

## **SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER**

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

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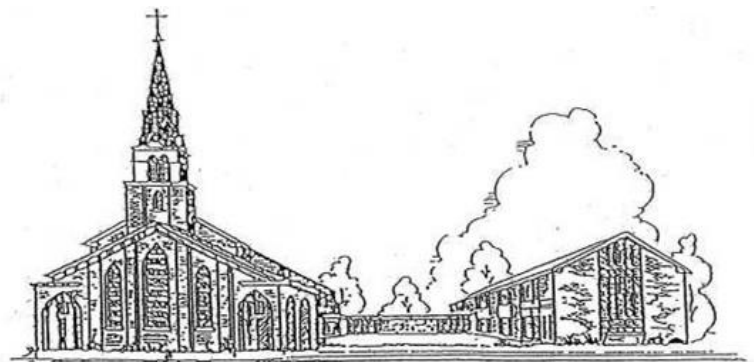
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## **WELCOME BACK, PASTOR ALEX!!!!!!**

Pastor Alex will be back from his sabbatical beginning in September. His first Sunday will be September 7. The Church Council is planning a special welcome back reception following worship that day and is encouraging all of us to be present for worship and the reception to make it a great homecoming for

Pastor Alex and a renewal of our ministries together. Let's all make the effort to be there to let Pastor Alex know much we appreciate him and have missed him.



*Zion United Church of Christ*

*"The Church with the Carillon Tower Chimes"*



**Zion UCC Church Council Meeting**

**July 21, 2025 7:00pm**

Members present: Larry Grosenbach, Marty Johnson, Jerry Koehler, Dinelle Freschi, Alice Tostovarsnik, Lori Rynke

Larry G. called the meeting to order.

Opening prayer led by Alice T.

Last month's minutes: Motion to approve by Jerry K. seconded by Alice T.

Treasurer's report: May Motion to approve by Marty J. seconded by Phyllis B.  
June Motion to approve by Phyllis B. seconded by Alice T.

President's Report: All dates for services going well and have been filled. Received resignation letter from Terri Kelly (Sunday School.) Told Erin to pay \$50.00 fee for Rotary Park display for LaSalle's celebration of lights.

History: Looking forward to Celebrating Zion Church's 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Pastoral Care: Alice T. continuing to send cards.

Building and Grounds: Extreme heat slowing down progress on hallway roof leak repair. Will begin tracking hours on projector light. Estimate \$900 for bulb replacement.

Women's Guild: Ice Cream Social brought in \$1500-\$1600. Also, at the last meeting the amount given to church fund was an error. They will provide picnic at Vacation Bible School.

Renewal Leadership Team: Will meet in August.

Marty J. made a motion to adjourn meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Marty J.



## **Zion UCC Church Council Meeting**

**August 18, 2025 7:00pm**

Members present: Larry Grosenbach, Arnie Watkins, Marty Johnson, Jerry Koehler, Lauren Knutson, Lori Rynke

Larry G. called the meeting to order.

Opening prayer led by Larry G.

Last month's minutes: Motion to approve by Jerry K. seconded by Arnie W.

Treasurer's report: Motion to approve by Marty J. seconded by Arnie W.

Christian Education: Elecia L. and Dinelle F. working on Sunday School curriculum. Pastor Alex will be teaching Confirmation Class. Pilgrim Park Lock-In will be start of Sunday School with classes starting the following week.

Building and Grounds: Ballasts in Sunday School room have been fixed- cost around \$200.00. Need future consideration of Blower motor in A/C – starting to get noisy.

Women's Guild: Meeting 9/4/25 at 1:00pm in Fellowship Hall.

Renewal Leadership Team: To meet sometime the month of September.

The Lord's Prayer: Larry G.

Marty J. made a motion to adjourn meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Martin Johnson.

## *In Need of Ongoing Prayer:*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: Theresa Grove, George, Dixie, members of Annunciation Parish in Minneapolis, Cliff and Stanley Smith, Debbie, Pilgrim Park Lock-In & Christian Ed., Lauren, Mack, Davis, Tom Kaszynski family, Sandy & Don, Geo & Marni, Melanie, Disaster victims, Pastor Alex, Scott, Mary Opsal, Bill Ellena family, Rusty Thies Family, Rene, Pete Sampo, Shelly, Kimberly, Kylin, Cora, Ted Davenport, Kevin Orval, Shirley Lopeman, The Fuplers, Terry Dean, Arnie & Jan Watkins, Jacob Bremann, Lexanne Jarosz & family, Elizabeth, Hugh Williams, Jack Hauser, Ray Kollar Family, Anthony, Dawn & Ron Narczewski, Jim Brown, Austin, Maxine, Shirley, Jackie, Brianna, Zimmer family, Tim P., Eric & Tina, Dale Jacobson, Paul Nave, Jeff Rietgraf, Jean Mikus, Deb Cooper, Ryan, Josie, Steve & Audrey, Jean Spayer, Cindy Harzheim, Paul Lewis, Marilyn Haslam, Bob & Holly Antkowiak.



