JOIN ZION

WORSHIP AT 9:15AM

NEW MEMBERS AND BAPTISM!



A Mosaic Community
Sharing the Grace of Christ



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REVISED OCTOBER 28, 2026

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MISSION

Zion Lutheran Church is a mosaic community sharing the grace of Christ with all.

VALUES

These key values are used in decision making.

1. Grace: Unconditional love and mercy
2. Outreach: Building bridges and partnerships at and beyond Zion to express Christian community with words and actions
3. Discipleship: Daily following the ways of Christ
4. Stewardship: We respond to the grace of Christ by sharing our time, talent and treasures
5. Community: Strengthening Christian relationships at and beyond Zion
6. Justice: Intentional advocacy, reconciliation, and building a community of peace
7. Inclusive: all cultures, classes, ethnicities, races, sexual orientation and gender identity

VISON

1. Discipleship – to foster spiritual growth with people connected to Zion through intentional discipleship training for all ages
2. Equipping Leadership – to identify, equip, and nurture leadership at and beyond Zion
3. Neighborhood Community Development – to strengthen and grow community partnerships by defining the roles and responsibilities for Neighborhood Community Development
4. Mosaic/diversity permeates and influences all – to celebrate, grow, and teach our diversity that it will permeate the life and leadership of the church
5. Worship –to expand opportunities for seeker friendly worship
6. Increase Participation – to develop, discover, deploy the gifts and talents of all those who are connected to Zion's mission
7. Facilities –We recommend the 2025 Long Range Planning focus: "Zion's Midtown Mission".

ZION'S CHURCH HISTORY

1883 Zion Chartered out of First Lutheran Church
1884 Zion admitted to the Augustana Synod
1885 Church sanctuary and fellowship hall dedicated
1896 Church Bell Dedicated
1903 Church balcony built
1913 Church steeple added
1914 Women granted right to vote at Zion
1917-25 Formation of Tabor started from Zion leadership
1920 Two paintings on each side of new altar created
1921 English language services started
1929 Two story Education wing added
1931 New Altar completed
1938-42 Alpine Sunday School created/Alpine Church
1955 Education wing expanded and Chapel added;
kitchen expanded; Sacristy and Choir area added
1956 Zion had largest Sunday School: Augustana Synod
1961 Elevator added
1970 First woman to serve on Church Council
1971 8.5 acres bought on Spring Creek, east of Mulford
1972 Discontinued Swedish worship on Sunday
1973 Thrift Shop created
1981 Outreach to Laotian refugees started
1982 Zion Development Corporation formed
Sold the 8 acres of land on Spring Creek, east of Mulford
1982 Food Pantry created
1983 2 homes on 5th Avenue sold to Amcore: parking
1983 Church sells Spring Creek land
1985 Youth Center built: "The Point"
1995 Patriots Gateway Center created
2000 Bell Tower Carillon added
2005 Zion Outreach program formed
2009 Outreach to Burmese refugees started
2018 Ruthie's Kitchen was started
2020 Ascension Window restored
2021 Patriots Gateway Community Center mortgage paid off
2024 First Same Sex Marriage at Zion

LUTHERAN-CHRISTIAN BELIEFS (CATECHISM OR TEACHINGS)

Lutheran-Christians accept the core teachings of Martin Luther (1483–1546). Luther was a German theologian who realized that there were significant differences between what he read in the Bible and the practices of the Roman Catholic church at that time. On October 31, 1517, he posted a challenge on the door of Wittenberg University, titled "95 Theses" (to debate 95 theological issues). His hope was that the church would reform its practice and preaching to be more consistent with the Word of God as contained in the Bible.

What started as an academic debate escalated into a distinct separation between the Roman Catholic church of the time and those who accepted reforms. "Lutheran" became the name of the group that agreed with Luther's convictions. Today, nearly five centuries later, Lutherans still celebrate the Reformation on October 31 and still hold to the basic principles of Luther's theological teachings, such as Grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone.

These comprise the very essence of Lutheran-Christianity:

1. We are saved by the grace of God alone -- not by anything we do
2. Our salvation is through faith alone -- a confident trust in God, who in Christ promises us forgiveness, life and salvation
3. The Bible is the norm for faith and life -- the true standard by which teachings and doctrines are to be judged.

Ten Commandments: The Ten Commandments are the basis for community and civil order. God has provided these for our good so that society and church community experience good order. The Ten Commandments provide the foundation for our lives in the world, community, church and family.

