

Zion Lutheran Church  
925 5th Avenue - Rockford, Illinois  
January 25, 2026 at 9:15am

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

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY



PRELUDE      “It’ll Be Alright”

Ellie Mathiesen-trombone

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*The Holy Spirit calls and gathers us together  
as the people of God*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the Creator of heaven and earth,  
the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters.

**Amen.**

Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely. Mighty  
God, lover of justice,  
**you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests  
at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty  
was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you.  
Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of  
Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you,  
our God. Amen.**

The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares:  
Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the  
righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in + Jesus’ name. May the  
Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of  
peace. **Amen.**

## GATHERING SONG "Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!"

### Red Hymnal #873

- 1 Rejoice, ye pure in heart! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing;  
your festal banner wave on high,  
the cross of Christ your king.

### *Refrain*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

- 2 With voice as full and strong as ocean's surging praise,  
send forth the sturdy hymns of old,  
the psalms of ancient days. *Refrain*

- 3 With all the angel choirs, with all the saints on earth  
pour out the strains of joy and bliss,  
true rapture, noblest mirth. *Refrain*

- 4 Still lift your standard high, still march in firm array,  
as pilgrims through the darkness wend  
till dawns the golden day. *Refrain*

- 5 At last the march shall end; the wearied ones shall rest;  
the pilgrims find their home at last, Jerusalem the blest. *Refrain*

- 6 Praise God who reigns on high, the Lord whom we adore:  
the Father, Son, and Spirit blest, one God forevermore. *Refrain*

## GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## KYRIE

Red Hymnal #154

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy; have mercy, O Lord.

## SONG OF PRAISE “You Are Holy” Red Hymnal #525

You are holy, you are whole. You are always ever more  
than we ever understand. You are always at hand.  
Blessed are you coming near. Blessed are you coming here  
to your church in wine and bread,  
raised from soil, raised from dead.  
You are holy, you are wholeness, you are present.  
Let the cosmos praise you, Lord!  
Sing hosanna in the highest! Sing hosanna!  
Sing hosanna to our God!

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Lord God, your lovingkindness always goes before us and follows after us. Summon us into your light, and direct our steps in the ways of goodness that come through the cross of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## THE WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.*

## FIRST READING Isaiah 9:1-4

<sup>1</sup> There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time [the LORD] brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. <sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. <sup>3</sup> You have multiplied exultation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. <sup>4</sup> For the yoke of

their burden and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Word of God. Word of Promise. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 27:1, 4-9

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom then shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

<sup>4</sup> **One thing I ask of the LORD; one thing I seek;  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life;  
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD  
and to seek God in the temple.**

<sup>5</sup> For in the day of trouble God will give me shelter,  
hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary,  
and raise me high upon a rock.

<sup>6</sup> **Even now my head is lifted up above  
my enemies who surround me.  
Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary,  
sacrifices of rejoicing;  
I will sing and make music to the LORD.**

<sup>7</sup> Hear my voice, O LORD, when I call;  
have mercy on me and answer me.

<sup>8</sup> **My heart speaks your message—"Seek my face."  
Your face, O LORD, I will seek.**

<sup>9</sup> Hide not your face from me,  
turn not away from your servant in anger.  
Cast me not away—you have been my helper;  
forsake me not, O God of my salvation.

## SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

<sup>10</sup> Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you but that you be knit together in the same mind and the same purpose. <sup>11</sup> For it has been made clear to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." <sup>13</sup> Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup> I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. <sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel—and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. <sup>18</sup> For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Word of God. Word of Promise. **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

"Celtic Alleluia" Red Hymnal #174

Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 4th Chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

## GOSPEL: Matthew 4:12-23

<sup>12</sup> Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: <sup>15</sup> "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the

gentiles— <sup>16</sup> the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” <sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>18</sup> As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. <sup>19</sup> And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” <sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup> As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. <sup>22</sup> Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. <sup>23</sup> Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

The gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON                      Pastor Michael Thomas

SERMON SONG            “Build A Longer Table”

1     Build a longer table, not a higher wall,  
feeding those who hunger, making room for all.  
Feasting together, stranger turns to friend,  
Christ breaks walls to pieces; false divisions end.

2     Build a safer refuge, not a larger jail;  
where the weak find shelter, mercy will not fail.  
For any place where justice is denied,  
Christ will breach the jail wall, freeing all inside.

3     Build a broader doorway, not a longer fence.  
Love protects all people, sparing no expense.  
When we embrace compassion more than fear,  
Christ tears down our fences: all are welcome here.

- 4 When we lived as exiles, refugees abroad,  
Christ became our doorway to the reign of God.  
So must our tables welcome those who roam.  
None can be excluded; all must find a home.

#### APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

#### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Lord, in your mercy      **Hear our prayer.**

#### PRAYER CANDLES

*This is a time of prayer at your seat  
or light a candle at the two prayer stations.*

*You can request a prayer at the prayer table by the piano.  
Feel free to pray, sing, sit in silence and pray for others.*

#### SONG

**"Spirit of the Living God"**

Spirit of the Living God, Fall afresh on me,  
Spirit of the Living God, Fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the Living God, Fall afresh on me.

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

## MUSIC OFFERING & OFFERING

“Largo”

(from “The New World Symphony”) arr. By Peter Steiner

Offering envelopes are available in the pews at your seat to designate gifts toward the ministries of Zion. The Offering Box is by the prayer table. You can also go online at [www.zionrockford.com](http://www.zionrockford.com) or you can click on the QR code



## TABLE BLESSING “Come to the Table” Red Hymnal #481

Come to the table of mercy,  
prepared with the wine and the bread.

All who are hungry and thirsty,  
come, and your souls will be fed.

Come at the Lord's invitation;  
receive from his nail-scarred hand.

Eat of the bread of salvation;  
drink of the blood of the Lamb.

**THE MEAL** - *God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

## PRAYER

Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

#### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

*Please come to the front for communion today.*

*Receive the wafer with an open hand.*

*The cups of wine are red and juice is in the center  
and the juice is clear.*

*There are individual communion cups at the prayer table by the piano.*

*Dispose of them in the lobby.*

## COMMUNION

## “One Bread, One Body” Red Hymnal #496

*Refrain:* One bread, one body, one Lord of all;  
one cup of blessing which we bless,  
and we, though many throughout the earth,  
we are one body in this one Lord.

1. Gentile or Jew, servant or free,  
woman or man, no more. *Refrain*

2. Many the gifts, many the works,  
one in the Lord of all. *Refrain*

3. Grain for the fields, scattered and grown,  
gathered to one for all. *Refrain*

## “Taste and See” Red Hymnal #493

### *Refrain*

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Oh, taste and see, taste and see  
the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.

1 I will bless the Lord at all times.  
Praise shall always be on my lips;  
my soul shall glory in the Lord;  
for God has been so good to me. *Refrain*

2 Glorify the Lord with me.  
Together let us all praise God's name.  
I called the Lord, who answered me;  
from all my troubles I was set free. *Refrain*

3 Worship the Lord, all you people.  
You'll want for nothing if you ask.  
Taste and see that the Lord is good;  
in God we need put all our trust. *Refrain*

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen.**

#### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray: Radiant God, we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this table with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

#### BLESSING

May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise + bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

#### THE SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

SENDING SONG      “Rise Up, O Saints of God”  
Red Hymnal #669

- 1 Rise up, O saints of God!  
From vain ambitions turn;  
Christ rose triumphant that your hearts  
with nobler zeal might burn.
- 2 Speak out, O saints of God!  
Despair engulfs earth's frame;  
as heirs of God's baptismal grace,  
the word of hope proclaim.

3 Rise up, O saints of God!  
The kingdom's task embrace;  
redress sin's cruel consequence;  
give justice larger place.

4 Give heed, O saints of God!  
Creation cries in pain;  
stretch forth your hand of healing now,  
with love the weak sustain.

5 Commit your hearts to seek  
the paths which Christ has trod;  
and, quickened by the Spirit's pow'r,  
rise up, O saints of God!

SENDING

Go in peace, beloved children of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE "This Little Light of Mine"

Arr. By Mark Hayes

2026 Midtown Midweek Lenten at Noon

## Conversations With Jesus

SIMPLE LUNCH AFTER WORSHIP

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

February 18 at Zion Lutheran Church at Noon

February 25 at Calvary Lutheran Church at Noon  
(held at Emmanuel Lutheran Church)

Preacher: Pastor Mike Thomas

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 2 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

**PRAYER CORNER! WE ASK YOU TO PRAY FOR:**



- ◇ The ELCA, Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry, Bishop Stacie Fidler, Pastor 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 and Pastor Selvakumar of Arcot Lutheran Church in India and 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 the loss of loved ones: Ebony Grant's Mother;
- ◇ For healing: Colette Buchert, Norm Buchert, Linda Callahan, Marjorie Carlson, Yolanda Churchill, Charlie Dahlberg, Jeff Dahlberg, Norma Daugherty, Karen Eiseman, John Hoyt, Gary Johnson, Leola LeGault, Greg Johnson, Jim McDowell, Les Morgan, Terry Morgan, Betty Jo Rodey, Wayne Spitzer, Carrie Steder, Carl Stoutenberg, Kamara Thomas, Brian Veitch, Nancy Warden, Danielle Wegner, Gary Wegner, Jr., and Gary Zeien.

If you have a prayer request or a prayer of thanksgiving 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.

