



Our Church

(309) 734-2106 office@flcmonmouth.org

Volume CL Issue 3

MARCH 2018

Embrace the Courage of Christ!

“Not my will but yours be done.” - Jesus

Luke 22:42b

The loving spirit of Valentine’s Day this year was shattered by the news that 14 high school students and 3 teachers had been gunned down in south Florida by a troubled former student. Once again America grieved as flags were lowered to half-staff to remember the victims. Mass shootings have become so common in America that schools have added active shooter drills to their list of routine fire and tornado drills. As a reminder that not even our corner of rural America is safe from shootings, a pellet gun was seized the next day from a student at the alternative high school a block from First Lutheran and a previously scheduled active shooter drill was held the following day at Monmouth-Roseville High School across the street. While we are consistently shocked by these tragedies, we have yet to find the resolve to prevent them from recurring. With that in mind, and with Holy Week approaching, I would like to share a personal experience that I pray will put us in the right frame of mind to find a solution.

On Sunday, June 12, 2016, my preparation for worship at *Spirit of Joy* in Orlando was interrupted by the news that 49 people had been killed overnight by a lone gunman at the Pulse, a downtown nightclub. The next morning, I gathered with about a dozen Lutheran pastors to grieve and to discuss our response. We recognized that this shooting was deeply rooted in the fears that were consuming our nation: the Pulse was a gay nightclub...the gunman was a Muslim...his weapons were military style assault weapons. On Wednesday, we gathered at an ELCA congregation 5 minutes from the Pulse to pray and share communion. A heart-broken first responder who lost a close friend in the shooting joined us. What happened next was unexpected: While kneeling to receive communion, I found my mind transported back in time to the garden of Gethsemane on the night Jesus was betrayed. In his prayers Jesus was struggling with God’s plan to be crucified on a cross. Jesus asked if there was another, less painful way forward, but in the end he assertively proclaimed: *“Not my will but yours be done.”*

At that moment God's Spirit tugged at my heart with these words: *Embrace the courage of Christ!* It was not easy for Jesus to face his death but in the end he found the courage to follow God's lead by confronting the sins of the world head on with love. He did not retreat but walked into the very face of evil...and everything changed. When Jesus cried out "*It is finished!*" and breathed his last, Satan assumed that he had won the battle. In reality, when Jesus was raised from the dead three days later, death lost its grip on eternity and the dead in Christ would forevermore be released from the grip of death so we would no longer grieve as others do who have no hope.

As I left worship that day, and in the days that followed, the words *Embrace the courage of Christ!* stayed with me and took root. When I drove by the Pulse a week later I imagined the scene that horrific night as two hundred people ran from the evil taking place inside. I wondered what might have happened if instead of running from the evil, all two hundred people had found the courage of Christ and ran toward that lone gunman instead of away from him. Some in front would surely have died but those rushing in from behind would surely have subdued the gunman. Dozens of lives might have been saved. If you or I had been there would we have found such courage? I don't know and I don't fault those whose instinct was to flee. All I know is that at some point we have to run toward evil to subdue it instead of running from it.

On 9-11 I vividly remember the image of firefighters running up the stairs of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers while hundreds fled. That took great courage, and many paid the ultimate price, but at some point, some of us have to run toward the evil in order to subdue it. The Apostle Paul understood this when he wrote in Romans 12: *Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.*

While Satan may have lost his grip, he has not stopped trying to undermine God's plan in the here and now. Unfortunately, many seem to be running from evil today and it has gotten the upper hand. Because death has been overcome and our ultimate victory in heaven has been assured, we must *embrace the courage of Christ* and confront evil wherever we find it...even if we have to pay a price for doing so!

I have been impressed by the courageous spirit of some of the surviving students of this week's shooting who have boldly challenged our leaders and nation by stating: *Enough is Enough! It's time to do something!* I agree with them and believe that we will honor the memory of all the victims...from Columbine to now...by *embracing the courage of Christ* and taking unpopular stands against the ready availability of military style assault rifles. In a tragic irony, we seem intent to go after weapons of mass destruction that threaten innocent lives anywhere in the world except our own neighborhoods. Here at home we target the people but continue to cut mental health spending. And we continue to allow assault rifles to be sold with little restriction. It's time to pursue homeland security from within by targeting weapons of mass destruction in our neighborhoods. It's time for us to *embrace the courage of Christ* and take action, even it makes us unpopular.

