

# FOCUS

August 2026



A Publication of  
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Chisago City, Minnesota

## Message from Pastor Sarah

This past month Zion's church council had a mini retreat. Members participated in an exercise to clarify values that are important to our congregation. We came up with four words that speak to who we are.

1. **Sacramental.** We are centered in worship with the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion guiding our communal life.
2. **Serving.** We serve each other and our neighbors in a wide variety of ways including hosting the Community Meal every week, our quarterly Senior Luncheons, coffee hour, funeral luncheons, providing treats and supplies for our youth. We serve by giving away our quilts and prayer shawls. We collect school supplies and toiletry kits for people around the world.
3. **Hospitality.** We are a welcoming congregation. We value human connections and try to greet all who come into our space so that they might feel at home.
4. **Generosity.** This congregation is very generous with their gifts of time, talent and resources. If there is a need, people step up to help out in whatever way they can.

I encourage you to sit with these words for a bit. How have they shaped your own life of faith? Which of these values are important to you? Which value is a place for personal growth?

I would like to thank the council for taking this work seriously. There will be more to come as we start our intentional stewardship campaign. Thank you for being on this journey with us!

Peace,  
Pastor Sarah

<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup> love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.      Romans 12:9-13



## Worship Services

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

*Contemporary Worship is  
on hiatus for the summer.  
It will resume on September  
6th at 10:45 am.*



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

## Find Us Online:

YouTube: recordings are posted  
@zionaevangelicallutheranchi6301  
Facebook: 9:00 am Live (zionlcc)



## Office Hours

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



## AUGUST EVENTS



Zion will host guest preachers in August. Pastor Marla Amborn will be with us on Sunday, August 2nd. Our new Bishop, the Rev. Justin Grimm, will be here on August 9th. His official installation is September 13 at 3:30 pm at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Apple Valley. The public is invited to attend.



### **National Night Out is Tuesday, August 4th, 6:00 pm**

Join us on the front lawn by Old Towne Road for root beer floats!

*National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that is celebrated nationwide. The campaign promotes community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make neighborhoods a safer, better place to live.*

Donations of ice cream and root beer are welcome.



### **Game Day is returning on Wednesday, August 5th at 1:00 pm.**

We will continue meeting most Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. We'd like to establish a variety of groups who like to play a particular game. We also realize there are those who are very competitive and those who'd rather chat while playing a game. Connect with Emmy if you have a specific game in mind.



**The Stewardship Committee** will move forward with planning for the program Stewardship For All Seasons. The next meeting will be held August 6, at 6:00 pm via Zoom. If you can help in any capacity, we'd love to have you! Perfect attendance not required. Sit in on a meeting to see what it's all about.

To join via Zoom, all that is required is a computer with a typical browser like Chrome or Firefox, which comes with all computers. A link will be sent through email to connect you to the meeting.



Zion will open our doors to offer respite from noon to 2:30 pm, prior to the **Ki-Chi-Saga Days parade on Sunday, August 23rd**. We'd like to have a building host be present at that time. Reach out to the office if you are able to offer this help.

## Life at Zion

The youth group had a fulfilling and productive mission trip this year! They contributed many hours helping citizens of Winchester, Kentucky repair their homes.



### **THIS WEEK:**

WE HAD 296 CAMPERS  
FROM 20 CHURCHES IN 13 STATES.  
YOU MADE UP 50 CREWS, WORKED AT  
52 SITES, AND COMPLETED 100%  
ALL TOGETHER, 8,880 HOURS OF SERVICE.

photos courtesy  
of Heidi Klecker

## LOOKING AHEAD TO FALL: Save the Dates

The **Choirs** will begin practice after Labor Day. Every Monday, the Bell Choir meets at 5:30pm while the Choir meets at 6:30 pm. Join us!



### **Seniors and Friends Worship & Luncheon**

Thursday, September 17, 11:00 am  
Bring your neighbor, friend, or relative!



## CONDOLENCES

Our sympathy is extended to the family of Pat Pojanowski.

On Saturday, August 22nd, we will hold a visitation at 10:00 am and a funeral at 11:00 am.

A luncheon will follow.





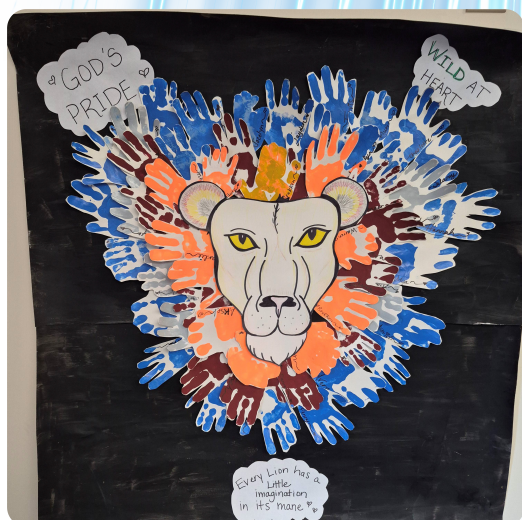
## Vacation Bible School Recap



photos courtesy of Sarah Stromgren



The July VBS session was a success with 35 kids in attendance and many helpers! It was so wonderful to have the building filled with children here to learn about David, Adam, Eve, Noah, and Jonah. They created Noah's ark, cooled off with fun water games, visited Ecumen Point Pleasant, and wrapped up the week with a trip to Como Zoo.



