



# DECEMBER

Our Church—This Week  
for December 11, 2023

## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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FIRST LUTHERAN MONN MOUTH  
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### Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher  
prjamie@flcmonmouth.org  
Cell (630)200-3550  
Custodian  
Chris Algren  
Musician  
Janice Algren  
Preschool and Day Care Director  
Bobbi Nees  
(309) 734-5350

### Congregation Council

President: Pam Van Kirk  
Vice President: Ray Golden  
Secretary: Diane Carlson

Pam Best  
Adam Sanberg  
Mark Shrader  
Chip Algren  
Brian Elliott

\*\* one seat remains vacant in honor of Evelyn Volz, until our next election meeting in May, 2024

Dear Friends and Family,

The holiday season continues to thrill with winter concerts local and not so far away. Recently, we enjoyed concerts both by Monmouth Roseville High School and Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa. I hope you are finding ways to enjoy all the great sounds of the season.

I also hope you are finding ways to keep warm, both with the nice warm-up and through all the recent power outages that Monmouth keeps experiencing. As I write this, there is anticipation of a power outage affecting at least some of Monmouth on Sunday as Ameren works to fix the issues that impacted our community the previous weekend.

Carry on this week with all the warmth and light of Sankta Lucia and pass that warmth and light on to all in need.

### Advent and Christmas Schedule

Join us throughout the season for these great worship opportunities:

**Advent 4—Sunday, December 17th**, due to a scheduling conflict, the Day Care and Preschool will now join us on Dec 17th to share a Christmas Pageant

This year's Christmas play is once again written by Pastor Jamie. It is called "They travelled so far". This is the story of the "Wise Travelers" or the magi from the Bible story. They have left Herod's palace and are trying to find the new born king when they stop to ask for directions from a local travel agent. The travel agent uses the latest technology of her day—a Global Positioning Tree—to lay out the clues to help the Wise Travelers reach their destination. It will be a delightfully fun story, and a can't miss Christmas Pageant

**Christmas Eve—Sunday, December 24th**

Both 10 AM and 7 PM worship services will be Christmas Eve worship services. Candlelight will be offered only at the 7 PM service.

**New Year's Eve—Sunday, December 31st**

During our 10 AM worship we will have a service of lessons and carols and we will have a blessing for the new year beginning.

## Coming in January

It's hard to think that January is right around the corner, and with all the emphasis on everything Advent and Christmas, we still need to prepare for what is coming next month.

Our Annual meeting will be on Sunday, January 21 following the worship service. A weather-back-up date is January 28th.

The watch party for the TV Show "The Chosen" will return on a weekday morning, a time will be announced soon.

A new Bible study called "So That's My Bible" is coming—Pastor will use this to introduce stories in the Bible that don't get heard much and use those as a way to talk about the history, writing, translating, and so much more, of the Bible. A time will be announced soon.

The season of Epiphany begins on Sunday, January 7th with the Baptism of our Lord and will continue through Sunday, February 11th. Ash Wednesday will be celebrated on Wednesday, February 14th. And I am sure there will be many jokes about Jesus' expressing his love for you on Valentine's Day with the gift of ashes. (And its okay if you roll your eyes at me, my kids do it all the time.)

## Nativity Word Search

C A N O I T A V L A S D N S H S  
 Q S H E P H E R D S R F A L L U  
 R A T S A M T S I R H C T E J S  
 N E M E S I W S H E E P I G O E  
 J G N I K M A R Y G I U V N S J  
 M O S Y I H X Q U R Q W I A E T  
 D O N K E Y R E G N A M T D P M  
 Z I L I N N K E E P E R Y O H F



angels  
 Christmas  
 donkey  
 innkeeper  
 Jesus  
 Joseph  
 king  
 manger  
 Mary  
 nativity  
 salvation  
 sheep  
 shepherds  
 star  
 wisemen

## Directory Update

Every year we publish a directory for the congregation in time for the annual meeting.

Here are some updates we are looking for as we prepare this year's directory:

- \* Have you had an address change? Or has a family member had an address change?
- \* Have you changed your phone number or dropped a landline and only use a cell phone?
- \* Have you connected to a new congregation and would like to no longer be included on our membership list? Have you seen your name mysteriously vanish from our previous year's membership directory and think it should still be there?

Maintaining an accurate congregational membership directory allows us to better communicate with members by mail and by phone. It also helps us with accurate numbers for meeting quorum. The list maintained by the office is only as accurate as members share their correct information.

Please take a moment to review your previous directory. If you need a copy, the office is happy to mail one to you. It is especially important to have correct phone numbers as we use a "robo-call" system for critical church announcements and to have correct mailing addresses as we mail out giving statements and other important congregational information.

