

The Brick Bulletin

St. John Lutheran "Brick" Church
196 Brick Church Road
Montgomery, PA 17752
(570)-547-6423
Email: stjohnbrick@gmail.com
Website: www.stjohnbrick.org

February 2024

Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Blessings and Peace to you from our Triune God

As you continue your Faith Journey through the season of Epiphany and into the season of Lent, I pray that you are getting closer to the Triune God each and every day.

Lent begins this year with Ash Wednesday on February 14th, more commonly known as Valentines Day. What better day to begin our tradition of giving up something for Lent than a day known for sharing your love for others. By giving up (snacks) for example you will have a few more minutes each day that you can use to call a friend or neighbor you haven't contacted in a while. In addition to giving up something for Lent may I suggest you also GIVE something for Lent. You can give of your time, talent, or money you save because you're not buying (snacks) to provide food for a needy family or give a can of soup every day during Lent. Your food donations could be brought to the church where it will go to a local food distribution organization, such as Footprints in Montgomery or Son Light House in Muncy.

As I was thinking about this newsletter my thoughts went back to The Gospel lesson for the 7th of January (The Baptism of Jesus). Remembering the words God spoke when the Heavens opened up and the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove. God said of Jesus "This is my beloved son; in him I am well pleased". You received that same Holy Spirit when you were Baptized and marked with the Cross of Christ FOREVER. Does God tell you "This is my beloved child, in him or her I am well pleased". I believe he does because he is a forgiving God, and his Grace and love are always given to us freely by him. Notice I said GIVEN to us FREELY, because you and I cannot do anything to earn God's Love and Grace. It is a gift that we do not deserve.

As we move into the season of Lent, I invite you to one of two Ash Wednesday. One will be at St John (Brick) Church at 7PM and the other is at Trinity at 7PM. I also invite you to attend the mid-week Lenten Services. This year we will be looking at and studying different types of Lament. Each week we will be worshiping in a different church. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for the schedule. All services will be at 7 PM with a social time of light refreshments starting at 6:30.

I pray God's richest blessings be with you and abide with you every day as you continue to Love God and all of his people and continue caring for his creation.

Your servant in Christ
S A M Jim

Worship SCHEDULE February

ATTENDANCE:		
	Avg. '23	Avg. '24
Jan	42	43
Feb	40	
Mar	45	
April	45	
Easter	19/60	/
May	45	
June	41	
July	41	
Aug	44	
Sept	40	
Oct	41	
Nov	46	
Dec	46	
Christmas Eve	?	

February 2nd, Presentation of Our Lord

February 4th, 8:30am - Fifth Sunday after Epiphany,
Holy Communion

February 11th, 8:30am - Transfiguration of Our
Lord and the last Sunday after Epiphany, Holy
Communion

February 14th, 7:00pm – Ash Wednesday Service
at St. John Brick, Montgomery

February 18th, 8:30am – First Sunday in Lent, Holy
Communion

February 21st, 7:00pm – Mid-Week Lenten
Service at Trinity, Hughesville

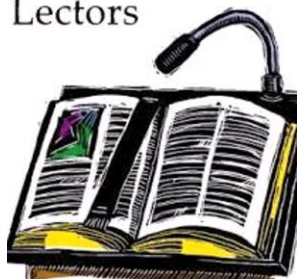
February 25th, 8:30am – Second Sunday in Lent,

February 28th, 7:00pm – Mid-Week Lenten
Service at St. John Brick, Montgomery

Worship Notes:

Transfiguration of Our Lord: The word translated in English as “transform” or “transfigure” in the gospels is the Greek verb *metamorphoó*. It’s the root of the English word *metamorphosis*. The first metamorphosis we learn about as children is often a caterpillar changing into a butterfly. The caterpillar grows until it’s suspended in a chrysalis to be transfigured into a butterfly. We follow the metamorphic life cycle of Jesus through the gospels and see him changed in dazzling light as God reveals God’s own divinity within Jesus. This is a turning point for Jesus as he turns toward Jerusalem, toward his death and resurrection. This is his ultimate transfiguration that paves the way for us to be metamorphosed by God, to be made new in Christ.

Lectors



Lectors Wanted!

