



# GRAPEVINE

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

## JULY 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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Duck Pin Bowling & Lunch  
Join Pastor Mike at Cahoots!  
**CAHOOTS** is at 314 Prairie Street  
Rockford, IL

Tuesday, July 7, 2026  
11:00am-1:00pm  
(RSVP to Pastor by July 3rd)

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

## SEASONED SAINTS GROUP

## THURSDAY 9AM-1PM

### 2026 SEASON

June 4 to September 24

Indoors at Katie's Cup  
502 Seventh Street  
Rockford, IL  
We Accept Link!



## WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY AT 8:00AM AT STOCKHOLM INN



## BAG FLUFFING

FOR CORNUCOPIA FOOD PANTRY

Fourth Monday at 1:00pm

Held at Zion Lutheran Church!

Cornucopia



Food Pantry



# PASTOR THOMAS THOUGHTS

## *Thank You Jolyn Hess*

I am so grateful for the 14 years of service that Jolyn Hess has shared at Zion. We will gather on June 30th at noon at Zion for one last thank you. Jolyn's retirement is well deserved and she will be greatly missed. She recently has been training our new Financial Secretary, Hannah Wearsch. I am so grateful that Jolyn has been here for almost all of my sixteen years of ministry. We have worked very well together because I try to just stay out of her way and let her lead. She has been a great leader at Zion, working with the other staff, the Council, the various committees and the Zion partners

You have blessed us with so many great memories among the staff, former interns and office volunteers. We have had many special community times around food: gyros from Uncle Nicks, Swedish pancakes, Fat Tuesday Paczki and holy week pancakes at Johnny Pamcakes. Of course you always appreciated a Carmel Macchiato from Katie's Cup.

You helped the congregation through various changes, losses and challenges: the transitions with Arnie, a few interactions with the police, annual meetings, the flood of 2024 and the various staffing changes and retirements. You helped me and the congregation journey through times of loss and grief, including Arnie and Ruthie, as well as countless others we have lost.



In June, you told me you kept that pencil Maggie gave you years ago. I was amazed and grateful to you for your kindness to our kids over the years! You watched them grow up, heard me tell stories about their joys! You encouraged me as a dad and I will always be grateful to you!

Finally, Thank you for your encouragement of our ministries over the years at Zion. You helped us on our journey with your radical inclusion of people in the LGBTQIA community. People will never know how many details you took care of or how many little processes you knew how to manage. People don't know but the word "administration" is rooted in the word ministry, to ad-minister is what you have done—you have added to our ministry behind the scenes in so many ways. I give God thanks for you!

Happy Retirement! Peace, Michael Thomas

# THANK YOU JOLYN HESS HAPPY RETIREMENT



# JOLYN - GRATITUDE

Where do I begin to even express my gratitude and appreciation as not only an employee but also a part of a great community called Zion Lutheran Church, well I guess at the beginning. Who would have guessed, my previous employer (mentored of course, by Pastor Mike) would lead me to begin a journey with Zion, that has lasted 14 years!! (Way to go Pastor Lu!!)

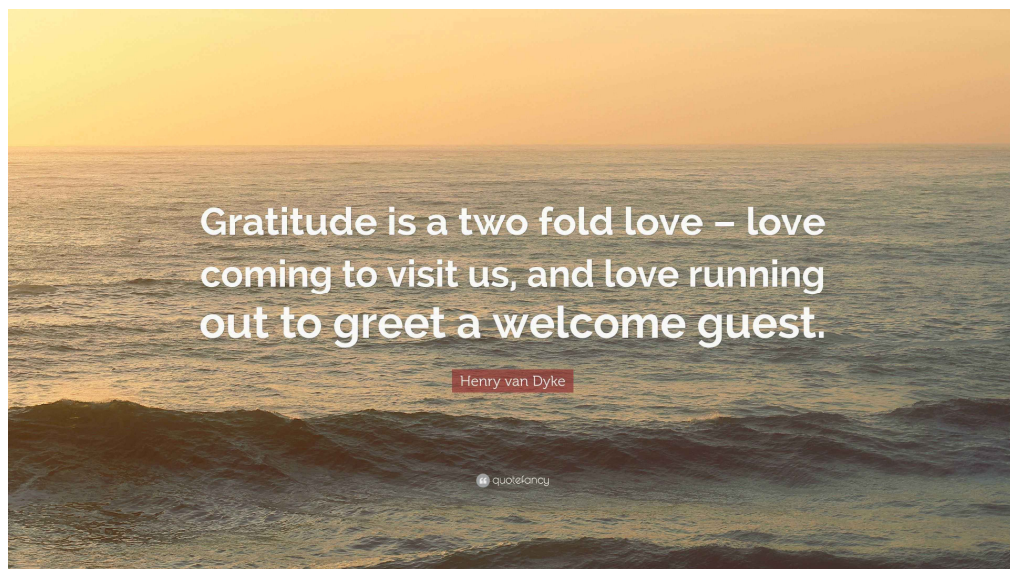
I have so many wonderful memories—including all the good, bad, ugly and the beautiful—mostly beautiful of all who have journeyed with me along the way. Those who stood beside me through all the sadness and joyous times, you all are my extended family! Including all my many amazing volunteers through the years, each hold so many special memories which still can make me laugh and smile to this day. All the staff members who journeyed the path to keep Zion moving forward, past and present. To memories from each and every Intern I was privileged to walk beside and watch them blossom into who they are today—how fortunate am I? Every visitor who was buzzed in during office hours—now there were even some special memories there that forever touched my heart, and some my funny bone. All the many church council members through the years, each with their own special memories, it was my honor to take the minutes and walk with you during your journey, I was and am blessed. Also a special “thank you” to my herd—you know who you are—You all have a special place in my heart and I cherish each and everyone of you! All the many Office Managers and Secretaries from other congregations, having a group to be apart of to hold round tables, break bread, and develop fellowship and friendships beyond the walls at Zion, what an awesome group of people, Thank you!

