



# FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

## MONMOUTH, IL

116 S. B Street, Monmouth, IL 61462; (309)734-2106

[www.flcmonmouth.org](http://www.flcmonmouth.org); email: [office@flcmonmouth.org](mailto:office@flcmonmouth.org)

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# JANUARY

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

## Our Church—This Week :: January 26, 2026

### Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher

[prjamie@flcmonmouth.org](mailto: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,

With the cold spell happening this weekend, we are testing our character as Illinoisans. I have seen posts from friends who live in southern states, like Texas, complain about their 30 degree days. And sure, it is fun to jab and reply with things like, "I don't even need a jacket if it is 30 degrees." (even though I most certainly do wear a jacket when it is 30 degrees out). But this cold does indeed challenge us. Thank you to everyone who braved the cold and came for worship and the annual meeting. These tasks can only happen because we value our faith and commitment to our congregational ministry.

This week will eventually be warmer, with temperatures maybe reaching 30 again — maybe. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of this week, I will be at our church camp, LOMC in Oregon, IL, working with colleagues and friends on the creation care committee worship resources. We have used these materials before, and will again. Our committee will be revisiting the resources we have previously developed, looking for ways to tweak and refresh them. We have received some valuable feedback as a committee and we are looking forward to our work of crafting a worship resource that will really help congregations better connect the Word of God with our desire to better care for creation. So watch for the announcement of when we will use the revised materials here.

If you do need to reach me these days, please do call, text, or email. I will have time to answer your calls or messages.

### **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**

### **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.



## **Sunday School**

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

Our Next three Sundays are: February 8 and February 22, March 8.

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

## **The Pathways Discernment Team**

The Pathways Discernment Team has begun its work. It meets monthly on Zoom with a cohort of other churches who are also discerning new pathways forward in our age. One of the first themes the Pathways Discernment Team wrestled with is the question of — why are we doing this?

Why are we discerning what where we are going? After all, the church continues to do church-y things, right? There is worship. There is an office that tends to all the behind the scenes things. People who have always done what they always do continue to always do what they have always done. (yeah, say that sentence 5 times fast). So what do we mean by asking the question of—why are we doing this?

Well, for one thing—just because routine is happening does not mean we are being church. Yes, worship is meeting the needs of those who attend. Yes, our annual summer festivals still happen. But beyond those things, the energy of our congregation is very low. The anxiety about getting involved is very high. Even participation in the Pathways Discernment process has been hampered often by other time commitments, which happens to most of us who are over-committed in our lives; but sometimes there is a lack of motivation to participate.

The Pathways Discernment Team never ended up settling on the answer to this question—why are we doing this? And that is fascinating and says a lot. We have not answered this question because not everyone from the team has been able to participate at the same time. We have not been able to answer this question because we have not been able to generate a time aside from the monthly cohort Zoom meetings to meet. We have not answered this question because we have assumptions that we bring into this process about how our congregation has always just managed to get by and we will always manage to get just by and so we just stay the course.

For the Pathways Discernment process to have impact at First Lutheran Church, we will need to shake our assumptions. We will need to find a new source of energy. We will need to find a way to hear God speaking through our anxiety, through our over-commitments, through our “always will-be” attitudes. So in this spirit, the Pathways Discernment Team offers a congregation forum on Sunday, February 22nd, as an opportunity for feedback on another piece to our process—our core values and vision statement. Read more about that forum on this same page.

## **Congregation Forum—February 22nd**

Join us on Sunday, February 22nd for a congregation feedback forum. The Pathways Discernment Team and the congregation council have wrestled with and prayed over a list of core value identity markers and whittled the list down and crafted 5 brief core value statements:

- We gather because of our 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

Before declaring these as official core values, the Pathways Discernment Team and the congregation council invite you to reflect on these statements and share feedback about how these statements do or do not reflect your view of First Lutheran Church.

Sunday, February 22nd, following the worship service, we will gather in the sanctuary. Our conversation will talk about what a core value is, why a congregation often has core values that are implicit and why we are trying to make them explicit, and do these statements fully reflect who we are as a congregation.

Feedback during this forum will be used to help craft the most accurate core value statements for our congregation that will be useful in not only planning current ministries, but will be helpful in future decisions the Pathways Discernment Team helps the congregation and the congregation council take as we discover more about where God is leading us.



## Epiphany

### January 6 to February 15

When you come to worship, you will notice a set of banners on the two sides of the front of the sanctuary. And you will see a series of cloths, called paraments, that adorn the altar, lectern, and pulpit. These will all match in color scheme and may even have similar symbols on them.