Apostles Creed: The Apostles' Creed is the lens for understanding the holy one who has created all life; who has forgiven us through Christ; and who empowers us through the Holy Spirit. The Apostles' Creed as we now have it dates from the eighth century. But in truth its roots are in the "Old Roman Creed," which was used in some parts of the ancient church as early as the third century. Before the "Old Roman Creed", in turn, were variations rooted in the New Testament itself. While this creed does not come from the apostles (Jesus's followers sent to share the good news), its roots are apostolic (in keeping with the teaching of the New Testament apostles). The creed describes the faith into which we are baptized and therefore is used in the rites of Baptism and Affirmation of Baptism.

The Lord's Prayer: The Lord's Prayer is our guide to call out to God. When we realize that we break the commandments, we then call upon God who in the words of the Apostles' Creed, invites us to know grace in Christ and to rely on the Holy Spirit to be present with us in our trials. The teaching of the Lord's Prayer reminds us that we can call upon God, our heavenly "abba".

Sacrament of Baptism: The Promises of God

1. You are Called by God
2. You are Forgiven by Christ
3. You are Empowered by the Holy Spirit

The Gifts of Baptism

1. Baptism is a SACRAMENT (sacred).
2. Three things that make up a sacrament:
   Gift of God's Grace; Physical Element Attached and it was Commanded by Christ
3. Baptism gives us FORGIVENESS: "When we were baptized, we died and were buried with Christ. We were baptized, so that, we would live a new life, as Christ was raised to life by the glory of God the Father." Romans 6:4
4. Baptism makes us God's CHILDREN: "So you are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have been made like Him." -Galatians 3:26-27
5. In Baptism we are given forgiveness of SINS: "Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." Acts 2:38
6. Baptism is for CHILDREN & ADULTS!
7. A person is baptized only ONCE!
8. Baptism can be celebrated and claimed every day!

Baptism Terms

· Rebirth - New beginning
· Baptism - Washing away of sin
· Original Sin - all of our have sin from birth
· Resurrection - Jesus was raised from the dead
· Children of God - We are adopted into God's family
· Sacrament - sacred, holy, set apart; outward sign of the mystery of God's grace and mercy
· Catholic - the universal Christian church for all who believe in Jesus Christ.
· Renew - Daily we can remember our baptism

WORSHIP

1. "Jesus said, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment."* - Matthew 22:37-38
2. There is a pattern for worship. We *gather*. We hear God's *Word.* We share a *meal* at the Lord's table. And we are *sent* into the world. Worship is fundamentally about what God is doing and our response to God's action. Worship is an encounter with God, who saves us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Taken together, the Word proclaimed and the sacraments -- both Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are called the means of grace. We describe worship as a "gathering around the means of grace."
3. Weekly community worship that is Trinitarian, contextual, liturgical, sacramental [Communion & Baptism-infant/adult] and frequent personal expressions
4. Sabbath: Sabbath means to stop; Third Command which is to "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." – Exodus 20:8
5. Liturgical means work of the people: spoken public confession; singing; scripture reading; sacrament; prayer; and frequent personal expressions.
6. Sacraments: sacred = holy (set apart) Gift of God's Grace - Physical Element Attached - Commanded by Christ = Holy Communion (real presence; open Communion) and Baptism (infant/adult)

BIBLE STUDY

Jesus said: *"…Teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* - Matthew 28:20

The Bible is the inspired Word of God
· Daily devotionals, reading/listening to the scriptures, sermon hearing, Bible study
· Principle of Law and Gospel (order; convicts us; points us)

Lutheran-Christian Theology is a faith rooted in a spirituality of daily dying to our will through Baptism and living in response to the grace of Christ. We are sinner and saint at same time and daily we are renewed as we remember that we are claimed by God in baptism. Key Bible Verses
· John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that God gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.
· Ephesians 2:8-10 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God; 9not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life."

STEWARDSHIP

The early church in Acts 2:44-45 *"All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need."*

Stewardship is our response to God's generosity! We believe that everything we have is "holy currency" (see book by Eric Law). We believe that God created everything. We are called to be stewards of time, talents and treasures in response to God's grace not as a requirement to earn God's love. We acknowledge that everything belongs to God. We encourage "first fruit giving", which means donating before you find out if you have enough. Zion is a generous church and in 2021, we gave 20% of our income to missions programs in the community and globally.

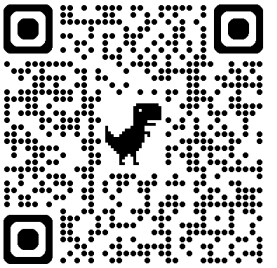
There are various ways people give financially.

