

Zion Lutheran Church

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Dear Friends,

I am writing to you to ask you to consider partnering and sponsoring the Zion Lutheran Church first ever Civil Rights Conference called “We The People” Conference with Mark Charles and the Common Memory Tour. This conference will be held on April 18, 2026 at Patriots Gateway Center, located at 615 S. Fifth Street in Rockford, IL. This conference is being coordinated by Zion Lutheran Church and their Multicultural Committee. This event will feature two keynote talks by Mark Charles and then workshops to discuss racism, immigration, affordable housing, education, economics and health.

The keynote speaker is Mark Charles, a well know speaker, writer, and consultant. The son of an American woman (of Dutch heritage) and a Navajo man, Mark teaches the complexities of American history regarding race, culture, and Christendom in order to help forge a path of healing and conciliation for the nation. In 2012, Mark hosted a public reading at the US Capitol of the buried apology to Native peoples in the 2010 Department of Defense Appropriations Bill given by the 111th Congress. He is the co-author of the book, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*, and he authors the blog *Reflections from the Hogan*. He is a co-founder of the *Would Jesus Eat Frybread?* college-conference series and has served on the boards of the Christian Reformed Church of North America and the Christian Community Development Association. In 2020 Mark ran as an independent candidate for the presidency of the United States, advocating for a Truth and Conciliation Commission – a formal and national dialogue on issues of race, gender, and class.

We are inviting non-profits, businesses, agencies and community leaders to consider being a sponsor for the event. The event will cost \$25 per/person and space is limited. Space is limited. Please share with others this opportunity to acknowledge our common history and find ways to build a just and equitable community. To register or become a sponsor online, use this link for [payments and donations online!](#)

If you have any questions about the event or being a sponsor, call me at Zion at 815-9864-4609! If you are going to send a check, make it out to Zion Lutheran Church.

Peace,

Pastor Michael Thomas