



“God welcomes all, strangers and friends; God’s love is strong and it never ends.”
All Creation Sings 978: God Welcomes All

“God Welcomes All” was the gathering song at my ordination. It is a simple melody with this one verse that repeats as long as the assembly wishes. It serves as both a declaration and a prayer, sharing how God is always at work in love to welcome all people, turning strangers into friends. You can probably find this song on YouTube! Sing or hum it to yourself as your own prayer this next month.

As I join you all in ministry, I am a stranger among you. I am a stranger among people who have deep ties, strong relationships and friendships, and long-standing members of this community. Thank you for the many ways you all have already welcomed me into this community of faith. This song serves as a reminder of how God welcomes friends who have already gathered and welcomes those we have not met or befriended yet. If we have not yet had the opportunity to meet or chat much, know that I am looking forward to meeting you! Reach out to me to schedule coffee, lunch, or a visit. Call the church office, catch me before or after worship, or email me at pastor@zionbelvidere.com.

As someone new to the community, I am looking forward to learning from you all. What places should I check out? What community events should I put in my calendar? I don’t know what I don’t know. You all are the experts to help me get acquainted. Whether it is school events, sporting events, community organizations, or local businesses, I am so looking forward to getting to know Belvidere and the area better.

As the school year kicks off, Zion is plugging into our regular programming. We will host a Back-to-School night, Friday, Sept. 11 from 6:00-9:00 p.m. At the beginning of that time, I’ll have a quick meeting with parents and guardians of confirmation students. I’m currently working on a proposed schedule for our confirmation year. Rally Sunday is Sept. 13. You’ll find further information in other articles. I am excited to journey with you all, learn more about your current programs, and explore the many ways we are church together.

Trusting in God’s love that never ends,
Pr. Marit

Boone County Fair Report



Isabelle Bahena crowned 2026 Boone County Fair Queen and Miss Congeniality.



Terry Miller won 1st place for the 9' Hosta Green



Dan Druckrey placed first with his Cherry Tomatoes, Jalapeños, Red Cabbage, and Carrots. Second with his Onions and third with his Tomatoes.



Heather Wick took home two ribbons. First Place for her Zucchini Squash and second for



A very special thank you to everyone who helped at the Boone County Fair. I cannot thank you enough for donating your time to help at the grandstand. A shoutout to Ken, Ty, and Alicia Downey for running the cameras during the Bull Riding and Rodeos. Thanks to Cynthia for getting all the reminders out and passing out passes. Our muscles on the track: Gene Berg, Chuck Forster, Elleney Ogan (who showed the boys how it's done!), Terry Miller, Melody Johnson, Melita Ogan, and Melissa Bahen. Kris Beever impressed us all with her wonderful counting skills!

Our "Gate Keepers" Keith & Karen Ballweg, Gene & Mary Berg, Melissa & Olivia Bahena, Judy Fisk, John, Lois, & Brittany Bender, Kris Beever, Cindy Foster, Marie Hagen, Alex Haugen, Katie Bishop, Kay Boudreau, Pastor Marit, Melody Johnson, Elleney Ogan, Beth Hong, and Dan Albrecht. Chuck Foster, Aryln Groen, and Jen Downey kept the lines moving as they showed people to their seats. Special shoutout to Terry Miller, who took a lickin' and kept on tickin'. Our fair workers had some new vests this year. **THANK YOU** to Arlyn for paying for them! If I didn't mention you above, please forgive me. I truly appreciate everyone who helped!





Thank-you to everyone for who brought goodies and helped clean up for Pastor Marit's first Sunday!

Blessing of the School Supplies

Thank you to everyone who supported our school supply/ classroom needs at First Step Day Care. Your generosity provided students with a start to a wonderful school year. Thank you also to Thrivent for their grant funding that supplemented your gifts.



Youth Happenings



ELCA Youth Gathering is in Minneapolis, MN next summer, June 28-July 2. This is open to those who will be in 8th -12th grade this year. Early registration is Oct. 21-Nov. 11, 2026.

Pastor Marit and Jody are looking forward to attending. Please let us know if you are interested! (For all our 6th and 7th graders, there will be another gathering in 3 years)

Upcoming Youth Events:

Friday, September 11: Youth Back to School Night 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. We will have dinner, talk about the new year, and have some fun. Let Jody know if you can attend. Parents of confirmation students, please stop in at 6:00 for a quick meeting with Pastor Marit about the upcoming year and what will be happening with confirmation.

Sunday, September 20: Breakfast Fundraiser for the orphanage in India
We will be helping the Women of Zion raise money for our sister church to build an orphanage for the children. Youth are asked to serve and clean up.

Christian Nurturing News

Our noisy offering from VBS and our congregation this summer raised \$120 for Operation Kid to Kid through World Vision. Thank you to all who donated!

September 13: Rally Sunday-Sunday School Kickoff. Sunday School will be held during church services again this year. Children will be invited downstairs to the Sunday School room after the children's sermon and will come back up during the sharing of the peace. After worship, join us for refreshments and more fun activities.

