



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH MONMOUTH, IL

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**Gathered by God, We Live Our Faith With:
Compassion, Grace, Gratitude, and Joy.**

Our Church—This Week :: September 15, 2025

Our Staff

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Congregation Council

President: Pam Van Kirk

Vice President: Chip Algren

Secretary: Diane Carlson

Pam Best

Brian Elliott

Adam Sanberg

Kurt Volz

Dee Dee Yez

Dear Friends and Family,

This week, I am attending two conferences. The first is the annual Professional Leaders' Conference hosted by the Northern Illinois Synod. This year the event is taking place at Lutherdale Outdoor Ministry Center in Elkhorn, WI. This 2 day/night event will focus on themes of racism and justice, and how despite years of efforts to end racism, it still rears its ugly head in some of the very places we had tried to root it out of. The second conference I am attending is in Columbus, OH, this is the third time I get to attend an ELCA World Hunger Leader's Gathering. This year I will even get to speak at the event as I share what our synod has done for our ELCA World Hunger giving challenge.

Speaking of that, for those who didn't hear my announcement—the World Hunger committee issued a challenge to the whole Northern Illinois Synod to raise \$100,000 between March 16 and October 16 to receive a massive matching donation. As of now, that initial \$100,000 has been met and additional funds are still pouring in—so much so, that we have another \$20,000 committed to match additional giving above the initial \$100,000. And, based on givings we know are still coming, we have already matched that \$20,000 and have more above it. This means, our synod will be giving almost a quarter million dollars to ELCA World Hunger! See the article on the next page about how the synod plans to celebrate this amazing generosity.

For pastoral care next week, if you call me, I will connect you with a nearby pastor who can attend more quickly to your needs. I will return to the office on Tues, Sep23.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM Worship

**Our next Bible Study will be
announced for the Fall**

MRHS Marching Band Homecoming Dinner

On Friday, September 19th, our congregation will once again provide a dinner to the MRHS Marching Band between the homecoming parade and the homecoming game.

The parade is at 4 PM, the call time for heading to the game is 6 PM. There is a brief window the band members have to eat, and we are here to make that happen.

Menu details are still be worked on, but volunteers are needed to help prepare the meal, serve the meal, and clean up after the meal. We are preparing for 80 to 90 students, plus 2 or 3 teachers/staff.

To help with this, please talk with Pam Van Kirk.

The Chosen TV Series Watch Party

Continue watching The Chosen TV Series with your friends at church.

Season 5 is now available and we will watch the episodes on Wednesday mornings at 10 AM with conversation about each episode following the watching.

Our first Wednesday back for this is September 24.

To catch up on the seasons, check your favorite streaming services for options. Each season is 8 episodes long. The Chosen began in season one with Jesus gathering his disciples, and now the timeline of Season 5 brings us to the events of Holy Week.

The Chosen is historical/Biblical fiction, yet it follows many stories that we read in the Gospels. Our conversation is often filled with understanding the difference between the fictional TV narrative and the Gospel stories.

BYOB & B Bible Study

(Bring Your Own Bible and Beverage)

Beginning Tuesday, October 7th, at 10 AM, First Lutheran Church is hosting a community Bible study that will for sure include folks from First Lutheran, First Methodist, Faith Presbyterian, and Monmouth College.

Join us as Pastor Jamie, Pastor Shelly, Pastor Brandon, and Pastor John lead a 6-week Bible study on the hows and whys we think theologically.

This study will introduce us to thinking theologically—why do we think about the Bible the way we do, why do certain scriptures carry more weight than others, how our theological systems are informed by culture, how we use our theological systems to inform how we interact with culture—these are just some of the questions we will deal with over the course of the 6 weeks.

This is hosted in our fellowship hall in the church basement. And any one in the community can join us for this series. So, invite a friend. Sharing this with other churches will help us to see what we share in common with our siblings in Christ in other faith traditions.



Mark Your Calendars Now:

Tuesday, October 28, Halloween Fun Night

Sunday, November 2, Congregational All Saints Soup Luncheon, following Worship

4 PM at Faith Lutheran, Rochelle, the Northern Illinois Synod Gathering to celebrate accomplishing the ELCA World Hunger Giving Challenge

Sunday, November 23, following worship decorate for Advent/Christmas

Sunday, November 30, First Sunday of Advent

Wednesday, December 24th, Christmas Eve Worship

NIS World Hunger Celebration

You are invited to attend a celebration hosted by the NIS World Hunger committee on Sunday, November 2nd at 4 PM at Faith Lutheran Church in Rochelle, IL.

