

FOCUS

SEPTEMBER 2026



A Publication of
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Chisago City, Minnesota

Message from Pastor Sarah

I have a few small stones on my desk. One is a polished agate from Wayne Driver, another is a fossil picked up from the rocks behind the church by Jeff Trudeau, the third stone is wrapped in wire and beads, adorned with a small feather. This was made by Julia Anderson-Miller. Rocks from her collection were given out at her funeral service in July.



These are very different stones, but each one holds a special meaning for me. They are reminders of people I know/have known but are also reminders of the incredible diversity of the world around us. If we were to take the time to look through the stones on a beach or the pile behind the church, we would never find two stones that were identical. It is the same with people. We are all individual and unique beings, yet we are all created in the image of God.

As we head into a new school year, a new stewardship campaign, new activities and routines, think about how you can use your unique gifts and personality to serve the Lord. How is God calling you to share your time and talent with this community and with our neighbors? How can we be open to the unique folks God sends to this place so that all people may learn and grow in grace?

These past few weeks we have sent some beloved and unique saints to heaven. They will be deeply missed. These past few weeks we have also welcome some wonderful new members to Zion. Through all the changes and chances of life, we cling to the rock from whom we were hewn Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Sarah

*¹Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the Lord.
Look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry from
which you were dug. Isaiah 51*

Worship Services

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

Contemporary Worship
will resume on
September 13th 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.



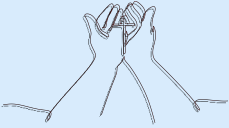
SEPTEMBER EVENTS



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!



Game Day will return in September on Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. Our first gathering will be September 9th. 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.



Our **10:45 am worship service** will return on Sunday, September 13th!

Blessing of the Teachers and Backpacks will be held during both worship services on September 13th.



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!*



A Fall Thrift Store outing is scheduled on Tuesday, September 22nd. Join Pastor Sarah, Emmy, and your fellow members to have a fun thrift haul followed by lunch. The group will travel in the Zion van. RSVP to Emmy.



Pastor Sarah will host a new book study beginning October 5th at 3:00 pm in the library. We will continue meeting on Mondays (before the community meal). The book is "*Better Ways to Read the Bible: Transforming a Weapon of Harm into a Tool of Healing*" by Zach Lambert.



Copies of the book have been purchased and are available from Pastor Sarah.

Bring your neighbors, friends, or relatives!

Zion Lutheran Church invites you to

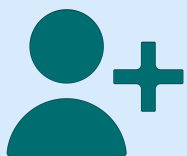
Seniors & Friends Luncheon

Thursday, September 17, 11:00 am

Bring a friend and join us for worship and a meal.

RSVP by September 14:
651.257.2713 or office@zionlcc.org

MEMBER UPDATES



NEW MEMBERS

We welcomed new members Amber Zimmerman and Mabel to our congregation on August 16th!



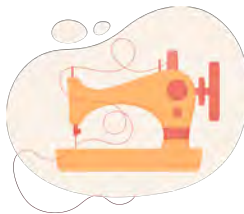
CONDOLENCES

Our sympathy is extended to the families of Corrine Mix, Pat Pojanowski, and Tom Alldritt

Engaging with Emmy

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.

Also look for new options in our sanctuary for the little ones! There are plans to refresh and provide welcome areas for our smallest members.



SEWING CLASS

Look for upcoming opportunities to join a sewing class led by Linda Letourneau. You are welcome to learn on your own machine or utilize a machine provided by Zion. A new session will be communicated in the near future. This is a multi-week experience.



Blessing of the Pets

Save the date for our annual Blessing of the Pets on Sunday, October 4th. We will bless our furry friends at the second service.

2026-2027 NOIZ SCHEDULE

- September 9, 16, 23, 30
- October 7, 28
- November 4, 18
- December 2, 9, 16
- January 6, 13, 20, 27
- February 3, 10, 17, 24
- March 3, 17, 24, 31
- April 7, 14, 21, 28

Life at Zion

Emmy held a second week of VBS in August, hosting about 25 kids. We learned about Salt of the Earth, Living Water (woman at the well), Earth/Foundation (the wise and foolish builder), Wind (Holy Spirit), and Fire (the fiery furnace). We enjoyed cotton candy on Thursday while also serving 40 visitors when they were here for a Chisago Age Well event. Thursday we also had cookies and conversations with our friends at Point Pleasant Ecumen, stopping at the primary school park on the way back for a bit of fun.



It was great to have Bishop Grimm visit us as he begins his new call.