Our deepest condolences go out to the family of Thomas Kaszynski. Tom passed away July 21, 2025. Services were August 2, 2025 with Pastor Alex Garncarz officiating.

**A Memorial** was given for Richard and Anne Greening on their birthdays, from Jim Greening.

**The Altar Flowers** August 24<sup>th</sup> were for Eric, given by Diane Gebhardt.

**The Altar Flowers** August 31<sup>st</sup> were in celebration of Candie Zelenak's birthday. Happy Birthday, Candie! From Karen, Kim, and Jim.

*A letter of thanks-* To all our family and friends: Dick and I are better!! And your prayers, care, and love made that happen. All the prayers were answered the way we asked God. God is good. With our deepest thanks from our grateful hearts, we wish to thank all of you. Dick has healed completely and I am so much better... stronger all the time. We appreciate all the prayers, cards, food and calls. It takes our breath away for all the love and care we received. Thank you to each and every one of you.

With our love and thanks, Alice & Dick T.

**Thank you** to Rev. Kay Harding for overseeing the bulletin each week while Pastor Alex was on Sabbatical, as well as being available for emergencies, preaching and administering Holy Communion on the first Sunday during the summer months. Your ministry and time spent are greatly appreciated!



**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.



Here's a picture of Zion folk who attended camp at Pilgrim Park this summer. This great group included one volunteer camp director, a volunteer camp counselor and campers from both Tenderfoot Camp and Spirit Camp. We are blessed to have this wonderful facility so close to us. Join us later this fall when we hold a Sunday worship at the camp on Nov. 2, with lunch at camp following the service

## THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED MAKE VBS A SUCCESS!

The theme of this summer's Vacation Bible School was being good stewards of God's creation. Our key verse: Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." Our identity: Our Creator's Crew. Our Mission: Stewardship of God's Creation. Our motto: We have got a job to do 'cause we are the Creator's crew.

When Lauren and I decided to create our own Vacation Bible School curriculum this year, rather than purchasing a packaged program, we knew we would have a lot of work to do. Lauren jumped right in, finding video resources, crafts and games. I began identifying and scheduling local resource people to make presentations to the kids and writing opening and closing session for each day incorporating Bible verses and stories, music and the daily featured endangered animals that Lauren identified (all native to Illinois). Our guest presenters included a bee keeper, a veterinarian, a Peru Police canine officer and dog, a wildlife rehabilitator from Mendota and the Northern Illinois Raptor Rehab and Education Center. We opened the presentation by the raptor center to families of the students and the public, and we did have about 45 people come.



We had about 35 kids participate during the week. They seemed to especially enjoy the guest presentations and, of course, the waterslide on the last day. Wouldn't you know it, after 4 days of really hot weather, our last day was almost cool. But that did not deter the kids. And of course we finished up with hot dogs, chips, desserts and beverage provided for the kids and their families by the Women's Guild. Overall the week was a big hit.

And it could not have happened without all the people who volunteered to help as registrars, group leaders, craft leaders, games leaders, snack providers, tech support and office support. Thank you, thank you both Erins, Jerry, Jim, Lois, Mary, Dixie, Marcia, Edna, Arnie, Matt, Abbey, Holly, Terri, Diane, Cheryl, Larry, Laurie, Marty, Dave, Bill, Caidin Connor, Lily, Rhonda, Candy, Theresa, Dona, George and those of you who never signed up to help but just showed up and helped, or helped arrange furniture in the fellowship hall before and after the event. I apologize if I have omitted someone's name. But know that your help was appreciated and you still get the stars in your crown. God bless you all. Pastor Kay





Here are a few pictures of our guest speakers, making seed bombs and having snacks from VBS. If you have any at you are willing to share, especially of the water slide, building the bat boxes, or playing games, please email them to Pastor Kay at [pkh@juno.com](mailto:pkh@juno.com) or send them to her cell phone at 309 238 8221. Thanks!

# BIBLE STUDY TO RESUME THIS FALL WITH SEASON 3 OF *THE CHOSEN*



We were reluctant to take a break over the summer because we were enjoying our session so much, but with everyone's vacations schedules and Pastor Alex's sabbatical it seemed the best thing to do. But we all agreed we wanted to continue in the fall. The exact starting date has not yet been set (we are waiting for consult with Pastor Alex after he gets back) but anticipate that 1) it will be sometime in September and 2) that it will continue to be both in person and on zoom.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS GROUP BUT ARE CONCERNED THAT YOU WEREN'T PART WHEN WE DISCUSSED SEASONS 1 AND 2, DO NOT LET THAT HOLD YOU BACK.** You can catch up with a little "binge watching" or some more leisurely watching. Here's how.

