
Zionite Newsletter



ZION UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

January 2025



Pastor's Letter:

Hello Church,

I hope and pray your 2025 is off to a blessed start!

This newsletter is arriving a little late in January since I took some time to visit family in Massachusetts last week. I don't make it home to Massachusetts as frequently as I should, but when I do, I'm grateful for each moment. Seeing family and friends and snuggling my 9 month old baby nephew definitely warmed my heart!

Things at church have also settled down a bit now that we've made it through a successful Advent and Christmas Season. On Christmas Eve, we had 270 people in the Sanctuary. I knew it would be a full house, and it was a joy to have everyone snug in the pews and chairs worshipping together. Fun little fact is that I was really hoping we would have 300 people here for Christmas Eve (and I think we could have squeezed in another 30), but that gives us a goal to try to hit next year!

I know it doesn't matter how many people are in the pews, but studies have shown that once someone makes their way into a church for the first time, and feels welcome, they'll come back. And Christmas and Easter are two of the biggest Sundays for guests. Consistory also ran an add on Facebook and Instagram for Christmas. You may have seen it: it was the singing of Silent Night from last year's service. And when people keep coming to church, they become a part of the family of faith. And together we're able to learn and grow together as we all strive to follow Christ and be the most loving, faithful versions of ourselves as we can be.

One thing that we did realize was that our parking lot couldn't hold all the cars on Christmas Eve. So next year, we'll have to carefully park some cars on the street to make room for first time visitors. This is definitely a good problem to have!

And as we start this new year, I want you to know that it's a privilege to serve as your pastor. Being able to do ministry together, with a church full of volunteers and people doing their best to embody the Holy Spirit, is truly a blessing.

Also, a little bit of information to share with all of you is that my second (and final) term as Moderator of the Western Association of the NY Conference of the UCC has come to an end. Since I am no longer serving in that role, I have added a new Association role (I think it's important to be involved in the greater church); I'm now serving on the Church and Ministry Committee. This is the committee that supervises, approves, and even disciplines ministers. I've been waiting to finish my term as Moderator to join this committee, and I'm looking forward to being a part of it.

With all of that said, there is a lot in this newsletter that I hope you can take time to read. We have some great ministry opportunities and I would love for you to consider being a part of them. (see page 5)

*In Christ's love,
Pastor Elizabeth*

Thank you for reading!

Breakfast with Santa

The youth group had another successful Breakfast with Santa!

Thank you to our wonderful Santa Claus, and for our youth, volunteers, guests, and photographer, Micah Weber!

The youth group raised enough money to send two of them on the mission trip! Some of the photos are below, but to see more, visit this link:

<https://www.micahweber.com/santa2024>



Church Events

- Sunday Services ▶ 9am & 10:45
- Sunday School ▶ Sundays at 9am
- Bible Study ▶ Tues. at 12pm Facebook Live
- Nursery ▶ Sundays during the 1st service
- Youth Group ▶ 1st & 3rd Fridays 6-9pm
- Food Pantry ▶ Every Tuesday 10am-12pm
- AA ▶ Sat. at 10am & 1pm, Thurs. at 5:30pm
- Girl Scouts ▶ Thursdays at 6:30pm
- Bell Choir Practice ▶ Wed @6:30pm
- Chancel Choir Practice ▶ Wed @7:30pm
- Jan 11 ▶ Men's Fellowship at Family Tree, 9am
- Jan 12 ▶ Two services resume, 9 & 10:45am
- Jan 14 ▶ Consistory, 7pm
- Jan 17 ▶ Youth Group Ice Skating 7-8:30pm
- Jan 18 ▶ Women's Fellowship
- Jan 20 ▶ Trustee's Meeting, 6pm
- Jan 22 ▶ Exercise with Dawn, 5:30pm
- Jan 25 ▶ Community Dinner, 5pm
- Jan 31-Feb 2 ▶ WAY Retreat @Epiphany
- Feb 8 ▶ Health Ministry Class: Dealing with Grief, 9am
- Feb 9 ▶ Baptism of Emmersyn Walker, 10:45am
- Feb 11 ▶ Consistory, 7pm
- Feb 12 ▶ Exercise with Dawn, 5:30pm
- Feb 15 ▶ Men's Fellowship at Family Tree, 9am
- Feb 15 ▶ Women's Fellowship at 11am
- Feb 16 ▶ Baptism of Frankie Pike, 9am
- Feb 16 ▶ Pastoral Care Team Lunch, 12pm
- Feb 17 ▶ Trustees, 6pm
- Feb 21 ▶ Youth Group @ Nativity
- Feb 26 ▶ Exercise with Dawn, 5:30pm

For more events:

www.zionuccton.com/events

LECTOR SIGN UP



DINNER VOLUNTER SIGN UP





Food Pantry

Thank you to our amazing food pantry volunteers: Jeff Quinton, John Wagner, Sue House, and Pat Mudd!

