



November 13, 2027

Dear Zion Church,

The beloved **Zion Reformed United Church of Christ** has proven its roots deep and wide surviving even thriving amidst the travails of the disrupting pandemic. You made it through. You have made it through the odd fluctuations of pastoral transitions. Because of you Zion changes lives.

None of our successes would be possible without your gifts of time, leadership, faithfulness and, yes, money. Regardless of the ways in which you engage the life of this faith community, we hope you can sense the movement of the Holy Spirit here. It's from this place of gratitude, this place of refreshing abundance that I come to you about our stewardship campaign for the coming year and ask you to join us.

Every one of you is important for Zion to thrive and grow as a Beloved Community. I have been told that over many, many years you have been dependent on endowed gifts. Beautiful large, urban churches with large endowments too often shrink to a small number of parishioners. There are multiple factors yet one significant issue is that the membership doesn't feel responsible for the church for it has funds to pay the bills; the membership thus does not have a deep sense of ownership. These types of church are often called Zombie Churches for there is little vibrant life, yet they don't expire because the endowments keep resuscitating them.

BECAUSE OF YOU OUR CHURCH CHANGES LIVES.

You are not a Zombie Church. Your corporate life is deeply engaged with each other and in the community. You have a great life in you, beautiful bones, healthy muscles, yet not enough helping bodies. Many of you have shared that you wish the church to grow. One primary way is to share belonging and ownership.

BECAUSE OF EACH OF US THE CHURCH CHANGES LIVES.

Consider your contributions of talent, time and treasure. Many have overextended the time they can give during this time in their lives; let's welcome them with open arms as a restful place. Many others have more time to give, call me and I will help you find a place to be a significant partner in our ministries. Many of you live penny to penny or by the love of others and you have no coins to spare. No worries, you are deeply important in the life of the congregation. Give us your talents. Give us your time. Some have treasure but no time. And then praise God, some of you have time, talent and treasure to share.

Please commit this year to a pledge to our General Fund of whatever you can give. Ponder with me a dynamic transformation from our culture's marketing of a scarcity mindset, towards a Holy mindset of abundance. A scarcity mindset worries us to believe there will never be enough. Scarcity thinking identifies all the things we don't think we can do, all the things we shouldn't share. An abundance mindset sees the fullness of God's Love, the fullness of Life's Fruitfulness.

Stewardship is an invitation to participate in the work of the Spirit at Zion. Pledges help us build and plan as we move forward into God's future together. We need everyone to make a commitment. Why? Because God is, in God's own heart, One who gives. We are called, as followers of this same God, to be generous.

Thank you for making Zion your place for worship and ministry. I am glad to share the path of discipleship with you as together we seek to be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. Join us in renewing your commitment to Zion Church, and pledging time, talents, and treasures for the upcoming year.

In Christ,



Pastor Scott Winnette

PS: Let's jump the commitment. *In 2023 eleven people of about ninety households pledged a total of \$25,498. Marvelously, \$37,901.89 has been received. Put this in perspective. Zion's total budget for 2023 is \$434,000. More time and talent saves money. More treasure creates belonging.*



It is a statement that is both bold and simple. With the denomination (UCC) we join boldly expressing the truth about the ultimate nature and the purpose of the church: to engage in acts of transformation. It boldly asserts that we see our mission as one that gives assurance to every individual that their life matters, not because we say so, but because the gospel says so.

It boldly challenges us to engage in the work of breaking down barriers and dismantling systems which deny the fundamental truth that God loves the world. This radically inclusive belief leaves no living thing out of the Divine embrace or allows anyone to be separated from the hope of that promise.

We can be bold because we know it is true. Our own life stories bear witness that being a part of the beloved community in some way has either made us different; or causes us to fervently believe that it will. It gives us hope, reminds us of our value, calls us to discover and claim our purpose, clarifies the moral Right and Wrong, motivates us to be a part of something larger than ourselves all for the sake of change! Change that can more closely align us and our world with the values of the Realm of God. Our church matters because of **you**.

Our theme **Because of You, Our Church Changes Lives** is also simple. It recognizes that each of us, by our gifts and the decisions we make to employ them, power this sacred work. Our resources make ministry happen. The arithmetic is not complex. Our choice to grow in our generosity enables the church to increase the impact of the difference it makes.

By choosing to give, even a little bit more, we will expand our shared quest to change lives – even our own. Be bold! Take a step forward in your generosity. It's simple! The choice is **yours**.

THANKS SO MUCH TO ALL WHO HAVE PLEDGED!
IF YOU HAVEN'T PLEDGED YET, YOU CAN CHOOSE ONE OF THREE OPTIONS:

- 1. Fill out the pledge card and mail it to the church.**
- 2. Fill out the electronic pledge card in the What's Happening Email.**
- 3. Email Administrator Rae Smith (zionrucc@myactv.net) with your pledge information.**