



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 :: June 15, 2026

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Secretary: Pam Best

Adam Sanberg

Kurt Volz

Dee Dee Yez

Dear Friends and Family,

Our church has a social media page on Facebook, and most often I post an event coming up, and I get a few responses. I will share something we are praying for, and get a couple reactions. I post that we have material for a Bible study on our church website, and I get zero comments. But then I post about Pride month -- and suddenly the post-analysis says I am getting over 7000% more interactions than my usual posts. And boy did this one light up the world. And boy does this show how ugly the world is. I have removed some of the most tasteless and repulsive comments, and comments that were posted by so-called "bots", those automatic social media pages that are not an actual person, but a computer designed to just comment hate whenever and wherever it can. But I cannot delete all comments, even as many remaining comments are as ugly as human beings can be to each other.

I made the choice to not delete all comments for a specific reason. My post identifies that there is a lot of church trauma that happens to people who identify as LGBTQIA+. And these comments are that trauma. These hateful comments demonstrate the full rage of people who hide behind a social media profile to spew what is in their hearts. And if you did not believe people could be so hateful towards a neighbor who identifies as LGBTQIA+, well, just take a stroll through those comments. Though do so with great caution. And remember those comments do not reflect our church's position. Now there were a few people who jumped into the comment section and supported my post, and I am thankful for those who did. But the overwhelming majority of the comments demonstrate people just do not understand how their hate is hurting people.

It is my greatest hope that you take time this month to reflect on the teachings of the church. Where did you learn your understanding on people who identify as LGBTQIA+ ? Who taught you whether to love and welcome or shun and exclude? Do you just take someone's word for their position, or have you fully studied the topic and really deep dived into theology, what the passages in the Bible that have anything to do with this actually are about? This Pride Month is a month for learning and I hope we continue to learn, as we continue to be a safe space for all people - especially for our neighbors who identify as LGBTQIA+ who need a safe space to come and be in the presence of the holy and divine.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM

Worship

Sunday School

June 14 & 28

July 12 & 26

9:45 AM

Thank you to everyone who helped with our Strawberry Festival. We had a tremendous time and the band performance was spectacular as ever.

Watch for news updates across July as we share more about our outdoor worship on Sunday, August 9th, and our Prime Beef Drive-Thru Festival on Thursday, September 3rd

Summer Bible Reading Challenge

Have you started reading the full Gospel of Mathew yet? This is our Summer Bible Reading Challenge.

It is quite simple, just read through 2 chapters of Matthew's Gospel each week.

On our website, we have resources - an introduction to the 2 chapters, some deep dives into themes found either in the whole gospel or a portion of this week's reading, and a simple devotional reading based on part of this week's reading. We also have videos of Pastor Jamie reading the chapters that are on our website as well.

Each Sunday, feel free to place a sticker on the poster board in the Narthex gathering space. Share with our friends that you have read the chapters, or have read one or all of the online resources as well.

This is an opportunity for our church to grow together in faith over a summer when we are otherwise too busy to come together and study together.

Updated Security System for Day Care/Office Entrance

The new security system is installed. If you have a key card, please bring it to the church office and we will get it reprogrammed for you to match our new system. Either Pastor Jamie or Ms Bobbi in the Day Care can program your card. If you would like to use the new phone app, you may also see Pastor Jamie or Ms Bobbi to get that set up as well.

Vacation Bible School

This year VBS will be held from Sunday August 2nd to Thursday, August 6. The times are from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM. First United Methodist Church is hosting. Volunteers are needed, and when we know what supplies they need, we will share that list. If you are interested in helping with VBS at the Methodist Church, please let Pastor Jamie know.

Pride Month

The month of June has been designated Pride Month for many years. Lately, this designation is getting significant pushback from cultural forces who are trying to control people and dominate people. This is not just found in comment sections on social media, though it is heavily and sadly there, it is also in our political networks. Local, state, and national lawmakers are trying to make it hard for people who identify as LGBTQIA+ to have equal rights at the voting booth, in the workplace, in family circles, and in public spaces such as bathrooms.

