OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

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

Phone:815-223-2671 Email:office@zionperu.org www.zionperu.org

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: ZION UCC, PERU, IL

Dear Zion Family and Friends,

There's something special about this time of year. The leaves are changing colors, it's getting cooler, and everywhere we look, we see the beauty of God's creation. The fall season reminds us that the seasons change, but God's goodness and faithfulness stays the same. And it reminds us to slow down once in a while, look around, and count our blessings.

However, slowing down might be a little difficult around Zion these next few months! We have a lot going on, and I'm looking forward to every bit of it.

Our annual **Grubby Sunday** is coming up soon, giving us an opportunity to roll up our sleeves and show a little extra love to our church home. We also have our Church Potluck coming up, and you know how much I enjoy those times when we gather around a table, share a good meal, and enjoy one another's company.

And before we know it, we'll be preparing for our Annual Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner. This is one of those wonderful ministries that reminds us what being the church is all about. It's an opportunity to extend God's love beyond our walls and offer food, fellowship, and a warm welcome to our neighbors.

Now, here's where you come in! All of these events require people willing to help. We'll need help with cleanup, preparing food, setting up tables, serving meals, or just being present with a smile and conversation. I want to encourage you not only to attend these events but to get involved in making them happen. You don't have to do everything. Just find something you can do and jump in!I've said it before, and I'll say it again: The church isn't a building. The church is people. It's you and me, working together, loving one another, and sharing God's love with the world around us.

And believe it or not, Advent and Christmas are right around the corner! It hardly seems possible, right? Soon we'll be lighting Advent candles, singing carols, and celebrating again the wonderful news of God's love coming into the world through Jesus. It's one of my favorite times of the year, and I'm already looking forward to sharing it with all of you.

We've got a busy season ahead, but it's a good kind of busy. These are opportunities to strengthen our fellowship, serve our neighbors, make some memories, and remind ourselves why Zion is such a special church family.

As we move through these beautiful autumn days, I hope you'll take a little time to thank God for the blessings in your life. And I hope you'll make time to be part of the good things happening at Zion.

Last, I want to remind you of something I hope you never forget. **I** love you all. I love this church family, and I am grateful beyond words for the privilege of being your pastor. We've shared a lot over the years, and I continue to believe that God has good things in store for us as we walk together in faith. Enjoy the beauty of fall, take good care of one another, and I'll see you soon!

To God be the glory,

Pastor Alex



Zion UCC Church Council Meeting September 20, 2026 7:00pm

Members Present: Pastor Alex, Arnie Watkins, Dinelle Freschi, Lauren Knutson, Elecia Lindenmier, Larry Grosenbach, Jyll Janz, Lori Rynke, Jerry Koehler, Phyllis Bender

Call to order: Larry G.

Opening Prayer: Jerry K

Last month's minutes: Motion to approve by Jerry K. seconded by Arnie W.

Treasurer's Report: No Report

President's Report: No Report

Christian Education: Elecia "Listening to God's Call" – needs more advertising

Evangelism: Sent out September cards & October soon – Dinelle

History: 175th Anniversary coming October 12, 2027. Make shirts with 175th anniversary on them to sell

Missions: Ordered PADS meal – 60 people there now

Building and Grounds: To start roof 2 to 3 weeks from now 0 may damage flat roof so he will repair at no charge. Troy needs deposit of $13,000 ASAP total bill is $27,700.

Women's Guild: October 18th – Grubby Sunday, November 1st – Pot Luck, December 11th – Cookie Sale

Renewal Leadership Team: Council is basically doing that with our current project.

Minister's Report: (See minister's report)

Old Business: Copy machine is fixed.

New Business: LaMoille will be handing out small items that have Zion's name on them (to school kids during the school's fall festival)

Arnie W. made motion to adjourn meeting.

The Lord's Prayer: Pastor Alex

Respectfully submitted by: Phyllis B

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Altar Flowers this month were In Memory of our parents Rev Philip & Peggy Krause on their 80th Anniversary, from Kathy Krause Learn, Kim Krause Clements, and Carol Krause

Prayer Requests In the Bulletin - We are grateful for the privilege of praying for one another. To help us keep our prayer list current, each new request will be included in the bulletin for four weeks. After that time, we will remove it unless we are asked to continue sharing it longer. If you would like a request to remain, please let us know—we want to walk alongside you in prayer for as long as you need.