Through the years some church members have told me that this is a political issue and not a religious one. My response has always been to refer them to the Fifth Commandment: *Do Not Kill!* which is taught by Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike. It's time for all of us to live what we are being taught! It will make a difference and help make us truly great again!

As you walk with Jesus this month to the cross and beyond...especially when you spend time with Jesus in the garden during our *Experiential Journey to the Cross Worship* Maundy Thursday...please *embrace the courage of Christ* by praying along with me, *"Not my will but yours be done!"*

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Jeff Linman

Want to Become a Member/Disciple at FLC?

Are you new or returning to First Lutheran and excited about what's happening?

If so, please consider joining the congregation by becoming a member/disciple!

Pastor Jeff will be scheduling a New Member / Disciple orientation soon.

To express an interest and offer your thoughts on the best time to meet,

Speak with Pastor Jeff in person or contact him by phone or text

(407-435-8525), or email (jeff@flcmonmouth.org).

Assets for Ministry

I began working with Beacon of Hope in October of 2013. I sent a resume through cyberspace and the next morning I had an interview for a job as a Hospice Care Consultant – the first contact for doctors, families and patients in hospice. This is the person who, for lack of a better word, sells hospice. I remember in that interview telling the two people interviewing me that I was not the person that they wanted for that position. It did not fit my skill set. I was hired anyway for a job that was created around my skill sets.

As I write these words, I am sitting in a motel in St. Louis. Over the course of the next couple of months I will be heading here for some more training for a new position I have at Beacon. I am still a Chaplain part of the time, but this is my fourth or fifth job change. I am fortunate to work with people who are willing to look at my assets and work with me to utilize my strengths.

As I opened the 40 days devotional that Robin Johnson coordinated, I had a “wow” moment. 30 different members of our congregation from young to old and all ages in between took time to share a scripture and a part of their faith journey – a rather risky thing to do. Some were short – some long – but all a reflection of a personal faith journey. This is an incredible asset that we have here at Monmouth First Lutheran Church.

I am learning, slowly, that as a Church we need to minister from our assets – the strengths that we have as individual members of the Body of Christ and collectively as Monmouth First Lutheran Church. Too often congregations jump into ministries that do not fit the strengths of the members and the congregation – we do ministry to fill a need that we think is there whether we are passionate about it or not.

As we continue our journey to the Cross and Resurrection, I encourage each of you to read this wonderful devotional and to look at your strengths and passions for ministry in Monmouth and beyond. And, then play to your strengths to strengthen our ministry together.

Pastor Vince Marolla

Back to Our Future: A Never-Ending Story!

Dear Fellow Members of FLC,

Our 150th Anniversary year is in full swing now and we would like to keep it going with help from all of you. Our big homecoming anniversary event is planned for Reformation Sunday, October 28th. In the meantime we are planning a number of additional events. This anniversary page is one - a place for you to share special memories (funny, meaningful, hopeful, surprising, reflective, you name it), as well as hope and dreams for the future of First Lutheran. Pictures are also welcomed! We invite you to share your own memories, hopes and dreams so we can make this truly everyone's celebration! To contribute something, please email it to office@flcmonmouth.org or drop it off at the church office.

