



Our Church—This Week  
for January 15, 2024

## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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### Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher

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Custodian

Chris Algren

Musicians

Janice Algren

Carolyn Kellert

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,

What a wild week of winter weather. I hope you have all kept safe and warm as the temperatures plunged over the weekend.

The cancelling of worship for Sunday, January 14th was a decision by the congregation council that was not taken lightly. And while Sunday was bright and sunny, the road conditions and extreme low temperatures were not ideal. So, rather than having some people choose to go out or choose to stay home, the council simply made a choice for all. I will say the cold conditions were not fun to be in, and while the roads improved during the day, it was good decision.

Katie and I did have to be out in the cold as our son, Nate, had to return to school in Iowa yesterday. And I will say, Iowa got it significantly worse than we did. There were many trucks and cars in the ditches as we drove to Mount Vernon. But safely back to school our son is now. And hopefully, even though this week will be cold, we will all remain safe as we wait for the temperatures to warm up once again.

### Annual Meeting

Join us on Sunday, January 21, 2024 for our winter annual meeting. This meeting gives our congregation a chance to celebrate the past year of ministry and plan for the upcoming year. At this year's annual meeting, we will hear the ministry budget and as we approve that spending agenda, we declare where our heart is as a congregation ... how is God acting in and through our congregation by where we spend the money we are entrusted with.

### Annual Report and Membership Directory

The annual report will be finalized this week after some updates after the council meeting and the membership directory is ready as well. If you would like a copy of this report ahead of the meeting, please let Pastor Jamie know, and a copy can be emailed to you.

When you receive your copy of the Membership Directory, please take time to review your information. If any contact information needs to be updated, please let the office know. If you have children who have moved to their own addresses, that information needs to be updated as well. If you think someone is on the list who has moved away, or if you think someone has been left off the list who should be on it, also, please let the office know.

## **The Chosen TV Show watch party**

We will resume watching the TV series “The Chosen” on Wednesday, January 17th 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**

The new Bible study will begin now on Sunday, January 28th. Join us for this exciting study as described here below:

The Bible Study will introduce us to our Bible and using a series of videos from the YouTube Channel “The Bible Project” we will become more familiar with what is in the Bible and how it came to us.

This week, we will have a story from the Bible about a young man named Eutychus. Eutychus was attending a worship service being led by Paul. Paul was preaching long into the night, and Eutychus was sitting on the window sill, fell asleep and fell out of the window, dying when he hit the ground—three floors below. Paul dismissed his death quickly, and the young man got up, but Paul seemed to ignore him and resumed preaching as the young man was taken home to continue recovering.

What a strange story. Why is it in our Bible? Why does Paul dismiss the miracle of the young man’s return to life? Why does the rest of worship just go on as if nothing happened? What could this possibly tell us about being the people of God?

Join us on Sunday to read the complete story (Acts 20:7-12) and learn more about it.

The Bible study will not be held on Feb 4, but will resume on Feb 11.

## **Updated Robo-Calling System List**

Well, best laid plans, right? We were going to have a test of the updated robo-call system ahead of our annual meeting. This test call will not take place now.

Obviously, we just used the new and updated robo-call list for the weather alert for Sunday, January 14th. If you did not get a phone call on Friday, January 12th at 6 PM from the church with a recorded message from Pastor Jamie about the worship service being cancelled, please call Pastor Jamie and make sure the church office has your correct phone contact information.

In this day when many landlines are being discontinued, it may be easy to forget to update the church office of your new cell phone number. We want to make sure everyone is included for our phone alerts.

Once again, these phone alerts will be used for weather emergencies or other major church announcements. Most of our news is updated weekly through our newsletter, email contact list, or social media.

## **Boy Scout Pancake Supper**

The Boy Scout Troop 705 will host a Mardi Gras Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 13th. We will serve from 5 PM to 7 PM in the fellowship room here at First Lutheran.