In Need of Ongoing Prayer:

Abby, Terry, Red Bly, Evan Grove, Mary Thies, Jim D, Mitch K, Angel, Mclaughlin Family, Jan Watkins Family, Joe, Jean, Mary Lamps Family, Jim, Dick Tostovarsnik, Paul Lewis & Family, Pastor Kay, Chris Lamps, Matthew, Adeline, Barb, Mary Garncarz, Alice, Marsha, Rebecca, Lauren, Ned Yoder, Heather, Jean Spier, Cindy Harzheim, Arnie, Mary Jean, Stephanie Heilstedt, Dixie, Deb Cooper, Marilyn Haslam

Memorials for Jan Watkins were given by Bill & Sue Johnson, Barb & Jim Ryba, Barbara & Ken Ficek, Ben & Kelly Wicklund, Bill & Phyllis Bender, Larry & Cheryl Grosenbach, The Women's Guild, Jerry Koehler, Debbie Miller, Lindsay Gardner, Allison Miller and also by Sherry Rubins



A Thank you card from the Family of Jan Watkins
I am at a loss for words, Thank you for all of your generous support to Jan and I over these last 2 years.
- Arnie, Jesse & Andy

Walking Together to Fight Hunger
The Illinois Valley CROP Walk for Hunger was held Sunday, September 27. This year, 25 walkers representing five local churches raised $2,685 to help fight hunger!
Thank you to everyone who walked, donated, and supported this meaningful effort. Your generosity helps make a difference!





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

If you would like to provide special music please contact Shelly Garncarz. Please note that the choir will not sing on **11/29** and **12/27**. If you're willing to offer special music on one of these Sundays, we'd love to include it





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.

Worship at Pilgrim Park – November 8 We're heading back to Pilgrim Park! On Sunday, November 8, we will gather at our church camp for worship, followed by lunch and a time of fellowship together. It was a wonderful experience last time, and we're looking forward to another special Sunday surrounded by the beauty of Pilgrim Park. Mark your calendar and plan to join us!

PILGRIM PARK UCC





Women's Guild Meeting

Thursday, November 5th
1:00pm in the Fellowship Hall

Upcoming Events

Grubby Sunday

Sunday, October 18th

Just as we did last year, come to worship dressed in your comfortable "grubby" clothes and be ready to lend a hand with some work around the church following worship. There's something for everyone to do, and many hands make light work.



Potluck Sunday

Sunday, November 1st

Join us for a potluck lunch following worship on Sunday, November 1! Fried chicken will be provided. If you are able, please bring a dish to pass and come enjoy some good food and fellowship with your church family.



Looking Ahead

Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner

Thanksgiving Day

Everyone in the community is welcome to our annual free dinner! Share a Thanksgiving meal, hospitality, and fellowship with our neighbors.

Stay tuned for more information about meal times, volunteering, donations, and how you can help make this year's Dinner a success!



Zion's Annual Cookie Sale

Friday, December 11th

Bakers, start thinking about your cookies! Information about baking, donating, volunteering, and sale details will be coming soon.



****HELP FEED THE HUNGRY!**** Zion UCC is providing a delicious hot meal delivered to the **Peru PADS homeless shelter** each month. 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. 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!

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 or donate online through the Giving page on our website.



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.



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.

JOIN US FOR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

If you're unable to attend in person, we 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*

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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

Zion UCC

Birthdays & Anniversaries

OCTOBER

Birthdays

01 Mark Bejster
03 Leah Wilmot
05 Jyll Janz
07 Michelle Johnson
07 Ryan Ploch
08 Kristen Eustis
09 Libby Mize
10 Lucy Breuning
11 Klaire Wilmot
12 Dona Ostermever
13 Stephanie Heilstedt
13 Olivia Shetterly
16 Sharon Eustis
16 Bentiey Moisant
20 Lanie Lynn Gardner
23 Rosalie Watkins
24 David Baltikauski
25 Becky Wicinski
25 Nathan Tipton
25 Olivia Bergagna
26 Bill Becker
27 Anna Coutre'
29 Lexanne Jarosz