Thank you,
150th Anniversary Committee

We both grew up in our First Lutheran Church, as did three of our parents. Our Matson, Melburg, and Fahlund Swedish grandparents were early members. The pump organ in the back of our church came from the old South E Street church. Pastor Johnson had bought it and later sold it to us. Many layers of varnish were removed to show the beautiful walnut. Bob's grandfather Melburg was the treasurer, when our new church was going to be built. There was a large home on the lot, so he and another church member bought it and moved their two families into the home, until razing and construction could begin. Bob's dad, Hilding, was a choir director and a soloist who sang "The Holy City" as Olson does with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. We sang in the choir with Jean and Jerry Linman, a cousin and parents of Pastor Jeff. Melba's mother, Eunice, sang in the choir with Bob, and Melba's dad, COV or Virgil, taught Bob in Sunday School and outdoors, as the war planes flew over. We were SS superintendents, and Bob was a trustee. When Melba was three, she sang a solo, while standing on a piano bench, but quit solos after she was in high school and forgot the words. Carol Levine and Melba played violin duets and the piano. Mary Strand and Melba started the first circle for women and Mark and Mary for couples. We had a Family Fun Night for all, which we still laugh about. Bob was ringing the church bell one Sunday, 70 years ago, when he saw Melba in the balcony and asked her for a date. It was wedding bells in two years and a wonderful life with three children, John, Jane, Ted and six grandchildren. Bob's mother, Edna, lived to nearly 103. Thanks be to God and Jesus for Our Church and our blessings.

Robert and Melba Larson Matson *(Submitted shortly before Bob died.)*

LENTEN JOURNEY

2018 Lenten Devotionals Available (written by members!)

This year's set of 40 member-written devotionals for the season of Lent were written by 30 different people, with no one person contributing more than two. Thanks to all 30 for helping create this unique devotional filled with personally relevant scriptures. Special thanks to Robin Johnson for coordinating the collection! To grab your copy, look in the usual places – outside the chapel or office, and in the back of the sanctuary.

All 40 devotionals are also on our website www.flcmonmouth.org – just in case we've run out at church, or for easy sharing with friends!

Cross+Walk with Jesus Soup & Sandwich Suppers

6:00pm, Wednesdays in the Fellowship Hall

Join us in the Fellowship Hall any Wednesday through March 21st from 6-7:15pm for our weekly Lenten soup and sandwich supper. The meals include a time for informal worship and table group devotions and sharing for all ages. Volunteers to bring soup and/or a loaf of sandwiches are being recruited. Contact Patti Linman to volunteer.

43rd Annual Lenten Lay Breakfast Series

6:30am, Fridays at Strom Center

This series began Friday, February 16 and will continue each Friday morning through Good Friday, March 30. Strom Center is hosting the series (sponsored by the Warren County Ministerial Association), while lay members from area churches will be speaking. Breakfast begins at 6:30am with the program from 7:15-7:45am. Listed below are the dates in March various churches will provide the programming.

March 2 - Immaculate Conception

March 9 - First United Methodist

March 16 - Heritage Bible

March 23 - Immanuel Baptist

March 30 - First Lutheran

HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday Worship

8:15am & 10:30am, March 25th

Remember Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Experiential Journey to the Cross

7:00pm Thursday, March 29th

Don't miss the return of this moving Holy Week worship opportunity for all ages combining the events of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday into one powerful journey to the cross. Last year's worship was memorable for those attending. The evening will begin with a simple Communion service followed by a time for people to visit three "experiential journey to the cross" stations: *A Garden of Gethsemane Prayer Station, A Footwashing Station, and a Rugged Cross Station*. The evening will conclude by reading the Seven Last Words of Christ as the sanctuary darkens, along with special music. Members and friends of all ages are invited to attend!

Easter Sunday Potluck Breakfast

9:00am, April 1st

First Lutheran's first ever Potluck Easter Breakfast was a great success last year so don't miss this year's breakfast. It's a chance to taste your fellow church member's favorite breakfast goodies. Bring your favorite egg casserole, meats, breakfast pastries / coffee cakes, or fruit to share. Coffee and juice will be provided!

Easter Sunday Worship

10:30am, April 1st

This year's Easter Celebration promises to be inspiring! The entire congregation will gather at 10:30am for a powerful message, great music in a variety of styles...from the worship band, organ, and bell choir...and a personal encounter with the risen Christ in Holy Communion. Invite your friends and neighbors to join you!

EASTER FLOWER RESERVATION

How many flowers do you wish to order?

___ Lilies ___ Bulbs

To be given in memory / honor (circle one) of:

Given by: _____

___ I will pick my flower(s) up after services

___ I would like to donate my flower(s)

Complete and return by March 5th!