Jeff does all the shopping to keep our pantry stocked, and John Wagner is here every week. Pat helps John and Sue helps when needed!

Thank you also to everyone who brings in donations regularly. We appreciate you!



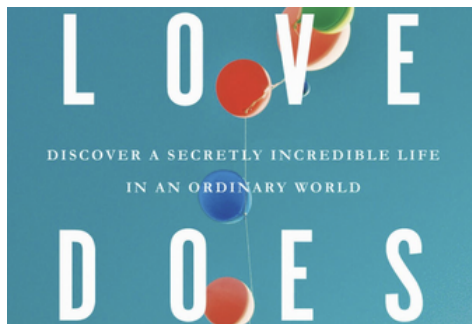
Community Dinner

Every Month we are blessed to offer a free, drive-thru dinner to the community.

To pick up a meal, arrive at 5pm. Food runners will bring the food to you.

To volunteer, scan the QR code on the previous page or click the link: <https://bit.ly/4jalKEY>

Thank you to all our volunteers!



New Book Study!

Just imagine what God could do with a whole group of people who were passionate about Jesus' love and eager to put it into creative practice.

Jump into "Love Does" and find out!
Dates: Mondays January 27, February 3, February 24, and March 3
Time: 7 to 8:30pm.



Children's Sunday

Thank you to all of our children who participated in our Children's Christmas Sunday!

If you missed it, we'll have another Children's Sunday on Father's Day!

And if you missed the **Nativity Pageant**, watch it on our YouTube Channel [HERE](#).



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

On Sunday, December 15, we welcomed 26 new members! And baptized one new member, Nick Pennisten!

Welcome to Zion UCC:

Rev. Don & Kathie Lawrence; Brooke, Paige, and Larry Benn; Geoff, Jill, Ethan, Evie, and Emmy Walker; Carol & David Ace; Andrew, Andrea, Leah, Makayla Eck; Gail Shattuck; Nick Pennisten; Bill Hoock; Carl, Tina, Xavier, Isabella Erickson; Lena, Anna, Cora Dorsey



Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Jr. WAY: Ages 4 to Grade 6

WAY: Grades 7-12

Sr. WAY: Ages 18-35

If you know someone in one of these age groups, help them get connected today!

WESTERN AREA YOUTH
Winter WAY Retreat
Grades 7-12

JANUARY 31 - FEBRUARY 2, 2025

EPIPHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
9365 CLARENCE CENTER RD,
CLARENCE, NY

REGISTER:
WWW.ZIONUCCTON.COM/WAY

DROP OFF:
FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 6-7PM

PICK UP:
FEBRUARY 2, AFTER WORSHIP
AROUND 11AM

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Canal View MINISTRY TEAM

Just before Christmas, Pastor Elizabeth, Taylor, Walter, and Mary Drescher went to Canal View (group home) to help them decorate cookies. We had a wonderful time, and when we left we went by the nearby nursing home to see a church member, Arlene, and sing her a Christmas song.

All of us had a wonderful time, and if you would like to participate in any future events at Canal View, please let Pastor Elizabeth know!



Pastoral CARE TEAM

Would you be interested in making photo calls to check in on church members at home?
Or would you be interested in visiting people in nursing homes?

Each person on the Pastoral Care Team will be assigned a member to check in on. This way they can build a relationship with that member and support them. If you are interested, join us for a **Pastoral Care Team Luncheon on Sunday, February 16 at noon** (following worship). We would love to have a large team, so stay for lunch and hear what it means to be on the Pastoral Care Team.

Checking in on our church members who live alone, and our church members in nursing homes, is an important part of ministry that can be done by more people than the pastor. We hope you join us! And if you have children: Pastor Elizabeth's kids have joined her on visits (occasionally) all of their lives, and it's a blessing to those they visit and to the kids!