Now, Pastor Mike, a whole different dimension, a boss, a pastor, a singer, songwriter!?! (We could also ask his children's opinion on that one, and my children, lol) How do you thank someone who continued to hold you in Grace, through it all, some would have given up - Thank you! For tolerating the “are you busy, can you talk” (as I closed the door before you could answer), said what I needed to say, thanked you and left your office without the current burden I entered with, Thank you! Not COVID, not even the flood couldn't take us down, it might have tried, but “Jesus washed our troubles away”, couldn't resist.

So, so many memories - they always say a church lady should write a book—but some would find it hard to believe that “it” really happened so memories forever it is.

With all my thanks and heartfelt gratitude, love to you my Zion Family!

You will be missed, Jolyn



## STUDENT DEACONESS JANICE FORREST

I am blessed to help God's children every day. To serve and to have a calling that comes from the heart is cultivating to the soul. This is a remembrance of Matthew 9:35. *The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.* I enjoy being one of the harvests to be a laborer to share and spend the Good News of the Lord. For June my first meeting of the month was Zion Development Board talking about the Lafayette Open House that was held on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. I had a meeting with Crusader Clinic; I am on the committee of the Crusader Quality Operation. Then later that week I had the Crusader Clinic Board meeting. The mission team meeting was great. After the mission team meeting, I went to the volunteer's office and UPS envelope was in my mailbox, a \$5,000 check for the Buddy House was in the envelope, I was overwhelmed with joy. I texted the person with gratitude and thank you. I was able to start planning for the Blackhawk Buddy House open house Friday 6-19-2026 from 4-6. The Ruthie Fairchild urban Farm event was great I was able to talk to people I haven't seen in a while. I took pictures with almost everyone there. It was a raining evening, but all in all it was great. I had to leave early to get packing for the Synod Assembly on Friday and Saturday. Which was great. I was with Julie, James, and Gary for the two days. James drove and we all had a great time riding there and back. Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> I was the preacher for Juneteenth. I am still meeting with my Spiritual Advisor, Life coach, LDA mentor, LDA area conference, Pastor Thomas, the committees here at Zion, Wednesday Bible study. Ruthie Kitchen and Closet is going great, the first Saturday of June, as we fed about 110 guests each week. I had a meeting with Rockford Housing Authority, collaborating together with the Buddy House events as we have various events there this summer and fall.

Peace, Janice Forrest - Outreach Director and Student Deaconess

## NURSE JORI ROYSDEN

Hello everyone! Welcome to the summer season! I encourage you all to go outside and enjoy the beautiful weather while it is here! Here are some preventative health tips to keep in mind this summer: It is HOT which means we are sweating out a lot of the fluid we drink so it is important to stay hydrated! Drink plenty of water, eat lots of healthy fruits like melons (watermelons, cantaloupe, musk melon, etc.), pineapples, apples, etc will help you stay hydrated. Eat the fruit rainbow while it is season!

