



Zion Lutheran Church

The Messenger

October 2026

A Message from the Zion Lutheran Council President:

OCTOBER – feel the crispness in the autumn air, savor the taste of pumpkin spice, and witness the cascade of red and gold falling leaves. The season arrives with an increase in activities as school has started including sports, music, etc. That activity level is reflected in Zion as well. Again, we enjoy the voice of our choir and the ring of the bell choir. The beauty of music can touch the soul, and we are thankful to have such fine musicians.

Sunday school and confirmation classes are underway. On September 13th, backpacks of these young people were blessed and youth Bibles given to a number of smiling faces, holding the word of God in their hands. Additionally, Pastor Jason is offering an adult education opportunity to explore the role of Christians in our modern, tumultuous world. The Bible tells us to “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s”. This class helps us to determine how to balance what is God’s and what are our civic duties in our communities. Consider participating in this class.

Also, on September 5th we celebrated a unique worship experience with Waffle Church. During the course of the service, we took time to “break bread together” and enjoy fellowship. I had the opportunity to visit with two young visitors who may have been two unfamiliar faces sitting in a pew had it not been for the “waffles”.

Halloween lies ahead with it’s jack-o-lanterns and goblins. Children look forward to costumes and candy while Mexican-Americans celebrate the “Day of the Dead”, also with costumes and food. At that same time, the church celebrates All Saints Day, remembering those who have gone before us, those who built Zion and supported it into the church it is today. As a way to honor those saints, the Council has embraced PIVOT, the Synod’s program to revitalize, reenergized congregations. This is an important step for Zion as we move forward with our Affordable Housing Project.

As autumn becomes busier and the holidays approach, please remember to set aside time to reflect on all the blessings we have been give both as individuals and as a faith community. In other words:

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD!

Sue Bunkert

If you have any questions or concerns, don’t hesitate to call: 920-734-5138

A Message from the Pastor:

Thin Places

Somewhere around the second week of October, I always notice something in the same way: I'm driving home, and the sky that used to hold light until I pulled into the driveway at home has gone dark by the time I am halfway there. It happens gradually and then all at once (this year on Halloween). One evening the porchlight is no longer optional.

We have a word in the Christian tradition of places where the boundary between heaven and earth seems wear thin – maybe a chapel, a mountaintop, a graveside. Thin places, the old Celtic Christians called them, where the sacred feels closer to the surface than usual, almost easier to brush up against.

I wonder if we go looking for thin places only in geography, when they might also show up in time. This particular slant of October light – not gone, just dimmer, just closer to the ground in some way – may be doing the same work a chapel does. Not less light. A thinner light.

We know that scripture opens this way: “And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” Evening comes first in Genesis. Before the sun rises on anything. God is already at work in the dark. The dimming isn't the story pausing. It is where the story has always started.

Psalm 121 puts it another way: the one who keeps you neither slumbers nor sleeps. Not: turns the lights back on for you. Keeps you in light or no light, whichever the season brings.

So if the early dark catches you off guard this month, on a drive home or a walk you cut short, that is not a design flaw in October. It might be a thin place. The nearness was never dependent on daylight. The shorter days just make it easier to see what was close all along.

+Pastor Jason

FALL ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Faith & Civic Life:

Seeking the Wellbeing of All!

In 2025, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted a social statement on faith and civic life, addressing the relationship of religious organizations and political authority, and related matters. Join Pastor Jason for a six-session study on the social statement and our call as Lutheran Christians to seek the well-being of all people by engaging in our civic life together.

SESSION 3 - OCTOBER 11

Assessing the U.S. Constitutional Form of Government

SESSION 4 - OCTOBER 25

Religion and the First Amendment

SESSION 5 - NOVEMBER 8

Constructive Relationships Between Religious Organizations and Political Authority

SESSION 6 - NOVEMBER 22

Selected Contemporary Concerns in Civic Life

SUNDAYS AFTER WORSHIP

PIVOT!