**Round Two: Vacation Bible School**  
**August 10-14, 9:00am-2:00pm**

**WHO:** Ages 5 to 12 are invited.  
Helpers 13+ are welcomed.  
**HOW:** Registration is required by guardian  
**COST:** Vacation Bible School is Free!

*We'd love to see volunteers again in whatever capacity you are available!*

## Fall Programming

**NOIZ kids** will meet again on Wednesday, September 9th and continue to gather almost every Wednesday thereafter. Let Emmy or the office know if you want to enroll for the 2026-2027 school year.

**Confirmation Class for all 6-8 grade students** will begin on Wednesday, September 16th. Students can attend the weekly Wednesday class which is from 4-5 pm. Or they can attend a longer class on the third Sunday of the month starting September 20th. This Sunday class will be from 11:45 am-1:30 pm (parents will take turns providing lunch). Students do not need to be members of Zion to attend.

*Friends are always welcome!*



## Ge Howard...Words to Challenge and Inspire

### WHAT IS YOUR PRICE?

Jesus had a definition for greed. He called it the practice of measuring life by possessions. Greed equates a person's worth with a person's purse.

- 1) You got a lot=you are a lot
- 2) You got a little, you are a little



The consequence of such a philosophy is predictable. If you are the sum of what you own, then by all means own it all. No price is too high. No payment is too much. Greed is not defined by what something costs; it is measured by what it costs you. And if anything costs you your faith or your family, the price is too high.

Max Lucado from "When God Whispers Your Name"

*Happiness is not a goal; it is a by-product.* --Eleanor Roosevelt

## Notes of Gratitude



**Thank you** to all the volunteers who supported a week of Vacation Bible School.

**Thank you** to everyone who donated and attended the Bingo event to benefit the Community Meal. The event raised \$8,000.

**Thank you** to all who donated snacks and gas money to the Youth Group and also kept them in prayer during their Mission Trip to Kentucky.

**Thank you** to Virgi for hosting the council visioning event at Homestead.

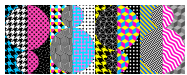
**Thank you** to our prayer angels who continue to hold those in need in their prayers

**Thank you** to Melanie Torborg who has stepped into the bookkeeping duties for Zion.

**Thank you** to the volunteers who keep our weekly tasks humming along:  
Barb Garness, Deb Hoffmeister, Carl Thomsen, and all the Altar Care teams!



## Missions



The next **QUILTING DAY** will be **Thursday, August 6th, 12:30 to 2:30pm** for our Zion friends. Everyone is welcome to come and help tie knots! Mark your calendar and join us.

### BACKPACK SCHOOL PROJECT

We are pleased to see the response for the collection of needed school items to fill the 200+ backpacks that have been made for this project.

Packing Day...the time when we fill the backpack will be in September. The day will be publicized in late August or the September FOCUS. Thanks to all who have brought in their contributions and supported this endeavor.



## Pave the Way- Part Two: We're Getting Close!

A special thank you to all who have continued to contribute toward the pay down of our second mortgage. We only need \$25,000 more to reach our goal.

Thanks again AND let's keep going!

Gary Kerkow



## Food Shelf Ministry & Community Support

### JULY COLLECTION

Thanks to you, during the month of July we collected a total of **153** notebooks, **60** pens, and **394** pencils!

Zion also collected **7** pounds of food and supplies in July.

### AUGUST COLLECTION: Individual Breakfast Items

Poptarts, individual boxes or cups of cereal, breakfast bars, oatmeal packets are supplied to kids going back to school in September. Family Pathways food shelf cannot order the items above from their supplier, but often purchase them locally.

**thrivent**

Thanks to those who designated their **Thrivent Choice Dollars** to Zion in June, we received a total of \$100. We are grateful to Robert and Nada Engquist and Rod and Joy Sietsema.

If you haven't used your **Thrivent Action team cards** yet, consider dedicating your card for future Intergenerational programs. Emmy can use them for August VBS, the beginning of school year activities, and the September Senior Luncheon.

## Page Turner's Book Club

On Monday, August 3rd at 6:00 pm we'll discuss *The Life Impossible* by Matt Haig.

On Monday, September 7th at 6:00 pm we'll discuss *Be Ready When the Luck Happens* by Ina Garten (the Barefoot Contessa).