Anniversaries

05 Dick & Alice Tostovarsnik
07 Bill & Sue Johnson
09 Jerrid & Tanya Ware
10 Pastor Alex & Shelly Garncarz
13 Dan & Sheryl Churney
15 Adam & Jennifer Mize
16 Brant & Megan Baltikauski
29 John & Mary Lamps

NOVEMBER

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01 Reid Baltikauski
01 Charles Lindenmeyer
04 Ellyn Hylla
13 Aubree Lamps
14 Brian Butkus
15 Taeden Freschi
16 Mary Thies
16 Austyn Sprong
18 Kevin Rynke
21 Sophie Bergagna
22 Jacob Miller
23 Katherine Nardulli
25 Beverly Keutzer
26 Hanna Sprong
27 Zach Freschi
27 Adaline Grove
28 Lauren Dergance
29 Evelyn Jayne Lindenmier
30 Caidin Garncarz

Anniversaries

26 Roger and Lori Rynke



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15 Adam & Jennifer Mize
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01 Charles Lindenmeyer
04 Ellyn Hylla
13 Aubree Lamps
14 Brian Butkus
15 Taeden Freschi
16 Mary Thies
16 Austyn Sprong
18 Kevin Rynke
21 Sophie Bergagna
22 Jacob Miller
23 Katherine Nardulli
25 Beverly Keutzer
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27 Zach Freschi
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28 Lauren Dergance
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Pastor Alex



Zion UCC Church Council Meeting September 20, 2026 7:00pm

Members Present: Pastor Alex, Arnie Watkins, Dinelle Freschi, Lauren Knutson, Elecia Lindenmier, Larry Grosenbach, Jyll Janz, Lori Rynke, Jerry Koehler, Phyllis Bender

Call to order: Larry G.

Opening Prayer: Jerry K

Last month's minutes: Motion to approve by Jerry K. seconded by Arnie W.

Treasurer's Report: No Report

President's Report: No Report

Christian Education: Elecia "Listening to God's Call" – needs more advertising

Evangelism: Sent out September cards & October soon – Dinelle

History: 175th Anniversary coming October 12, 2027. Make shirts with 175th anniversary on them to sell

Missions: Ordered PADS meal – 60 people there now

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Women's Guild: October 18th – Grubby Sunday, November 1st – Pot Luck, December 11th – Cookie Sale

Renewal Leadership Team: Council is basically doing that with our current project.

Minister's Report: (See minister's report)

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New Business: LaMoille will be handing out small items that have Zion's name on them (to school kids during the school's fall festival)

Arnie W. made motion to adjourn meeting.

The Lord's Prayer: Pastor Alex

Respectfully submitted by: Phyllis B

October NEWSLETTER



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In Need of Ongoing Prayer:

Abby, Terry, Red Bly, Evan Grove, Mary Thies, Jim D, Mitch K, Angel, Mclaughlin Family, Jan Watkins Family, Joe, Jean, Mary Lamps Family, Jim, Dick Tostovarsnik, Paul Lewis & Family, Pastor Kay, Chris Lamps, Matthew, Adeline, Barb, Mary Garncarz, Alice, Marsha, Rebecca, Lauren, Ned Yoder, Heather, Jean Spier, Cindy Harzheim, Arnie, Mary Jean, Stephanie Heilstedt, Dixie, Deb Cooper, Marilyn Haslam

Memorials for Jan Watkins were given by Bill & Sue Johnson, Barb & Jim Ryba, Barbara & Ken Ficek, Ben & Kelly Wicklund, Bill & Phyllis Bender, Larry & Cheryl Grosenbach, The Women's Guild, Jerry Koehler, Debbie Miller, Lindsay Gardner, Allison Miller and also by Sherry Rubins



A Thank you card from the Family of Jan Watkins
I am at a loss for words, Thank you for all of your generous support to Jan and I over these last 2 years.
- Arnie, Jesse & Andy

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Thank you to everyone who walked, donated, and supported this meaningful effort. Your generosity helps make a difference!





