



# GRAPEVINE

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

## MAY 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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## Mosaic Youth Group



Sunday May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm  
Zion Lutheran Church

## Women's Group!

### May 11, 2026

Monday at 3:00-5:00pm  
At Stockholm Inn

### "Esther" Women's Small Group!

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



### PASTOR MACK PATRICK ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP GUEST PREACHER MAY 31, 2026!



9:15am Worship  
10:30AM FORUM

Join us for a Forum after worship  
Northern Illinois Synod Updates!

# PASTOR THOMAS THOUGHTS

## “WE THE PEOPLE”

I am so grateful that we were able to host Mark Charles in April at our civil rights conference held at Patriots. We had about 100 people register and attend the event. His sermon on “radical inclusivity” can be found on our Facebook page and YouTube channel. I thank the Multicultural Committee for their leadership on putting this together. They are



working on grilling up food at the May 2nd Cars & Coffee Rockford, participating in the June Pride parade on June 6th, the Juneteenth service at Zion on June 14th.

## CAPITAL APPEAL

The Fire Alarm System approval is moving forward with Security Alarm Company. We have submitted a down payment to them and the total cost is projected to be \$184,841.00 and we are sending in half. That company has submitted the plans to the Rockford Fire Department for their approval. We will then get a timetable for the installation. If you have any questions, please let us know. Please prayerfully consider any special gifts toward this Capital Fund improvement. I am grateful to the Buildings and Grounds Committee for their efforts in getting quotes and moving this forward. Please support this new Capital Fund Appeal as we “Sound The Alarm” and raise an “alarming” amount (pun intended) for our new Fire Alarm System.

## Mosaic Youth Group



Sunday May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm  
Zion Lutheran Church

## ZION’S MOSAIC YOUTH GROUP

On May 3rd and 17th at 4pm, the new Zion’s Mosaic Youth Group gathers in the youth center with Pastor Bitner and Student Deaconess Janice Forrest. The group started to gather earlier in the year. We need support in providing a meal to the youth so talk with Janice if you want to help. This new group is made up of our Zion church youth, the Burmese church youth and the youth from the Congolese church that worships upstairs in the Conrad Room at Zion. Please join them for games, devotions, food and music.

## GRADUATION PARTY

In the month of May, our daughter Maggie Thomas will be graduating from Northern Illinois University with a degree in Environmental Engineering. We will not be around Mother’s Day weekend as we will be in Dekalb helping her begin to pack and attending graduation ceremonies. Pastor Steve Erickson will be the guest preacher that Sunday. Tammy and I are so thrilled to celebrate with her and family this wonderful milestone. She has been blessed by you over the past sixteen years and I thank you for your encouragement of her. I thank God for her and the leadership she continues to demonstrate for the next generation of servants who love God and God’s people.

*Peace, Pastor Thomas*

# STUDENT DEACONESS JANICE FORREST

For the month of April my internship has been very busy. I have learned that Holy Week is a very busy week. With the services, preaching, evening services, set-ups, breaking down, setting up for the next day and the day-to-day operation of the church. That is what I learned for Holy Week. In April I preached about this guy who was using the phone in the fellowship hall. He was cussing loudly; I asked him to stop cussing about 3 times. When the guy hung up the phone. He started cussing at me and this guy standing next to me. In my sermon I was preaching about Peace. That God wants us to have Peace, (Shalom). I mention in my sermon that you need to let God do his work and take care of your problems. To stay out of his way. On Thursday I was at Dollar General this guy came to me saying Ms. Janice. I said yes, because I was getting some ice cream. I looked up and it was the guy who was cussing me out at Ruthie Kitchen. He said he was so embarrassed when he left Ruthie Kitchen that day. He apologized to me for saying all the mean and nasty words. That he wanted my forgiveness for saying them words to me. I let him know that yes do forgive him and that God loves him and I love him too. He extended his hand out to shake my hand. I said no, can I give you a hug? That is what I am talking about that you must get out God way and let him do his work. I did not have to say anything to the guy. God already knew that the guy would apologize to me. I got in my vehicle and said thank you Jesus.

With my Deaconess program doing my annual reports.

I have a schedule for the Buddy House, for this summer: June 19 th Summer open house 4-6pm; July 17 th Taking the kids to Sand Park Pool 2-4pm; August 21 st Game night 4-6pm; September 18 th Canning and Crocheting? At Zion Lutheran Church 2-4pm; October 23 rd Harvest Celebration 4-6pm.

