



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 :: March 23, 2026

Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher

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Cell (630)200-3550

Musicians: Janice Algren

Carolyn Kellert

Preschool and Day Care Director

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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,

Well, that was a week for the weather to do all the seasons at once. Last Sunday, I raced across to Mount Vernon, Iowa to get my college kid back to school after his spring break, and the raced home again to beat the incoming weather. Blizzard warnings were beginning at 4 PM in Mount Vernon and by 7 PM here at home in Monmouth. And the journey was safe and thankfully I did not have any issues with the weather. Then we had the blizzard here, and two days of cancelled school, and now as I prepare this, I am wearing shorts and a t-shirt as the highs on Friday are in the upper 70's. When someone says you cannot experience all four seasons in the same week, Illinois says, "oh yes you can."

As wild as this week was in weather, we are about to experience a whole different kind of wild. This time in the world of our faith. Holy Week is an emotional roller coaster where we say there is no way one can experience all the highs and lows of faith in the same week, and scripture says, "oh yes you can." Palm Sunday begins the week with the high of Jesus entering the city of Jerusalem with a parade and people cheering him as the incoming messiah. In the span of 4 days, the mood goes completely dark as those same people turn on Jesus and begin demanding his death. And then the weekend flips, and the women encounter an empty tomb and a message that Jesus is indeed alive! This kind of emotional whiplash is one we experience every year as we remember the joys and the laments of Holy Week. Join us throughout the whole week, experience the story in worship and in community as we gather because of our faith in Jesus for all of the Holy Week experiences.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM Worship

Sunday School

March 29; April 12 & 26

9:45 AM

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

Holy Week and Easter Celebrations

We Gather because of our Faith in Jesus...

April 2nd, Maundy Thursday, 7 PM, worship in our chapel

April 3rd, Good Friday, 7 PM, worship in our chapel

April 5th, Easter Sunday, 9 AM breakfast and Easter egg hunt for all

10 AM Easter Worship

Recognition for Caring Hearts Ministry

Through the years, as families are grieving, a core ministry at First Lutheran Church has been Caring Hearts. Caring Hearts is the funeral luncheon ministry. When a member passes, this team of dedicated members come together and prepare a luncheon for 20, 50, 100, or more people; and they do it in just a matter of days.

Caring Hearts has been led by Betty Bruyn for so long that we can't even recall exactly when she began leading this ministry. The three-ring binder labeled "Caring Hearts" might as well be labeled "Betty's Binder". But now Betty is stepping back from leading this ministry.

To be sure, this has been a ministry of love for Betty. This is how she has cared for all her friends and fellow members here at First Lutheran Church. This is how she tends to their grief, by making sure sandwiches are made, salads and pies are donated and prepared, dishes are washed, tables set and cleaned up. All so a family gathering does not need to worry about anything.

On Sunday, April 12th at the end of worship, our congregation will host a reception in the narthex to thank Betty Bruyn for her time leading this ministry.

Along with Betty, another dear member also worked countless hours to make sure these meals went off without a hitch, and that is Glenna Martin. Glenna was there to help make those sandwiches, cut those cakes, set out those salads, and prepare the beverages. Glenna, too, valued being a member of this Caring Hearts Ministry and deserves a moment of gratitude for all the years of dedicated service to friends and fellow members alike.

So join us on Sunday, April 12th after worship as we recognize the contributions of Betty and Glenna to our community, to thank them for their dedication to our families when we were in grief. Cake and beverages will be provided by the church.

Caring Hearts Ministry will continue with new leaders, new helpers, new people dedicated to serving families in grief. But this ministry was built through the dedication of Betty Bruyn and Glenna Martin and all who answered their phone calls to say, "yes, I can be there; yes, I can contribute something."

Core Values

As our Council and Pathways Team prepares to review the feedback from our congregation feedback forum in February, we are taking a moment to explore the draft core statements. Our fourth statement is "Everybody has something to contribute."

This is a statement that reflects our approach to how our community happens. Our community happens because you have something to contribute. And what you have to contribute is certainly in your wallet, and what you offer does make our community happen. And what you have to contribute is on your calendar, your wristwatch, your smartphone to-do-list. Yes, I am talking about time. You have time to give, and that makes our community happen. And what you have is skills and talents and creativity and imagination and desires and craftiness and more. Yes, you have something to contribute.

Our community also does not evaluate a quantity by which you must have before you can contribute—be it the coin, the few moments, or the slightest skill. Any amount is appreciated, any amount is what is needed to make our community happen.

We also do not check for membership cards—Everyone means Everyone, from the life-long member to the first time visitor, to the neighbor who you ask to bake a pie to the friend who comes only on Christmas to sing "Away in the Manger." Everyone has something to contribute.

There is no height requirement, no age limit one must reach before contributing—the youngest and the oldest and those somewhere in the middle—we all have something to contribute.

This means, when you are invited to serve a committee, it is because you have something to contribute; when you are invited to help a coffee hour or a festival dinner, it is because you have something to contribute; when you sing, pray, read a lesson, join a Bible study, change a light bulb, host a circle, light a candle, fill the shopping cart, and so much more ... it is because you have something to contribute.

And what you give is given through the church unto the Lord in joyous gratitude for all that the Lord has done for you. Thank you for all you contribute that helps make First Lutheran Church the ministry it is.



LENT

February 18 to April 4

40 Days

Lent is a season of 40 days, when you start on Ash Wednesday and end on Holy Saturday, and do not count Sundays. This number 40 was chosen because Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness after his baptism, and also in the Old Testament the Israelites wandered for 40 years from when they left Mt. Sinai to reach the promised land. The number 40 also appears in the flood story as the number of days of rain.

