

one hundred plus ten years

Caring & Sharing



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH



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Credits

This book is the result of hard work and dedication from a large number of people. This work was prepared in the spirit of love and gratitude in celebration of the 110th Anniversary of Zion Lutheran Church. While impossible to list every contributor, special thanks go out to the following people:

- Jerry Gustafson Designer
 Bob Thomas Photography
 Tom Kerngard Editor
 Judy Lindstrom Typesetting
 110th Anniversary Committee
 Darrell Lindstrom Chairman



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Foreword

Dear Friends,

The first decade of the second century of Zion Church has been one of the most exciting periods of our history. With a renewed sense of call, the congregation has risen to tackle the challenges of being an urban congregation in a metropolitan community. Serving as pastor during this period has been one of the most rewarding and uplifting experiences one could hope for in ministry. The kinds of ministry that have been carried out in the name of Christ are nothing short of miraculous.

It was ten years ago that Rockford was in the midst of an economic crisis. Twenty-six percent of our community was unemployed. Many people came to our church's door for food and assistance and the demands on our church were multiplying daily. Our neighborhood was in transition as new ethnic groups were making their homes all around us. These factors of neighborhood change and economic crises have often spelled doom for many churches, but that has not been the case at Zion. A group of Zion members began a ministry to the unemployed by forming Zion Development Corporation. Through this ministry we were able to provide jobs and economic development while tackling the problem of deteriorating housing in the area.

The church's social ministry outreach, under the leadership of Helen Marander, rallied the resources in order that no one who came to the church for food was ever sent away hungry. The pantry has provided food for over 800 families each month for almost each of the last ten years. The commodities distribution and the SHARE program of cooperative buying have supplemented and stretched the purchasing power of many of Zion's constituents. The tremendous number of volunteers in these programs has been a testimony to God's love in action. Zion has become a church well known throughout the city and the synod as a church that puts its caring into action by sharing the Good News both in word and deed.

A great irony of the past decade is that this congregation, which was built by the toil of immigrant labor, should find itself beginning a new century welcoming new strangers in our land. I was overwhelmed with emotion on the day we called the first Laotian pastor in the world to the staff of the church. It was all the more significant that Pastor Khamphou Sisouphanthong became a Christian through Zion's ministry and was nurtured and reached maturity in his walk with Christ in our church.

These past ten years have been filled with one miracle story after another. We rejoiced in the wonderful legacy of two beautiful church women, Elsie Anderson and Ruth Anderson, who quietly left funds to the church which enabled us to begin an endowment to build for Zion's future needs. Where are we going in the years ahead? I believe Zion has a bright and hopeful vision for its future. We are becoming a teaching congregation which shares the Good News with those both near and far. It has been a privilege to participate in the preparation of four men and women for the ordained ministry. Kendall, Dawn, Khamphou and Thiem are wonderful gifts to the church and their ministry will extend God's kingdom far and wide.

More and more the church and community look to Zion for leadership in evangelism and outreach. The Christ who bids us to lose ourselves for the sake of the Gospel will also enable us to be renewed and empowered for the tremendous work of bearing the Good News of Jesus Christ to all the world.



Your Partner in the Gospel,
Pastor Denver W. Bitner



one hundred plus ten years

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the loving memories of Clarence Helsing and Helen Marander. Their spirit, kindness and wisdom served as an inspiring example to us all. We miss them both every day, but they are in our hearts always.



Clarence Helsing
1914-1992

Clarence came to Zion in 1953 to serve as Music Director. He received his Bachelor of Music degree with honors from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. He used his education and talent to brighten the worship services at Zion for over 31 years until he retired in 1984.



Helen Marander
1923-1992

Helen joined the staff of Zion in 1957 in the capacity of Education Director. Her considerable talents and enthusiasm in this field allowed her to expand her ministry into the areas of Outreach and Social Ministry. Helen touched the lives of so many in and around Zion and her legacy and good work lives on.

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History

The sharp click, click of leather-soled shoes echoed off the tile floor as the man headed for the door. As usual, he was the last to leave. However, as he reached for the familiar glass door, he stopped and took a final look back. The memories of a lifetime poured over him like a wave. Then with a sigh he turned back to the door and pushed his way outside. He looked up towards the steeple as he waited for the door to swing shut. The click of the latch falling into place startled him as he realized he had just locked the door to 100 years of history. After a moment, following his usual routine, he reached back and gave the door handle a tug to make sure it was secure and he headed off to his car. With a smile he wondered what the next century would hold for Zion...



Nineteen eighty-three marked the year the Friendship House and Larson House were sold to American Bank in order to make room for a parking lot for the newly constructed Amcore Financial Plaza. This lot would also serve as a parking facility for Zion church during the evenings and on Sunday mornings. As a result of this change the youth of Zion needed a new place to gather, so construction began on a new youth center which would be physically connected to the church. In the interim, youth activities were held in the M-West Center on the corner of 5th St. and 3rd Ave. The M-West Center also served as the headquarters for the Zion Development Corporation.

The church council approved the purchase of a computer system to help the staff in their day-to-day duties. The hardware and software for this system were given to the church by an anonymous donor.

On Sunday, June 12, 1983, a special congregational meeting was held in regards to hiring an Indo-Chinese community outreach staff person for a period of 18 months. The motion to hire was approved and Khamphou Sisouphanthong was added to the staff as Indo-Chinese Ministry Director.

Other additions to the staff in 1983 included the hiring of Bev Henry as Helen Marander's Assistant for Education and Social Ministry and Bill Pope as Custodian. In addition, Clarence Helsing celebrated his 30th year as Music Director.



The youth of Zion carried on a Zion tradition by making the annual pilgrimage to Bethphage Mission in Axtell, Nebraska to work with the developmentally disabled residents.

In the summer of 1983 the church was struck by lightning. Repairs were made to all the damaged areas including the chimney, elevator, organ and exterior flood light. The fellowship room also received a face-lift with new drapes and new carpeting.

In August, 1983, 60 members of the congregation attended the "Family Camp" retreat in Colorado.

Zion celebrated Martin Luther's 500th birthday with a party at the MetroCentre with 26 other area churches.

In 1984, Zion experienced some staff changes. Pastor Bitner was installed as Co-Pastor, sharing the title with Pastor Leonard. He had formerly been Associate Pastor.



In June of 1984, after 31 years of service, Clarence Helsing retired. Pastor Ed Corneilson was hired as the new Music Director. Bev Henry filled in during the interim.

Nineteen eighty-four saw the completion of the new youth center. As a result all activities and offices were moved out of the M-West Center and back to the church.



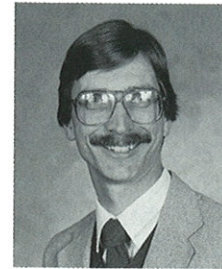
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The "Pony Express" and "Thy Will Be Done" Stewardship Programs got under way in 1984.

August 5, 1984, a special congregational meeting was held regarding the purchase of the land property south of the church from the Chicago Northwestern Railroad. This property was needed to make an estimated 55 parking spaces. The motion to purchase the property was approved and the 15,000 square feet area was purchased for a total of \$8,274.78.

Various renovations were made to the structure during 1984, including enlarging the nursery and the library, replacing tiles throughout the church, installing fire and alarm systems in the new youth center

Phil Peterson is hired as the new Youth Director. Phil and his family moved down from Mandan, North Dakota to become part of the Zion family.



The landscaping of the new parking lot south of the church was started and an air conditioning unit was installed in the nursery. New lights were also installed for the west entrance and a new church van was purchased.

