



Zionite *Newsletter*

NEWSLETTER OF ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
TONAWANDA, NY

Message from the Pastor

Hello Church!

Here we go again! Start of a new school year, a new Sunday School year, and a new “church year” (as everyone returns from their summer adventures).

I’m sitting here at my desk, which is in Kuck Hall while the offices are renovated, and I can’t help but be hopeful. I’m hopeful that our church community can stay healthy and safe as more of us return to Sunday worship and Sunday School. I’m also thankful. I’m thankful that we’re able to have two services so we can spread people out more to help keep people safe. And I’m also longing for healing and wholeness from this terrible pandemic.

Looking at the positives—it was wonderful to spend so much time worshipping outside this summer! Even when Covid one day becomes a distant memory, I hope we can continue to worship outside as much as possible in the summer. (Although I will confess that it feels kind of funny to be in the middle of preaching as someone walks down the street and turns their head to listen for a brief moment). We also had a spectacular VBS (Vacation Bible School), where the kids spent each morning here at church, learning Bible stories, singing songs of praise, creating spectacular crafts, exploring science (thanks Mrs. Debbie!) and pretending they were Knights of the North Castle. The youth were also able to go on a local Mini-Mission Trip with our sister churches, and some of them even made it to Dunkirk (our UCC Camp) for some amazing weeks of summer camp. All in all, this summer went well. We also have a ton of new folks interested in joining the church. Some of them have been with us throughout the whole pandemic, others joined us later on, but it’s wonderful to see so many new faces in worship and to hear from new people online.

If you have been with us, in-person or online, you already know about all of this. If you haven’t been with us much since the pandemic started, how about joining us again (in-person or online)? If we haven’t seen or heard from you for a while, I promise, you’re missed! Come worship with us, or jump online and join us for worship. Remember who you are and whose you are and join with us as we worship.

Remember friends, you are loved. You are blessed. And I look forward to seeing you soon!

In Christ’s abundant love,
Pastor Elizabeth

Rally Day

W E E K E N D

Sunday, September 12th

Worship & Sunday School at 10am

All Church Photo & Picnic at 11am

Backpack Blessing!

Kids, bring your backpacks on Sunday, September 12th!



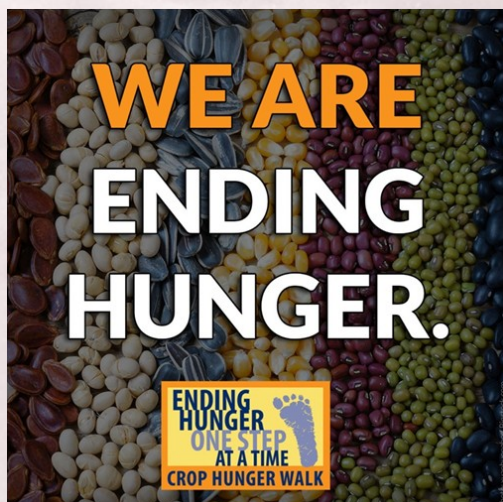
Church Events

- Bible Study ► Monday and Tuesday at 1pm on Facebook Live
- Sunday School ► Sundays in Kuck Hall at 9am (10am on Rally Day)
- Nursery ► Open and staffed on Sundays at 9am (10am on Rally Day)
- September 12th, 10am ► Rally Day Worship! Outdoor worship followed by an all-church picture and picnic!
- Food Pantry ► Open Every Monday from 11am to 1pm
- September 7th, 7pm ► Consistory
- September 21st, 6pm ► Trustees
- September 25th ► Drive Through Community Dinner (last Saturday of every month) from 5pm to 6pm or until food runs out.
- September 29th ► 1pm Women's Fellowship lunch, Lumberjack Patio Grill
- AA ► Wednesdays at 8pm, Saturdays at 10am

Upcoming Worship Schedule:

Rally Day 10am

September 19th, Two Services 9 & 11
with Coffee Hour at 10am



**The Ken-Ton Crop Walk is
Saturday, Oct. 2, 2021**

10am (gathering at 9:45)

At Kenilworth UCC

45 Dalton Dr. Tonawanda

Two Ways YOU can participate:

Join our Team and walk with us!