40 represents spiritual testing, growth, and renewal. Throughout Lent, we are given a liturgical reason to focus on our spiritual life. This is a time of asking how God is working in and through us; to ponder in what ways my faith can grow; to reflect on opportunities for renewal.

The season ends with the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection. A reminder that hope wins in all things. How have you used these 40 days of Lent? Have you seen God working in your life? Is your faith growing? Are you feeling renewed?

Mid Week Re-Center Devotions Continue

We have two more Lent Re-Center Devotions this season. Join us Wednesdays at 7 PM. This is a time to slow down, breathe in the Holy Spirit, reflect quietly on thoughts written by and about Martin Luther.

Join us in the chapel this week and next week and Re-Center your faith life in the midst of the chaos happening all around us.

Worship Guild Members

March 22— 5th Sunday in Lent

Usher: Diane Carlson
Reader: Trace Gallagher
Com Asst: Gary Sanberg
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

March 29— Palm Sunday

Usher: Pam Van Kirk
Reader: Kurt Volz, Judy Sanberg, Maddie Blaesing, Trace Gallagher
Com Asst: Kurt Volz
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

April 2, Maundy Thursday

Usher: Kurt Volz
Reader: Steve Erlandson
Com Asst: Diane Carlson
Musician: Janice Algren

Apr 3, Good Friday

Pam Van Kirk
Carolyn Kellert

April 5 — Easter Sunday

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



Strom Center Lent Worship Schedule

Strom Center (211 South A Street) is again hosting breakfast and devotions on the Fridays during Lent. Breakfast begins at 6:30 AM, and the devotion begins at 7:15 AM.

- March 27: Heritage Bible Church
- April 3: Immaculate Conception Church



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



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.

Sunday, March 22nd—5th Sunday in Lent

Sun, Mar 22—9:45 AM Sunday School

Wed, Mar 25—7 PM Lent Devotions—Chapel

Sunday, March 29th—Palm Sunday

Thurs, Apr 2—7 PM Maundy Thursday Worship

Fri, Apr 3—7 PM Good Friday Worship

Both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday
 Worship will be in the Chapel

Sunday, April 5th – Easter Sunday

Sun, Apr 5—9 AM Easter Breakfast

Mon, Apr 6—7 PM Building/Grounds Meeting

Sunday, April 12th—Easter 2nd Sunday

Sun, Apr 12 — 9:45 AM Sunday School

11:00 AM reception for Betty and
 Glenna

Tues, Apr 14—6 PM Council Meeting

Sunday, April 19th — Easter 3rd Sunday

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



- 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
- Apr 11 Angela Bradley-Volz
- Apr 13 Elise Blaesing
- Apr 16 Nate Gallagher
- Apr 18 Chip Algren
- Apr 20 Diane Carlson
- Apr 20 Warren Dobry
- Apr 20 Rachael Nuckles
- Apr 23 Lindsay Martin
- Apr 23 Rob Ravel
- Apr 25 Deve Erlandson
- Apr 28 Sharon Edwin
- May 6 Andrew Youngquist
- May 7 Jacob Ide
- May 8 Sophie Shrader
- May 16 Shelly Golden
- May 18 Todd Champion



- 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
- Jun 26 Dave & Kathy Erlandson
- Jun 26 Gary & Jan Martin
- Jun 30 Chip & Janice Algren

Prayer Requests

Ila Roseberry, Kathi Cruce, Janet Lowe, Wes Lovdahl, Pat Clark, Jennie Best, Dee Dee Yez, Charlotte Volz, Richard Schlicher, Tim Greene

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



Vision and Purpose Giving

In March, we support ELCA World Hunger with our Vision and Purpose Giving. ELCA World Hunger provides a variety of ministries both domestically and internationally.

Last year, we supported our synod campaign to reach a matching grant goal. This year, we give because it is still right to support ELCA World Hunger.

Thank you for all your support of all our Vision and Purpose Giving agencies throughout the year.

January, Mosaic == \$140

February, Lutheran Disaster Response ==\$252

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



Jesus said to [Martha], “ I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”— John 11:25-26

So, here it is. The crux of our faith. If the crux of the Gospel is John 3:16—For God so loved the world ...; then the crux of our faith is found here in John 11—do you believe Jesus? Do you believe Jesus is God’s Son, the one who came into the world in order to save it? Do you believe Jesus is the resurrection and the life? If you answer yes to this, then there is no other choice but to see your life entirely different. And if your life isn’t entirely different, then are you really saying yes to this question?

As the resurrection and the life, we naturally assume this statement by Jesus refers to the next life, when we die. In fact I read this verse in the committal portion of my funeral service. Standing next to the grave, under the open sky, with grieving loved ones sitting, crying, wondering what comes next, we hear these words of Jesus “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.” It offers comfort, it brings joy, to know that the end in this life is not the end in life in God, and there is more and we will be there because we believe in Jesus.

But if our faith in Jesus is only for the sake of receiving eternal reward and avoiding eternal punishment, then our faith is missing a major component—and that component is today. For the resurrection and the life Jesus promises is a life for today. Jesus orders the stone over Lazarus’ tomb to be rolled away so Lazarus can have life today, in this moment. Jesus raises Lazarus to show us that we can have life today, and have meaningful life today, and meaningful life in Jesus looks like trusting Jesus in everything; it looks like caring for the poor as Jesus did, feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, seeing that others have a fair shot at living life, too. Faith in Jesus is not just about tomorrow, it is not just about what happens when we die. Faith in Jesus is very much about today. And if we get too tangled up in rules and moral codes and demanding everyone look and act the same way, Jesus will be there to roll the gravestone away from us, and to call us back to life today, here and now, a life in God’s Kingdom today.

Peace, Pastor Jamie