This celebration includes worship and a sandwich/cake reception after worship. Pastor Jamie, who has been instrumental with the World Hunger Committee plans and announcement and promotion of this challenge, will be a worship leader. Bishop Stacie Fidler will be preacher. And we will have special guests from ELCA World Hunger.

This is a synod event, so you will get to meet other Lutherans from across Northern Illinois and hear about how their congregations met the challenge and be further encouraged as this is not an end to our giving, but a moment to celebrate a massive gift and a moment to encourage continued generosity.

Prime Beef Thank You

Thank you for the good day of fun, volunteering, donating, and supporting our festival day.

Estimates of gross income for the day is around \$3,500; and after expenses, we are estimating \$1500 of net. Exact figures will be shared once we have them more precise. But this places this year's festival at close to previous year's efforts. So, again, a big thank you to everyone who made this day so special.

— Connie Larimer



Ordinary Time

June 15 to November 23

On Sunday, September 21st, we welcome our own Pam Van Kirk to leading worship and sharing the sermon for the day. Pam is going to speak about a church conference she, Ellen Shrader, and Pastor Jamie recently attended.

The conference was called “Scrappy Congregations.” It was designed for small congregations for the purpose of a) reminding us we are not broken big congregations, we are scrappy and good little congregations; and b) that what drives our ministry will be the unlimited creativity and imagination of those who make up our scrappy and good little congregation.

Pam will share more thoughts on how those two key points were made and what that means for our scrappy and good little congregation here in Monmouth.

Be sure to come and hear more from Pam and tell her what a great job she did leading worship that Sunday.

Worship Guild Members

September 21 — Ordinary Time

Usher:	Dee Dee Yez
Reader:	Judy Sanberg
Com Asst:	N/A
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Carolyn Kellert

September 28 — Ordinary Time

Usher:	Chip Algren
Reader:	Ellen Shrader
Com Asst:	Gary Sanberg
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Janice Algren

October 5 — Ordinary Time

Usher:	Doug Cruce
Reader:	Chip Algren
Com Asst:	Dee Dee Yez
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Janice Algren

October 12 — Ordinary Time

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



Halloween Fun Night

Yes, it is that time for us to once again say “It can’t be fall already!” We started this Halloween Fun Night back before Covid, and brought it back after Covid cancelled it for a year. And this is one of our biggest community outreach events of the whole year.

Over 200 kids, parents, and grandparents, come to our church for the Halloween Fun Night each year. This year it will be Tuesday, October 28th at 6 PM.

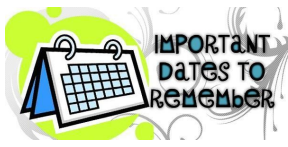
We need volunteers to help with set-up, tear down, and everything in between. I always look forward to this event and this opportunity to just have a fun, safe space for our community to celebrate Halloween. I hope you mark your calendars now to be a part of this night as well.

Constitution Revision Process

Our Congregation Council is currently undergoing a revision of our constitution. There is need to make adjustments to fit the needs of our congregation today. We are in the editing phase and conversation with the synod constitution committee phase.

The plan is to finalize a revised draft constitution to have available in December for the congregation. We will have a congregation meeting in January to approve the new constitution and a special meeting a month later to ratify the new constitution.

Stay tuned for more information on this process.



Every Sunday

9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering

10:00 AM Worship



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.

Sunday, September 14th—Ordinary Time

Mon, Sep 15 to Mon, Sept 22, Pastor Jamie is attending a pair of conference.

