



# Zionite newsletter

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST: FEBRUARY 2021

## LOOKING FOR THE POSITIVES:

*"Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Philippians 4:8*

One thing that I know about myself is that I'm an extrovert. I like to be with people, I'm even energized by it! And this is especially true when I'm around Church people. I don't know what it is about all of you, but I enjoy our discussions and our time together. I genuinely love a healthy church environment! If you want to know what I miss most of all during covid-times, it's church. (I guess I'm in the right vocation, huh?)

But while I miss this all so much, and I'm very eager for Covid to be a thing of the past, I like to look for the positives. And covid forced our church to have a greater online presence. Every week I receive messages from new people who are watching our services online. Maybe they wanted to try out the church before but didn't want to take that daunting step into the building without knowing what to expect? Maybe they had never heard of us until a friend shared a service on Facebook? Maybe they saw our church sign directing them online? Or maybe someone told them about the talking dogs? I don't know what it is, but I know that God always pushes me to look at the positives. Yes, this past year has stunk. Yes, I miss our people. Yes, I miss visiting nursing homes. Yes, there have been more deaths than my mind can fathom. Yes, this past year has stunk. But we can still find some positives in all that stinkiness. People are still hearing the good news. People are still praising God—some maybe for the first time in years. Even when it's really easy to be pulled into the negatives, there are still positives.

Will you look for the positives with me today?

How is God working in this chaos?

How is God encouraging you during this trying time?

How can we find the positives when negativity shouts so loudly?

Look for the positives with me, friends! And know that you are loved!

In Christ, Pastor Elizabeth



# Lent is about to begin!

We're getting creative for Ash Wednesday! February, Wednesday 17th, is Ash Wednesday. And even though we're holding a virtual service, you can still receive your ashes! Here is the game plan for the start of Lent.

## Drive-Thru Ashes

From 12:30-1pm and 6:00-6:30pm

Drive into the church parking lot and pull up near the entrance (like the community dinner).

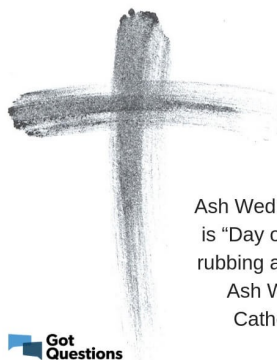
Pastor Elizabeth will meet you at the car, with a mask on (please wear yours as well) and administer the ashes to all in the car who would like to receive them. You are welcome to receive ashes on your forehead or on your hand.

The pastor will also give you a take-home communion.

## Virtual Service

Then at 7:00pm we will have an Ash Wednesday Service online. The service will run about 30 minutes.

If you have never participated in Ash Wednesday, now will be a great time to check it out. Ash Wednesday truly helps us to prepare for the Season of Lent which leads us to the Cross of Christ.



## What is *Ash Wednesday?*

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. Its official name is "Day of Ashes," so called because of the practice of rubbing ashes on one's forehead in the sign of a cross.

Ash Wednesday and Lent are observed by most Catholics and some Protestant denominations.

Got  
Questions

# Sunday School

***When the church resumes in-person worship, we will also resume group Sunday School in Kuck Hall. Until then (and even after then if your child decides to stay home), there are always two ways to keep your child focus on Church:***

- 1. Watch the Children's Moments on this playlist.***

***<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqYwouHwHQ3Ns58bi7K0LEMBYFrLGE CzW>***

- 2. Download Sunday School materials here.***

***[https://www.mediafire.com/folder/72vvzq32ejmd8/Sunday School Materials](https://www.mediafire.com/folder/72vvzq32ejmd8/Sunday+School+Materials)***

## When are we resuming in-person worship?

This is the question that is likely on your mind! Consistory is meeting next week, February 17th, and will discuss a date to re-open and select a new streaming camera that is more reliable than our current one. Check your email on February 18th for information about our new re-opening schedule.

When we resume in-person worship, we hope to have the best quality streaming options available so not to leave out those who choose to stay home.

Remember, all services are online and stay online whether they're live-streamed or pre-recorded. Don't forget to tune in and spend time in study and praise!



## Calling all kids, youth and adults: Come Sled With US!

The Youth Group is going sledding during winter break, and you're invited to join us! If you're looking for something fun to do during February break, come join the Youth Group on the hill at:

**Billy Wilson Park on Hopkins in  
Williamsville  
at 4pm on February 18th.**

Bring your own sled, a face mask, and dress for the weather!

Pastor Elizabeth will bring a crock pot (or two) of hot cocoa with to go cups and some tasty treats!



### Looking to give online?

Visit [www.zionuccton.com](http://www.zionuccton.com) and select "donate" to set up one time, weekly, or monthly giving.

If you are still in need of a financial statement for your taxes, please call or email and let us know.



## Passing of Barb Pempsell

On Saturday, February 6th, we returned the body of Barb Pempsell to the Earth, confident in the gift of eternal life. Unless you've been in this church for more than 10 years, you probably don't know Barb. But she was a member of this church for many years. Barb had cerebral palsy, and for the past 10+ years she had been in a nursing home and limited to a wheel chair. But years ago, she loved to bowl and go on adventures!

Even though Barb was dealt a difficult hand in life, her family and friends all know that Barb was never one to complain. She was tremendously faithful and loved to receive communion. She never stopped loving her church and she enjoyed visits from the pastor and members of the church.

Together with her family and friends, Barb's body was laid to rest in Acacia Park Cemetery in the middle of a snow storm. She will be missed, but we know with certainty that she now resides in the Kingdom of God, fully restored and abiding in God's steadfast love.

