

MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED BY: ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, PERU ALEX GARNCARZ, PASTOR
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FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: ZION UCC, PERU, IL

Dear Zion Family,

As I think about 2024, I'm thankful to God for the many ways God has blessed our congregation. This past year has been a time of growth, renewal, and deepened faith in our church family.



One of the most exciting highlights of this year has been welcoming new faces into our community. We have been blessed with seven adults and two youth who have become regular attendees, actively participating in worship, Bible study, and various church ministries. We look forward to officially welcoming them into membership soon. As our numbers increase, we also see our congregation maturing in faith, growing in discipleship, and deepening our commitment to loving God and loving people.

Throughout 2024, you have gathered to worship, shared in fellowship, and served our community with dedication. Our young people continue to take a more active role in morning worship. Our Bible studies, mission projects, and outreach efforts continue to get positive results, touching lives inside and outside our church walls. The well-attended Tuesday evening adult Bible study has been a place of encouragement and learning for us, and the weekly radio ministry on WLPO continues to reach hearts in our community. Our choir is growing, a wonderful blessing in a day when many churches no longer have a choir. CREW Sunday School remains steady under excellent leadership. Thanks to our teachers for your dedication and care.

The highlights of the year include a successful Cookie Sale, a beautiful Christmas Candlelight Service, and a nice Christmas Program led by our young people. These moments remind us of the joy and vitality in our church family. Our outreach has also been strong, with the Illinois Valley Food Pantry receiving a \$4,000 check from Zion, along with a successful Harvest Home gathering of food and money donations. Ecumenical services were enjoyed at Thanksgiving and during Lent, with eight churches participating together in worship and fellowship. Our commitment to PADS homeless shelter continues, with Zion providing a meal once a month for those in need.

As we look ahead to 2025, we do so with excitement and trust in God's continued work among us. The coming year will bring new opportunities for worship, service to others, and growth. As I prepare for my sabbatical in June, July, and August, I am confident that Zion will continue to thrive, guided by the Spirit and the faithfulness of our dedicated congregation.

Thank you for your love, prayers, and commitment to our church's mission. Let's continue to walk together in faith, hope, and love, trusting that God has even greater things in store for us in 2025 and beyond.

To God be the glory,
Pastor Alex



Members present: Pastor Alex, Larry Grosenbach, Arnie Watkins, Marty Johnson, Jerry Koehler, Lauren Knutson, Alice Tostovarsnik, Jyll Janz.

Larry G. called meeting to order.

Opening prayer led by Larry G.

President's report: Thank you notes from Erin & Jerry for Christmas bonus.

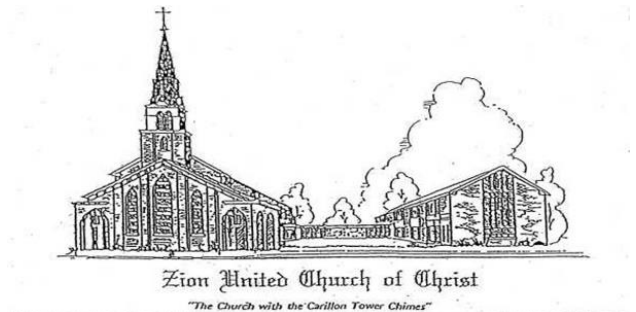
Christian Education: Children made Valentine cards.

Evangelism: Alice T. keeping up with cards for congregation.

Old Business: Working on approval of 2025 budget. Need to start a "Raise the Roof" fund for roof completion. Will discuss during Annual Meeting. Running low on overall funds. Discussing all aspects of Budget for 2025. Budget was approved to present to congregation at Annual Meeting scheduled for 2/23/2025.

Jyll J. made a motion to adjourn meeting.

Pastor Alex led The Lord's Prayer.



ZION UCC
Loving God, Loving People

In Need of Ongoing Prayer:

Karen Kradle, Charlene Theisinger Family, Ray Poehler Family, George, Pope Francis, Carol Sell Family, Arnie & Jan Watkins, Medical Research Funding, Dick & Alice Tostovarsnik, Jody & Family, Rusty & Mary Thies, Theresa, Nia's mom, Disaster victims, Country, Marty, Steve Theisinger, Eddie, Ed, Unspoken, Zion Youth events, Pam Haslam, Karen, Shelly, Anthony, Larry Aldman family, Orval family, Hopkins family, Shawna & Family, Dawn & Ron Narczewski, Evie Coulter, Jim Brown, Dixie Tonozzi, Austin, Maxine, Shirley, and Jackie, Brianna, Jim Greening, Pam, Audrey Clements family, Zimmer Family, Tim P., Michelle, Eric & Tina, Jackson, Dale Jacobson, Jeff, Paul Nave, Jeff Rietgraf, Jean Mikus, Deb Cooper, Kathy Radke Family, Ryan, Josie, Steve & Audrey, Carol Harris Family, Ben Vowels, Sr. Family, Priscilla Dean, Tom & Gretchen Kaszynski, Lindenmier family, The Smith Family, Art Ramey Family, Jean Spayer, Emily, Renewal Team, Cindy Harzheim, Paul Lewis, Marilyn Haslam, Bob & Holly Antkowiak.



