



# February

Our Church—This Week  
for February 5, 2024

## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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### Our Staff

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### 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,

Howdy Y'all! I have safely returned from Texas, though my flight into Dallas on Sunday came in really too close for comfort, I barely made my connection to Moline. But safely home I did make it. What a great week. I had a fantastic time visiting my brother and being all Touristy along the Gulf Coast down to Corpus Christi. I also had such an amazing time at this World Hunger Leadership Gathering. I will be sharing so much of what I learned throughout this and upcoming newsletters as well in sermons. There is so much to do, so much hope that what is being done is amazing work, and the lives being impacted daily are filled with gratitude for what they are receiving. I have a few photos I will even share along the way. I met some amazing people, reconnected with folks I was absolutely surprised to run into at this gathering, and made new friendships with folks who are passionate about the same work for Jesus I am passionate about. So I rejoice at the time spent, I celebrate being home once again, and now - on to what the rest of this week offers:

### **Boy Scout Pancake Supper**



The Boy Scout Troop 705 will host a Mardi Gras Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 13th. We will serve from 5 PM to 7 PM in the fellowship room here at First Lutheran.

More details about the dinner will come out in the upcoming weeks. This is a fundraising event to help raise scholarship funds for the troop to help offset the annual cost for participation in scouting.

Scouting is a youth organization for both boys and girls. Scouting teaches leadership, citizenship, and outdoor skills. Scouting values inclusivity and is open to all youth.

The troop meets regularly on Sunday evenings at 6 PM and has monthly outdoor activities (weather permitting).

For more information about our scouting program, talk with Pastor Jamie, who serves as the scoutmaster of the troop.



## Amparo

Psalm 46:1, in Spanish reads:

Dios es nuestro amparo y nuestra fuerza

In English this is:

God is our refuge and strength

The ELCA ministry called “Amparo” is an acronym taken from the Spanish word “amparo” meaning refuge. Amparo is the ELCA ministry to and for immigrants. While at the World Hunger event, our group went to Iglesia Luterana Principe de Paz (Prince of Peace Lutheran Church) in Houston, a church led by the first woman from Columbia to be ordained in that area. She partners with Amparo and ELCA World Hunger to welcome immigrants and assist them with obtaining resources for housing, employment, and legal immigration status.

The US legal immigration system is, quite plainly, a mess. But there are some certainties in this mess. First is this - it is completely legal to come to the US border, turn oneself into an Immigration agent, and ask for asylum.

Then the mess begins. It is a long court process. And if the one seeking asylum doesn't get proper legal representation, this process becomes more difficult. Also, there are times a person is released from detention without having a clear status made known, and they are sent off into the US not knowing any different about their status. So many times an immigrant will show up to seek housing or employment and not have a visa or any documentation, and it is no fault of the immigrant - it is because the system has completely failed to provide it for that immigrant. And then the legal issues mount from there.

The story said over and over again, from immigrants who have visas or other documents allowing them being in the US and from those who have become naturalized citizens is this: They have come for a better life and to contribute to the society here in the US. They are grateful for ministries like Principe de Paz and others who provide resources that help them gain the footing they need to have stable lives here in the US. And all of this comes after all the stories of what they fled from. And what they fled from is an article in itself, it is horrifying what these immigrants have had to flee. We rejoice that our church has a ministry like Amparo which provides such hope for our immigrant neighbors.



These photos are the interior of the sanctuary at Iglesia Luterana Principe de Paz in Houston. This is a group shot as we listened to one of the speakers. I promise I am in this picture, but I am in the last row behind someone taller than me.

And here is the pastor of Principe de Paz. She had a remarkable story. Her name is Reverend Adriana Johnson-Rivas. I got to meet here when I shared a message from a mutual friend who was sending her church a financial donation to help fix their church A/C unit.



### The Chosen TV Show watch party

We continue our Wednesday The Chosen TV Show party this week. 10 AM in Pastor's office.

### So That's My Bible — Bible Study

Our new Sunday Bible study finally begins this next week. Stay after worship and join us for a great study as we learn the history of our Bible and dive into some really fun stories we otherwise don't hear too often.

# Worship

Season of Epiphany  
Sunday, January 7 through  
Sunday February 11

## Transfiguration Sunday

This Sunday will serve as a transition from our time after Epiphany into our time for Lent. Jesus will ascend a mountain to pray with three disciples, and there he will be shown in his heavenly glory. But he does not remain in that glory. He will return to the work of this realm, the work of healing, feeding, and more.

This is a tremendous reminder that whenever we come to experience the full glory of Christ in heaven, we, too, return to the work of this world - a work where there are still many hungry - hungry for food, hungry for justice, hungry for opportunity.

Join us as we transition from Epiphany to Lent and as we hear what it means to come down the mountain and return to the work Jesus calls us to keep doing.

## Worship Guild Members

### Feb 11 — Transfiguration of the Lord

Usher: Kurt Volz  
Reader: Maddie Blaesing  
Com Asst: Julie Blaesing  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

### WEDNESDAY Feb 14 — Ash Wednesday

Usher: Ray Golden  
Reader: Pam Van Kirk  
Com Asst: Chip Algren  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

### Feb 18 — Lent 1

Usher: Diane Carlson  
Reader: Pam Best  
Com Asst: Adam Sanberg  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

### Feb 25 — Lent 2

Usher: Pam Van Kirk  
Reader: Judy Sanberg  
Com Asst: Robin Johnson  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren



## NIS WORLD HUNGER TEAM

I was joined in Texas by some amazing co-workers on the NIS World Hunger team. Here I am with Becky Wright and Kent Terry. Becky is the chair of the committee and lives in Huntley. Kent has served the team for over 25 years and is currently serving as a lay-synodically authorized leader for a rural congregation south of DeKalb.

