



# FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

MONMOUTH, IL

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# JANUARY

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

## Our Church—This Week :: January 12, 2026

### Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher

prjamie@flcmonmouth.org

Cell (630)200-3550

Musicians: Janice Algren

Carolyn Kellert

Preschool and Day Care Director

Bobbi Nees

(309) 734-5350

### Congregation Council

President: Pam Van Kirk

Vice President: Chip Algren

Secretary: Diane Carlson

Pam Best

Adam Sanberg

Kurt Volz

Dee Dee Yez

Dear Friends and Family,

Earlier last week, I had the opportunity to spend some time in Nebraska at our family apartment. For those who have not been to Nebraska, I will say this to start—it is not flat. It is very rolling. And at the state park near our apartment, there is an oak tree that was a sapling in 1644. The Missouri River with its beauty rolls gently by as the state line between NE and Iowa and with South Dakota. The Lewis and Clark National Trail has several points of interest including a known campsite that is part of that same state park near our apartment. As far as we know, the explorers on that expedition looked at the same oak tree that still stands there today.

Katie is settling into her new position as assistant to the bishop, with her focus being on congregation renewal and helping congregation members discover their baptismal calling. And she is continuing to recover from her liver injury. And she gives thanks for all the prayers that have been coming along the way. As 2026 begins, my family will continue to be learning how to navigate new ways of being here and there, all the routes between, and focusing on healing.

As 2026 begins, I am also looking forward to continuing ministry here at First Lutheran. We have seen great impact on our community through our reputation as a welcoming congregation; we have opened our arms to new friends; we have ongoing relationships with the high school music department; and so much more to build on. Sure, we are navigating new routes of how to get from here to there in ministry. But that is just the fun of ministry. And one day, someone will be standing in our sanctuary saying, back in the day the greats who forged the way, they were baptized at this same font and they ate at this same table.

### **Sunday Schedule**

**9:30 AM Coffee**

**10:00 AM Worship**

**Sunday School**

**January 11 and 25**

**9:45 AM**

**Future Bible Study  
Opportunities will be  
announced soon**

### **Liturgical Arts Workshop**

The congregation council invites you to a Liturgical Arts Workshop on Wednesday, January 14th at 6 PM.

We will begin evaluating our worship banners and paraments. We will also review sacristy tasks for worship preparation (communion set-up and candle-care). And we will review our worship assistant roles (reader, communion assistant, and usher).

This workshop is open to the whole congregation.

## **Sunday School**

Our Sunday school days will be the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month.

January dates will be: January 11 and January 25.

We will begin at 9:45. Sunday school students will join worship in time to share communion with their families.

## **Annual Meeting on January 25th**

Following the worship service on January 25th, we will have our regular annual meeting. We will take the ratification vote for our revised constitution which was adopted on January 4th. We will elect our new council members, which will be a total of 6 elected members from the congregation. We will also adopt our 2026 annual budget.

We look forward to celebrating 2025 and preparing ourselves for ministry 2026 at our annual meeting.

## **Revised Congregation Constitution**

We have adopted our revised constitution and will ratify it with the second vote on January 25th.

You may find a copy of the revised constitution on our website under the "Resources" tab. Click on the "Congregation Documents" tab to download a PDF. You may also call the church office and have a print copy mailed to you.

Key changes include:

- reducing the membership of the church council to 7 members, 6 elected from the congregation and the pastor.
- Eliminating term limits for those serving council and committees
- Eliminating the second annual meeting in May
- Including the Day Care By-Laws
- Incorporating the church
- And other revisions as required by the ELCA model constitution which don't typically affect our day to day ministry

Thank you to the whole council, but especially to Chip Algren, who spent a lot of time preparing this document for our congregation.

## **Pardon our Dust**

The bathroom project to renovate the women's bathroom in the basement has begun. The project is expected to take a couple weeks for completion. During this time, there is a single-person bathroom off the narthex as well as bathrooms located in the office building. If you would like to make a donation to help offset the cost of this project, please feel free to mark your offering envelop and place it in the offering plate when attending worship or mail to the church office.