Nineteen eighty-five was a pivotal year in determining the future of Zion. There had been much talk about moving Zion to property on Spring Creek Road which the church had owned for some time. After much debate and meditation, the church council recommended selling the Spring Creek property. This was a major step toward the commitment this congregation would demonstrate in revitalizing the neighborhood surrounding Zion.



addition and adding a handicap area for wheelchair members. The city also put in new curbs on the 6th Street side of the church with a handicap accessible loading zone.

March 3, 1985, a dedication service was held to celebrate the completion of the new youth center. However, amid the joy came a little sorrow as Steve Stark resigned his position as Youth Director. On June 16, 1985, a farewell party was held for the Starks as many people gathered to wish them well as Steve ventured off to start his own construction business.

May, 1985, the Confirmation Service brings 50 confirmands to the altar.



On January 5, 1986, a special congregational meeting was held regarding the sale of the Spring Creek property. The motion to sell the property was carried. The congregation backed the council's recommendation and by doing so showed its support for tending to the deteriorating neighborhood surrounding Zion.

The youth of Zion enjoyed an exciting year in 1986 as the mortgage was paid off on the new addition and a new Sunday School format was implemented for 7th-12th graders.

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The major construction improvement project of 1986 carried into the next year as new light fixtures were installed in the sanctuary and the atrium.



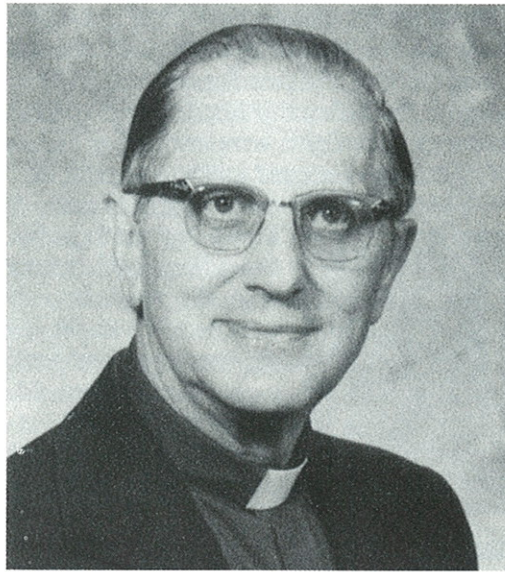
Nineteen eighty-seven started off as another interesting year as Zion joined the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA).

An every member visit campaign was conducted in July of 1987, to gather information from members of the congregation and to assist in updating church records. This effort yielded a 74% return of EMV questionnaires. The main concerns revolved around air conditioning in the nave and the singing of more familiar hymns on Sunday mornings.

As always, Zion focused much attention on its strong youth program by installing sound equipment and a video arcade game in the youth center. In addition, 16 students received scholarships to assist in paying for their college education.

Improvements continued to be made inside and outside the church. In the nave, entrance doors were replaced and ceiling fans were purchased. Brick pillars and a wrought-iron fence were installed surrounding the courtyard.

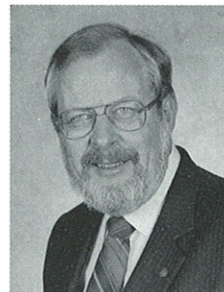
Nineteen eighty-eight marked another year of transition as many staff changes occurred. The most notable being that after 20 years of faithful service, Pastor Ralph Leonard stepped down to accept a post at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin. In an attempt to send Pastor Leonard and his wife, Odelle, off in style, a fond farewell service was held with reception afterwards. The church was standing room only as the congregation turned out in force to say good-bye to a very dear friend.



Pastor Marvin Johnson retired in February 1988, as part-time Visitation Pastor after serving in that position since January of 1982. Prior to 1982, Pastor Johnson faithfully served Zion as full-time Associate Pastor.

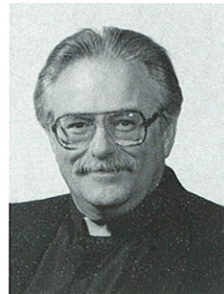
Pastor Corneilson also left Zion to accept a call at a church in Jennerstown, Pennsylvania.

Immediately following, Dr. Charles John Stark assumed the position of Music Director at Zion. In November of 1988 Kendall Koenig joined the staff of Zion serving in the capacity of intern. At the same time Khamphou



Sisouphanthong started seminary at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa.

December 9, 1988, a special congregational meeting was held to determine whether to extend a call to Pastor Jeffrey Otto to serve as Associate Pastor for a term of two years. The motion was carried and a call was extended. Also at that meeting, Pastor Bitner was affirmed as Senior Pastor.



The SHARE program started at Zion in September of 1988. This program, in conjunction with the existing Rice Day and pantry efforts, supported Helen Marander's promise that no one who came to Zion's door asking for food would ever go away hungry.



one hundred plus ten years

The improvements continued in the nave as an air conditioning unit was installed, old wiring replaced and new doors placed in the balcony. The Fellowship Room also got a little brighter as new lights were installed.

Phil Peterson resigned as Youth Director in 1989. He left Zion to accept a position at a church in North Dakota.



Being from North Dakota originally, the Petersons were excited with the opportunity to head back home. Shortly afterward Brett Gustafson took over the position of Youth Director.

In September of 1989, Dawn Hass joined the staff of Zion and served as an intern.

Pastor Otto and the commitment committee launched an ambitious stewardship campaign with the theme "On Our Way Rejoicing". Also in the Fall of 1989, an Endowment Fund was established.



Changes were implemented in the Sunday morning worship schedule. Between services at 9:00 am there would be Sunday School and the adult interim hour. Families were then encouraged to worship together at the 10:15 service.

Improvements made to the church in 1989 included the purchase of a new grand piano and a new printing machine.

A special congregational meeting was held on June 10, 1990, to discuss issuing a call to Kendall Koenig as Associate Pastor for Education and Evangelism. The motion was passed and Pastor Koenig joined the staff.

There were other staff additions in 1990. Bea Hakes was appointed as Volunteer Coordinator and in August, Thiem Baccam began serving at Zion in the capacity of intern.



Zion Development was honored by the Rockford Register Star and received the 1990 Excelsior Award.

There was another change in the Sunday morning worship service as children's sermons were given twice a month in an effort to get children more involved in the service.



Many repairs were made to Zion in 1990 including fixing the boiler at a cost of \$17,000. This included the actual boiler repair, complete asbestos removal from the boiler room and re-insulation of the boiler. Funds for this project were raised from the congregation.

Additional renovations included new carpeting in the narthex, new wooden racks to hold hymn books, an entrance was made leading from the courtyard to the elevator, and the rest rooms and the cloakroom were remodeled.

Nineteen ninety-one saw the birth of a new organization at Zion...Men's Ministries. This included the existing monthly men's breakfast and the new quarterly men's dinner. The dinners in 1991 attracted such speakers as Roland Harper of the Chicago Bears, former Congressman John Cox and Rockford Mayor Charles Box. Attendance for these dinners

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was standing room only as members of the congregation brought friends and co-workers to these uplifting events.



A special congregational meeting was held on August 18, 1991, to determine whether to extend a call and hire a Senior Care Pastor. The motion was defeated.



Dr. Joseph Conrad, who served as Pastor at Zion from 1946 to 1968, died in 1991.

A group of Assisting Ministers were installed to help the Pastors with Sunday morning worship. This expanded use of lay leadership was

strongly supported by the ELCA.

Pastor Koenig served as chairman of the Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries Communication Committee which produced a series of six television commercials utilizing the "You're Invited!" theme. This campaign focused on generating an increase in worship attendance at local area Lutheran churches.