Lectors assist during the Service by reading the weekly scripture readings and leading the responsive reading of the psalm. If you would like to help with this ministry, please sign up on the sheet in the narthex and indicate the Sunday (or Sundays) you would like to help.

If you would like the readings ahead of time to practice, please see the church office to pick up the readings for your Sunday.

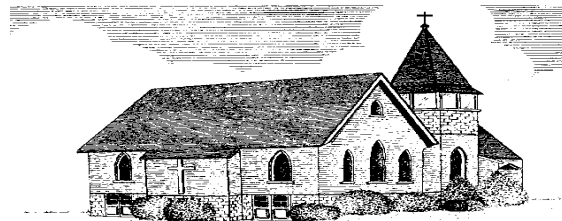


St. John “Brick” Church will continue to live stream our Worship Service every Sunday morning on our Facebook page AND continue to upload every Sunday Service to the church’s webpage on the same day.

In the past 2 months our online services have reached 678 people, had 3 new likes on our page and 3 new followers. We have been watched both here in the states and abroad including countries such as The Bahamas, Germany, and Italy! If you are Facebook please make sure to like, share and follow and the church’s Facebook page.

STEWARDSHIP:

It is important to remember that the ministry and the mission of St. John continue on a year-round basis. While it may not be possible for all members of the congregation to maintain their previous stewardship practices during these uncertain times, the church strives to meet its obligations to the greater church and the local benevolence programs which rely on our support.



Tithes and offerings can be mailed to the Church at **196 Brick Church Road, Montgomery, PA 17752**. The continuing support of our mission is a hallmark of St. John's tradition of faithfulness. Even in uncertain times, we are church for the world, and, these days, we need each other, just as the world needs us.



Altar Flowers

2024 Sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board for sponsoring altar flowers and Sunday bulletins. If you would like to sponsor flowers or bulletins and cannot come to the church, please call the church office (570-547-6423) to



Bulletins

reserve the date you would like. Altar flowers are (2) vases for \$37.00 or (1) vase for 18.50 and bulletins are \$10.00 per Sunday.

The following Sunday are currently available:

Flowers:	Bulletins:
April 7 th	February 25 th
April 14 th	March 3 rd
April 21 st	March 10 th
April 28 th	April 21 st
May 5 th	May 12 th

The 2024 Sign up Sheets are posted in the Narthex for both Flower and Bulletin sponsorships.
Please note that the bulletin sponsor sheet is filling up fast so don't forget to sign up now!



Communion & Altar Committee

**February 2024
 Julie Bennett and Carolyn Girard**



Church Closings and Delays



If church must be canceled due to in-climate weather, a call chain is in place for telephone calls or text messages to be placed around 7 am on the morning of the cancellation. Also an announcement will be placed on the church's Facebook page.



DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER IS FEBRUARY 20TH.



COUNCIL

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Council met on Thursday, January 18 for the first time in 2024.

Current council members are:

Stephen Puzio (570-974-3183), President

Suzanne Burkholder (570-244-7627), Vice -President

Deborah Books (570-323-8398), Secretary

Kenneth Blessing JR (570-772-3350)

Julie Bennett (570-279-1647)

Michelle Smith (570-772-1823)

Donna Dershem (570-506-2892).

SAM Mr. James Girven (570-419-4993)

Many thanks are given to David Doran, Esta Meisel and Carolyn Girard for your service on council, whose term ended in 2023. Also, a big thank you to Donna Dershem for serving as council president for the last two years.

The Ash Wednesday Service, February 14, will be held at St John Brick at 7 PM. The special envelope donations for Ash Wednesday, Easter and Christmas Eve will be divided 50/50 for Camp Mount Luther and World Hunger.

If church must be canceled due to in-climate weather, a call chain is in place for telephone calls or text messages to be placed around 7 am on the morning of the cancellation. Also, an announcement will be placed on the church's Facebook page.

The 5 churches currently in the Co-op will be rotating services for the mid-week Lenten service. St. John Brick will host the February 28th service. There will be no communion and no monetary collection at this service.



Please support our church by buying Weis cards.

They are available on Sunday mornings before Worship Service. You may also buy them at the church office Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 8:30am to 1:00pm.

