

APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED BY: ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, PERU ALEX GARNCARZ, PASTOR

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Dear Zion Church Family and Friends,

It is hard to believe we are already into April. The seasons are changing, and there is something about this time of year that feels hopeful. The days are longer, the sun is staying with us a little later, and signs of spring are beginning to show up all around us. After a long winter, it feels good.

We have also just come through a blessed Lent and Easter together. I am thankful for the meaningful season we shared as a church family and as part of the wider Christian community. Our ecumenical Lenten services were very well attended this year, with nine churches participating. It was encouraging to gather with so many others for worship and fellowship during Lent. Through the offerings received at those services, \$3,750 was raised for local food pantries. What a great example of people of faith coming together to help meet real needs in our community.

Here at Zion, I continue to be grateful for the good things happening in the life of our church. Tuesday night Bible Study is going well, with steady attendance and good discussion each week. It is always encouraging to see people hungry to grow in faith and spend time together.

And yes, we set our clocks ahead one hour—yay! We may not love losing the hour of sleep, but I think most of us are glad for the extra daylight in the evening. There is just something about that extra light that lifts the spirit.

I also want to mention a couple of ways Zion continues to make a difference. Recently, we presented a \$2,500 check to the Illinois Valley Food Pantry. What a blessing. Zion Church also continues to provide monthly meals for our friends at PADS Shelter. I am proud of the way this congregation continues to care for others in such practical and generous ways. These acts of kindness matter, and they reflect God's love in a very real way.

Spring brings with it a certain sense of excitement. The earth wakes up again. Trees bud, flowers bloom, everything feels a little more alive. As people of faith, we know spring also reminds us of resurrection, renewal, and hope. It reminds us that God is always at work bringing new life, even after seasons that feel long and heavy.

Thank you for being part of the Zion family. Thank you for your faithfulness, your generosity, and your love for this church and for one another. It is a joy and a privilege to serve as your pastor. As always, please know of my love for every member of the Zion family.

With love and gratitude,

Pastor Alex



Zion UCC Church Council Meeting March 23, 2026 7:00pm

Members Present: Pastor Alex, Larry Grosenbach , Arnie Watkins, Marty Johnson, Jerry Koehler, Dinelle Freschi, Elecia Lindenmier, Lauren Knutson, Jyll Janz, Lori Rynke, Keith Jarosz, Phyllis Bender

Call to order: Larry G.

Opening Prayer: Phyllis B.

Last month's minutes: Motion to approve by Jerry K. seconded by Phyllis B.

President's Report: Abandoned car to be tagged by Peru police in our parking lot. In 7 days will be removed. Larry G. read expectations/List for new council members.

Evangelism: Jerry was notified by email by ccli Hymns we sing to report in 3 weeks hymns we are using, then monthly.

Stewardship: Roof replacement, Anonymous person to match roof funds up to \$7,000.00

Pastoral Care: Check with Alice T. if she is still going to keep on sending cards, etc.

Missions: Food ordered for PADS meal, ongoing collecting of supplies for pads. \$2587.00 donations to be given to PADS.

Building and Grounds: Boiler downstairs was corrected, clear for 2 years to use. Church chimes not working, Jerry K. to work with repairs person to see why they're not working on 3/24/26. Keith J. to go up in the Bell Tower to check on chimes. Organ update: Repairman got parts, tentative Plan to be here April 8th by 10:30am, will remove old unit to work on at his shop. Expects to have organ operational by May 1st. We also have an anonymous person offering to take care of cost.

Women's Guild: Grubby Sunday went well, ladies are planning a tea in May by Kay Harding and Dixie Tonozzi. Ice cream social will be 6/18/26.

Arnie W. made motion to adjourn meeting.

The Lord's Prayer: Arnie W.

Respectfully submitted by: Marty J.



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Flower Charts There are many open dates for Altar flowers. The dates are hung on the bulletin board outside of the Fellowship Hall. We have 4 months hanging at a time. If you would like to reserve flowers you may sign up on the chart or contact the church office to ask about availability. Altar Flowers will be seen on YouTube services, the weekly bulletin, monthly newsletter, and on the church website in the posted bulletin. The cost for flowers is \$25.00. Please be sure to include all names, first and last, and any information you would like added to announcement.

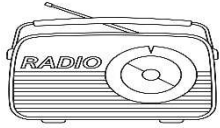
Prayer Requests In the Bulletin We are grateful for the privilege of praying for one another. To help us keep our prayer list current, each new request will be included in the bulletin for four weeks. After that time, we will remove it unless we are asked to continue sharing it longer. If you would like a request to remain, please let us know—we want to walk alongside you in prayer for as long as you need.

In Need of Ongoing Prayer: Mark Harkins family, Donna, Joyce Patton family, Alan Fupler, Joe Bohler, Lyle Morrow family, Ron Narczewski Family, Lauren, Shelly, Kevin Kramer Family, John Dergance, George Siebert, Hubert Keutzer Family, Ed Lopeman, Stephanie Heilstedt, Larry Grosenbach, Karin, Chelsea, George, Arnie & Jan Watkins, Maxine, Karen Hauser, Steve Theisinger, Debbie, Ristau Family, Family of Gene, Dixie, Deb Cooper, Ryan, Cindy Harzheim, Paul Lewis, Marilyn Haslam

We received a special thanks from the Illinois Valley Food Pantry for our recent monetary donation!

