



# GRAPEVINE

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH IS A MOSAIC COMMUNITY SHARING THE GRACE OF CHRIST WITH ALL...

## MAY 2025 Sunday Worship at 9:15am

In Person & Facebook live

Burmese Worship at 10:30am

Zion Lutheran Church  
925 5th Avenue  
Rockford, Illinois 61104



Phone: 815-964-4609  
www.zionrockford.com  
zionrockford@gmail.com

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## Alzheimer's of Northern Illinois

Presented by Aileen Zei

Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body

May 18, 2025 at 10:30am

**KATIE'S CUP CONVERSATIONS**  
Tuesday at Noon - May 20, 2025  
*"Christian Nationalism"*  
Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Thomas  
Pastor at Zion Lutheran Church

### Katie's CUP

## GOLF OUTING

Wednesday, May 21

7:30 am Registration

8:00am am Shotgun Start



Timber Pointe Golf Club  
5750 Woodstock Road, Poplar Grove,  
20 minutes east of Rockford

**\$125 per golfer**

**\$500/foursom**

Includes cart, fees, golf balls, tees, lunch,  
prizes & gift bag  
Performance prizes awarded  
Funds Benefit Katie's Cup



Patriots Gateway Center presents

## Ruthie's Garden Party

Dedication and Fundraiser

MAY 29, 2025 5 - 8 PM

**TICKETS: \$50**

Food Silent Auction  
Art Auction 50/50 Raffle

Music by  
Harlan Jefferson



# BAHAI TEMPLE TRIP

INTERFAITH EXPERIENCE TO WILMETTE, IL



MAY 31, 2025

8:00AM-5:00PM

TICKETS: \$50

(PAYS FOR BUS & LUNCH)

SPONSORED BY ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH MULTICULTURAL COMMITTEE  
925 FIFTH AVENUE - ROCKFORD, IL 61104 - WWW.ZIONROCKFORD.COM

# PASTOR THOMAS THOUGHTS

## THE REPAIRS ARE ALMOST COMPLETE!

I want to thank the Buildings & Grounds Committee for their work in getting the church building back together. Since the August of 2024 flood, the buildings and grounds committee has helped coordinate the plastering company, the flooring company and managing other projects. The carpet and flooring has been installed. Most of the floorboards have been added. We have created another office in the Youth Center in the space across from the old Youth Director office. Jolyn has ordered new office furniture, which arrives soon and will be put together. New staff and leaders mailboxes have been ordered. The Office storage area is getting filled up. The fellowship hall is looking great. We have new flooring going into the Marander room soon, matching the fellowship hall. I processed Martin and Katie Luther back to my office (see below). We are coordinating a time to have a moving back into the offices party where you are welcome to help us move boxes and unpack.

## SUNDAY MORNING FORUMS

In the month of May and June, we will have the chance to gather during the 10:30am hour for fellowship and conversation. A few of these were set up with Nurse Jori so thank you! There will be different speakers each week.

- ⇒ May 4 - "Good Shepherd Sunday" as we support Lutheran Social Services
- ⇒ May 18 - "Alzheimer's" Speaker to talk about Nutrition and Healthy Living.
- ⇒ June 1 - "Christian Nationalism—part 2"
- ⇒ June 8 - "Reconciled in Christ" Synod Resolution

## MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

I want to thank our Student Pastor, Rachel Perkins-Gama for her leadership at Zion. Since last September, Rachel has served as a Student Pastor. She's been active in the life of the parish, serving as preaching, Songshow Media coordinator, worship leader, WOW program leader and pastoral care minister. I am very grateful for her service. Rachel recently met with her Bishop from WI and was told she will be assigned a synod for call on May 19th. The normal call process and interviewing usually takes 2-3 months so she is hopeful for a call something this summer. For the 2025-2026 school year, we have not been assigned an intern due to the fact that there are fewer students.