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

If you would like to provide special music please contact Shelly Garncarz. Please note that the choir will not sing on **11/29** and **12/27**. If you're willing to offer special music on one of these Sundays, we'd love to include it





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.

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PILGRIM PARK UCC





Women's Guild Meeting

Thursday, November 5th
1:00pm in the Fellowship Hall

Upcoming Events

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Sunday, October 18th

Just as we did last year, come to worship dressed in your comfortable "grubby" clothes and be ready to lend a hand with some work around the church following worship. There's something for everyone to do, and many hands make light work.



Potluck Sunday

Sunday, November 1st

Join us for a potluck lunch following worship on Sunday, November 1! Fried chicken will be provided. If you are able, please bring a dish to pass and come enjoy some good food and fellowship with your church family.



Looking Ahead

Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner

Thanksgiving Day

Everyone in the community is welcome to our annual free dinner! Share a Thanksgiving meal, hospitality, and fellowship with our neighbors.

Stay tuned for more information about meal times, volunteering, donations, and how you can help make this year's Dinner a success!



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Friday, December 11th

Bakers, start thinking about your cookies! Information about baking, donating, volunteering, and sale details will be coming soon.



****HELP FEED THE HUNGRY!**** Zion UCC is providing a delicious hot meal delivered to the **Peru PADS homeless shelter** each month. 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. 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!

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 or donate online through the Giving page on our website.



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.



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.

JOIN US FOR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

If you're unable to attend in person, we 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*

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Zion UCC

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OCTOBER

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03 Leah Wilmot
05 Jyll Janz
07 Michelle Johnson
07 Ryan Ploch
08 Kristen Eustis
09 Libby Mize
10 Lucy Breuning
11 Klaire Wilmot
12 Dona Ostermever
13 Stephanie Heilstedt
13 Olivia Shetterly
16 Sharon Eustis
16 Bentiey Moisant
20 Lanie Lynn Gardner
23 Rosalie Watkins
24 David Baltikauski
25 Becky Wicinski
25 Nathan Tipton
25 Olivia Bergagna
26 Bill Becker
27 Anna Coutre'
29 Lexanne Jarosz

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05 Dick & Alice Tostovarsnik
07 Bill & Sue Johnson
09 Jerrid & Tanya Ware
10 Pastor Alex & Shelly Garncarz
13 Dan & Sheryl Churney
15 Adam & Jennifer Mize
16 Brant & Megan Baltikauski
29 John & Mary Lamps

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01 Reid Baltikauski
01 Charles Lindenmeyer
04 Ellyn Hylla
13 Aubree Lamps
14 Brian Butkus
15 Taeden Freschi
16 Mary Thies
16 Austyn Sprong
18 Kevin Rynke
21 Sophie Bergagna
22 Jacob Miller
23 Katherine Nardulli
25 Beverly Keutzer
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27 Zach Freschi
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OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

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

Phone:815-223-2671 Email:office@zionperu.org www.zionperu.org

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: ZION UCC, PERU, IL

Dear Zion Family and Friends,

There's something special about this time of year. The leaves are changing colors, it's getting cooler, and everywhere we look, we see the beauty of God's creation. The fall season reminds us that the seasons change, but God's goodness and faithfulness stays the same. And it reminds us to slow down once in a while, look around, and count our blessings.

However, slowing down might be a little difficult around Zion these next few months! We have a lot going on, and I'm looking forward to every bit of it.

Our annual **Grubby Sunday** is coming up soon, giving us an opportunity to roll up our sleeves and show a little extra love to our church home. We also have our Church Potluck coming up, and you know how much I enjoy those times when we gather around a table, share a good meal, and enjoy one another's company.

And before we know it, we'll be preparing for our Annual Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner. This is one of those wonderful ministries that reminds us what being the church is all about. It's an opportunity to extend God's love beyond our walls and offer food, fellowship, and a warm welcome to our neighbors.

Now, here's where you come in! All of these events require people willing to help. We'll need help with cleanup, preparing food, setting up tables, serving meals, or just being present with a smile and conversation. I want to encourage you not only to attend these events but to get involved in making them happen. You don't have to do everything. Just find something you can do and jump in!I've said it before, and I'll say it again: The church isn't a building. The church is people. It's you and me, working together, loving one another, and sharing God's love with the world around us.

