

Zionite Newsletter



A Christ-centered, inclusive, community of faith

ZION UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

July 2026



Pastor's Letter:

Dear Church,

Do you ever wonder what it's like to be a pastor? I remember asking my mom, right as I was graduating from seminary, "So what do you DO all day as a pastor?" She just laughed and said, "A little bit of everything." And she was right. Ministry is genuinely a little bit of everything.

As a pastor, I get to be with church members at the most joyous times of their lives: I get to stand with couples as they say their wedding vows; I get to visit newborn babies; I get to hold those babies in my arms when I baptize them; I get to baptize adults when their faith moves them towards Christ; I often get to be one of the first people to hear good news (of course I'm usually sworn to secrecy for a while until that news can be public). Being a pastor is filled with joy!

But there's also sadness. I love all of my people (all of you!) so when you hurt, I hurt; however, I don't see that as a burden, but I see it as an honor. As your pastor, I want to be the person to sit with you in scary, sad times and support you and pray with you. When you receive scary news, and I'm the first phone call, it's a great honor to hold that fear with you and pray with you. When your heart is broken, I see it as an honor to sit with you and walk with you. I believe that helping you carry your sadness is not a burden, but an honor.

I've learned, in these 16 years, that being a pastor is genuinely a "little bit of everything." And I truly love the honor of being able to rejoice when you rejoice, mourn when you mourn, and remind you, through it all, that God is with you, and that God loves you more than you can possibly imagine.

I know many of you extremely well, and I love hearing your stories. And if you're a person who has never stopped by and sat with me for a while to talk and to tell your story, consider doing that this summer. You can call ahead or text to make an appointment, or if you are driving by and see that I'm here, you can stop in and see if I have time to talk. But know, if you need a person to talk to, if you need someone to be with you as you carry your burdens, or if you need someone to rejoice with you when you have good news to share, I'm here for you. I'm honored to be your pastor, and I want each and every one of you to know that you are cherished, you are loved, and you are a blessing.

*In Christ's love,
Pastor Elizabeth*

Thank you for reading!

With You
A Mental Health Support Group



Find Calm. Find Clarity. Find Connection.

Join "With You" - A mental health support group centered on the healing practice of journaling. This is a safe and welcoming space to slow down, reflect, and gently explore your thoughts and emotions - no writing experience needed.

Dates: June 2nd, July 7th, August 4th, September 1st, October 6th

Location: Community Mission, Meeting in the Community Room
1590 Buffalo Ave. Niagara Falls

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Contact: Please Text Rev. Kalee Mielke at 716-327-2960 if Interested.

VOLUNTEER NEED: UNITED CHURCH MANOR

United Church Manor (a 50-unit, affordable senior apartment building in West Seneca) is seeking **UCC members willing to join their Board of Directors**. As a Board Member, you would play a vital role in guiding our mission in providing an affordable, vibrant, faith-based community that encourages independent lifestyles.



Your expertise would be invaluable in helping strengthen our organization, enhance workforce strategies, and ensure best practices in governance and leadership development. This is a rewarding opportunity to make a meaningful impact while collaborating with a passionate team.

We meet on the **3rd Tuesday** at **6pm** in **Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov**. The term is a 3-year commitment. If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to **Sarah Bohnstadt, Director of Housing**, at **(716) 668-5804** or email sbohnstadt@ucmanor.org. Check us out online at www.ucmanor.org

Church Events

- Summer Worship ► Sundays 9:30am
- Summer Sunday School ► begins July 5
- Nursery ► Sundays during worship
- Food Pantry ► Tuesdays 10am-12pm
- Bible Study ► Tues. @12pm on Facebook
- AA ► Thu. @5:30pm; Sat. @10am & 1pm
- July 5 ► Contemporary Worship @9:30am (*)
- July 6-12 ► Western Area Youth Mission Trip
- July 8 ► Exercise Buddies w/ Dawn @5:30pm
- July 12 ► Traditional Worship @9:30am
- July 18 ► Women's Fellowship in Kuck Hall @11am
- July 19 ► Contemporary Worship @9:30am (*)
- July 19 ► Animal Blessing in the Memorial Park, 11am - 1pm
- July 22 ► Exercise Buddies w/ Dawn @5:30
- July 25 ► Men's Fellowship Breakfast at Family Tree @9am
- July 25 ► Drive Through Community Dinner @5pm
- July 26 ► Traditional Worship @9:30am
- July 27 ► Zion UCC Vacation Bible School, 9am - 12pm

*Outdoor worship is weather permitting

Find more events at:
www.zionucc.com/events

Looking for daily Bible readings?
[Click this link.](#)

**JULY 25TH
COMMUNITY
DINNER SIGN-UP
(SCAN OR CLICK
HERE)**



tinyurl.com/DinnerJuly2026



Register

NOW



If you're a parent/grandparent of young kids,
have you signed them up for VBS yet?
If not, do so today!

Vacation Bible School is for kids ages 4-12
and it's the week of July 27-31 from 9:00am
to Noon each day. There is no cost but space
is limited, so sign up today!
www.zionucc.com/events/vbs

We look forward to a great week
with a great group of kids!



**WHAT A GREAT CHILDRENS,
NEW MEMBER, AND GRADUATE SUNDAY!**

Welcome New Members! Beverly Andrew, Sharon Bogdan, Becky Torres, Pat Kamionka, Julie & Abby Klein, 3
Will Lucas, Abigail Luce, Heather & Beth Monahan, Ricky & Molly Wionkowski, Megan Sholtz

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!