In August, our Council members had an opportunity to begin to take part in a program provided by the East Central Synod of Wi. It is called Pivot.

This program will allow us to help our congregation by giving us the opportunity to discern new pathways and purposes for mission in Jesus' name.

The curriculum is written by pastors and design thinkers of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin. Our Council members will engage in eight sessions centered on seven significant pivots. Each session will include time for dwelling in scripture and prayer, team-building activities and experiments, curating reflections through one-on-one conversations in our community, and active learning facilitated by a Pivot Facilitator.

More information and updates to come!
Respectfully,
Kandie Wilz



FAITHformation

Do you have children in your life who are ready to explore their faith?

Children, age 3 (by September 1st) - 5th grade participate in our Sunday School Program and 6-8th graders participate in confirmation. Interested in more information?

Please go to:

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/yuZBsmXbxj>

Paint & Sip Fellowship Event



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Pinot's Palette,

226 E. College Ave., Appleton

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Doors Open @ 6:00 p.m. to Gather

Cost: \$50 per person — includes all painting supplies and light appetizers. Cash bar featuring wine, cocktails, and mocktails.

All ages welcome. Painting announced in November Newsletter.

Sign up in the Narthex beginning October 4 or call the office.

Intro to RISE and Who it Serves

RISE is an AASD program inside the Columbus School building that provides a small, flexible learning environment for Appleton area students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Students who attend RISE are placed due to significant special education needs.

The goal of RISE is to re-engage students in the process of learning and successfully reintegrate those students to neighborhood schools.

Sue Bunkert, on behalf of Zion, put together back-to-school bags with school supplies and treats for the 24 kids starting the 2026-2027 school year across the street at RISE. She also made baked goods for the 10 staff. These were delivered the first week of school to a round of smiles and "thanks!" from the RISE staff.

Zion Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes
August 17, 2026 Meeting began at 6:30pm

Opening Prayer: Pastor Jason

Present: Sue Bunkert, Molly Kuba, Tom Meltz, Kandie Wilz, Amanda Kuba, Linda Van Bommel, Mary Mueller, Pastor Jason, Kyle Moseng

Absent: Ray Pittman

Guest: Wendy Sachs

Approval of Agenda: motion was made and approved.

Approval of Minutes: motion was made and approved after 2 corrections were made from the Financial Secretary Report in July. The first 2 sentences should read as follows; Total expenses for June \$29,416.43; Total June revenue \$72,564.07.

Pastor's Report: A handout was given.

Financial Secretary Report: Wendy gave an oral report. Total member giving \$113,847.13; Total revenue for July \$217,192.83; Expenses \$217,468.48. The finance committee will send \$3000 to East Central Synod of WI for tornado relief. Porchfest money will also be sent to East Central Synod of WI for tornado relief.

Committee Reports:

Zion Mutual Homes - handout was given. Linda gave an oral report; Volunteers are at ZMH daily. A new washing machine is up and working while the other 2 washing machines are not working. A motion was made to approve the \$6400 plus pr package from red shoes incorporated. Approved.

Staff/Personal - handout was given. Meeting minutes were taken from staff meeting. William would like to come back as our organist. Recommending he comes on as a staff member. His title would be Principal Organist and would play 2 Sundays a month.

Old Business:

Wi-Fi Challenges - looking into different options.

New Business:

Renewal of lease - Renewal of lease for Fabrication Something More located in the Parish House - motion was made and approved. Rent will be due on the 15th of each month. Have the ability to add more space to rent if needed.

