

FOCUS

April 2026



A Publication of
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Chisago City, Minnesota

Message from Pastor Sarah

Last week I had a small bouquet on my office desk. Emmy and I had deconstructed funeral flowers and made small arrangements to deliver around the neighborhood. I took a few of the leftover flowers and stuck them in a glass to brighten my desk. One of the items that made it into the glass was a curly stick. This stick had been used to add height and variety to one of the larger arrangements. After a week, the flowers were wilted and turning brown. I emptied them but then looked down, and to my surprise, the stick had roots and was sprouting leaves! Of course, I kept it and will soon be planting it in a pot to see how it grows and discover just what the plant is.

The discovery of those tender leaves brought a smile to my face. So many times we think something has died, and yet we end up being surprised with signs of new life. We are caught unaware by a note from an old friend. We hear a baby giggle and the whole day is brighter. This past fall we had sightings of a man on a motorcycle with a goggle wearing dog in the side car. Every time it made me laugh.

Easter is like that. Everything had grown dark and death seems to be the final answer when Jesus is laid in the dark tomb and the stone is rolled over the door. The women go home to weep, the men gather behind locked doors, afraid and out of hope. We know what happens next. New life springs forth as Jesus lives again. Hearts are renewed and hope is refreshed. And we cannot help but feel the same way.

May you look for and see signs of new life this Easter season.
May God continue to surprise us and fill us with joy.

Peace and love,
Pastor Sarah



*Therefore we were buried with him
by baptism into death, so that, just as
Christ was raised from the dead by the
glory of the Father, so we also might
walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4*

Worship Services

9:00 am Sunday
Coffee and Fellowship
following the service.

Contemporary Worship
10:45 am Sunday

Facebook live is available at 9am
and YouTube recording is
available at 10:00 am.

Find Us Online:

YouTube: recordings are posted
@zionevangelicallutheranchi6301
Facebook: 9:00 am Live (zionlcc)

Office Hours

Monday through Thursday
9:00 am to 2:00 pm
or by appointment.



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES



About our April 4th Easter Vigil

Weather permitting, we will gather outside to light a great fire, praising the risen Christ as our light. We then sing songs and hear beloved stories, inspiring poems, delightful tales, and the Easter gospel from John, all of which proclaim that God is always giving new life. We then thank God for baptism. Finally, we will conclude with holy communion.

- Maundy Thursday, April 2, 6:30 pm
- Good Friday, April 3, 6:30 pm
- Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 4, 6:00 pm
- Easter Sunday, April 5, 9:00 am

OF NOTE:

- Due to the fact that our **March Quilting Day** falls on a special day in our worship life-Maundy Thursday-we will not have quilting on that day. It is a time of quiet reflection and evening worship. Please mark your calendar- **No Quilting on Thursday, April 2nd.**
- Easter Decorating will take place on Saturday, April 4th from 9:00-10:30 am. Feel free to join us!
- There are still several volunteer opportunities available for both Good Friday and the Easter Vigil services.

LOOKING AHEAD

Health Ministry on Sundays

Attend Fellowship Hour and Stay for a Talk!



APRIL

On Sunday, April 19 we will host a representative from Iringa Hope. Iringa Hope is one of the Bega-Kwa-Bega Affiliates of the Saint Paul Area Synod that works in conjunction with the Lutheran Diocese of Iringa (DIRA) in Tanzania. Iringa Hope was founded 15 years ago to provide microloans to farmers and small business owners in one of the Regions (like a State or Province) of Tanzania. Iringa Hope loans enable farmers to buy better seed and the most appropriate fertilizer, thus significantly increasing crop yields.

MAY

On Sunday, May 17 at 10:45 am, we will host another organization, Dignity for Daughters, that supports girls in the same Tanzanian location of Iringa. Stay tuned for more details.

JUNE

On Sunday, June 14, we will host a blood pressure clinic.

Confirmation Class

Confirmation class will resume on April 8 (weekly Wednesday class) and April 15 (Sunday class).

