



Pastor's Letter:

Hello Church!

Happy February! There are already heart candies and decorations all over the grocery stores, because February is the month of love. It's the month of love because of Valentine's Day, but in the Christian calendar, it's also the month of love because we begin the season of Lent on February 18, Ash Wednesday.

Now you might be asking: *How is Lent a Season of Love?*

And I'm so glad you asked!

Let's do some reading:

1 John 4:7-9 reads: "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. God's love was revealed among us in this way: **God sent his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.**"

The Season of Lent is a season of repentance that starts with the Mount of Temptation and then reminds us of the ministry and the suffering of Jesus. And all of the suffering of Jesus was for one purpose: to redeem God's beloved people. Because WE ARE LOVED.

But here's the thing: because we have free will, God's love is like a valentine passed in class.

God sent Jesus, God's son to live among us, to die for us, and to rise and to open up the gates of Heaven. That's like God sending us a valentine saying:

I love you.
I want to spend eternity with you.
Will you be mine?

And since we have free will, we get to answer:

Circle: Yes or No

Accepting God's love is a choice. It's also more than just a choice that we make once, but it's a choice we make every day.

Everyday that we choose to love one another, we say yes to God. Every day that we choose to love in God's name, that's a yes to God. Every day that we choose love over hate, that's a yes to God.

So let's say yes to God. Because, "No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us, and God's love is perfected in us." (1 John 4:12)

Thank you for reading!

In Christ's love,
Pastor Elizabeth



Attention Church families!

The UCC is again holding its annual Climate Hope Art Contest for children through grade 12. The theme comes from Jeremiah 29:11 which says, *“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”*

If your child would like to draw a picture to submit to the art contest, envisioning a hopeful future for our earth, you can pick up a copy of the art page in the church office, or you can [print it here](#).

Please return your finished pictures to the office by **Sunday, March 15th**, so we can submit them to the national office before the deadline.

Church Events

- Contemporary Worship ▶ Sundays 9:00am
- Traditional Worship ▶ Sundays 10:45am
- Sunday School ▶ Sundays 9:00am
- Nursery ▶ Sundays during 9am worship
- Food Pantry ▶ Tuesdays 10am-12pm
- Bible Study ▶ Tues. @12pm on Facebook
- Bell Choir ▶ Wed. @6:30pm
- Chancel Choir ▶ Wed. @7:30pm
- AA ▶ Thu. @5:30pm; Sat. @10am & 1pm
- Feb 1 ▶ Blood Pressure Checks @10-10:30am
- Feb 6-8 ▶ Winter WAY Retreat (Grades 7-12) at Epiphany
- Feb 10 ▶ Consistory @7pm
- Feb 11 ▶ Exercise Buddies w/Dawn @5:30pm
- Feb 16 ▶ Trustee’s in Choir Room @7pm
- **Feb 18 ▶ Ash Wednesday Worship @7pm**
- Feb 20 ▶ Youth Group @6pm at Nativity
- Feb 21 ▶ Men’s Fellowship @9am at Family Tree Restaurant, 4346 Bailey Ave., Amherst
- Feb 21 ▶ Women’s Fellowship @11am at Olympic Restaurant, 1601 Military Rd., Tonawanda
- Feb 25 ▶ Exercise Buddies w/ Dawn @5:30pm
- Feb 28 ▶ Self-Defense for Women/Stay Safe in Today’s World @10:30am
- Feb 28 ▶ Drive Through Community Dinner @5pm
- Mar 7 ▶ Memorial for Patti Voght @2pm
- Mar 21 ▶ Zion UCC Cabin Fever Basket Raffle, 12-3pm

Find more events at:

www.zionucc.com/events

Looking for daily Bible readings?

[Click this link.](#)

COMMUNITY DINNER
SIGN UP (SCAN OR CLICK BELOW)



February Dinner

LECTOR, GREETER, & SAFETY USHER
SIGN UP (SCAN OR CLICK BELOW)



9am Worship



10:45am Worship

Congregational Survey Results!

Volunteers Needed:

Taskforce



Thank you to everyone that participated in our first annual Congregational Survey! We had a great response! Now it's time to review the results.

Brooke Benn will be leading a **small taskforce of volunteers** who will be tasked with disseminating the valuable feedback from the survey and providing that back to Consistory.

If you are interested, please email: john.zionucc@gmail.com.

2025 Attendance Update

We have an update from our Head Usher, Ken MacDonald on our **2025 Attendance:**



The 12-month attendance for 2025 was 9,283. When compared with the attendance of 8,011 in 2024, there was an attendance increase of 1,272, or **15.818% increase**. It should be noted as was mentioned in the original report that January 14, 2024 service was cancelled because of a snow storm.



