

OLD ZION'S TRUMPET

... Blow ye the trumpet in Zion...

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OLD ZION CHURCH AND GROUNDS CLOSED DUE TO COVID19: Thru January 2021

OLD ZION IS *THANKFUL*

It's November, the traditional season of giving thanks for our many blessings. Because 2020 has been a turbulent and unusual year, giving thanks could be more challenging. However, the altered routines have provided us with time to reflect upon what has been positive.

Via bimonthly ZOOM meetings Old Zion's Board has been meeting and has had the opportunity to be more creative, to do more future planning, and to work more diligently at maintaining this special location for current and future generations. When our environment is safe, we are looking ahead to returning both Old Zion's traditional events and special occasions to the church's calendar.

Old Zion Church's volunteer Board is so very grateful to all of you for your past and ongoing support of this unique and historic location. Your attendance at our special events, your contributions of your time and talents, and your generous donations allow Old Zion church and grounds to continue to hold its special place overlooking the beautiful, peaceful Brubaker Valley. Happy Thanksgiving and **THANK YOU!!!**

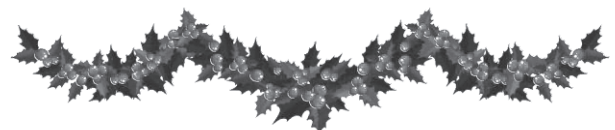


OLD ZION CLOSED FOR 2020

Due to the COVID pandemic, in April of this year, Old Zion's Board voted unanimously to close the church for the remainder of the 2020 calendar year. This was a difficult decision and it meant that we couldn't hold our beloved traditional events: the June Strawberry Social, the September Anniversary Service, and the December Carol Sing. In addition, it was determined that all weddings scheduled between April and October could not be held in the church. The decision to close the church was made for the following reasons:

- This determination was in-keeping with the State guidelines.
- Creating a hygienic environment would have been extremely difficult to accomplish in the 1813 sanctuary.
- Cleaning products could potentially harm the interior and the cleaning/sanitizing would have needed to be done professionally.
- The safety of visitors could not be assured.
- Concerns regarding visitor liability.

Although the closure is regrettable, the volunteer Board is certain that the correct decision was made. We are hopeful that the church will be able to be safely reopened sometime during 2021. When that happens, it will definitely be a time to celebrate. Until then...



OLD ZION INFORMATION

Information about the church and events can be found at www.oldzionchurch.org .

The website provides history, event info, newsletters, rental agreement, and wonderful photographs. It also includes directions and an easy way to contact the Board with questions, oldzionchurch@gmail.com .

MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS CONTINUE

Like many other organizations and sites, Old Zion has been closed during most of 2020 because of COVID 19. The Board's focus continues to be addressing various property issues and also planning for the church and cemetery's future upkeep. When Old Zion safely reopens, the Board wants to make certain that routine maintenance on the church and its property has been completed and that any new challenges that arise will be successfully resolved. Below is a listing of some of the completed and future Old Zion maintenance activities:

- **Wrought-iron Fencing** - The wrought-iron section of fencing next to Reifsnnyder Rd. has been successfully repainted (powder coated), restored, and reinstalled.
- **Fence Damage** – On two, recent occasions the fencing along the curving, northbound section of Reifsnnyder Rd. sustained damage from automobile accidents. Reflectors have now been installed next to this curving section of fencing. It is hoped that this pro-active measure will improve visibility for drivers so they can safely ascend the hill.
- **Squirrels** – These critters love to take refuge in the unoccupied church building and entertain themselves by eating through various sections of the attic. Efforts to keep squirrels to their native tree habitat are on-going.
- **Windows** – The original 1813 shutters continue to need repair. Currently, repair

work is needed on a north facing shutter that has sustained serious water damage. Sourcing carpentry work to repair this shutter with historical accuracy is needed.

- **Landscaping** – Throughout the pandemic, two very dedicated Board volunteers pulled weeds and trimmed the landscaping.
- **Handrails** – Plans are in process to install improved and historically accurate appearing handrails next to the church's three entrances.
- **Bench re-attachment** – A bench along the west wall was in need of re-attachment to the plaster wall. It has been reconnected and stabilized.
- **Grounds & Cemetery** – Mowing, edging, and leaf pick up are on going. A Board volunteer has painted the large, white cemetery cross at the far end of the cemetery.