Friday, September 19th MRHS Marching Titans Homecoming Parade/Game dinner

3 PM prep/4:30 PM serving

Sunday, September 21st—Ordinary Time

Mon, Sep 22 6:30 PM Pathways Team Zoom meeting

Wed, Sep 24 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party

Sunday, September 28th — Ordinary Time

Wed, Oct 1 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party

Sunday, October 5th — Ordinary Time

Mon, Oct 6 9:30 AM Sarah Circle

7 PM Building/Grounds meeting

Tues, Oct 7 10 AM BYOB&B study

Wed, Oct 8 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party

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



Sep 15 Harber Sprecher

Sep 23 Dennis Mann

Sep 25 Lacey Elliott

Sep 28 Maddie Blaesing

Oct 1 Kaylie Champion

Oct 4 Jamie Reynolds

Oct 7 Margaret

Hackspacher

Oct 10 John Van Kirk

Oct 11 Julie Blaesing

Oct 16 Ayla Johnston

Oct 18 Loretta Reynolds

Oct 21 Betty Bruyn

Oct 26 Paula Buban

Oct 28 Jackie Heerwagen

Oct 30 Bryan Osborn

Nov 9 Ted Hanson

Nov 14 Theodore Coombes

Nov 15 Troy Hippen

Nov 19 Jan Martin

Nov 22 Delmar Champion

Nov 23 Jenny Sanberg

Nov 26 Brady Sanberg

Nov 28 Ray Golden

Nov 29 Brenda Jones

Nov 30 Glenna Martin



Oct 11 Jamie & Katie Gallagher

Oct 15 Ken & Teresa Miller

Oct 25 Mark & Ellen Shrader

Feb 22 Kenny & Nancy Reynolds

Mar 1 Phil & Trudy Bergren

Mar 11 Cecil & Kay Lovdahl

Mar 14 Jim & Tammy Slater

Apr 2 Don & Kathy Fillman

Apr 25 Todd & Kris Champion

Apr 28 Ron & Deb Manuel

May 5 Craig & Brenda Jones

May 6 Chuck & Connie Larimer

May 21 Ted & Sue Hanson

Jun 1 Rodger & Linda Ellison

Jun 4 Gary & Judy Sanberg

Jun 7 Dennis & Becky Terpening

Jun 8 Ben & Jenny Sanberg

Jun 12 Neal & Jackie Heerwagen

Jun 13 Michael & Barb Pearson

Jun 14 Doug & Kathi Cruce

Jun 14 Rich & Nancy Hanson

Jun 15 Rob & Tammy Ravel

June 19 Stan & Diane Carlson

Prayer Requests

Linda Ellison, Ila Roseberry, Kathi Cruce, Dean Sandstrom, Emily Agema, Janet Lowe, Brian Elliott, Wes Lovdahl, Pam Best, Doug Moulden, Marlene Moulden, Dan Golden,

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



Vision and Purpose Giving

Throughout September, we are supporting the Out of Darkness, Suicide Prevention Walk.

It doesn't take much to realize just how much we are impacted by Suicide. Every one of us knows someone personally or indirectly who has taken their own life. Not one of us thought that could happen. That's because a person with suicidal thoughts masks those thoughts really well.

So, our donations this month help create resources for those who have lost a loved one; for those who have thoughts of ending their life; and for communities on how to create a welcoming space where people who have mental illness are not ostracized or stigmatized, but are welcome, valued, and allowed to live into their giftedness for the world.

Thank you for supporting this months Vision/Purpose.

January, Strom Center == \$250.00

February, Lutheran Disaster Response == \$515.00

March, ELCA World Hunger == \$2,609.00

April, Special Olympics == \$410.00

May, Recharge Center == \$407.00

June, St. Jude Run (Wendy Anderson) == \$772.00

July, LWR School Kits == \$270.00

August, Kiwanis Club == \$460.00

September, Out of Darkness Walk,

October, Mosaic,

November, Lutheran Day Care and Pre-School,

December, Jamieson Center,



Then they dragged [Stephen] out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

From the passage on the stoning of Stephen, Acts 7:58

Political violence, in particular assassination of those whose opinions differ from our own, is as old as time. This last week a conservative activist named Charlie Kirk was killed while engaging in a debate at a university in Utah. In recent months, we had politicians assassinated in their homes in Minnesota. Our current president faced two assassination attempts while campaigning for office. Our nation's history is littered with political assassinations, as well as lynchings of persons of color just for being persons of color, and beating deaths of persons who are LGBTQIA+ just for being LGBTQIA+. It is a horrible cycle of violence we are stuck in. And while the debate over accessibility to weapons is certainly a piece of this, that is not what I want to consider today. Today is the day to lament that as a species, we find it easier to kill one another for differing opinions and ways of existing than we find it to truly love one another and become a fuller diverse community. We need a space to lament those lost to needless political violence. We need a space to lament school children in Colorado being shot and injured. We need a spot to lament children shot and murdered in Minneapolis. We need a spot to lament that children in our own communities practice safety drills in case a tragic event were to take place here. We need to lament because crying out to God (which is what lament is all about) is all we have right now. It is time for some old school, old testament practices of tearing our clothing, putting on the sackcloth, and rubbing ash all over our heads, and just crying together that this is how reality is.

Now, you wonder—there has to be good news, right? That's the point of being church—that there is good news. Let's look for the Good News in our lamenting together, for as we lament, God calls us to do something together to change the situation we are in. God calls us to wash off our ash, put on clean clothes, and go make the community envisioned by the Gospel, a community where violence no longer is the answer, because in this community diversity is celebrated and welcomed, and all have a place. Violence will never stop the opinions you disagree with. Violence never ends the differing ways of existing. Love will welcome all diversity, love will shape the debate for the good of all. That's the good news today. May we lament for a time, then, may be pick up the Gospel of Love, and create that God-centered community our Gospel envisions. Peace, Pastor Jamie