CHURCH LIBRARY NEWS

During this 150th anniversary year of our church, we've been hearing a lot about the Swedish immigrants who founded it. This month I'd like to draw your attention to the Swedish/Scandinavian section in the church library where there are a variety of books.

"The Emigrants", a series of four novels by the Swedish author Vilhelm Moberg:

- * The Emmigrants
- * The Settlers
- * Unto a Good Land
- * The Last Letter Home

is among them. [This] "Series describes the long and strenuous journey for a party of emigrants from the province of Småland, Sweden, to the United States in 1850.

The story focuses primarily on Karl-Oskar Nilsson and his wife, Kristina Johansdotter, a young married couple who live with their four small children; Anna, Johan, Lill-Märta and Harald, as well as Karl-Oskar's parents and his rebellious younger brother Robert." (Wikipedia)

The series follows their arduous boat trip, their trip across America, homesteading in Illinois, and eventually settling in Minnesota.

It really opens your eyes to what Swedish immigrants went through. While reading this series you will come across familiar names and sites in Illinois. According to Wikipedia "the novels are generally considered to be among the best pieces of Swedish literature." I highly recommend reading them; you won't be sorry you did. As the year progresses, I will tell you of other books in this section.

THANK YOU to Patti Linman for donating the book *Joan of Arc: A Life Transfigured*, by Kathryn Harrison to the library. This is the story of Joan of Arc, the young peasant girl whose "voices" moved her to rally the French nation and a reluctant king against British invaders in 1428.

Every era must retell and reimagine the Maid of Orleans's extraordinary story in its own way, and in "Joan of Arc: A Life Transfigured", the superb novelist and memoirist Kathryn Harrison gives us a Joan for our time—a shining exemplar of unshakable faith, extraordinary courage, and self-confidence during a brutally rigged ecclesiastical inquisition and in the face of her death by burning. Deftly weaving historical fact, myth, folklore, artistic representations, and centuries of scholarly and critical interpretation into a compelling narrative, she restores Joan of Arc to her rightful position as one of the greatest heroines in all of human history. (www.kathrynharrison.com)

THE LIBRARY IS OPEN during regular office hours, before and after services on Sundays, and anytime there is an event at the church. Stop by to check out a book or two for some excellent reading.

Anna Lovdahl, Your Church Librarian

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

Ray & Betty Bruyn	3/26/1955	63 years
Cecil & Kay Lovdahl	3/11/1961	57 years
Phil & Trudy Bergren	3/1/1969	49 years
Roger & Elaine Sander	3/30/1990	28 years
Tamara & Jim Slater	3/14/1998	20 years

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Maggie Champion	3/2	Joseph Slater	3/13	Phil Bergren	3/27
Dana Jensen	3/2	DeeDee Yez	3/20	Kurt Volz	3/27
Dawn Johnson	3/7	Heather Ide	3/25	Paul Johnson	3/30
Helen Babcock	3/9	Patricia Hackspacher	3/26	Anna Lovdahl	3/30

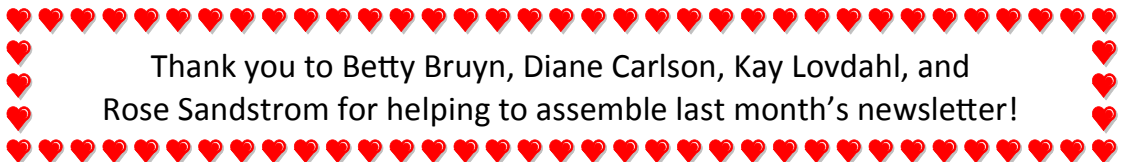
Know a College Student's Address?

As we update and verify our entire database, college students - whose addresses can change annually - require special attention. If you, your child/grandchild, or your friend has entered or graduated college in the last several years, please contact the church office to share their current contact information so we can stay connected with them during this important season in their life.

Our Church in Your Inbox

First Lutheran has recently started delivering the monthly newsletter via email. If you would like to receive your newsletter this way, send an email to office@flcmonmouth.org. If you're intrigued, but not sure you're ready to switch, please email the office anyway - you can get the newsletter both ways (mail and email) while you decide!