Summer fun in the sun is great, but it is important to take care of your skin. Always use sunscreen if you know you are going to be outside for long periods of time in the sun. If you are in the water (swimming pools, ocean, etc.) you will be at a higher risk for sunburn. Please remember to reapply sunscreen as needed! In the event that you do develop a sunburn, keep aloe vera on hand. If you do not have aloe vera in your home, take a cool shower/bath to cool your skin. You can also use cold cloths/towel to cool the skin, just make sure they are clean. Signs of severe sunburn and treatment can be found here on Mayo Clinic's website: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-sunburn/basics/art-20056643>

Summer is a time travel increases. Please wash your hands to avoid the spread of infection, especially in airports and bathrooms. Keep hand sanitizer/disinfectant wipes nearby or in your carry-on luggage. Keep moving! The hot weather can be a deterrent for some but try to spend more time outside with your pets and loved ones during this season. Exercise is the best way to maintain your mobility, and increase your flexibility and balance. I will be holding exercise class at Zion in the youth center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am-10am 7/8/25, 7/10/25, 7/15/25 and 7/17/25! Come and have fun in the A/C with me!

As always, please call me at 630-465-2135 or email me at [jori.l.roysdon@osfhealthcare.org](mailto:jori.l.roysdon@osfhealthcare.org) if you have any questions or concerns! If you are in the hospital please call church and let someone know so they can notify me or call me directly. Have a safe and blessed summer!

# JULY 2026 CALENDAR

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
<b>28</b> 9:15am Worship 11:00am Burmese Worship 1:00pm New Life Worship	<b>29</b>		<b>30</b> NOON—Jolyn Hess Retirement Party at Zion	<b>1</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn	<b>2</b>		<b>3</b> Office Closed	<b>4</b> 9:00am Cars & Coffee Rockford NO Ruthie's Kitchen					
<b>5</b> 9:15am Worship 11:00am Burmese Worship 1:00pm New Life Worship	<b>6</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>7</b> 11:00am Seasoned Saints: Duck Pin Bowling at Cahoots	<b>8</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn	<b>9</b> 4:00pm Katie's Cup Board 5:30pm Zion Development Board	<b>10</b> Office Closed	<b>11</b> 1:00pm—Ruthie's Kitchen (St. Bernadette's)							
<b>12</b> 9:15am Worship 11:00am Burmese Worship 1:00pm New Life Worship	<b>13</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>14</b> 5:00pm Church Council Picnic	<b>15</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn	<b>16</b> <b>Grapevine Mailing</b> 11:00am Finance Committee	<b>17</b> Office Closed	<b>18</b> NO Ruthie's Kitchen							
<b>19</b> 9:15am Worship 11:00am Burmese Worship 1:00pm New Life Worship	<b>20</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>21</b> 12:30pm Building and Grounds	<b>22</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Office Closed	<b>25</b> 1:00pm—Ruthie's Kitchen (Zion)							
<b>26</b> 9:15am Worship 11:00am Burmese Worship 1:00pm New Life Worship	<b>27</b> 1:00pm Bag Fluffing - Fellowship Hall	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Office Closed	<b>1</b> 9:00am Cars & Coffee Rockford (Zion Grilling)							
<b>2</b> 9:15am Worship 11:00am Burmese Worship 1:00pm New Life Worship	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 1:00pm—Ruthie's Kitchen (Helping Hand)							

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

### Our Ministers - All the People of Zion

Senior Pastor Michael Thomas

Pastor Emeritus Denver Bitner

Office Manager:

Finance Secretary: Hannah Wearsch

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

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

[www.youtube.com/zionrockford](https://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: Pat Ree
- ◇ For healing: Colette Buchert, Linda Callahan, Yolanda Churchill, Charlie Dahlberg, Norma Daugherty, Karen Eisman, Gary Fulkerson, Deanna Hartenberg, John Hoyt, Leola LeGault, Jim McDowell, Les Morgan, Betty Jo Rodey, Wayne Spitzer, Carrie Steder, Deb Tolodxi, Neal Tolodxi, Brian Veitch, 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.

GRAPEVINE DEADLINE FOR THE AUGUST 2026 GRAPEVINE, EMAIL BY JULY 10, 2026 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.

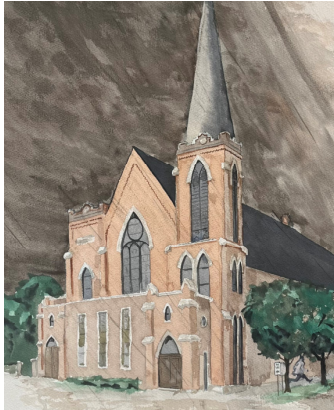
**VANCO**  
FAITH



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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](http://www.youtube.com/zionrockford) afterwards)

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