With Rachel's transition to her first call, Zion will move toward having Janice Forrest, our Deaconess Student, taking on more responsibilities in the parish. Janice will be preaching on June 15th for Juneteenth. She is learning more about the Sunday worship duties and the pastoral care concerns of parish life. As she takes two classes in the next few months, she will be learning more about scriptures and church history. She will be attending her second summer of training at the Lutheran Diaconal Association center at Valparaiso, Indiana in August, she is being prepared to serve in a new calling at Zion. God continues to raise up leaders for the sake of the Gospel.

*Peace, Pastor Thomas*

# M&K NEWS!



# DEACONESS UPDATE

To the congregation family's and friends!

I want to thank you for your support this first year of being a Deaconess Student of the Lutheran Deaconess Association program. I was accepted into this ELCA program in the summer of 2024 and attended the first year program for education and formation last August in Valparaiso, Indiana. We reviewed the LDA handbook and began to use the LDA online learning platform for training.

In the fall, I took a World Religion class at Rock Valley College. In January, I participated in an online preaching class called "Backstory Preaching Among Friends" with the ELCA ministry called Backstory Preaching. In June, I'm taking a class called "New Testament" through Concordia University in Irvine, California. I'll be reading the book, "Together By Grace" and reviewing it with my mentor in April and May. In August, I'll be attending the second year of the Lutheran Deaconess Association program at Valparaiso, Indiana in person for several days. I've also been invited to the "Reclaim" events from September 4-7, 2025 at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside. This is put on by the ELCA African Descent Ministries. **Reclaim** is a carefully curated gathering for the African Descent community of all ages and gender identities.

In the fall of 2025, the Deaconess training will include an Old Testament class at Wartburg Seminary, then a class on Church History, and then Lutheran Theology and Doctrine. After those courses, I'll be serving more on hands to learn about spirituality, ministry leadership, pastoral care education, church polity, ecumenical awareness, worship leadership and spiritual direction.

I've been blessed to have the support of Zion and the LDA. My student fees, books, travel and other expenses have all been paid for in this training program. I want you all to know what a wonderful blessing it is to have your love and support of my call. I have been trying to run away from the one what has called me into ministry. I had different ideas and a plan for my retirement season but we have a God that continues to call us in all the seasons of our lives. For me, I believe that God has called me to serve the Lord our God and the many different children in our community. I am called to help us create a place where we all belong.

This new journey in my life will be amazing. I want to thank the Zion Lutheran Church congregation for the support, believing in me and all the prayers for me going forward in my new journey of life. Zion Lutheran Church is a church where God's people help others in need of food, even a place to sit down and rest your feet, fellowship and willingness to eat with people who are not as fortunate as you. The list can go on and on about Zion Lutheran Church and the people in the church, that is a ministry. That is what God wants us to do for his children. We are all children of God! God has opened this door for me, and I will by the grace of God, walk through that door he has open for me. Praise be to God!!!!



Gracefully Yours,  
Janice Forrest,  
Deaconess Student  
WOW Coordinator  
Zion Outreach Director



**LDA**  
Lutheran Diaconal Association

## NURSE JORI'S PAGE

Hello everyone! I hope everyone had a blessed Easter! May is mental health awareness month. I had NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) come talk about mental health and their experiences during fellowship on Sunday April 6th, which many of you enjoyed. I wanted to share some of those resources here for those that were unable to attend.

NAMI 24/7 Crisis line: Dial 988

NAMI Help Line (for those not in crisis and seeking information) is available Monday through Friday 10am to 10pm. Call 800-950-6264. You can text NAMI to 6264 if you prefer. Jeanette Towns was one of the speakers that shared some of her story with us. If you have any questions for her, please email her at

[jeanette@naminorthernillinois.org](mailto:jeanette@naminorthernillinois.org)

One of the ways to improve mental well-being is to move your body! Exercise is excellent for improving blood flow to the brain, joints, and muscles. When you exercise, endorphins (natural chemicals in your brain) are released in the body to make you feel better. Exercise helps ease depression, anxiety, builds confidence, and is a great way to keep your mind from focusing on negative thoughts or emotions.