Khamphou Sisouphanthong finished seminary in 1991 and in 1992 the congregation of Zion extended a call to him to serve as Associate Pastor. The call was accepted.

Nineteen ninety-two was a sad time for many at Zion as two pillars in the congregation and community, Helen Marander and Clarence Helsing passed away.

Zion implements and conducts an Every Member Visitation which has the goal of visiting every member of the congregation within a one year period. The purpose of the visit is simply to invite members to Sunday worship.

The Son Day Celebration Sunday morning worship program format is accepted by the church council and implemented in the Fall of 1992. This format allows the children to take part in the 10:15 worship service.

Zion Development Corporation purchases the adult bookstore on 7th St. in an effort to further clean up the neighborhood surrounding Zion.

December 1992, Pastor Bitner earned his Doctorate of Ministry from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

Pastor Kendall Koenig and Connie Dougherty get married in January, 1993.

Chronology

1983

- Friendship House and Larson House sold to Amcore Bank.
- Construction started on new youth center.
- Purchase of computer system approved. Hardware and software given to church by anonymous donor.
- Pantry continued to serve over 250 people each month.





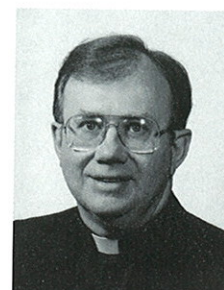
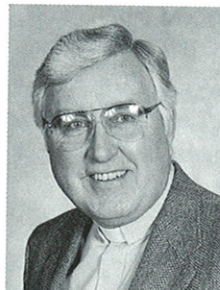
one hundred plus ten years

- Khamphou Sisouphanthong started as Indo-Chinese Ministry Director.
- Celebrated Martin Luther's 500th birthday at the MetroCentre with 26 other local churches.
- Clarence Helsing celebrated 30 years as music director.
- Bill Pope hired as custodian.
- Fellowship Room redecorated with new drapes and carpeting.
- Chimney, elevator, organ and outside flood light are damaged when church is struck by lightning.
- Annual pilgrimage made to Bethphage mission.



1985

- March 3, dedication service for new youth center was held.
- May, Confirmation Service welcomes 50 confirmands.
- Pastor Bitner and Pastor Leonard are installed as Co-Pastors.



- Phil Peterson hired as Youth Director.
- Council recommended to sell property on Spring Creek Road.
- Air conditioning unit installed in nursery.
- New church van purchased.
- Over 2,000 people served each month at Pantry.



1984

- June, Clarence Helsing retired after 31 years of dedicated service.
- August, purchased land south of the church property to make new parking area.
- Youth center addition completed.
- Nursery and library enlarged.
- Handicap area for wheelchair members added.
- New curbs on 6th St. side of church with drive-up handicap accessible loading zone installed by the city.
- "Pony Express" and "Thy Will Be Done" Stewardship Campaigns begin.
- Fire and alarm systems installed in new addition.
- Floor tiles replaced throughout church.

1986

- January, Spring Creek property sold for \$90,000.
- Initiated installation of new light fixtures in sanctuary.
- Mortgage on new addition paid off.
- New Sunday School format implemented for 7th-12th graders.

1987

- July, EMV organized to gather information.
- Zion joined the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.
- New light fixtures installed in the nave and atrium.
- New entrance doors and fans installed in the nave.

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- Pantry open twice a week. Served over 2,000 people per month.



- 16 students received scholarships.
- Brick pillars and wrought-iron fence constructed for courtyard.
- Sound equipment and video game purchased for the youth center.

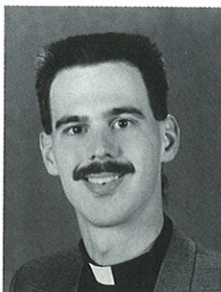
1988

- Pastor Leonard resigned from Zion and took a position at Carthage College.
- February, Pastor Marvin Johnson retired after serving as Visitation Pastor for seven years.
- Congregation affirmed Pastor Bitner as Senior Pastor.
- Pastor Corneilson left Zion to answer a call as Pastor in Jennerstown, PA.
- Dr. Charles Stark assumed the position of Music Director.



- Air conditioner installed in the nave.
- Khamphou Sisouphanthong began seminary.
- New lights installed in Fellowship Room.
- Wiring replaced in the nave.
- Pantry and Rice Day efforts continued.
- New doors for balcony installed.
- September, SHARE Program began.

- November, Kendall Koenig began serving as intern.



- December, congregation extends a call to Pastor Jeffrey Otto.

1989

- Brett Gustafson hired as Youth Director.
- Pastor Otto and Commitment Committee launched an ambitious stewardship campaign, "On Our Way Rejoicing".
- September, Dawn Hass begins serving as intern.



- Zion Lutheran Church sign hung on 5th Avenue by Youth Center.



- Phil Peterson left Zion for a position in North Dakota.
- Purchased grand piano.
- Purchased new printing machine.



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1990

- June, Zion issued a call to Kendall Koenig to serve as Associate Pastor.
- Bea Hakes appointed as Volunteer Coordinator.
- August, Thiem Baccam started as intern.
- Narthex redecorated with new carpeting.
- Zion Development received the Excelsior Award from the Rockford Register Star.
- Boiler repaired at a cost of \$17,000.
- Rest rooms and cloakroom renovated.
- Entrance made from courtyard to elevator.
- Wooden racks installed in pews to hold hymn books.
- Started delivering children's sermons twice a month.
- October 21, 1990, Homecoming Service had 488 in attendance.

1991

- August, congregation defeats a motion to hire a Senior Care Pastor.
- Dr. Joseph Conrad died.
- Zion's Men's Ministries launched.
- Khamphou Sisouphanthong finished seminary.
- Assisting Ministers installed.



- U.S. Congressman John Cox served as the featured speaker at Men's Ministries Dinner.

1992

- February, Clarence Helsing died.
- Every Member Visitation is initiated.
- Khamphou Sisouphanthong accepts a call to serve as Associate Pastor.
- June, Helen Marander died.

- Son Day Celebration format accepted and implemented.



- Zion Development Corporation purchased Adult Bookstore on 7th Street.
- Victorian style street lamps installed.

