



YOU ARE LOVED

Pastor's Letter:

Happy February Church,

I just read this quote by Bishop Gene Robinson: "It's funny isn't it? That you can preach a judgmental and vengeful and angry God and nobody will mind. But you start preaching a God that is too accepting, too loving, too forgiving, too merciful, too kind... and you are in trouble."

And while this quote might not be applicable to our church (I sure hope it's not!), it is applicable to many Christians today. There are Christians who seem to think that Jesus is exactly what Jesus preached against.

Pharisees were judgmental, Jesus welcomed the sinner. The religious elite condemned, Jesus saved. The leaders were selfish and vengeful, Jesus was sacrificial and loving.

John, one of Jesus' disciples, wrote in his letter, 1 John 4:7-8, 18-20, "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love... There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen."

It's sad (genuinely heartbreaking) that there are Christians today who are judgmental and cruel, because they act more like the Pharisees than they do like Jesus, and they scare people away from God.

And then there are churches and Christians like Zion and all of you lovely people. We know that God loves not just us, but God loves the people we like, the people we don't like, and the people we don't even know. God loves all of God's children.

I love that old saying, "You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." And it goes with spreading our faith. Spewing words of hurt and words of judgment scares people away from Christ. But loving, forgiving, and being merciful, not only leads people to Christ, but it draws us closer to Christ in the process as we become more like Him.

A little while ago, I was on Instagram and someone shared a video of a judgmental preacher who was freaking out because he saw a "boy with fingernail polish." He was so angry about it that he said he wanted to "break the boy's fingers." (Scary, I know.) I commented on the video, "I'm a pastor, and when my son was little, he always wanted his nails painted when I did his sister's. So I did, and he was happy. The end." My comment gained a lot attention (in a good way). This reminds me that it's important to share to the world that there are Christians, and pastors, and churches that aren't judgmental and hateful. There are Christians, and pastors, and churches, who are trying to follow Jesus, through love, kindness, and mercy. Let's be like Jesus, this month and every month. Let's love, let's forgive, and let's be kind.

*In Christ's love,
Pastor Elizabeth*

Thank you for reading!

Pastoral CARE TEAM

PASTORAL CARE LUNCHEON

FEBRUARY 16 AT NOON

SIGN UP SHEET ON THE BULLETIN BOARD

Would you be interested in making phone 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.





Consider joining our pastoral care team!

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
- 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 22 ► February Community Dinner, 5pm
- Feb 26 ► Exercise with Dawn, 5:30pm
- Feb 24 ► "Love Does" Study, 7pm
- Feb 26 ► Exercise with Dawn, 5:30pm
- Mar 2 ► Blood Pressure Checks
- Mar 3 ► "Love Does" Study, 7pm
- Mar 4 ► Basket Assembly, 2pm
- Mar 5 ► Ash Wednesday Worship, 7pm
- Mar 9 ► Daylight Savings
- Mar 10 ► Mental Health Class by MHA
- Mar 11 ► Consistory, 7pm
- Mar 12 ► Exercise with Dawn, 5:30pm
- Mar 13 ► Lenten Bible Study, 7pm
- Mar 15 ► Basket Raffle! 12-3pm

www.zionuccton.com/events

LECTOR SIGN UP	DINNER VOLUNTER SIGN UP
	



Food Pantry

Our food pantry is open every Tuesday from 10am to 12pm. Thank you to all of our supporters who donate items and money to the food pantry. With over a dozen guests each week, we are able to help supply food to those who are in financial need.

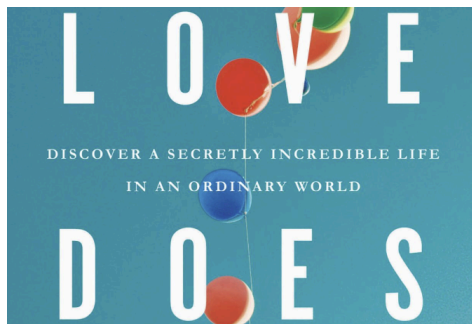


Community Dinner

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/4gxG7KS>



Love Does 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.