Sunday, September 20: Regular Sunday School begins

Save The Dates:

Sunday, October 18: The 1st craft Sunday after the worship service.

Sunday, November 15: The 2nd craft Sunday after the worship service, focusing on Christmas ornaments for the Hometown Christmas Tree.

Monday, November 16: Join us and help make ornaments for Hometown Christmas and enjoy some treats in Linda's Lounge from 5:30-6:30 pm. All are welcome

Women of Zion

The Women of Zion are sponsoring a Fundraiser Breakfast in support of our sister church in India, Arcot Church.

During our 130th Anniversary year, Zion was blessed to give over \$5,000 to Arcot Church to help with the construction of their orphanage. We would like to continue supporting this important ministry by raising additional funds this year.

A breakfast will be served after worship on September 20th, and we are grateful to the Youth of Zion, who are generously giving their time to help serve and clean up. A Thrivent grant has also been applied for to help offset the cost of the food.

We hope you will join us for breakfast and help support the ministry of Arcot Church. If you are unable to attend, please consider donating. Make your contribution payable to Women of Zion and write "Arcot Church" in the memo line.

Thank you for helping us continue to share God's love and support the important work being done through our sister church in India!



Looking Ahead:

Sunday, September 20, 2026

Join us during coffee hour for a **Fundraiser Breakfast** benefiting the Arcot building project. As part of Zion's 130th anniversary celebration, we made a seed-money donation toward their orphanage. We are excited to continue supporting our sister church in India through this special fundraiser.

Coming Later This Year

More details will be shared as these events get closer:

- **Thanksgiving Meals** for First Step Daycare families and others in need.
- **Angel Tree** for the children of First Step Daycare.

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form six ordinary words.

O	E	O	P	S	P
O	P	P	O	S	E
A	Y	R	T	T	N
T	Y	B	R	A	N
U	A	R	C	G	O
C	O	U	G	A	R
M	R	Y	R	A	O
A	B	M	O	R	Y
E	G	D	E	R	E
D	E	G	R	E	E
S	E	J	Y	R	E
J	E	R	S	E	Y

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Get the free JUST JUMBLE app - Follow us on Facebook

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

PRINT YOUR ANSWER IN THE CIRCLES BELOW

G	R	E	E	N	E	R
P	A	S	T	O	R	S

By John Enright

The WOZ did it again!

Chuck Crane, a member of Presley's Country Jubilee in Branson, MO, stopped by Zion last night and blessed us with some wonderful old-time Southern Gospel favorites. A great time was had by all who attended! We're so thankful for the music, fellowship, and the good memories made together.

As always, a special thank-you to everyone who helped make this event possible—from making all the arrangements, shopping for refreshments, and baking our treats, to serving and cleaning up afterward. It truly was a team effort, and a job well done!

We're grateful for each one of you who helped make the evening so special.





Zion Food Truck Volunteers!

Mark your calendar for the next two food truck events

1st Event September 29th 4:00 – 5:30 pm

2nd Event October 31st – 10:00 – 11:30 am

Zion's New Financial Secretary!

Stephanie Skelnik



Stephanie has taken the role of Zion's Financial Secretary that Diane Vorndran had held for many years until her recent health concerns and retirement. Stephanie is bringing to this position previous accounting experience from her time working at various businesses prior to retirement. Stephanie is in the process of learning the responsibilities of this position along with some training that will take place this fall as we prepare for the new financial year. If you have questions about your giving, please reach out to Stephanie, and she will find the answer for you.

When you see Stephanie, "Congratulate" her on her new role here at Zion!

A CHRISTIAN GARDEN

What to Plant:

5 rows of P's: Prayer, Perseverance, Politeness, Promptness & Preparedness

3 rows of Squash: Squash criticism, Squash gossip, Squash indifference

**5 rows of Turn-ups: Turn up at church, Turn up with the Lord's tithe and your offering,
Turn up with a visitor, Turn up with determination to win others to Christ**

**5 rows of Let-Us: Let us be faithful to God and His work,
Let us be unselfish in our work
Let us be loyal to the church and the Pastor
Let us be truthful and honest with God
Let us love one another and all His people**

By David Schumann

Community Meal

A simple meal of spaghetti & meatballs, salad, and bread was served for the August Community Meal. We had a decent crowd of 37 people show up for the meal despite the County Fair going on at the same time.

Thank you to the following people who made this meal happen. Kay, Linda P., Jean, Stephanie, Nancy, Larry, Dawn, Marge, Marilee, Lillian, and Kathy.

The next Community Meal will be held on Wednesday, September 9th, two days after Labor Day. A volunteer sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board. Anyone is welcome to participate in preparing, serving, and cleaning up.

By John Enright

Pioneer Luncheon

Zion Pioneers will resume with our potluck lunch at noon on September 14th.

Broasted chicken will be provided for a small donation. Please bring a dish to share.

