



GRAPEVINE

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

MARCH 2026

Sunday Worship at 9:15am

In Person & Facebook live

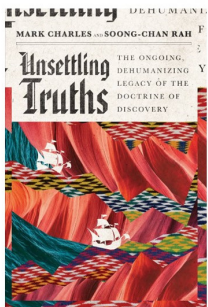
Burmese Worship: 11:00am

New Life Church Worship: 1:00pm

Zion Lutheran Church
925 5th Avenue - Rockford, Illinois 61104

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

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ZION FORUM
March 22, 2026
10:30am in Fellowship Hall

**A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE
MARK CHARLES BOOK
"UNSETTLING TRUTHS"**

SEASONED SAINTS GROUP

Join Pastor Mike for Food, Fellowship & Faith
Topic: "Conversations With Jesus"

Tuesday, March 3, 2026
5:00-7:00pm

Aunt Mary's (room reserved)
East State Street
Rockford, IL



SEASONED SAINTS
MINISTRY



ZION FORUM March 8, 2026

9:15am Greeting
10:30am in Fellowship Hall

A CONVERSATION WITH RABBI BINAH WING
Temple Beth-El Synagogue



Strengthening Our Roots
Growing Our Future

JOIN ZION CLASS March 15, 2026

10:30am in Library

JOIN PASTOR MIKE IN A CONVERSATION
ABOUT ZION'S MISSION, VALUES & MINISTRIES

PALM SUNDAY BREAKFAST

\$12 Adults \$8 Children (under 12)
Sunday, March 29 at 10:30AM-1:00pm

Sponsored by the Multicultural Team of Zion Lutheran Church
Held at Zion Lutheran Church
925 Fifth Avenue - Rockford, IL 61104
Proceeds benefit the Multicultural Committee

PASTOR THOMAS THOUGHTS

CAPITAL APPEAL

At our February Council meeting we will be voting to approve one of the Fire Alarm quotes. This means we will withdraw funds from the Endowment Fund. We will also begin a Capital Fund Appeal to replenish some of those funds that are needed for the Fire Alarm System. At the January Annual Meeting, the Congregation authorized the Church Council to spend up to \$200,000 from the Endowment restricted fund and/or take out a loan; and/or start a Capital Appeal to raise the funds needed for a complete new Fire Alarm system for Zion. This upgraded system will ensure we can steward the ministries at Zion for years to come. If you have any questions, please let us know. Please prayerfully consider any special gifts toward this Capital Fund improvement. We are grateful to the Buildings and Grounds Committee for their efforts in getting quotes and moving this forward.

“SOUNDING THE ALARM”

Please support the new Capital Fund Appeal as we are “Sounding The Alarm” and raise an “alarming” amount (pun intended) for our new Fire Alarm System. There will be more information on how to donate coming out soon. You can click the link below and make a one time donation or set up regular donations for the appeal.



2026 Fire Alarm System Replacement

Investing Into Our Mission

RAISING FUNDS FOR A NEW
FIRE ALARM SYSTEM



Zion Lutheran Church
925 Fifth Avenue – Rockford, IL

“WE THE PEOPLE”

The Multicultural Committee is leading our first ever Civil Rights Conference on April 18th with speaker, Mark Charles. This will be held at Patriots Gateway Community Center. This 2026 Civil Rights Conference is being called the "We The People" and Mark Charles will share his "Common Memory Tour". Mark is a speaker, writer, and consultant. The son of an American woman (of Dutch heritage) and a Navajo man, Mark teaches the complexities of American history regarding race, culture, and Christendom in order to help forge a path of healing and conciliation for the nation. In 2012, Mark hosted a public reading at the US Capitol of the buried apology to Native peoples in the 2010 Department of Defense Appropriations Bill given by the 111th Congress. We will have a forum on March 22nd after worship on the book, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*. Mark's blog is *Reflections from the Hogan*. He has served on the boards of the Christian Reformed Church of North America and the Christian Community Development Association. In 2020 Mark ran as an independent candidate for the presidency of the United States, advocating for a Truth and Conciliation Commission – a formal and national dialogue on issues of race, gender, and class.