We showed up for National Night Out on Old Towne Road during the August 4th celebration.



photos courtesy of Arlen & Sheila Strehlo

ROOTED IN LOVE

Arriving at the cancer center where I would be serving as my mother's caretaker I felt alone and afraid. My family and support system were over 750 miles away. But before I could even touch my luggage, Frank, a man with a huge grin, offered to help. Within minutes I'd made plans to meet his wife who cared for him during his treatments. The couple soon became like family for me as we leaned on each other and God through this ordeal. We laughed, vented, cried, and prayed with each other. Life's circumstances can provide roads to unexpected places far beyond our comfort zones. As we remain connected to God and each other, He will keep us rooted in love as we support one another.

Xochilt Dixon in "Our Daily Bread"



I see 1/3 of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, and ill nourished. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

---Franklin Roosevelt January 20, 1937

(My note: does not seem as though we have made much progress in the last 89 years).

Notes of Gratitude

Thank you to those who are supporting Stewardship efforts: Cristy Finklea, Virgi Johnson, Linda Letourneau, Vicki Mickelsen, Linda Parker, and Emmy Lundeen.

Thank you very much for all the cards in fact, there were over 30 cards received for my and Richard's birthday. I had a very good time with relatives for the whole weekend and it was a delightful time. I wish Richard would've been here because he would've enjoyed it.

-- Sincerely, Lois Degonda

Thank you to our Zion family for the prayers, cards, texts, calls and flowers during the loss of my sister Amy, to breast cancer. Amy was the brightest light in our family and we miss her terribly. Thank you to Pastor Sarah for the prayers and for helping us all to cope with our loss. We are grateful.

--Liz Alldritt & Family

We can't thank our Zion family enough for all the prayers, cards, texts, calls and visits in the last 2 weeks as we have dealt with loss of our husband/Dad Tom Alldritt. The food, gift cards, and gifts of money have helped us greatly to focus on healing from our grief and spending time together as a family. Tom fought Parkinson's Disease for 21 years and although we miss him terribly, we take comfort in knowing that he is no longer in pain or held captive by a body that no longer works. Thank you to Nina for helping us to plan the service and to Emmy for helping us get through the day. Thank you to Julie for the beautiful organ music - Tom always loved when you played. A very special thank you to Pastor Sarah for coming when we called and knowing just what to say to allow Tom to let go and go fishing with Jesus. Tom cherished your friendship. Your eulogy message was spot on and we can't thank you enough for sharing our guy with everyone at the funeral. Continued prayers are appreciated as we learn to live without our husband/Dad. We appreciate you all and are blessed to belong to such a caring and supportive church family.

--Liz, Bridget & Kyle Alldritt and Allie, Troy, Sydney, Georgia Engel

Thank you to Amy Green for covering the front office when Nina was away.

Thank you to our volunteer worship helpers: altar guild, communion assistants, readers, greeters, ushers and fellowship hour hosts. If you would like to learn how to do one of these tasks, speak to Pastor Sarah or talk to the person doing that task and they will show you the ropes.

Thank you to all of our Service Teams and their leaders for helping serve the recent funerals. You are greatly appreciated by families and provide a warm welcome for all of our guests.

Thank you to the Hospitality Team for stepping in to host Tom Alldritt's visitation.

Thank you to the Lauritzen family for maintaining the front flower bed. It always looks good!

Thank you to the person who pulls weeds out of the front rocks on their way in and out of worship. I see you! (Pastor Sarah)

Food Shelf Ministry & Community Support

AUGUST COLLECTION

Thanks to you, during the month of August we collected a total of **485** breakfast items for Family Pathway food shelf!

Zion also collected **309** pounds of food and supplies in July. This large collection is mostly thanks to Pat Pojanowski and her loved ones. Pat championed the Chisago Lakes food shelf with her pie sales and Thrivent cards throughout the years.

SEPTEMBER COLLECTION:

Individually Wrapped Snacks for NOIZ kids

Anything you think the kiddos would like--packaged in individual portions. Items like crackers, cookies, granola bars, fruit snacks, hostess cakes, cheese or peanut butter sandwich crackers, chips, popcorn or meat sticks.



Thanks to Bob and Nancy Butte who designated their **Thrivent Choice Dollars** to Zion in July! We are grateful for this financial contribution.

If you haven't used your **Thrivent Action team cards** yet this year, consider dedicating your card for future Intergenerational programs. Upcoming events Emmy can use them for include the Community Meal fundraising picnic, Seniors and Friends Luncheon, Sewing Class, Shepherding 'to-go' bags, and the Angel Tree.

Page Turner's Book Club

On Monday, October 5th at 6:00 pm we'll discuss The Book of Lost Friends by Lisa Wingate.

Lisa Wingate brings to life startling stories from actual "Lost Friends" advertisements that appeared in Southern newspapers after the Civil War, as newly freed slaves desperately searched for loved ones who had been sold away.



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.

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, September 8, 1:00 pm

.....

