



# GRAPEVINE

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

**JANUARY 2025**  
**Sunday Worship**  
**at 9:15am**

In Person & Facebook live

Burmese Worship at 10:30am

Zion Lutheran Church  
925 5th Avenue  
Rockford, Illinois 61104



Phone: 815-964-4609  
www.zionrockford.com  
zionrockford@gmail.com

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## WINTER FESTIVAL AND MARKET

Saturday, 9am-1pm  
January 4, 2025



MUSIC BY "RARE PRIVILEGE"  
Music, Food, Coffee & 16 Vendors!



*Twentyfirst Anniversary*

### Celebrating Dreams

January 15, 2025  
Sunday at 11:00am

*"IN THE GARDEN..."*

Celebrating the Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

*Legacy Award Recipient: Tedd Snowden*

LUNCH SERVED AFTERWARDS IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL

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



## Congregational Meeting



ANNUAL REPORT REVIEW  
January 19, 2025 at 10:30am

## ANNUAL MEETING

January 26, 2025  
9:15am Worship  
10:30am Annual Meeting

# PASTOR THOMAS THOUGHTS

## “CHRISTMAS CONTINUES”

In the month of January, we will still be celebrating Christmas on January 5th and sing on that 12th day of Christmas! We will be leaving the trees up with just stars on them until Ash Wednesday, which is March 5th this year. Please join us in the new years as the star that led the wisemen continue to lead us into the mystery of God’s presence at worship and in community.

## BAPTISM SUNDAY

We gather for worship on January 12th for the Baptism of our Lord Sunday. We will have the chance to renew our baptism and celebrate the renew of our faith in the one who has claimed us in the water and words of promise in Baptism.

## CELEBRATING DREAMS

Join us Sunday, January 12th at 11:00am at Zion for the “Celebrating Dreams” event, our 22nd Annual gospel jamboree. This year we will honor Tedd Snowden, the Farmers Rising Community Coordinator working at the Buddy House Farms at the Black Hawk Apartments. The day will include a time to remember the ministry of Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Award. We will honor Tedd for his legacy of service in the community. He is a board member at Patriots Gateway Center and works with our urban farm program there. e will have special music for the gathering with various community speakers. A meal in the fellowship hall will take place at noon!

## ANNUAL MEETING

Please plan to join us to review the Annual Report on Sunday, January 19th at 10:30am. We will look at the past year when it comes to programs, ministries, budgets, joys and sorrows. The Annual Meeting is on Sunday, January 26th at 10:30am after worship. Please join us as we vote on the budget, reports and nominations for various leadership roles in the life of the parish.

## HAPPY 15 YEARS!

I can’t believe that it’s been fifteen years since I started here at Zion on January 15, 2010. The past 15 years have been filled with the fulfillment of God’s promises in our lives. I thank God for the call to word and sacrament here at Zion. I have learned so much about the Rockford community and the fabric of relationships at and beyond Zion. When we arrived here fifteen years ago, our kids were only 6 and 8 years old. I am so grateful for the various ways different people have blessed Maggie and Nathan, helping them to know they have gifts to serve.

Over these 15 years, we have reached out to people in so many ways through our ministries and programs. Some of the highlights for me include:

- ⇒ We have supported 12 Pastoral Interns as part of their seminary training toward ordination.
- ⇒ We have taken three different Civil Rights Trips to various places, learning to be a mosaic community sharing the grace of Christ!
- ⇒ We have served thousands of meals at Ruthie’s Kitchen over the past six years.
- ⇒ Helped develop the Rockford Midtown Market and Cars & Coffee Rockford.

I am thankful as we begin a sixteenth year together. I believe we are called to continue to serve the neighborhoods of Rockford with an amazing outreach focus rooted in our Sunday morning worship where we are fed by the word, a meal and a growing community of friends in faith. This foundation is the way we are sustained for the call to serve the least, least and lost.

In this next year, I will be leading a conversation with the multicultural committee and council to discuss becoming a Reconciled in Christ Church. I encourage you to look at [www.reconcilingworks.com](http://www.reconcilingworks.com) for more information.