## **Thank You from the Day Care and Preschool**

The staff and students of the Day Care and Preschool send their heartfelt thanks to the congregation for the generosity of the November Vision and Purpose which supported our center. Our students enjoyed receiving new games, toys, books, and educational materials that were all possible because of the gift we received from the congregation. We look forward to our day care and preschool ministry continuing its impact our community throughout the year in part because of the generosity of our congregation.

Miss Bobbi and Miss Tosha

## **Scout Sunday and Pancake Supper**

First Lutheran Church is the charter organization for two scouting units. Pack 3705 and Troop 4705. Both units serve families in Monmouth and the surrounding areas.

On Sunday, February 8th, we will celebrate Scout Sunday during worship. The Scouts will attend and assist with worship leadership roles, as well as demonstrate a flag ceremony.

On Tuesday, February 17th, from 5 PM to 6:30 PM the Troop will host a pancake supper fundraiser. The funds raised will support scouts attending summer camp. Summer camp can cost up to \$425 to attend for a week. So all fundraising really does help the scouts offset that cost.

# Worship

## Epiphany

January 6 to February 15

The baptism of Jesus is a moment that each Gospel writer uses to help establish the identity of Jesus as God's Son, the beloved, who we are to follow. The story of his baptism is rather brief, though, in fact the writer John doesn't even record it, just the events in the days after it when John the Baptist points to Jesus and says, "Yep, it's him—he's the one."

The baptism we experience is a moment that helps establish our identity as a follower of Jesus. Our story is one sketched in our memory, a moment long ago when our parents brought us to the font and water was poured over our head and the promise of God was spoken, naming us as a Child of God who can never be cut off from God because of Jesus's death and resurrection.

This year as we remember Jesus' baptism, we recall our own baptism, and we get to ask ourselves—why do we follow Jesus? Is there something about following Jesus that is important in our life?

Whether we answer the question or not does not change God's promise in our life. We are secure. But it does matter to how we are living our life.

So, how do you answer the question "Why do I follow Jesus?"

## Worship Guild Members

### January 18— Epiphany

Usher: Mark Shrader  
Reader: Trace Gallagher  
Com Asst: Diane Carlson  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Drew Carlson

### January 25— Epiphany

Usher: Adam Sanberg  
Reader: Steve Erlandson  
Com Asst: Robin Johnson  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

### February 1— Epiphany

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

### February 8— Epiphany

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



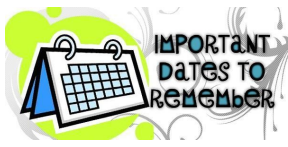
## Want to Add Your Name to our Worship Helper List?

You can — join us at our Jan 14th Liturgical Arts Workshop and learn more about the roles of reader, communion assistant, and usher. We are looking for help scheduling these roles, as well.

You can — email or call Pastor Jamie and ask to have your name added to the list.

Right now the schedule is made using a rotating list. When someone is scheduled and they cannot make, they are simply asked to notify Pastor Jamie and a replacement can be found. And folks in worship are always ready to step up if someone cannot attend that day.

Share your talents in worship .. Volunteer today!



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



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

Sunday, January 11th — Baptism of Jesus  
 Sun, Jan 11 — 9:45 AM Family Sunday School  
 Tue, Jan 13 — 6 PM Council Meeting  
 Wed, Jan 14—6 PM Liturgical Arts Workshop  
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 Sun, January 18th — 2nd Sunday after Epiphany  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 Sun, January 25th —3rd Sunday after Epiphany  
 Sun, Jan 25th — 9:45 AM Family Sunday School  
     Annual meeting following  
     worship  
 Mon, Jan 26th—Wed, Jan 28th  
     Pastor Jamie attends Continuing  
     Education event  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 Sun, February 1st—3rd Sunday after Epiphany  
 Mon, Feb 2nd—7 PM Building and Grounds  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 Sun, February 8th—4th Sunday after Epiphany  
 Sun, Feb 8th— Scout Sunday  
     9:45 AM Family Sunday School  
 Tues, Feb 10th—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.*



