



Our Church—This Week
for January 8, 2024

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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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,
Happy New Year! Welcome to 2024. May God bless us all as we enter this new year with peace and prosperity.
Let me take a moment to say thank you to everyone who shared a Christmas card or simple gift with me this season. Your kindness during the holidays was greatly appreciated.
Now Christmas is quickly fading into the background. The decorations are put away. There is a potential of actual winter weather approaching early in the week just as our students return to school. Hopefully that weather will not impact anything on our church calendar next week.
And speaking of time quickly moving, before we know it, Lent will be here. Ash Wednesday is already February 14th! Yep, you get to celebrate Valentines Day with your special someone in worship, getting your ashes. How romantic, right?

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 Meeting report will be available by Sunday, January 14th. We will include a membership directory with this year's report. There have been some changes over the past couple of years to our membership directory. Please take a moment to read through the directory when it is published. If address or phone contact information needs to be changed, please let the office know. Also, if you find someone listed in the membership directory you believe has left the congregation OR if you do not find someone in the membership directory you believe is still a member, please contact the office. We recognize simple errors may take place with data entry and we want our directory to be as accurate as possible. Thank you for reviewing this information and helping the church office.

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

Sunday, January 14th we will begin a new Bible Study. The study will begin shortly after worship begins, probably around 11:15 AM in the basement fellowship room.

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.

Updated Robo-Calling System List

In December, we had an incident when there was a power outage and we had to cancel worship. We used our Robo-Calling system and chaos still ensued. This incident prompted a revision of who is on the Robo-Call system list and an update of contact information to include cell phone numbers.

We will conduct a test of the updated system list on Saturday, January 20th. We will use this test to remind the congregation of the Sunday, January 21st Annual meeting. For those who have both a landline and a cellphone listed, you might get two calls, one on each, though I think the system will recognize if you answer the first call that it will not make the second. But I haven’t tested that yet. I’m not sure how that works yet.

That is partly why we are conducting this test. You have the opportunity to let me (Pastor Jamie) know after if you indeed got the call, or if you did not get the call. And if we need to continue working to get this system correct, we will do that.

Ordinarily, we will only use this calling system for a weather emergency or other reason that might cancel worship or another ministry event.

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 6:30 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, such as the Klondike Derby on Saturday, January 13th in Galesburg. The troop will participate in the derby and demonstrate many scout skills they have learned, such as fire building and knot-tying, and teamwork.

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



Season of Epiphany
Sunday, January 7 through
Sunday February 11

What is the season of Epiphany? And why do we celebrate it?

This season follows Christmas and completes the “Christmas-cycle” of the lectionary year. It begins on January 6th, the day we celebrate the arrival of the magi bringing gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh. Throughout the season, we have revelations or epiphanies of who Jesus is while also hearing the story of those Jesus first calls to follow him,.

We see Jesus clearly being recognized as God’s Son with that visit of the magi, on the day of Jesus’ baptism, and on the day of Transfiguration. We hear how others follow Jesus like Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Nathanael, and more.

The color of the season is green, and is also sometimes considered part of the “Ordinary Time” such as the Sundays that follow Pentecost.

Worship Guild Members

Jan 14 — Epiphany 2

Usher: Brian Elliott
Reader: Pam Van Kirk
Com Asst: Steve Erlandson
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren

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: Kurt Volz
Reader: Wendy Anderson
Com Asst: Julie Blaesing
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.

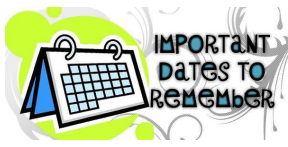
This Sunday we will learn the Kyrie from the new setting. We will speak it and sing it. The words are simple.

The first call is “Kyrie Eleison” and the response is “Lord, have mercy.”

The second call is “Christe Eleison” with the response being “Christ, have mercy.”

And the final call and response repeats the first.

Kyrie is Greek for “Lord” and Eleison is Greek for “Have Mercy”. Using the Greek in worship connects with the ancients who worshipped God using the same words. Using English in worship connects us to our modern world today, reminding us that God is present through all of time.



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



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.

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
 Wed, Jan 17 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party

Sunday, January 21st Season after Epiphany
 Sun, Jan 21 11:15 AM Annual Meeting
 Wed, Jan 24 10 AM The Chosen Watch Party

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

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 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 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
- Jun 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



In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

Mark 1:9

Why was Jesus baptized? This is one of those questions that always comes up when we read this story that Jesus was baptized. It is a question because we believe Baptism is about the forgiveness of sins, and if Jesus is the Son of God, why would he need his sins forgiven? Well, yes John was performing a ritual bath for the people of God for the purpose of forgiveness of sins. But this baptism was more than just forgiveness. This baptism was about repentance for the forgiveness of sins (See Mark 1:4). Repentance is about turning away from one thing and toward another.

Jesus came to John to be baptized to demonstrate how he was aligning his life. Jesus was aligning his life with a certain way of being connected to God, a way of true forgiveness and mercy and compassion. There were rituals at the Temple in Jerusalem that could be performed for forgiveness, such as sacrificing a dove or a lamb or even a full bull, if you could afford it. But those sacrifices only forgive certain sins and have a completed action, new sins will require a new sacrifice. But John's baptismal bath was about turning one's who life away from all sins, it was not time sensitive, it was not for certain sins and not others, it was a complete and total experience. Jesus came to baptism to say he too was turning away from all the sins (sin being defied as anything that breaks our relationship with God and others) and turning toward mercy and compassion. This is a new way of living. God's Kingdom as Jesus ushers it in will not dwell on sins. It will dwell on hospitality, it will dwell on inclusion, it will dwell on making people whole again—none of which can happen if we only focus on sins. The sacrificial system of the temple only focused on sins, and if you were a sinner and could not sacrifice an animal, then you were not welcome, not included, and you were considered unclean or not whole. Jesus wanted to proclaim a radically new vision for God's kingdom and that couldn't be proclaimed from an altar burning animals. It could only be proclaimed from a place where we are washed of our old ways and cleansed for new ways.

So the real question when we hear the story of Jesus' baptism shouldn't be about Jesus. It should be about us. Why were you baptized? Why did you come to the font and have water poured over your head? Was it for some ritualized tradition that just needed to be completed? Was it out of fear that if you weren't you would be eternally punished? If we approach baptism like the ancients approached the sacrificial system at the Temple, then we will remain in our sins, and we will not be whole, and we will miss out on what God's Kingdom truly offers. But if we come to baptism and join with Jesus in aligning ourselves with God's Kingdom goals of mercy and compassion, we find that we are suddenly welcoming the lost, including the outsider, and proclaiming whole all those our society would say are broken. This is why Jesus was baptized—so we could live this new way in God's amazing Kingdom.

Peace, Pastor Jamie