As many of you know by now, I teach an exercise class twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am-945am at St. Bridget's Catholic Church Parish Hall in classroom A. If you are interested in attending, please connect with me. Those who have come from Zion are enjoying it! If you are unable to attend this session of classes, I will have classes in the summer. Time and days TBD.

During Lent, I also assisted with Lenten exercise classes at several churches in midtown. Those are typically 30-45 minutes long and consist of stretches, balance and coordination exercises. I am wanting to start these classes at Zion. If anyone has any interest in attending, please let me or call the church so staff can notify me. I'd like to gauge interest before deciding on days/times to hold classes.

May 18th after service in the fellowship hall I arranged for the Alzheimer's Association to come back to discuss how nutrition impacts the brain and body. Come and invite your family and friends!

As always, contact me if there are any questions, or health concerns at [Jori.L.Roysdon@osfhealthcare.org](mailto:Jori.L.Roysdon@osfhealthcare.org) or 630-465-2135. I would love to work with you!

Blessings to you all,

Jori Roysdon, Faith Community Nurse

## WOMEN OF ZION

**WOZ Events:** May 15th will be our annual salad luncheon. Bring whatever you enjoy whipping up. We always have a wonderful variety of delectable, delightful food! We'll change the time to 12:00 for this. On June 19th 1:00 in the Fellowship Hall Jeff Dahlberg will present a program about local dairies. Men are invited to join us for this program. If anyone has an idea for a program, please let any board member know. Lastly, we are asking you to bring a donation of nonperishable food items for Cornucopia Food Pantry to each meeting. The grocery cart in the Narthex has been looking really empty. Thanks, WOZ Board-Sue Drilling, Maggi Hallin, Karen Kermgard, Kathy Rasch and Linda Reinhardt.

# COUNCIL MEETING UPDATES

A motion was made and seconded to affirm the rental agreement with New Life Church and Zion Lutheran Church - passed.

The Building and Ground Committee gave an update on the HVAC system, Rockford Heating and Air Conditioning will be replacing three rooftop air conditioners.

Thank you to all the Building and Grounds Committee for all their hard work on the flood mitigation and hard work.

Finance & Stewardship Report – the finances were reviewed by Council.

The Northern Illinois Synod Assembly Delegates so far are Kris Sommer and Karen Kermgard. We are looking for two males to attend. Registration deadline is May 12<sup>th</sup>.

Pastor Thomas shared that Zion is a sponsor for the May 8th “Summit on Racism” and we get 15 registrations. Let Pastor know if you wish to attend and get the code. There are 5 registrations available.

There are still spots open for the May 31st Baha'i Temple Trip Interfaith Experience to Wilmette, IL .

A brochure will be completed and available in a few weeks for the Ron Simmons Scholarship Fund. The Endowment Fund donated \$1,500 to this fund.

We briefly discussed the Marsha Wurtlin Bequest, any ideas for additional uses of the funds are still possible. We will discuss again at the next Church Council Meeting.

The Council Retreat date is Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> from 8:30-11:30am, at Zion.

Next meeting for Council is May 27, 2025

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES!!

