



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 :: April 13, 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,

We have had a couple of wonderful weeks of worship. Easter morning was delightful and filled with great music. Yesterday morning, we had the joy of celebrating the baptism of Ryan Sandstrom, congratulations to Mike and Christine as they celebrate this faith milestone with their son. Thank you also to all the special musicians we have had the last two weeks, these students from Monmouth Roseville High School were more than happy to join us in worship.

Thank you to all who helped yesterday with the celebration for our Caring Hearts leaders Betty Bruyn and Glenna Martin. These ladies are stepping back from their leader roles. For a long time they have been at the forefront of serving families in their time of grief. And our giving thanks to them yesterday was a beautiful moment. Looking ahead, take note of the event coming up on Tuesday, April 28th. This is an event for members of ELCA Churches that are in our conference. We are a part of the Southwest Conference of the Northern Illinois Synod—an area that stretches from Stronghurst to Kewanee, from Aledo to Knoxville. There are 16 ELCA congregations in our area. And this is a great chance to get together and meet folks from these other area churches.

Also, coming up will be a new Bible study in the month of May. We will meet on Wednesday mornings and study passages about God as creator. Read the article on page 3 for more information.

Have a safe week, enjoy all the wild weather as spring continues to bring the warmer temperatures and the occasional storm.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM Worship

Sunday School

April 12 & 26

9:45 AM

**Wednesday Bible Study returns
in May**

Northern Illinois Synod— Southwest Conference

Spring Assembly

Now the Green Blade Rises

You are invited to a fun night of meal and worship and a presentation for the Southwest Conference. Tuesday, April 28th beginning at 6 PM at Trinity Lutheran Church, Galesburg, IL (304 E. Ferris Street). This is an opportunity to get to know Lutherans from other area churches, like the ones we pray for every week. And it is an opportunity to learn about the amazing ministries that are taking place all over our smaller piece of the Northern Illinois Synod. No RSVP necessary. To share a ride, call Pastor Jamie.

Core Values

Over the last few weeks, we have explored the newly crafted Core Values for First Lutheran Church. These statements were created after study and prayer by the Pathways Discernment Team and congregation council and after responses from the congregation were reviewed, it was determined these statements reflect who we say we are at First Lutheran Church. Here again are these 5 statements:

- We gather because of faith in Jesus
- We welcome all
- We engage in open, honest, respectful conversation for faith growth
- Everyone has something to contribute
- We create a safe haven, reflecting the hope of God's Kingdom

Mission Statement

First Lutheran Church has a mission statement that we have been including on all our print media, on our website, and it is a statement we recite before we begin worship each week.

Gathered by God, we live our faith with: Compassion, Grace, Gratitude, and Joy

This statement reflects our core values in action. When we are being church, we are being gathered, and our faith is actively lived out in these 4 qualities.

Vision Statement

Where are we going, what will it look like when we are living out our mission statement and building on our core values? This is summarized in our vision statement. This statement also developed by the Pathways Discernment Team and congregation council is a faith statement, it reminds us where we are going.

- We want to be a church where the joy of gathering is infectious, and the values of our faith connect deeply to our daily living.

Why did we do all this work?

The Pathways Discernment Team and congregation council have been engaged in a lot of work over the last year. From developing our core values, affirming our mission statement, and crafting a vision statement, to reworking our congregation constitution to meet our evolving ministry needs, the leaders of our congregation have been reflecting on the future of ministry here at First Lutheran Church,

Do we have all the answers? No, not fully yet. But we see there is a spirit working in and through our congregation that is continuing to drive us forward through ministries such as our welcome to immigrants and refugees, our giving to organizations outside of our church through Vision and Purpose, and by being a place of prayer for the community when the need arises for our world. And it is this spirit that we are going to build our ministry around

It is this spirit that is grounded in a faith in Jesus in which we gather, in which we live our faith, in which we are creating a church where people are excited to be a part of and find those deep connections between every day life and that same faith which brings us together to begin with. It is circular in some ways, but that is the life of the church—we gather to tell the stories of Jesus who was born in Bethlehem, crucified and risen in Jerusalem, and lives in the world through the Church, and then we do it all over again.

Being church isn't always easy. It isn't always cool or culturally popular. It isn't always fun. But it is always about our faith in Jesus and working actively to bring about the Kingdom of God and to demonstrate the values therein in a world that is always resisting those blessed values.



Worship

Easter

April 5 to May 24

The Season of Easter is not just a single day. The Season is a Week of Weeks, that is 7 Sundays. This also does not align with the way our cultural consumerism seasons work. In popular culture, the season leads up to the day and the day is the end—think how much we sing about Christmas from Thanksgiving (ok, really Halloween) up to Christmas, then we put it all away. In stores and popular culture, Easter is the weeks that lead into the day of Easter ... then the chocolates go away, the easter baskets are put away, and all that remains is left-over ham and colored hard-boiled eggs.

But in the Church, our liturgy celebrates Easter for 7 weeks. The resurrection of Jesus gets its due. For our congregation, we will stay with the lectionary readings for the season of Easter for the rest of April, and then we will switch to a season of creation to finish out Easter in May. We will make this switch so we can link the resurrection of Jesus to our calling to renew the earth and prepare all of creation to be there for generations to come. Join us throughout the whole season of Easter!

