



# 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 9, 2026

### Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher

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: Pam Best

Adam Sanberg

Kurt Volz

Dee Dee Yez

Dear Friends and Family,

Thank you once again to Pastor John Huxtable and Pastor Shelly Forrest who helped lead the prayer service for peace. And a special thank you to Janice, who in the midst of a busy week as an accompanist for high school students preparing for solo/ensemble contest, also gave another evening of time to play for our service. Over 30 attendees from the community came and shared in a time of prayer for our nation, for our world, and for the peace of God which surpasses all understanding.

On the next page I do share a statement from the Presiding Bishop, Rev. Curry, on the war in Iran. Please take time to review his statement, and the ELCA Social Message which Rev. Curry references. These statements help us understand how our faith guides us during these uncertain times. If you have any questions about the statement by the Presiding Bishop, or what the ELCA social statement offers, feel free to connect with me for a visit and we can talk more about it.

Thank you is also expressed from the Monmouth Roseville High School Music Department who for the last month has had students coming to our facility to use many spaces for rehearsing for the solo-ensemble contest that was held on Saturday. On Saturday, many of the students performing piano solos and duets also performed here in our sanctuary. It is truly a gift that we can share our space with this program and help them be so successful.

### **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.

## Statement from the Presiding Bishop

Dear siblings in Christ,

*They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more (Isaiah 2:4).*

In our Lenten journey, we are reminded of our dependence on God, and we are sustained by hope in the future peace God has promised. As war involving the United States, Israel and Iran intensifies and spreads, we lament how far off that promise seems. We do not know how many people have been killed, but we know the number will continue to grow. Early reports indicate that more than 100 Iranian schoolgirls and several U.S. service members are among them.

The church of Jesus Christ is called to proclaim the peace of God's eternal reign and to work for an earthly peace here and now. The ELCA social message "[Living in a Time of Terrorism](#)" states that this earthly peace is a "precious yet fragile good." Its existence depends on leaders who prioritize diplomacy over military engagement and deterrence over war, and on citizens who hold government accountable whenever military action is considered.

With many of you, I am distressed that a robust, public discernment through congressional authorization did not occur prior to the United States' engagement in this war. As Lutherans, we affirm that government and the order that just laws provide are gifts of God for our safety and well-being. This war does not represent the promotion of this just order but rather its failure.

The costs in lives and safety of this failure will be borne by those least able to avoid it — children, families and those without the means to flee. Its deadly toll has been, and will continue to be, paid with the lives of our neighbors, including our siblings in Christ in the Middle East.

This moment underscores the urgent need for robust, well-resourced diplomatic and humanitarian efforts. Our companions in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land have asked our church to pray fervently for peace and safety and to advocate for the dignity and security of all people. ELCA Witness in Society will continue to provide opportunities for this advocacy.

As members of the body of Christ, join me in prayerful, hopeful solidarity with our siblings and neighbors who suffer today.

## Core Values

As our Council and Pathways Team prepares to review the feedback from our congregation feedback forum in February, we are taking a moment to explore the draft core statements. Our second statement was "We Welcome All."

This statement was drafted because as our pathways discernment team and congregation council reflect on the nature of our community we find this statement to be very true. We welcome all. We have welcomed refugee, immigrant, Swede, Haitian, Chin, Ukrainian, Vietnamese. We have welcomed old, young, college student, high school student. We welcome those who are LGBTQIA+ and we say here you can experience God's love like we do.

We have welcomed the neighboring high school music program for multiple features. We demonstrated our welcome to the Alcin family as they sought a church home for the baptism of their daughter, which we then took that next step and welcomed them by using their language for that sacrament.

Welcome is not just about letting someone come in, welcoming is about drawing someone into the community, making them feel at home, for who they are, without them having to change who they are.

This is why this value was named in our core values. This is truly who we have seen this congregation be.

Together,

We mourn the rush to war and the combatants and noncombatants who have lost their lives.

