

Zion Lutheran Church  
925 5th Avenue - Rockford, Illinois  
March 1, 2026 at 9:15am  
[www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford](http://www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford)



## SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

PRELUDE                      “Just As I Am”                      by William B. Bradbury

WELCOME

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

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

**WORSHIP SERVICES ONLINE**

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

Please subscribe to the Zion YouTube  
channel

<https://twitter.com/ZionRockford>



Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses. Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace.

**Amen.**

# GATHERING SONG "Oh, for a Thousand Tongue to Sing"

Red Hymnal #886

- 1 Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace!
- 2 My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim,  
to spread through all the earth abroad the honors of your name.
- 3 The name of Jesus charms our fears and bids our sorrows cease,  
sings music in the sinner's ears, brings life and health and peace.
- 4 He speaks, and list'ning to his voice, new life the dead receive;  
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice, the humble poor believe.
- 5 Look unto him, your Savior own, O fallen human race!  
Look and be saved through faith alone, be justified by grace!
- 6 To God all glory, praise, and love be now and ever giv'n  
by saints below and saints above, the church in earth and heav'n.

## 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

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

Chris - te e - lei - son. Christ, have mer - cy.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

SONG OF PRAISE "Sometimes Our Only Song Is Weeping"



1 Some-times our on - ly song is weep - ing; our on - ly  
2 Some-times we catch the faint-est hum - ming, a far - off



sound is gasp - ing breath. Some-times it seems that God is  
tune our hearts know well. Some-times we sense the Spir - it



sleep - ing while our brief lives are bound in death.  
com - ing. Our song re - turns; our voic - es swell.



Who hears the song our sor - rows swal - low and of - fers  
The Spir - it sings though we are shak - en, and Christ has



hope to calm our fears? When all our words seem frail and  
shared our heart - felt cries. Re - stored, our wea - ry souls a -



hol - low, God heeds the prayers with - in our tears.  
wak - en to join God's song that nev - er dies.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **THE WORD**

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

FIRST READING Genesis 12:1-4a

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” <sup>4a</sup> So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him.

Word of love. Word of trust. **Guide us as we journey.**

PSALM 121

<sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the hills;  
from where is my help to come?

<sup>2</sup> **My help comes from the LORD,  
the maker of heaven and earth.**

<sup>3</sup> The LORD will not let your foot be moved  
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

<sup>4</sup> **Behold, the keeper of Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep;**

<sup>5</sup> the LORD watches over you;  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

<sup>6</sup> **the sun will not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.**

<sup>7</sup> The LORD will preserve you from all evil  
and will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup> **The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in,  
from this time forth forevermore.**

SECOND READING: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

<sup>1</sup> What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." <sup>4</sup> Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup> But to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness. <sup>13</sup> For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression. <sup>16</sup> For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup> as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Word of love. Word of trust. **Guide us as we journey.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“Let Your Steadfast Love”



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

The Holy Gospel according to John, the 3rd Chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: John 3:1-17

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup> What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ <sup>8</sup> The wind

blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”<sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?”<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”<sup>11</sup> “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony.”<sup>12</sup> If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?<sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.<sup>14</sup> And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,<sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”<sup>17</sup> “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

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

SERMON                      Pastor Michael Thomas

SERMON SONG        “When Our World Is Rent by Violence”

- 1     When our world is rent by violence  
          and our lives are marred by grief,  
when our songs of calm assurance turn to cries of unbelief:  
          God, we raise our lamentation seeking refuge and relief.
- 2     When our cities stand forsaken and the poor must beg for bread,  
          when the pris'ner sits forgotten and the homeless find no bed,  
          God, we raise our lamentation: waken justice from the dead!
- 3     When our lives are burnt to ashes and our hopes fade like a dream,  
          when our stories lose their meaning  
and despair becomes their theme, God, we raise our lamentation:  
          Come, Lord Jesus, to redeem!

- 4 Raise up beauty from the ashes; end our violence; tend our peace.  
Give us visions of a future where all captives find release,  
where oppression is evicted, and all works of hatred cease.

#### 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

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**Amen.**

#### SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

MUSIC OFFERING & OFFERING "Love Was When" Jodi Beach

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

## "This Is Christ's Body"



This is Christ's bod - y, bro - ken and blest. Feed us with



mer-cy and love. We are Christ's bod - y,



bro-ken and blest. Heal us and make us one.

**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      "Bread of Life from Heaven"      Red Hymnal #474

### Refrain

Bread of life from heaven,  
your blood and body given,  
we eat this bread and drink this cup  
until you come again.

1 Break now the bread of Christ's sacrifice;  
giving thanks, hungry ones, gather round.  
Eat, all of you, and be satisfied;  
in Christ's presence the loaves will abound. *Refrain*

2 Seek not the food that will pass away;  
set your hearts on the food that endures.  
Come, learn the true and the living way,  
that the fullness of life may be yours. *Refrain*

3 Love as the one who, in love for you,  
gave himself for the life of the world.  
Come to the one who is food for you,  
that your hunger and thirst be no more. *Refrain*

4 Dwell in the one who now dwells in you;  
make your home in the lifegiving Word.  
Know only Christ, Holy One of God,  
and believe in the truth you have heard. *Refrain*

5 Drink of this cup and declare his death;  
eat this bread and believe Easter morn;  
trust his return and, with ev'ry breath,  
praise the one in whom you are reborn. *Refrain*

“Shout to the Lord” Red Hymnal #821

My Jesus, my Savior,  
Lord, there is none like you.  
All of my days I want to praise  
the wonders of your mighty love.  
My comfort, my shelter,  
tower of refuge and strength;  
let ev'ry breath, all that I am  
never cease to worship you.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing  
power and majesty, praise to the King.  
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar  
at the sound of your name.  
I sing for joy at the work of your hands;  
forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand.  
Nothing compares to the promise I have in you.