Step 1 Go to BYUtv on your computer or tablet.

Step 2. Set up an account. They are free and give you access to lots of programs beside "The Chosen".

Step 3. Click on the little magnifying glass at the top of the screen. Then type The Chosen in the search box that appears

Step 4 An icon (picture) for the Chosen will appear. Click on it. Then on episodes.

Step 5 Choose Season 1. Click on Episode 1 and you are on your way.

A few things to keep in mind:

You won't see much of Jesus in the first two episodes. These two episodes mostly introduce some of the disciples who will be following Jesus and give a sense of what their lives might have been like. The creators of this series have drawn on lots of research to present life in the time of Jesus and used their imaginations to flesh out what biblical descriptions we have of the disciples' personalities in a very credible way.

The series does not follow the order of events of any one of the Gospels, but incorporates scenes and events from all of them. And adds some scenes that are not in the Gospels but which help us understand the times, characters and relationships.

You might want to turn on the closed captions. The accents of some of the actors are a little hard to understand at first, and it helps get everybody's names straight.

The episodes are very engaging, but they do sometimes jump back and forth between people and places, and a few start with an event from the Old Testament that will be referred to later in the episode. One resource that provides episode summaries and notes is

<https://studythechosen.wordpress.com> .

Even if you don't take time to watch seasons 1 and 2 you are welcome to join the class when it starts up again.





**The Women's Guild** will meet Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm in fellowship hall. All ladies are welcome to attend!



### **CREW KIDS LOCK-IN AT PILGRIM PARK**

This year, we are kicking off Sunday School Rally Day with a Lock-in at Pilgrim Park on September 5<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup>. Parents are welcome as well! There is a sign-up sheet circulating.

Please contact Shelly Garncarz or the Church office for more information. We hope you can attend!



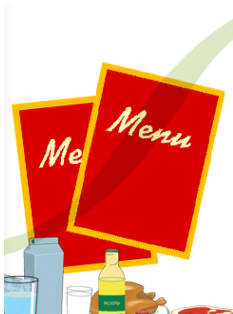
**CREW WILL RESUME CLASSES ON SEPTEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup> AT 9:00AM.**  
**WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU!**

### ***Mark your calendars...***

Please plan on attending worship Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup> to welcome back Pastor Alex from his sabbatical.



**Choir Announcement:** Choir practice will begin Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. If you like to sing and have fun please contact the church office or Jim Greening (815/223-1858) with questions, or come to practice when it begins.



**Zion Diners** met August 21<sup>st</sup> with Laurie and Marty Johnson as hosts. The place was Country House restaurant. We have such a nice group and always have a great time. The next Diners event will be Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm. Your host will be Jyll Janz and the restaurant will be announced soon. You might want to check it out to see what you are missing. All are Welcome!



## Illinois Valley CROP Walk Against Hunger

Mark your calendars! The Illinois Valley CROP Walk Against Hunger will be held Sunday, September 28 at Rotary Park in La Salle. The walk begins at 1:00 p.m. Join us as we walk together to raise awareness and funds to help fight hunger locally and around the world. Whether you choose to walk, sponsor a walker, or make a donation, your participation will make a difference. Donation envelopes and sign up sheet are in the church office.



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.



ILLINOIS VALLEY PUBLIC ACTION TO  
DELIVER SHELTER  
Established 1991

## **\*\*HELP FEED THE HUNGRY!\*\***

Zion UCC is once again providing a delicious hot meal delivered to the **Peru PADS homeless shelter** each month. As the summer winds down, the shelter reopened earlier this year due to a greater need than ever. 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!





**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](mailto:ushers@zionperu.org) to be added to the ushers list.



**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](mailto:evangelism@zionperu.org).



ILLINOIS VALLEY PUBLIC ACTION TO  
DELIVER SHELTER  
Established 1991

**PADS Meals:** Thank you for opening your heart to this mission of compassion and care. PADS will reopen in August. You may continue to contribute. Our mission will continue when the shelter reopens.

**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
  - Donate online through the Giving page on our website

**THE CHURCH IS OPEN FOR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP**

Please follow all safety guidelines when in attendance. We understand if you are not comfortable coming in person and invite you to watch services on YouTube.

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

### Support Needed for Food Pantry Expansion!

The Illinois Valley Food Pantry is seeking donations to purchase their new facility to better serve those in need. The larger space will allow for the storage of additional perishable and non-perishable food items, ensuring that we can meet the increasing demand in our community.

