



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 6, 2026

Our Staff

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Congregation Council

President: Pam Van Kirk

Vice President: Chip Algren

Secretary: Pam Best

Adam Sanberg

Kurt Volz

Dee Dee Yez

Dear Friends and Family,

I once again want to say thank you to everyone who helped at the Prime Beef Drive Thru on Thursday. We had a wonderful day. Yes, it was hot. But we had lots of water thanks to a generous donation. Both lunch and dinner serving times went very well. And the final numbers are being processed now, so we will soon know how well this year's festival turned out for our fundraising.

I know there is still some lament that we are no longer serving at our tent at the actual festival. But I also see new energy around our new way of serving the community. This is a good demonstration of how ministry changes. What once worked for us no longer does, but what we are now doing is bringing new energy for our community. And there is so much delight in seeing all the folks who do drive through our parking lot and visit and catch up.

So what other ministries do we do that need reimagining, to receive new energy by doing them in new ways? This is the question the Spirit is leading us to explore all the time.

So what comes next? We will have our recap dinner for our Summer Reading Challenge on the Gospel of Matthew. Information is below. This is open for all, even if you hadn't gotten through the whole Gospel yet. Join us.

Later in October, we have our Halloween Fun Night event returning this year. And I am developing a Bible study to begin later this fall using the book "The Bible Says So: What we get right (and wrong) about scriptures most controbersial issues" by Dan McClellan. This book has many more chapters than we will get through, btu it will allow us to learn more about what scripture says and peel away what we have been classically trained to think the Bible says, and sometimes we will discover we know the Bible well, other times we may be surprised by just what is there. Look for this study to begin in Octonber.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM

Worship

Sunday School

Sept 13, 27

9:45 AM

Matthew Reading Challenge Recap Dinner

Join us on Wednesday, September 16 at 5:30 PM
As we discuss over dinner the Gospel of Matthew.

What are your insights from reading Matthew this summer? What questions remain after reading? Which resources available on our website were the most helpful for you? And more ... this is an open time for reflection. Even if you didn't read the whole Gospel, come and be part of the conversation.

Moment of Joy

We are looking to create a new moment in worship - a ritual way to share joys.

Join the conversation on Sunday, September 13th after worship as we explore ways to include this time in our worship life together.

Sharing joys will allow our community to see the good ways God is engaged in our life, the moments of celebration for which we want to offer praise, and remind us God is with us in good times. We so often focus on the times of lament and times when things are not going well, and wonder where God is, and we come to community to help find God then.

This new opportunity will help us learn to see God in the joys of our lives, as well.

So, come, be a part of the conversation, help us create a new ritual for our worship life together.



Curious what your baptism has to do with everyday life? Waterways is a six-week journey for lay people to explore the five baptismal promises and how we live our faith wherever we go.

This series is led by Pastor Katie Gallagher, CaSTLE Project Director, with over 24 years of ministry focused on faith formation in small-town and rural contexts.

Online series meets by Zoom in the evenings from 7:00–8:30 p.m., starting October 1, for six weeks.

Ask Pastor Jamie to send you the link for registering through the Nebraska Synod for more information.

Women of the ELCA + Northern Illinois Synod 2026 Annual Convention

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

9AM - 3PM

New Life Lutheran Church
249 N Bolingbrook Drive
Bolingbrook, IL

Registration and coffee start at 8:00 a.m.



All women in the Northern Illinois Synod are welcome to attend the 2026 Annual Convention, I Am Worthy, All Are Worthy, on Saturday, September 19, at New Life Lutheran Church in Bolingbrook.

Our worship will be led by Pastor Julie Monnard, Assistant to the Bishop, and Pastor Lindsay Fertig-Johnson, Synod Generosity Director and Associate Pastor at New Life in Bolingbrook.

Our afternoon breakout sessions will be led by Pastor Pat Fish and Yenny Muñoz-Swainger. Registration information at www.nisynod.org

Halloween Fun Night

We are already planning our next Halloween Fun Night. This year, we will hold the event on Thursday, October 29th from 6 PM to 7 PM in the fellowship hall.