*Merry Christmas,  
Pastor Thomas  
zionrockfordpastor@gmail.com*

## STUDENT PASTOR

*The road isn't straight...the road isn't straight and sometimes you have to choose a different route. The road isn't straight and sometimes you even get lost. The road isn't straight and sometimes you cross paths with what you least expected. The road isn't straight and yet God is always with us...*

Happy New Year, Zion. We journey into a new year together with hearts full of hope and joy as we rejoice in the birth of our Lord and Savior. We all find ourselves, yet again, facing a year of newness and possibility. Perhaps we are feeling a bit lost or confused. Maybe we are feeling ready and stocked up for all we will need on this next part of the journey. It is also possible that we are feeling out of breath and in need of a break. Our Monday morning Bible study group has been reading from an Advent devotional titled "Sanctified Art, Words for the Beginning". This devotion provides moments of pause and reflection through poems, scripture, and art. The reflection for Epiphany is titled "The Road Isn't Straight". We are invited into the story of the Magi from Matthew 2: 1-12. The Magi are on their way to the Messiah. They are coming from the East and following a star. Their journey is met with twists and unexpected turns. Their road to Jesus is not straight. Their road back home from their visit with Jesus was also not straight. They had orders to report back to King Herod. They followed their divine dream and traveled home on another road. The road to King Herod was not their only option. I am finding myself comforted by this devotion and scripture. The beginning of a new year is oftentimes overwhelming. You want things to be different, better, safer, for the coming year. We have an idea of what our road should look like, what we want it to look like. And, like it goes every year, things happen that we never expected. Our road takes a different turn. Sometimes we see it coming from miles away and sometimes these turns are sudden and abrupt. Above everything, God is present with us. Like the Magi on their different road back home, we trust and believe that God is guiding our way. "We don't have to know where we are going to know that God is with us" (Kayla Craig, "The Road Isn't Straight").

My roads have not been straight. I do not know when a call will come. I do not know when I will be done here. I do know, however, that God is with me. I know that Christ continues to lead and guide me on my journey. This presence is so comforting. I am entering into this new year with confidence in whatever my road turns into. I pray that we all take time to sit and reflect on our journeys. I pray that we embrace every turn and bump we come across. I pray that we keep going when one road ends and another one begins.

Here is a breathing prayer from the advent devotional:

**Inhale: Each twist and turn**

**Exhale: Invites me to follow you.**

Amen.

Student Pastor Rachel Perkins-Gama

internrachelperkins@gmail.com



### RUTHIE'S KITCHEN

We want to thank the Zion Multicultural committee for serving on December 14th. We are looking for people to help serve on Saturday January 11 & 25 at Ruthie's Kitchen. We are also looking for donations to help support our outreach. We served over 1700 meals in 2024. Your generosity of time and treasure helps us care for those around us who need a hot meal. If you know a group that wants to volunteer, talk with Janice Forrest about signing up.

# FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE JORI

Hello everyone! January is Mental Wellness Month. The holiday season can be a very stressful and difficult time for many people, especially those that have experienced the loss of a loved one this time of year or are experiencing health challenges. Your mental health directly affects your physical and emotional well-being, so it is important you are taking care of yourselves. Self-care is different for everyone, but here are some ways you can practice self-care:



- ⇒ Exercise – even if it's brief. This could be as simple as cleaning up spaces in your home or putting up decorations. Any movement is better than no movement.
- ⇒ Reading can provide a sense of relaxation and entertainment, especially on a cold wintry day
- ⇒ Meditation, prayer, and mindfulness can calm the mind, especially after a busy day of hosting holiday activities
- ⇒ Practicing gratitude – Life can become very busy and overwhelming, especially this time of year, so it's important to take a few moments each day to share what you're grateful for – whether you write it down in a journal or share during friendly conversations – take a moment to be present with yourself and others
- ⇒ Journaling can be beneficial, especially if you've had a busy day. Take a few moments to reflect on your day and everything you've accomplished
- ⇒ Getting enough rest – Sleep gives our bodies the opportunity to recover from the activities of the day, refreshes our mind for the next day, and gives us a break from stress or challenges we may be facing. 8 hours of sleep is ideal for full physical rest and recovery
- ⇒ Being creative, whether you like to paint, draw, color, sew, crochet, knit, do holiday or DIY crafts, bake or cook a new recipe, journal, etc. The opportunities to express yourself and creativity are endless, and may bring joy to others
- ⇒ Maintaining physical hygiene – showering, getting a haircut, getting a manicure or pedicure, doing your makeup, applying deodorant or perfume/cologne, applying lotion to dry skin or chap stick to dry lips, keeping your eyeglasses clean, etc. are all ways to maintain your physical hygiene. These tasks may seem simple, but for people that are experiencing depression, may take a lot of energy, physically and mentally

Take time for yourselves during this season. If any of you should need anything, feel free to contact me by phone at 630-465-2135 or email at [Jori.L.Roysdon@osfhealthcare.org](mailto:Jori.L.Roysdon@osfhealthcare.org). My office hours at Zion are 10-noon Mondays and Wednesdays, or by appointment.

