



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 2, 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 woke up Thursday morning to a light dusting of snow that made our community very pretty as it covered up the on-going winter browns of our lawns and the empty of leaves trees. It may have been slightly annoying as we had to brush our cars off, though just earlier on Wednesday I saw a picture from a friend who lives in Chassell, Michigan, a town in the Upper Peninsula on the Keweenaw Bay. This friend's picture was taken from inside looking out the window. And by looking out, I mean, it was a picture of the snow drift that went to the top of his living room picture window. If you can't imagine that much snow, I can, because I used to live not far from Chassell, and I remember the days when the snow piled up that much here in the end of February and early March. So, yes, this is a matter of perspective for our inch of snow that melted away by Thursday afternoon as the sun shined brightly

Meanwhile, the dark shadow of Lent hangs over us as our world remains topsy turvy and chaos in our politics dominates our cultural conversations. Joy in the US Men's Hockey Team winning Gold at the Olympics got soured by politics. And the collective sigh of "can't we just enjoy a good thing without it being ruined by politics" was released by everyone. But then we moved on and the sun shined brightly, and we were still able to go to the store, and work, and send our kids and grandkids to school, and bombs were not falling on our cities, and we are not fleeing threat of physical harm or arrest, as those who are refugees among us have had to do. And yes, we are reminded that it is perspective. Lent is a time of reminding us that God enters the world of chaos and Lent lets us know Jesus is walking with us and the resurrection is coming for us all just as it came for Jesus. And our hope in that expression of faith keeps us going as we shovel everything from the snow that dusts our lawns or piles up in front of our windows, to the political stuff that drive us crazy.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM Worship

Sunday School

March 8 and 22

9:45 AM

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

Lent Re-Center Devotions

Join us throughout Lent on Wednesday Evenings at 7 PM. We will gather in our Chapel for a devotional time to Re-Center ourselves in our faith.

The world around us is crazy, we are tired of arguing over politics, we are anxious for sensibility to return to government at many levels, and we are overwhelmed by many stressors.

Lent provides an opportunity to re-center ourselves in the faith we have in Jesus. Using reflections by Martin Luther, we will reflect on a few themes that will help us remember why our faith is so important and how our faith grounds us even in the crazy, topsy-turvy world.

Core Values

Thank you to everyone who joined us after worship on Sunday, February 22nd, as we reflected on the draft core values. The first core value that we discussed was “We gather because of our faith in Jesus.”

This was chosen as our first core value because it contains two elements—that as First Lutheran Church we are nothing if we do not come together, and what prompts our coming together is faith in Jesus.

Gathering happens in many spaces of our life. We gather as family. We gather because of work. We gather because of school. We gather with friends at our homes, their homes, at restaurants, at the movie theater, at our kids and grandkids events. We gather because the school is having an event.

There are so many reasons to gather. So gathering at First Lutheran Church has to have a reason that is different from every other gathering. Whether it is worship, serving at one of our festivals, a funeral or wedding, a committee or council meeting, what is the ultimate difference is we gather here because of our faith in Jesus.

Our faith in Jesus brings us together for the sake of praising God (worship), serving the community (our festivals, our Vision and Purpose Giving, our participation in Community Care Days, and more), and being in fellowship with everyone who also has gathered.

Generally, the responses from our Feedback Day identify this value as truly a value something you experience here at First Lutheran Church. This means our motivation for getting together is our faith in Jesus, we may experience our faith in Jesus in other places, but we especially experience our faith in Jesus when we gather with this particular community. This value leads us to our joy in being here. This value leads us to know when we are not feeling the joy, the community here will surround us and pick us up. This value means we place a high priority on being in this community because we get something here we do not get anywhere else. This is the power of this core value.

While the council and pathways team continues to work with all the feedback from our forum, reflect on why you are a part of First Lutheran Church and what leads you to gather here. Additional feedback is welcome to be sent to the church office.

Re-Center Devotion

Wednesdays, we gather because of our faith in Jesus, and we spend time re-centering ourselves.

Our devotion begins with a moment to engage deep breathing and to listen to a prayerful chant as we are drawn into our time together.

Our reflection comes from Praying with Martin Luther by Peter E Bastien. This is from the “Companions for the Journey” series of books. Bastien introduces us to Martin Luther as we read Luther’s words and have opportunities to reflect on questions.

Our first week was on the theme of dread. We were reminded that Luther was raised in an era when God was seen as very judgmental and the only way to reach God was through punishment for every little sin. This space of dread led Luther to discover the true meaning of grace, an experience Luther was not certain he could have without first experiencing the absolute dread of God. We sometimes today have a similar experience of dread. We may not feel like God is the same heavy hammer of judgment and punishment as Luther experienced, we do have times we feel God is absent or distant or somehow not helping as we endure tremendous challenges. When God is absent, much like when Luther felt God was judgmental, we feel dread.

Ancient psalmists even expressed dread. You are invited to read Psalm 22 or Psalm 88 and hear the dread being expressed, the distance from God being experienced, the wonder where God is during suffering that is being named. Use your time of reflection to ponder how your faith sustains you, even as you experience the dread.

We finished our time together with a responsive prayer and a closing blessing hymn.

This week Wednesday, we focus on the theme of “Christ Alone”. This is a central Lutheran doctrine that our salvation comes from Christ alone. Join us as we gather to breath, to settle ourselves in a chaotic world, and to hear Luther’s words, and scripture, and to reflect together on the theme.