Donations of candy will be accepted beginning October 1st. Bring your donations to the church office or to worship on Sunday. Volunteers needed for helping check guests in as they arrive and hand out the goodie bag. More information on volunteers needed will be coming.

Our Halloween Fun Night is a great way to invite the community to our church to experience Halloween safely and comfortably. This happens in partnership with the preschool/day care staff and with volunteers from the Scout troop and MRHS Music Department.



The Season After Pentecost May 31 to November 22

Worship is grounded in Word and Sacrament.

The Word is present obviously in the readings. But the Word is also found in the responsive elements of worship. The Greeting, the Kyrie, the Gospel Acclamation, the Communion Prayer, the Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lamb of God - these are all some of the places the Word is found. We quote scripture so often during worship, and because it comes with one of these fancy worship titles, we miss that it is actually the Word being spoken by us, between us, from us to God.

Sit through worship and take note of how often we quote the Word in the form of scripture. And ponder the Word as scripture is read from the Old and New Testaments, and as the sermon proclaims it meaning for our daily living. Notice how many times scripture that isn't read is quoted in the sermon or in prayers or the confession and so on.

The Bible Says So

Pastor Jamie is working on a 6 week Bible study to begin in October and end in November. The book resource to be used is "The Bible Says So" by author Dan McClellan. If you would like help getting a copy before the study starts.

Watch for more information about the day and time for this study.

Worship Guild Members

September 13 -- Sunday after Pentecost

Usher: Adam Sanberg
Reader: Ellen Shrader *
Communion: Gary Sanberg
Narthex: Linda McGiure
Musician: Janice Algren

September 20-- Sunday after Pentecost

Usher: Pam Best
Reader: Judy Sanberg
Communion: Julie Blaesing *
Narthex: Linda McGiure
Musician: Janice Algren

September 27 -- Sunday after Pentecost

Usher: Mark Strader
Reader: Pam Best
Communion: Diane Carlson
Narthex: Linda McGiure
Musician: Janice Algren

October 4 -- Sunday after Pentecost

Usher: Steve Erlandson
Reader: Chip Algren
Communion: Robin Johnson
Narthex: Linda McGiure
Musician: Janice Algren

*Changes from original publishing due to schedule changes





Every Sunday

9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering

10:00 AM Worship



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.



Sunday, September 6th - Season after Pentecost
Mon, Sep 7 - Labor Day, Office Closed
Tues, Sep 8 - 6 PM Council Meeting

Sunday, September 13th - Season After Pentecost
Sun, Sep 13 - 9:45 AM Sunday School
11:00 AM Forum for new Sharing
Joy worship tradition
Mon, Sep 14 - 7 PM Scout Pack/Troop
Committee Meeting
Wed, Sept 16 - 5:30 PM Matthew Study Recap
Dinner

Sunday, September 20th - Season After Pentecost

Sunday, September 27th - Season After Pentecost
Mon, Sep 28 to Wed, Sep 30 - Pastor Attends
Northern Illinois Synod Professional
Leaders' Conference

Sunday, October 4th - Season After Pentecost

Sunday, October 11th - Season After Pentecost
Tues, Oct 13th - 6 PM Council Meeting

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



Sep 12 Tiny Fillman
Sep 23 Dennis Mann
Sep 24 Manohie Alcin
Sep 25 Lacey Elliott
Sep 28 Maddie Blaesing
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
Nov 9 Ted Hanson
Nov 19 Jan Martin
Nov 23 Jenny Sanberg
Nov 26 Brady Sanberg
Nov 28 Ray Golden
Nov 29 Brenda Jones
Nov 30 Glenna Martin
Nov 30 Judy Sanberg
Dec 2 Linda McGuire
Dec 13 Kathy Erlandson
Dec 13 Ben Sanberg
Dec 16 Michael Pearson
Dec 17 Caleb Sanberg
Dec 17 Jackie Slater
Dec 18 Adam Sanberg
Dec 23 Derek Johnston
Dec 26 Janice Algren
Dec 28 Emma Nuckles
Dec 30 Gary Sanberg