We yearn for creation's fulfillment in "a new heaven and a new earth" where death and pain "will be no more" (Revelation 21:1, 4).

We strive for justice and peace in all the earth, strengthened by faith in the crucified and risen Lord to persist.

We trust that, through God who sustains us, our weariness and fear will not overcome us.

In Christ,

Rev. Yehiel Curry      Presiding Bisahop



## LENT

**February 18 to April 4**

### Re-Center Devotion

Throughout Lent, we will gather on Wednesdays at 7 PM in the Chapel for a Re-Center Devotion.

This gathering time is focused on intentional breathing, soothing, prayerful chanting style hymn, and reflections from the book, "Praying with Martin Luther" by Peter Bastien.

This last week, we visited the topic of "Christ Alone". The reflections offered us a chance to see in Jesus the fullness of the hidden God. In Jesus we experience the full reality of God's love and grace.

This week, we will reflect on the topic of "Grace Alone."

Join us as we take a moment in the middle of the week to Re-Center ourselves in faith, hope, and love of God.

### Worship Guild Members

#### 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: Diane Carlson  
Reader: Trace Gallagher  
Com Asst: Gary Sanberg  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

#### March 29— Palm Sunday

Usher: Pam Van Kirk  
Reader: To Be Determined  
Com Asst: Kurt Volz  
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 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 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  
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Sunday, March 15th—4th Sunday in Lent  
 Man, Mar 16, 6:30 PM Pathways Zoom meeting  
 Wed Mar 18—7 PM Lent Devotion—Chapel  
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Sunday, March 22nd—5th Sunday in Lent  
 Sun, Mar 22—9:45 AM Sunday School  
 Wed, Mar 25—7 PM Lent Devotions—Chapel  
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Sunday, March 29th—Palm Sunday  
 Thurs, Apr 2—7 PM Maundy Thursday Worship  
 Fri, Apr 3—7 PM Good Friday Worship  
 Both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday  
 Worship will be in the Chapel  
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Sunday, April 5th – Easter Sunday  
 Sun, Apr 5—9 AM Easter Breakfast  
 Mon, Apr 6—7 PM Building/Grounds Meeting

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



- 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, Tim Greene

*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



He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. — Isaiah 2:4

In the days following the initial bombing of Iran, a series of reports emerged that soldiers are hearing from their commanding officers that God had anointed the president to begin the battle of Armageddon to hasten the second coming of Jesus. These reports, if true, are very discouraging. First, it is horrific that anyone would justify an aggressive military action in God's name. That is an egregious sin. Second, even if the reports are not true, that anyone would believe in a battle of Armageddon or that the second coming of Jesus can only be hastened by war, is also very discouraging.

The expression Battle of Armageddon comes from a passage of Revelation, which is not a prophecy of the future, but a metaphoric description of things being experienced by the people of faith when the author wrote Revelation around 100 CE. There is no future battle that is coming, spiritual or otherwise, that will demonstrate God's final victory. Rather, quite simply, the author was demonstrating that in his current circumstances, which included many reports of warring nations, God is present and is siding with the faithful, and the faithful can have hope that even as the world falls apart God is sustaining them.

Then, the notion of a second coming of Jesus has been hotly debated over the centuries. The very earliest letters by Paul expressed the notion that Jesus was returning the very next day. Later letters of Paul and others in the New Testament seemed to suggest the day is not so nearby and we just have to be patient until God decides it is time. And even today, we still wonder what does it all mean, when will it happen, how will it happen. But if God's Word gives us any indication, like here in Isaiah, that day will come not through war. In fact, war is the farthest thing from what God envisions as the future reality we are striving for.

So for today, shed the worries that this war has anything to do with hastening Jesus' return. No human authority can start a war and hasten Jesus' return. All we have is a vision from God for a world of peace. So may we continue to pray for that vision to come, that vision to be reality, for those in authority to work for and start God's peace.

Peace, Pastor Jamie