

MARCH

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

As I pondered what words we needed to hear at this moment in our Lenten journey, I drifted to a friend's blog where I read the following.

Divine Authenticity; a poem about living into God's design!

Posted on February 18, 2024 by WhovianPastor

In the quiet whispers of dawn's first light, there lies a truth, pristine and bright. A journey unfolds, a path to unveil, to become the self, beyond the veil.

In the depths of the soul, where echoes reside, God's creation, in us, does confide. With every breath, a chance to embrace, the essence within, with love and grace.

Through trials and triumphs, we find our way, unraveling layers, day by day. For in the mirror of divine design, lies the image of the self, truly divine.

Let go of masks, of fears and doubt, embrace the journey, within and without. For in becoming who we're meant to be, we find liberation, pure and free.

So heed the call, let your spirit soar, embrace the truth, at your very core. For in the embrace of authenticity, we find communion with divinity.

Sometimes, we find sparks of the divine in places that can surprise us. When we are able to embrace the truth of our lives, we will find that God is ever-present. So, as we continue to journey through this Lenten season remember that God walks with us, helping us become who we are meant to be.

Blessings,
Rev. Stephen Stark

Rev. Stephen Stark

MARCH

Birthdays

1- Josh Korte
Jeanice Anderson
2- Diane Schooley
3- Stephen Sinkey
12- Cade Williamson
Noah Huelsmann
Pat Sprehe
13- Caroline Brown
14- Grahm Penick
15- Rev. Stephen Stark



16- Wesley M Schooley III
19- Megan Korte
20- Carol Houghland
21- Molly Stark
23- Roy Robinson
Joyce Krausz
24- Christopher Herndon
Sarah Holtgrave
29- Rev. Elmer Bowman
30- Adrian Grathwohl

Kids Collection Corner



For the month of March, we are collecting household cleaning supplies. This includes items such as glass cleaner, disinfectant wipes, wood polish, toilet cleaner, and other items of the like.

Please bring your donations to the church office or place them in the baskets in the Gathering Space.



Happy March as that means we are a bit closer to spring!

The February Council Meeting had a guest speaker as Matt Wagner from United Church Funds provided our annual review of our investment account. As of December 31, 2023, the funds in our investment account were up 16.66% over the previous year. Matt did not recommend any modifications to our current strategy as that has served us well so far.



Our church does enjoy a good meal and the results from the Frostbite BBQ were very successful with \$1,200 being raised. The first fish fry was also successful and there is another one scheduled for March 15. The spring chicken dinner is on March 2 and by the time you read this, it will have already occurred. Thanks to all who ate, worked and otherwise made these events a success!

As we are now into March, with hopefully most of the winter weather behind us, do keep in mind to provide the church office any updates to your phone numbers or email addresses in the event church services or events need to be adjusted or cancelled. Updated information is vital to keeping you informed, so please share if something has changed for you.

One of the biggest agenda items the council has been working on is the repair of one of the HVAC units in the Fellowship Hall. The west unit has a cracked heat exchanger and it also required a new blower motor. A special congregational meeting was held on Sunday, February 25th and it was decided to have Baer Heating and Cooling make the repair for a cost not exceeding \$5,000. The bid we received from Baer was \$3,650, so we are looking forward to having that unit up and running as soon as the parts arrive!

A big change in the Clothing Pantry days and hours will be occurring in March. The Clothing Pantry will now be open on Tuesday instead of Monday and hours will also include the opportunity to participate not only in the afternoon, but now with late afternoon and evening hours. This mission is vital to our community, so please volunteer some time if you are able.

The Congregational Life Committee is in the early planning stages of offering a monthly Community Meal at the church. There are churches in our area who have developed a program like this and we are exploring what could work for our church in order to provide a vital service to the community. It would also be a great time for fellowship with friends and the opportunity to meet new folks who may be looking for a church home.

Lastly, we are in the Lenten Season, so please reflect and lift up in prayer those who are experiencing challenges with their health, employment, family or life in general. Let's walk together on our Lenten journey as we approach Easter and reflect on the path Jesus Christ took for us to save us from our sins. Rejoice in the Risen Savior!

