

FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED BY: ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, PERU ALEX GARNCARZ, PASTOR

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FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: ZION UCC, PERU, IL

Zion Church Family,

It's a weird time in the church. So much change is happening in the world around us. Cultural change and political tension just keep moving faster. If I'm being honest, it scares me a bit at times. So much change so fast.

But there is also change happening at Zion UCC. We've moved into hybrid ministry (online and in person) more than ever before. The church has moved out of the pandemic. We're learning that some of our faithful attendees have fallen away and it looks like they may not return. Others have become so accustomed to watching services online that they no longer attend in person. Our online attendance is growing while our in-person attendance is not.

On a positive note, we have Zion family members in Ohio, Iowa, Arizona and other states that join us faithfully each week and support our ministry through fellowship, prayer and financial contributions. Some of our local members and friends that are not able to attend in person for various reasons join us every Sunday online. What a wonderful blessing!

With all that said, I want to be clear. I don't view these changes as good or bad. Things are just different and that's okay. I have to be honest. I was hesitant to include some of these comments. I thought, "I know I'm being too protective. But they've all been through so much these last years, and they're doing really well. But we're facing a lot of change in the next couple of years. It's all a bit much and I don't want them to get overwhelmed."

Where are we headed? Well, that isn't so clear right now. I hope that doesn't make you nervous. I'm not claiming to have a mountaintop point of view. I don't have a roadmap. But I know this...we have gone through so much together and shown how strong we really are.

So much is up in the air right now. We can't really see where it's all going to come down. Time and faithfulness will figure this all out. But there's no crisis. God has not forsaken us. God always provides. There's just some moving parts that it's kind of hard to make sense of at the moment. But **together**, with God's help, we'll figure it all out.

In all this, I would ask that you be even more intentional about staying in touch with one another. Let's make it a habit to reach out to one or two church family members or friends deliberately each week.

It's harder with some of our Zion family online only to keep up with one another. People have different schedules. It's hard for people on YouTube and people in the sanctuary to talk back and forth. It's our task as a family to find ways to communicate, and we will accomplish that task.

Remember to be patient and kind to one another and to yourself. Understanding and communication are harder to come by when we are missing one another – literally, figuratively, emotionally. Care, concern, reaching out, staying in touch can all go a long way.

Remember, we are the church even if we're in new territory. Let's just hold on to one another like we hold on to God (and like God holds on to us). We may not always agree, but we will do better when our issues are shared at the table that Jesus has built for us.

In 2024 and beyond, we will find our way in this new world of culture change and 'hybrid ministry.' Jerry and Rhonda are constantly working to make our online presence stronger and it gets better all the time, thanks to their efforts.

I am honored to be your pastor and to be on this journey with you. Together we will keep working together faithfully to figure out and wait faithfully to see what God has in store for us in 2024!

Love you all,

Pastor Alex



Zion UCC Church Council Meeting

January 22, 2024

Members present: Pastor Alex, Bonnie Bird, Arnie Watkins, Marty Johnson, Alice Tostovarsnik, Todd Harzheim, Rhonda Essl, Jyll Janz, Lori Rynke, Jerry Koehler (guest) & Larry Grosenbach (guest)
November 2023 meeting minutes were reviewed. Motion to approve by Todd, seconded by Marty. Motion carried.

President's Report: Letter received from Erin thanking Zion and the church council.

Christian Education: Attendance has been impacted by severe weather. Shelly will be directing VBS this year.

Evangelism: Bonnie will continue sending birthday cards going forward (3 sent last month).

Pastoral Care: 11 poinsettias delivered last month.

Missions: A \$4000 check will be delivered to the Food Pantry shortly. A new PADS collection is in the works.

Building and Grounds: Koolmaster's \$1694 railing replacement estimate was accepted (no vote needed) but will need painted.

Women's Guild: Will meet again in March.