**Contribute on the
Zion UCC Tonawanda page!**

Use this link for either:

**[https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/
team/zion-ucc-tonawanda](https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/team/zion-ucc-tonawanda)**

See Debbie Grine or Pastor Pierre

For more information!



PARENTS! Take a moment to register for Sunday School so our teachers have all of the up-to-date information as the Sunday School Year begins.

Thank you!

<https://www.zionuccton.com/sunday-school/>

"My beloved, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger—for your anger does not produce God's righteousness." James 1:19

Join the Women's Fellowship for Lunch!

September 29th, 1pm at

Lumberjack Patio Grill











1000 River Rd.

North Tonawanda

Let Gaye Mehlretter know if you can make it!

Zion UCC Mask Policy

Updated 6/8/2021

Vaccinated		Unvaccinated ages 12+
	Inside the building, walking around	
	Outside the building, socially distanced	
	Inside: sitting in a socially distanced pew	
	Inside: singing	
	Outside: singing	

*Masks for children under the age of 12 are optional, and are only required when they are unable to socially distance indoors. Children should bring masks to Sunday School in case they are needed for an activity.

**Toddlers and babies do not require masks.

Women's Fellowship





SEPTEMBER

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Written by UCC NY Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Gary Ferner. Before reading, please understand that this is a story about suicide and may be too emotionally difficult for some to read.

A close friend of mine died by suicide, in December of 2019.

We were unlikely friends: he was younger than my oldest children, and professed to be an agnostic, maybe even an atheist. In spite of those differences, we discovered that we had much more in common.

He was a funeral director in town, and each time he called me to help with a funeral, we'd talk about the bible, or the Quran, or physics, or existentialism, or any of a host of topics...he was well read, and curious about the world.

When he fell in love, and had proposed to the woman who loved him, they asked me to officiate at their wedding. When they announced that they were expecting, they invited me over to talk with them about parenting, and babies, and fathering.

Over 4 years our friendship grew.

And then we lost touch. One of his colleagues said he'd checked himself into the hospital because he was experiencing intense suicidal feelings. That was news to me.

I left texts, voice messages, email, but none of them were returned.

He'd asked for some personal leave, so that he could heal, but when he returned, he'd had a difficult time transitioning back to work.

He called and asked if we could meet, and I quickly agreed. When we met, he told me everything, and the news that he and his wife were expecting again. He said he'd come very close to ending his life, but realized he had so much for which to live.

I had never had such an honest and open conversation with someone who had just shared their deepest secret, but when he left my office, he seemed to express some hope that the worst was behind him.

Weeks later, I was told that he had checked himself back in to the hospital again, only to check out a few days after that. I texted, and he responded: can we meet?

I said, of course! So we did. He was buzzing with energy. He couldn't sit still. He told me he had been down in his basement, with a noose around his neck, and the chair tilting away when he felt this bright light, deep in the core of his being, telling him to take the noose from his neck. He did, and then felt a flood of love like he'd never felt before. He said he knew it was God. He said he knew now that things were going to be ok. He promised to call me if he had any more suicidal ideation.

When he left, he gave me a big hug, and thanked me for listening.

A week later, I got the call: he had ended his life.

I tried to write this account last September, during Suicide Prevention Month. I hiked in his favorite local park, toasted him with his favorite beer (don't tell the park rangers), and generally sought to feel any of his spirit, his cosmic energy lingering. I really missed him, and for that time, I just sat with those feelings.

I wrote, but I hit the wrong button, and the article didn't save, and I just didn't have it in me to try and write it again.

But now I do.

I wish I had been better educated on how to help him. I know now that there wasn't anything I could have said that was going to prevent him from ending his life if he wanted to.

I am comforted that for my friend, he has been returned to the star dust elements of the universe that held such fascination for him. The love he put in the world is still circulating, in the memories of his days on earth, in his children, in those he loved and those who loved him.

Let's Celebrate!

Happy Birthday and Happy Anniversary to these church members!