And believe it or not, Advent and Christmas are right around the corner! It hardly seems possible, right? Soon we'll be lighting Advent candles, singing carols, and celebrating again the wonderful news of God's love coming into the world through Jesus. It's one of my favorite times of the year, and I'm already looking forward to sharing it with all of you.

We've got a busy season ahead, but it's a good kind of busy. These are opportunities to strengthen our fellowship, serve our neighbors, make some memories, and remind ourselves why Zion is such a special church family.

As we move through these beautiful autumn days, I hope you'll take a little time to thank God for the blessings in your life. And I hope you'll make time to be part of the good things happening at Zion.

Last, I want to remind you of something I hope you never forget. **I** love you all. I love this church family, and I am grateful beyond words for the privilege of being your pastor. We've shared a lot over the years, and I continue to believe that God has good things in store for us as we walk together in faith. Enjoy the beauty of fall, take good care of one another, and I'll see you soon!

To God be the glory,

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16 Mary Thies
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18 Kevin Rynke
21 Sophie Bergagna
22 Jacob Miller
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PUBLISHED BY: ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, PERU ALEX GARNCARZ, PASTOR

Phone:815-223-2671 Email:office@zionperu.org www.zionperu.org

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: ZION UCC, PERU, IL

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JOIN US LIVE ON YOUTUBE SUNDAYS AT 10:15

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THAT'S IT! SEE YOU SUNDAY! *Bulletins available to view on our website!

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Also, here's the link to give to our church: https://zionuccperu.breezechms.com/
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Zion UCC

Birthdays & Anniversaries

OCTOBER

Birthdays

01 Mark Bejster
03 Leah Wilmot
05 Jyll Janz
07 Michelle Johnson
07 Ryan Ploch
08 Kristen Eustis
09 Libby Mize
10 Lucy Breuning
11 Klaire Wilmot
12 Dona Ostermever
13 Stephanie Heilstedt
13 Olivia Shetterly
16 Sharon Eustis
16 Bentiey Moisant
20 Lanie Lynn Gardner
23 Rosalie Watkins
24 David Baltikauski
25 Becky Wicinski
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26 Bill Becker
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05 Dick & Alice Tostovarsnik
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15 Adam & Jennifer Mize
16 Brant & Megan Baltikauski
29 John & Mary Lamps

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01 Reid Baltikauski
01 Charles Lindenmeyer
04 Ellyn Hylla
13 Aubree Lamps
14 Brian Butkus
15 Taeden Freschi
16 Mary Thies
16 Austyn Sprong
18 Kevin Rynke
21 Sophie Bergagna
22 Jacob Miller
23 Katherine Nardulli
25 Beverly Keutzer
26 Hanna Sprong
27 Zach Freschi
27 Adaline Grove
28 Lauren Dergance
29 Evelyn Jayne Lindenmier
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October 2026



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OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

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

Phone:815-223-2671 Email:office@zionperu.org www.zionperu.org

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: ZION UCC, PERU, IL

Dear Zion Family and Friends,

There's something special about this time of year. The leaves are changing colors, it's getting cooler, and everywhere we look, we see the beauty of God's creation. The fall season reminds us that the seasons change, but God's goodness and faithfulness stays the same. And it reminds us to slow down once in a while, look around, and count our blessings.

However, slowing down might be a little difficult around Zion these next few months! We have a lot going on, and I'm looking forward to every bit of it.

Our annual **Grubby Sunday** is coming up soon, giving us an opportunity to roll up our sleeves and show a little extra love to our church home. We also have our Church Potluck coming up, and you know how much I enjoy those times when we gather around a table, share a good meal, and enjoy one another's company.

And before we know it, we'll be preparing for our Annual Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner. This is one of those wonderful ministries that reminds us what being the church is all about. It's an opportunity to extend God's love beyond our walls and offer food, fellowship, and a warm welcome to our neighbors.