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: God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

#### BLESSING

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, ✝ bless you now and always.

**Amen.**

#### THE SENDING

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

SENDING SONG      “Blessed Assurance”      Red Hymnal #638

1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain: This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior, all the day long:  
this is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior all the day long.

2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
angels descending bring from above  
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. Refrain

3 Perfect submission, all is at rest;  
I in my Savior am happy and blest,  
watching and waiting, looking above,  
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. Refrain

SENDING

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE      “Blessed Assurance”      arr. By Mark Hayes



# JOIN ZION CLASS

## March 15, 2026

10:30am in Library

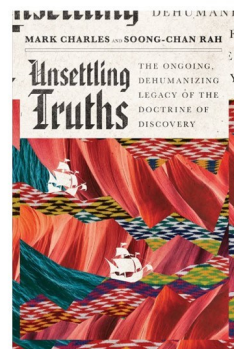
JOIN PASTOR MIKE IN A CONVERSATION  
ABOUT ZION'S MISSION, VALUES & MINISTRIES

## 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



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

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

## Good Friday Swedish Service

Friday, April 3, 2026 at Noon

**Zion Lutheran Church**

925 Fifth Avenue – Rockford, IL



- Good Friday/Långfredagen Service at noon
- Liturgy bulletin all spoken in Swedish
  - Swedish Community Choir
  - Jodi Beach, Special Music
- Loose offering: Ruthie's Kitchen
  - Sermon in English
- Holy Communion liturgy in Swedish



Zion Lutheran Church  
925 Fifth Avenue - Rockford, IL 61104  
Office: 815.964.4609  
[www.zionrockford.com](http://www.zionrockford.com)



Swedish Historical Society  
404 South 3rd Street  
Rockford, IL 61104  
Office: 815.963.5559  
[www.swedishhistorical.org](http://www.swedishhistorical.org)

# 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 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



# BAG FLUFFING

FOR CORNUCOPIA FOOD PANTRY

Fourth Monday at 1:00pm

Held at Zion Lutheran Church!

Cornucopia



Food Pantry



## 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.
- ◇ For healing: Colette Buchert, Norm Buchert, Linda Callahan, Marjorie Carlson, Yolanda Churchill, Charlie Dahlberg, Jeff Dahlberg, Norma Daugherty, Karen Eiseman, John Hoyt, Gary Johnson, Greg Johnson, Leola LeGault, Jim McDowell, Les Morgan, Betty Jo Rodey, Wayne Spitzer, Carrie Steder, Kamara Thomas, Deb Tolodxi, 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. If you would like a ribbon to show support for pride or the African American communities, they are located in a basket in the lobby/narthex. If you would like a Zion yard sign to display they are in the lobby/narthex.

# 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

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



## "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



# Easter Spring Garden

Remember or honor your loved ones and help us beautify Zion's Sanctuary by sponsoring flowers for the Spring Garden. Or, 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, no later than Monday, March 23rd (*firm deadline*).

## EASTER SPRING GARDEN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Happy Easter to: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Plants: Tulip: \_\_\_\_\_ Daffodil: \_\_\_\_\_

Hyacinth: \_\_\_\_\_ (\$15.00 each plant)

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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES THIS WEEK

- Sunday 9:15am Worship  
10:30am Fellowship –In honor of Ina Miller’s Birthday  
11:00am Burmese Worship Service—Chapel  
1:00pm New Life Worship Service-Conrad Room
- Monday 9:30am Book Study—Multipurpose Room
- Tuesday 8am-Noon RVC ESL Class—Marander Room  
(Tuesday-Thursday, 2-10 to 4-30-26)  
5:00pm Seasoned Saints—Aunt Mary’s
- Wednesday 8:00am Bible Study—Stockholm Inn  
Noon Lenten Worship—Calvary (Emmanuel)
- Saturday 8:00am CRE—Sauk Valley Community College  
1:00pm Ruthie’s Kitchen
- Sunday 9:15am Worship  
10:30am Fellowship  
11:00am Burmese Worship Service—Chapel  
1:00pm New Life Worship Service-Conrad Room

## UPCOMING

- March 8 10:30am Forum with Rabbi Binah Wing: “What is Purim?”
- March 9 3:00pm Women’s Circle at Stockholm Inn
- March 29 10:30am Palm Sunday Breakfast
- April 2 Noon Maundy Thursday Worship
- April 3 Noon Swedish Good Friday Worship Service  
7:00pm Good Friday Music Tenebrae Service
- April 18 9am-3pm Civil Rights Conference  
“We The People” - Patriots Gateway Center
- June 12-13 8:00am Synod Assembly—Augustana College

## WORSHIP LEADER’S TODAY

- Presiding Minister Pastor Michael Thomas  
Altar Guild Kris Sommer  
Assisting Minister  
Communion Asst: Diane Wegner and  
Student Deaconess Janice Forrest  
Fellowship: Sponsored by Ina Miller’s Family  
Musician: Jodi Beach  
Reader:  
Usher: Kris Sommer

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