PB&J's Corner



2026 Fundraising Season is here - and it's time for our most popular fundraiser - our **Basket Raffle** on **Saturday, March 21st!** There are several ways you can contribute:

- 1. Donate Empty Baskets:** If you have any spare baskets, please consider donating these.
- 2. Donate Assembled Baskets:** Feeling creative? Grab a basket, fill it, and wrap it up! We have idea sheets!
- 3. Donate Basket Contents:** If you prefer, bring in purchased items and we'll make up a basket for you!
- 4. Enter the Crock-Pot Cookoff:** Sign-up sheet is limited to 12 entrants. The tastiest recipe will win a prize!
- 5. Volunteer:** We have lots of volunteer slots available. **Click here** to find the perfect slot!
- 6. Help Us Spread the Word:** Share our Facebook event! Grab a Flyer! Tell your family and friends!

Outreach Updates

Here's the latest on our Outreach Initiatives:

- 1. Postcard Campaigns:** Consistory has approved funding for 2 individual postcard campaigns:
 - a. We Miss You:** We are targeting ~100 individuals who we are missing in worship. It illustrates an empty seat in a pew and reminds them that, "Whatever season you're in, there's always room for you here."
 - b. Easter:** We are targeting ~500 individuals who have given to Zion in the past, but who may or may not have ever joined us for worship. It invites them to celebrate Easter with us. It illustrates our church full of people and states, "Easter is Better Together"
- 2. Animal Blessing:** We are planning this event for **Sunday, July 19 (from 11 -1)**. Bring your beloved pet to Zion Memorial Park to be blessed! Rain date: July 26th.
- 3. "Why Zion" Facebook & Instagram Campaign:** We'll continue to expand on this ongoing outreach.



Do you have a great outreach idea? If so, please email us at ucczion@gmail.com and/or john.zionucc@gmail.com and let us hear your idea!

Health Ministry Updates

Self-Defense for Women/ Stay Safe in Today's World

Your safety starts with awareness - and knowledge is power. Join this dynamic, eye-opening session designed to help women sharpen their instincts, spot red flags fast, and use practical techniques to stay safe and confident wherever they go in today's world

And, it's absolutely free for all!



Saturday, February 28, 2026

10:30 - 11:30am

Zion UCC

Exercise Buddies

Don't put off getting in shape a moment longer! Come join **Exercise Buddies with Dawn** right here at Zion! Dawn is a certified trainer who does light weight training, chair yoga, strength training, and more! All ages are welcome and the best part is that this program is **FREE!** 😊

Classes are held two times a month on the **second and fourth Wednesdays.**



Wednesday February 11th & 25th

5:30 - 6:30pm

Blood Pressure Checks

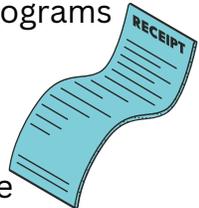
On the **first Sunday of the month, from 10:00 - 10:30am**, you can have your **blood pressure checked** by one of our nurses!



Our Next Clinic: **Sunday, February 1st**.

Support Health Ministry with Your Dash's Receipts

If you shop at Dash's Market, please consider saving your receipts. These receipts directly support the valuable classes and programs provided by the Health Ministry for our church community.



You can drop off your receipts in the designated box on the sanctuary shelf or place them in the labeled clear folder located just outside the church office.

Thank you for your continued support!

Men's Fellowship

Men's Fellowship Breakfast:

Our next Men's Fellowship breakfast will be on **Saturday, February 21st at 9am!** Come join us at **Family Tree Restaurant**, 4346 Bailey Ave., Amherst!



Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship Lunch:

Our next Women's Fellowship lunch will be on **Saturday, February 21st at 11am!** Come join us at **Olympic Restaurant**, 1601 Military Rd., Tonawanda!

new! Busy Mom's Fellowship

Spring Fling Tea Party 🌸 ☕

Busy Mom's and Women - this one's for you! Take a break from the hustle and join us for a relaxing Spring Fling Tea Party on **Saturday, March 28 from 10:30 - 12:30pm in Kuck Hall!**

Enjoy a delightful spread of finger foods; sample a variety of teas; and get creative with a fun spring wreath-making craft.

This casual fellowship is designed to offer time to connect, unwind, and build community with women in a similar season of life. Our hope is that this event will be the start of many future gatherings - and perhaps even spark new groups like a walking club or book club. Come as you are, bring a friend, and **let's welcome spring together!**

RSVP: To **Sara Hengst** (shengst@roadrunner.com) by **3/21/26**.