Now, here's where you come in! All of these events require people willing to help. We'll need help with cleanup, preparing food, setting up tables, serving meals, or just being present with a smile and conversation. I want to encourage you not only to attend these events but to get involved in making them happen. You don't have to do everything. Just find something you can do and jump in!I've said it before, and I'll say it again: The church isn't a building. The church is people. It's you and me, working together, loving one another, and sharing God's love with the world around us.

And believe it or not, Advent and Christmas are right around the corner! It hardly seems possible, right? Soon we'll be lighting Advent candles, singing carols, and celebrating again the wonderful news of God's love coming into the world through Jesus. It's one of my favorite times of the year, and I'm already looking forward to sharing it with all of you.

We've got a busy season ahead, but it's a good kind of busy. These are opportunities to strengthen our fellowship, serve our neighbors, make some memories, and remind ourselves why Zion is such a special church family.

As we move through these beautiful autumn days, I hope you'll take a little time to thank God for the blessings in your life. And I hope you'll make time to be part of the good things happening at Zion.

Last, I want to remind you of something I hope you never forget. **I** love you all. I love this church family, and I am grateful beyond words for the privilege of being your pastor. We've shared a lot over the years, and I continue to believe that God has good things in store for us as we walk together in faith. Enjoy the beauty of fall, take good care of one another, and I'll see you soon!

To God be the glory,

Pastor Alex



Zion UCC Church Council Meeting September 20, 2026 7:00pm

Members Present: Pastor Alex, Arnie Watkins, Dinelle Freschi, Lauren Knutson, Elecia Lindenmier, Larry Grosenbach, Jyll Janz, Lori Rynke, Jerry Koehler, Phyllis Bender

Call to order: Larry G.

Opening Prayer: Jerry K

Last month's minutes: Motion to approve by Jerry K. seconded by Arnie W.

Treasurer's Report: No Report

President's Report: No Report

Christian Education: Elecia "Listening to God's Call" – needs more advertising

Evangelism: Sent out September cards & October soon – Dinelle

History: 175th Anniversary coming October 12, 2027. Make shirts with 175th anniversary on them to sell

Missions: Ordered PADS meal – 60 people there now

Building and Grounds: To start roof 2 to 3 weeks from now 0 may damage flat roof so he will repair at no charge. Troy needs deposit of $13,000 ASAP total bill is $27,700.

Women's Guild: October 18th – Grubby Sunday, November 1st – Pot Luck, December 11th – Cookie Sale

Renewal Leadership Team: Council is basically doing that with our current project.

Minister's Report: (See minister's report)

Old Business: Copy machine is fixed.

New Business: LaMoille will be handing out small items that have Zion's name on them (to school kids during the school's fall festival)

Arnie W. made motion to adjourn meeting.

The Lord's Prayer: Pastor Alex

Respectfully submitted by: Phyllis B

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Altar Flowers this month were In Memory of our parents Rev Philip & Peggy Krause on their 80th Anniversary, from Kathy Krause Learn, Kim Krause Clements, and Carol Krause

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Bakers, start thinking about your cookies! Information about baking, donating, volunteering, and sale details will be coming soon.



****HELP FEED THE HUNGRY!**** Zion UCC is providing a delicious hot meal delivered to the **Peru PADS homeless shelter** each month. 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. 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!

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 or donate online through the Giving page on our website.



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.



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.

JOIN US FOR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

If you're unable to attend in person, we invite you to watch services on Youtube!

JOIN US LIVE ON YOUTUBE SUNDAYS AT 10:15

HOW DO YOU GET THERE? EASY……

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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.
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Zion UCC

Birthdays & Anniversaries

OCTOBER

Birthdays

01 Mark Bejster
03 Leah Wilmot
05 Jyll Janz
07 Michelle Johnson
07 Ryan Ploch
08 Kristen Eustis
09 Libby Mize
10 Lucy Breuning
11 Klaire Wilmot
12 Dona Ostermever
13 Stephanie Heilstedt
13 Olivia Shetterly
16 Sharon Eustis
16 Bentiey Moisant
20 Lanie Lynn Gardner
23 Rosalie Watkins
24 David Baltikauski
25 Becky Wicinski
25 Nathan Tipton
25 Olivia Bergagna
26 Bill Becker
27 Anna Coutre'
29 Lexanne Jarosz

