

WELCOME TO
Old Zionsville United Church of Christ
5981 Fountain Road, P.O. Box 215
Old Zionsville, PA 18068

Email: ozuccoffice@ptd.net Web page: www.oldzionsucc.org
Church Office: 610-966-3601
Pastor: 610-393-3522 or 610-966-3436

Rev. Lori Esslinger

Pastor

David Carlson

Organist

March 15, 2026

10:15am

**those who are able may stand*

Fourth Sunday in Lent
"The Signs"

Prelude: "There Is a Green Hill Far Away"

Stebbins

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Candles

Call to Worship

Leader 1: Some days, it's hard to recognize the signs,
when what we have come to know and rely on is ablaze
and everything looks like ashes.

Leader 2: Do you not know what the Holy One can do with ashes?

**All: Then the Earth-maker knelt down and formed humanity
from the dust of the ground,
and breath breathed new life.** (Genesis 2:7)

Leader 1: Some days, it's difficult to believe the signs,
when truths are erased and buried
and there is nothing left to witness but the bare dirt.

Leader 2: Do you not know what the Holy One can do with dirt?

**All: Then the Pain-bearer spat in the dirt and made mud
spreading it on the man's eyes
and visions appeared of a new day rising.** (Mark 9:6-7)

Leader 1: Some days, it feels impossible to embrace the signs,
so we come together to pay attention, and seek, and be changed

Leader 2: finding our grounding in the ashes that were once stars
in the dirt that holds galaxies in the mud that birthed our bones and breath.

All: Then the Life-giver who made safe ground in the middle of the sea said:

See, I am doing a new thing. Do you not perceive it?

and a way was made out of no way toward hope. (Isaiah 43:16-19)

Invocation (drawn from Open Unto Me, a prayer by Howard Thurman) **(unison)**

Open unto us, hope for our despair.

Open unto us, dreams for our dread.

Open unto us, courage for our fear.

Open unto us, vision for our skepticism.

Open unto us, wisdom for our confusion.

Open unto us, love for our hates.

Open unto us, Your heart for our hearts.

O God, our God, open unto us. Amen.

***Hymn: "This is My Father's World"**

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Seeking Transformation and New Life

Call to Transformation

Leader: In our gospel reading for today, when Jesus and the disciples encounter a man who was blind, the disciples ask Jesus, "who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" And Jesus replied, this is not a story about sin.

Our Christian tradition, our churches, and our world are rife with stories where difference is mistaken for deficiency, inferiority, even sin, with dire consequences. These stories and histories of ableism, of racism, and so many other isms are testing us, challenging us to open toward new understanding and acknowledge with vulnerability where we have caused hurt and harm. So in this moment, let us open our hearts, minds and spirits to this call to turn around.

Time of Silent Reflection

Prayer for New Life

Leader: For the ways we have been shaped by a culture that wants to place blame and find fault when we encounter differing abilities and embodiments, as if they mean wrongness or offense

All: God, have mercy.

Leader: For the times when we have used language that draws a line between disability and sin, using blind or deaf or lame as if they mean ignorant, doubting, unfaithful

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: For the moments we have disbelieved and disregarded
the needs, stories, and experiences
of those who are disabled
as if access was a problem, a burden and we know better

All: God, have mercy.

Leader: Open us to new stories of disability from those who
know them best.

All: Turn us around, Holy One. Amen.

Words of Grace

Leader: Let your soul receive this rest:
There is no story we can't unlearn,
and no way of loving we can't learn anew.

**All: Praise God, who forgives us and frees us
always inviting us to change and become a new creation
from the ground up.**

***Hymn: "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"**

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OGHS Video Clip

Scripture: John 9:1-41

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Reflection

Invitation to Generosity

Leader: Maybe today, you're spent.
Maybe it feels like you have nothing else to give.
Maybe you are emptied out, bent over, barely making it.
Maybe you feel like dirt, dust, ashes.
Beloved, do you not know what the Holy can do with dust?
Even from spit and mud, God creates a new dream and new visions.
So let us discover what abundance emerges
when whatever we have finds its way into the hands of grace.

Offertory: "I Believe in a Hill Called Mt. Calvary"

Gaither

***Presentation of our Gifts and the Doxology**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication**

Leader: Into a world desperate for signs of hope,
All: let these gifts arrive as beacons.