The Altar Flowers and Bulletin sponsorship February 2 were in Memory of Elizabeth Kivett and Jim Kivett, from Ellyn & Gary Hylla.

The Altar Flowers February 23 were in Celebration of Dixie Tonozzi's Birthday.



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.



Thank you to everyone who donated soup for "Souper Bowl Sunday." Zion donated all cans to the Illinois Valley Food Pantry!

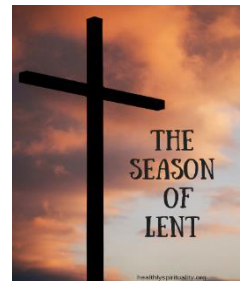


Thank you to all who donated to the Kitchen Shower! The church has received enough supplies to last a while, and your generosity is greatly appreciated!



"When you know deep within yourself what God has revealed to you and called you to do, no one else can take that away from you. The call of God is lodged deep in the human spirit and mind."

—Vashti McKenzie



Ash Wednesday is March 5th and marks the beginning of the Lenten Season. Ash Wednesday service will be at 7:00pm in person and on You Tube.



Ecumenical Lenten Services

LENT *Wednesdays at 7:00pm during Lent.*

March 12: LaSalle Congregational

March 19: Grace UMC, LaSalle

March 26: Zion UCC

April 2: Spring Valley UCC, Pastor Alex preaching

April 9: Waltham Presbyterian



Holy Week Services begin Palm Sunday, April 13th

Maundy Thursday...7:00pm... Zion UCC

Good Friday.....Noon.....DePue UCC

Easter Sunday.....10:15am.. Zion UCC



Tune in to Pastor Alex every Sunday morning at 8:25 on 103.9 WLPO. Be sure to spread the word to your friends!

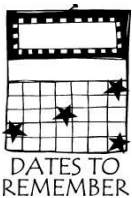


CREW is in Full Swing—Come Join the Fun!

Hey families! Our CREW Sunday School program is off to an amazing start, and it's in full swing! Every Sunday at 9:00 AM, kids in kindergarten through 6th grade are having a blast with exciting stories, awesome crafts, and fun games that keep everyone engaged and smiling.

It's a great opportunity for your kids to make new friends, grow in faith, and have a ton of fun each week. If you haven't joined us yet, it's not too late—bring your kids this Sunday and let them be part of all the excitement!

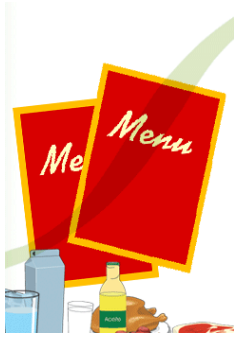
We can't wait to see you there!



The Zion Women's Guild will meet Thursday, March 6th at 1:00pm in Fellowship Hall. All Ladies are welcome to attend.



The Guild will also meet in April on Thursday, April 4th at 1:00pm.



Zion Diners met Thursday, February 17th at Garzanelli's in Oglesby. Larry & Cheryl Grosenbach hosted. Everyone had a great time and the food was wonderful. The next Diners meeting will be Thursday, March 20th at 6:00pm. Randy Fouth will be hosting. We are all looking forward to another great time. The restaurant will be announced soon and ALL are welcome!

Join Us for Bible Study!



Bible Study meets Tuesdays at 6:30 PM! Our study is based on the inspiring series *The Chosen* and is open to all adults.

This is a **hybrid event**, so you can join us **in person at the church** or **via Zoom**—whichever works best for you. Each week, we'll dive into a new episode, so be sure to watch it beforehand and come ready to share your questions and insights.

Let's grow in faith and community together. **See you Tuesday!**



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.

Don't forget to "Spring Ahead" March 9th!



APRIL 6TH WORSHIP AND LUNCH **AT PILGRIM PARK**

Anyone who wishes to carpool will meet at the church at 10:00am. Worship will be at 11:15am in the beautiful Pilgrim Park Chapel. Afterwards, we'll have lunch together in the dining area and more great fellowship. There will be sign-up sheet available at the church.