Consider joining our pastoral care team!

Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes January 5, 2025
Zion United Church of Christ

OPENING STATEMENT – Dave Dombrowski, Consistory President

Dave thanked Edie Bauer for her service as Consistory President. Pastor Duffy presented her with an appreciation gift for her service.

REVIEW OF ROBERTS RULES – Dave had people refer to page 20 of the Zion UCC 2024 annual reports

Please raise your hand, stand, and say your full name prior to speaking

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – 11:05 A.M.

Quorum Present – 85 in attendance

OPENING PRAYER – Pastor Elizabeth Duffy

OLD BUSINESS

1. Review minutes from past congregational meetings (pages 17-19)

Debby Williams made a motion to accept the past meeting notes and James Cousins seconded. All attending approved.

- a. James Cousins asked with the number of committees we presently have, if Consistory had thought of discontinuing or combining some. Dave Dombrowski said the Consistory had discussed this and many had been discontinued or combined with others. Dave also stated that Consistory is now reviewing the Constitution and will be updating it this year.
- b. Tim Schlegel brought up the fact that Pastor needed health insurance and there should be no question we approve that after all she has done for our church and people in it.
- c. Angie Staniszewski- expressed that when Pastor started at our church, we had 250 members, and we are now at 450. She felt that Pastor Duffy should be properly compensated for all her hard work and that she should be getting help from somebody with all that she does.
- d. Dave Dombrowski said that Pastor had done extensive research on the health insurance and chose the one best for her family.
- e. James Cousins motioned to close the debate, and it was seconded by Elena Camp.
- f. Motion to approve past meeting minutes – James Cousins made a motion to open debate/Sue Clark seconded. All members attending approved

2. Approval of Committee Reports (pages 5-9).

- a. All attending members approved

3. Consistory and Trustee Vacancies.

- a. Debate was opened
- b. Dave Dombrowski stated that there were vacancies in consistory and trustees. Kelly DesChamps and Marcel Ross volunteered. James Cousins spoke in support of Marcel and Debby Williams spoke on behalf of Kelly.

c. Pastor stated we still need one more Consistory member and one alternate for Consistory and asked for volunteers. Cheryl Lindstrom volunteered, and Jeff Quinton volunteered for the alternate position.

d. Angie Staniszewski wanted clarification of who was taking which position. Dave Dombrowski clarifies their names and positions.

e. The Motion to accept nominees was made by James Cousins and seconded by Ted Camp. All attending members approved.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Budget (pages 12-15)

a. Motion to open the floor to debate on the budget was made by James Cousins and seconded by Laurie Mittlefehldt

b. Tim Schlegel asked if we could have a side-by-side comparison of the budget years for more understanding as it was in last year's report but not this year.

c. Motion to Pass Budget and the Trustees report as displayed/listed and forthcoming all future budgets will include a plus/minus column so the congregation can see and understand the changes that were made to the budget. A motion was made by James Cousins and seconded by Elena Camp. All members attending approved

2. Trustee's narrative report. Ted Camp presented.

a. Overview of the Trustees Report –page 16

b. Ted thanked Laurie Mittlefehldt who chaired the committee that oversaw the parking lot project.

c. Ted thanked Ken Voght, who did an audit of our church and made suggestions including changes to our by-laws and constitution to improve things.

d. Ted also acknowledged the Trustees by having them stand up so the congregation could see names/faces.

e. He explained the new projects forthcoming such as pew cushion replacement, Kuck Hall refresher and redoing the outside courtyard.

f. James Cousins was present to answer questions.

g. Debbie Grine asked if the projects are financed by donors or the Memorials Fund. James Cousins answered it was mostly donors.

h. Motion to the Trustees report was made by Andrew Eck and seconded by Tim Schlegel. All members attending approved

3. Pastor Duffy thanked Ted and Rick for making lunch for after this meeting. A Blessing was done.

Closing remarks – Dave Dombrowski

Adjourned– 11:42pm

Minutes Recorded by Consistory Secretary, Debby Williams

Zion UCC Consistory Meeting Minutes December 10, 2024

Call to Order at 7:05 pm by Edie B.

Attending: Pastor Elizabeth, Edie B., Pierre, John P., Dave D., George D., Robin F., Elena C., Debby W., and Ted C as Trustee representative. Absent: Bob S. and Kalee.