Blessings to you all, Jori Roysdon [jori.l.roysdon@osfhealthcare.org](mailto:jori.l.roysdon@osfhealthcare.org)

## ZION MINISTRIES

**BAGGING FOR CORNUCOPIA** We are in need of plastic shopping bags for the Pantry. Please drop off at the office and join us on the fourth Monday, at 1:00 PM, in the Fellowship Hall for lots of fun while we fluff, & diaper bags (Coffee & treats too) for Cornucopia Pantry! Thanks, Karen Kermgard.

**MEMBERS MOVING** (LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE A CHANGE OF ADDRESS)

**WOZ- Cornucopia Food Pantry & Save the Date:** During December we are requesting donations of **pancake mix and syrup** for distribution at the 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. Thank you so much for your help! Continue to look for updates in the Grapevine and weekly bulletins: WOZ Board: Sue Drilling, Maggi Hallin, Karen Kermgard, Kathy Rasch, & Linda Reinhardt.

**MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY** at Zion at 9:30am—feel free to join us!

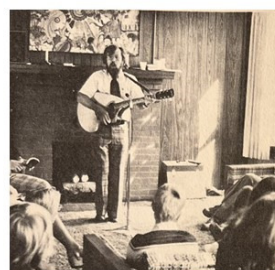
**WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY** at Stockholm Inn, 8:00am—feel free to us!

# Bethphage Travelers Reunion

Host: Pastor Bitner

January 12, 2025

3pm at Katie's Cup  
Food and Drink  
Music by Steve Johnson



Katie's Cup presents:

## OPEN MIC NIGHT!

Hosted by Chris Sims  
January 14, 2025 (5-7pm)



**KATIE'S CUP CONVERSATIONS**  
*"Zoom Communion & the New Reformation"*  
 Rev. Stephen Bowie

January 21, 2025  
Tuesday at Noon

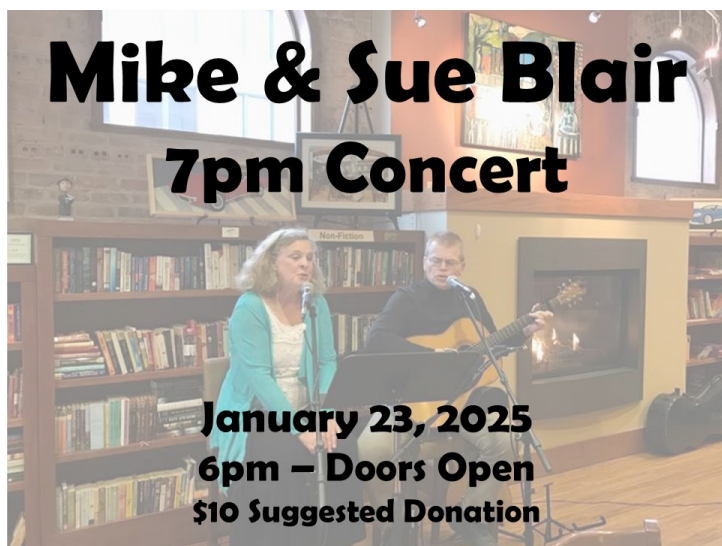


KATIE'S CUP - 502 SEVENTH STREET  
ROCKFORD, IL 61104  
WWW.KATIESCUP.COM

## Mike & Sue Blair

### 7pm Concert

January 23, 2025  
6pm - Doors Open  
\$10 Suggested Donation



## BAG FLUFFING

FOR CORNUCOPIA FOOD PANTRY  
Fourth Monday at 1:00pm

Zion Lutheran Church - Youth Center!

Cornucopia



Food Pantry



# JANUARY 2025 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>29</b> 9:15am Christmas Worship	<b>30</b> 8:00am Miss Carly's Sandwich making - kitchen 1:00pm Bag Fluffing - Fellowship Hall	<b>31</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>1</b> <b>New Year's Day</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Office Closed	<b>4</b> 9:00am Winter Festival and Indoor Market - Katie's Cup
<b>5</b> 9:15am Christmas Worship	<b>6</b> <b>Epiphany</b> 9:30am Book Study - Nursery	<b>7</b> 9:00am Worship Team Meeting Noon: Multicultural Committee Meeting 6:00pm Church Council	<b>8</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 8:00am Miss Carly's Sandwich making 11:00am Missions Team - Nursery 4:00pm WOW	<b>9</b> 4:00pm Katie's Cup Board 5:30pm Zion Development Board	<b>10</b> Office Closed	<b>11</b> 1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen
<b>12</b> 9:15am Baptism of Our Lord ]Worship 11:00am Celebrating Dreams Gospel Jamboree (worship space) 3:00pm Bethpage Travelers Reunion at Katie's Cup	<b>13</b> 9:30am Book Study - Nursery	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 8:00am Miss Carly's Sandwich making 4:00pm WOW	<b>16</b> <b>Grapevine Mailing</b> 11:00am Finance Committee	<b>17</b> Office Closed	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 9:15am Worship 10:30am Annual Report Review - Fellowship Hall	<b>20</b> <b>Martin L. King, Jr. Day</b> 9:30am Book Study - Nursery	<b>21</b> Noon: Katie's Cup Conversation 3:30pm Building and Grounds	<b>22</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 8:00am Miss Carly's Sandwich making 12:00pm Patriots Open House 4:00pm WOW	<b>23</b> 4:30pm Patriots Board 7:00pm "Mike & Sue Blair Concert" at Katie's Cup	<b>24</b> Office Closed	<b>25</b> 1:00pm Ruthie's Kitchen
<b>26</b> 9:15am Worship 10:30am Congregational Meeting - Fellowship Hall	<b>27</b> 9:30am Book Study - Nursery 1:00pm Bag Fluffing - Fellowship Hall	<b>28</b> 5:00pm HR Committee 6:00pm Church Council	<b>29</b> 8:00am Bible Study - Stockholm Inn 8:00am Miss Carly's Sandwich making 4:00pm WOW	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Office Closed	<b>1</b> 9:00am Valentine Festival and Indoor Market - Katie's Cup