Also, I was surprised to learn that a dear friend name Grace Hoening was also attending this event. Grace's family and my family have been friends for a long time. Grace and Heide are best friends. Grace has served our World Hunger team with her mom for many years until she moved to college. But she continues to be involved as she works for "FoodRecovery.org" a ministry I will share more about later.





Every Sunday

9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.

Sunday, February 4th Season after Epiphany

Mon, Feb 5 9:30 AM Sarah Circle  
7 PM Building/Grounds meeting

Wed, Feb 7 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party  
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Sunday, February 11th Transfiguration Sunday

Sun, Feb 11 11:15 AM Bible Study  
Tue, Feb 13 5 PM to 7 PM Pancake Supper  
Wed, Feb 14 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party  
6 PM Ash Wednesday worship

Thur, Feb 15 6 PM Council meeting  
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Sunday, February 18th 1st Sunday in Lent

Sun, Feb 18 11:15 AM Bible study  
Wed, Feb 21 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party  
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Sunday, February 25th 2nd Sunday in Lent

Sun, Feb 25 11:15 AM Bible Study  
Wed, Feb 28 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party

Note: Throughout Lent, the MRHS Choir program uses various spaces during the day for private lessons as the students prepare for their solo and ensemble contest which will be held at MRHS on Saturday, March 2nd.

*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.*



- Feb 11 Becky Terpening
- Feb 15 Ross Beedle
- Feb 17 Keirstyn Johnson
- Feb 17 Gary Martin
- Feb 18 Mary Jane Olson
- Feb 19 Janet Lowe
- Feb 26 Teresa Miller
- Feb 27 Heidi Niemann
- Feb 28 Connie Larimer
- Mar 2 Dana Jensen
- Mar 7 Dawn Johnson
- Mar 7 Pam Van Kirk
- Mar 9 Helen Babcock
- Mar 13 Joey Slater
- Mar 20 Dee Dee Yez
- Mar 25 Heather Ide
- Mar 27 Phil Bergren
- Mar 27 Kurt Volz
- Mar 30 Anna Lovdahl
- Apr 4 Marly Dobry
- Apr 5 Deb Manuel
- Mar 13 Joey Slater
- Mar 20 Dee Dee Yez



- 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
- Jun 13 Michael & Barb Pearson
- Jun 14 Doug & Kathi Cruce
- Jun 15 Rob & Tammy Ravel
- Jun 19 Stan & Diane Carlson
- Jun 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, Dean Sandstrom, Emily Agema, Gary Eyler, Cecil Lovdahl, Janet Lowe, Brian Elliott, John Van Kirk, Hannah Taylor, Chris Camp

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

## Our Vision & Purpose



We celebrate that in January, our congregation raised \$405 dollars to support WIAR.

This will be added to by our endowment committee who has committed \$100 for each month plus up to \$150 in matching funds.

Our grand total for WIAR raised by Vision and Purpose giving is \$655.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting the Western Illinois Animal Rescue.

## Vision and Purpose Giving

In February, our Vision and Purpose will support the Kiwanis Club in Monmouth. The club celebrates its 100th anniversary here in 2024.

Kiwanis International is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world one child and one community at a time.



### Weekly Devotional



Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. — 1 Peter 4:10

This verse served as the theme verse for the ELCA World Hunger Leadership Gathering. The overarching narrative for the gathering was captured in the expression “Embracing Hope - Taking Action - Moving Forward.” Whenever we talk about world hunger, there is a certain level of despair that enters the conversation. After all, hunger has been a global crisis forever. ELCA World Hunger has its roots 50 years ago in a decision by the former ALC to begin specifically raising money and educating church members about the crisis and using that money to take action where it was needed most. In the 1980’s, a book discussing the world hunger crisis even identified that the problem is not how much food there is, but a policy and a distribution issue. The claim was made that world hunger could be solved by 2000. Well, here we are it is nearly 25 years after the crisis should have been solved and we are still at it. Yet, there is tremendous hope. And we must embrace the hope. The hope is found in the work being done, the advocacy at state and national levels for policies that are making a difference. The hope is we are not giving up just because the crisis continues.

In fact, we continue to take action. ELCA World Hunger is now a global ministry with partnerships in religious and secular organizations all working to provide relief and stability for those suffering from a myriad of conditions that cause hunger. Climate patterns, war, gang violence, government regimes, and natural disaster all play roles in the continuing crisis. ELCA World Hunger partners with agencies that provide relief for immigrants, displaced persons, asylum seekers, and the many more who simply trying to have a stable life where they are.

So we are encouraged to look forward to the next year, the next 5 years, the next decade, the next 50 years. What action can still happen as we look forward to the impact ELCA World Hunger will have going forward? We do not simply sit on our hands or pat ourselves on the back for what we have done. As impressive as the totals raised by ELCA World Hunger over the past 50 years has been, we know there is so much more that can still be raised for this work. As tremendous as the partnerships have been, we know there are still more connections to be made. As powerful as our advocacy work has been to impact state and national policy, even advocating for provisions in the US Farm Bill, we know there is much policy work still needed to reshape domestic and even international policies that impact climate change, equality and just pay, better education systems, and more.

Peter reminds us we have received a gift from God. That gift is one we often take for granted. But the gift we have is to make a difference for a neighbor who is hungry. May we serve as Peter encourages, with whatever that gift is, until the day finally happens when the ELCA World Hunger vision statement “Until all are fed” is finally realized.

Peace, Pastor Jamie