WOZ—We are taking a winter program break, but are still collecting food for Cornucopia Food Pantry. The February items are chili, flip top cans preferred, and Ramen noodles. The grocery cart in the Narthex has been really empty. Please help fill it! Thanks Karen Kermgard

## BAG FLUFFING

FOR CORNUCOPIA FOOD PANTRY

Fourth Monday at 1:00pm

Zion Lutheran Church – Youth Center!

Cornucopia



Food Pantry



## Women's Group!

February 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](mailto:zionrockford@gmail.com)!  
Call Zion at 815-964-4609 for the address!

Zion Lutheran Church - 925 Fifth Avenue - Rockford, IL 61104



## PATRIOTS GATEWAY CENTER LITERACY PROGRAM OPEN HOUSE

January 28, 2026

5:00-6:00pm



Red Robin® will give  
**20% OF FOOD SALES\*  
BACK TO**  
**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Show this flyer or simply mention the fundraiser to  
your server to have your sales counted.

### FUNDRAISER DETAILS

7029 E State St, Rockford, IL 61108  
January 29, 2026\*

If ordering online, please follow these instructions:

1. Start your order at [redrobin.com/order](http://redrobin.com/order) and select the restaurant above.
2. In the menu, go to the category labeled "Fundraisers (Go-Go Only)" and click on that item.
3. Click the "add" button, and then "add to bag."
4. Add your meal items and check out.
5. Arrive at Red Robin, come in, say hi, grab your food and be on your way! If your location has  
multiple pick-up, we can bring it to your car too!

\*Fundraise during restaurant operating hours. Not redeem on food that is not for sale. Location to view hours.  
Duration based on all eligible restaurants and on-site food sales only. For sales made from catering (or select  
locations), 20% party ordering and delivery sales, including gift cards, will be included. Offer valid if flyer is  
displayed in or near the restaurant during fundraiser day & hours.





## **ZION FORUM** February 15, 2026

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

***A CONVERSATION WITH RON CLEWER***  
***THE NEW CEO OF ZION DEVELOPMENT***

Sponsored and Held at Zion Lutheran Church - 925 Fifth Avenue - Rockford, IL 61104

## **Ash Wednesday Worship**

FEBRUARY 18, 2026 AT NOON



**Soup lunch  
after worship**



## **WORSHIP LEADER'S TODAY**

Altar Guild	Kris Sommer
Assisting Minister	
Communion Asst:	
Fellowship:	Bonnie Dahlberg
Musician:	Jodi Beach
Readers:	Charlie Dahlberg

## **WOMEN OF ZION**

During the month of January we are requesting donations of Macaroni and cheese. (Also cereal is always in demand) for distribution at the Cornucopia Food Pantry. There is a great need for these items! A grocery cart is in the Narthex for donations, or you can bring them to the church office. You can donate to Cornucopia on our church website and we pass along the donation to the pantry organization. Thanks so much!

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\* Pattern of Worship—resource from ELW pages 91-93

## **WORSHIP SERVICES ONLINE**

<https://www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford>

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

Please subscribe to the Zion YouTube channel

<https://twitter.com/ZionRockford>



### PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES THIS WEEK

Sunday	9:15am	Worship
	10:30am	Annual Congregational Meeting
	11:00am	Burmese Worship Service—Chapel
	1:00pm	New Life Worship Service-Conrad Room
Monday	9:30am	Book Study—Multipurpose Room
	1:00pm	Bag Fluffing—Fellowship Hall
Tuesday	5:00pm	Human Resource Committee
	6:00pm	Church Council
Wednesday	8:00am	Bible Study—Stockholm Inn
	5:00pm	PGCC Literacy Program Open House
Thursday	10-am10pm	Multicultural—Red Robin Fundraiser
Saturday	Noon-4pm	Works of Faith—Kitchen & Fellowship Hall
Sunday	9:15am	Worship
	10:30am	Fellowship
	11:00am	Burmese Worship Service—Chapel
	1:00pm	New Life Worship Service-Conrad Room

### UPCOMING

February 7	1:00pm	Ruthie's Kitchen
February 8	9:15am	Laotian Reunion at worship
February 9	3:00pm	Women's Circle at Stockholm Inn
February 10	8am-Noon	RVC ESL Class—Marander Room (Tuesday-Thursday, 2-10 to 4-30-26)
	1:30pm	Multicultural Committee
February 15	9:15am	Ron Clewer, CEO ZDC Installation & Forum
February 18	Noon	Ash Wednesday Worship
March 7	8:00am	CRE—Sauk Valley Community College
March 8	10:30am	Forum with Rabbi Binah Wing: "What is Purim?"
April 2	Noon	Maundy Thursday Worship
April 3	Noon	Swedish Good Friday Worship Service
April 18	9am-3pm	Multicultural Civil Rights Conference
		"We The People" - Patriots Gateway Center
June 12-13	8:00am	Synod Assembly—Augustana College