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

### Our Ministers - All the People of Zion

Senior Pastor Michael Thomas  
Student Pastor Rachel Perkins-Gama  
Pastor Emeritus Denver Bitner  
Office Manager & Finance Secretary: Jolyn Hess  
Outreach Coordinator & Deaconess Student:  
Janice Forrest  
Faith Community Nurse: Jori Roysdon  
Music Ministry Coordinator: Jodi Beach  
Custodians: Shanita Baker and  
Denzel Banks  
Worship Media: Kurt Brown

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

Michael Beert, Pam Bitner, Bonnie Dahlberg,  
Gary Fulkerson, Debbie Gortowski, Thomas Habing,  
Karen Kermgard, Angeles Polcher, Debbie Raymond,  
Ron Simmons, Kris Sommer,  
Pastor Michael Thomas, and Neal Tolodxi

### Church Council Officers

President: Kris Sommer  
Vice-President: Thomas Habing  
Treasurer: Michael Beert  
Secretary: Bonnie Dahlberg  
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)

GRAPEVINE DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY 2025 GRAPEVINE, EMAIL BY JANUARY 11, 2025 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.

## PRAYER CORNER

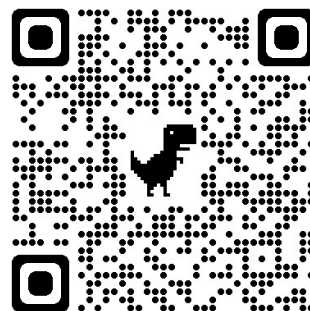
### WE ASK YOU TO PRAY FOR:

- ◇ The ELCA, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Bishop Stacie Fidler, Pastor Michael Thomas, Student Pastor Rachel Perkins-Gama, 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.
- ◇ Pastor Cosmas Mujungu of Sepuka/Msisi Church in Tanzania.
- ◇ Pastor Selvakumar and Arcot Lutheran Church in India.
- ◇ Mission Partner in Senegal with Pastor Mytch Dorvilier
- ◇ For the Northern Illinois Synod; North Conference churches; Midtown Lutheran Parish, faculty and students of Rockford Lutheran Schools, Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries.
- ◇ For those who grieve loss of loved ones.
- ◇ For healing: Eloise Anderson, Phyllis Brynteson, Colette Buchert, Linda Callahan, Yolanda Churchill, Charlie Dahlberg, Norma Daugherty, Jim Duhigg, Deanna Hartenberg, Jolyn Hess, Linda Reinhardt, Betty Jo Rodey, Wayne Spitzer, Carrie Steder, Neal Tolodxi, Brian Veitch, and Megan Zaphel.

If you have a prayer request or a prayer of gratitude to share, please notify Pastor Mike or Student Pastor Rachel. 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.

# VANCO

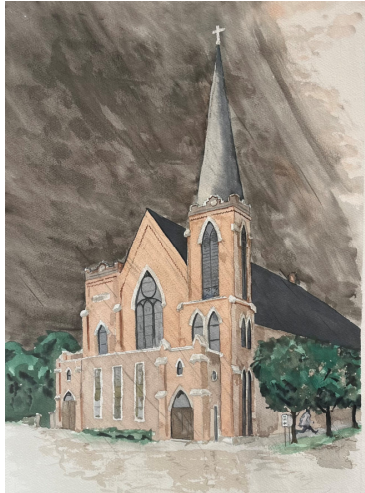
FAITH



Zion Lutheran Church  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



*“A Mosaic Community Sharing the Grace of Christ with All”*

Place mailing label here.

# 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 10:30am In the Chapel