Anniversaries

05 Dick & Alice Tostovarsnik
07 Bill & Sue Johnson
09 Jerrid & Tanya Ware
10 Pastor Alex & Shelly Garncarz
13 Dan & Sheryl Churney
15 Adam & Jennifer Mize
16 Brant & Megan Baltikauski
29 John & Mary Lamps

NOVEMBER

Birthdays

01 Reid Baltikauski
01 Charles Lindenmeyer
04 Ellyn Hylla
13 Aubree Lamps
14 Brian Butkus
15 Taeden Freschi
16 Mary Thies
16 Austyn Sprong
18 Kevin Rynke
21 Sophie Bergagna
22 Jacob Miller
23 Katherine Nardulli
25 Beverly Keutzer
26 Hanna Sprong
27 Zach Freschi
27 Adaline Grove
28 Lauren Dergance
29 Evelyn Jayne Lindenmier
30 Caidin Garncarz

Anniversaries

26 Roger and Lori Rynke



October 2026



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OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

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

Phone:815-223-2671 Email:office@zionperu.org www.zionperu.org

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: ZION UCC, PERU, IL

Dear Zion Family and Friends,

There's something special about this time of year. The leaves are changing colors, it's getting cooler, and everywhere we look, we see the beauty of God's creation. The fall season reminds us that the seasons change, but God's goodness and faithfulness stays the same. And it reminds us to slow down once in a while, look around, and count our blessings.

However, slowing down might be a little difficult around Zion these next few months! We have a lot going on, and I'm looking forward to every bit of it.

Our annual **Grubby Sunday** is coming up soon, giving us an opportunity to roll up our sleeves and show a little extra love to our church home. We also have our Church Potluck coming up, and you know how much I enjoy those times when we gather around a table, share a good meal, and enjoy one another's company.

And before we know it, we'll be preparing for our Annual Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner. This is one of those wonderful ministries that reminds us what being the church is all about. It's an opportunity to extend God's love beyond our walls and offer food, fellowship, and a warm welcome to our neighbors.

Now, here's where you come in! All of these events require people willing to help. We'll need help with cleanup, preparing food, setting up tables, serving meals, or just being present with a smile and conversation. I want to encourage you not only to attend these events but to get involved in making them happen. You don't have to do everything. Just find something you can do and jump in!I've said it before, and I'll say it again: The church isn't a building. The church is people. It's you and me, working together, loving one another, and sharing God's love with the world around us.

And believe it or not, Advent and Christmas are right around the corner! It hardly seems possible, right? Soon we'll be lighting Advent candles, singing carols, and celebrating again the wonderful news of God's love coming into the world through Jesus. It's one of my favorite times of the year, and I'm already looking forward to sharing it with all of you.

We've got a busy season ahead, but it's a good kind of busy. These are opportunities to strengthen our fellowship, serve our neighbors, make some memories, and remind ourselves why Zion is such a special church family.

As we move through these beautiful autumn days, I hope you'll take a little time to thank God for the blessings in your life. And I hope you'll make time to be part of the good things happening at Zion.

Last, I want to remind you of something I hope you never forget. **I** love you all. I love this church family, and I am grateful beyond words for the privilege of being your pastor. We've shared a lot over the years, and I continue to believe that God has good things in store for us as we walk together in faith. Enjoy the beauty of fall, take good care of one another, and I'll see you soon!

To God be the glory,

Pastor Alex



Zion UCC Church Council Meeting September 20, 2026 7:00pm

Members Present: Pastor Alex, Arnie Watkins, Dinelle Freschi, Lauren Knutson, Elecia Lindenmier, Larry Grosenbach, Jyll Janz, Lori Rynke, Jerry Koehler, Phyllis Bender

Call to order: Larry G.

Opening Prayer: Jerry K

Last month's minutes: Motion to approve by Jerry K. seconded by Arnie W.

Treasurer's Report: No Report

President's Report: No Report

Christian Education: Elecia "Listening to God's Call" – needs more advertising

Evangelism: Sent out September cards & October soon – Dinelle

History: 175th Anniversary coming October 12, 2027. Make shirts with 175th anniversary on them to sell

Missions: Ordered PADS meal – 60 people there now

Building and Grounds: To start roof 2 to 3 weeks from now 0 may damage flat roof so he will repair at no charge. Troy needs deposit of $13,000 ASAP total bill is $27,700.

