

Update from Buffalo, NY

Just over one week ago our city was devastated by a mass shooting by a white supremacist. The grocery store in which the shooting occurred remains closed, creating a “food desert” in the community. TOPs grocery store has set up a mobile food bank and the Buffalo Community Fridge continuously accepts donations that go out to residents as quickly as they come in.

The community has rallied together in support and prayer, but there is still more work to do, even after the grocery store re-opens. One way that we have been supporting the community is through regular donations to the Buffalo Community Fridge. We donate grocery items such as milk, eggs, baby formula, diapers, toilet paper, produce, and more, depending on the daily need. If you are able to make a monetary donation to help, please do. Every cent will be used to provide food and supplies for the community. The link to donate is below.

Zion UCC's original location was in the “Fruit Belt” of Buffalo, only a few blocks from the shooting. Our older members grew up in that neighborhood. So supporting the community, even with our church now a few miles out of the city, is at the heart of our ministry right now. Many of our members also grew up at Grace UCC in the city of Buffalo, one of the few UCC churches remaining in the city, so we have partnered together with them and Pilgrim St. Luke's UCC (also in the city) to do greater ministry together. As Pastor Larry Jackson from Grace UCC said to me, “Pastor, the people in this community are HUNGRY.” And they are. So we held our first of hopefully many free BBQs at Grace UCC in Buffalo the other day, with members from at least 4 UCC churches participating to feed over 300 people; and we plan to do a food giveaway next week (which also might become a regular event).

The community is hurting, but we are joining together, praying together, creating new ministries and partnerships together, and feeding people. This shooting was a wake up call for us, that our city needs our continuous support, and our sister churches need our fellowship and assistance.

If you're reading this from far away, consider making a donation, large or small, to help us feed the city of Buffalo by clicking this link: <https://zionucc.breezechms.com/give/online> and choose “Give to Buffalo”. (The community fridge is no longer accepting donations since they need deliveries, not money.) You may also follow and contribute to the local organization **Voice Buffalo** here: www.voicebuffalo.org

As Rev. Traci Blackmon said when she spoke at one of our vigils on Sunday evening, “The world is suffering from a lack of love.” And she gave us the charge: “We must love the hell out of this place!” And that's what we plan to do here in the City of Good Neighbors. Even after the cameras turn off, and the news moves on to other tragedies, we need to “love the hell out of this place” and we will do so, hand in hand, with our sister churches.

In Christ's love and mercy,
Rev. Elizabeth Duffy, Zion UCC Tonawanda