Our guest speaker for the day will be Jim & Marilee Sellers' daughter, Natalie Armstrong. She will be giving a program on Helping Seniors Move.

Even if you haven't thought about it, please come and listen to what she has to say. She will have some good information about what services are available.

We will share food and fellowship & catch up from taking the summer off.

By Patti Lee

From the Treasurer:

General Fund

July/2026 Beginning Balance \$ 55,317.87

Total Income \$ 19,874.00

Total Expense \$ 14,965.67

Balance \$ 60,426.20

Building Fund

July/2026 Beginning Balance \$ (1,827.04)

Total Income \$ 3,417.00

Total Expense \$ 2411.16

Balance \$ (821.20)

General Fund Reserve Savings

July/2026 Beginning Balance \$ 89,105.14

Income \$ 18.92

Expenses \$

Balance \$ 89,124.06

September Scriptures

	<u>1st Reading</u>	<u>2nd Reading</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
<u>September 6</u>	Ezekiel 33:7-11	Romans 13:8-14	Matthew 18:15-20
<u>September 13</u>	Genesis 50:15-21	Romans 14:1-12	Matthew 18:21-35
<u>September 20</u>	Jonah 3:10-4:11	Philippians 1:21-30	Matthew 20:1-16
<u>September 27</u>	Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32	Philippians 2:1-13	Matthew 21:23-32



Happy Birthday from your Zion Family!



2-Sapphire Watts
4-Avery Beever
7-Kathy Hansen
12-Wanda Watts
14-Gary Prater
19-Brenda Tobin
22-Judith Fisk

3-Lois Graves
4-Brad Ogan
9-Caspian Downey
12-Tammy Zastrow
15-Raven Downey
21-Jeff Ernest
24-Beth Hong

3-Elleney Ogan
7-Lorraine Carmichael
12-Chelsea Lopez
13-Aarron Minson
17-Erik Jonas
21-Tanya Hoemke
29-Koralyn Wick

Council Members

Term Through January 2027

Kris Enright
Michelle Ernest
Kelly Kotajarvi
Terry Miller
Gary Yunto

Term Through January 2028

Jody Archer
Dawn Calkins
Jeanne Marnen
Stephanie Skelnik

Term Through January 2029

Rodney Brandmire
Melody Johnson
David Schumann

Nominating Committee

Nancy Brendum
Marilee Sellers
Cheryl Sturges

Worship Schedule

Sundays at 9:00 am
Thursday at 7:00 pm

Find Worship Videos at
www.zionbelvidere.com

OR

On Facebook at
[ZionBelvidere+](https://www.facebook.com/ZionBelvidere+)

Email
zionlutheran1300@gmail.com

Staff & Leadership

Pastor
Rev. Marit Johnson

Administrative Assistant
Cynthia Reynolds

Council President
David Schumann

Choir Director
Dan Albrecht

Sunday School Directors
Melody Johnson &
Melita Ogan

Director of Children and
Youth Ministries
Jody Archer

Financial Secretary
Stephanie Skelnik

Treasurer
Sharon Yunto

SEPTEMBER 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Sewing/Quilting 9am Bible Study 9:30am Baby Bank 4pm-6pm	3 Thursday Worship Service 7pm	4	5
6 Sunday Worship	7 Labor Day Church Office Closed	8 Lunch W/ Ray 11:30am 2-3 pm Pr. Text Study Meeting	9 Council Reports 9am Bible Study 9:30am Community Meal 5-6pm	10 Choir 5pm/Bells 6pm Thursday Worship Service 7pm	11 Youth Back to School Night 6-9pm Confirmation Info session	12
13 Sunday Worship 9am & Rally Sunday School	14 Witness Meeting 6pm Cynthia out of Office	15 2-3 pm Pr. Text Study Meeting Cynthia out of Office	16 Sewing/Quilting 9am Bible Study 9:30am Council Meeting 6:00pm Cynthia out of Office	17 Pr. LOMC Lunch 11-1 Choir 5pm/Bells 6pm Thursday Worship Service 7pm Cynthia out of Office	18	19
20 Sunday Worship & Sunday School 9am Adult Bible Study Kickoff after Worship India Fundraiser After Worship	21 Tidings Articles 9am	22 Lunch W/ Ray 11:30am 2-3 pm Pr. Text Study Meeting	23 Bible Study 9:30am Draping of the Quilts	24 Pr. North Conference Meeting 9:30-12 Choir 5pm/Bells 6pm Barnabas Meeting 6pm Thursday Worship Service 7pm	25	26
27 Sunday Worship Sunday School 9am Adult Bible Study after Worship Christian Nurturing Meeting after Worship Blessing the Quilts/Auction	28 Baby Bank Restock 9:30 – 11:30am Pr. NIL Professional Leadership Conference	29 Food Truck 4-5:30pm Pr. NIL Professional Leadership Conference	30 Bible Study 9:30am Pr. NIL Professional Leadership Conference		OFFICE HOURS Monday-Friday 9am-1pm	