



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH MONMOUTH, IL

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JANUARY

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

Our Church—This Week :: January 19, 2026

Our Staff

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Carolyn Kellert

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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,

Monday is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. This is a day we remember the man, naturally, and all he stood for. But we also remember the movement of civil rights. It is absolutely a part of our national heritage that we have not always treated one another equally. American history is full of demonstrable privilege and oppression based solely on race, gender, and sexual orientation. And it is not just history, it is today as well. We are seeing in American cities major atrocities committed by federal agents who are grabbing people based solely on their skin color or accent. And what is worse is that we cover up all these tragedies with lines that say America is the 'land of the free' and 'liberty and justice for all'. We claim these expressions of the American identity are even grounded in Christian values. But here we are, a nation once again in the midst of racism and classism, where discrimination against someone based on skin color, language-spoken, gender, sexuality, and more are just seen as normal and okay again.

This Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is a day for us to dive into our American history and to be honest with how the past is shaping today. It is a day for us to ask the question—If Jesus were here today, what would he say to all of this overt racism taking place in our nation? It is a day to ask ourselves if our faith in Jesus, the Son of God, who died on the cross for all, not just a few, if this faith really shapes our lives, how are we going to respond to the injustices being spread across our nation today? It is hard to wrestle with these heavy topics in just a few paragraphs, or even in a day on our calendar, but if we don't start wrestling with these things here, ignoring these issues will only encourage them to become worse.

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: January 25, February 8 and February 22.

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

Revised Congregation Constitution

We have adopted our revised constitution and will ratify it with the second vote on January 25th.

You may find a copy of the revised constitution on our website under the “Resources” tab. Click on the “Congregation Documents” tab to download a PDF. You may also call the church office and have a print copy mailed to you.

Key changes include:

- reducing the membership of the church council to 7 members, 6 elected from the congregation and the pastor.
- Eliminating term limits for those serving council and committees
- Eliminating the second annual meeting in May
- Including the Day Care By-Laws
- Incorporating the church
- And other revisions as required by the ELCA model constitution which don't typically affect our day to day ministry

Thank you to the whole council, but especially to Chip Algren, who spent a lot of time preparing this document for our congregation.

Pardon our Dust

The women's bathroom renewal project is well underway. Feel free to check out the progress by peeking into the bathroom as it is being worked on.



The Pathways Discernment Team

Over the last couple of years, the council has discussed with the congregation the possibility that in the future, we may have to do ministry differently here at First Lutheran. We aren't sure what it will look like, and so we have begun a process to help us figure this out.

The council appointed a Pathways Discernment Team and joined a cohort of other congregations across the Northern Illinois Synod who are also trying to figure out next steps. You may remember we had a visit from Pastor Mark Juliot last year. He came and shared during a sermon the purpose of discernment, how this helps a congregation listen to each other and to God, and to discover what will be the best pathway forward. This is kind of where this initiative gets its name—pathway, we want to be on the right pathway forward.

The Pathways Discernment Team was appointed by council last summer. The members are Chip Algren, Pam Best, Ben and Jenny Sanberg, Mark and Ellen Shrader, and Ray Golden (though Ray has since stepped back from this team due to other commitments). Each month the Pathways Discernment Team meets by zoom with the cohort. There are 5 total churches in our cohort, including from New Windsor and Aledo in our same conference.

The Pathways Discernment Team has been learning tools and has been given resources to talk about congregation history, listen to the needs of the present, and in upcoming sessions, will begin exploring what the future holds for us.

The Pathways Discernment Initiative from the Northern Illinois Synod is about helping congregations discover if partnering with another ministry is the right pathway, or if the right pathway has something to do with changing staff structure, or if the right pathway leads to a form of holy closure. The council and the Pathways Discernment Team here are not considering that third pathway at all. We are exploring the other two pathways. We do not yet know what it will look like, if we will partner with another ministry or if we need to learn new ways of being First Lutheran without partnering with another congregation. On Sunday, February 1st, Pastor Mark Juliot will be back visiting our congregation and meeting with the Pathways Discernment Team and the Council. On Sunday, February 22nd, we will have a congregation forum after church to share insights the Team and Council are working on for wider congregation input. Next week, this column will say more about that.