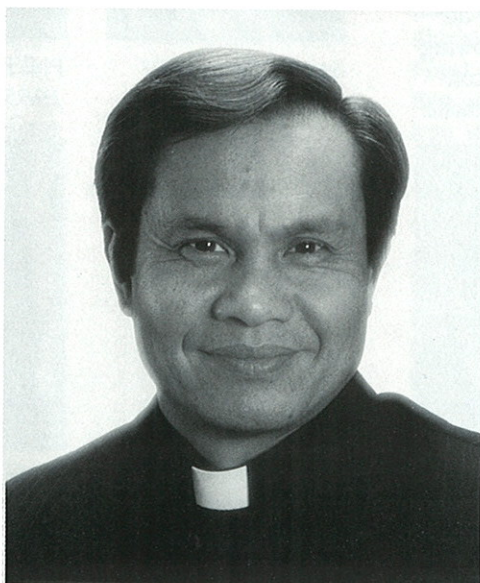
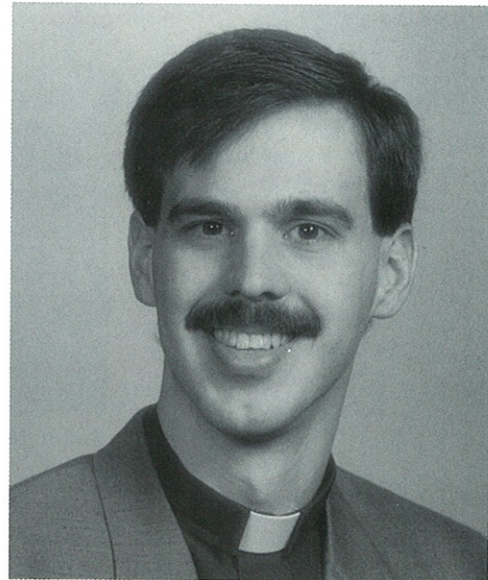
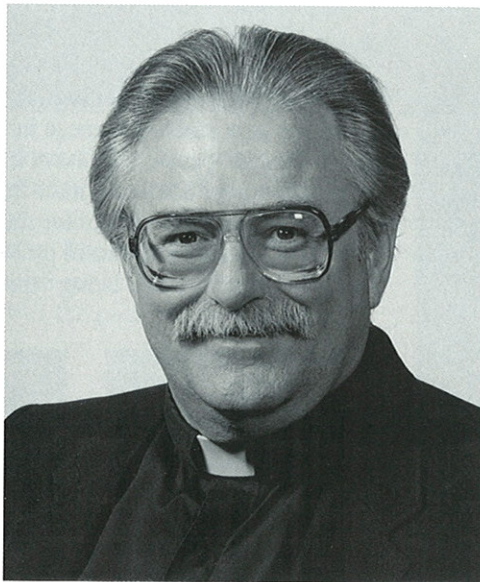
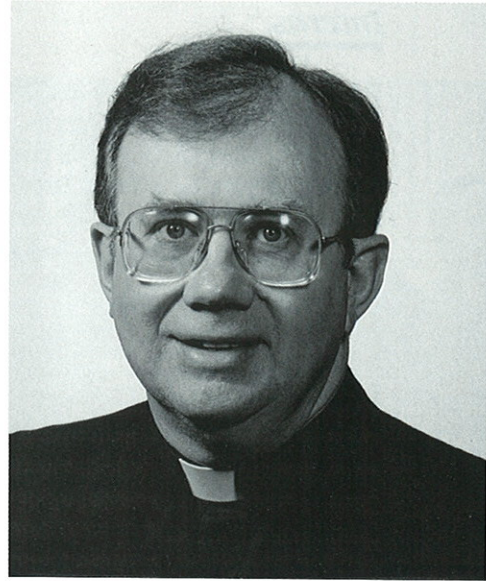
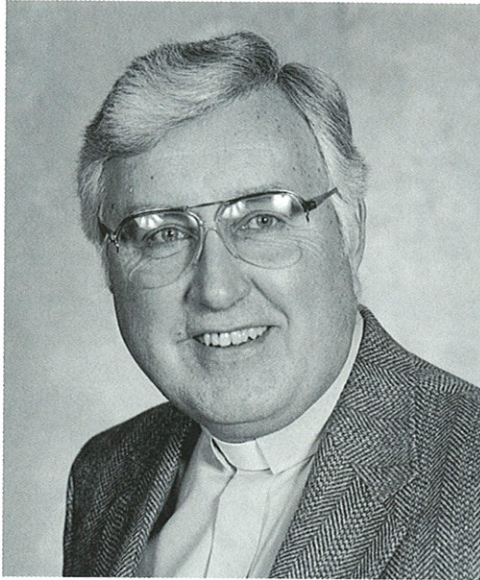


- December, Pastor Bitner earned his Doctorate of Ministry degree from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

1993

- January, Pastor Kendall Koenig and Connie Dougherty get married.

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Pastors

Rev. Ralph Leonard (top left)
1968-1988

Rev. Denver Bitner (top right)
1979-

Rev. Jeffrey Otto (middle left)
1988-1990

Rev. Kendall Koenig (middle right)
1990-

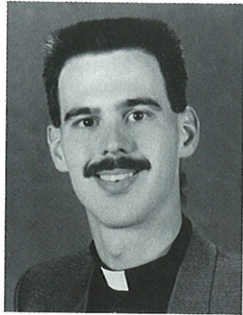
Rev. Khamphou Sisouphanthong (left)
1992-



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Interns

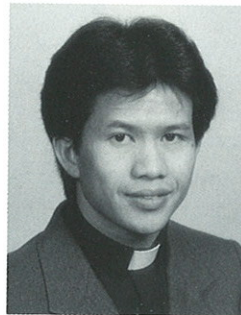
During the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's Zion utilized the assistance of interns to share the pastoral responsibilities. This practice stopped for almost three decades as Zion increased its full-time staff. However, at the end of the 1980's three interns were called to Zion and served in numerous and special ways.



Kendall Koenig
1988



Dawn Hass
1989



Thiem Baccam
1990



Dr. Charles Stark
1988-1992



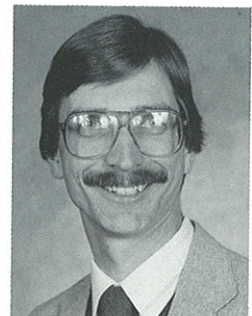
Mary Shore
1992-

Youth Directors

The Youth Director at Zion plays an important role in shaping the lives of the young people in this congregation. The "teen" years can be very confusing and awkward, but the Youth Director serves as a stable influence in their lives. The special people who have held the position over the years have been tremendous role models for the youth of this church. They have proven that knowing Christ and being "cool" go hand in hand.



Steve Stark
1982-1985



Phil Peterson
1985-1989

Music Directors

Music has always been and will always be an inspiring part of worship at Zion. The following people have been faithful servants to our congregation and have lifted our hearts with music.



Clarence Helsing
1953-1984



Pastor Ed Cornelson
1984-1988



Brett Gustafson
1989-1993

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Lay Leadership



Zion is a congregation full of hard workers and dedicated servants. The list of members who have donated their time to serving this church is staggering. The following is a list of the people who have served terms on the Church Council over the past ten years.

June Adolphson	1986-1988	Jim Holmberg	1985-1987
Clayton Allen	1992-	Catherine A. Johnson	1991-1993
LaVerne Anderson	1987-1989	Doris Johnson	1989-1991
Phyllis Anderson	1982-1984	Gary Johnson	1982-1984
Ruth Anderson	1983-1985	Lorane Johnson	1986-1988
Sheryl Andreasen	1990-1992	Marion E. Johnson	1991-1993
Tim Banwell	1988-1990	Rev. Roland Johnson	1984-1986
Patrick Betts	1990-1991	Steve Johnson	1987-1989
Jeff Campbell	1985-1987	Karen Kermgard	1985-1987
Dr. Allan Carlson	1986-1988	Harold Larsen	1992-
Mabel Carlson	1983-1985	James Larson	1991-1993
Roger Carlson	1983-1985	Rudy Larson	1982-1984
Edward Cunningham	1993-	Jane Lightcap	1991-1993
Jeffrey Dahlberg	1991-1993	Charles Liljegren	1987-1989
Eloise Dettmer	1989-1991	Darrell Lindstrom	1992-
James Duhigg	1986	Judy Lindstrom	1986-1988
Phil Fillweber	1990-1992	Shirley Lundgren	1988-1990
Jim Flodin	1993-	Frank Macchi	1983-1985
Ken Franzen	1985-1987	Bob MacRoy	1991-1992
Brett Gustafson	1986-1988	Ron MacCallum	1993-
Dee Gustafson	1993-	Pam Miner	1989-1991
Bud Hakes	1991-1992	William Miner	1984-1986
Torgny Hallin	1984-1986	Clarice Nelson	1990-1992
Bob Hallstrom	1988-1990	Leander Nordlof	1982-1984
Donald Hardesty	1983-1985	Daniel Peterson	1987-1989
Ann Harkabus	1987-1989	Kenneth Peterson	1986-1988
Constance Heden	1984-1986	Marguerite Peterson	1984-1986
		Richard Peterson	1992-
		Kathryn Rasch	1983-1985
		Linda Reinhardt	1989-1991
		Brenda Rinehart	1992-
		Curtiss Reynolds	1983-1985
		Karen Sandberg	1982-1984
		Roger Schmidt	1988-1990