Janice Forrest, Zion Deaconess Student

## RUTHIE'S CLOSET

Ruthie's Closet has been busy, and with spring in the air we need seasonal sturdy clothing and accessories.

No items on the list need to be new.

Additionally, items that help with transportation and daily existing.

While doing your Spring cleaning or general



decluttering think about donating to Ruthie's Closet.

Things we can use: *Pants, Levi's are premium; Shirts, not dress, and T-shirts; Sweatpants; Sweatshirts and hoodies; Coats; Raincoats/ ponchos; Socks; Belts; Men's boxer shorts; Women's underwear (especially small); Bras; Shoes, tennis and casual; Boots; Bath towels; Wash clothes; Blankets; Sleeping bags; Backpack, totes, and book bags; Tarps; Tents; Roller suitcases; Bicycles; Bike locks and chains.*

If you have questions or donations, contact the church office at 815.964-4609, leave a message for Tom.

## NURSE JORI

May: Skin Cancer and Mental Health Awareness Month

Hello everyone! Spring is finally here! I hope you all have been able to enjoy the sun and better weather we've been having. Speaking of the sun, OSF is having a free skin cancer screening Saturday May 16th from 8am-12pm at the Patricia D. Pepe Center for Cancer Care located at 5666 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61108. Please call (815) 227-2135 to schedule your appointment. Screenings are provided by Edgebrook Dermatology. They do have limited space, so if you're interested call as soon as you are able! As this new season begins and the earth starts to come back to life, take time for yourself. If you noticed you were experiencing seasonal depression during the winter, are currently going through any type of rough season in your life, or are just tired of being cooped up in your house, take a moment to sit in the sun and reflect. Sit with the Lord and focus on just being present in the moment. If you're feeling up for a walk or just wanting to exercise, go outside if the weather is allowing it and move your body. Even if it's only for 10 minutes that's better than staying cooped up in the house the whole day. Come to my class if you want to, happy to have you. Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-10am at St. Bridget Parish Hall, classroom A. Make the time to take care of you because you matter and so does your health and well-being. If any of you or anyone you know within the community needs support, call or text 988. Counselors are available 24/7 365 for mental health struggles, crisis, drug/alcohol concerns, or if you just need someone to talk to. I am here as a support for each of you so please let me know if any of you are wanting visits, needing anything, or are admitted to the hospital. You can also call church if my number is out of reach at the time. Happy Spring and blessings to you all!

Jori, Faith Community Nurse



Free Skin Cancer Screening When: Saturday, May 16th, 2026 8:00 am – 12:00pm Location: Patricia D. Pepe Center for Cancer Care 5666 East State Street Rockford, IL 61108 Please call (815) 227-2135 to schedule your appointment. Screenings are provided by Edgebrook Dermatology. Call today as space is limited. Thank you!

## WOZ NEWS

Hello: All women are invited to attend the interfaith potlucks, listed below, which start at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a dish to pass. Plates, silverware, and beverages will be provided, but you are always welcome to bring your own plate and silverware if you wish. Please join us!

- **Monday, May 18, 2026**, at Christ Lutheran Church, 425 Riverside Rd., Belvidere. Karen Glavin will talk about walking meditation and the history of labyrinths. People will also have an opportunity to walk the labyrinth at Christ Lutheran Church.

- **Monday, June 29, 2026**, at Zion Lutheran Church, 925 - 5th Ave., Rockford. (NOTE: enter at rear door, next to the fire escape; If no one is at the door, push the button marked Kitchen and someone will open it.) The program will be "In Our Own Voice", through Northern Illinois NAMI, with an inspiring panel of women discussing their personal experiences with mental illness.

And don't forget we are collecting Personal Items: toothpaste, soap, deodorant, etc for the pantry during May. Thanks-the Woz Board.

# OTHER

**MONDAY BOOK STUDY**  
AT 9:30AM AT ZION

**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!



## PRIDE PARADE

*Zion is in the parade!*

**June 6, 2026**

*We will setup at 10am!*

*Parade starts at 11:00am*

Sponsored by the Multicultural Committee  
Zion Lutheran Church - 925 Fifth Avenue - Rockford, IL 61104



A KATIE'S CUP & RVC PARTNERSHIP

## “White Body Supremacy”

By Pastor Mike Thomas

Thursday, May 7

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.