A lot of the pushback against recognizing Pride Month, or having any decency towards our neighbors who identify as LGBTQIA+, comes from people who assume the Bible gives them the authority to do so.

Let's clarify some misconceptions.

First, there is no single correct way to be Christian, nor is there a single correct way to understand what the Bible says. We are split into many denominations for a reason, and the least of these reasons is about sexuality. We are divided over the purpose of faith, the person of Jesus, the identity of the Trinity, the ways of worship, the who can be pastors, the interpretive lens of scripture and so much more. So if someone says your church is wrong, the response is "no, my church believes differently, and that is okay."

Second, there are only 7 verses/passages in all of scripture that address any sort of question related to human sexuality - be it identity or relationship-based. Compare this to the hundreds of verses that talk about loving our neighbor, feeding the hungry, bringing justice for the oppressed, visiting the imprisoned, welcoming the stranger. If someone believes we must all have the same interpretation on human sexuality but is ignoring all the weightier matters of faith that we are obviously also not in agreement over, then it is time to flip the script and focus on those weightier matters first.

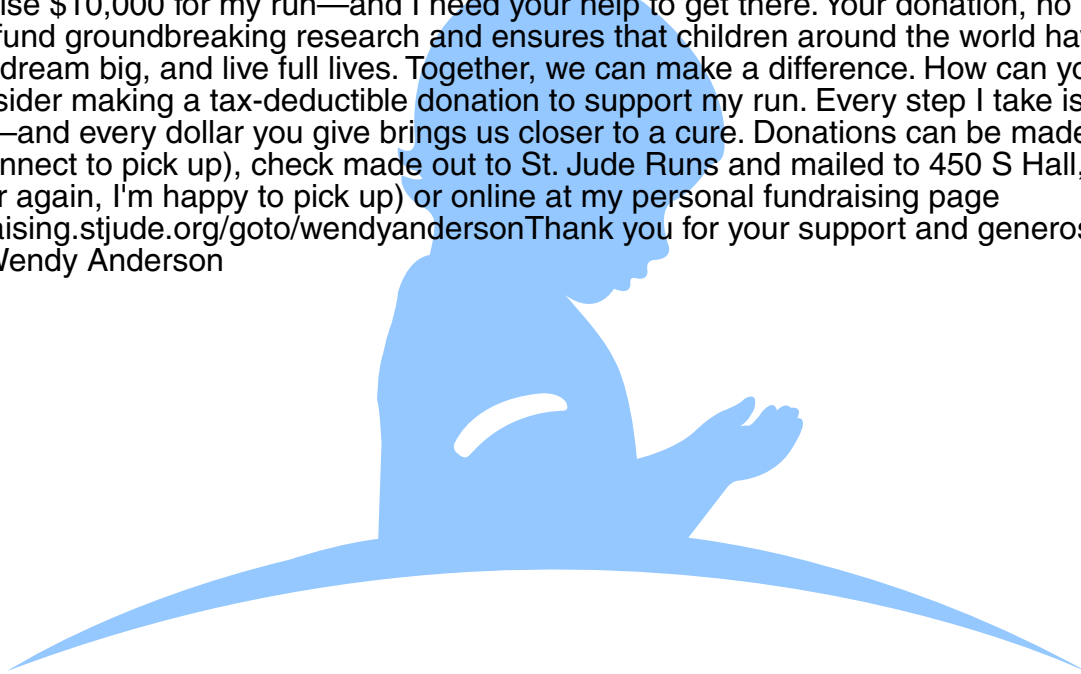
It will take more than a single column to talk through all the issues that are present in the cultural conflicts we are experiencing when it comes to our neighbors who identify as LGBTQIA+. But it takes one command from Jesus to know where our priority will be "Love your neighbor."