Footprints Food Pantry 71 Bower St Ext food distribution dates and times

10-2 & 5:30-6:30 the 2nd Thursday

10-12 4th Thursday

*** please bring in proof of residency as we begin our new year***

If unable to pick up food during distribution hours *your appointed proxy will need to do your pick up during the distribution hours and can be arranged @ the desk. We are available after hours for emergency situation food only.

Thank you for understanding.



AMONG OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Prayer Requests:

Intercessions: Dawn H., Family of Ronald Books, Eileen Montgomery, Christian Harvey, Trey Gresh, Dave Doran, Tracy Boyer, Erin Fox, as well as those afflicted with the COVID 19 virus and their families, and residents and staff of long term and assisted living facilities. Finally, pray for the members of St. John's church family and all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Military Prayers: Corporal Eric Bennett and the 1st LAR, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine aboard the USS Somerset (Deployed), Carter Temple and the 2nd-112th Infantry Regiment out of Lewistown, PA (Deployed to Africa)

Please call the church office (570-547-6423) or email: stjohnbrick@gmail.com if you have names to add to the prayer list.

Names written in the Prayer Request book will be printed in the bulletin for two weeks. If after two weeks they need to be kept on the prayer list, please write their names in again or call the church office (570-547-6423).



NEW!

Prayers for our soldiers at home and abroad!

We have decided to add another section to our prayer list. This list will be for our military, both those serving here in the states and overseas. For those soldiers just

starting out (going through their basic training and schooling) and those who have dedicated many years to serving our great nation.

If you know someone who you would like added to this list, please contact the church office or add them to the prayer list book in the narthex.

St. Pauly Textile, Inc.



Here at St John Lutheran Church, we commonly refer to the St. Pauly Textile, Inc. as St. Pauly shed which is located in the back of the parking lot across from the parsonage garage. Donations of good used clothing can be placed in the shed at any time. It is available to not only the people of St. John, but also to anyone who would like to donate. The church is paid so

much per pound for the clothing. St. Pauly thanks you so much for partnering with them. They truly appreciate all the support you continue to give to the clothing shed program!

****** At times the clothing donations pile up in front of the drop-off window and need to be moved. A big thank you to Paul Pentz for overseeing this.

Fausnaught Dinner

Trinity Lutheran Church has extended an invitation to the sister churches for their yearly Fausnaught Dinner:

When: Thursday February 13th, 2024

Where: Trinity Stuempfle Hall

Time: 5:30 PM Dinner Served

Menu: Pork, Sauerkraut, Spaetzle, Hot Dogs, Mashed Potatoes, Applesauce, Roll, and Donut ~ A Free offering will be accepted ~

RSVP by February 1, 2024 to Karlda Thomas 570-584-3490

MUSIC News



MUSIC NOTES

for February 2024

One of my favorite things about Facebook is its “Memories” section. When I opened that part of my profile this morning, I was amazed to see that I’ve been back at Messiah for an entire year already! Incredible! I’m looking forward to working with the choir to bring you some meaningful and beautiful anthems this Lent! Hopefully the weather and everyone’s health cooperates!

Lent comes early this year, starting on Ash Wednesday, which falls on February 14. Lent is observed many ways in various churches: some veil the crosses and statues in purple, while others remove the Prelude and Postlude. Some choirs enter and recess differently, churches sometimes remove flowers from the altars, and the list goes on and on. But no matter where you go, the music is more somber and reflective once again.

This Lent, we will once again be participating in Mid-Week services with our fellow Lutherans from our five churches. We will be sharing Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday services between Brick and Messiah. All these services give us the unique opportunity to worship with people we might not otherwise meet, and to perhaps worship in a different place with different traditions. These services are a great way to get to know each better, and also to grow ourselves spiritually. We are challenged to think and to reflect.

I will be striving to bring you music from the masters this Lent. In addition to more recognizable hymn tune chorales, you’ll also hear works by Bach, Beethoven, Dvorak, Elgar, Vivaldi, and more. As we progress through the Holy Season of Lent, let us prepare our hearts and minds for the Passion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ . . . as we await the Resurrection!

