

Zion Lutheran Church
925 5th Avenue - Rockford, Illinois

February 1, 2026 at 9:15am

www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY



PRELUDE "I Surrender All"

arr. By Mark Hayes

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

CONFSSION 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 “As We Gather at Your Table” Red Hymnal #522

- 1 As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence;
let our hearts and minds be stirred. Nourish us with sacred story
till we claim it as our own; teach us through this holy banquet
how to make Love's vict'ry known.
- 2 Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you,
bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image in the world you died to save.
- 3 Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome
those who had been last and least. There no more will envy blind us
nor will pride our peace destroy, as we join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.

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. Holy God, you confound the world’s wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

CHURCH COUNCIL INSTALLATION

THE WORD

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

FIRST READING Micah 6:1-8

¹ Hear what the LORD says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. ² Hear, you mountains, the case of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the LORD has a case against his people, and he will contend with Israel. ³ “O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! ⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the

house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.⁵ O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”⁶ “With what shall I come before the LORD and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

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

PSALM 15

- ¹ LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle?
Who may abide upon your holy hill?
- ² **Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,
who speak the truth from their heart;**
- ³ they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends;
they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.
- ⁴ **In their sight the wicked are rejected,
but they honor those who fear the LORD.
They have sworn upon their health
and do not take back their word.**
- ⁵ They do not give their money in hope of gain,
nor do they take bribes against the innocent.
Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” ²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength. ²⁶ Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, ²⁹ so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

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 5th Chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he began to speak and taught them, saying: ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. ⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. ⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. ⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. ¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

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

SERMON

Pastor Michael Thomas

SERMON SONG “To Be Your Presence” Red Hymnal #546

4 We are your heart, O Christ, your hands and voice,
to serve your people is our call and choice,
and in this mission we, the church, rejoice,
alleluia!

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.**

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 OFFEREING & OFFERING "Limitless"

Music & Lyrics by Jodi Lynn 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 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 "Let Us Break Bread Together" Red Hymnal #471

1 Let us break bread together on our knees;
let us break bread together on our knees.

Refrain

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.

2 Let us drink wine together on our knees;
let us drink wine together on our knees. *Refrain*

3 Let us praise God together on our knees;
let us praise God together on our knees. *Refrain*

“Look Who Gathers At Christ’s Table”

- 1 Look who gathers at Christ's table!
Hear the stories that they bring.
Some are weeping; some are laughing;
some have songs they want to sing.
Others ask why they're invited,
burdened by the wrong they've done.
Christ insists they all are welcome.
There is room for ev'ryone.
- 2 Clouds of light surround the table;
ancient followers appear,
saints confessing how they wrestled
with their guilt, their doubt and fear.
Peter tells of his denying
Christ was ever in his sight;
Paul relates his fruitless efforts
to obliterate the light.
- 3 Their sad stories are repeated
in a thousand diff'rent ways,
but they share one thing in common:
they all end in thanks and praise
for the host who has invited
north and south and east and west
to converge around this table,
where all life is fed and blest.

4 Bring your joy and bring your sadness,
and prepare to be surprised
by the host whose hands are wounded,
who will open wide your eyes
when he blesses bread and breaks it—
truth and manna from above!—
and then passes wine that wakens
in your heart the taste of love.

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 “The Spirit Sends Us Forth To Serve”

Red Hymnal #551

- 1 The Spirit sends us forth to serve; we go in Jesus' name to bring glad tidings to the poor, God's favor to proclaim.
- 2 We go to comfort those who mourn and set the burdened free; where hope is dim, to share a dream and help the blind to see.
- 3 We go to be the hands of Christ, to scatter joy like seed and, all our days, to cherish life, to do the loving deed.
- 4 Then let us go to serve in peace, the gospel to proclaim. God's Spirit has empowered us; we go in Jesus' name.

SENDING

Go in peace, beloved children of God.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE “The Light of the World Is Jesus” 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 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

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

If you have palm branches from last year, please bring them into worship or the office before February 10th. Thank you!

BAG FLUFFING

FOR CORNUCOPIA FOOD PANTRY

Fourth Monday at 1:00pm

Zion Lutheran Church – Youth Center!



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



FEBRUARY 18, 2026 AT NOON

Soup lunch
after worship

LAOTIAN REUNION

February 8, 2026

Worship at 9:15am & Food at 10:30am

Pastor Bitner Preaching and Sharing the History of
the Laotian community in the Zion
neighborhood since the late 1970's!

Held at Zion Lutheran Church
Let us know if you would like to help!
Email zionrockford@gmail.com or call Zion at 815-964-4609!

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



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

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



PRAYER CORNER! WE ASK YOU TO PRAY FOR:



- ◊ The ELCA, Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry, Bishop Stacie Fidlar, 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: Mary Norman.
- ◊ 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, Terry 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.

WORSHIP LEADER'S TODAY

Altar Guild	Kris Sommer
Assisting Minister	
Communion Asst:	Janice Forrest
Fellowship:	Bonnie Dahlberg
Musician:	Jodi Beach
Reader:	Nancy Warden
Usher:	Charlie Dahlberg

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

PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES THIS WEEK

Sunday	9:15am	Worship & Installation of Church Council
	11:00am	Burmese Worship Service—Chapel
	1:00pm	New Life Worship Service-Conrad Room
Monday	9:30am	Book Study—Multipurpose Room
Wednesday	8:00am	Bible Study—Stockholm Inn
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 14	9:30am	Mary Norman Visitation
	11:00am	Mary Norman Memorial Service
	1:00pm	Ruthie's Kitchen
February 15	9:15am	Worship—Ron Clewer, CEO ZDC Installation & Forum
February 18	Noon	Ash Wednesday Worship
February 22	10:30am	Forum: Fire Alarm System Capital Appeal
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

WORSHIP SERVICES ONLINE

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



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