Here is a comic for Holy Humor Sunday. Some churches celebrate the 1st Sunday after Easter with some good humor ... making fun of death and the devil for losing to Jesus. This Sunday is often also near April 1st, a date known for silliness and good humor.



Worship Guild Members

April 19 — Easter Sunday 3

Usher: Mark Shrader
Reader: Maddie Blaesing
Com Asst: Adam Sanberg
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

April 26 — Easter Sunday 4

Usher: Steve Erlandson
Reader: Ellen Shrader
Com Asst: Doug Cruce
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren

May 3 — Easter Sunday 5

Usher: David Sandstrom
Reader: Chip Algren
Com Asst: Trace Gallagher
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

May 10 — Easter Sunday 6

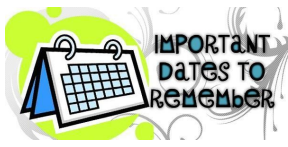
Usher: Chip Algren
Reader: Kurt Volz
Com Asst: David Sandstrom
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren



Wednesday Bible Study in May

You are invited to join a Wednesday morning Bible study in the month of May. Wednesdays at 10 AM in the Pastor's study. We will begin on Wednesday, May 6 and continue for all 4 May Wednesdays.

Our topic will be Creation stories in the Bible. Let's look at the many ways God is attributed the title "Creator" and the many ways we see creation praising God and how God is restoring creation in and through the resurrection of Jesus.



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



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.

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
 Monday, Apr 20 to Wednesday, Apr 22,
 Pastor Jamie will be out of the office

Sunday, April 26th—Easter 4th Sunday
 Sun, Apr 26—9:45 AM Sunday School
 Tue, Apr 28th—6 PM Southwest Conference
 Spring Assembly at Trinity Lutheran,
 Galesburg

Sunday, May 3rd—Easter 5th Sunday
 Wed, May 6—10 AM Bible Study

Sunday, May 10th –Easter 6th Sunday
 Sun, May 10 Happy Mother’s Day
 9:45 AM Sunday School
 Tue, May 12—6 PM Council Meeting **
 Wed, May 13—10 AM Bible Study

** may change due to a conflict

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



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
 May 19 Carl Hamberg
 May 22 Lorene Nelson
 May 26 David Sandstrom
 May 27 Charlotte Sanberg
 May 28 Lena Johnson
 May 28 Nancy Reynolds
 May 29 Kaylee Teel
 May 31 Tammy Slater
 Jun 2 Alexia Golden
 Jun 2 Jarrod Hippens
 Jun 2 Susie Jurgens
 Jun 6 Rose Youngquist



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, Eloise Swisher, Cecil Lovdahl

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



Vision and Purpose Giving

In April, we will be supporting the local Special Olympics. We will have a guest speaker on April 12th share why the Special Olympics are so important.

Kaylee McLaughlin is an athlete as well as an ambassador for Special Olympics. She has joined us in years past to share the value of Special Olympics, and I hope you all are able to join us again this year to hear her share her story and encourage our support for Special Olympics.

Thank you for all the ways you support all our Vision and Purpose monthly giving causes.

January, Mosaic == \$140

February, Lutheran Disaster Response ==\$252

March, ELCA World Hunger == \$900.00

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



But [Thomas] said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”— John 21:25

Thomas gets the nickname “Doubting” from this passage. But we do not call Peter “Doubting” when he tried to walk on water, with Jesus standing right there, and Peter failed and fell in to the water. We do not call the disciples in Matthew or Luke’s resurrection account “Doubting” when after the women say Jesus is risen they go running to the tomb to see for themselves. But Thomas, he gets this nickname. Which is quite unfortunate. Because when we call Thomas “Doubting Thomas” we are using the nickname as an insult. Like, how dare you, Thomas, not believe your fellow disciples? How could you possibly, in the wake of the tragedy of your teacher’s execution not believe he is risen.

What follows then becomes a way that we look at one another, if one doubts anything about God or Jesus, we automatically assume the worse about that person. Like, how dare you, in the wake of 2000 years of people saying Jesus is Risen, not believe? How could you possibly not accept the verbal affirmation of so many through the years? And this kind of treatment of doubt is just as bad as it sounds as you read this. When we put down someone for doubt, we are engaged in a kind of bullying behavior. Doubt is not bad. Doubt is not a negative trait. Doubt is very much a part of faith. We need evidence, sometimes. And while faith by definition does not have evidence, because we are human we still seek evidence. We can point to the beauty of creation and see evidence of a creator. We can experience a sense of call or mission, and so we experience evidence of the Holy Spirit. We can experience love through many forms of relationships, and we can say we are experiencing evidence of God the Father. But the risen Jesus is so different. We have no evidence beyond texts that were written decades after these events took place. So doubt is normal. Doubt means we are seeking evidence and understanding. I know I am a pastor, and I am looked to as one who has some kind of perfect faith, but the reality is quite the opposite. I am skeptical, I am filled with doubts, I strive to more fully understand this faith planted inside me at my baptism. I sometimes question the resurrection, I sometimes wonder at the mysteries of the universe from the tiniest atoms to the farthest galaxies, I sometimes do not have any answers at all for why evil continues, or why God is sometimes quiet in our suffering, and I certainly have no clue what the future holds. So, place me there with Thomas, with the moniker “Doubting.” It is just part of the faith journey, it is natural, and it is human, and it is a blessed space for God sits with us, even in our doubting. Peace, Pastor Jamie