Flute Concert Sunday April 6th at 3:00pm



The Illinois Valley Flute Ensemble and the Bloomington-Normal Flute Club are joining forces and performing with music inspired by Route 66. The concert will be held at Zion UCC. Free will offerings are accepted with gratitude.

Easter Lily Order - \$10.00 per Lily
Please turn in your order by April 13th

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____



Order forms will be available in your church bulletins. If you would like to mail an order to the church, you may print out this form or write your order on a piece of paper to mail in with your check. Please write "In Memory" for a memorial or "In Honor" of someone or a group who is living. If you have any questions, please contact the church office.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON EASTER

SUNDAY AT 10:15 AM

We will celebrate the Resurrection of Christ on April 20th
with in-person worship or on YouTube live



**HELP
WANTED**

Ushers

Ushers: We are building a new Ushers List. If you previously served as usher and would like to serve again, we would like to add you to the new ushers list. Previously ushers served for an entire month. Ushers now will serve when they are available to serve even for a single Sunday. You can let Larry Grosenbach know you will serve as usher or email ushers@zionperu.org to be added to the ushers list.

**HELP
WANTED**

Evangelism

Evangelism: We are updating our visitor information about Zion church and will be creating a visitor packet that will contain our new updated information about Zion Church and a thank you gift or two for them visiting. If you would like to help the Evangelism Team with the visitor project you can let Pastor Alex, Jerry Koehler or email evangelism@zionperu.org.



ILLINOIS VALLEY PUBLIC ACTION TO
DELIVER SHELTER
Established 1991

FEED THE HUNGRY – JOIN OUR MISSION!

Every month, Zion UCC partners with the Peru PADS homeless shelter to serve a hot, nutritious meal to our neighbors in need. Due to increased demand, the shelter reopened earlier this year, and now more than ever, your support is essential.

How You Can Help:

- **Donate:** Every gift—big or small—ensures that we continue providing hearty, healthy meals.
- **Ways to Give:**
 - Write a check to the church with “PADS Meals” in the memo
 - Donate online through the Giving page on our website

Thank you for opening your heart to this mission of compassion and care. Together, we can make a difference in our community!

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

Support Needed for Food Pantry Expansion!

The Illinois Valley Food Pantry is seeking donations as it searches for a new, larger facility to better serve those in need. A larger space will allow for the storage of additional perishable and non-perishable food items, ensuring that we can meet the increasing demand in our community.

Your financial support can make a real difference! Contributions can be sent to:

*Illinois Valley Food Pantry
122 Wright St.
LaSalle, IL 61301*



Feeding the Community

Together, we can work to end hunger in our community. Thank you for your generosity!



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.

**COMMUNITY
PROGRAMS**

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

Rainbows and Promise

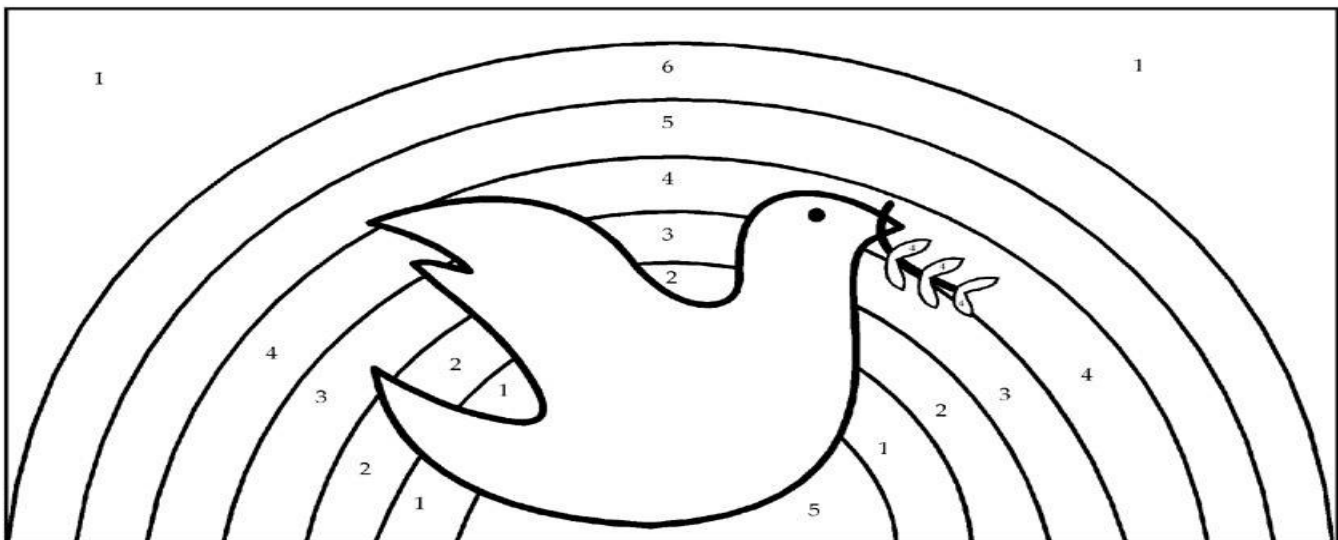
Read the story of Noah from a children's story Bible, or from Genesis 6:13—8:12 and Genesis 9:8–17.