The office would also appreciate any updates if you prefer to receive your weekly newsletter by mail or by e-mail.

Thank you for all your help in maintaining our accurate membership directory.





**Advent**  
**Sunday, November 26 to**  
**Sunday, December 17**

Christmas Eve Worship is nearly here. And this year we have two opportunities for worship.

Sunday, December 24th 10 AM worship will include the Christmas Proclamation and the lighting of the Christ Candle, a lot of Christmas carols, and holy communion.

The 7 PM worship will include the Christmas Proclamation, the singing of Silent Night by candlelight, a special music selection by Heide Gallagher, and a lot of Christmas carols and holy communion.

Families have multiple ways of celebrating the holiday, and now you have two opportunities to include your families in worship to celebrate the birthday of our Lord Jesus – the reason for the season!

**Worship Guild Members**

Dec 17 — Advent 4

Usher: Ted Hanson  
Reader: Maddie Blaesing  
Com Asst: Julie Blaesing  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

Dec 24 — 10 AM Worship

Usher: Pam Van Kirk  
Reader: Pam Best  
Com Asst: Dee Dee Yez  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

Dec 24 — 7 PM Worship

Usher: Steve Erlandson  
Reader: Wendy Anderson  
Com Asst: Paula Buban  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

Dec 31 — 1st Sunday of Christmas

Usher:  
Reader:  
Com Asst:  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren



**New Worship Setting  
for Epiphany and Lent**

Pastor Jamie and Janice have chosen a new worship setting for the season of Epiphany and Lent. We will learn this setting over the Sundays of January and be fully comfortable with it all through Lent. The setting comes to us from a new hymnal called "All Creation Sings." This hymnal is a new resource from the ELCA and we have used some hymns from it over the last year. Be sure to join us as we continue to expand the liturgical settings our congregation is familiar with.

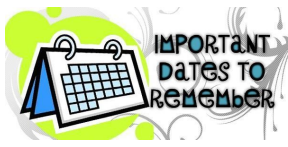
**Worship Assistants**

As we prepare for the new year, we are looking to update our worship assistant list. Council members have been used as ushers, and others who have regularly been in worship are used for other assisting roles.

Please let the office know if you wish to be included as a worship assistant—usher, lector, or communion assistant.

Please let the office know if you no longer wish to be included on the worship assistant list.

Thank you.



**Every Sunday**  
**9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering**  
**10:00 AM Worship**



*For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.*

Sunday, December 10 Advent 3

Tue, Dec 12 6 PM Council meeting  
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Sunday, December 17 Advent 4

Tue, Dec 19 6 PM Council Bible Study  
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Sunday, December 24th Christmas Eve  
 10 AM and 7 PM Christmas Eve Worship

Office closed December 25th; and Pastor Jamie will be sporadically available the rest of the week—it is always best to call first before stopping by the church office.

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Sunday, December 31st 1st Sunday of Christmas, also New Year's Eve

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Sunday, January 7th Baptism of Our Lord

Tue, Jan 9 6 PM Council Meeting

There will be no Our Church published the week of December 25th or January 1st.

*Notice something missing from the calendar? Please contact the church office, and we will add it to next week's newsletter.*

*Pastor Jamie's typical day off is Friday, though with covering occasional office duties, this time off may vary throughout the week. You are always welcome to call Pastor Jamie on his cell phone.*



- Dec 10 Don Reynolds
- Dec 10 Kevin Sprecher
- Dec 13 Kathy Erlandson
- Dec 13 Ben Sanberg
- Dec 16 Michael Pearson
- Dec 17 Caleb Sanburg
- Dec 17 Jackie Slater
- Dec 18 Tyler Osborn
- Dec 18 Adam Sanberg
- Dec 21 Kaye Johnson
- Dec 23 Derek Johnston
- Dec 26 Janice Algren
- Dec 28 Emma Nuckles
- Dec 30 Gary Sanberg
- Jan 3 Elizabeth Hippen
- Jan 3 Ellen Shrader
- Jan 4 Kay Bailey
- Jan 5 Neal Heerwagen
- Jan 5 Mike Jurgens
- Jan 5 Dennis Terpening
- Jan 7 Nancy Hanson
- Jan 9 Steve Erlandson