Minister's Report: Three IV Food Pantry Board of Directors meetings. Continuing search for a new larger building. Met with ministers group twice. Recorded eight radio shows that aired on WLPO. We renewed our contract for 2024. Coordinated PADS meals for November, December and January. There are currently 60 residents. We held our Thanksgiving Community Dinner. It was well attended and enjoyed by all. Thanks to all who helped make it happen. Held Ecumenical Thanksgiving service at Waltham Presbyterian on Thanksgiving Eve. Very well attended. Offering was divided between local food pantries. Cookie Sale was on December 8. It was a success. Zion Diners Christmas party was on December 12. We had a great time with good food and fellowship! We celebrated a wonderful Advent season and Christmas Eve together. As always, it was a special time. I took a staycation from December 26 through January 1. Looking forward to Lent. Ash Wednesday is February 14. We have planned Ecumenical services throughout Lent on Wednesday evenings.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Alex

Old Business: Early online donations toward this spring's required Christian Ed roof repairs can be made on zionperu.org website.

New Business: 2024 church budget discussed. Bonnie made a motion to approve and seconded by Jyll. Motion carried/passed. Rhonda, Bonnie, and Todd being replaced on church council with Dinelle, Elicia, Jerry, and Larry.

Marty made a motion to adjourn meeting.

Meeting ended with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Todd Harzheim

In Need of Ongoing Prayer:

The family of Aubrey's great-grandfather, Linda, Pastor Dan Richardson, Tammy Franklin, Doug Jakse, Karen Rynke & Family, Immigrants, PADS, The Homeless, Cindy Harzheim, Jenna, Lopeman & Pargo Families, Turner, Victims of war, Joshua Nardulli family, Jim's neighbor's daughter, Taylor, Hunter Gerard, Marcus & Cody Wymm, Laura, Dixie Tonozzi, Jonathon Burgoni, Roger Harbeck, Becky Jacobson, Marilyn Haslam, Dennis Miller, Marilyn, Gloria, Neil Tipton family, Roger Rynke, Mary Enstrenchi, Floyd, Caroline, Joe Smith, Jenna, Kathy Radtke, Glenn Damer, Sara, Rusty & Mary Thies, Leslie, Marsha Reed, Cheryl Johnston, Tom Kaszynski, Paul Lewis, Clinton Crouch, Carol, Evie, Mary, Healthcare/Hospital, Quinn & family, Johanna Arkels family, Deb Cooper, Bonnie, Marsha Dodd, Jeanie, Cathy Rose, Jack Yager, Lucille Smith family, Tim Engel family, Ron Narczewski, Jason, Debbie, Mary Fiedler, Jim L., Keisha Smith, Bob & Holly Antkowiak, Darrell, Bill Vlastnik, Jean Spayer, Ron Hudkins, Mrs. Lucas.



The Altar Flowers December 10th were in Memory of Kylene Kaszynski. Happy Heavenly Birthday December 13th. Love always, Mom and Dad, Jolene, and Collin.

The Altar Flowers December 17th were in Memory of Andrew Kelly on December 28. With Love, Mom, Dad, Bettianne, John, Duncan, and Josephine.

The Altar Flowers December 24th were in Memory of Jean Greening, from Jim.

A Memorial was given for Fred & Frieda Huettemann and their children Lyle, Karl, Joan & Gary, by Marjorie Huettemann.

A Memorial was given for William K. Janz, by Shirley and son William D. Janz.

A Memorial in Loving Memory of David Splittstoesser was given by Georgia Splittstoesser.

A Christmas Memorial was given in Memory of My Family, by Dona Ostermeyer.

A Christmas Memorial was given in Memory of Alice Guenther, Mr. & Mrs. Fred Halm, Mr. & Mrs. Hobart Peters. Mr. & Mrs. Donald Peters, and Don Wilmot, by The Family.



Thank you to Diane Gebhardt for sorting and donating the clothing from our Clothes Closet! You did a fantastic job distributing the clothes to those in need and we are very grateful!

Flower Charts There are many open dates for Altar flowers. The dates are hung on the bulletin board outside of the Fellowship Hall. We have 4 months hanging at a time. If you would like to reserve flowers you may sign up on the chart or contact the church office to ask about availability. Altar Flowers will be seen on YouTube services, the weekly bulletin, monthly newsletter, and on the church website in the posted bulletin. The cost for flowers is \$25.00. Please be sure to include all names, first and last, and any information you would like added to announcement.



2024 Offering envelopes are available in the narthex. If you have not been able to pick up your 2024 envelopes, use any envelope and put your name and date on it when you donate your contribution. Zion Church again thanks you for your continued support during these hard times. Your generosity has been a blessing for the continued operation and mission of Zion. Should you have any questions about envelopes or your giving statement please contact Jim Greening at (815) 223-1858.