Devotion and Lord's Prayer

Approval of Consistory Meeting Minutes -edit: AA does not pay rent but makes donations to the church instead. Motion to accept the report was made by Dave, seconded by Debby and all attending members approved.

Treasurer's Report (Ron J.)

- As of 12/1/2024 there is a balance of \$63,904.76 in the operating account and \$25,064.23 in the restricted funds account.
- The revenue for November was \$19,947.00 (thanks in part to the success of the rummage sale). The net income was \$3,650.47. In comparison: The revenue for November 2023 was \$23,478.88 (this included over \$8,000.00 in income from the meat raffle). The net income for November 2023 was \$6,599.44. The YTD income for 2024 is \$190,795.01 and the net income is \$15,996.27. The 2023 YTD was \$175,837.65 and the net income was \$2,426.98.
- There were three payrolls in November and there are five Sundays in December.
- Notable P&L events in November:
- 51710 Pastor FICA - \$1,407.46 Last Quarterly Payment for 2024
- Fourth Quarter payments to the UCC for OWCM, Western Area and Per Capita totaling \$2,486.00.
- All quarterly payments due for this year have been paid in full. Barring a major catastrophe, we will end the year on a positive note.

Motion to accept the report was made by Debby, seconded by Elena and all attending members approved.

Annual Meeting Planning and Discussion

- January 5, 10am worship, 11am meeting. There is a luncheon at noon after the annual meeting. There will be a genie sign up for volunteers to help with the luncheon afterwards and cleanup.
- Reports for the annual meeting are due by Christmas day.
- We can create a narrative budget to accompany the budget.
- Budget went out in the newsletter. Thank you, Ron, for working on this.

Kalee's Member in Discernment (MID) update: Sent her report to Pastor Duffy

- She is working on Board Certification for chaplaincy. The last steps are writing essays. All her paperwork is due at the end of February. If she is approved, there is a panel interview in June or July.
- Our new church has enjoyed the Advent season. Everyone is coming over to their house on Saturday for a meal and fellowship.
- We are pursuing some ideas to begin live-streaming in mid-January.
- She hopes everyone at Zion is doing well.

Pastor's Report

- See Newsletter and bulletin for latest December updates. We only have one service on Christmas Eve at 5pm. We will need to set up extra chairs in the overflow room and have extra available if needed.
- Commercial is live on Facebook and Instagram. Share to invite friends to Christmas Eve worship.
- The New Member meeting /dinner on 12/9 was wonderful. On Sunday 12/15, we will have 15 adults, 2 teens, and 9 kids joining on Sunday. One of our new members will also be baptized on that Sunday.

- Pastor will be in Massachusetts visiting family the week of New Years. She will not miss a Sunday, and she will still be available, but she will be spending time with my family that week.
- Jr. WAY, WAY, and Sr. WAY all have events that can be found in the bulletin.
- With the help of some volunteers, she will be visiting home-bound and nursing home-bound members and bringing them poinsettias. Thank you to those who have offered to help deliver poinsettias.
- Breakfast with Santa signup is going slow. Hopefully we will have a lot more signed up by Saturday.
- Pastor did get approved for insurance through the UCC and thank God because it's much cheaper than any other option. The cost is \$14,995 for Plan C plus \$1,000 for an FSA, totaling \$15,995. Since her family doesn't have large health requirements, she thinks this is better than choosing plan B or A.
- We need to select a new copier. Our options are:
 - BXI (current company). The annual price should be \$2,690. The copier is a Xerox C-8145
 - Eagle Systems (new option to us). They matched the \$2690 annual price (assuming current copy rate). The copier is a Sharp BP50c31.
 - Copies of the specs were handed out and discussion was done at the end of our meeting.

Trustee's Report

- Contracted for snowplowing for the church. Our contractor, Nick Lund, did have an increase this year due to the price of gas and insurance, but was still the lowest bid at \$5,200 a year. This includes plowing the entire parking lot and all the sidewalk around the church as well.
- Other forthcoming projects will be discussed at the annual meeting on January 5, 2025.