~ Jeff Harvey

A TASTE OF CAMP



Sunday, February 11 2-4pm
at CAMP MOUNT LUTHER

Hungry for camp but can't wait until the summer? Always wanted to try camp but not sure you'll like it? Camp Mount Luther has an event for you! On February 11, 2024, from 2:00-4:00 p.m., you can get a Taste of Camp! Enjoy songs, food, games, a campfire program, information on the 2024 program, and more! Those who attend will get Camel Bucks to spend in the camp store this summer. Campers from synod congregations who attend this event (or sign up to be a camper with the director) will get Camel Bucks for all their congregation's Summer 2024 campers.

This year's summer camp season will begin on June 23 and run until August 2. There are programs for all ages from elementary to senior high, and for adults and families. If you're looking for a place where your child can grow in faith and have fun doing it, Camp Mount Luther is that place. Don't settle for second-rate summer programs. Camp Mount Luther has been giving kids fun, exciting, faith-filled, outdoor experiences for 60 years. If you have questions about our summer programs, feel free to reach out to us at cml@campmountluther.org

HELP CAMP RAISE THE REGION

Camp Mount Luther is participating in The First Community Foundation Partnership of PA's "Raise the Region" on March 13-14, 2024. It is a 30-hour fundraising event starting at 6:00 p.m. and ending the next day at 11:59 p.m. Money donated by the Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships will help stretch donations made to organizations that day. Additional monetary prizes and incentives will be awarded, too. Proceeds raised for Camp Mount Luther will contribute to the Annual Fund unless a donor gets contacts the camp office to designate otherwise. To be part of Raise the Region, visit www.raisetheregion.org during the event and make an online donation to camp. Running totals will be shown throughout the day at the Raise the Region website. Camp Mount Luther has participated in Raise the Region for eleven years and has garnered about \$206,345 in donations over the years. We hope you will help us to have another successful year!



chad@campmountluther.org

SUMMER STAFF

Every summer, Camp Mount Luther depends on responsible young people to serve as role models for our campers. Whether serving as a counselor, lifeguard, or kitchen personnel, a job at camp can be an amazing and rewarding work experience. Please spread the word and help us find quality candidates for Summer 2024. If you know someone who would be a good fit, direct them to



The Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly will be held on June 14-15, 2024, at Susquehanna University. In acknowledgement of the ELCA World Hunger's 50th anniversary, our theme will be "**Fed by Jesus to Feed the World.**" Our ELCA Representative will be Norma Malfatti.

The assembly gives every congregation and member within our synod an opportunity to participate, whether you are a voting member from your

congregation, a rostered leader, a Sunday School student, or just one of the folks who sits in the pew and wants to see what all the rest of the believers are up to!

Congregational delegates need to be selected by Mid-February.

For more information please see Jim.



Lenten and Easter Schedule:

February 14th - Ash Wednesday – St. John's Brick – 7pm

As a way of getting to know one another's churches and members, the 5-Church Committee has decided to hold joint services for Lent for 2024. Below is the mid-week Lenten services schedule:

February 21st – Mid-week Lenten Service – Trinity Lutheran, Hughesville

February 28th – Mid-Week Lenten service – St. John's Brick

March 6th – Mid-Week Lenten Service – Messiah, Clarkstown

March 13th – Mid-Week Lenten Service – St. John's, Unityville (Gordner's)

March 20th – Mid Week Lenten Service – Mt.Zion, Hughesville

At each church, a half-hour of fellowship will begin at 6:30 with coffee, tea and dessert-like refreshments. This will allow members from each of the churches to get to know one another. The Lenten Service will follow at 7 p.m., led by Jim Girven and Dianne Bubb. There will be no communion during the service.

March 28th – Maundy Thursday Service – St. John's Brick

March 29th – Good Friday Service – Messiah Clarkstown

March 31st – Easter Sunrise Service – Messiah Clarkstown

St. John's and Messiah will also hold their regular worship times on Easter Morning

TRYING SMALL

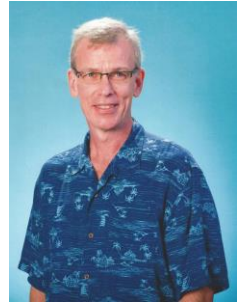
Brian Palmer – ELCA Pastor/Missionary serving in Totota, Liberia



Totota's Struggle for Healing

Most of you know that I live in a small town in somewhat rural Liberia

called Totota. Some of you may have noticed that Totota made the international news recently. On Tuesday, December 26, tragedy



struck Totota when a tanker truck, carrying 9000 gallons of gas, overturned at about 3 PM. The events that unfolded after the accident are both ugly and a testimony to the fragility of life. A huge crowd gathered around the truck, predominantly consisting of young men and children seeking a quick buck, most of them well aware of the risk.