There will be time to hear Mark speak, attend a few workshops related to civil rights in our time. A lunch is included in the cost of the event. Our sponsors so far include: Rockford Urban Ministries, Tipping Point, Mayor McNamara, Katie's Cup, Zion Development, and Bishop Fidlar.

Mark will be our preacher on Sunday, April 19th at Zion and lead an Adult Forum at Zion. We are called to discern how “we the people” includes “all the people” in our diverse and beautiful community that is Rockford in the 21st century! Together, we can be a gateway of opportunity for all the people who live in our community. We are looking for sponsors and partners to support this event.

Peace, Pastor Thomas

STUDENT DEACONESS JANICE FORREST

Deaconess Student Janice Forrest

I am grateful for this opportunity to work as a Deaconess Student at Zion Lutheran Church. This opportunity gives me a chance to grow in my ministry as a Deaconess and to learn how the church operates on a day-to-day basis. There is so much to learn as a Deaconess. With the help of God and the congregation this will be an amazing journey in my life. I started working as a Deaconess Student February 1, 2026. It has been a very busy 3 weeks with meetings, bible studies on Wednesday morning at Stockholm Inn, visiting shut-ins, calling members who have medical concerns, assisting with the Ash Wednesday service, preparing a sermon for Sunday services, opening and closing the church on Sunday, learning to set-up for Facebook live and much more. I am still coordinating the once a month WOW Program at Zion/Patriots and we are grateful to Lino's who provides pizza each month. If you would like to help with WOW please let me know. I recently moved into my new office (former intern office). My office hours are Tuesday and Wednesday 9-3pm. I continue to serve as the Outreach Director, and that includes my work with Ruthie's Kitchen, Ruthie's Closet and the Buddy House.



If you have any questions, please feel free to call me Office: 815-964-4609, Cell: 815-904-0064
Janice Forrest, Student Deaconess - zionoutreachdirector@gmail.com

WOZ NEWS

WOZ NEWS—We've been busy planning our Spring programs. Our first one is a fan favorite, Bunco! This will be on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th, 1:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Add April 21st at 1:00pm to your calendar. This will be an interesting program by Jeff Dahlberg. May 19th is our annual salad luncheon at Noon in the Fellowship Hall. Our June date is the 16th with the program TBD. And don't forget we are collecting canned fruit for Cornucopia Food Pantry during March. Thanks—the WOZ Board.

“WE THE PEOPLE”

A Civil Rights Conference

Speaker: Mark Charles
Common Memory Tour



Saturday, April 18, 2026 - from 9:00am-3:00pm

Held at Patriots Gateway Community Center

615 S. Fifth Street – Rockford, IL

Cost: \$25.00 (includes lunch)

Sponsored by Zion Lutheran Church



2026 Midtown Midweek Lenten at Noon

Conversations With Jesus

EXERCISE CLASS BEFORE WORSHIP & SIMPLE LUNCH AFTER WORSHIP

March 4 at Salem Lutheran Church at Noon

Preacher: Pastor Chuck Olson

March 11 at Zion Lutheran Church at Noon

Preacher: Pastor Frank Langhoff

March 18 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church at Noon

Preacher: Pastor Leslie Aska

March 25 at First Lutheran Church at Noon

Preacher: Pastor Bill Dahlberg

CONVERSATIONS WITH JESUS

LENT 2026

GOING DEEPER



Please join us:

- February 25th at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in the Library!
- March 4th at Salem Lutheran Church in the Fireside Room!
- March 11th at Zion Lutheran Church in the Fellowship Hall!
- March 18th at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in the Library!
- March 25th at First Lutheran Church in the Friendship Hall!

Lenten Exercise Class

Led by: OSF Faith Community Nurses

Classes will be held from 11am-1145am at designated Midtown Lutheran Churches!