Fundraising, Stewardship, and Outreach

- Stewardship pie charts were available in the bulletin. The areas that are not listed did not have enough volunteers.
- John reported they have decided to move the basket raffle back to March instead of February because statistics have shown we do better in the spring months for this event. This upcoming year, they will be doing the basket raffle, the meat raffle and the Strawberry Festival to raise funding for the church. They made \$13,215.94 in 2024 alone! Since they started recording the totals earned in 2018, they have made \$72,270.90 for our church. Great job to the fundraising committee and all who help make the events successful!

Committee Reports

- Christian Education & Missions - (Edie) – Sue H reported that we had 20 bags of gifts that Pastor and her delivered 12/10. The congregation was extremely generous in this mission! Many thanks to everyone! Calendars are still coming in and Sue made another trip to the VA to turn them in.
- Christmas pageant is Sunday. Thank you to Sue Clark for helping to make another pageant successful by getting our kids into their costumes and helping us run things smoothly
- Health Ministry - (Debby)- Emergency Preparedness Class - 24 people attended and it was extremely interesting. He said our church is very prepared for various emergencies and applauded how it is set up. Our next class is Medicare ABCs- on Saturday January 25 from 10 till noon. It is free for everyone so invite friends and family if they may be interested. You do not have to be turning 65 years old to learn about this topic as it changes every year, so it is important to understand the basics!
- Altar Guild - (Robin)- no report
- Memorials - (George) Memorials were received for Sally Browning and in memory of the Ciatello family. The current balance is \$4,638.20.
- PPRC/Admin - (George)- Debbie G. reported there have been no issues this month. Poinsettias have been ordered for the altar.
- Community Assistance Ministry - (Dave) - no report
- New Member - (Dave)- The New Member meeting 12/09 was wonderful. On Sunday 12/15, we have 9 adults, 2 teens, and 9 kids joining our church. One of our new members will also be baptized on Sunday.

Dave D., Elena and Ted Camp, Edie B. and Debby W. were there to assist Pastor. Ted noted that many of the new people expressed how welcoming the congregation is and felt like they had found a home. Great job congregation as we show Christian love and kindness to others!

- Environmental Ministry - (Pierre)-no report
- Network of Religious Communities - (Pierre)- the members include denominations/faith coordinating bodies, religious organizations and congregations serving Western New York and the Niagara Peninsula of Southern Ontario, Canada. Individuals supportive of the mission and purpose of the Network may become auxiliary members. The Network is a forum providing opportunities for cooperative ventures, the strengthening of our religious communities and the betterment of the community. Religious communities are encouraged to develop links with similar faith communities for cooperative programming, the sharing of resources and mutual support. (See Mission and Purpose) The core belief and integrity of all religious communities are respected in all policy statements issued and actions taken in the name of the Network. Participants in the Network are never expected to compromise their belief; rather to dialogue with people from other faith communities from a perspective of humility and mutual respect.
- Community Dinners - (Bob)- Thank you to Ted and Rick, George D., Melissa and Jake Korte and all the other volunteers who helped make the Thanksgiving community dinner a success. And thank you to the volunteers who came in and decorated the church to make it so festive during this holiday season. Planning next dinner- thinking of soup, chili or goulash. Ted and Elene will assist in the final decision.
- Food Pantry - (John)-There was a very successful food drive that helped to provide much needed supplies to the Food Pantry. Two anonymous donors gave a total of \$220 to the Food Pantry as well! Thank you to the congregation for all their support. Thank you to John Wagner for monitoring the food pantry every week. The families that come for assistance do appreciate the church's mission in this.
- Coffee Hour - (Ted)- They really need more bakers. Kathy has had to run to the store for baked goods recently. Charles, Kathy H. and Ted do a wonderful job providing the congregation with coffee, drinks and baked goods.

Old Business

- Continue working on Consistory Manual/Handbook Debby began. -- bylaws revisions have begun . Discussion and questions were made about the by-laws so Consistory members could understand some of the terminology better. These discussions will continue between Consistory and the Trustees as we continue to work together and help benefit the church now and in the future.
- Printing professional hobby registry soon <https://www.zionuccton.com/professional-directory/>- still accepting people's forms on this if interested.

New Business

- Anything? Discussion about ceiling tiles- they will be examined more closely after the holiday season- possibly just need to be glued down. The feeling is that nobody is in danger and can wait for repair.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm

Closing prayer: In the Church, for the people, with one another. Amen.

Next Meeting: January 14, 7pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Debby Williams
Consistory Secretary