stjuderuns.org



Dear Family and Friends, I'm thrilled to share that I'll be participating in the St. Jude Memphis to Peoria Run as part of the 45th Annual St. Jude Runs, taking place on Saturday, August 1, 2026! I'll be joining thousands of runners who are united by one mission: to raise funds and awareness for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Each satellite run is a unique, community-driven event—whether it's 20 miles or 100—that contributes to the larger movement of hope. Since its founding in 1982, the St. Jude Runs has raised over \$94 million to support life-saving research and treatment for children battling cancer and other life-threatening diseases. What makes St. Jude so special? Families never receive a bill for treatment, travel, housing, or food—so they can focus on helping their child live. My goal is to raise \$10,000 for my run—and I need your help to get there. Your donation, no matter the size, helps fund groundbreaking research and ensures that children around the world have a chance to grow up, dream big, and live full lives. Together, we can make a difference. How can you help? Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to support my run. Every step I take is for the kids of St. Jude—and every dollar you give brings us closer to a cure. Donations can be made in cash (I'm happy to connect to pick up), check made out to St. Jude Runs and mailed to 450 S Hall, Roseville, IL 61473 (or again, I'm happy to pick up) or online at my personal fundraising page <http://fundraising.stjude.org/goto/wendyanderson> Thank you for your support and generosity! Sincerely, Wendy Anderson



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he Season A ter Pentecost May 31 to November 22

Summer Worship is in full swing. The green paraments remind us of a season of growing and a season of rest. Summer is our cultural time of rest, stepping back from regular routines, stepping back from high demands, maybe even going on a vacation or two, maybe finding yourself in the woods, or hiking a long trail, or exploring national parks.

However you spend your summer, take a moment and remember worship is always in season. Worship refreshes us in God's Word. Worship renews us in God's promises. Worship feeds us for our journeys - near and far.

Worship Guild Members

June 21 — Sunday after Pentecost

Usher: Adam Sanberg
Reader: Pam Van Kirk
Communion: Kurt Volz
Narthex: Linda McGuire
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

June 28 -- Sunday after Pentecost

Usher: Pam Best
Reader: Judy Sanberg
Communion: N/A
Narthex: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren

July 5 -- Sunday after Pentecost

Usher: Mark Shrader
Reader: Pam Best
Communion: Steve Erlandson
Narthex: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren

July 12 -- Sunday after Pentecost

Usher: Steve Erlandson
Reader: Ellen Shrader
Communion: Robin Johnson
Narthex: Linda McGuire
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

July 19 -- Sunday after Pentecost

Usher: David Sandstrom
Reader: Madeline Blaesing
Communion: Adam Sanberg
Narthex: Linda McGuire
Musician: Jannice Algren

Are You Interested in Serving in Worship?

At this time, our list of worship helpers includes:

11 lectors; 12 communion assistants, 12 ushers

Which means a person volunteering helps out about 1 time every 12 weeks or so. Though, some of the folks on this list are on two or even three of these lists. So, often a person is helping in worship more like 2 or 3 times every 12 weeks.

Perhaps you have an interest and would like to help as an usher, or assisting in communion, or reading the scripture passages and prayers of intercession?

Let Pastor Jamie know you are interested in helping out in worship and get your name added into the rotating list of those who help bring our worship services to life.

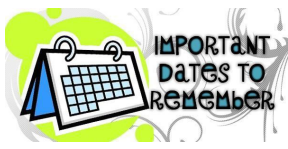
Summer Newsletter schedule

We will not have weekly newsletters through the summer. Please take note of this schedule and watch for our newsletter publications accordingly:

July 6, July 20

August 3, August 17, August 31

If additional information or updates need to be shared between newsletters, an email and FB social media post will share that.



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



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.