- Feb 22 Kenny & Nancy Reynolds
- Mar 1 Phil & Trudy Bergren
- Mar 11 Cecil & Kay Lovdahl
- Mar 14 Tammy & Jim Slater
- Apr 2 Don & Kathy Fillman
- Apr 25 Todd & Kris Champion
- Apr 28 Ron & Deb Manuel
- May 5 Brenda & Craig Jones
- May 6 Connie & Chuck Larimer
- May 21 Ted & Sue Hanson
- May 22 Butch & Kaye Johnson
- June 1 Rodger & Linda Ellison
- June 4 Gary & Judy Sanberg
- June 8 Ben & Jenny Sanberg
- June 11 DeeDee & David Yez
- June 12 Neal & Jackie Heerwagen
- June 13 Michael & Barb Pearson
- June 14 Doug & Kathi Cruce
- June 15 Rob & Tammy Ravel
- June 19 Stan & Diane Carlson
- June 23 Mike and Susie Jurgens

*Our celebrations list reflect current membership. To request someone not on our current membership list be added to our celebration lists, please contact the church office.*

## Prayer Requests

Linda Ellison, Ila Roseberry, Kathi Cruce, Erica Lancaster, Dean Sandstrom, Emily Agema, Chris Buban, Ann Enstom, Gary Eyler, Cecil Lovdahl, Janet Lowe, Brian Elliott

*Please let the church office know any updates that are needed to our prayer list.*

## Vision and Purpose Giving Update

# Our Vision & Purpose



Throughout December, our congregation will support the Recharge Teen Center here in Monmouth.

Located on South Main Street, the teen center is open weekdays from 3 PM to 6 PM. It provides a place for high school teens to hang out, develop life skills, and for those in need, to receive a warm meal, have laundry services, select from donated clothing items, and more.

Our endowment committee donated \$500 which Pastor Jamie was able to present to the center already. Now this month, our congregation has an opportunity to match what the endowment committee did. Can we reach that goal this season?

Throughout this year, we have been quite generous with our Vision and Purpose Giving:

January: WIAR, \$15

February: Missionaries, \$95

March and April: Janet and Taylor Lowe, \$370

May: Loving Bottoms, \$55

June: LSSI, \$45

July: Wendy Anderson and the St. Jude Run, \$425

August: Jamieson Center, \$30

September: the Suicide Prevention Walk, \$8

October: LWR School Kits, \$73

November: Jamieson Center, \$5

December: Recharge Teen Center

## Weekly Devotional



Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?

Opening line for the song, “Mary, Did You Know”

The popular song “Mary, Did You Know” is a favorite Christmas song for many. For others, it is a source of controversy. The lyrics of the song ask a series of questions, essentially pondering what Mary did or did not know about her baby boy. The song seems to be written as if Mary has already given birth and is holding her newborn son and is pondering herself what all this means. At its best, the song is a beautiful lullaby that can only be sung in hindsight knowing the full story of Jesus. At its worst, the song is accused of suggesting Mary had no idea what she was getting into with this baby she was told to name Jesus.

So, what did the Angel say to Mary? The story only appears in Luke’s Gospel. In chapter 1, the Angel greets Mary and tells her “[Jesus] will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” The angel also goes on to say, “the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.”

What the angel Gabriel says to Mary is kind of vague on one hand, but also very specific on the other. Mary would have been familiar with ancient prophecies in Isaiah, for instance, that spoke of a coming messiah. There would have been a tremendous fervor about a messiah during the time of Herod’s reign because of the way the Roman Empire treated Israel and the way the government of Israel was so corrupt. There would have been tremendous stories told of a powerful king being raised up who would conquer enemies, vanquish foreign militaries, and restore glory to Jerusalem and all of Israel. And yet the story of Jesus as it unfolds in Luke’s Gospels, and really across all the Gospels, is quite different. Jesus walks on water, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dead live again, the lame leap, the dumb speak praises of the Lamb. And there – that last word of that sentence— “The Lamb” — this metaphor, more than anything Mary might have known as a young woman recently betrothed and yet never having slept intimately with Joseph, becomes the overarching narrative to who Jesus is. And this is so very different and yet it can be subtly found in what Gabriel says just as much as the expected war-horse riding King could be found in what Gabriel said to Mary.

So, what did Mary know when Gabriel came and opened the way for her to be included in God’s salvation story? It is a wonderful thing to ponder, a beautiful thing indeed, and the only way I can identify in anyway with Mary is sitting now with a 21 year old graduating from college next spring—Jamie, did you know your baby girl would one day lead the Marching Band, Jamie did you know, that one day she would play many instruments and sing like an angel? I think every parent can profoundly relate to this Christmas song and appreciate the wonder and mystery of maybe knowing some things but also not having a clue what this newborn child will gift the world with.

In Peace, Pastor Jamie