Church by Thursday, February 15, 2024.

Upcoming Major Days

At our Annual Church Business Meeting last month, a few major days/events for 2024 were announced.

Please mark your calendars for the following. As each day/event gets closer, more information will be shared.

Fitness in February:

Saturdays, February 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th, from 9 to 10 a.m.

Resurrection Sunday:

Sunday, March 31st

Mothers' Day Brunch:

Sunday, May 5th after service

Mt. Zion's 3rd Annual

Family Reunion:

Sunday, August 25th
(tentative date)

47th Church Anniversary:

October (Date TBA)

PASTOR ELECTED PRESIDENT

After recently being elected, on Sunday, January 14, 2024, our Pastor, **Rev. Dr. Atu White**, was installed as President of the Pastors' Council of Greater Springfield. The installation service was part of the Council's MLK, Jr. Scholarship Program, held at St. John's Congregational Church here in Springfield.

Congratulations, Pastor White, on another wonderful accomplishment.

Church Cancellation Notices

As you know, due to a snowstorm on January 7th, Sunday morning service was cancelled. **If** service is ever cancelled in the future, please check our Facebook page as well as turn to Channel 22 for notifications.

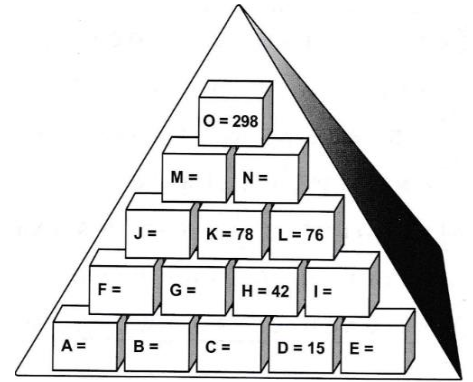
PUZZLE PAGE

LAST MONTH'S PUZZLE: PHARAOH'S PYRAMID

Last month, we thought it might be fun to start the year off brushing up on our math skills. We were asked to figure out the missing numbers on this pyramid. The only information we were given was that every brick in the pyramid contains a number which is the sum of the two numbers below it, so that $F=A+B$, etc. How did you do?

Here are the answers:

A=21; B=9; C=27; D=15; E=19; F=30; G=36; H=42; I=34; J=66; K=78; L=76; M=144; N=154; O=298.



THIS MONTH'S PUZZLE: BLACK HISTORY FACES

This month, the Newsletter Staff is doing something a little different with the puzzle:

1. To participate, you will need to be at the Church. (The Newsletter Staff apologizes to our virtual readership.)
2. Anyone who participates could win a prize.

Here's how it works:

In the double-sided glass bulletin board across from the sanctuary, there are pictures of 24 Black Americans who have over the centuries made significant contributions to the world through science, music, athletics, politics, education, and so much more. This month's task is very simple...identify those individuals.

Forms are available next to the bulletin board. The **deadline** to submit a form is **Saturday, February 17th**. (Answers will be revealed on Sunday, February 18th.) Everyone who correctly identifies all 24 (or the most) will win a prize. Winners will be announced at the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, February 25th, and must be present.

How well do you know your Black History? Go to the bulletin board and see.

JUST A REMINDER, WE ARE STILL IN **THE FIRST 48 DAYS OF 2024**

Written by Pastor Atu White

By continuing to practice and implement the five (5) steps below—the one's we've discussed thus far in 2024, we will build a healthy devotional life, and grow closer to God.

1. **PRAISE** ~ Psalm 34, Psalm 47:1, Psalm 146, Psalm 150: We start our day with gratitude by magnifying, bestowing adoration and honor to our God. Praise is also demonstrative. We clap our hands, we sing praises, we dance, we revere God with movement.
2. **PRAY** ~ Philippians 4:4-9, Luke 18:1, Luke 11:1-13, Mark 6:30-31: Prayer is a delicate dance between speaking and listening. Prayer is exchanging our wants and desires for what God has in mind.
3. **PAUSE** ~ Psalm 46:10, Mark 6:30-31, Isaiah 40:31: After we praised and prayed, we sit in God's presence. We keep company with God. In stillness and with a quiet soul, we sit and allow the Holy Spirit to write on our hearts and minds. While busy and many concerns compete for our attention, God calls us to pause. We cannot tend to everything, be everywhere, and show up for everyone if we are not spiritually grounded. God calls us to pause.
4. **PLAN** ~ Proverbs 16:1-3, Luke 14:28-31, Habakkuk 2:1-3: To accomplish what God is guiding and instructing us to do, we will need a plan. Make the most of each day by writing, journaling, documenting, and educating ourselves. The plan (creating an agenda) makes us accountable to the vision (direction) God reveals to us. The plan helps us to be intentional.
5. **PURSUE** ~ Colossians 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 1 Samuel 30:7-9: In 2024, develop a healthy devotional life. While we celebrate monumental growth, we should also appreciate incremental movement. Each day, move with divine intentions while making a step toward accomplishing the plan.

The Pastors' Council of Greater Springfield

2024 Lenten Service Schedule

In-Person & Livestreamed at the Churches Listed

www.facebook.com/ThePastorsCouncil

Date	Preacher	Location
Wednesday, February 14	Rev. Marcus McCullough	Wesley United Methodist Church 741 State Street, Springfield, MA 01109
Wednesday, February 21	Rev. Benard Smith	All Nations Church 70 Leete Street, Springfield, MA 01108
Wednesday, February 28	Rev. Robert Carter	Bethlehem Baptist Community Church 304 Elm Street, Holyoke, MA 01040
Wednesday, March 6	Rev. Dr. Terrlyn Curry Avery	New Life Calvary Baptist Church 981 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109
Wednesday, March 13	Rev. Jesse Williams, Jr.	Bethel AME Church 27 Pendleton Avenue, Springfield, MA 01109
Wednesday, March 20	Rev. Angelo S. Dawson (Ret.)	Zion Community Baptist Church 1140 Roosevelt Ave. Springfield, MA 01109
Wednesday, March 27	Rev. Taylon Lancaster	Mt. Zion Baptist Church 33 Oak Street, Springfield, MA 01109
Good Friday, March 29	Rev. Gail Hill Rev. Dr. Atu White Rev. Maxine Moore Rev. Dr. Dayhige Wright	St. John's Congregational Church 45 Hancock Street, Springfield, MA 01109

SAVE THE DATE

For the Congress of Christian Education Session
of the
United Baptist Convention of MA, RI, & NH, Inc.

The UBC Congress of Christian Education Board is pleased and excited to announce that the 2024 UBC Congress will be held in person on Saturday, March 16, 2024. Due to ongoing construction at Bethany Assembly of God Church in Agawam, MA, however, where the Congress has been held for several years, this year's location will be at Van Sickle Academy, 1170 Carew Street, Springfield, MA 01104. More information about the Congress will be forthcoming as plans continue to be finalized for this in-person session. In the meantime, please mark your calendars and plan to attend on Saturday, March 16th. We believe God will bless us with an amazing experience in Christian Education.

Dea. Steve Powell is a Board Member and the Registrar for the Congress; **Deaconess Wanda Powell**, also a Board Member, serves as the Congress' Treasurer; our Pastor, **Dr. Atu White** is the President of the UBC Parent Body.