<u><i>Sarah</i></u>	<u>WELCA Circles</u>	<u><i>Naomi</i></u>
<i>Anna Lovdahl</i>	MARCH	<i>Becky Terpening</i>



 Thank you to Betty Bruyn, Diane Carlson, Kay Lovdahl, and Rose Sandstrom for helping to assemble last month's newsletter!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

K-5 Sunday School

Sunday School for children in grades K-5 meets at 9:30am in the main floor Sunday School room in the education building with Judy Sanberg serving as the teacher. If you have friends or neighbors with children in that age group who do not have a church home, please encourage them to come to Sunday School!

Middle and High School Sunday School

Ellen and Mark Shrader lead a weekly Sunday School class for middle and high school youth Sundays at 9:30am in the Pastors' Office. All middle and high school youth and friends are invited to this fun faith-building learning and sharing time.

Mark and Ellen usually bring treats to share...even more reason to attend!

Confirmation Update

During Lent, the Confirmation Class for middle and high school youth are participating in the *Cross+Walk with Jesus* Soup and Sandwich Supper Gatherings and the Holy Week *Experiential Journey to the Cross* worship. Regular Wednesday night classes will resume after Easter. New youth are always welcome as we seek to grow in our relationship with Jesus. Contact Pastor Jeff for further information.

Weekday Heart to Heart Encounters with Jesus Study

The Wednesday afternoon *Heart to Heart Encounters with Jesus* studies with Pastor Jeff will not be meeting during March so that study participants can participate in the Lenten Lenten *Cross+Walk with Jesus* Soup and Sandwich Supper Gatherings.

This weekly study of the parables of Jesus will resume after Easter.

Easter Flowers - Reserve Yours Now!

We invite you to help supply flowers to decorate the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday.

There are two options: either a lily or a spring bulb (tulip, hyacinth, or daffodil). Each are \$7 and come in a 6 inch pot. To order a flower, fill out the form on page 8 and return it to the church office (via the offering plate is fine!) by **March 5th**.

*(After March 5th, you may still place an order,
but flower availability is no longer guaranteed. So earlier is better!)*

WORSHIP HELPERS FOR MARCH 2018

Altar Care: Diane Carlson

Altar Flowers: 4 - OPEN
11 - Diane Carlson
18 - OPEN
25 - Ray & Betty Bruyn

Lectors

Chapel: 4 OPEN, 11 OPEN, 18 Kay Lovdahl, 25 OPEN

Sanctuary: 4 Rose Youngquist, 11 Ellen Shrader,
18 Judy Sanberg, 25 OPEN

Communion Assistants

Chapel: 4 OPEN, 11 OPEN, 18 Cecil Lovdahl, 25 OPEN

Sanctuary: 4 Ray Bruyn & OPEN, 11 Gary Sanberg,
18 Mark Shrader & OPEN, 25 DeeDee Yez

Acolytes

Acolyte: 4 & 25 Elise Blaesing, 11 Derek Johnston, 18 Collin Nuckles



Please Remember in Your Prayers

Shane Johnson, Ryder Armstrong, Peggy Kulczewski, Cathy Bush Raymer, Mary Beedle, Melvin Schlicker, Angela Bradley-Volz, Marjorie Swanson, Ruth Fluke, Kathy Bertelsen Kever, Richard Reynolds, Roger Sander, Evelyn Volz, Libby Shrader, Marjorie Smith, Austin Loving, Bill Root, John Petersen

If you have someone you would like included on the prayer list, please contact the church office. Please let Courtney know who you would like included, for how long, and if we can include their name on our website.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Worship Volunteer Sign-Up Update!

March – May worship helpers are now being recruited for both worship services. If you would be willing to greet people before worship and serve as ushers, read the lessons and prayers, or set-up and serve communion, please check for specific openings on the sign-up sheet after worship or call the church office.

Stephen's Ministry Program Returning

At the December Council meeting, the Council agreed to explore again becoming a congregation that engages in the Stephen's Ministry program. This is a way to involve more members in the pastoral care of the congregation. Stephen's ministers are trained to minister into specific situations in the lives of members of First and the community. The first step is to send a group of people to a one-day orientation session sometime this spring. The costs will be paid for by the congregation. From there, we would develop a Stephen's Ministry leadership team and a program to train ministers and identify needs. In addition to supporting the ministry of First Lutheran, this will be an excellent beginning for a new pastor.