Epiphany

January 6 to February 15

Liturgical Arts Workshop Recap

At our Jan 14 Liturgical Arts Workshop, we accomplished two of our three goals. We discussed our banners and paraments and the way we display them. And we learned about how the candles and communionware are cared for. Thank you to Chip Algren for taking care of the candles and communionware each week. If you would like to learn more and learn how you can help with our sacristy needs, like filling candles and preparing communion cup trays, please speak more with Chip.

For our banners and paraments, the question came up about how the banners are displayed, and how the stands we use are perhaps not the most stable. The function well enough to not be an issue, but are wobbly enough to raise a question. No solutions were yet presented, just questions raised about why these particular banners. We did discuss the frequency of changing banners and paraments and how the church season dictates what colors are being displayed and how we may have forgotten over time the importance of the colors and the symbols on these banners and paraments. Over the coming weeks, more will be shared about what the colors and symbols mean.

Annual Meeting on January 25th

Following the worship service on January 25th, we will have our regular annual meeting. We will take the ratification vote for our revised constitution which was adopted on January 4th. We will elect our new council members, which will be a total of 6 elected members from the congregation. We will also adopt our 2026 annual budget.

We look forward to celebrating 2025 and preparing ourselves for ministry 2026 at our annual meeting.

Worship Guild Members

January 25— Epiphany

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

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

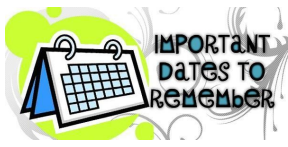
Usher:	Steve Erlandson
Reader:	Judy Sanberg
Com Asst:	Doug Cruce
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Carolyn Kellert



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



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.

Sun, January 18th — 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

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

Sun, February 1st—3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Mon, Feb 2nd—7 PM Building and Grounds

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

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

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

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



[Andrew] first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed.)
— John 1:41

There is a lot of excitement in this opening sequence of stories introducing Jesus in John’s Gospel. John the Baptist is out in the streets telling everyone who will listen that he baptized the Messiah at the river. Then Jesus happens to walk by, and John just points at him — there he is! That’s the one I have been telling you all about! Go follow him!

And so John’s own disciples do just that, they go after Jesus. One of them is Andrew, who runs to get his brother Simon (as in Simon Peter). Andrew will later in the Gospel bring to Jesus a boy who has a few loaves of bread and some fish so that Jesus could use that food to feed the multitude. And later still, Andrew brings a group of people identified as “the Greeks” to meet Jesus, because even those outside of Israel are curious about Jesus. This excitement of finding Jesus, seeing Jesus, and wanting others to find Jesus is the beginning of John’s Gospel. And it is an excitement we are called to follow today.

So, in our modern day language we talk about “seeing” Jesus when we come to worship, in the symbols of baptism and communion, in the community being together, and most clearly in the cross. We talk about “meeting” Jesus in water, bread, wine, Word proclaimed, peace shared, prayers lifted up, the hungry fed, the oppressed released from their chains. And we are called to have the same excitement today as Andrew in the opening stories of John’s Gospel. We should be first running to tell someone we know ... for Andrew it was his brother, but for us it might be a relative, it might be a neighbor, it might be a co-worker. We are called to go and say what Andrew said, “We have found the Messiah”. Andrew would find someone who had something to contribute to the cause, and he brought him to Jesus. We, too, are called to identify those who have gifts that can benefit our ministry, and bring them to offer those gifts to Jesus. And when others ask us about our faith, we are not called to have all the answers, but we are called to have the invitation ready — “Oh, my faith, why do I believe? Well, come and see the Messiah for yourself.” Bring them with you to “see” Jesus in the community that shows you Jesus. Bring others to “meet” Jesus in the water, the bread, the wine, the Word proclaimed, the peace shared, the prayers lifted up, the hungry fed, the oppressed released from their chains. The excitement of this opening sequence of stories in John’s Gospel is the excitement we are called to bring to our being congregation today.

Peace, Pastor Jamie