About an hour after the original accident, the tanker caught fire. As of January 4, the numbers I've heard reported are: 84 dead with 30 reported as missing, presumed to have been reduced to ashes; 10 persons whose remains were on the periphery of the fire, and 109 were initially taken to hospitals scattered around the country. Most days, we hear of more people dying in the hospital from their injuries.

I don't really recommend it, but you can see a video of the incident on Facebook or Youtube. Simply search for "Totota fire" and then tell the search engine that you really want Totota and not Toyota.

Every day since the fire, I hear stories. Here are some:

- A sad story: A "big belly" (pregnant woman) went to retrieve her son, who was helping her husband get gas. It was as she was leading her son out of the danger zone when the truck ignited. The big-belly, her son, and her husband all died in the fire.
- A near-miss story: A 15-year-old named Abednego was in the middle of the gasoline river flowing from the tanker, using the cushion of an old motorcycle seat as a sponge to soak up the money. His friend came and asked to use the sponge, and Abednego agreed. After a few minutes, Abednego decided to go to the Sanoyea junction to get another motorcycle seat, and it was while he was returning to the tanker that the gasoline ignited. Abednego shook with fear and spent the next several days stunned at the thought of what nearly happened to him. The friend who borrowed the sponge is among the dead.
- A West African spirituality story: Some claim they witnessed a gina in the smoke above the burning truck. Gina is a Liberian term for a spiritual being. The claim is they saw a gina that looked like a lion's head with its open mouth.
- A story of ignorance: As the fire burned, people started to wonder how the death toll might be determined. Many were under the impression that the "human heart can't burn" and that the death toll would be determined by counting hearts left behind.

Who is to blame for all this? Many witnesses say the truck driver was driving recklessly fast, and many more witnesses say they could see the steering wheel wildly shaking in the driver's hands immediately before the accident. The Totota police were quickly on the scene. In the end, six of them were badly burnt. The word on the street is that one brought a taser, and the fire started when a young man grabbed the taser from the police officer's holster and used it on the truck itself in an attempt to get people to leave the area. So, who is responsible? It seems to me there are lots of options: 1) Truck owner, 2) Truck driver, 3) Police, 4) the man who grabbed the taser. Perhaps we could look more deeply and put the blame on greed spurred on by poverty, spurred on by rampant corruption. Maybe this is a good time to think about the words of Rabbi Abraham Heschel, "Few are guilty, all are responsible. "

Since the fire, Totota has been a very quiet place. Many businesses have been closed as the business owners tend to family matters. Normally, in a small community when a person dies, everyone can focus on the 1 or the family of the 1. This is different. Everyone is bereaved. I heard someone say, "sorrow is all over." As I walk on the road to buy my bread, I can feel the quiet condolences passing in every interaction.

Psalm 34:18 says, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Hebrew poetry is not like English poetry. In English poetry, we repeat sounds by using words that rhyme. In Hebrew poetry, it is ideas that are repeated, not sounds. Perhaps what the psalmist is saying

here is that being near the Lord is the same as being saved by the Lord. I like that. The one thing I know for sure is that the air in Totota is thick with the Spirit of the LORD. May God bless you all.

December 29, 2023

To: Members and Friends, St. John's Lutheran Church,



On behalf of the Recipients, Volunteers and Board of Directors at the Son Light House, "Thank You" for your donation of "Cereal" we received December 28th, 2023 for the Son Light House. And your monetary donation of \$127.00 we received on January 10th, 2024.

We are truly thankful for your generous and thoughtful support. This donation of cereal will be distributed in January at Son Light House.

The month of December, 549—households received Food and Clothing. This would include 457-Youth, 593-Adults, 379-Seniors a total of 1,428-Individuals. There were 27 New Family Households registered in December.