o n e h u n d r e d p l u s t e n y e a r s

Debbie Schultz 1993-
 Bounhom Sibounheuang 1990-1992
 Todd Stalcup 1989-1991
 Steve Stark 1989-1991
 Mary Stein 1988-1990
 Mike Sutton 1985-1987
 Chuck Sweeney 1986
 Robert Thomas 1992-
 Brian Venstrom 1991-1993
 Evert Venstrom 1988-1990
 Kathie Verni 1990-1992
 Victor Verni 1982-1984
 Mary Wahlmark 1985-1987
 Delbert West 1984-1986

Jennifer Casazza
 Trina Evans
 Lori Fuller
 Dale Hamilton
 Nancy Hoffmann
 Christine Johnson
 Vicki Johnson
 Kathryn Ketchum
 Kristie Kosowiec
 Somkhith Manivong
 Melissa Milani
 Chintana Nachampassak
 Larry Payne
 Kari Peterson
 Kesone Sibounheuang
 Kong Souvannahkily
 Rick Stout
 Julie Swenson
 Radavane Symphommarath
 Soulisack Symphommarath
 Paul Thomas
 Bounnong Vilayphanh
 Inthavong Vilayphanh
 Heidi Vincent
 Lance West

Marc Engberg
 Rebecca Foster
 Katrina Hallin
 Troy Hering
 Vickie Hughes
 Kimberly Johnson
 David Kenny
 Terri Knowlton
 Erin McDonough
 Melinda Milani
 Quincy Montgomery
 Darcy Pepper
 Amy Sandberg
 James Swanborg, Jr.

10 Years of Confirmation

1983

Konni Aaby Jerry Anderson
 John Anderson Tamatha Andreen
 Jon Brynteson Debra Calacci
 Nicole Collier Thomas Cunningham
 Michelle DeGross Michelle DiGiovanni
 Troy Evans Tina Anne Forsling
 Shawn Gatchel Maurice Goodwin
 James Russell Jeffrey III Glenn Johnson
 Stephen Krans Robert McCormack
 Terrie Sue McCoy Robert Petrie
 Michael Pohl Laurie Saack
 Sherri Salyer Patsy Ann Swanborg
 Sounthone Syhaketh Arnold Thompson
 Chris Wahlmark Eric Wahlmark

1984

Parrish Anacker Kimberly Andreen
 Tina Becker Matthew Goodwin
 Sara Hill Mark Juffernbruch
 Diana Kay Lindsay Rebecca Lindstrom
 Phouvong Luangsombath
 Robert McGrew Stephen Mulcahey
 Heather Payne Clayton Pollack
 Katherine Saam Kristine Saam
 Keoudon Sibounheuang
 Keosamphon Sibounheuang
 Tonya Simpson Marc Thomas
 Erik Voss Brian West
 Jennifer West Vicki Winans

1985

Christine Anderson Matthew Anderson
 Melissa Anderson Kevin Appelgren
 David Bates Karen Berg
 Patrick Berg Carla Brace
 Sherri Bucher Christopher Casazza

1986

Joella Anderson Christopher Bitner
 Bradley Brace Jason Brynteson
 Melissa Holub Jeffrey Johnson
 Jeremy Johnson Kathy Johnson
 Michelle Kosowiec Lisa Longnecker
 Joseph Lyons Kristina Mabry
 Joseph Mulcahey Raymond Pollack
 Sheila Schmidt Tracy Steinmetz
 Kristin Stone Pamela Strupp
 Erika Swedlund Mark Wallace
 Erik Wallin

1987

Kristie Anderson Elizabeth Bitner
 Holly Buetsch Amy Carlson
 Melissa Carlson Ronald Carlson
 Kongkes Chanthasena Andrew Corirossi
 Jessica Denny Lisa Eckhardt
 Michelle Eckhardt Katrina Endres
 Christopher Franzen Tanya Greenberg
 Tara Hering Mike Hughes
 Margo Hunter Brei Johnson
 Kari Johnson Kim Johnson
 Oday Kingsavanh Tim Lawson
 Souphavanh Luangsiongkham
 Sisavath Luangsiongkham
 Steven Lyle Marcy Mabry
 Victoria MacRoy Vanessa Nix
 Boualong Oudomsouk

Caring & Sharing

Kabinh Oudomsouk
Manichanh Oudomsouk
Phone Phongsomphone
Paseuth Phomsouvank
Bouakham Piemmalay
Ketmany Piemmalay
Kingphet Piemmalay
Jarrod Pollock
Michelle Rudeen
Diana Salyer
Phonphet Sibouheuang
Lisa Sisouphanthong

Timothy Saam
Mary Sandstrom

Cori Stark
Chansamone Thammarath
Chanthy Thammarath
Ahn Thomas
Kajsa Voss
Bradley West

Noy Syphommarath
Matthew Tolodxi
Robert Wendt
Brent West

1988

Britt Anderson
Heather Campbell
Erica Didier
Matthew Fleming
Jeff Fulkerson
Samuel Garkey
Peter Juffernbruch
Michael Pearce
Christy Salyer
Kethmany Sibounheuang
Jeremy Tuftee
Melissa Wallace

David Berg
David DeGrave
Melody Doane
Doug Foster
Tom Fuller
Gregory Heden
Daniel Lyons
Chris Robbins
Angelina Verni
Andrew Wallin

1989

Christopher Anderson
Sara Bitner
Anna Cox
Amy Franzen
Cynthia Hallin
Andrew Holub
Khambay Kingsvananh
Phoukhathong Louangxay
Brian McDonough
Matthew MacRoy
Jackie Lynn Riley
Sammy Xayasouk

Adam Arling
Andrea Blixt
Alan Corirossi
Jonathan Goodin
Marty Holmberg
Scott M. Johnson
Toni Marie Lee
Andrea McFadden
Justin Montgomery
Tabatha Tolodxi

1990

Jessica Betts
Sara Caldwell
Tabatha Endres
Jeffrey Heden
Thong Louangxay
Kelly Schmidt
Sara Stienecker

David Bitner
Jenny Carlson
Erica Harkabus
Beth Johnson
Lisa Reinhardt
Amanda Stienecker
Steven Ylitalo

1991

James Buetsch
Jason Cloyd
Jamie Fredickson
Joni Holmberg
Luciana Johnson
Sarah Johnson
Seth Lightcap
Tracy Liljegren
Jennifer Rossato

Mark Carlson
Sara Dahlberg
Jennifer Hawkins
Brad Johnson
Marie Johnson
Bruce Johns
Lisa Liljegren
Michael Reinhardt
David VanderVennet

1992

Nathan Arling
Amanda Bolar
Gina Caldwell
Anders Carlson
Carrie Johns
Justus Morgan
Gregg Olson
John Rossato
Donald Stine
Elizabeth VanderVennet
Martin Verni

Julie Betts
Dawn Burkhardt
Elizabeth Campbell
Lisa Henderson
Jason Johnson
Joshua Olmsted
Karissa Paulsen
Emily Scott

1993

Amy Appelquist
Katherine Campbell
David Harkabus
Hattie Johnson
Malcolm Johnson
Bayoan Lamberti
Bradley Lindstrom, Jr.
Melissa Kunz
David Schneider
Sysouda Sibounheuang
Mouk Sisouphanthong

Matthew Bates
Chad Endres
Benjamin Jacobson
Eric Johnson
Stephanie Johnson
Marina Lamberti
James Lundgren
Michelle Kunz



Zion Today

Zion is a church rich in tradition. Our heritage is a proud one and it is clearly documented. However, times are changing and Zion continues to make the necessary changes while holding on to the treasured past. Zion, as a congregation, made a conscious decision to stay in the current location. This showed the commitment to revitalizing the neighborhood. And the hard work and dedication is starting to pay dividends. Zion is a respected leader in the area of community service and membership is strong.