If you are interested in joining this team or getting more information, please contact Pastor Vince at (262) 323-6189 or by email at vince@flcmonmouth.org. Thanks.

Tech Booth Volunteers Needed

We are creating a tech booth for sound and projection in the center of the balcony. If you are computer and/or sound savvy, we would love to have you on our new tech team to advance slides and adjust sound. If interested, contact Pastor Jeff.

Want to Join the FLC Worship Band?

If you have musical gifts (vocal or instrumental) and would like to explore serving on FLC's worship band, please speak with Janice Algren (keyboardist) or any other member of the worship band after Sunday worship.

First Lutheran Church Council Highlights

January 9, 2018

(approved w/revisions February 13, 2018)

Living as Children of God;

Joyful in Worship, Faithful in Service

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm by President Steve Erlandson, followed with prayer by Pastor Jeff.

Present: Pastor Jeff, Pastor Vince, Steve Erlandson, Cecil Lovdahl, Connie Larimer, Ray Bruyn, Diane Carlson, Butch Johnson, Ben Sanberg, Rose Sandstrom, and Ellen Shrader.

Assistant to the Bishop Pastor Kurt Nordby met with the Council and Call Committee to restart the Call Committee.

After discussion with the Call Committee and the Council, the Call Committee then had a meeting of their own.

Blessings: The Christmas Eve service and music were just beautiful.

Motioned, Seconded, and Approved

- Minutes from December 12th Council Meeting
- Treasurer's Report

Old Business

- Financial Oversight Update – both Pastors and Steve Erlandson reviewed the current endowment funds.
- 2017 Audit date to be set soon.
- Lenten Midweek Gatherings will begin February 21st with a soup/salad potluck with table group Bible Study.
- Robin Johnson will collect member-written devotions for a 2018 Lenten Devotional.
- Ash Wednesday services will be 12pm (noon) and 7pm on February 14th.

New Business

- Budget for 2018 was reviewed and approved for submission to the congregation at the Annual Meeting.
- The surplus income from 2017 was designated to be split between the Emerging Ministries Fund and the Pastoral Compensation Fund.

Committee Reports

Building & Grounds

- The water fountain near the chapel needs repair work.
- MTC promised an Internet booster for Friday, January 12th.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Next meeting is February 13th, 2018 at 6pm.

-Connie Larimer, Secretary

(FULL MINUTES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST)

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH'S LEADERS

PASTORS

Jeff Linman
jeff@flcmonmouth.org
(828) 216-7233

Vince Marolla
vince@flcmonmouth.org
(262) 323-6189

OFFICERS

President: Steve Erlandson
Treasurer: Gary Sanberg

Vice President: Cecil Lovdahl
Secretary: Connie Larimer

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS (2017-2018)

Ray Bruyn, Diane Carlson, Butch Johnson
Ben Sanberg, Rose Sandstrom, Ellen Shrader

Published monthly by First Lutheran Church

Postmaster: Send address changes to:

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
116 S B ST
MONMOUTH, IL 61462-1615

Periodicals postage paid at Monmouth, IL 61462
U.S.P.S. 915-820



DATES TO REMEMBER:

Mar 7, 14, 21 - *Cross+Walk with Jesus Supper*

Mar 11 - Daylight Savings - spring forward!

Mar 18 - All-Church Bowling Party @ 12:30pm

Mar 25 - Palm Sunday Worship @ 8:15 & 10:30

Mar 29 - *Experiential Journey to the Cross*
@ 7pm in the Sanctuary

Apr 1 - Easter Sunday Potluck Breakfast @ 9am
Easter Sunday Worship @ 10:30am

Our Church

The deadline for the next newsletter is
MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2018 at 8AM.

Please submit your articles by the deadline.

Articles for submission to Our Church
may be edited to fit the format.

Whenever possible, please submit articles
via e-mail (message text or attachment).

Thank you!