Scott Billhartz
Council President

Reminder

On Friday, **April 5th**, Zion UCC will once again have Operation Food Search, our monthly drive thru where we hand out boxes of food, no application necessary. First come, first served. All are welcome! Spread the word!



Board of Christian Education



The BCE met February 27. Candy Beard and Meg Billhartz will be working on organizing music for the children who are interested in singing during a church service. If your young people are interested, please contact Candy or Meg. Camp Sunday will be celebrated on March 3rd. Any donations will go to assist our members with their camp tuition.

The Sunday School will have an egg hunt after the delicious Easter Breakfast. Plan on attending the breakfast and enjoy the egg hunt! The kids will have a blast.

Our kids's corner will be collecting any type of cleaning supplies in March. As always, we appreciate any donations that the congregation provides. We love seeing Zion's kids in Sunday School. Hope to see all of you in Sunday School.



WE PRAY WITH AND FOR...

Larry Cox ♦ Rebecca Catlin ♦ Jim & Judy Korte ♦ Logan Vallee

Simon Romoser-Claunch ♦ Sherrie Patterson ♦ Marc Govier

Molly Stark ♦ Rick Shepherd

Sharol Guerin - Clinton Manor ♦ Jody Cox - Bria of Mascoutah

June Mitchell ♦ Dorothy Bridgeforth - Trenton Village

Bill Malina - Aviston Countryside Manor

All those in the military, at home and abroad.

The victims, families, and those fighting in any global conflict.



OPEN AND AFFIRMING
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Open and Affirming team has been meeting regularly this year and working diligently to write a Covenant, also called a Welcoming statement, for Zion. We plan to share it with our church family as soon as it is complete. We have been using the guidelines written by the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ throughout our journey and to write this statement.

In an effort to continue growing and learning, a few members of the team will be attending the Gateway Open and Affirming Convocation at Parkway UCC on March 2. While there we will participate in worship services and attend workshops about a variety of topics related to the various stages of the ONA journey. We are looking forward to sharing what we learn with you.

As always, our team is here to answer any questions you may have about this process and what it means for Zion UCC. Our team members are Pat Albers, Meg Billhartz, Caroline Brown, Molly Stark, Claire Thorpe-Klinsky and Michelle Washburn. Pastor Stephen serves as a non-member pastoral guide.

Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support as we continue through this process.



Fish Fry

DINNER



Friday, March 15th

**414 W Hanover St
New Baden, IL 62265**

4:00 PM - 6:30 PM

\$15/Dinner

Dinners include: Cod Tail, Catfish, or Fried shrimp, mac & cheese, hush puppies,





SCHEDULE

March 2024

Date	Time	Liturgist	Tech	Acolyte
Mar. 3rd	8am 1030am	Michelle Washburn Bev Adams	Rodney Washburn Scott Billhartz	Brody Seth
Mar. 10th	8am 1030am	Laverne Laux Molly Stark	Vicki Walthes Bev Adams	Mallory Adrian
Mar. 17th	8am 1030am	Leanne McDonald Kathy Sinkey	Rodney Washburn Bev Adams	Carly Jonah
Mar. 24th	8am 1030am	Julie Edwards Bev Adams	Vicki Walthes Scott Billhartz	Lucy Silas
Mar. 31st	8am 1030am	Charissa Thorpe Molly Stark	Rodney Washburn Bev Adams	Brody Seth



Treasurer's Report for the month of January 2024

	General Account	Pastor Discretionary Fund	Memorial Account	Building Fund
Balance, 1/1/2024	\$10,145.04	\$265.00	\$25,830.54	\$304,271.79
Income	16,320.55	0.00	0.00	1,266.00
Expenses	(19,826.87)	0.00	(75.00)	(259.77)
Transfer	334.77	0.00	0.00	0.00
Subtotal	6,973.49	265.00	25,755.54	305,278.02
Capital Campaign Acct.				0.00
UCF Account	860,146.74			
CD - First Federal	150,000.00			
Emergency Fund	65,315.95			
Balance, 1/31/2024	<u>\$1,082,436.18</u>	<u>\$265.00</u>	<u>\$25,755.54</u>	<u>\$305,278.02</u>

Vicki Walthes, Treasurer