



DECEMBER

Our Church—This Week
for December 18, 2023

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

116 S. B Street, Monmouth, IL 61462; (309)734-2106
www.flcmonmouth.org; email: office@flcmonmouth.org



FIRST LUTHERAN MONN MOUTH
@FLCMONMOUTH.ORG

Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher
prjamie@flcmonmouth.org
Cell (630)200-3550

Custodian
Chris Algren

Musician
Janice Algren

Preschool and Day Care Director
Bobbi Nees
(309) 734-5350

Congregation Council

President: Pam Van Kirk
Vice President: Ray Golden
Secretary: Diane Carlson

Pam Best
Adam Sanberg
Mark Shrader
Chip Algren
Brian Elliott

** one seat remains vacant in honor of Evelyn Volz, until our next election meeting in May, 2024

Dear Friends and Family,

This is our last weekly newsletter for 2023. The next weekly newsletter will be published on January 8th. So ... Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! May all the holidays you celebrate be festive and all your travels be safe. Enjoy much merriment and drink eggnog (and guilty pleasures responsively) and eat many wonderful cookies and other baked goods.

We may not have a white (snowy) Christmas this year, as the forecast is looking fairly warm. But take some hot cocoa in your travel mug, drive around at night and enjoy the colorful displays. Watch your favorite seasonal movie again and again. And most importantly, be rejuvenated in your love for Christ and your faith in the great God whose salvation story includes you.

May all that is coming in the new year be a blessing for you and your family.

Christmas Schedule

Christmas Eve—Sunday, December 24th

Both 10 AM and 7 PM worship services will be Christmas Eve worship services. Candlelight will be offered only at the 7 PM service.

New Year's Eve—Sunday, December 31st

During our 10 AM worship we will have a service of lessons and carols and we will have a blessing for the new year beginning.

New Bible Study in January So That's My Bible

You will read more about this on the next page—but now is the time to get excited as we add to our Sunday morning gathering time a Bible study that will help us learn more about the Bible and introduce some rather interesting stories from the Bible.

So That's My Bible will follow worship beginning on January 14th. The full schedule will be shared with our January 8th newsletter.

The Chosen TV Show watch party

We will resume watching the TV series “The Chosen” on Wednesday, January 10th at 10 AM in Pastor’s study.

The TV series is a beautiful telling of the life of Jesus and the disciples.

After each episode we talk about how the stories in the Gospel are found in that episode and we discuss how the narrative, story telling nature of the series writers is based on what we know or what we conjecture. It is a good time. And even if you haven’t seen the earlier episodes, you can still catch up by watching the series on a streaming service at home.

So That’s My Bible – Bible Study

Introducing a new Bible study that will begin on Sunday, January 14th called “So That’s My Bible.”

This study will do two things. One, we will learn how the Bible came to be—who wrote it, when was it written, when was it decided to be called scripture, and many more questions.

Two, we will look at some stories in the Bible that may be a bit surprising—like, the time a young man fell from a third story window because he fell asleep while Paul was preaching. Let’s just say Paul wasn’t happy with the young man.

Or the time a married couple sold some property and withheld some of the proceeds and lied about how much the sale was and when confronted, they both fell dead.

Or the time David, a married man, looked out over the city and saw a beautiful woman, got her pregnant, and then when her husband wouldn’t come home from war to be with her, he had the husband killed in battle to cover up his crime.

And there are many more stories that might just surprise you. Beginning with our January 8th newsletters the stories we will talk about for the upcoming study will be announced.

The study will begin after worship in the fellowship room and may last 45 to 60 minutes.

Invite your friends to join us to learn more about the Bible and to grow in faith together with our congregation.

Thank You from Jamie Reynolds

A very special thank you to my First Lutheran Church family. I was truly overwhelmed by all the love and support on my last Sunday. It has been a blessing and honor to play for you these past nine years. Making the decision to go to Coldbrook was not an easy one, but I ultimately felt it was best for me.

I am doing well at Coldbrook, everyone has been very kind and welcoming, and I am continuing to look forward on this journey.

Thank you to everyone for all the love and supporting me in my music ministry these past nine years at FLC, and your continued love and support as I move forward.

One thing I have learned over the years, is never say never, maybe one day when the time is right, I will be back.

Love to all and a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Jamie Reynolds

Updated Robo-Calling System List

Our Robo-Calling system list was updated. Several individuals no longer connected to the congregation were removed. Several members of the congregation were added. For instance, married couples for whom I have a cell phone listed are now both included on the list.