Leader: Into communities working for signs of freedom,

All: let these gifts unlock shackles.

Leader: Into hearts searching for signs of compassion,

All: let these gifts offer tenderness.

Leader: Into each breath yearning for signs of new life,

All: let these gifts come as possibility. Amen.

Choir Anthem

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

***Closing Hymn: "O How I Love Jesus"**

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*Benediction

The disciples asked, whose fault is it?

This is not a story about sin, Jesus replies.

It is a story about what is being revealed.

Let this revelation be our blessing.

The neighbors asked if it's really him, if it's really possible?

This is not a story about blindness, the healed one replies.

It is a story about signs and dreams and what the light shines through.

Let these signs be our blessing.

The leaders asked, he can't be the one, can he?

This is not a story about the one we've been waiting for,
the healed one replies.

It is a story about how all of us are part of the new day rising.

Let all of us be our blessing.

The teacher asked, do you believe?

This is not a story about creeds, the healed one replies.

It is a story about testifying to the love you witness.

Let this testimony to love be our blessing

And we be the witnesses, to the ends of the earth. Amen.

*Extinguishing of the Candles

*Postlude: "Come, Thou Almighty King"

Giardini



"The Signs: Service Prayers for Lent 4A" was written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema who serves as a free-range facilitator, ritualist, activist, teacher, and writer whose work lives at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and embodied spiritual practices. She is a founding member of the Liberating Lineages Collective.

TODAY'S LITURGIST is Jan Strobel.

TODAY'S GREETER is Robin Yoder.

TODAY'S ALTAR FLOWERS are sponsored by Linda Benner in memory of Anna & Joseph Benner.

TODAY'S BULLETINS are sponsored by Linda Benner in memory of Anna & Joseph Benner.

RESTROOMS ARE AVAILABLE on the main floor of the Church and downstairs.
Bulletin MAGNIFIER SHEETS can be found on the sound system.



Our church is equipped with an Assistive Listening System. You provide your own headphones which can be connected to the transmitter which will allow you to more clearly hear the Worship Service or any program being offered in the Sanctuary. See anyone at the sound booth to inquire.

Greeters and Liturgists Needed. If you would like to get on our schedule to help in our Worship Services by being a Greeter or Liturgist, please contact the church office. Email and phone number are on front page or put a note in the Secretary's mailbox. Thank you.

Holy Week Schedule:

Palm Sunday, March 29 – 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship

Maundy Thursday, April 2 – 7:00 p.m. Communion Worship

Good Friday, April 3 – 7:00 p.m. Worship, Service of Darkness

Easter Sunday, April 5 – 7:30 a.m. Communion Worship

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

9:30 a.m. Egg Hunt for Children up to 6th Grade

10:15 a.m. Communion Worship

(Donuts and Coffee will be served between the Services)

Egg Hunt! Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday, April 5 at 9:30 a.m. for all children up to 6th Grade. Lower Social Hall at 9:30 a.m. Bring your own bag or basket for hunting. Coins in every egg! Share the fun with your church friends.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) – This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response and recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing puts you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate

needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place. Envelopes can be found at the end of your pew and at the entrance to the Church for those wishing to give. **This collection begins on February 22 – 1st Sunday of Lent and concludes on Palm Sunday, March 29.** The United Church of Christ is always responsive to disasters both here and globally. If you wish to donate money to any global disasters, 100% of your donation will go to aid relief. Make your check payable to Old Zionsville UCC and clearly mark it for Disaster Relief. Thank you

Corn Pies and Ham & Cheese Sandwiches pick-up will be Thursday, March 19, between 3-5pm, in our downstairs Social Hall.

2026 Easter Flower Orders are due Today - To place your order for Lilies or Tulips please find the order forms in the Narthex. **Drop the order form in the offering plate today.** Orders with payment must be received today, **Sunday March 15, 2026.** Cost per 6" pot of Tulips or Lily is \$11.50. Please make any checks payable to "Old Zionsville UCC". Thank you!

The next **All Things Free Sort & Store** will be held on Monday, March 16 at 10am. Stop by to check it out. We can always use extra hands! Thanks in advance for serving the Lord. For further information, please contact Pastor Lori Esslinger at 610-393-3522.