First Name	Last Name	Birth Month	Birth Day		
				Joyce & James Dolce	09/08/2012
Olga	Apfel	September	3	Lori & Kevin Gilcart	09/19/1992
AnnGee	Caci	September	11	Ray & Christine Greiner	09/10/1983
Ted	Camp	September	7	Herb & Melanie Hachten	09/29/1979
Diane	Cinelle	September	24	Matthew & Lisa Laufer	09/21/1991
Frank	Coleman	September	16	Frank & Edith Martene	09/06/1958
Ainsley	Cousins	September	27	Richard & Dana Maxwell	09/04/1993
James	Cousins	September	6	Patrick & Maureen Mudd	09/10/1977
Millie	Dekoff	September	9	Sandra & Tim O'Brien	09/02/1972
Trevor	Duffy	September	23	Kevin & Karen Robins	09/16/1995
Ron	Fortuna	September	22	Timothy & Lisa Schlegel	09/16/1988
Ryan	Fortuna	September	4	Jim & Gail Sweeney	9/6/1958
Margaret	Goerss	September	29	Steve & Sharon Toth	09/02/2000
Troy	Hengst	September	21	Brian & Jennifer Young	09/26/1998
Evan	Korte	September	6		
Addison	Kraska	September	6		
Katie	Lee	September	12		
Heather	MacLeod	September	4		
Frank	Martene	September	3		
Carol	McGrath	September	13		
Karen	Mittlefehldt	September	11		
Jerry	Owassi	September	18		
Katherine	Phillips	September	26		
Itha	Poeltl	September	30		
Karen	Robins	September	1		
Kevin	Robins	September	9		
Hannah	Rosehart	September	3		
Lisa	Schlegel	September	22		
Kat	Schmeichel	September	7		
Michael	Thorp	September	16		
Steve	Toth	September	2		
Sandra	Voss	September	29		
Sandy	Zientek	September	10		

Lectors Needed!

Sign up to lector for Sunday
services with this link:

<http://bit.ly/zionlector>

You can also find this on our
website:

www.zionuccton.com

Go to Members then Lector
sign up



MEMBERSHIP CLASSES

Growing Together

September 28th, 6pm

Calling all New Members!

Have you been worshipping with us and are you interested in officially joining the church? Or are you new here and would you like to know more about the church?

If so, join us on Tuesday, September 28th at 6pm for dinner and a conversation. If you are uncomfortable joining in person, but would like to join virtually, let Pastor Elizabeth know and we can “zoom” you in.

Pastor Elizabeth & Consistory Tim Schlegel hope you can make it!

Committee Night!

On October 12th at 7pm we are having a COMMITTEE NIGHT!

If you are on a committee, please join us (in-person if you're able) to meet with your Committee and/or Ministry Team.

Committees and/or Ministry Teams will meet for an hour before Consistory. Then the committee liaisons will share what is going on with that committee with the Consistory at 8pm.

ALSO if you're not on a Committee but are interested in joining a Committee or Ministry Team, come on October 12th to check it out!

Below are a list of our Committees and Ministry Teams:

- ♦ Administration
 - ♦ PPRC (Pastoral Parish Relations Committee)
 - ♦ Christian Education & Christian Ed Missions
 - ♦ Coffee Hour & Community Dinners (Church Life)
- ♦ Memorials
 - ♦ Community Outreach (new committee)
 - ♦ Health Ministry Team
 - ♦ Environmental Ministry Team
 - ♦ Pastoral Care Ministry Team
 - ♦ Food Pantry Ministry Team
 - ♦ New Member Ministry Team (new team)

Volunteers Needed:

Coffee Hour Team

Are you interested in helping with Coffee Hour once a month?

We need a new team of volunteers to help with coffee hour on Sunday. There will only be one coffee hour at 10am in-between services. Please email Pastor Elizabeth if you can help.

New Member Ministry Team

Are you interested in being a part of the New Member Ministry Team?

You'll meet with the new members (along with Pastor & Tim) and you'll be able to help them and answer questions during their first year of membership.

If so, please email Pastor Elizabeth.

Thank you!