There is plenty of excitement at Zion, a wonderful staff, numerous activities and worthwhile organizations. Let's take a closer look at Zion today...

Staff

Pastor Denver Bitner *Senior Pastor*

Pastor Bitner was born in East Tennessee and came to Rockford when he was 10 years old. He attended Rockford Schools and graduated from East High in 1965. Baptized and confirmed at Trinity Lutheran Church, he was active in youth ministry as a student and as a leader. Young Life was very influential on his Christian life in high school and he continues to be involved and supportive of this Christian

outreach ministry today. After two years at Rock Valley College he spent a year as a VISTA volunteer in Baltimore, Maryland. It was there he met and married Pam and together they moved to Springfield, Ohio where he completed his college degree at Wittenburg University and then a Master of Theological Studies at Hamma School of Theology. At the completion of his studies he received an appointment as Director of Youth Ministries at Zion. After a few years at Zion, the congregation and Pastor Leonard encouraged him to complete his education for certification as a pastor. This he completed in 1979 and was called as Associate Pastor to serve with Pastors Leonard and Johnson. Later he and Pastor Leonard were called to serve as Co-Pastors of Zion until Pastor Leonard left to take a call at Carthage College. Pastor Bitner has been active in the community, serving as President of the Rock River Valley Epilepsy Association, chairman of the Mayor's Task Force on Hunger, member of the board of the Howard Foundation, founding member of the Rockford Interfaith Council and founder and president of Zion Development Corporation. Pastor Bitner and Pam have three children who were all born while he has served Zion. Elizabeth is a student at Luther College, Sara and David are students at Auburn High School. Pastor Bitner completed his Doctor of Ministry and was awarded the degree in December of 1992 from the University of Dubuque.

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Pastor Kendall Koenig
Associate Pastor

Pastor Koenig grew up in Oak Park, Illinois in a family deeply involved in Lutheran education as well as their home congregation. Kendall attended Luther College, followed by the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He graduated in 1990. Pastor Koenig also studied briefly at the University of Zimbabwe. Kendall interned at Zion and received a call as Associate Pastor to Zion in August, 1990. He and his wife, Connie, met at Zion and were married there on January 2, 1993.

Pastor Khamphou Sisouphanthong
Associate Pastor

Khamphou was born in Laos in a city near the country's capital. In Laos he worked as a telephone repairman at the U.S. Embassy. After the communist takeover of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, Khamphou was forced from Laos in August 1976, and he sought shelter at a refugee camp in Thailand. From the camp he came to the United States via a 24 hour flight on January 14, 1977 that went from Thailand to Hong Kong to Washington, D.C. and finally to Edwardsville, Pennsylvania where he saw snow for the first time. In Edwardsville he worked in an ice cream factory for eight months until he moved to Elgin, Illinois. From Elgin he moved to Rockford in August 1978 to work at Borg-Warner. He worked there until 1982 when he came to work at Zion. At this point in his life, Khamphou was a Buddhist. Being from Laos, he was raised Buddhist and still carried those beliefs in America. However, Paul Dixon gave Khamphou a Lao Bible and got him involved in a weekly bible study. He actively participated in this group, however, he was arguing against the group as they were Christians and he was a Buddhist. Then on Easter Sunday, April 22, 1984, during a group prayer Khamphou converted to Christianity and started a new life. From that moment on he was hungry and thirsty for the Word of Jesus Christ and in 1988, at the urging of Pastor Bitner, Khamphou started seminary at Wartburg Theological Seminary. He graduated in September of 1991, and was issued a call from the congregation of Zion to serve as Associate Pastor. Khamphou accepted the call and was ordained on June 28, 1992.

Brett Gustafson
Youth Director

Brett was born at Rockford Memorial Hospital in 1961 and has been in Rockford ever since. His parents are Donn and Lorraine Gustafson and he has one younger brother, Brad. At the age of nine Brett became an insulin dependent diabetic. He attended Rockford Public Schools, Hallstrom, Lincoln and East respectively. He married Rachel Ann Wilson on May 31, 1986, and their first child, Breanne Michelle Gustafson was born on November 23, 1988. Brett is a life-long member of Zion and joined the staff as Director of Youth Ministries in September of 1989.

Mary Shore
Director of Music

Mary is a Rockford native who has been with Zion since 1992. She teaches music in Rockford Public Schools and previously sang with the Chicago Symphony Chorus. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois.

Judy Lindstrom
Church Secretary

Born and raised in Elgin, Illinois, Judy married her husband Darrell in 1963 and moved to Rockford. Joined Tabor Lutheran Church and served as Financial Secretary/Treasurer for nine years. She also spent five years as part-time secretary at Salem Lutheran Church. She and Darrell joined Zion in 1983 and have been active participants of the congregation ever since. Before joining the staff at Zion in February 1992, Judy served as receptionist at Reno Zahm Law Firm for seven years.

Beverly Henry
Administrative Assistant

Born and raised in Zion, Bev started her church music work as a teen under Allen Elmquist playing for mid-week services. Attended Augustana College as a Church Organist/Parish Worker major, served at Salem Lutheran, Rockford as parish worker for one summer, attended Lutheran Bible Institute for Bible and Mission emphasis one year, and then married Pastor David H. Henry.



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Together they served as missionaries for 10 years in Tanzania, East Africa and 3 years in an Iowa parish. Upon Pastor David's tragic death in 1965, she returned to Rockford to raise her four children. She joined the bell ringer group, Blue Belles, and directed the Children's Choir, under Clarence Helsing for several years. In 1982, God called her to serve as part-time secretary to the Christian Education/Social Ministry Director, Helen Marander, thus continuing her ministry at Zion. Here she served as organist during interims of seeking a new Music Director. In 1985, she became Financial Secretary, assisting Pastor Bitner in correspondence and filing for him as dean of the North Conference, Lao Ministry, Forward Fund, and some Pantry donation acknowledgements and formatting the bulletins for worship services.

Beatrice (Bea) Peterson Hakes
Volunteer Coordinator

Bea's roots are in Zion Lutheran Church. Her grandparents were charter members and she has five generations in Zion. She attended Rockford Public Schools and graduated from East High in 1942. She was baptized, confirmed, and married at Zion. She has been involved in Blue Belles for 30 years, a member of Zion Bell Choir, A Cappella Choir, and President of WELCA.

She along with her husband, Bud, organized Bereaved Parents of Rockford. She is currently the Volunteer Coordinator at church. She has two children Gayle Stark, Rockford and Ross Hakes, Balwin, Missouri.