Basket Raffle

We're having our Annual Basket Raffle!
 To volunteer, sign up here:
<https://bit.ly/basket2025>

And spread the word!
 Date: March 15, 2025
 Time: 12-3pm
<https://www.facebook.com/share/1A25rWBJyv/>



BOWLING FOR KIDS ESCAPING DRUGS



Sign up for this fundraiser for Kids Escaping Drugs! Western Area Youth is putting together a group of teams of kids and adults for this great fundraiser. All ages welcome!

Cost: \$25

Registration: www.zionuccton.com/Bowling

Register by March 19th

Date: Sunday, April 6th

Time: 11am-1pm

(during our second service, sorry, we didn't choose the time...)



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!

Zion UCC Consistory Meeting Minutes January 14,2025

Call to Order at 7:02pm by Debby Williams

Attending: Pastor Elizabeth, Jeff Q, Cheryl L, Kelly D., George D., Bob S, Kalee (virtually), Robin F., Elena C., Debby W., and Ted C as Trustee representative. Absent: Dave D., Pierre, and John P.

Devotion and Lord's Prayer

Approval of Consistory Meeting Minutes – motion to accept the report was made by Bob, seconded by Elena and all attending members approved.

Annual Meeting Recap

- Next year return to two columns for the budget: actual (included predicted actual for end of year) and budget.
- January 4, 2026 is the first Sunday of the New Year. This will be the next regular scheduled annual meeting.
- 85 people were in attendance for the annual meeting (quorum is 10%: 46), so this was a very well-attended meeting for the Congregation.

Treasurer's Report (Ron J.)

- As of 1/1/25 there is a balance of \$59,219.30 in the operating account and \$28,086.74 in the restricted funds account.
- The revenue for December was \$16,793.88. The net income was \$-3752.19. In comparison: The revenue for December 2023 was \$12,525.26. The net income for December 2023 was \$-10,448.35. The annual income for 2024 is \$207,588.09 and the net income is \$12,244.08. The 2023 annual income was \$188,362.91 and the net income was \$-8,021.37.
- Notable P&L events in December:
 - 51730 Pastor Health Insurance - \$1166.04 January payment
 - 54701 Property Insurance - \$4053.00 Payment for 1st quarter 2024

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

Kalee's Member in Discernment (MID) update:

- Just got back from a trip to Nashville which was very enjoyable
- As of January 27, she is switching from Hospice Niagara to Catholic Health as a Spiritual Health Counselor. She will still be working with Hospice patients but in a different setting.
- Is writing many essays in her board certification for Chaplainship as it is due by the end of February.
- She has been asked to be involved in a prayer service with other Niagara Falls pastors for Martin Luther King Day. Her topic is peace.
- She is working on her paper for the Committee on Ministry.
- She loves her church (First Congregational in Niagara Falls). They are now doing a book study and she has made a goal to have a live service up and running online.

Pastor's Report

- Sunday worship has gone back to two services, 9 & 10:45. This will stay the same until Pentecost.