Your financial support can make a real difference! Contributions can be sent to: *Illinois Valley Food Pantry 122 Wright St. LaSalle, IL 61301*

Together, we can work to end hunger in our community. Thank you for your generosity!



**Feeding the Community**



**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.



**October 5<sup>th</sup> is World Communion Sunday**



**The Illinois Valley Flute Ensemble** will present a Halloween concert on October 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM in the sanctuary of Zion UCC. Please come and join us and enjoy a “flutey” Halloween with HAUNTINGLY beautiful music.

It will be open to the public with a free will donation.



### September Birthdays

1. Brad Bingheim
2. Andrea McGarvey
4. Nickolas Miller  
Candis Zelenak
5. Jon & Rileigh Lemmer
6. Beth Coutre'
7. Barry Breuning
8. Jodee Ploch
10. Cheryl Grosenbach
13. Barbara Ryba  
Molly Ryan
14. Daniel Johnson  
Mary Kuzma  
Ellie Gardner
15. Erin Lewis
17. Cindy Harzheim
18. Steve Theisinger
20. Jennifer Mize  
Connie Sprong
21. Debbie Miller  
Harper Jae Sprong
23. Kaylee Ploch
25. Maureen Lemmer  
Pastor Alex Garncarz
26. Gerald Koehler
27. Shug Grosenbach  
Katelyn Bejster
27. Grant Grosenbach  
Cindy Van Cleave
29. Debbie Baltikauski



### September Anniversaries

3. Steve & Carol Theisinger
5. Sharon & John Eustis
11. Grant & Miranda Grosenbach
28. Keith & Lexanne Jarosz



### October Birthdays

1. Mark Bejster
3. Leah Wilmot
5. Jyll Janz
7. Michelle Johnson  
Ryan Ploch
8. Kristen Eustis
9. Libby Mize
10. Lucy Breuning
11. Klaire Wilmot
12. Dona Ostermeyer
13. Stephanie Heilstedt  
Olivia Shetterly
16. Sharon Eustis  
Bentley Gardner
20. Lanie Lynn Gardner
23. Rosalie Watkins
24. David Baltikauski
25. Becky Wicinski  
Nathan Tipton
25. Olivia Bergagna
26. Bill Becker
27. Anna Coutre'
29. Lexanne Jarosz




### October Anniversaries

5. Dick & Alice Tostovarsnik
7. Bill & Sue Johnson
9. Jerrid & Tanya Ware
10. Pastor Alex & Shelly Garncarz
13. Dan & Sheryl Churney
15. Adam & Jennifer Mize
16. Brant and Megan Baltikauski





# September 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					August 29	August 30 <b>8:00am</b> Weight Watchers meeting
August 31 <b>8:25</b> Pastor Alex WLPO <b>10:15</b> Worship- Also available on You Tube	1 <b>Labor Day</b>	2 Welcome back Pastor Alex !	3	4 <b>1:00pm</b> Zion Women's Guild Meeting	5 <b>Pilgrim Park Lock-in</b>	6 <b>8:00am</b> Weight Watchers meeting <b>Pilgrim Park Lock-in</b>
7. <b>8:25</b> Pastor Alex WLPO <b>10:15</b> Worship- Also available on You Tube & Coffee Fellowship	8 <b>6:30pm</b> Live Life Group meeting	9	10 <b>6:30</b> Choir practice	11	12	13 <b>8:00am</b> Weight Watchers meeting
14. <b>8:25</b> Pastor Alex WLPO <b>Sunday School Rally Day</b> <b>9:00</b> CREW <b>9:30</b> Choir practice <b>10:15</b> Worship- Also available on You Tube & Coffee Fellowship	15 <b>7:00</b> Church Council Meeting	16	17 <b>6:30</b> Choir practice	18 <b>6:00</b> Zion Diners	19 Newsletter info Due	20 <b>8:00am</b> Weight Watchers meeting
21. <b>8:25</b> Pastor Alex WLPO <b>9:00</b> CREW <b>9:30</b> Choir practice <b>10:15</b> Worship- Also available on You Tube & Coffee Fellowship	22	23	24 <b>6:30</b> Choir practice	25 <b>6:30pm</b> Compassionate Friends Group meeting	26	27 <b>8:00am</b> Weight Watchers meeting
28. <b>8:25</b> Pastor Alex WLPO <b>9:00</b> CREW <b>9:30</b> Choir practice <b>10:15</b> Worship- Also available on You Tube & Coffee Fellowship <b>1:00 CROP Walk</b>	29.	30	Oct. 1 <b>6:30</b> Choir practice	Oct. 2 <b>1:00pm</b> Zion Women's Guild meeting	Oct. 3	Oct. 4 <b>8:00am</b> Weight Watchers meeting