Register through RVC!  
Call 815-921-3933 or email  
[T.Lewis@rockvalleycollege.edu](mailto:T.Lewis@rockvalleycollege.edu)  
The cost is \$5 for anyone 50 and older  
**HELD at Katie's Cup**



**Sunday**  
**June 14, 2026**

**Sunday Worship at 9:15am**

**Worship at Zion Lutheran Church**  
**Special Music, Speaker and Worship**

615 S. Fifth Street – Rockford, IL 61104

# MAY 2026 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26</b> 9:15am Worship 11:00am Burmese Worship – Chapel 1:00pm New Life Worship – Conrad Room	<b>27</b> 1:00pm Bag Fluffing - Fellowship Hall	<b>28</b> 8:30am RVC Class – Marander Room 5:00pm HR Committee 6:00pm Church Council	<b>29</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 8:30am RVC Class – Marander Room	<b>30</b> 8:30am RVC Class – Marander Room	<b>1</b> Office Closed	<b>2</b> 1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen – Helping Hands
<b>3</b> 9:15am Worship 11:00am Burmese Worship – Chapel 1:00pm New Life Worship – Conrad Room	<b>4</b> 8:30am RVC Class – Marander Room	<b>5</b> 8:30am RVC Class – Marander Room	<b>6</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 8:30am RVC Class – Marander Room	<b>7</b> 8:30am RVC Class – Marander Room	<b>8</b> Office Closed	<b>9</b> 1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen – Saint Bernadette
<b>10</b> 9:15am Worship 11:00am Burmese Worship – Chapel 1:00pm New Life Worship – Conrad Room	<b>11</b> 3:00pm Esther Circle - Stockholm Inn	<b>12</b> 10:30am Worship Team 1:30pm Multicultural Team - Library	<b>13</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 9:00am Grapevine Articles Due 11:00am Missions Team - Nursery	<b>14</b> 8:30am RVC Class – Marander Room 4:00pm Katie's Cup Board 5:30pm Zion Development Board	<b>15</b> Office Closed	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9:15am Worship – Patriots Gateway 10:15am Simmons Scholarship Award Program - Patriots 11:00am Burmese Worship – Chapel 1:00pm New Life Worship – Conrad Room	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 3:30pm Building and Grounds	<b>20</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn	<b>21</b> Grapevine Mailing 11:00am Finance Committee 11:30am WOZ Salad Luncheon	<b>22</b> Office Closed	<b>23</b> 1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen - Zion
<b>24</b> 9:15am Worship 11:00am Burmese Worship – Chapel 1:00pm New Life Worship – Conrad Room	<b>25</b> <b>MEMORIAL DAY</b>	<b>26</b> 5:00pm HR Committee 6:00pm Church Council	<b>27</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn	<b>28</b> 4:30pm Patriots Board	<b>29</b> Office Closed	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 9:15am Worship – Guest Pastor Mack Patrick 11:00am Burmese Worship – Chapel 1:00pm New Life Worship – Conrad Room	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Office Closed	<b>6</b>

## 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](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: Marjorie Carlson, and Norm Buchert.
- ◇ For healing: Jessica Brown, 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 services.

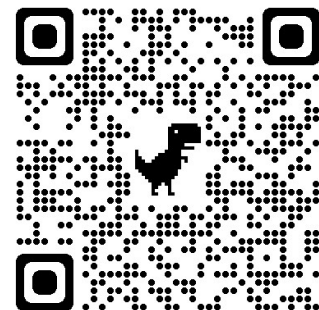
GRAPEVINE DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE 2026 GRAPEVINE, EMAIL BY MAY 13, 2026 to submit an article: [zionrockford@gmail.com](mailto:zionrockford@gmail.com), or please send a hardcopy to the church office.

## 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.

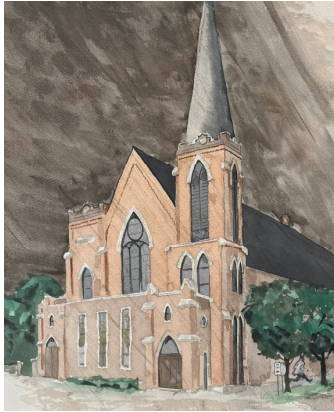
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FAITH



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

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