Next Meeting: Monday, September 14, 2026 at 6:30pm

Pivot! Session "O" with Pastor Dara Clifford

Motion to dismiss at 8:40pm

Submitted by Amanda Kuba

October



Zion Lutheran Church



2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4 Choir Practice 8:00 AM Worship 9:00 AM Faith Formation Fellowship	5	6	7 Staff Meeting 12:00 PM Handbells Practice 4:15 PM Balcony	8 Monthly Worship at Linwood 11:00 AM	9	10
11 Choir Practice 8:00 AM Worship 9:00 AM Faith Formation Adult Faith Formation Fellowship	12	13 ZMH Committee Meeting 10:00 AM	14 Handbells Practice 4:15 PM Balcony	15 Zion Lunch Social 11:30am Real Estate Committee Mtg 5:30 PM Appleton Library	16	17
18 Worship 9:00 AM Faith Formation Fellowship Pastor Jason out of office for Continuing Ed	19 Pastor Jason out of office for Continuing Ed	20 Pastor Jason out of office for Continuing Ed	21 Handbells Practice 4:15 PM Balcony Pastor Jason out of office for Continuing Ed	22 November Newsletter Deadline Pastor Jason out of office for Continuing Ed	23	24
25 Choir Practice 8:00 AM Worship 9:00 AM Faith Formation Adult Faith Formation Fellowship	26 Finance Meeting 5:00 PM Zion Council Meeting 6:30 PM	27	28 Handbells Practice 4:15 PM Balcony	29	30	31 Trunk or Treat Time: TBD Zion's Parking Lot 

Oct. 4th: Rev. Jason Poole Xiong
Assisting Minister: Gwen Schwandt
Musician: William Surtees
Greeters: Paula Kuba
Opens: Gwen Schwandt
Closes: Gwen Schwandt

Oct. 11th: Rev. Jason Poole Xiong
Assisting Minister: Tricia Staedt
Musician: Heather Watney
Greeters: Mary McDonald
Opens: Greg Pettigrew
Closes: Jodi Hoesli

Oct. 18th: Rev. Jason Poole Xiong
Assisting Minister: Grace Van Eyck
Musician: Heather Watney
Greeters: JoAnn Salm
Opens: Gene Wiese
Closes: Tammy Mossholder

Oct. 25th: Rev. Jason Poole Xiong
Assisting Minister: Tommy Meltz
Musician: William Surtees
Greeters: Colleen Malchow
Opens: Jim Schley
Closes: Jim Schley

Zion Lunch Social Group

Please plan to join Zion Lunch Social Group on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 11:30am. Check the sign-up sheet in the narthex to see where they are heading. Everyone is welcome. Please come and learn something new about someone at Zion.

LUNCH TIME

For the first 6 weeks of summer, Brianne ran free lunch for kids participating in the City of Appleton's Playground Program at City Park. First English Lutheran Church and First United Methodist Church let us use their fellowship spaces to host lunch. Roughly 8 kids attended daily.

For the last 2 weeks, Brianne ran free lunch for all Historic Central Neighborhood kids at the Columbus playground. Roughly 20 kids attended daily.

From July 6th through August 27th, 2026, Zion supplied free lunches to neighborhood kids from Monday to Thursday. Lunches included turkey and cheese sandwiches, chips, pickles and cuties. All funds used for the purchase of food were from Thrivent Action Team grants.

Thank you to Diana Staedt for applying for one of these grants!

If anyone reading this is a Thrivent member, you have access to 2 \$250 Action Team grants per year. Please let Brianne know if you'd like to find a way to use these funds. You can call her at 918-625-5895 or email her at brianne@zionappleton.org.



On Tuesday, August 25, 2026, roughly 10 Zion congregants volunteered by serving the Historic Central Neighborhood delicious Italian sausages, brats and hot dogs at Porchfest on the Columbus playground. It was a great evening with beautiful weather, hundreds of neighbors, and great music by the 10 bands playing on various porches around the block. Zion kept it local by supplying Jacob's Meat Market meats and Simple Simon Bakery buns.





TRUNK OR TREAT

October 31, 2026

Time to be determined

Zion Parking Lot

Hope you can join us for this fun event!