Fun was had by all at our Hawaiian themed Senior Lunch on March 19th!



photos courtesy of Arlen Strehlo

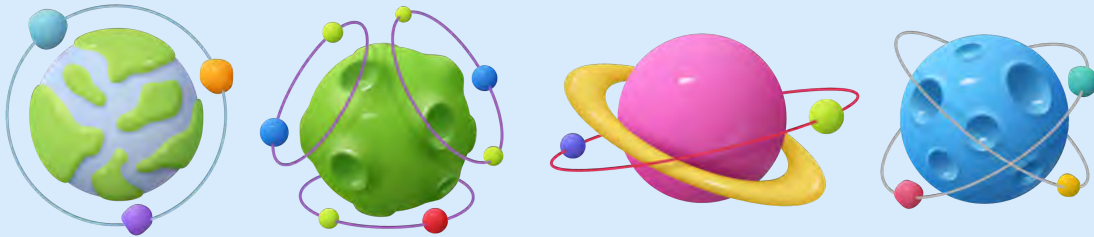
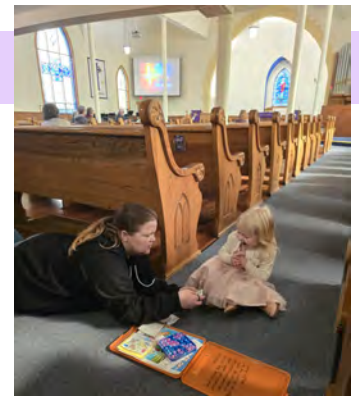
Engaging with Emmy

WEEKLY PROGRAMMING

NOIZ will meet on April 8, 15, 22, 29 No class on April 1st)
We will conclude our programming with a Bowling Party on April 29.

Game Days are Wednesdays at 1:00 pm
April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Join us for an afternoon of games. Show up when you can!
We meet in the Fellowship Hall.



It's time to get ready to bring your friends to Vacation Bible School that will be....
OUT OF THIS WORLD WITH JESUS!

WHEN: June 15-19, 2026, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. on Monday.

WHERE: Trinity Lutheran Church, Lindstrom

WHO: Grades Pre K to Grade 5

Hosted by the Chisago Lakes Lutheran Churches – Chisago Lake, Trinity, and Zion

Our adventure will take us out of this world and into the universe! When God began creating the world and beyond, nothing was left out. We'll discover how we can take care of God's creation, that we are all like stars and aliens, alike, and yet created uniquely by God! It will be a week of fun, games, lessons, crafts, snacks and more with your friends! Make sure to invite your friends.

Cost is \$20. Bring a friend or two or three and come and join the fun!
Friends must have their parents fill out a form and \$20 turned in.
This form can be found in the office and is due by Monday, June 8.

What to bring: your own lunch each day (snacks will be provided),
energy, and a positive attitude!

NOIZ Kids baked cookies and delivered them to Point Pleasant during their spring break lock-in.



photos courtesy of Emmy

Gee Howard...Words to Challenge and Inspire

Words given to Sarah Young to be shared with all

Let the dew of My Presence refresh your mind and heart. So many, many things vie for your attention in this complex world of instant communications. The world has changed enormously since I first gave the command to "Be still and know that I am God." However, this timeless truth is essential for the well-being of your soul. As dew refreshes grass and flowers during the stillness of the night, so My Presence revitalizes you as you sit quietly with me.

Spread love wherever you go. Let no one come to you without leaving happier.

Mother Theresa



Notes of Gratitude



Thank you to all who donated items for the Youth's Silent Auction.. Also, thank you to all who attended and to those who donated to the youth's next mission trip in July.

Thank you to everyone who supported NOIZ spring break activities.

Thank you to everyone who supported the Easter Garden this year with a memorial gift.

Thank you to Sue Schneider and the altar guild for all of their work this season.

Thank you to everyone who helped with our mid-week Lenten suppers and worship.

Thank you to our serving teams and Emmy's group for providing meals.

Thank you to Kia Frederixson and Lilly Lachmiller for leading the singing.

Thank you to the adults that helped with the confirmation class- Becky Haven, Todd Freeman, Linda Letourneau and George Mickelson.

Thank you to Rod Sietsema for running the sound system and Joy Sietsema for playing piano.

Thank you to Pat Pojanowski and Sharon Schmidt for raising \$653 for Family Pathways Food Shelf through their pie sale. In addition to the pies, Sharon utilized her Thrivent Action Team card by baking 62 pounds of bread for the food shelf during the month of March. Thanks also to all those who participated in the pie sale.

Thank you to the adults that helped with the confirmation class- Becky Haven, Todd Freeman, Linda Letourneau and George Mickelson.

