



*Zion Reformed Church
United Church of Christ*

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May 5, 2021

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**A letter to our Zion Congregation from your Search Committee,
announcing our Settled Pastor Candidate:**

Rev. Thomas and Patricia Dunkle

In mid-October, your Pastoral Search Committee was formed to undertake the new search for a full-time settled pastor here at Zion Reformed UCC. Over the nearly eight months since, your Committee spent many hours in discussion, in thoughtful prayer, in phone conversations and in Zoom online meetings – reviewing pastoral profiles and speaking with several well-qualified individuals. Our primary mission was always to interview candidates and match their personal backgrounds to what we believe are the best interests of our Church as it moves forward into the future.

We have not taken lightly our task of determining the best candidate whose professional qualifications and background aligns with enhancing growth in our congregation, attracting more families and youth, and ‘taking the story’ of who we are at Zion UCC, out into our local communities. Recently, we met both on Zoom, and then for two days of in-person conversations, with Rev. Tom Dunkle. We each believe he is well-qualified to be Zion’s next pastoral leader. Your committee’s vote in moving forward with this candidate was a unanimous 9-0.

Now, your search committee is inviting you to meet both Tom and Patty, the weekend of May 22-23, for a get-acquainted social”meet and greet” reception Saturday evening between 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm, and a church service and sermon Sunday, May 23 (Pentecost Sunday). Following this service, a majority vote of those in attendance will be taken, to confirm Rev. Dunkle as Zion’s new pastor.

As a voting congregational member, your involvement in meeting our pastoral candidate and his wife is of utmost importance! Based on your vote Sunday May 23, this may be the individual who will lead our church and congregation during the years ahead – years which will be critically important to the continued growth of Zion Reformed Church! *Please save these dates and do not pass by this opportunity to meet your candidate.*

Faithfully, Your Search Committee

Todd Willman, Chairman

Joan Thomas

Diana Johnson

Laura Frey

Mara Smith

James English

Barb Metcalfe

Joan Pogue

Craig Wagner



Presenting Pastoral Candidate
Rev. Tom & Patty Dunkle

Reverend Thomas J. Dunkle (and wife Patricia) of Dover, OH

Children: Thomas J. Dunkle Jr., Heather Dunkle Ulsh, Meagan Dunkle Lawson

Interests: Kayaking, Woodworking and Weightlifting.

Pastor Dunkle is a graduate of Susquehanna Township in Harrisburg, PA. He attained his Masters of Divinity degree in 2005 at Lutheran Seminary Gettysburg PA, and also holds a Masters of Human Services degree. From 2013 to Present, he has been serving as Sr. Pastor of St. Johns UCC in Dover, OH.

Between 2007 and 2013, he served as Sr. Pastor of First Sunbury UCC in Sunbury, PA and prior to that, as Senior Pastor of Trinity UCC in Lewistown, PA from 2004 to 2007. Before entering the ministry, he served in the USAF security police for four years, and for the same length of time as a Pennsylvania state corrections officer. His previous background includes managing a homeless shelter and serving as a coordinator as a nursing home volunteer. He started and ran a food pantry, sponsored exchange students, ran multiple veterans events, and enjoys doing kayak summer devotions.

PERSONAL MINISTRY

Begging Bowl Ministries (in August of 2017)

“I bought a wood lathe in order to learn how to make wooden communion cups. A member of St. John’s had made them for many years and I wondered if I could make one. One night I went to sleep and awoke at 5 a.m. from a dream. The dream directed me to make Begging Bowls and laid out how to do it and how I must run the ministry. I truly believe this was given to me by God. I had never turned bowls before and now started on

this ministry. Hindu and Buddhist Monks used them to collect alms. They were made with clay and Iron. Franciscan and Dominican Monks also used them to collect alms. The theory was that God provided what they needed daily in what was collected in the Begging bowl. My Begging Bowls are made of wood to remind you of the wood of the cross and the sacrifice Christ made for you. Each bowl has a cross somewhere on it and was prayed on during it's making to bless the recipient and their family. Like life, there are imperfections in the wood. This bowl has various cuts that are not perfect. None of the bowls are perfectly finished. We as humans are not perfect and struggle with many trials of the world both physical and spiritual. Unlike the bowl or us as human beings, Christ is always perfect. They are meant to be set somewhere in your home or office so that when you have little or much it will remind you of Jesus sacrifice and you will remember that you are truly blessed. If you have been given a Begging Bowl and are able I ask you to prayerfully consider donating to a ministry of your choice to help someone in need. To date I have made 175 bowls, many donations to so many worthy causes, and have seen more blessings than I can list.”

Holy Kayak

“Peter stepped out of the boat in faith to walk on the water to Jesus. I’m asking you to take a leap of faith and step into a kayak and explore your faith. During the month of July and beyond, I lead small groups of kayakers on a devotional adventure. Each trip includes 4 mini devotions on the water. There is no cost for the adventure and all ages are welcomed. (18 years and under must be accompanied by a parent) This is meant to be a beginner kayak adventure and a way to connect with God’s wonderful creation. You will not be asked to join any church or make any profession of faith. All I ask is you be open to the still small voice of the spirit within. “

Closing Thoughts

“I love being a Pastor in the purest sense. I love to preach, visit the sick, and be involved with the community I'm serving. I also believe in being a Pastor/Servant. I would not ask anyone to do something I would not do. Clean the bathrooms, shovel snow, set up chairs, or whatever is needed to keep the church running is indeed my call along with all its members. As a Pastor I'm called as a servant first with a priority in Pastoral duties.”

Meet Patty Dunkle

Patty graduated from Cedar Cliff High School in New Cumberland, PA.
She holds a Commercial Art Degree.

“Patty loves anything art and anything crafty. She has been known to paint in the morning, quilt in the afternoon, and craft in the evening. Patty loves to laugh and her laugh is infectious. Patty has always been my art department at the church and is much loved by everyone that gets to know her. I have been blessed to have her by my side for thirty three years.”