- Pentecost is June 8th (also Confirmation Sunday). We will have only one service at 10am due to Confirmation.
- June 15th will be the Children's Program (and Father's Day), and we will have one service at 10am.
- On June 22 we will begin Summer Worship services at 9:30am
- One date that could differ from the normal schedule is: March 9th. March 9th is Daylight Savings time (spring forward). Should we have only one service at 10:45 on March 9th (that will feel like 9:45) since a 9am (feeling like 8am) service will likely not be well attended? Discussion occurred but the decision was tabled for next month.
- Lent is late this year. Here is the plan for the season of Lent:
 - Ash Wednesday is March 5th: Ashes will be available during the day (drive thru) and in the evening during 7pm Ash Wednesday worship.
 - Lenten Bible Study will be Thursdays at 7pm in the Overflow room: March 13-April 3 (the NRC dinner is scheduled for April 10th, so the series will end the week before).
 - Holy Week Schedule: April 17: Maundy Thursday Worship, 7pm. April 18: Good Friday, Church opens for Stations of the Cross, 8am-12pm. (Holy Saturday: Youth Group's Breakfast with the Easter Bunny & Egg Hunt). Easter Sunday: April 20, two services as normal. There is an optional Ken-Ton Clergy Led Sunrise service at Elmlawn Cemetery that she will share info about when she has it.
- Pastoral Care Team Luncheon, February 16, Noon.
 - This is for anyone interested in either making occasional phone calls or occasional visits to keep in contact with our church members who are not able to come to church regularly. The luncheon is open to those who want to know more, and those who know they want to help. Each person who joins the Pastoral Care Team will be assigned a home-bound or nursing home-bound church member to check in on. This is a great way to make sure our senior members stay connected to their spiritual home. She will announce this in the Newsletter.
- We need to order new welcome mugs, but they have increased in price. Kelly offered to reach out to one of her contacts to see if she could get a lower price. She will work with Pastor on this.
- Her term as Moderator of the Association has come to an end, but she is now on the Committee of Ministry
- She had an interesting Zoom meeting with a Pastor from Indiana on how a group of UCC pastors could work together doing technology to get the inclusive message of Jesus out. Elena suggested that some of our youth assist with this as well.

Trustee's Report (Ted)- no report currently as they have not met yet.

A separate discussion was held about having 3-4 joint meetings between the Consistory and the Trustees. The decision was made to have the first one on Tuesday March 11 at 7 pm. Ted will let trustees know at their next meeting.

Fundraising, Stewardship, and Outreach (John)

Three fundraisers this year- Saturday March 15 is the Basket Raffle

Saturday TBD in June is the Strawberry Festival
Friday November 7 is the Meat Raffle

Committee Reports

- A. Christian Education & Missions - (Kelly) – no report
- B. Health Ministry - (Debby)- Our next class is Medicare ABCs- on Saturday January 25 from 10 till noon. It is free for everyone. Saturday February 8 is our next class on Dealing with Grief and how to deal with loneliness. It is from 9 am-11:30 am. This is free for all.
- C. Altar Guild - (Robin)- new schedule is out for the next 6 months
- D. Memorials - (George) - Memorial Fund received a donation in memory of Bill Roberts. Current balance: \$4763.40
- E. PPRC/Admin - (Cheryl)- no report
- F. Community Assistance Ministry - (Jeff) - no report
- G. New Member - (Dave)- more people have asked to join our church!
- H. Environmental Ministry- (Jeff)- Committee will refocus their plans in the Spring when they meet again with new ideas to make use of the land next to the parking lot. Need new members!
- I. Network of Religious Communities - (Pierre)- Thursday April 10 is Annual Appreciation Dinner (awards dinner) at the Grapevine in Depew. We need to nominate 1-2 adults and one teenager. Still discussing the nominations.
- J. Community Dinners - (Bob)- Next dinner is goulash. Last month's vegetable soup was a big hit! Genie sign-up is on church's website to volunteer for the dinner.
- K. Food Pantry - (John)-Received \$689.73 from the KenTon Crop Walk so now have about \$3,000 in account. They need to purchase a 4 ft metal storage shelf to place their extra supplies in the storage room. The cost is approximately \$156.73. Motion to allow the purchase was made by Cheryl L, seconded by George and all attending approved. The Food Pantry was also recently inspected and passed with flying colors.
- L. Coffee Hour - (Ted)- They really need more bakers.

Old Business

- Set dates or a subcommittee to work on Constitution and Bylaws and then dates to work on Consistory Manual/Handbook. Subcommittee members are Pastor Elizabeth, Ken Voght, Elena, George and Kelly from Consistory and Ted C and James C from trustees. They will meet to start going over the Constitution and by-laws (2-4 meetings, possibly over many months)
- Professional Directory is available in the back of the Sanctuary. The submission form is still on our website and will remain there and we can print updated copies when necessary.

New Business

- Anything? Nothing currently

Meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm

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

Next Meeting: February 11, 7 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Debby Williams, Consistory Secretary