I am utterly flabbergasted at the generosity of this congregation! You all overwhelm me! God Bless each and every one of you for your understanding and compassion at this difficult time.

With thanks, Mary Redgrave

Dear members of Zion, Thank you so much for your amazing donations of winter clothes! Our volunteers at Doggie Dud Ranch appreciate it so much. You may laugh a little about needing warm clothes in Florida! But, they work from 7am-10pm and it's in the 30's in the morning. We all know how it feels to be cold. And there is nothing better than Minnesota winter gear! We are overwhelmed by your generosity!

Many Blessings, Julie & Doggie Dude Ranch

Quilting Update



Having mentioned to those in attendance at our February and March quilting events, I am informing the church membership that I am retiring from being coordinator of the quilting program as of September 2026. It is time for a change, and a new/different approach to our quilting activities. I have reached that point in life in which I recognize my limitations; new/fresh ideas and energies are needed. It will be up to the members to consider what the future of this service to our congregation and community should be. Is there someone yet to be a part of this group willing to step forward: I shall continue to participate in the quilting activities, as I am able, but not as coordinator or responsible for leadership of this program.

I thank you for your support to Corrine Mix and me in the past few years and do hope that someone from our congregation will feel the guidance of the Lord to assume this responsibility.

Thank you. Virgi Johnson

Food Shelf Ministry & Community Support



UPDATE on FEBRUARY COLLECTION

You heard the call and answered by donating even more Cake Mixes and Frosting! We were able to provide Family Pathways with an additional [55 cake sets](#) for their Easter Meal distribution!



MARCH COLLECTION

Thanks to you, during the month of March, we collected a total of [52 packages](#) of baby wipes for families supported by Lutheran Social Services.



Zion also collected [221 pounds](#) of food in March.

Finally, you contributed [\\$181](#) in loose change to support the Chisago Lakes Clergy Association Good Samaritan Fund.



APRIL COLLECTION: Lemonade Mix for the Community Meal.

Page Turner's Book Club

On Monday, April 6 at 6:00 pm we'll discuss *Wealth of Shadows* by Graham Moore

1939. Tax attorney Ansel Luxford has everything a man could want, but he is obsessed by a belief that Europe is on the precipice of a war that will grow to consume the world. He is offered an opportunity to move to Washington, DC to join a clandestine team within the Treasury Department that is conspiring to undermine Nazi Germany. He takes on the challenge of a lifetime. How can they defeat the enemy without firing a bullet?



On Monday, May 4 at 6:00 pm we'll discuss *The Lies They Told* by Ellen Marie Wiseman.

When Lena Conti, a young, unwed mother sees immigrant families being forcibly separated on Ellis Island, she vows not to let the officers take her two-year old daughter. But the inspection process is more rigorous than she imagined, and she is separated from her mother and teenage brother, who are labeled burdens on society, denied entry, and deported back to Germany. Now, alone but determined to give her daughter a better life after years of living in poverty and near starvation, she finds herself facing a future unlike anything she had envisioned.



For further information contact Marilyn Rue at mrue.rue@gmail.com. Books previously reviewed by Page Turners can be found in the church library. If you'd like a comprehensive list of the planned book choices, contact the office.

MEETINGS

Property Committee
Wednesday, April 8, 5:00 pm

Health Ministry Committee
Thursday, April 9, 11:00 am

Shepherding Committee
Thursday, April 9, 12:00 pm

Finance Committee
Tuesday, April 14, 1:00 pm

Zion Council
Wednesday, April 15, 6:00 pm

Stewardship Committee
Thursday, April 16, 11:00 am

Adult Education

Pastor Sarah's Bible study meets on Thursday mornings at 10:00 am in the library, year-round.

We will learn more about women in the Bible. Everyone is welcome to join us! No prior Bible Study experience is required.



Men's Bible Study is led by Pastor Richard Baumann, on Saturday mornings at 8:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. Although our primary intent is a Bible study, we seem to digress often and cover a wide range of subjects. Join us any time!

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Readers, Ushers, Greeters, Communion Assistants, and Coffee Hosts are needed every week.

Online sign-up is found at zionlcc.org or see the paper schedule after worship on the bulletin table. Dates through May are listed.



The **Quilting Group** meets once a month on the first Thursday from 12:30-2:30 pm. There are also opportunities to assist with Missions at these gatherings.