Jan 12 Evan Shrader  
 Jan 14 Kathi Cruce  
 Jan 30 Kay Lovdahl  
 Feb 11 Becky Terpening  
 Feb 15 Ross Beedle  
 Feb 17 Kierstyn 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 Marlys Dobry  
 Apr 5 Deb Manuel  
 Apr 6 April Icenogle  
 Apr 7 Fred Burgland  
 Apr 10 Trace Gallagher



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 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  
 June 19 Stan & Diane Carlson  
 Jun 23 Mike & Susie Jurgens  
 Jun 23 John & Pam VanKirk

## Prayer Requests

Ila Roseberry, Kathi Cruce, Dean Sandstrom, Janet Lowe, Wes Lovdahl, Pat Clark, the family and friends of Marlene Moulden

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



## Vision and Purpose Giving

Join us in supporting Mosaic this month in our Vision and Purpose Giving. Mosaic, with offices in Macomb, is a Lutheran-rooted ministry supporting adults with special needs.

Mosaic helps provide at-home resources, community living centers, employment skills and so much more.

You can go to the website: [www.mosaicinfo.org](http://www.mosaicinfo.org)

To learn more about the many ministries Mosaic provides.

January, Mosaic

February, Lutheran Disaster Response

March, ELCA World Hunger

April, Special Olympics

May, Recharge Center

June, St. Jude Run (Wendy Anderson)

July, LWR School Kits

August, Kiwanis Club

September, Out of Darkness Walk

October, Strom Center

November, Lutheran Day Care and Pre-School

December, Jamieson Center



“A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.” — Matthew 2:18

One of stories that is a part of the Christmas narrative in Matthew’s gospel is the tragedy where Herod sends troops to kill the boys who are 2 years old or younger in and around Bethlehem. Herod sends the troops because he is afraid of a new king born as a rival. Herod authorizes this horror because of his paranoia and insecurity. We often do not read this story during the Advent or Christmas season because a story of such horror seems contrary to a beautiful tale of God’s Son born. We want the ideal beauty of a shining star, angels singing, shepherds holding baby lambs, and nice guys showing up with expensive gifts. We want to avoid the horror that God arriving is a threat against the empire ruling the day. It is a shame that we avoid this story, because by avoiding the horror found in scripture, we have taught ourselves to avoid talking about the horror of our daily world. We like nice narratives that the powers that be are okay and trustworthy. We want the idealism of a happy nation; and to point out injustice caused by our modern empires makes us uncomfortable. We need to stop avoiding the story of the slaughter of the innocents. We need to be reminded that the horrors of this world is exactly why Jesus was born. Jesus was not born for happy idealism. Jesus was born to point out that the empires of this world are unjust.

As our nation reels in the chaos of the federal agent killing Renee Good in Minneapolis, we are left with the choice to avoid talking about the story, much as we avoid the horror story of the slaughter of innocents; or, we have the opportunity to name the violence of our world and to point out when the empire powers of our world cause wailing and lamentation, much as Herod did in sending his troops to Bethlehem. There is nice way to avoid naming the obvious that state-sponsored extrajudicial violence is never justifiable. There is no idealism that can cover up the blatant abuse of power that is trying to make anything right about what happened.

As people of faith, we are called to confront the horror of the world with the same boldness of Jesus, who was born to stand against the Herods of his day by standing against the metaphorical Herods of our day. May we remember our vocation as people of faith, and not hide from our tragic world, but instead with the faith and hope found in Jesus call out injustice wherever it is found, and work towards a world where God’s vision of peace roots out empiric injustice and blossoms fully with God’s true justice.

Peace, Pastor Jamie