June 1	Forum: Christian Nationalism—Part 2
June 7	Ruthie’s Kitchen
June 8	Forum: Reconciled in Christ—Synod Resolution
June 10	Open Mic Night—Katie’s Cup
June 11	Missions and Evangelism Team—Multipurpose Room
June 13-14	Synod Assembly—Augustana College
June 14	Cars and Coffee—RPS Parking Lot across from Katie’s Cup
June 17	Building and Grounds
June 18	Finance Committee
June 19	WOZ Presentation by Jeff Dahlberg
June 23	Bag Fluffing—Fellowship Hall
June 24	Human Resource Committee followed by Church Council
June 28	Ruthie’s Kitchen



# MAY 2025 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>27</b> 9:15am Worship	<b>28</b> 9:30am Book Study - Multipurpose Room 1:00pm Bag Fluffing - Fellowship Hall	<b>29</b> 8:30am RVC ESL Class	<b>30</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 8:30am RVC ESL Class 4:00pm WOW	<b>1</b> <b>National Day of Prayer</b> 8:30am RVC ESL Class	<b>2</b> Office Closed	<b>3</b> 9:00am Cars and Coffee 1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen
<b>4</b> 9:15am Worship – Good Shepherd Sunday	<b>5</b> 9:30am Book Study - Multipurpose Room	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 4:00pm WOW	<b>8</b> 9:00am Rachel's Circle - Fellowship Hall 4:00pm Katie's Cup Board 5:30pm Zion Development Board	<b>9</b> Office Closed	<b>10</b> 1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen
<b>11</b> <b>Mother's Day</b> 9:15am Worship	<b>12</b> 9:30am Book Study - Multipurpose Room	<b>13</b> 9:00am Worship Team 11:00am Memorial Committee 5:00pm Open Mic Night – Katie's Cup	<b>14</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn <b>9:00am Grapevine Articles Due</b> 11:00am Missions Team – Multipurpose Room 4:00pm WOW	<b>15</b> <b>Grapevine Mailing</b> 11:30am WOZ Salad Luncheon - Fellowship Hall	<b>16</b> Office Closed	<b>17</b> 8:30am Council Retreat – Multipurpose Room 1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen
<b>18</b> 9:15am Worship 10:15am Forum: Alzheimer's, Nutrition and Healthy Living	<b>19</b> 9:30am Book Study - Multipurpose Room 1:00pm Bag Fluffing – Fellowship Hall	<b>20</b> 12:00pm Katie's Cup Conversation – Christian Nationalism 3:00pm Zion Outreach Board 3:30pm Building and Grounds	<b>21</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 4:00pm WOW	<b>22</b> 4:30pm Patriots Board	<b>23</b> Office Closed	<b>24</b> 1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen
<b>25</b> 9:15am Worship	<b>26</b> MEMORIAL DAY	<b>27</b> 5:00pm HR Committee 6:00pm Church Council	<b>28</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 4:00pm WOW	<b>29</b> 5:00pm Ruthie's Garden Party – Patriots Gateway	<b>30</b> Office Closed	<b>31</b> 8:00am Baha'i Temple Trip, Wilmette, IL

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

### Our Ministers - All the People of Zion

Senior Pastor Michael Thomas

Student Pastor Rachel Perkins-Gama

Pastor Emeritus Denver Bitner

Office Manager & Finance Secretary: Jolyn Hess

Outreach Coordinator & Deaconess Student:

Janice Forrest

Faith Community Nurse: Jori Roysdon

Music Ministry Coordinator: Jodi Beach

Custodians: Shanita Baker and

Denzel Banks

Worship Media: Kurt Brown

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

Michael Beert, Pam Bitner, Bonnie Dahlberg,  
Gary Fulkerson, Debbie Gortowski, Thomas Habing,

Karen Kermgard, Angeles Polcher,

Ron Simmons, Kris Sommer,

Pastor Michael Thomas, and Neal Tolodxi

## Church Council Officers

President: Kris Sommer

Vice-President: Thomas Habing

Treasurer: Michael Beert

Secretary: Bonnie Dahlberg

Pastor: Michael E. Thomas

[www.zionrockford.com](http://www.zionrockford.com)

[www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford](https://www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford)

[www.youtube.com/zionrockford](https://www.youtube.com/zionrockford)

GRAPEVINE DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE 2025 GRAPEVINE, EMAIL BY MAY 14, 2025 to submit an article: [zionrockford@gmail.com](mailto:zionrockford@gmail.com), or please send a hardcopy to the church office.