Feb 22 Kenny & Nancy Reynolds
Mar 11 Cecil & Kay Lovedahl
Mar 14 Jim & Tammy Slater
Apr 2 Don & Kathy Fillman
Apr 28 Ron & Deb Manuel
May 5 Craig & Brenda Jones
May 6 Chuck & Connie Larimer
May 21 Ted & Sue Hanson
Jun 4 Gary & Judy Sanberg
Jun 7 Angela & Kathleen
Bradley-Volz
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
Jun 19 Stan & Diane Carlson
Jun 23 Mike & Susie Jurgens
Jun 23 John & Pam Van Kirk
Jun 26 Dave & Kathy Erlandson
Jun 26 Gary & Jan Martin
Jun 30 Chip & Janice Algren
Jun 30 Warren & Marlys Dobry
Jul 2 Jeremy & Wendy Anderson
Jul 8 Tom & Pam Best
Jul 12 Steve & Karen Erlandson
Jul 24 Michael & Julie Blaesing
Aug 4 Ray & Shelly Golden
Aug 28 Hal & Kathy Tate
Sept 2 Dennis & Denise Mann
Oct 11 Jamie & Katie Gallagher
Oct 15 Ken & Theresa Miller
Oct 25 Mark & Ellen Shrader

Prayer Requests

Janet Lowe, Pat Clark, Dee Dee Yez, Richard Schlicher,
Cecil Lovdahl, Donna Winbigler, John Van Kirk

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



Vision and Purpose Giving

The Council made a switch for our September Vision and Purpose. We will be supporting the Strom Center in September. Strom Center helps seniors and individuals with disabilities in Warren County with a variety of short-term and long-term programs. Strom Center relies on donations to help ensure its programs remain sustainable for all who need.

Thank you for all the ways you support our Vision and Purpose Giving throughout the year.

Jan, Mosaic == \$140

Feb, Lutheran Disaster Response == \$252

Mar, ELCA World Hunger == \$900

Apr, Special Olympics == \$550

May, Recharge Center == \$380

June, St. Jude Run (Wendy Anderson) == \$625

July, LWR school and health kits == \$372

Aug, Kiwanis Club

Sept, Strom Center

Oct,

Nov, Lutheran Day Care & Preschool

Dec, Jamieson Center



So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. -- James 2:17

Happy Labor Day. We celebrate this holiday in recognition of the worker. This is a holiday that goes back to the late 19th century as a way to recognize the achievements of the worker and labor movements. It is a federal holiday that gives the day off for federal workers, but has been recognized by all states as a statutory holiday, meaning the majority of workers get the day off. Though, we all know this does not apply equally, and many retail and service workers as well as first responders and health care workers do not get this day off. For us in Warren County, Labor Day also is the signal that the Prime Beef Festival is almost here, and many of our church remember this a day we would use to set up our tent at Monmouth Park.

Turning to our faith, we are Christians who happen to follow Luther's teachings. We have a long history of emphasizing grace as the key to salvation, and therefore de-emphasizing works. Paul writes in Ephesians that it is by faith that we are saved, and this is not our own doing, so that no one can boast. And there is something we need to continue to lean on when it comes to our understanding of grace. But salvation by grace does not get us out of doing the work of faith.

What does it look like to do the work of faith? Well, following the example of Jesus, it is taking care of the hungry and thirst, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned (Mt 25). Following the example of Jesus, we are giving away all our possessions (Mt 19). Following the example of Jesus, the work of faith is crucial in so many ways.

So, this Labor Day weekend, take a moment not only to appreciate a day of not having to go to work (if you are so lucky) and contemplate what your faith life is really like. Are you simply resting on the grace getting you from here to there? Perhaps a recalibration to live following the example of Jesus may be in order. Not because doing the work of faith is going to impact your salvation, not because ignoring the work of faith will change how you are forgiven by God. But because to have a vibrant faith leads us to doing such things as what Jesus did and more.

Peace, Pastor Jamie