In her memoir, Ina shares her personal story with readers hungry for a seat at her table.



For further information contact Marilyn Rue at [mrue.rue@gmail.com](mailto: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.

## Volunteer Opportunities

As members transition out of long held roles, please consider your time and talents for the needs of Zion's community:

### Leadership Roles and Projects

- Organize and Communicate with the Quilters Group
- Gather, Organize, and Prepare Missions Projects
- Serve on the Mutual Ministry Committee (supporting our staff)
- Serve as a Council member (elected every November)
- Serve on the Community Meal board (meets monthly)
- Organize the archives

### Occasional or As-Needed Roles

- Scrub coffee cup stains
- Clear weeds around and in the playground
- Organize books in the library

See also the newly created [volunteer handout](#) at the Welcome Desk for a more extensive list of opportunities! Visit with Pastor, Emmy, or Nina to learn more.

## MEETINGS

Finance Committee  
Tuesday, August 11, 1:00 pm

.....

Property Committee  
Monday, August 17, 4:00 pm

.....

Zion Council  
Wednesday, August 19, 6:00 pm

## Adult Education

**Pastor Sarah's Bible study** meets on Thursday mornings at 10:00 am in the library, year-round. You are invited to join us at any time. No Bible Study experience necessary. Coffee is provided.



**Men's Bible Study** is led by Pastor Richard Baumann, on Saturday mornings at 8:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. *This group is on hiatus and will resume Saturday, September 12th at 8:30 am.*

## VOLUNTEER CORNER

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

Online sign-up is found at [zionlcc.org](http://zionlcc.org) or see the paper schedule after worship on the bulletin table. Dates through July 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.



More information from the July Council Visioning meeting is available upon request.



Thanks to everyone who showed up and made the Community Meal fundraiser a big success!



Join Us for this **FREE** Event!

## Dine & Discover

Hosted by the Chisago Age Well Coalition  
with the assistance of Title III Grant from the Central Minnesota Council on Aging as part of the Older Americans Act. August Sponsor: Meadows on Fairview.

### Alzheimer's and Dementia: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Caregiver Support

For older adults and caregivers



**Rebecca Lyman, MD**  
Family Medicine  
St. Croix Health



**John Boston, LNHA, LALD**  
Administrator  
Meadows on Fairview



**Lisa Lovering**  
Aging Services Outreach  
Family Pathways

**Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026**

More than seven million Americans age 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease. One in three older adults dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia. Nearly 13 million Americans provide unpaid care for a family member or friend with dementia. Good news: The discovery of indicators, called biomarkers, has transformed diagnosis and helped identify dementia risk factors. New treatments slow the disease and allow those in early stages to maintain a more normal life. Our panel members will share current information on preventing, diagnosing, and treating Alzheimer's and dementia, and resources for caregivers. Questions welcome.

(Check-in begins 30 minutes before each session.)

**9 am - Chisago County Senior Center, 38790 Sixth Ave., North Branch**  
Light breakfast served

**12 noon - Zion Lutheran Church, 28005 Old Towne Rd., Chisago City**  
Light lunch served.

**3:30 pm - Rush City Community Center, 720 W 14th St, Rush City**  
Afternoon appetizers served

Registration requested by Aug 7. Call 651-674-1025.  
To register online: Register through North Branch Community Ed.  
Click on QR code to go directly to registration page.



photos courtesy of Arlen Strehlo



## 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 dennysunrise11@gmail.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](mailto: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](http://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 .
- **Yoga** meets Wednesday morning at 8:30 am in the Choir Room.

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](http://www.zionlcc.org) or [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)  
Email: [office@zionlcc.org](mailto:office@zionlcc.org)



## ZION STAFF

Pastor Sarah Kerkes, ext. 2, [pastor@zionlcc.org](mailto:pastor@zionlcc.org)  
Intergenerational Ministry: Emmy Lundeen, ext. 3, [emmy@zionlcc.org](mailto:emmy@zionlcc.org)  
Office Administrator: Nina Ball, ext. 1, [office@zionlcc.org](mailto:office@zionlcc.org)  
Bookkeeper: Melanie Torborg, ext. 4, [bookkeeper@zionlcc.org](mailto: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](mailto: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  
Mutual Ministry/HR  
Linda Letourneau, Stewardship  
Emmy Lundeen, Christian Education  
Karen Pederson, Outreach



*If everybody does a little bit it really does make life bearable. You don't always have to be the heroic friend. Everybody can pitch in a little bit. It's a 'potluck style' kind of love.*

Kate Bowler

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



If you have photos from a day in the life of Zion's community, please send them to [office@zionlcc.org](mailto:office@zionlcc.org). We'd love to share them!

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

Focus design-Nina Ball// graphics supplied by Adobe Express or Freepik.com

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.