All are welcome!

OTHER



BUNCO

Women of Zion

March 17, 2026

1:00-3:00pm

Zion Lutheran Church



Easter Spring Garden

Remember or honor your loved ones and help us beautify Zion's Sanctuary by sponsoring flowers for the Spring Garden. You may prefer to make a donation in lieu of flowers. If you would like to contribute to our Spring Garden, please fill out the bottom portion of this insert, enclose your check made payable to Zion Lutheran Church and mail to the Church office, 925 5th Avenue, Rockford, IL, 61104



Ruthie's Kitchen



RUTHIE'S KITCHEN

Community Meal on Saturday 1:00-3:00pm

GROUPS SERVING IN FEBRUARY

- March 7 Helping Hands
- March 14 St. Bernadette's
- March 21 Zion's Multicultural Team
- March 28 Midtown Health Team

Held at Zion Lutheran Church - 925 Fifth Avenue - Rockford, IL 61104
815-964-4609 - www.zionrockford.com

Women's Group!

March 9, 2026
Monday at 3:00-5:00pm
At Stockholm Inn

Join us for a new small group for women!
Any woman interested can attend or email us of your interest at zionrockford@gmail.com!
Call Zion at 815-964-4609 for the address!



BAG FLUFFING

FOR CORNUCOPIA FOOD PANTRY

Fourth Monday at 1:00pm

Held at Zion Lutheran Church!

Cornucopia



Food Pantry



MONDAY BOOK STUDY

AT 9:30AM AT ZION

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

AT 8:00AM AT STOCKHOLM INN



EASTER SPRING GARDEN

Name: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Happy Easter to: _____

Number of Plants (\$15.00 for each plant)

Tulip: _____

Daffodil: _____

Hyacinth: _____

Amount Paid: \$ _____

In lieu of flowers,
I would like to donate monies to:

Cornucopia Food Pantry \$ _____

Ruthie's Kitchen \$ _____

World Hunger Relief Appeal or ELCA \$ _____

Other (please specify) \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please submit no later than Monday, March 23rd (firm deadline).

MARCH 2026 CALENDAR

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
1	9:15am Worship	2	9:30am Book Study - Library	3	5:00pm "Seasoned Saints" Group at Aunt Mary's on E. State St.	4	8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn	5		6	Office Closed	7	1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen (Helping Hands)
8	9:15am Worship 10:15am Forum: Rabbi Binah INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY	9	9:30am Book Study - Library 3:00pm Women's Circle at Stockholm Inn	10	8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room Noon - Katie's Cup Conversation 1:30pm Multicultural Committee Meeting	11	8:00am RVC-ESL Class 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn Noon - Midtown Lenten Worship at	12	8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room 4:00pm Katie's Cup Board 5:30pm Zion Development Board	13	Office Closed 10am-2pm Open House at Katie's Cup & Pie-Day Pickup	14	1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen (St. Bernadette's)
15	9:15am Worship 10:30am "John Zion" New member Class in Library with Pastor Mike	16	9:30am Book Study - Library	17	8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room 1:00pm WOZ Bunco - Fellowship Hall	18	8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn Noon - Midtown Lenten Worship at 4:00pm WOW @ZLC	19	Grapevine Mailing 8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room	20	Office Closed	21	1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen (Zion Multicultural Team)
22	9:15am Worship 10:15am Forum: "Unsettling Truths" Book conversation led by Pastor	23	9:30am Book Study - Library 1:00pm Bag Fluffing - Fellowship Hall	24	8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room 5:00pm HR Committee 6:00pm Church Council	25	8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn Noon-MTLP Lenten Service	26	8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room 4:30pm Patriots Board	27	Office Closed	28	1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen (Midtown Health Team)
29	9:15am Palm Sunday Worship 10:15am Palm Sunday Breakfast	30	9:30am Book Study - Library	31	8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room	1	8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room	2	8:00am RVC-ESL Class - Marander Room Noon - Maundy Thursday Worship	3	Noon - Good Friday Swedish Worship 7:00pm - Good Friday Music Tenebrae	4	9:00am Cars & Coffee Rockford 1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen
5	9:15am EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP	6		7		8	8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 8:00am Grapevine Article Due 1100 am Missions Team	9		10		11	