Again, the system will typically only be used for weather emergencies (snow or ice) that cancel a worship service. Occasionally, we may use the system to remind the congregation of an important event, but we would use it sparingly for that.

To help ensure everyone does receive a call from this system, we will set up a test call in January, ahead of our annual meeting. The phone call will be a reminder for our annual meeting, but also serve as an opportunity for you to let us know if you did not receive the call. This test call will occur ahead of the January 21st annual meeting and the date and time for the call will be published in our first weekly newsletter of January.



Christmas

**Sunday, December 24th through Sunday,
December 31st**

The season of Christmas is 12 days long. Where have we heard that before? Perhaps a delightful Christmas carol?

Did you know that if you added up all the gifts given in “The Twelve Days of Christmas” you would get 364 gifts, and you would have spent over \$202,000 buy all those items, like the 42 geese and 42 swans that come with all they days you are buying geese and swans.

While our current cultural way of celebrating Christmas begins anytime from Halloween to Thanksgiving Weekend, the thought of celebrating Christmas for only 12 days may seem a bit archaic. And again, culturally, once the presents are unwrapped and the holiday dishes washed up, we are ready to move on to what comes next. But with the Church liturgical season, we are reminded that the build up to the moment of celebration is nothing compared to the celebration itself. So enjoy the whole season of Christmas, all the way through January 5th!

Worship Guild Members

Dec 24 —10 AM Worship

Usher: Pam Van Kirk
Reader: Pam Best
Com Asst: Dee Dee Yez
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren

Dec 24 —7 PM Worship

Usher: Steve Erlandson
Reader: Wendy Anderson
Com Asst: Paula Buban
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren

Dec 31 —1st Sunday of Christmas

Usher: Adam Sanberg
Reader: Kurt Volz
Com Asst: Gary Sanberg
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren

Jan 7 — Baptism of our Lord

Usher: Chip Algren
Reader: Trace Gallagher
Com Asst: Robin Johnson
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren



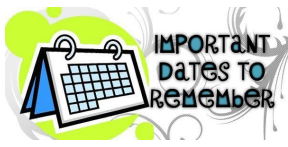
New Worship Setting for Epiphany and Lent

Pastor Jamie and Janice have chosen a new worship setting for the season of Epiphany and Lent. We will learn this setting over the Sundays of January and be fully comfortable with it all through Lent. The setting comes to us from a new hymnal called “All Creation Sings.” This hymnal is a new resource from the ELCA and we have used some hymns from it over the last year. Be sure to join us as we continue to expand the liturgical settings our congregation is familiar with.

Playground Agreement with Monmouth Chin Church

Our Council has entered an agreement with the Chin Church to let them use our playground during their normal church activities. Instead of them having to climb the fence to get in, they now have a key to open the gate when they need the space.

This agreement is a sign of our hospitality to our neighbors, sharing what we have to meet a need they have.



Every Sunday
9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering
10:00 AM Worship



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.

Sunday, December 17 Advent 4

Tue, Dec 19 6 PM Council Bible Study

Sunday, December 24th Christmas Eve
 10 AM and 7 PM Christmas Eve Worship

Office closed December 25th; and Pastor Jamie will be sporadically available the rest of the week—it is always best to call first before stopping by the church office.

Sunday, December 31st 1st Sunday of Christmas, also New Year's Eve

Sunday, January 7th Baptism of Our Lord

Tue, Jan 9 6 PM Council Meeting

Wed, Jan 10 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party

Sunday, January 14th Season after Epiphany

Sun, Jan 14 11:15 AM Bible Study

There will be no Our Church published the week of December 25th or January 1st.

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

Pastor Jamie's typical day off is Friday, though with covering occasional office duties, this time off may vary throughout the week. You are always welcome to call Pastor Jamie on his cell phone.



- Dec 17 Caleb Sanburg
- Dec 17 Jackie Slater
- Dec 18 Tyler Osborn
- Dec 18 Adam Sanberg
- Dec 21 Kaye Johnson
- Dec 23 Derek Johnston
- Dec 26 Janice Algren
- Dec 28 Emma Nuckles
- Dec 30 Gary Sanberg
- Jan 3 Elizabeth Hippen
- Jan 3 Ellen Shrader
- Jan 4 Kay Bailey
- Jan 5 Neal Heerwagen
- Jan 5 Mike Jurgens
- Jan 5 Dennis Terpening
- Jan 7 Nancy Hanson
- Jan 8 Steve Erlandson
- Jan 9 Sue Hanson
- Jan 11 Kathy Tate
- Jan 14 Kathi Cruce
- Jan 30 Kay Lovdahl
- Jan 30 Melba Matson
- Feb 11 Becky Terpening



