



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 :: February 2, 2026

Our Staff

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Musicians: Janice Algren

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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,

Due to the weather on Sunday, January 26, we did not end up with quorum to host our annual meeting. We did have worship, though, and that is just how some weeks go. I do not want anyone to feel guilty for not making out in extreme weather conditions, staying safe and in comfort spaces is important and a meeting can always be rescheduled. We will not always cancel worship due to extreme cold, but you can always use your own judgement for what is safe on any given Sunday for venturing out.

Meanwhile, this last week as I was traveling across Northern Illinois for a couple reasons I got to experience the rare sight of a golden eagle. It was truly magnificent. The golden eagle is much larger than a bald eagle, and more rare to see in Illinois. This is only the second golden eagle I have seen in the wild here in Illinois, the first was over 10 years ago.

I was also at our church camp, LOMC, in Oregon, IL. There I and my colleagues saw many deer who were out roaming for food and huddling for warmth. When our retreat ended, one friend and I even drove past the Nachusa Grasslands Preserve and got to see the bison herd. There are over 150 bison in that herd that get to graze over 1500 acres of restored prairie land. The bison is truly an amazing creature, and despite the one being close to the fence, the warning still holds true — do not pet the fluffy cow. So, no, I did not pet it. But I did get some really great pictures. So, even though it is winter, and even though staying inside is preferable, there is still much goodness in God's creation to witness just by wandering about.

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 is underway with its task to help determine a course forward for our congregation. With cohort meetings that began in the fall of 2025 and with working meetings combined with the congregation council, our Pathways Discernment Team is developing a sense of congregation identity.

This congregation identity is found in our core values, our mission statement, and our vision statement.

Core Values help identify the beliefs that dictate our actions as community. When we see the core values for our congregation, our initial reaction should be “Yes, that is our church—that is who we are—that is how we behave with each other.”

Core Values become the kind of thing that we can say to others when they ask, “What is going on at First Lutheran?” Our answer should be able to be summed up with these statements. Our Sunday, February 22nd congregation feedback forum (see article on this page) is intended to give the congregation a chance to talk about the core values that the Pathways Discernment Team and the congregation council have in draft form. With feedback helping shape the final form of our core values, we will be able to use these statements going forward as we make decisions about what our future ministry will look like.

Our future ministry will also be shaped by a vision statement. A vision statement is about telling us where we want to go, what do we want our ministry to look like, what are we working towards becoming. Later in the season of Lent, we will host a second congregation feedback forum to discuss our vision statement. In its current draft form, our vision statement is “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.”

The congregation feedback forums that are being scheduled will be important opportunities for this important work to be owned by the whole congregation, not just the few serving on council or the Pathways Discernment Team. So when you attend and share your feedback, you are helping craft the identity of this congregation—a place where your heart is deeply invested because here you connect with Jesus in a way no other place provides.

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: The season of Lent is the season we will experience next. Purple will be displayed from Ash Wednesday through Maudy Thursday. Purple represents penance, humility, and preparation. Lent is a season preparing us for Jesus' second coming, as we tell the story of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Years ago, purple was also associated with Advent (now blue), as that season also was a season of preparation.

Purple is a color for reflection and returning ourselves to focus on God's word.

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 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

February 22—1st Sunday in Lent

Usher:	Chip Algren
Reader:	Maddie Blaesing
Com Asst:	David Sandstrom
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Janice Algren



2025 Giving Statements

The 2026 Giving Statements were mailed out. If you did not receive a giving statement, please contact the church office so we can send to you. Also if you feel there is an error on your giving statement, again, please contact the church office so we can figure that out with you.

If you need a new set of giving envelopes for 2026 and have not received those yet, please let the office know and those will be provided.



Every Sunday

9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering
10:00 AM Worship

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
Wed, Feb 11 through Saturday, Feb 14—Pastor Jamie will be out of the office

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

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

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

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.

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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

For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.



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

In February, our Vision and Purpose Giving will support Lutheran Disaster Response.

Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

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



For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. — 1 Corinthians 1:18

The message about the cross is foolishness, St. Paul writes. And what is the message about the cross? It is the message that Jesus died on the cross to save God's people. Let that sink in. God didn't send 10,000 angels to beat up people who broke God's law. God didn't send lightning to burn cities because people broke God's law. God did send a plague to wipe out people who God didn't like. No, God sent Jesus. And Jesus died on the cross, because all those people who break God's law would rather see God's love killed than see God's love win. But there on the cross, God's love did something rather remarkable — God's love won. Yes, in dying, God's love actually won and the power of breaking God's law lost.

It is fascinating to see people in our modern nation try to claim God on the side of power, to see them claim God on the side of mass arrests without cause, to say that to be with God is to follow law perfectly, and to justify abuses of power as if it is what God would want.

The message about the cross is foolishness to all those who side with ICE arresting people for no more than their skin color or their language or their nation of origin. The message about the cross is foolishness to those pepper spraying protestors and arresting journalists and killing someone for holding a phone recording what is happening. The message of the cross is foolishness to those because God's love winning on the cross is completely opposed to all we are witnessing by the authorities and all who side with them.

God's love is about inclusion, God's love is about diversity, God's love is about recognizing the human worth and dignity in each neighbor. And God's love is not demonstrated in abuses of power. God's love is not found in authoritarianism. God's love is found in sacrificing oneself for the need of the other. God's love is found in outstretched hand of welcome. God's love is power for those of us being saved because we now see as God sees. God's love is power for those of us being saved because we now want to act in the world as Jesus acts in the world. God's love is power for those of us being saved because we now have the same compassion Jesus had as he opened his arms on the cross, welcoming everyone in the Kingdom of God. God's love is power for those of us being saved when we strive for God's Kingdom come here, in this place, in this time.

Peace, Pastor Jamie