Epiphany

January 6 to February 15

On Sunday, March 8th, the memorial service for Cheri Stanton begins at 11 AM at the American Legion (1110 N. 11th Street, Monmouth).

Since our worship normally ends at 11 AM, this may be an issue for those who wish to attend both worship and the memorial service that day. Therefore, Pastor Jamie and Janice have worked out an abbreviated worship service for that morning.

Our worship will still begin at 10 AM, but we will plan to conclude our worship, with word rightly proclaimed, and the sacrament rightly observed, around 10:30 AM.

This abbreviated worship service will give worshipping members the opportunity to go to the memorial, to remember their friend Cheri, to support Tiny, our friend and fellow member here as he grieves the loss of his sister, and to be with our community as it celebrates the life of someone who dedicated her whole life to Monmouth and our nation.

Worship Guild Members

March 1— 2nd Sunday in Lent

Usher: Dee Dee Yez
Reader: Kurt Volz
Com Asst: Chip Algren
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren

March 8— 3rd Sunday in Lent

Usher: Doug Cruce
Reader: Julie Blaesing
Com Asst: Trace Gallagher
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren

March 15— 4th Sunday in Lent

Usher: Ray Golden
Reader: Doug Cruce
Com Asst: Julie Blaesing
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

March 22— 5th Sunday in Lent

Usher: Ray Golden
Reader: Doug Cruce
Com Asst: Julie Blaesing
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Carolyn Kellert



Holy Week Schedule

Mark Your Calendars now to celebrate with your church family these important church holidays:

Palm Sunday, March 29, 10 AM Worship

Maundy Thursday, April 1, 7 PM worship in the chapel

Good Friday, April 2nd, 7 PM worship in the chapel

Easter Sunday, April 5th , 9 AM continental breakfast
10 AM Worship

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 6: Faith United Presbyterian Church
- March 13: Fairview Center Church
- March 20: High Point Church
- 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 1st—2nd Sunday in Lent
 Mon, Mar 2—7:00 PM Building/Grounds
 Wed, Mar 4—7:00 PM Lent Devotion—Chapel
 Sat, Mar 7—MRHS uses sanctuary for Solo/
 Ensemble contest

Sunday, March 8th—3rd Sunday in Lent
 Sun, Mar 8 9:45 AM Sunday School
 Tue, Mar 10—6 PM, Council Meeting
 Wed, Mar 11—7 PM Lent Devotion—Chapel

Sunday, March 15th—4th Sunday in Lent
 Man, Mar 16, 6:30 PM Pathways Zoom meeting
 Wed Mar 18—7 PM Lent Devotion—Chapel

Sunday, March 22nd—5th Sunday in Lent
 Sun, Mar 22—9:45 AM Sunday School
 Wed, Mar 25—7 PM Lent Devotions—Chapel

From February 2nd through March 6th, MRHS music department students will be using our facility during school days for solo/ensemble practice. Please check with the church office before using church space during the weekdays during this period.

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



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
 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



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
 Jun 26 Dave & Kathy Erlandson
 Jun 26 Gary & Jan Martin

Prayer Requests

Ila Roseberry, Kathi Cruce, Dean Sandstrom, Janet Lowe, Wes Lovdahl, Pat Clark, Jennie Best, Dee Dee Yez, Charlotte Volz, Richard Schlicher, the family and friends of Kevin Terpening

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

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



And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. — John 3:19

Early in the Gospel of John, Jesus receives a nighttime visit from Nicodemus. Nicodemus is a Pharisee just trying to understand what Jesus is up to. At first, he seems to understand Jesus, but then Nicodemus gets tripped up by a metaphor Jesus uses, the metaphor of being born again. Jesus attempts to explain. And in what follows, the most popular verse of scripture comes along, John 3:16—”For God so loved the world” you know the whole verse. And with the most popular verse comes its following verse, verse 17 “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world in order to condemn the world, hut in order that the world might be saved through him.” Together John 3:16-17 serve as the Gospel in a nutshell. But while these famous verses get all the billboards and stadium hand drawn signs, the story of Jesus explaining to Nicodemus continues through verse 21. And Jesus makes an even more poignant observation as he continues. The light, Jesus says, has come into the world, but people reject this light. People would rather stay in their own darkness than let the light cleanse and claim them.

We are in the season of Lent, and this season serves as a season for self-reflection. Lent gives us a chance to reflect on what it means that we have sin within us, sin that we commit actively, sin that we commit by ignoring someone’s cry for assistance, sin that we commit because we are not seeing beyond our own little world. In other words, Lent is an opportunity to reflect on the darkness that covers us and shrouds us in sinful ways. But rather than this opportunity turning into a moment of condemnation, we also get to reflect on the gift of God’s light. While here in John’s Gospel Jesus is not explicit about being the very light God sent into the world, throughout the centuries, Christians have understood this to be the point — Jesus is God’s light. Jesus exposes our sins, not so that we are condemned and crushed by the weight of punishment or fear the repercussions of hell. Rather the light that is Jesus shows us our sins so that we can change our ways, so we can be cleansed of them, so we can live for others, responding to needs, no longer blind to the plight of another. If we really like our darkness, we will stay in our sinful ways. But Jesus’ invitation to Nicodemus is the invitation to us today—step into the light. Do not be afraid of what sins get exposed, for those sins have no power over you any longer. Now the light has power over you, the light of Christ, the light of resurrection. Journey this Lent from darkness into light. Peace, Pastor Jamie