“We are truly grateful for your contribution, as it plays a crucial role in ensuring the uninterrupted operation of our pantry throughout the year.”

Please note: Pastor Alex will be on vacation beginning Monday, April 6th. He will return the following Monday, April 13th. Rev. Kay Harding will preach on April 12th and will be available for emergencies. Her phone number is: (815)993-9220



Listen to Pastor Alex at 8:25 every Sunday morning on 103.9 **WLPO**. Tell your friends!



Join us for coffee fellowship after worship! If you would like to sign up to provide coffee fellowship (most Sundays) after worship there is a sign up sheet in fellowship hall, or contact the church office.

If you would like to join choir or provide special music during worship, please contact Shelly Garncarz.



Zion Women's Guild was not able to meet in April due to bad weather. The next meeting will be Thursday, May 7th at 1:00pm in Fellowship Hall.



Join the CREW!

Our Sunday School program, **CREW**, is meeting every Sunday at 9:00 AM. Kids in kindergarten through 5th grade are invited to join us for stories, games, crafts, and activities that help build faith and friendships. We're excited to see you this Sunday!





Join Us for Bible Study!

Bible Study meets on Tuesdays Class starts at 6:30pm and you can participate in person at the church or Zoom on-line. The Zoom link can be found on our WEB page, zionperu.org. We are discussing Season 5 of The Chosen. You can view that episode (and many other programs) by opening a free account on BYUtv. All are welcome!

Let's continue to grow in faith and community together. See you Tuesday! All are welcome!

****HELP FEED THE HUNGRY!**** Zion UCC is providing a delicious hot meal delivered to the **Peru PADS homeless shelter** each month. Every little bit helps us provide a nutritious meal each month through May. Write a check to the church and note **"PADS Meals."** Or go online and donate through the Giving page on our website. Your donation helps provide a healthy, hearty meal to those who need it most. Thank you for your generosity and support in feeding the hungry!

How You Can Help: Donate: Every gift—big or small—ensures that we continue providing hearty, healthy meals.

Ways to Give: Write a check to the church with "PADS Meals" in the memo or donate online through the Giving page on our website.

**HELP
WANTED**

Ushers

Ushers: We are building a new Ushers List. If you previously served as usher and would like to serve again, we would like to add you to the new ushers list. Previously ushers served for an entire month. Ushers now will serve when they are available to serve even for a single Sunday. You can let Larry Grosenbach know you will serve as usher or email ushers@zionperu.org to be added to the ushers list.

**HELP
WANTED**

Evangelism

Evangelism: We are updating our visitor information about Zion church and will be creating a visitor packet that will contain our new updated information about Zion Church and a thank you gift or two for them visiting. If you would like to help the Evangelism Team with the visitor project you can let Pastor Alex, Jerry Koehler or email evangelism@zionperu.org.

THE CHURCH IS OPEN FOR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

JOIN US LIVE ON YOUTUBE SUNDAYS AT 10:15

HOW DO YOU GET THERE? EASY.....

- 1) Go to Youtube.com
- 2) Click on "Search" box at top of the page.
- 3) Type in "Zion UCC Peru Illinois"
- 4) Click on the big purple circle with a "Z" in it.
- 5) Click on the video that says "LIVE"



THAT'S IT! SEE YOU SUNDAY!

*Bulletins available to view on our website!

You can donate to Zion Church with a credit card or by bank transfer from your bank account. All you need to do is go to our web page and click "Donate" located on the right-hand side. Also, here's the link to give to our church: <https://zionuccperu.breezechms.com/>

You can also donate to Zion Church by Text to (815)-393-1954 : Enter the amount you want to give to Zion in the Text box and send. If it the first time you are giving by text you will be prompted to set up your giving method. Thank you for giving during these difficult times



Live Life (Pre and Post Transplant Support Group) meets the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm at Zion UCC.

The Compassionate Friends Group meets at Zion every fourth Thursday at 6:30pm. This meeting is open to any parent who has lost a child.

Weight Watchers meets every Saturday morning at 8:00. We're happy to provide space for this worthwhile service to our community.