Will Lucas

Graduated from Kenmore East.

Will was a member of the National Honor Society, Spanish Club, Best Buddies, and the Dance Team.

He is very proud to graduate as a bilingual student after working hard to earn his Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish.

Will received the Character Award for "perseverance in the face of challenges," and was voted Most School Spirit in the upcoming yearbook.

Future plans include continuing to volunteer at the children's hospital and throughout the community. He plans to gain work experience as a therapy aide soon after graduation.

Ainsley Cousins

Graduated from Williamsville North.

She was a Varsity Cheerleader. She received her Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award for Girl Scouts. She was in the National Honor Society, Skills USA, and the Environmental Club.

Attending Paul Smith's College next year for Environmental Studies

Zoey Skorupa

Graduated from Kenmore East.

She was a Varsity Cheerleader and a member of the Spanish National Honor Society with the seal of biliteracy.

She participated in Boces Early Education program and completed an internship in a preschool working with preschoolers with special needs.

Attending Buffalo State University for Special Education.

Gianna Colosimo

Graduated from Kenmore East.

She played varsity soccer, indoor and outdoor track, lacrosse, cheerleading, and flag football.

She was co-president of Best Buddies, VP of her class, and Skills USA VP.

She made the All Star Team for Soccer and 1st ALL Conference for Flag Football.

Attending SUNY Brockport to study Exercise Science and Kinesiology while playing Flag Football.

Lola Norris

Graduated from Kenmore East.

Played Varsity Soccer, Indoor & Outdoor Track, and Lacrosse.

She was Best Buddies Co-President, Class President, National Honor Society, and French NHS.

She was on the Dance team, student athletic advisory, Principals AND District Leadership Councils.

Attending SUNY Cortland for a Dual Major in Strength & Conditioning for Human Performance and Coaching.



We have 11 Senior High Campers from Zion!

Max is loving Pilgrim Camp!

Future Pastor (Adam) is leading worship! 4



Remembering Olga Apfel

Our beloved Sister-in-Christ, Olga Apfel, returned home to the Lord in June. Her service was attended by family, friends, and an abundance of Church Family. We will miss Olga, but our faith tells us that death is not the end, and we know she is at home, in the Kingdom of Heaven, with her beloved husband of nearly 70 years, Dick Apfel.



Veterans Blanket Project

**Do you knit, crochet, sew or quilt?
We need you!**

On **Sunday, November 8**, we will be displaying at the altar rail, red, white, and blue afghans, blankets, quilts, and lap robes, made by our church family and friends. Pastor Elizabeth will bless them during the service, before they are distributed to veterans in our church, community, and local nursing homes to show our appreciation for their service.

If you knit, crochet, sew, or quilt, we would be thrilled to accept your finished project. Any pattern is fine, but we prefer the red, white, and blue color scheme. If you wish, you can also purchase a ready-made fleece throw which are plentiful for our 250th anniversary of the USA at most stores.

The items should be brought to the church office **by the end of October**. There will also be a bin available starting in September. If you prefer to personally bring your blanket forward during service, you may do so before the blessing.

If you have any questions or need a pattern idea, please email **Elaine Sparks** at lanielamb@aol.com or text me at (716) 425-1133.



PBJ's Corner

Putting the FUN into fundraising!

Mark your calendars for these upcoming **FUN**draisers!

- **Meat Raffle:** Fri. October 9
- **Rummage Sale:** Sat. November 14

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will be meeting on **Saturday, July 18th** at **11am** in **Kuck Hall**. Please come and join us!



Men's Fellowship

Men's Fellowship will be meeting on **Saturday, July 25th** at **9am** for breakfast at **Family Tree Restaurant, 4346 Bailey Ave., Amherst**. Please come and join us!



Join us for Zion UCC's **Animal Blessing Event**

 Blessing of your beloved pet(s)!
 Pet Vendors!

PET SUPPLIES PLUS.


EARTHWISE Pet
NUTRITION CENTER & WELLNESS SPA

 Pet and human refreshments!
 Zion UCC Information Table!
 Enjoy a walk on our Zion Memorial Park path!

SUN. JUL 19
11AM - 1PM

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
15 KOENIG CIRCLE, TONAWANDA







Health Ministry Updates

EXERCISE BUDDIES W/ DAWN

Dawn is a certified trainer who does weight training with light weights, chair yoga, strength training & more! Classes are held 2 times a month on the **2nd and 4th Wednesday**.

All ages are welcome

5:30-6:30 pm, right here at Zion

Wed., July 8th

Wed., July 22nd



Bring your own water bottle and a small set of weights if you have them (but not necessary)

These classes are free!

Floor Stripping & Waxing

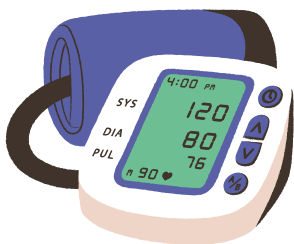
Great news! On **Wednesday, July 15th** and **Thursday, July 16th**, we are having our floors in the hallway, Kuck Hall, and the kitchen stripped and waxed. ***Access to those areas will be prohibited during this time.*** The church office will still be open.

PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.



Blood Pressure Checks

Our nurse volunteers will be taking a summer break from our blood pressure clinics.



We will resume again in September.

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!