- What part did the dove play in this story?
- What does the rainbow mean?

Follow the color key to finish the picture.

Color Key

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1 = Red | 4 = Green |
| 2 = Orange | 5 = Blue |
| 3 = Yellow | 6 = Violet |





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
 Madyson 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
- 31. Diane Gebhardt



April Birthdays

- 3. Tyler Martinez
- 4. Nate Trumpinski
- 6. Joel Bejster
Shirley Lopeman
Kenny Lindenmier
- 8. Gary Grosenbach
- 9. Rhonda Essl
- 11. Rich Ploch
- 13. Rev. Kay Harding
- 15. Heather Becker
 David Wilmot
- 16. Michael Breuning
- 18. Dean Wilmot
- 20. Kim Grant
- 21. Larry Butkus
 Jessica Rogel
- 22. Claire Baltikauski
- 23. Hunter Thurman
- 24. Tony Coutre'
 Leesa Tipton
- 25. Lori Rynke
 George Garncarz
- 26. Shelly Garncarz
- 27. Andrew Watkins
 Cody Essl
- 28. Brant Baltikauski
- 29. Pam Beck
 Nora Trumpinski



March Anniversaries

- 20. Leonard and Renee Lundeen

Book of Timothy



April Anniversaries

- 6. Rich & Jodee Ploch
- 14. Mark & Julie Zimmer
- 19. Doug & Cyndi Thurman
- 19. Russ & Maureen Lemmer
- 20. Gary & Elynn Hylla
- 23. Gary Fouth & Kimberly Tracy
- 30. Charles & Elinor Lindenmeyer





MARCH 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 8:00am Weight Watchers meeting
2. 8:25 Pastor Alex WLPO 9:00 CREW 9:30 Choir practice 10:15 Worship- Also available on You Tube & Coffee Fellowship	3	4 6:30 Bible Study	5 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service In person or on You Tube	6 1:00pm Zion Women's Guild meeting 6:30 Choir Practice	7	8 8:00am Weight Watchers meeting
9. 8:25 Pastor Alex WLPO 9:00 CREW 9:30 Choir practice 10:15 Worship- Also available on You Tube & Coffee Fellowship <i>Spring Ahead!</i>	10 6:30pm Live Life Group meeting	11 6:30 Bible Study	12 7:00pm Ecumenical Service LaSalle Congregational	13 6:30 Choir Practice	14	15 8:00am Weight Watchers meeting
16. 8:25 Pastor Alex WLPO 9:00 CREW 9:30 Choir practice 10:15 Worship- Also available on You Tube & Coffee Fellowship	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> 7:00 Church Council Meeting	18 6:30 Bible Study	19 7:00pm Ecumenical Service Grace UMC LaSalle	20 6:00 Zion Diners	21 Newsletter info Due	22 8:00am Weight Watchers meeting
23. 8:25 Pastor Alex WLPO 9:00 CREW 9:30 Choir practice 10:15 Worship- Also available on You Tube & Coffee Fellowship	24	25 6:30 Bible Study 5:15 PADS Meal	26 7:00pm Ecumenical Service Zion UCC	27 6:30pm Compassionate Friends Group meeting 6:30 Choir Practice	28	29 8:00am Weight Watchers meeting
30 8:25 Pastor Alex WLPO 9:00 CREW 9:30 Choir practice 10:15 Worship- Also available on You Tube & Coffee Fellowship	31.	April 1 6:30 Bible Study	April 2 7:00pm Ecumenical Service Spring Valley UCC	April 3 1:00pm Zion Women's Guild meeting 6:30 Choir Practice	April 4	April 5 8:00am Weight Watchers meeting

Don't forget to sign up for worship and lunch at Pilgrim Park on April 6th!