PA HISTORICAL MUSEUM COMMISSION GRANT AWARDED

Old Zion German Reformed Church has been awarded a Keystone Historic Preservation Grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. This matching grant of \$25,000 will enable us to obtain professional advice to help with long-range planning, maintenance and preservation of the church. The Board will be working with Heritage Design Collaborative from Media, PA.

Heritage Design has worked on James Buchanan's home, Wheatland, and on restoring the Old Main Tower, at Franklin & Marshall College. These

knowledgeable professionals will provide us with experienced input and guidance over the next two years, as we move forward with the preservation of the church and grounds.

Much effort has gone into applying for this grant which included extensive paperwork and numerous onsite visits. Veteran board member, Ginny Gillespie, has spearheaded this effort and deserves accolades for her hard work. The last major restoration study was done in 1980 with John J. Snyder, an architect-historian, helping with the restoration of the wine-glass pulpit.

This grant will provide us with a roadmap to follow for Old Zion's future. As we move forward with this, updates will be provided on the website, www.oldzionchurch.org, and in our Newsletter.

THE PIANO MAN

At the 2019 Old Zion Anniversary Service, the church was crowded with a wonderful congregation. We all enjoyed singing along to hymns led by the beautiful organ melodies created by organist, JP Weliver. During the service, no one was the wiser that early in the service a foot pedal strap had snapped and JP was taking a marathon run using one pedal to sustain the beautiful music we all heard. Thankfully, JP does run marathons in his free time and was up to the challenge.

Fixing the strap led to an interesting story. During this time of the pandemic, please feel free to research more about what you've read and let us know any new information you might uncover.

Jeff Henry restored the pedal strap this year. He is a professional with several family generations invested in piano tuning and pump organ restoration.

The strap that snapped on the left in picture, Jeff discovered, was actually WWII era Army surplus, not the type that should be in a pump organ.



Jeff attached a strap specially made for pump organs with a herringbone design. This type of strap is meant to fray not snap and perhaps give the organist some warning.



As Jeff worked, he shared some history he had heard connected to Reifsnnyder Road. The Reifsnnyder family lived in the 'Checkerboard' house at the intersection of Rt. 322 in the mid to late 1800's. Ferris, one of three brothers was known to the community for giving piano lessons and advice when asked about what type of piano would be good to buy. His father, H.H. Reifsnnyder thought why send people to other places to buy the piano, we could sell pianos here. H.H. Reifsnnyder was the financier and his sons sold the pianos.

Ferris's brother, Perry became a salesperson with a twist. Often traveling on the road, Perry would use a buckboard drawn by a horse with two pianos on it. He would drive into a farm explaining he had to transport the one piano to meet a delivery and his

horse was tired. Could he leave one of the pianos at the farm and pick it up in several weeks? With a yes as the answer, Perry would be on his way; just before leaving he'd share some sheet music he just happened to find in the wagon.

Stopping back at the family farm in a month or so, if successful, Perry would find the family or rather the children attached to the piano. He'd ask the parents if they wanted to keep it. Often the reply was a simple no, they couldn't afford it. Using a small notebook, Perry would ask how much could you pay if a payment plan was available. Some notebooks carried 25 cents to 50 cents per month.

Youngest brother, Ardon, followed the family business with the piano store opening in downtown Lancaster.

Next time you have to spell Reifsnnyder Road when giving directions to Old Zion Church might bring a new bit of history to mind.



Photo source:

<https://www.hartmanpianomoving.com/about.html>

Caption: H.H. Reifsnnyder & Sons with a piano delivery circa 1917.

In addition to sharing the story from the Reifsnnyder piano business, Jeff Henry expressed his admiration for the preservation of Old Zion and the organ. The Board appreciates his skill and care in keeping the organ in good condition and sound for all to enjoy!



HOLIDAY WISHES

The Board of Old Zion Church wishes you and yours all the blessing of the holiday season with a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