More details about the dinner will come out in the upcoming weeks. This is a fundraising event to help raise scholarship funds for the troop to help offset the annual cost for participation in scouting.

Scouting is a youth organization for both boys and girls. Scouting teaches leadership, citizenship, and outdoor skills. Scouting values inclusivity and is open to all youth.

The troop meets regularly on Sunday evenings at 6 PM and has monthly outdoor activities (weather permitting).

For more information about our scouting program, talk with Pastor Jamie, who serves as the scoutmaster of the troop.

# Worship

## Season of Epiphany Sunday, January 7 through Sunday February 11

The television series “The Chosen” takes a look at Jesus’ relationship with his disciples. The series ponders the question why did Jesus choose these men and women to follow him. They were individuals who led ordinary lives. They were not all successful at their professions, they were not all good at morals, they were not all religious scholars. They were a ragtag group of people with problems with spouses, parents, children, friends, neighbors, God. Yet Jesus chose them.

This season of Epiphany we will hear some of the early stories of Jesus choosing his disciples, of Jesus saying to someone ordinary “Follow me.” And when we hear these stories, we are to hear Jesus say those same words to us, “Follow me.” Yes, to us, ordinary people, who are not all successful, who are not all good at morals, who are not all religious scholars, who have problems with family, friends, neighbors, and even God. Yes ... Jesus says to you and to me, “Follow me.” We don’t know why, but Jesus does know and still he calls us.

## Worship Guild Members

### Jan 21 — Epiphany 3

Usher: David Sandstrom  
Reader: Pam Best  
Com Asst: Dee Dee Yez  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

### Jan 28 — Epiphany 4

Usher: Adam Sanberg  
Reader: Judy Sanberg  
Com Asst: Diane Carlson  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

### Feb 4 — Epiphany 5

Usher: Pam Best  
Reader: Judy Sanberg  
Com Asst: N/A  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

### Feb 11 — Transfiguration of the Lord

Usher: Kurt Volz  
Reader: Maddie Blaesing  
Com Asst: Julie Blaesing  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren



## Congratulations!

Congratulations to Mark and Ellen Shrader who welcomed Evan Matthew Shrader, born on Friday, January 12th. Big sister, Sophie, is very excited to have a new brother.

Evan weighed 6 lbs 11 oz and was 19.5 inches.

The family is doing very well.



## Mark your Calendars: Lent is Coming

Here are some important worship days and times to be aware of as we head into Lent.

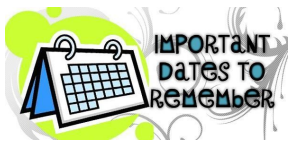
Wednesday, February 14 is Ash Wednesday. We will have worship at 6 PM.

There will be no midweek Lent worship services. Join us Sundays for the “So That’s My Bible” Bible study.

Palm Sunday is March 24th.

Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship will be 6 PM on both March 28th and March 29th.

Easter Sunday is March 31st.



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



*For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.*

Sunday, January 14th Season after Epiphany

Sun, Jan 14 11:15 AM Bible Study

Wed, Jan 17 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party

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Sunday, January 21st Season after Epiphany

Sun, Jan 21 11:15 AM Annual Meeting

Wed, Jan 24 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party

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Sunday, January 28th Season after Epiphany

Sun, Jan 28 11:15 AM Bible Study

Tues, Jan 29 to Monday, February 5

Pastor Jamie attends ELCA World Hunger Event in Houston, TX

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Sunday, February 4th Season after Epiphany

Mon, Feb 5 9:30 AM Sarah Circle

7 PM Building/Grounds meeting

Wed, Feb 7 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party

*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.*



- Jan 14 Kathi Cruce
- Jan 30 Kay Lovdahl
- Jan 30 Melba Matson
- Feb 11 Becky Terpening
- Feb 15 Ross Beedle
- Feb 17 Keirstyn 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



- 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
- Jun 13 Michael & Barb Pearson
- Jun 14 Doug & Kathi Cruce
- Jun 15 Rob & Tammy Ravel
- Jun 19 Stan & Diane Carlson
- Jun 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, 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

# Our Vision & Purpose



### Endowment Matching Funds for Vision and Purpose

The Endowment Fund Committee is promoting our Vision and Purpose monthly giving by giving automatically each month \$100. Then—based on the giving of congregation members, the committee will also match an additional \$150 of giving. This means, if the congregation gives \$150 a month to vision and purpose, the total amount given to the fund will be \$400.