Zion Council
Wednesday, September 16, 6:00 pm

.....

Property Committee
Monday, September 21, 4:00 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.

PLEASE NOTE:

We will not meet on Sept. 10 or 17.

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 or see the paper schedule after worship on the bulletin table. Dates through October 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 August Council meeting is available upon request.

Missions



We are looking for **leaders** to take on organization of our monthly quilting group and our annual mission project of the school backpack project. If missions are your calling, please reach out to Pastor Sarah or Nina for more information.



BACKPACK SCHOOL PROJECT

We've done it again...with the help of Zion's family and friends we have gathered enough school supplies to fill the 225+ hand sewn backpacks we now have on hand. We deeply appreciate your financial support and the purchase of the items needed. The Thrivent Financial Action Team \$250.00 cards helped greatly in completing this task.

These Backpacks will now be filled on Wednesday, September 9th at 1:00 pm, and packed for shipping.

Hopefully you have felt the joy in Zion's taking on this task. Your small donation of money, goods and your PRAYERS for the children who will receive, is blessed. If one child, receiving a backpack is challenged to better him/her self with an education, makes all our efforts worthwhile. --Thank You! Virgi Johnson

Finance

Why give to Zion's Endowment?

A gift to Zion Endowment is a gift that can make a difference year after year. The Endowment helps support the ministries and mission of Zion while preserving the principal so it can continue to grow and provide support for future generations.

Your gifts help make a difference in many ways:

Community Outreach - supporting programs and helping families in need, both within our community and beyond.

Student Scholarships - helping students pursue their education and invest in their future.

Missions - supporting mission work both at home and around the world, sharing God's love with those who need it most.

There are many ways to give. Gifts can be made by **check, memorial gifts, stocks and securities, charitable annuities, life insurance, or by naming Zion's Endowment as a beneficiary.**

What makes an Endowment gift especially meaningful is that we generally distribute the **earnings while preserving the principal.** This allows your gift to continue working for Zion year after year.

Give today—and your generosity can keep giving tomorrow. A gift to Zion's Endowment is more than a donation, it is an investment in Zion's ministry, our community, and generations to come.

It's truly the Gift That Keeps on Giving!

For more information about our program, feel free to contact: Gary Kerkow, Anne Thomsen, Laura Freeman, George Mickelsen or Jim Green.



COMMUNITY



The **Annual Community Meal Anniversary Picnic Fundraiser** will be held Monday, September 13th from 4:00-6:00pm. Volunteers are needed for several tasks including set up, serving, and cleanup. Contact Emmy to volunteer.

2026 Age Well Expo

LOCATION: Chisago Lakes High School

DATE: Friday, October 16 TIME: 8:00am-1:00 pm

THEME: Its Never Too Late to Learn Something New

Come visit over 60 vendor tables with local organizations and resources for older adults and their caregivers. There will be "Mini-Classes" offered, a Keynote Speaker Jenni

Thyng will present at 10:30am and updates on the 2027 Medicare open enrollment will be provided.

Food will be available in the concessions, and new this year Lunch is catered by "Dinner Rebellion" home cooked meals. Health Screens will be available and there will also be our annual "Vaccine Clinic" provided by Thrifty White Pharmacy.

Don't forget your Medicare and Insurance Cards!

Hand Crafts and Fellowship

A casual circle to share laughter and ideas. Bring whatever project you are working on.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Lindstrom
2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month
9:15-11:00 am

Starts September 8th

Enter through the courtyard doors, off the parking lot.

We would love to see you!



 Visit us at the Zion/Community Meal table!

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. 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 .
- **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 or www.elca.org
Email: office@zionlcc.org

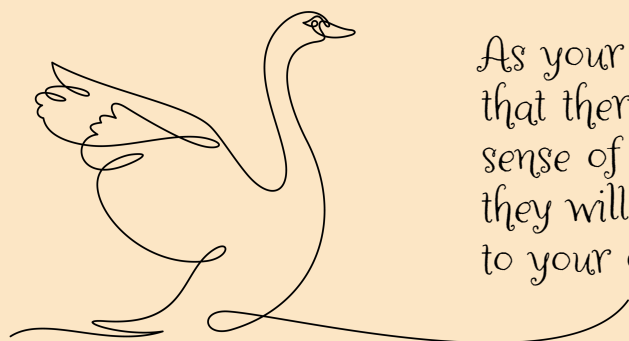


ZION STAFF

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: Melanie Torborg, 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
Mutual Ministry/HR
Linda Letourneau, Stewardship
Emmy Lundeen, Christian Education
Karen Pederson, Outreach



*As your faith is strengthened you will find
that there is no longer the need to have a
sense of control, that things will flow as
they will, and that you will flow with them
to your great delight and benefit.*

-Emmanuel Teney

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. 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.