Women's Guild: October 18th – Grubby Sunday, November 1st – Pot Luck, December 11th – Cookie Sale

Renewal Leadership Team: Council is basically doing that with our current project.

Minister's Report: (See minister's report)

Old Business: Copy machine is fixed.

New Business: LaMoille will be handing out small items that have Zion's name on them (to school kids during the school's fall festival)

Arnie W. made motion to adjourn meeting.

The Lord's Prayer: Pastor Alex

Respectfully submitted by: Phyllis B

October NEWSLETTER



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.

Altar Flowers this month were In Memory of our parents Rev Philip & Peggy Krause on their 80th Anniversary, from Kathy Krause Learn, Kim Krause Clements, and Carol Krause

Prayer Requests In the Bulletin - We are grateful for the privilege of praying for one another. To help us keep our prayer list current, each new request will be included in the bulletin for four weeks. After that time, we will remove it unless we are asked to continue sharing it longer. If you would like a request to remain, please let us know—we want to walk alongside you in prayer for as long as you need.

In Need of Ongoing Prayer:

Abby, Terry, Red Bly, Evan Grove, Mary Thies, Jim D, Mitch K, Angel, Mclaughlin Family, Jan Watkins Family, Joe, Jean, Mary Lamps Family, Jim, Dick Tostovarsnik, Paul Lewis & Family, Pastor Kay, Chris Lamps, Matthew, Adeline, Barb, Mary Garncarz, Alice, Marsha, Rebecca, Lauren, Ned Yoder, Heather, Jean Spier, Cindy Harzheim, Arnie, Mary Jean, Stephanie Heilstedt, Dixie, Deb Cooper, Marilyn Haslam

Memorials for Jan Watkins were given by Bill & Sue Johnson, Barb & Jim Ryba, Barbara & Ken Ficek, Ben & Kelly Wicklund, Bill & Phyllis Bender, Larry & Cheryl Grosenbach, The Women's Guild, Jerry Koehler, Debbie Miller, Lindsay Gardner, Allison Miller and also by Sherry Rubins



A Thank you card from the Family of Jan Watkins
I am at a loss for words, Thank you for all of your generous support to Jan and I over these last 2 years.
- Arnie, Jesse & Andy

Walking Together to Fight Hunger
The Illinois Valley CROP Walk for Hunger was held Sunday, September 27. This year, 25 walkers representing five local churches raised $2,685 to help fight hunger!
Thank you to everyone who walked, donated, and supported this meaningful effort. Your generosity helps make a difference!





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

If you would like to provide special music please contact Shelly Garncarz. Please note that the choir will not sing on **11/29** and **12/27**. If you're willing to offer special music on one of these Sundays, we'd love to include it





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.

Worship at Pilgrim Park – November 8 We're heading back to Pilgrim Park! On Sunday, November 8, we will gather at our church camp for worship, followed by lunch and a time of fellowship together. It was a wonderful experience last time, and we're looking forward to another special Sunday surrounded by the beauty of Pilgrim Park. Mark your calendar and plan to join us!

PILGRIM PARK UCC





Women's Guild Meeting

Thursday, November 5th
1:00pm in the Fellowship Hall

Upcoming Events

Grubby Sunday

Sunday, October 18th

Just as we did last year, come to worship dressed in your comfortable "grubby" clothes and be ready to lend a hand with some work around the church following worship. There's something for everyone to do, and many hands make light work.



Potluck Sunday

Sunday, November 1st

Join us for a potluck lunch following worship on Sunday, November 1! Fried chicken will be provided. If you are able, please bring a dish to pass and come enjoy some good food and fellowship with your church family.



Looking Ahead

Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner

Thanksgiving Day

Everyone in the community is welcome to our annual free dinner! Share a Thanksgiving meal, hospitality, and fellowship with our neighbors.

Stay tuned for more information about meal times, volunteering, donations, and how you can help make this year's Dinner a success!



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