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our Ministers - All the People of Zion

Senior Pastor Michael Thomas

Pastor Emeritus Denver Bitner

Office Manager & Finance Secretary: Jolyn Hess

Outreach Director & Deaconess Student:

Janice Forrest

Faith Community Nurse: Jori Roysden

Music Ministry Coordinator: Jodi Beach

Custodian: Shanita Baker

Worship Media: Kurt Brown

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Michael Beert, Pam Bitner, Linda Callahan,
Bonnie Dahlberg, Gary Fulkerson, Thomas Habing,
Karen Kermgard, Laurie Pellant, Angeles Polcher,
Ron Simmons, Pastor Michael Thomas,
Neal Tolodxi and Gary Zeien

Church Council Officers

President: Bonnie Dahlberg

Vice-President: Tom Habing

Treasurer: Michael Beert

Secretary: Laurie Pellant

Pastor: Michael E. Thomas

www.zionrockford.com

www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford

www.youtube.com/zionrockford

PRAYER CORNER

WE ASK YOU TO PRAY FOR:

- ◇ The ELCA, Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry, Bishop Stacie Fidler, Pastor Michael Thomas, 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.
- ◇ Senior Pastor Ndeshifose Akyoo, Assisting Pastor Evan Kiula, and Assisting Pastor Yohanna Samson Ntui of Sepuka Parish (Tanzania)
- ◇ Bishop Peter Paul Thomas of St. Thomas Lutheran Church and Pastor Selvakumarin the Arcot Lutheran Church of India.
- ◇ Mission Partner, Pastor Mytch Dorvilier
- ◇ For the Northern Illinois Synod; North Conference churches; Midtown Lutheran Parish, faculty and students of Rockford Lutheran Schools.
- ◇ For those who grieve loss of loved ones: Mary Norman.
- ◇ For healing: Colette Buchert, Norm Buchert, Linda Callahan, Marjorie Carlson, Yolanda Churchill, Charlie Dahlberg, Norma Daugherty, Karen Eisman, Deanna Hartenberg, John Hoyt, Leola LeGault, Jim McDowell, Les Morgan, Betty Jo Rodey, Wayne Spitzer, Carrie Steder, Deb Tolodxi, Neal Tolodxi, Brian Veitch, Nancy Warden, Diane Wegner, and Gary Wegner, Jr.

If you have a prayer request or a prayer of gratitude to share, please notify Pastor Mike.

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.

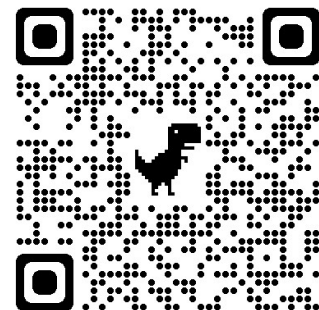
GRAPEVINE DEADLINE FOR THE APRIL 2026 GRAPEVINE, EMAIL BY MARCH 11, 2026 to submit an article: zionrockford@gmail.com, or please send a hardcopy to the church office.

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 for more information.

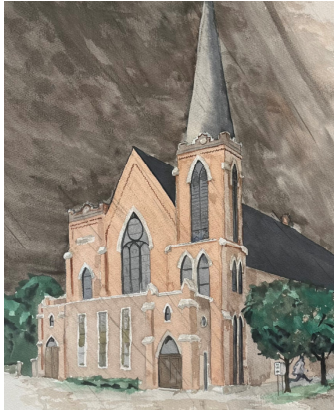
VANCO
FAITH



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Rockford, Illinois 61104
zionrockford@gmail.com

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Annual Meeting

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 afterwards)

Burmese Worship at 11:30am New Life Worship at 1:00pm