Please note: There is no April meeting.

Minutes for the March Council Meeting are available upon request.

COMMUNITY



Once Upon A River

An Earth Day concert with
Dan Chouinard, Barbara McAfee,
Peter Mayer, Rosie Peters and more!

Sunday April 12, 2026
Concert 2-4pm
Pre-Concert Exhibits 1-2pm
The Historic Auditorium
Tickets at festivaltheatre.org

Presented by
ST. CROIX FESTIVAL THEATRE
Rise from Destruction for the Arts
NORTH WOODS AND WATERS OF THE St. Croix HERITAGE AREA

Sponsored by
ST. CROIX VALLEY FOUNDATION
WILD RIVERS

Beer & Hymns
Sunday, April 26,
3:30-5:30
Uncommon Loon
Brewing Company



Calling All High School Seniors & College Students!
The Endowment Committee is offering scholarships.

Find the form at this link:

<https://forms.gle/ANhtu3cxkn8Konj7A>

A written narrative is required on the application. All students including those pursuing vocational education and continuing education are encouraged to apply. Deadline is April 30.



THRIVENT

In 2025, Zion received \$2,035 through the **Thrivent Choice® program**. These contributions strengthen our community and we're grateful for the impact. Thrivent clients can direct Choice Dollars® or request Action Team Cards at thrivent.com/thriventchoice.

If you have an opportunity to request a **Thrivent Action Team card**, Emmy is currently in need of funds for future Senior Luncheons, Vacation Bible School, Ice Cream Social, Health Ministry events, and shepherding projects.

Save the Date:
Annual Clean-Up Day is
Saturday, May 2nd at 8:30 am.



Pave the Way- Part Two

Our church family continues to make steady progress in caring for the financial commitments that helped provide our much-needed parking lot.

The remaining balance on our second mortgage is \$86,000 and requires annual payments of \$21,000. The interest rate is 4.25 %, and it would be paid off in about 5 years.

By working together through prayerful generosity, we can reduce or eliminate the debt, ease future financial pressure, and free additional resources for ministry and outreach.

We invite you to consider making a special gift toward this effort. Any contribution would be above and beyond your regular annual giving and would not reduce or replace the commitment that you already have made.

Various gifting techniques could be used: Qualified Charitable Distribution from an IRA, appreciated stock or property, or just writing a check. You may want to consult your tax preparer if necessary.

To discuss this further, feel free to contact Gary Kerkow @ 651-308-9225.

Sources of Support at ZION CHISAGO CITY



Pastor Sarah is available to minister to anyone in need of spiritual care and comfort. Please let her or the church office know if there is someone she can pray with or help.

- **The Prayer Chapel**, located in a small room in back of the sanctuary, is always available for anyone in need of a quiet space to pray or meditate. Someone can be available to pray with you, if you wish.
- Zion has a strong **prayer chain** group. If you have prayer requests or would like to be a part of the prayer chain, please call Sandy Patrias, 651-674-2029 or email at sd.patrias@q.com.
- The **Caregivers Courage** support group, led by Vicki Mickelsen, parish nurse, meets the first and third Wednesday mornings of the month at 9:30 am in the library. If you or someone you know is a caregiver, please come and invite them to join the group. Bring a beverage if you wish. For more information, contact Vicki at gandvmick@frontiernet.net.
- The **Grief Support Group**, led by Pastor Sarah, meets in the library on the second and fourth Wednesday mornings of the month at 10:00 am in the library. This group is open to people in the larger community as well. If you know someone who has lost a loved one and could use a caring group that understands the pain of grief, please let them know about this group.
- Zion hosts the free **Community Meal** every Monday of the year from 4-6pm in our Fellowship Hall. Year round, this weekly event brings together 250+ people from all walks of life to share a meal. No reservations necessary.
- **Contact a Mental Health Navigator for free** at 612.642.1220 (text/call) or email navigator@mhconnect.org. Navigators are available Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. If you reach out outside these hours, they'll return your message the following day. Help with access to mental health services and support with resource navigation.
- **Mental Health Crisis Help** call or text 988
- For **local crisis help**, call 800-523-3333 or Text "MN" to 741741
- Questions about Mental Health? **You are not alone**. One in four adults will experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any given year. People in all walks of life, and those they care for, can be affected at any point in their lives. You can find information and resources in our local area: **AdultMentalHealth.org**
Serving counties of Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Pine, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Are you worried about your mental health but don't know where to start?
Find a free Mental Health Screening at: mentalhealthmn.org

Movement Opportunities

- **Tai Chi meets** every Monday morning from 9:30-10:30 am.
 - **Strength and Flexibility (55+)** meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30-9:15am
 - **Cardio class** meets immediately after at 9:30 am. Cardio class is dance based .
- Tuesday/Thursday classes are open to the general public. Donations are welcome to pay the instructors.



ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

28005 Old Towne Road
Chisago City, MN 55013
Phone: 651.257.2713
Web: www.zionlcc.org or www.elca.org
Email: office@zionlcc.org



ZION STAFF

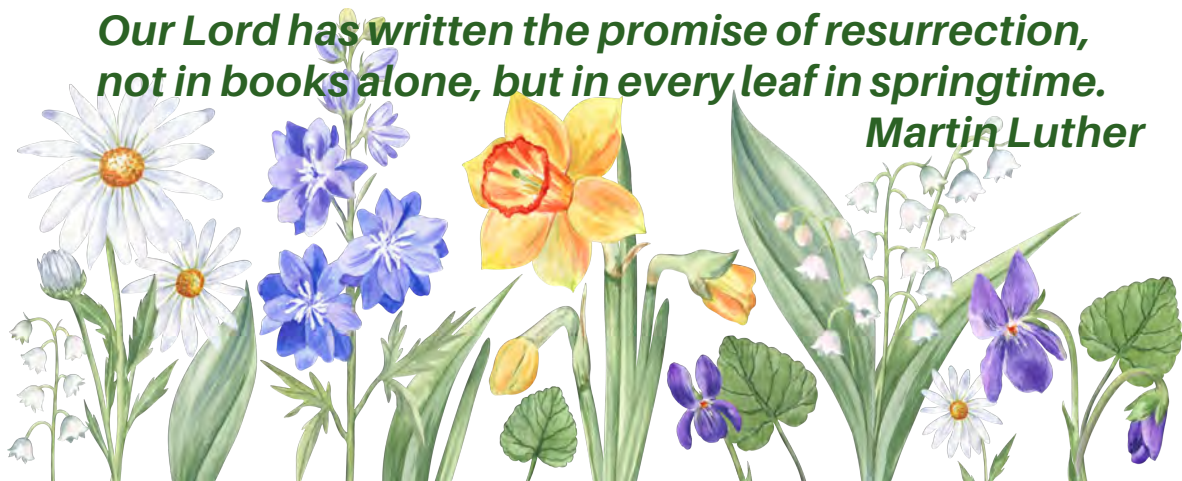
Pastor Sarah Kerkes, ext. 2, pastor@zionlcc.org
Intergenerational Ministry: Emmy Lundeen, ext. 3, emmy@zionlcc.org
Office Administrator: Nina Ball, ext. 1, office@zionlcc.org
Bookkeeper: Deb Hoffmeister, ext. 4, bookkeeper@zionlcc.org
Organist: Josh Miller
Auxiliary Organists: Julie Lauritzen, Joy Sietsema, Wayne Hulting
Bell Choir & Choir Director: Kelly Lachmiller
Accompanist: Melanie Torborg
Youth Director: Todd Freeman
Maintenance: Hal Becker, Linda O'Donnell
Cemetery: Sheryl Mellgren, ext. 5, cemetery@zionlcc.org
Sound Tech: Rod Sietsema

ZION COUNCIL

Vicki Mickelsen, President
Shepherding/Health Ministry
Barb Garness, Vice-President
Hospitality
Sheila Strehlo, Secretary
Arlen Strehlo, Treasurer
Roger Edholm, Property
Kia Frederixon, Youth
Virgi Johnson, Missions
Kelly Lachmiller, Music & Worship
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Linda Letourneau, Stewardship
Emmy Lundeen, Christian Education
Karen Pederson, Outreach

***Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection,
not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.***

Martin Luther



If you would like to donate to Zion's ministry, you can use this QR code. Thank you.



If you view services from home and would like to be on the email list to receive the bulletin each week, notify the office.

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If you'd like to receive this newsletter via email and Zion's weekly E-news on Thursdays, contact the office to be sure your information is in our database.