Bill Pope
Custodian

Bill joined the staff as Custodian at Zion in 1983 and has been a faithful servant ever since. He has been especially active in the Men's Ministries of Zion. A life-long resident of Rockford, Bill is active in the Allen Chapel A.M.E. and has served on their church board. He married his wife, Helen, in 1947 and has a daughter, Carol, living in Rockford and a son, Russell, in California. Prior to coming to Zion, Bill worked at Howard Monk and Associates for over 19 years.

Glenn Borst
Custodian

Glenn has been a resident of Rockford his whole life. He graduated from Rockford Central High School in 1936 and married Florence Johnson in 1943. Glenn spent two years in the Navy and then joined the Rockford Fire Department in 1947 from which he retired in 1970. He has worked part time at Zion as Custodian since 1989.

Leona Foster
Pantry Aide

Leona moved to Rockford from Kentucky in 1967. She was married in 1963 and has five children including Doug who is currently in college. Leona started volunteering at Zion in 1973 working with Helen Marander. She helped with after school programs, Vacation Bible School, Summer Safari and scouting. Leona also ran errands for Helen and assisted with filing. In 1979 she was hired at Zion and continues in the capacity of Pantry Aide.

Susan Campbell
Parish Assistant

Sue is our newest member to the staff. She is a single mother with three young children, who lives in the neighborhood. In 1989 she came to our door seeking help and volunteered to stay. She quickly became involved with the Social Ministry programs under Helen Marander's tutelage. Today, we look to her for direction of many of our Social Ministry programs as she knows firsthand many of the problems our "patrons" have. She also serves on the board of Zion Development Corporation and Crusader Clinic and assists with many of the neighborhood redevelopment programs.

Caring & Sharing

Church Organizations and Activities

Fellowship

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

WELCA is a community of women created in the image of God, committing ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, society and the world. We meet 6 times a year. We have 12 circles that meet monthly for Bible study, do hand projects and enjoy Christian Fellowship.

Men's Ministries/Breakfasts and Dinners

Men's Ministries is an organization that has really taken off. The attendance for their monthly breakfasts and quarterly dinners has gone through the roof. These breakfasts and dinners are excellent opportunities for the men of Zion to socialize as well as invite friends and neighbors to participate in the special ministries of Zion. Men's Ministries has attracted some impressive speakers such as Roland Harper and Les Frazier of the Chicago Bears, Fritz Peterson, Congressman John Cox and Rockford Mayor Charles Box. The food is always outstanding and the message inspirational.



Saturday Night Seniors

Formerly known as Mr. & Mrs. Club. Meets monthly for interesting, fun times and inspiring fellowship.

Saturday Nite Live

This group of adults meets every third Saturday night of the month for a variety of social activities including a corn boil/hayride and game night.

Amaranth

Amaranth is Zion's young adult group that meets for fun and fellowship. From waterskiing to progressive dinners to Bible studies, Amaranth provides opportunities to meet new people, nurture friendships and grow in faith and connection to this congregation.

Zion Seniors

This energetic group, ages 65 to 90, attend monthly meetings to congregate, hear devotions, sing songs and enjoy various forms of entertainment.



Dorcas

This group of church women originated in the Swedish language, but today they have adjusted to change and conduct their entire meeting in English. The women of Dorcas have given and purchased much over the years for the growth of Zion Church. These women who love and praise their Lord are a powerful force in Zion.



one hundred plus ten years

The Lao Committee

This organization, which meets monthly, serves several very important purposes. First, it blends two cultures, Laotian and American. The group also holds language lessons for those wanting to learn the Lao or English language. However, the primary purpose of the Lao Committee is for all members to work together to proclaim the Word of God.

Service

Sewing Day Circle

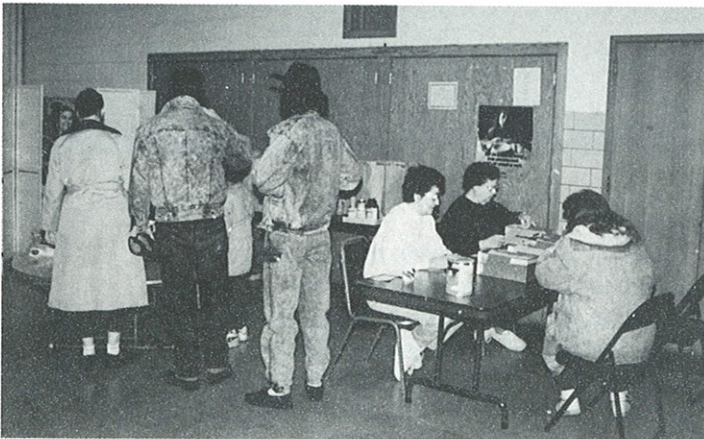
This organization is involved in several ongoing projects such as providing lap robes for those in nursing homes and bibs for the residents of Walter Lawson's Children's Home.

Friendship Circle

This organization was started over 25 years ago by Helen Marander in order to reach out to the women living in Zion's neighborhood.

Pantry

Zion's Pantry has been open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for over 10 years. This is another outreach program begun by Helen Marander to help alleviate hunger in our community. We service over 100 families per week with food, clothing and other household items.



SHARE-Rockford

Zion serves as a host for SHARE-Rockford, an organization that provides healthful food for an inexpensive price. Thirteen dollars and two hours of community service enables a person to obtain two bags of groceries full of fresh fruits and vegetables, and frozen vegetables and meats.

Zion Volunteers

Zion can be proud of its volunteers that are involved in everything from church council to Sunday School teachers. Hats off to the 300+ volunteers at Zion!



Widows/Widowers (WWI)

WWI is a support group for anyone who has lost a spouse through death. This group offers care, friendship, and support to one another as they struggle to cope with their loss.

Seekers Groups

Currently we have two groups meeting, one for men and one for women. Seekers is a group that focuses on a new way of living. It follows the "12 Step Program" using verses from the Bible. This group takes a spiritual journey together.

Caring & Sharing

Education

Library

Zion's library has developed into one of the hidden treasures of this congregation. Whether you want to read an intriguing book for pleasure, research a church topic, prepare for a Bible study, show a quality children's video or listen to uplifting music, you'll find what you need in Zion's library.

Sunday School Executive Board

Zion's Sunday School Executive Board is made up of one representative from each department and the Sunday School superintendent. This group oversees the work of the Sunday School and meets monthly to set policies, assess and review Sunday School budgets and provide input for special children's services.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

A weekly in-depth Bible study led by Zion's Pastors. Open to all Zion members and friends, this study focuses on books of the Old and New Testament. It is designed for those who want to dig into the history and circumstances of the scriptures.



Interim Hour

Children's Ministries

5th and 6th Grade Events

Zion's 5th and 6th graders meet once a month for various fun and educational activities. This group continues to grow and flourish and has been a wonderful new addition to the youth ministry program at Zion.

Boy's Club

An after-school program for boys in grades 1-8. Doing everything from yard work and cleanup around the church to wood crafts gives our boys a learning experience and a chance to serve in a tangible way.

Zion Girls

The Zion Girls Youth Program is designed for girls age 5 to 15 to build self-esteem, good character and Christian values. Service projects are done for shut-ins, Veteran Hospitals, Lawson's Children's Home, Bright Side and the Zion Church family.



Zion Zoo

Weekly, after school, children from around Rockford gather at Zion for a time of crazy games, active learning, treats and story time. This is a wonderful, safe experience for children who have no adult at home when they return from school.



o n e h u n d r e d p l u s t e n y e a r s

Summer Safari

Roughly thirty years ago Helen Marander started this program for children to experience adventures each Friday during the summer. Activities include swimming, picnics, and trips to zoos and parks. This program gives children an opportunity to have fun and fellowship while experiencing God's love.