1. GENERAL MINISTRY FUND: We give 10% of these funds to Mission Support for the Northern Illinois Synod & ELCA; we give 1% to Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries. The rest of these funds pay for program expenses, utilities and maintenance, administration and staff and other budget areas.

2. SPECIAL MINISTRY FUNDS: We provide members the chance to support various ministry partners at and beyond Zion.

3. CAPITAL FUND APPEAL: We ask members to prayerfully consider donating toward capital improvement projects at Zion in order to maintain the legacy of this space in this neighborhood for future generations.

There are various ways to express your generosity
1. Envelopes mailed to you quarterly
2. Pew envelopes
3. Vanco online giving with the app
4. Zion's Website has a portal for giving



PRAYER & FELLOWSHIP

The early church in Acts 2:42 *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."*

Prayer reminds us to call upon God and we can do this privately or in community; offer prayer concerns through the church Prayer chain, prayer time at worship, praying with others, pray highs and lows in groups and in study and daily life. Bible Passages about Prayer

- Psalm 14:4 - Calling Out to God
- Proverbs 2:1-5 - Pray for insight and wisdom
- Matthew 6:9-13 - Lord's Prayer in the Gospels
- Mark 14:36—Jesus in Gethsemane
- John 17:20-24 - Jesus prays for future disciples
- Romans 8:26-27 - Holy Spirit intercedes for us
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 - "God will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing God will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it."
- James 5:5 - Pray for others healing

SERVICE

"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." - Ephesians 4:11-13

Serving others means being equipped by God for ministry in the home, community, church and world. Everyone has spiritual gifts and talents for the building up of the body of Christ.

The SHAPE inventory helps you to identify your Spiritual Gifts.
SHAPE means: Spiritual Gift, Heart, Abilities, Personality & Evangelism Style

You are called to serve at and beyond the church community. We are called to help you know the right role, for the right time, for the right person for the right reason. We invite you to pray and consider where you might serve at and beyond Zion, such as...
· Worship leader roles
· Committees and Ministry Teams
· Outreach ministry programs
· Education or youth areas
· Small group leadership

OUTREACH

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." - Matthew 28:19

Outreach beyond Zion clearly communicates the grace of Christ in word and deed.

Review the Annual Report for the many outreach programs at and beyond Zion.

Outreach includes supporting and engaging in various social ministry programs at and beyond Zion's community and neighborhood.

We support many local mission programs and projects. Zion has help to create these non-profits organizations that have their own board of directors and are separate 501(c)3 ministries.

- Zion Development
- Patriots Gateway Community Center
- Zion Outreach (Ruthie's Kitchen, Ruthie's Closet and Buddy House)
- Katie's Cup (Cars & Coffee Rockford and Rockford Midtown Market)

We support various global mission projects in partnership with the ELCA.

Sharing the good news of God's love through words and actions includes reaching out to the FRANE (Friends, Relatives, Acquaintances, Neighbors & Enemies)

Outreach means clearly communicating with words:

1. Listening to the other "What's your faith background…"
2. Telling Your Story (verbal) "My faith means…
3. Sharing God's Story "Only by God's grace…

WHAT IS THE ELCA?

During the past several hundred years, different Lutheran church bodies in the world have been established to meet the needs of Lutherans in communities and nations all over the world. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is the largest Lutheran group in North America, founded in 1988 when three North American Lutheran church bodies united: The American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the Lutheran Church in America. Lutherans are part of a reforming movement within the whole Christian church; as a part of practicing their faith, the ELCA and its predecessors have engaged in ecumenical dialogue with other church bodies for decades.

FULL COMMUNION

The ELCA has entered into "full communion" agreements (sharing common convictions about theology, mission and worship) with several other Protestant denominations, including

· the Moravian Church
· the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
· the United Church of Christ
· The Episcopal Church
· the Reformed Church in America
· the United Methodist Church

The ELCA has an ongoing dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, and in 1999, representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church signed the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. This represented a historic consensus on key issues of faith and called for further dialogue and study together. Lutheranism is a faith tradition that is open to all, regardless of background. The ELCA alone is almost five million members strong, with nearly 10,500 congregations across the U.S., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Through programs, ministries and partnerships, the ELCA works every day to address inequities in political, economic and social systems—and to end conflict and violence all over the world. You can learn more about our efforts in this area on the website of the ELCA at www. Elca.org.