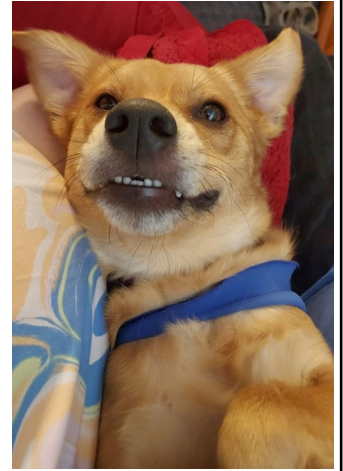
So—how will you support the Vision and Purpose giving this month?

We will start our year once again supporting the Western Illinois Animal Rescue. This shelter located here in Monmouth houses cats and dogs until they are able to be adopted into forever homes. Volunteers help the center by daily playing with the cats and dogs and helping with feeding and other necessary tasks. The shelter provides for veterinary care through a local vet's office.

Our donations will help WIAR with those vet costs, providing appropriate food and other supplies needed for the pets.

Have you ever adopted a pet from WIAR? Pastor Jamie's family dog, Niko, came from the shelter. Who could resist such a cutie as this?

Thank you for supporting WIAR this month with our vision and purpose giving.



### Weekly Devotional



Jesus answered [Nathanael], "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these."

John 1:50

In the story when Jesus calls Nathanael to follow him, there is an interesting exchange which we are not given the full details of. Jesus tells Nathanael that he saw him under a fig tree. What was Nathanael doing under the fig tree? We do not know. The gospel writer, John, does not tell us that. But it was apparently something that Nathanael did not expect for anyone, let alone Jesus, to have seen him. Yet Jesus saw him. Jesus connected with Nathanael over what was seen. And Nathanael recognized that only Jesus, the Messiah, the anointed of God, could truly see and know him.

Jesus sees you, just as Jesus saw Nathanael. Now on one hand, this could sound creepy, like, Jesus sees us when we are doing something morally questionable, or have a thought in our head that isn't the most pure, or even (gross) picking our noses! Well, this is not what it means to be seen by Jesus. Jesus is not some super spy for God who is watching us to see when we mess up and counting up the times we did it right.

To say that Jesus sees us is to say that Jesus truly knows who we are, our whole self, our brokenness, our shortcomings, our deepest yearnings, our fears, our successes, our hopes, and all that makes us who we are. In the TV Series, *The Chosen*, the character Nathanael is depicted as an architect who has a project fail due to a manager not giving him the proper supplies, yet Nathanael is blamed for the failure. He ends up under a tree alone, he is crying out to God who he feels is silently ignoring him. Jesus was no where near that moment when Nathanael was under the tree. Yet because Jesus is God's Son, Jesus did see Nathanael crying out to God in a moment of great depression.

And Jesus sees us just as Jesus sees Nathanael. Nathanael needed to know God loved him and that God valued him, even when the world was crashing around him. We need to know God loves us and that God values us. Some days the world is crashing around us. Some days we are not getting it right. Some days we are coming up short. Some days we are fighting with family or neighbors. Jesus isn't spying ready to pounce on us for what is "sin" or what is life crashing around us. Jesus sees us and is ready to tell us we are loved by God, we are valued by God, and Jesus calls us to follow him, just as he called Nathanael.

Because once we fully understand that we are loved by God and valued by God, we will be ready to see even greater things as we follow Jesus in the way of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and love towards everyone.

Peace, Pastor Jamie