Sunday, June 14th – Season after Pentecost

 Sunday, June 21st -- Season after Pentecost
 Sun, June 21 (afternoon) to Sun, Jun 28,
 Pastor Jamie on Vacation

 Sunday, June 28th -- Season after Pentecost

 Sunday, July 5th -- Season after Pentecost
 Mon, Jul 6 to Sun, Jul 12, Pastor Jamie on
 Vacation

 Sunday, July 12th - Season after Pentecost
 Tue, July 14 - 6 PM Church Council meets at
 Pam Van Kirk's House

 Sunday, July 19th - Season after Pentecost
 Mon, July 20th to Fri, Jul 31st, Pastor Jamie on
 Vacation

 Sunday, July 26th - Season after Pentecost

 Sunday, August 2nd - Season after Pentecost

 Sunday, August 9th - Season after Pentecost
 Sun, Aug 9th - Outdoor Worship at Pattee Park
 (East Broadway and 11th Street)
 Tue, Aug 11th -- 6 PM Council Meeting

 Sunday, August 16th -- Season after Pentecost

 Sunday, August 23rd - Season after Pentecost

Jun 21 Aaron Jensen
 Jun 22 Denise Mann
 Jun 30 Collin Nuckles
 Jul 3 Hal Tate
 Jul 9 Cohen Anderson
 Jul 13 Reese Anderson
 Jul 15 Pastor Jamie
 Jul 17 Cecil Lovdahl
 Jul 19 Mark Shrader
 Jul 20 Ron Manuel
 Jul 25 Barb Pearson
 Jul 26 Konner Elliott
 Aug 2 Karen Erlandson
 Aug 13 Brandon Reynolds
 Aug 16 Eloise Swisher
 Aug 23 Kenny Reynolds
 Aug 24 Pam Best
 Aug 25 Robin Johnson
 Aug 25 Tammy Ravel
 Aug 27 Kathy Fillman
 Sep 1 Ila Roseberry
 Sept 4 Chris Algren
 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

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

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

Prayer Requests

Ila Roseberry, Janet Lowe, Pat Clark, Dee Dee Yez, Charlotte Volz, Richard Schlicher, Cecil Lovdahl

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



Vision and Purpose Giving

In June, we are supporting Wendy Anderson and her annual run for St. Jude Children's Hospital. Please see her letter on page 3 for more information on how her fundraising helps St. Jude's and for the many ways you can support her, including through donating through church to help get our endowment fund matching donation for this month.

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)
- July, LWR school and health kits
- Aug, Kiwanis Club
- Sept, Out of the Darkness Walk
- Oct, Strom Center
- Nov, Lutheran Day Care & Preschool
- Dec, Jamieson Center



4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; -- Genesis 19:4

This verse is just one in a longer story that we are all vaguely familiar with. It is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. In this story, two angels of the Lord arrive in Sodom and Lot, a nephew of Abraham, welcomes them into his house for the evening. He offers hospitality and a place to stay and refresh so they may continue their journey the next day. What happens is the men of the city learn of these visitors and come to the house and after surrounding it, they call into the house, demanding Lot send the visitors out so they "can know them" (verse 19:5, NRSV translation).

We are all aware that the phrase "know them" is a euphemism for having sex. And of course in our modern day and age, we hear this as these men want to engage in a rolling orgy pleasure fest, as if this was some kind of normal behavior in the town of Sodom. And of course, we all know the ending of this story, that Sodom and Gomorrah, were destroyed because of their depravity.

There is a major flaw in our modern thinking, though, and that is we do not properly take into account ancient customs and what is actually happening here. This is not about consensual sex between grown adults. In ancient Hebrew culture, this context was to be blunt an abusive situation. Sex, in this case male-on-male rape, was about power and demonstrating authority. These visitors were not welcomed into the city properly, they needed to be shown a lesson, they needed to be reminded they were not equal, they were not going to be seen as equal men. Male-on-male rape was about emasculating these visitors, you know, putting them in their place, laying shame on them, telling them they were no-good, not worthy of even the status of women in this city.

There is nothing in this story that remotely describes healthy relationships between two committed individuals. There is nothing in this story that suggests anything about these men had anything remotely close to what we understand today as a homosexual orientation. These men were abusive to visitors, they demonstrated absolutely no care or hospitality or justice for these visitors. And that is why the judgment came from God for their cities to be destroyed.

And so, we need to know, this is a story that does not condemn an individual who identifies as LGBTQIA+. This is a story purely about the evils of abusing visitors. When you hear someone using this story to condemn a beloved child of God, please take the time to remind them why this story is not what they think it is. Peace, Pastor Jamie