Lunch Bunch – RSVP by Sunday 3/22/2026

When: Friday March 27, 2026, 12 Noon

Where: Trivet Restaurant
4102 Chestnut St, Emmaus

Supper Club – RSVP by Sunday 3/29/2026

When: Wednesday April 1, 2026, 6:00 PM

Where: Main Street Pub (Seafood Night)
505 Main St., Bally

Sunday Brunchers – RSVP by Wednesday 4/15/2026

Sunday April 19, 2026, ~ 12 Noon

Mercantile Club
427 Railroad St., Emmaus
CASH ONLY

Lunch Bunch – RSVP by Sunday 4/19/2026

Friday April 24, 2026, 12 Noon

Bally Family Diner
1605 PA-100, Barto (Main St., Bally)

Our annual **OZUCC Night at the Iron Pigs** will be on Saturday May 23, 2026, with first pitch at 6:35PM.

- We will again be seated in the Picnic Pavillion and have the buffet dinner (included in price). This is also a Fireworks show after the game.
- Tickets are still the same price at \$28.00 per person
- The signup is by Sunday March 29, and we will need your payment at time of signup.

The next round of **GriefCare** is scheduled to start on Wednesday, June 3 and run until July 29. There are nine sessions and will be held on Wednesday evenings from 6-8 pm. Please speak to Pastor Lori with any questions. This group is open to all and is Free.

New Member Classes will be happening soon. Want to learn more about our Church? Just join in the discussions on two Sunday mornings on either of two sets of dates: April 12 and 19 or May 17 and 24 at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday in the lower social hall. You are under no obligation to join, but if you wish to join the church, we will receive new members on the Second Sunday of each month (April and May) during our 10:15 a.m. Worship. Please register in advance with Pastor Lori by calling, emailing or texting her at least a week before the first session. Topics for discussion include: What IS the United Church of Christ? What IS Old Zionsville UCC? And How do we work together as a congregation? A tour of the Church building happens on the second Sunday of each month.

Jewelry Fundraiser (3/15/26-4/12/26) - Beginning March 15 there will be a designated locked container in the Narthex to collect any old, unwanted jewelry you may have. Our proceeds will be determined by the fair market value of the items collected less 15%. Some items may ultimately be donated to organizations such as The YMCA Perfect Fit Professional Clothing Boutique, YMCA Bethlehem Pop Up Prom Shop, and more. The proceeds from this fundraiser will be included as part of our end of year distribution. Flyer posted on bulletin boards for more information.

Sticky Bun Fundraiser - Our Outlook Committee is selling Sticky Buns as a fundraiser for Church repairs. The Sticky Buns are made by Shady Mountain Market and are approximately 8" round yielding 7 individual pieces. The Sticky Buns are \$8.00 each. Order forms may be found in the bulletins or on the table in the Narthex. Orders are due by Sunday, May 10 and Pick-up date is Thursday, May 21 from 3pm to 5pm in the lower Social Hall of the Church. Orders may be placed in the collection plate on Sunday mornings or by calling the church office at 610-966-3601 or by emailing the church at ozuccoffice@ptd.net.

Week of March 16 through March 22:

Pastor Lori will have office hours on Wednesday, 10am-3pm.
(other times by appointment)

Church Hours: Tues. 11:30am-1:30pm, Wed & Thurs 10am-2pm
(please call before coming to make sure secretary is in the office)

Monday: 10am ATF Sort & Store

6pm Scouts

7pm Music & Worship/Christian Education

Tuesday: 7pm Cubs

Thursday: 3-5pm Soup & Sandwich Pickup

7:30pm Choir

Friday: 6-8pm Pinewood Derby Setup-Cub Scouts (lower social hall)

Saturday: 9am-2pm Pinewood Derby Cub Scouts (lower social hall)

Sexton: Richard Shoemaker (with Thanks to his wife, Brenda)

Next Sunday, March 22 9:00 am Sunday School
10:15 am Worship

Total Offerings from March 8, 2026:

General Offerings: \$2843.00

Missions: \$65.00

Pastor's Discretionary: \$20.00

Comm: \$10.00

Bldg. Repair: \$110.00

Food Pantry: \$20.00

Easter Flowers: \$11.50

Cemetery: \$60.00

Attendance: 48