Listen to Pastor Alex at 8:25 every Sunday morning on 103.9 **WLPO**. Tell your friends!



CREW (Creative Rejoicing in Early Worship)

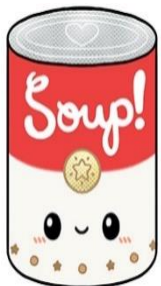
Calling All CREW Members! Get ready for adventure, fun, and faith! Join us every Sunday at 9:00AM if you're in kindergarten through 6th grade. We'll have games, stories, crafts, and more that will help you grow in your faith and friendships! Mark your calendars and don't miss the boat. Bring your energy and excitement as we learn how God is at work in our lives and world. Parents and grandparents - bring your kids and grandkids to CREW this Sunday!



Zion Women's Guild will not be meeting in February. The next meeting will be Thursday, March 7th at 1:00pm in Fellowship Hall.



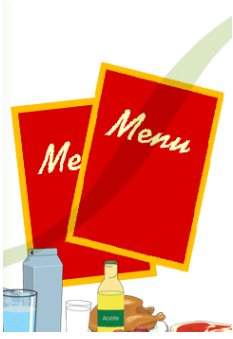
Join us for coffee fellowship after worship! If you would like to sign up to provide coffee fellowship (most Sundays) after worship there is a sign up sheet in fellowship hall, or contact the church office.



Souper Bowl Sunday will run through February 11th. Everyone is asked to bring cans of soup to worship and use them to vote for the team they think will win the Super Bowl, or the team they hope will win. The Sunday after the game, those who voted for the losing team are asked to bring one can of soup for every losing vote they cast. Jim Greening also says those who voted for the winning team should bring more soup to celebrate their team's victory.

All the soup will be given to the I.V. Food Pantry.

So who are you going to vote for?



Zion Diners met Thursday, January 18th at Verucchi's in Spring Valley. Pastor Alex and Shelly hosted. Everyone had a great time and the food was wonderful. The next Diners meeting will be Thursday, February 15th at 6:00pm. Larry & Cheryl Grosenbach will be hosting. The restaurant will be announced soon and ALL are welcome!



Ash Wednesday is February 14th and marks the beginning of the Lenten Season. Ash Wednesday service will be at 7:00pm in person and on You Tube.

"God, may your rhythms become my rhythms. May I not be afraid when you correct my ways and reorient me in your direction. Amen." —Ann Kansfield

Ecumenical Lenten Services

Worship will be Wednesdays at 7:00pm during Lent.

February 21st - Zion UCC with Pastor Lee Iseley from La Salle Congregational preaching.

February 28th - La Salle Congregational with Pastor Kay Harding preaching.

March 6th - Trinity UCC with Pastor Joel Stevenor from Waltham Presbyterian preaching.

March 13th - Spring Valley UCC with Pastor Betty Delgado from Trinity UCC preaching.

March 20th - Waltham Presbyterian with Pastor Jon Graham from Spring Valley UCC preaching.

Good Friday - Either Cherry or Depue with Pastor Alex preaching.



THE CHURCH IS OPEN FOR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Please follow all safety guidelines when in attendance. We understand if you are not comfortable coming in person and invite you to watch services on YouTube.

JOIN US LIVE ON YOUTUBE SUNDAYS AT 10:15

HOW DO YOU GET THERE? EASY.....

- 1) Go to Youtube.com
- 2) Click on "Search" box at top of the page.
- 3) Type in "Zion UCC Peru Illinois"
- 4) Click on the big purple circle with a "Z" in it.
- 5) Click on the video that says "LIVE"

THAT'S IT! SEE YOU SUNDAY!



*Bulletins available to view on our website!

You can donate to Zion Church with a credit card or by bank transfer from your bank account. All you need to do is go to our web page and click "Donate" located on the right-hand side. Also, here's the link to give to our church: <https://zionuccperu.breezechms.com/>

You can also donate to Zion Church by Text to (815)-393-1954 : Enter the amount you want to give to Zion in the Text box and send. If it the first time you are giving by text you will be prompted to set up your giving method. *Thank you for giving during these difficult times*



ILLINOIS VALLEY PUBLIC ACTION TO
DELIVER SHELTER
Established 1991

****HELP FEED THE HUNGRY!**** Zion UCC is providing a delicious hot meal delivered to the Peru PADS homeless shelter each month. Please open your hearts and wallets to support this important cause. Every little bit helps us provide a nutritious meal each month through May. Write a check to the church and note "PADS Meals." Or go online and donate through the Giving page on our website. Together we can make a difference for the less fortunate in our community! Your donation helps provide a healthy, hearty meal to those who need it most. Thank you for your generosity and support in feeding the hungry!