Let's break down the colors

For the season after Epiphany and the season after Pentecost, the primary color is Green. Green represents hope and growth. These Sundays are sometimes called "Ordinary Time", with the word ordinary referring the counting time "the 1st Sunday", "the 2nd Sunday", and so forth.

These Sundays are not focused on one of the two main foci of the church year, the birth or death/resurrection of Jesus. These Sundays are focused on the life of the church, the faith of disciples, the growing of our faith. Many of our green banners or paraments have symbols related to communion or to simple crosses. And these banners are a visual cue for worshippers to be seeking hope in Christ and growth in their faith and growth in the life of the church.

### Lent Devotions

Gather with us in Lent for Wednesday Devotions in the Chapel.

7 PM Wednesdays Feb 25, Mar 4, Mar 11, Mar 18, and Mar 25

Lent Devotions will be a time to be centered in quietness, responsive readings, hearing the word, and reflecting as a community on the word that we hear.

The theme for these Lenten Devotions will Praying with Martin Luther.

More on this series as we approach Lent.

### Worship Guild Members

#### 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

#### February 15—Transfiguration Sunday

Usher:	Steve Erlandson
Reader:	Judy Sanberg
Com Asst:	Doug Cruce
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Carolyn Kellert

#### February 18—Ash Wednesday — Chapel Worship

Usher:	David Sandstrom
Reader:	Ellen Shrader
Com Asst:	Mark Shrader
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Janice Algren



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

We have a robust core of folks who help in worship with the tasks of usher, communion assistant, and lector. Yet, we always have room for more to share their talents in these roles.

If you would like to volunteer to help in worship, please let Pastor Jamie know. If you would like to help coordinate our worship volunteers, Pastor Jamie is looking for someone to talk on this role.



## Every Sunday

9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering  
10:00 AM Worship

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

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Sun, February 1st—3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Mon, Feb 2nd—7 PM Building and Grounds

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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

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Sun, February 15th—Transfiguration of the Lord

Tue, Feb 17th— 5 PM to 6:30 PM Scout Troop  
4705 Pancake Supper

Wed, Feb 18th—7 PM Ash Wednesday Worship  
In the Chapel

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Sunday, February 22nd—1st Sunday in Lent

Sun, Feb 22—11:00 AM, Congregation Core  
Values and Vision Forum

Wed, Feb 25—7:00 PM Lent Devotion—Chapel

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



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  
Apr 11 Angela Bradley-  
Volz  
Apr 13 Elise Blaesing



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

*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



He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? — Micah 6:8

Asking “What does the LORD require of you” is a loaded question. For many, it is about following a strong moral code. For others, it is about God’s Law handed out by Moses beginning with the 10 commandments. For many more, there is a set of sacrifices that must take place, strict adherence to rituals that atone for the sins of individuals and communities alike. Micah is aware that these answers are what people give to the question, but he is one of many prophets who critiques responses like that. And this is where Micah, a prophet from the 8th century BCE, wanted to remind the people of Israel that what God desires is something much more basic than a strong moral code, or law-abiding citizens, or even getting the right turtledove or lamb to the altar on time. What Micah points to is justice, kindness, and humility. Today, these same words strike a similar critique. In our nation right now, adherence to a specific moral code, adherence to a specific structure for culture, adherence to specific gender norms and sexual identity norms has taken over and become the most important thing. Ethnicity has also become a major test, it doesn’t matter if one was born here or not, if the skin color or accent is not according to the norm, we have been told they must get out. Micah is screaming from the pages of scripture (and his grave from 2700 years ago) in the face of our modern empire ways. Micah blasts efforts to tell people how to live according to a specific set of norms—this is not justice! Micah criticizes efforts to remove people for not “looking white enough”. Micah slams all who put themselves up next to the altar claiming the name of God, but who reject not only the words he proclaimed but also the witness of all scripture, including Jesus, the one who died for all, not a few.

Is it harsh to hear that scripture critiques what is happening in our nation today? Is it difficult to wrestle with the actual words of our faith against the words of politicians and policies that are harming our neighbors? That is what Micah is about. Micah is about making us uncomfortable with aligning with empire ways. Micah is about comforting us when we align with God’s kingdom values. Micah is not about giving us a pass because we cannot do anything about it. Micah is not about letting us off the hook because we voted for who we were told to vote for. Micah is about generating the question within ourselves—how are we doing justice, how are we loving kindness, how are we humbly walking with our God. Peace, Pastor Jamie