Son Light House depends on the support of the local community, various organizations, Church, Schools, Boy and Cub Scouts, and monetary donations, not to forget our Volunteers Making it possible to provide this service to the many families in need during the year.

God's Blessings

Ken and Delores Frey, Directors
Son Light House, Muncy

Dear Friends of St. John's Lutheran Church:

Thank you for your donation to the Montgomery Christmas Committee.

This year we provided 200 families with a food box, and 349 children received gifts. None of this would be possible without donations from the community, businesses, and individuals.

We would also like to thank the church for allowing us to use the basement and other rooms with the church to store, wrap and put together the food boxes and gifts.

Again, thank you for supporting the Christmas Committee.

Virginia Hill

St. John's Lutheran Church

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! We're excited to share with you the impact your clothing shed made over the last year...

*19,046 pounds of clothing were donated to your shed in 2023

*This was enough to clothe an estimated 3,509 people all over the world

*Based on this volume of clothing, your organization received \$762

Thank you so much for everything you, your volunteers and your communities do to support the clothing shed program!

Sincerely,

The Team at St. Pauly Textile, Inc.

Church Family,

For the past two years, I was in confirmation class with Pastor Cockley and SAM Jim Girven to become an adult member of St. John Lutheran Church. Through some unexpected events in my family and a snowstorm, I was finally able to become a confirmed member on Sunday, Jan. 14. I want to thank my church family for supporting me in my confirmation and the gift of a confirmation plaque.

Alex Puzio

Happy Birthday!

Eugene Burkholder	1	Ernie Meisel	11
Margot Schreiber	2	Carl Richart	12
Dennis Gruver	3	Esta Meisel	16
Robyn Schreiber	4	Robert Strieby	19
Gregory Gruver	7	Deborah Books	20
Shirley Shaner	9	Cathy Snyder	20
Tina Ayers	9	Carolyn Girad	29



Happy Anniversary!

Gary & Eileen Shrey	14
Tim & Amy Lupold	25

Happy Birthday and Happy Anniversary to all! If there are any additions or corrections to the birthday or anniversary lists, please contact the church office (547-6423) with the information so it can be added or corrected.



From the Church Cookbook!

Hawaiian Wedding Cake

By: Bonnie R. Taylor

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Box yellow cake mix | 3 cups Milk |
| 4 Boxes instant vanilla pudding | 8 oz. Cream Cheese |
| 1 Large carton Cool Whip | 1 can Crushed Pineapple |

First Layer: Bake cake in 15X10X 3/8-inch pan until done (about 20-25 minutes). Test with toothpick; let cool. (Follow directions on box for cake mix)

Second Layer: Mix pudding, cream cheese and milk together. Spread on top of cake. If mixture is too thick, add more milk.

Third Layer: Drain pineapple well. Mix pineapple and Cool Whip together. Put on top of pudding mixture. This makes the last layer. Sprinkle with coconut. **Keep Refrigerated.**

If you would like to have one of your recipes included in an upcoming newsletter please email it to the church office or stop by and drop it off during regular office hours.

February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 8:30am Worship w/ Communion	5	6	7	8 10-11:30am Bible Study @ Trinity	9	10
11 8:30am Worship	12	13	14 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Services Brick Church and Trinity Hughesville	15 6pm Council Meeting 10-11:30am Bible Study @ Trinity	16	17 9:30am Bible School Meeting
18 8:30am Worship w/ Communion	19	20 Newsletter Deadline	21 6:30pm Fellowship Time prior to service 7:00pm Mid-Week Lenten Service at Trinity, Hughesville	22 10-11:30am Bible Study @ Trinity	23	24
25 8:30am Worship	26	27	28 6:30pm Fellowship Time prior to service 7:00pm Mid-Week Lenten Service Brick Church	29		

Coming in March:

3/6 – Mid Week Lenten Service at Messiah, Clarkstown

3/13 – Mid-Week Lenten Service at St. John, Unityville

3/15 – Bloodmobile

3/20 – Mid-Week Lenten Service at Mt. Zion, Hughesville

3/28 – Maundy Thursday Service, St. John Brick, Montgomery

3/29 – Good Friday Service, Messiah, Clarkstown

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