The Outdoor Ministries Fundraiser: Your gift is not "just" a donation, it is a prayerful statement to help change someone's life. You can donate directly : <https://outdoorministries.campbraingiving.com>

The I.V. Food Pantry needs monetary donations

The Pantry is looking for a larger space to store more perishable and non-perishable foods to help the community.

To mail contributions: Illinois Valley Food Pantry- 122 Wright St. LaSalle, IL 61301

Can you help? Tonica Church is collecting personal hygiene products to give away. Items needed include: *Bar soap *Shower gel *Shampoo * Razors *Deodorant *Toothbrushes *Toothpaste *Combs or Brushes *Also- they are collecting men's pants. Please bring items to donate to church and place them on the designated table in fellowship hall. Contact Diane Gebhardt with any questions.



COMMUNITY
PROGRAMS

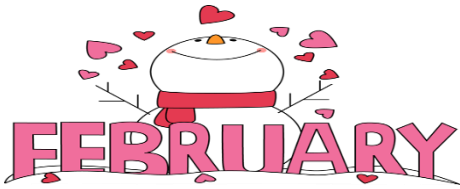
Live Life (Pre and Post Transplant Support Group) meets the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm at Zion UCC.

The Compassionate Friends Group meets at Zion every fourth Thursday at 6:30pm. This meeting is open to any parent who has lost a child. Please contact the church office for information.

Weight Watchers meets every Saturday morning at 8:00. We're happy to provide space for this worthwhile service to our community.

Dance as though no one is watching you; sing as though no one can hear you; live as though heaven is on earth.- Alfred D. Souza





February Birthdays

- 3. Harry Wilmot
- 4. Brooklyn Bejster
- 8. Todd Harzheim
- 9. Josephine Louise Casper
- 10. Collin Ward
Phyllis Bender
Abbey Gardner
- 12. Sue Ryan
Tracey Flahaut
- 14. Emmy L. Reid Trumpinski
- 16. Dick Tostovarsnik
Tatum Watkins
- 17. Matt Tipton
- 20. Lindsey Gardner
Tanya Ware
- 22. Bentley Bejster
- 23. Gary Fouth
Dixie Tonozzi
- 24. Linda Fetzer
Bonnie Bird
- 27. Alexis Beck



February Anniversaries

- 12. Ed & Shirley Lopeman
- 14. Francis and Kari Baker



March Birthdays

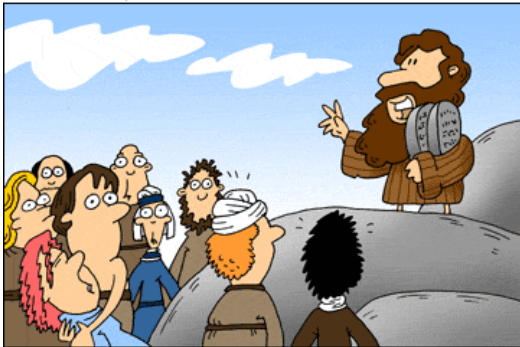
- 2. Tim Breuning
- 3. Garrett Fouth
Dave Jacobson
- 5. Janis Watkins
- 6. Gracelyn Watkins
- 7. Jesse Watkins
Tom Kaszynski
- 8. Evan Sprong
- 9. Bill Johnson
Kelsey Grosenbach
Madysen Zimmer
- 16. Ed Lopeman
- 18. Bettianne Kelly Casper
Roman Freschi
- 19. Gary Hylla
- 20. Amanda Coutre'
Isabelle Knutson
- 21. Duncan Casper
- 22. Elyse Boroski
Elecia Lindenmeir
- 24. Paul Witczak
- 29. David Brown



March Anniversaries

- 14. Rich & Bonnie Bird
- 20. Leonard and Renee Lundeen

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(See Exodus 34) 02-07-2003
I WAS JUST MESSING WITH YOU ON THAT LAST ONE ... CHOCOLATE AND PIZZA ARE STILL OK

Book of Timothy



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