As of December 31, 2020, there were 3.3 million baptized members in the ELCA. There were 8,900 congregations organized in 65 synods in nine geographic regions. Zion is part of the Northern Illinois Synod. The ELCA is a diverse church body, becoming more so every day. This church is committed to growing in diversity and strengthening its global, ecumenical and interfaith relationships around the world. ELCA congregations are led by gifted men and women who have been called by God to serve their community. The ELCA calls both women and men to serve as pastors and lay rostered leaders.

HERE ARE SOME FACTS ABOUT ELCA LEADERS:

Þ As of December 31, 2018, there were 17,214 leaders on the ELCA roster including 1,213 Ministers of Word and Service and 16,001 Ministers of Word and Sacrament.
Þ In 2018, nearly 32 percent of clergy on the ELCA roster were women.
Þ In the ELCA's seven seminaries, the numbers of women and men preparing for ministry are about equal.
Þ About 86 percent of ordained women and 83 percent of ordained men are actively serving in congregations.
Þ The ELCA offers opportunities for Lutheran education at every level and considers education as an important part of our calling. We offer quality education at every level through our institutions. In addition to the seven ELCA seminaries and two seminary extension centers, there are 26 colleges and universities, 50 or more lifelong learning programs, 14 high schools, 296 elementary schools, 1,573 early childhood programs, 145 camp and retreat centers serving 450,000 annually.

The ELCA is committed to making the world a more just and peaceful place to live. Through programs, ministries and partnerships ELCA congregations, synods and the churchwide organization work every day to address inequities in political, economic and social systems and to end conflict and violence all over the world. We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world – together. This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here.

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Bishop Stacy Fidlar
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MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Zion Lutheran Church - As a baptized member of God's family, trusting God's grace and mercy, and being in agreement with the Mission, Beliefs, Values, Vision and Structure of Zion Lutheran Church of Rockford, Illinois, members of Zion are led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Zion church community as a committed active member. In doing so, you commit yourself to God and to the people at Zion.

1. We continue to grow in our Mosaic Community as we share the Grace of Christ with all

2. We will protect the unity of the church…
   - …by acting in love toward other members
   - …by using my words to build others up and refusing to gossip
   - …by supporting the leadership, Pastor and staff of the congregation
   - …by living a life of integrity, to God, myself, and others
   - …by treating all equal regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, race, or class

3. We will commit ourselves as disciples by participating in …
   - Worship regularly, receiving the sacraments and hearing the word proclaimed
   - Fellowship opportunities that deepen our relationships in small groups, large group activities and sharing my personal faith with others
   - Serving through our spiritual gifts, interests, and passions at and beyond Zion
   - Prayer ministry for each other
   - Personal and community Bible Study
   - Generous giving of our first fruits to God
   - Outreach beyond Zion that clearly communicates the grace of Christ through local and global mission projects and sharing our faith story

4. As noted in the Zion Constitution, we understand that "All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council" (C8.03). Membership at Zion means… "It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments; live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the Churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards." (C8.04)

5. Not being able to fulfill this membership commitment may cause the Church Council to remove people from Zion Membership due to inactivity.

Membership Commitment Continuing Resolution 4-28-2011

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH TEAMS AND LEADERS

Leadership Team

Our Ministers - All the People of Zion
Senior Pastor Michael Thomas
Pastor Emeritus Denver Bitner
Pastor Uk—Burmese Community
Pastor Amuri Edouard—New Life Church
Office Manager & Finance Secretary: Nancy Ramoz
Outreach Coordinator & Deaconess Student: Janice Forrest
Financial Secretary: Hannah Wearsch
Faith Community Nurse: Jori Roysdon
Music Ministry Coordinator: Jodi Beach
Custodians: Shanita Baker
Worship Media: Kurt Brown

Council Members

Michael Beert (Treasurer)
Pam Bitner
Linda Callahan
Bonnie Dahlberg (President)
Liz Carlson
Thomas Habing (Vice-President)
Karen Kermgard
Laurie Pellant (Secretary)
Angeles Polcher
Ron Simmons
Neal Tolodxi
Pastor Michael Thomas

ZION 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

Zion Welcome Statement!

Journeying together as we love Christ and love all for the sake of the world, Zion Lutheran Church of the ELCA strives to reflect the expansive diversity of the Body of Christ in and through the community.

We welcome, celebrate, embrace, and uplift people of every race, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, disability, mental health status, socioeconomic status, political leanings, or any other boundaries the world uses to decide who is worthy and who is not.

We commit ourselves to the ongoing work of anti-racism and racial equity and ensure the welcome of historically marginalized communities as full participants in our life together.

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