EASTER LILIES 2026



IN MEMORY OF:

James (Rusty) Thies
Given by Mary Thies

James (Rusty) Thies
Brie, Kemper & Kora
Kupperschmid

Clyde & Doris Koehler
Terri Short
Given by Debbie Miller,
Allison Miller & Lindsey
Gardner

Marjorie Ploch
Given by The Richard E.
Ploch Family

Helen & Walter Lamps
Given by Mary & John
Lamps

Ruth W. Harding
Given by Kay Harding

Gregory G. Harding
Given by Kay Harding

Busia - Clara
Wachowiak
Given by The Freschi
Family

Janice Wood & Sandra
Henkel
Given by The Freschi
Family

Jean Greening
Given by Jim Greening

Clyde & Doris Koehler
Given by Jerry Koehler

Ronald & Carol Harris
Given by Rhonda (Harris)
Essl

Ronald Harris Jr.
Given by Rhonda (Harris)
Essl

Wayne & Annabelle
Lemmer
Given by Bonnie Anderson

Bill, Elizabeth & Jim
Kivett
Given by Gary & Ellyn
Hylla

Christine Heilstedt
Butler
Given by Gary & Ellyn
Hylla

Armetta Alt
Given by Dona Ostermeyer

Judy Flahaut
Given by Dona Ostermeyer

Irma Gallagher
Given by Dona Ostermeyer

Lois Wilmot
Given by Dona Ostermeyer

My Family
Given by Dona Ostermeyer

Wally & Mae Fouth
Given by Gary, Kim, Randy,
Garrett, Lindsey, Audra &
Nolan

Wayne & Claire Batchelder
Given by Gary, Kim, Randy,
Garrett, Lindsey, Audra &
Nolan

Ray & Lavina Smith
& Vern Batchelder
Given by Gary, Kim, Randy,
Garrett, Lindsey, Audra &
Nolan

The Engelhaupt
Given by Gary, Kim, Randy,
Garrett, Lindsey, Audra &
Nolan





BLOOMING WHERE WE'RE PLANTED

We're different flowers blooming in the same garden of sisterhood. None of us had any say in when and where we were born or about many of the events that have occurred in our lifetime, but with the help of God's grace and the support of each other, each of us can do amazing things.



Come celebrate being an inspired and inspiring woman at this year's Spring Tea at Zion United Church of Christ in Peru, from 1:00 to 3:00, May 2nd.

Join us for good friends, good food, and good fun.

And bring a guest or two, - or more.


Ladies \$14, Young Ladies 12 and under \$7

**To make your reservations sign up at church
or call Pastor Kay at (815) 993 9220.**



April Birthdays

3. Tyler Martinez
4. Nate Trumpinski
Keith Jarosz
6. Joel Bejster
Shirley Lopeman
Kenny Lindenmier
8. Gary Grosenbach
9. Rhonda Essl
11. Rich Ploch
13. Rev. Kay Harding
15. Heather Becker
David Wilmot
16. Michael Breuning
18. Dean Wilmot
20. Kim Grant
21. Larry Butkus
22. Claire Baltikauski
23. Hunter Thurman
24. Tony Coutre'
Leesa Tipton
25. Lori Rynke
George Garncarz
26. Shelly Garncarz
27. Andrew Watkins
Cody Essl
28. Brant Baltikauski
29. Pam Beck
Nora Trumpinski



May Birthdays

1. Kaitlyn Ogden
4. Laurie Johnson
Russ Lemmer
5. Connor Mickelson
6. Alison Coutre'
7. Nathan Morrell
Megan Baltikauski
8. Matt Sprong
Grace Knutson
13. Allison Miller
15. Tim Harzheim
19. Richard Vlastnik
John Vlastnik
21. David Bejster
22. Edna Daugherty
Lemix Freschi
Jaxen Freschi
24. Noah Rietgraf
Tyler Marie Grosenbach
25. Dane Wicinski
26. Ellie Breuning
Kora Kupperschmid
27. Larry Grosenbach
30. Frank Vlastnik
31. Rose Mary Redeen
Reid Rynke



April Anniversaries

6. Rich & Jodee Ploch
19. Doug & Cyndi Thurman
19. Russ & Maureen Lemmer
20. Gary & Ellyn Hylla
23. Gary Fouth & Kimberly Tracy
23. Jim & Connie Sprong
30. Charles & Elinor Lindenmeyer

May Anniversaries

19. Justin and Elyse Boroski
19. Tom & Lois Edgcomb
22. Ryan and Elecia Lindenmier
27. Gary & Shug Grosenbach

Happy anniversary!



April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 12:00pm Good Friday DePue UCC	4 8:00 am Weight Watchers
5 8:25 Pastor Alex WLPO 9:00 CREW 9:00 Choir practice 10:15 Worship- Available on Youtube 	6 6:30 pm Live Life group	7 6:30 pm Bible Study	8	9	10	11 8:00 am Weight Watchers
12 8:25 Pastor Alex WLPO 9:00 CREW 9:00 Choir practice 10:15 Worship- Available on Youtube Coffee & Fellowship	13 7:00 pm Church Council Meeting	14 6:30 pm Bible Study	15	16 6:00pm Zion Diners	17	18 8:00 am Weight Watchers
19 8:25 Pastor Alex WLPO 9:00 CREW 9:00 Choir practice 10:15 Worship- Available on Youtube Coffee & Fellowship	20	21 6:30 pm Bible Study	22	23 6:30pm Comp Friends Group	24	25 8:00 am Weight Watchers
26 8:25 Pastor Alex WLPO 9:00 CREW 9:00 Choir practice 10:15 Worship- Available on Youtube Coffee & Fellowship  MUSIC SUNDAY	27	28 6:30 pm Bible Study 7:00pm Council Meeting PADS MEAL	29	30		