- Feb 22 Kenny & Nancy Reynolds
- Mar 1 Phil & Trudy Bergren
- Mar 11 Cecil & Kay Lovdahl
- Mar 14 Tammy & Jim Slater
- Apr 2 Don & Kathy Fillman
- Apr 25 Todd & Kris Champion
- Apr 28 Ron & Deb Manuel
- May 5 Brenda & Craig Jones
- May 6 Connie & Chuck Larimer
- May 21 Ted & Sue Hanson
- May 22 Butch & Kaye Johnson
- June 1 Rodger & Linda Ellison
- June 4 Gary & Judy Sanberg
- June 8 Ben & Jenny Sanberg
- June 11 DeeDee & David Yez
- June 12 Neal & Jackie Heerwagen
- June 13 Michael & Barb Pearson
- June 14 Doug & Kathi Cruce
- June 15 Rob & Tammy Ravel
- June 19 Stan & Diane Carlson
- June 23 Mike and Susie Jurgens

Our celebrations list reflect current membership. To request someone not on our current membership list be added to our celebration lists, please contact the church office.

Prayer Requests

Linda Ellison, Ila Roseberry, Kathi Cruce, Dean Sandstrom, Emily Agema, Chris Buban, Ann Enstom, Gary Eyler, Cecil Lovdahl, Janet Lowe, Brian Elliott, Reva Stachinew

Please let the church office know any updates that are needed to our prayer list.

Vision and Purpose Giving Update

Our Vision & Purpose



Throughout December, our congregation will support the Recharge Teen Center here in Monmouth.

Located on South Main Street, the teen center is open weekdays from 3 PM to 6 PM. It provides a place for high school teens to hang out, develop life skills, and for those in need, to receive a warm meal, have laundry services, select from donated clothing items, and more.

Our endowment committee donated \$500 which Pastor Jamie was able to present to the center already. Now this month, our congregation has an opportunity to match what the endowment committee did. Can we reach that goal this season?

Throughout this year, we have been quite generous with our Vision and Purpose Giving:

January: WIAR, \$15

February: Missionaries, \$95

March and April: Janet and Taylor Lowe, \$370

May: Loving Bottoms, \$55

June: LSSI, \$45

July: Wendy Anderson and the St. Jude Run, \$425

August: Jamieson Center, \$30

September: the Suicide Prevention Walk, \$8

October: LWR School Kits, \$73

November: Jamieson Center, \$5

December: Recharge Teen Center

Weekly Devotional



On entering the house, [the wise men] saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2:11

Throughout the season of Advent, as we have lit our wreath candles, we have used a call and response litany based on Matthew 2:11. This verse reminds us that travelers from a faraway nation to the east of Israel came to celebrate the birth of the new king of Israel. There is a lot of mystery surrounding this story. For instance, we do not know exactly where these “Wise Men” came from. We do not know how many of them were in the traveling group, the number 3 comes only from the description of the gifts given. We do not know why they would have travelled to a faraway land to celebrate the king of that land being born.

We do know that Herod, the Roman-aligned, and self-titled King of Israel (he was not actually a King, he only used that title to sound more powerful), was very mad that a rival to his claim of leadership was born. We do know that Herod had killed some of his own sons to end their ability to challenge him for the leadership over Judea. And we do know that Joseph was warned by God to flee with his family to protect the child from Herod’s soldiers.

And in the midst of what we do not know and what we do know, there is this moment of pure worship and devotion to Jesus.

Our life is filled with a lot of things we do know and a lot of things we do not know. We know the sun will rise tomorrow, and the cultural issues that divide us politically will still be carrying on dividing us. We know that life is not always easy, and yet we come to church to celebrate our faith in a Savior born 2000 years ago. We know that this Savior will come again. But we don’t know when. We don’t know how. We don’t know, sometimes, why this faith matters at all. And yet in the midst of what we know and what we don’t know and what is left quite uncertain for us, we have this time to just come and worship and give ourselves fully to God.

That is what makes our moment of worship so pure and wonderful. We do not have to have it all figured out. We do not need all the answers. We simply know that here we give our whole self to Jesus. Here we know we will learn more about why this baby born not in a seat of power, but in a humble stable is the Savior who is worthy of all we can bring.

May this Christmas season be an opportunity for you to feel once again connected to the Lord Jesus in worship, a place where you can give all you are to the one who is celebrated by travelers, shepherds, angels, and all of us.

Merry Christmas, Pastor Jamie