Give to Zion United Church of Christ

**\$ 0.00**

Give to General Fund ▼

Add Gift to Another Fund

Give this Weekly ▼ Starting Today (Tuesday, F ▼

Give by Credit/Debit Card ▼

**Continue**



# COMMITTEES: SEND IN YOUR ANNUAL REPORTS

If you are on a committee, make sure to send in an annual report ASAP!

Reports should be submitted to Charlotte via email or snail mail.

Email: [zionuccoffice@gmail.com](mailto:zionuccoffice@gmail.com)

Annual reports and the budget will be sent out in the beginning of March.

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## Join a new committee:

The Consistory and Trustees are beginning a new committee to handle financial requests. For example, Dunkirk requesting money for the Camp and Conference Center, individuals in need of help after a fire, etc... Would you like to be on a new committee that handles charitable requests? If so, contact Pastor Elizabeth or Jeff Quinton (who will be serving as committee chair).

### February 28th:

Virtual Church with the entire Western New York Churches in Covenant!

On February 28th at 10am we will worship virtually with our Western Area brothers and sisters in Christ. Our Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams will be preaching.

Join us online or watch from the Sanctuary for this first ever full-area Sunday Morning Worship event!

## Free Community Dinners!

Spread the word that we are still serving free dinners every month!

The last Saturday of the month we're having "drive through" community dinners from 5-6pm.

Line up in the parking lot and volunteers bring dinner to you to take home.

In January we did run out of dinners so we will prepare to serve even more next month!

## Food Pantry

Know someone who could use the food pantry?

Our hours on Mondays are from 11am to 1pm.

The pantry does not open until 11 so we ask that recipients come within the 2 hour window.

All are welcome to use our Pantry (no church connection required).

*2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.*

## **Zion UCC Consistory Meeting Minutes via Zoom® 1-12-2021**

Call to Order: Tim Schlegel called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Pastor Elizabeth, Tim Schlegel, Jeff Quinton, Edie Baur, Debby Williams, Glen Gordon, Barb Miller, Troy Hengst, Peter Korte. Excused: Jason Whelan.

**Call to Order at 7:05 pm.**

**Devotion and Lord's Prayer:** Pastor Elizabeth led us in the devotion and Lord's prayer.

- **Approval of Consistory Meeting Minutes:** A motion to accept was made by Troy and seconded by Barb. Motion was passed.
- **Treasurer's Report:** Report was reviewed. A motion was made by Debby and seconded by Edie to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion was passed.
- **Trustees's Report:** Lights were installed on pole near new storage shed by Ed Miller. **Thank you to Ed!** Troy moved to accept. Motion was passed.
- **Budget Discussion:** Pastor Elizabeth was asked to leave the meeting so they could discuss her salary. Tim discussed Pastor Elizabeth's raise. She is in her 11<sup>th</sup> year and should be moved into the 11-15 year bracket for a pay increase. Barb mentioned a three month sabbatical for Elizabeth. Tim said that she may do it later when her kids are more independent. (Pastor Elizabeth later said that she will have a two week sabbatical in Israel when conditions permit. Another two weeks could be done at another time.) Barb asked if we could fund mini-sabbaticals during the year. She has a Master of Divinity and should go to the 11<sup>th</sup> year pay bracket beginning January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021.
- Pastor Elizabeth said that the church budget will be snail mailed to members of the congregation. This will allow members to think of questions before the congregational meeting. Glen mentioned that the sound quality was poor during the roof meeting in the Sanctuary. Tim said that Ron rolled the 2020 budget over into 2021. Debby asked about an associate Pastor. A motion was made to accept the budget by Barb and seconded by Debby. Motion was passed.
- **Pastor's Report:**
  1. Thank you to volunteers who helped on the Sunday after Christmas to deliver flowers and gifts! Community dinners were all given out.
  2. We can put together a survey to find out when people would like to resume in-person worship (with livestream) – do they want to wait until the vaccine roll-out has covered more people, or are some eager to return with restrictions? This was discussed and it was decided by Consistory to wait until next month to discuss returning to in-person.
  3. Newsletter is delayed but will go out next week.
  4. Pastor Elizabeth is the new Western Area Moderator – she can serve two, two year terms.
  5. We have many envelopes remaining. I'm wondering if we could get a team together to deliver envelopes (for people who are not giving online).
  6. We should plan the next couple months of community dinner volunteers/menus.
  7. Ash Wednesday is February 17<sup>th</sup>. We could have a service online and also drive by ashes. Sanitizer would be used after giving ashes to each person.

### **Committee Reports:**

- Administration - No report.
- Christian Education - No report.
- Community Dinners- No report.
- Memorials- Jason had no report.
- Outreach- Peter had no report.
- PPR-Jeff had no report.
- Health Ministry- Debby said that the Health Ministry is working with Kenmore Alliance Church to collect items for people in need. Dash's register tapes are also being collected.
- Environmental Ministry-Barb mentioned that you can take styrofoam packaging waste to ThermoFoam at 2101 Kenmore ave. for recycling. Niagara Riverkeeper recommended this.

### **Old Business:**

1. Need members for the new committee to handle charity requests from Endowment. Information and requests for committee members will be in this Zionite.
2. Discussion of when to resume limited in-person services.

### **New Business:**

1. Tim said that a thank you card was received from Gail Sweeney.
2. New Plan for Pastoral Ministry Training – Troy and Pastor.  
Pastor Elizabeth mentioned alternatives to Stephen Ministries. Trainers could provide training for our members. There would be a twelve hour course and a three hour course. The cost is approximately \$3,500.00. Pastor Elizabeth asked if we go to the Trustees for money? Tim said that we should ask for

\$4,500.00. Troy said that this could be done over a weekend. Tim asked if we need to supply pens, pads, etc? Troy will get pricing information for the Trustees.

A motion to adjourn was made by Glen and seconded by Barb.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Next meeting: **February 17th, 7:30pm via zoom**

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