Vacation Bible School

For six Wednesday mornings during the summer, Zion offers children an exciting experience of crafts, Bible learning, games, music and treats.

Sunday School

Zion's Sunday School offers our children a time to focus in and learn the stories of the Bible, the stories that form the foundation of our lives as Christians. Offering individual classes for each grade, the Sunday School continues as the vital center of Zion's efforts to teach children a basic understanding of the faith and nurture their relationship with Jesus Christ.



Son Day Celebration

Zion's newest addition to Sunday morning, this program allows children to experience the opening of worship in the "big church", but then leads them out before the sermon to participate in a worship geared to their age level. Their worship experience continues with joyous singing, a Gospel presentation, offering, prayers and benediction.



Nursery

The nursery provides a loving atmosphere where the children are able to play and also have a structured story time when a snack is served.

Youth Ministry

Breakfast Bible Study

The senior high youth have made the commitment to gather every Thursday morning before school. The study attempts to relate God's message and how to apply it to daily life.

Junior High and Senior High Ministry

The junior high and senior high youth meet on a regular basis for fellowship, recreation, and service events. Events include several weekend and week long trips. All activities prove to be great growth experiences for the youth of this congregation.

Parent Action

This group, made up of the youth and their parents, is charged with the responsibility of developing a youth ministry plan and to help make that plan happen.

Recreation Leagues

Our men, women, and youth involve themselves in many different sports activities sponsored by Rockford area churches. Softball, soccer, and volleyball leagues provide an excellent time for Christian fellowship and exercise.

Prime Time Network

This organization gives our youth a chance to take ownership of and participate in a worship service geared just for them. This monthly worship is a contemporary combination of music, skits and an uplifting message.

Caring & Sharing

Music and Worship



A Cappella Choir
Zion Bell Choir
Youth Choir/Bells
Children's Choir
Cherub Choir

The heart of our Zion ministry of music is to serve by assisting all of the congregation in its worship. All of the organizations listed above serve to praise God and share the Gospel through our music in anthem, concert or prelude.

Lao Children's Christian Choir

This choir is basically a group of children joining together to sing God's word for all people who want to hear the Good News. The choir consists of children ages 4 to 17 years of age.

The Lao Women's Choir

This special organization utilizes the beautiful voices of the Lao women to sing praises to Jesus Christ the Messiah. This choir is unique in that it is made up of women who were raised as Buddhists, but have converted and given their lives freely to Christianity.

Blue Belles of Zion

In February of 1963, six ladies, under the direction of Clarence Helsing, organized the Blue Belles of Zion. They ring 52 English hand bells and sing two part harmony. They have appeared on national television and have played at national bell conventions throughout the country. This group sings religious and secular music.

Ushers

Ushers are perhaps the "unofficial" greeters to all persons coming to Zion. In addition to passing out the bulletins and seating the worshippers, the ushers aid people to and from the altar rail for communion, assist those coming for baptism, receive the offering and generally see to the welfare of the congregation.



one hundred plus ten years

Greeters

Greeters are used to welcome the members of the congregation and visitors to our worship services. A warm welcome, a smile, and a handshake are the requirements. Two greeters assist with each service.



Lay Lectors

The Lay Lectors' role is to read the lessons at both services of the Sunday morning worship service. This affords members of the congregation an opportunity to actively participate in the Sunday morning worship setting.

Assisting Ministers

This group of men and women assist in the liturgy of the regular worship service. They also assist in communion and offer the prayers of the church and community.



Sound Booth Technicians

The Sound Booth Technicians are responsible for setting up the church microphones in their respective positions prior to the various services held at Zion. They control volume levels and monitor sound quality during the services as well as for the weekly radio broadcast on 91.1 WGSL.

The Altar Committee

The Altar Committee takes care of communion by getting the trays ready on Saturday and working in the sacristy during communion. This group is also responsible for flowers on the altar, baptism materials, acolytes' robes and fair linen, as well as changing altar candles and paraments.

Affiliated Ministries

Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts

Scouting at Zion builds leadership, self-confidence and respect for others through advancement and unit structure. Scouting also teaches duty to God and country, others and self.

Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries (RALM)

This ten-year-old agency is made up of Lutheran churches in the Rockford area. Its purpose is to facilitate a coordinated strategy of mission for the Lutheran church. It is well known for its ministry with singles and providing tutors to urban schools.

Rockford Area Gathering of Singles (RAGS)

A branch of Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries for those who are single. A variety of programs with a social, recreational and spiritual dimension are offered on a regular basis at churches in the area.

Crusader Clinic

This organization has established an outreach site at Zion during Pantry hours. They offer a wide range of services to low income and homeless people which includes medical, housing, clothing and food referrals on a personal, confidential basis.

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Hunger Connection

Hunger Connection works as a food “bank” for our area seeking out food that would otherwise be thrown away. They seek agencies, such as soup kitchens, and pantries, that will use it to feed low income and homeless people. This has been a great help in keeping down our costs and in supplying an interesting variety to the food we give away.

Big Sisters

Over 30 years ago Helen Marander started Big Sisters. It is now named Big Sisters of Winnebago County. This organization serves girls who are disadvantaged. Zion Church has always served as the meeting place for this program, although it is open to women and girls of all religions and backgrounds.

Bereaved Parents and Survivors of Suicide Support Group

This support group is for parents that have lost a child through an accident, illness, murder or suicide. Monthly meetings feature various speakers and/or clergy who help open the discussion on grief, anger, shock, or guilt.

Zion Development Corporation

A not-for-profit corporation established by members of Zion Church as a ministry in the area of employment, affordable housing and economic development in the neighborhood of Zion church. It has been very successful in bringing hope to area residents.

Parents' Anonymous

A community group which meets weekly at Zion Church. It provides support and assistance to parents who have identified patterns of abuse in their family.

Protestant Community Services

A ministry of the Christian churches in Rockford. It is well known for its ministries with the elderly through programs such as Bright Side Day Care for the Elderly, Mobile Meals, and Outreach to the Aging. Zion has been a long time partner in this ministry.

La Leche League

La Leche League is active in 48 countries reaching more than 100,000 mothers monthly through over 8,000 accredited and volunteer leaders. The organization offers information and encouragement to those women who want to breast feed their babies.

Zion Tomorrow

Taking a moment to reflect on the past ten years is truly inspiring. The congregation has experienced some growing pains but has responded by strongly demonstrating its commitment to the community, the neighborhood surrounding Zion and those that live there. Pastor Bitner once asked an elderly Laotian man why he chose to live in the area. The man responded that he wanted to live where he could see the cross of Zion Lutheran Church standing tall. This congregation is spreading the Word and is making a difference in the lives of many.

The next ten years will certainly be as challenging and even more exciting and rewarding. God has called the members of Zion to be his servants in a very special ministry of caring and sharing and you have accepted that call. The future of Zion Lutheran Church looks very bright indeed.





The Rev. Dr. Denver Bitner
Senior Pastor

The Rev. Kendall Koenig
Associate Pastor

The Rev. Khamphou Sisouphanthong
Associate Pastor

Mary Shore
Music Director

Judy Lindstrom
Church Secretary

Beverly Henry
Administrative Assistant/Finance

Bea Hakes
Volunteer Coordinator

Sue Campbell
Parish Assistant

William Pope
Custodian

Glen Borst
Assistant Custodian

Leona Foster
Assistant Custodian

Jane Lightcap
Church Council President

Martha Tortorice
Church Treasurer



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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