You can sign up in the narthex to bring your car or there is a box in the narthex that you can donate candy to be given out on Halloween.

Please consider participating in this event.

Contact Mary Mueller with any questions.

IN HONOR OF REFORMATION SUNDAY · OCTOBER 25

Pilgrimage to Luther-land

A congregational journey through Reformation Germany

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH · APPLETON, WISCONSIN



DATES

Aug 30 – Sept 9, 2027

ROUTE

Frankfurt → Berlin, Germany

LED BY

Pastor Jason

STOPS ALONG THE WAY

Lutherstadt Wittenberg · Eisleben · Leipzig · Erfurt · Eisenach · and more

A journey through the landscape of the Reformation — from Luther's birthplace and grave in Eisleben to his defiant stand at the Diet of Worms, his translation of the Bible at Wartburg Castle in Eisenach, and the Wittenberg door where it all began. Led by Pastor Jason, with a full itinerary available beginning in October.

INCLUDED

- ✓ Most meals
- ✓ Hotel accommodations
- ✓ Guided tours
- ✓ Ground transportation

NOT INCLUDED

- ✗ Airfare
- ✗ ETIAS visa fees
- ✗ Personal costs

INVESTMENT

\$2,050–\$2,650 per person

Final cost depends on the number of participants.

\$150 non-refundable deposit	holds your spot
\$1,000 payment	due April 11, 2027
Final balance	due June 13, 2027

Full itinerary available from Pastor Jason beginning in October.
This pilgrimage carries no cost to the congregation.

jason@zionappleton.org
(920) 739-3104



Raise Right. What is that?

It is a program where gift cards are sold & the group selling them gets to keep some of the money collected for the gift cards.

RaiseRight™

There is a long list of gift cards to choose from. An order is usually placed about every month and if you order something you usually get the gift card within 1 week. Lynn Walter is in charge of this program, so if you have any questions, please talk to her. She also has a limited amount of gift cards available for sale each week so you can purchase them right away.

Choir Practice is held every Sunday at 8:00 AM. Call Cheryl Meyer at 920-731-9474 if you are interested in joining.

Zion Tower RingerZ have resumed rehearsals on Wednesdays at 4:15pm in the balcony.

We are looking for a couple more ringers. Paula would be happy to introduce you to Paula's handbell basics.

You won't know until you try. Please call her at 920-810-2225 if you're interested.



Zion recently awarded a scholarship to Nathan Dutcher. Nathan is the son of Gail Hunter and is attending UW-Milwaukee. Congratulations Nathan!



A Ministry of Fox Valley Lutheran Homes

You are welcome to join us as we learn more about God's Word and grow together in faith and friendship.

Linwood Community Worship Opportunities:

Regular worship is held at Linwood once per month on the 2nd Thursday at 11 AM. On October 8, Pastor Jason will be leading worship and preaching.

Linwood Community Bible Study Groups:

Friday Mornings 9 AM (weekly)

Sunday Evenings 6 PM (twice monthly)

Wednesday Mornings 9 AM (twice monthly).

Linwood Community Event: Friday, Oct. 2 at 10:30. Join Christine Jennings from Choice Physical Therapy and Wellness as she shares ways to maintain balance and strength as we age.



Zion Lutheran Church

912 N. Oneida Street
Appleton, WI 54911

(920) 739-3104 - www.zionappleton.org

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Rev. Jason Poole-Xiong
Pastor

jason@zionappleton.org
Pastoral Emergencies: (920) 666-8594

Staff

Jodi Hoesli
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Lynn Walter
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Ministry Leaders

Wendy Sachs
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Kandie Wilz
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Paula Staedt
Handbell Director

Cheryl Meyer
Choir Director

Stephanie Draheim
Confirmation Coordinator
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Pennie Reis
Faith Formation Coordinator
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Gwen Schwandt
Visitation Ministers

Tommy Meltz
Blessing Box

Colleen Malchow
Sunday Fellowship