## OFFERINGS & DONATIONS WELCOMED!

Mailed...In-Person...Online

We are grateful for your generosity in supporting our ministries at and beyond Zion. There are envelopes in the place you are sitting at in worship and in the lobby of the church. Donations can be mailed to the church office or placed in the Offering Box in the back at the pole on the pulpit side before, during and after worship. You can also donate through the mobile app called, **Vanco Mobile**. You can download the Vanco Mobile app for free from the App Store or Google Play. From there, you can make a one-time donation or set up recurring giving right through the app to our various ministries. If you have questions with online or the mobile app, please email [zionrockfordfinances@gmail.com](mailto:zionrockfordfinances@gmail.com) for more information.

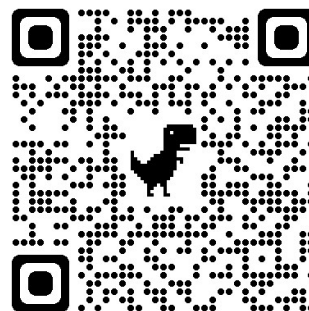
## PRAYER CORNER

### WE ASK YOU TO PRAY FOR:

- ◇ The ELCA, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Bishop Stacie Fidler, Pastor Michael Thomas, Student Pastor Rachel Perkins-Gama, Pastor Emeritus Denver Bitner, the Zion Church Council, Pastor Caleb Uk of the Burmese congregation; the Zion Staff, Zion Outreach Board, Staff and Programs of Patriots' Gateway Center, Katie's Cup and Zion Development Corporation.
- ◇ Pastor Cosmas Mujungu of Sepuka/Msisi Church in Tanzania.
- ◇ Pastor Selvakumar and Arcot Lutheran Church in India.
- ◇ Mission Partner in Senegal with Pastor Mytch Dorvilier
- ◇ For the Northern Illinois Synod; North Conference churches; Midtown Lutheran Parish, faculty and students of Rockford Lutheran Schools, Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries.
- ◇ For those who grieve loss of loved ones.
- ◇ For healing: Eloise Anderson, Phyllis Brynteson, Colette Buchert, Linda Callahan, Yolanda Churchill, Charlie Dahlberg, Norma Daugherty, Jim Duhigg, Deanna Hartenberg, Jolyn Hess, Linda Reinhardt, Betty Jo Rodey, Wayne Spitzer, Carrie Steder, Jeanne Thomas, Neal Tolodxi, Brian Veitch, and Megan Zaphel.

If you have a prayer request or a prayer of gratitude to share, please notify Pastor Mike or Student Pastor Rachel. The prayer room is upstairs to the left of the sanctuary and is available during office hours and on Sunday before and after worship services.

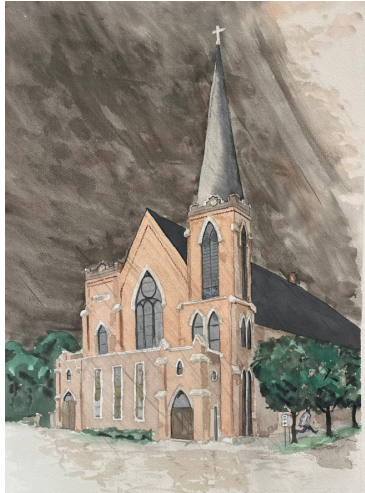
**VANCO**  
FAITH



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# GRAPEVINE

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH IS A MOSAIC COMMUNITY SHARING THE GRACE OF CHRIST WITH ALL...

*Zion is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

### PARTNERSHIPS



## Sunday Worship at 9:15am In the Worship Space

Also Facebook Live/Online Worship

(Also posted at [www.youtube.com/zionrockford](http://www.youtube.com/zionrockford) afterwards)

## Burmese Worship at 10:30am In the Chapel