



# 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 :: June 16, 2025

### Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher

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Musicians: Janice Algren

Carolyn Kellert

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### Congregation Council

President: Pam Van Kirk

Vice President: Mark Shrader

Secretary: Diane Carlson

Chip Algren

Pam Best

Brian Elliott

Adam Sanberg

Dee Dee Yez

Dear Friends and Family,

What joy we experienced Thursday night at our annual Strawberry Festival. While the final numbers are not in yet for this newsletter, we had a very good turnout. It was delightful to see how many members of the congregation were around helping in one way or another. This festival is one of our summer anchor events—the other being the prime beef drive through. And the Strawberry Festival never fails to bring this congregation together. Thank you, thank you, thank you, to all who volunteered, to all who made a dessert, to all who served, washed, cooked, and helped in any way. It was also a super delight to be able to introduce Pastor Dan Rift to our congregation and many members this weekend. Pastor Dan is the Director for Congregational Generosity. He serves the ELCA through the Annual Giving Team, Development Group. He has offices in Chicago and at his home in Louisville, KY. Pastor Dan has long served the ELCA through the World Hunger ministry and maintains close connections with generous givers in the Northern Illinois Synod. Pastor Dan attended our church this weekend and the Synod Assembly in Rock Island. Pastor Dan came to our congregation because of our tremendous response to the World Hunger Challenge campaign. And he wanted to remind a small congregation like ours of just what a huge difference we mean to a ministry like World Hunger. We are just as valuable to the work of Jesus as any larger suburban congregation. And we may feel like big-wigs in national church offices don't think about congregations like us, but we are extremely valuable. So it was a huge joy to welcome him to Monmouth and share the story of First Lutheran with him through all the encounters he had with us Thursday and Sunday morning.

### **Sunday Schedule**

**9:30 AM Coffee**

**10:00 AM Worship**

**Our next Bible Study will be  
announced for the Fall**

### **So ... What Come's Next?**

Whenever we hit a huge ministry event, like the Strawberry Festival, there is always this post-event let-down. Here are a few things we are working on to keep up the excitement:

Family Movie Night—date in July to be announced, this will feature popcorn, hot dogs, lemonade, and a family friendly movie. We are collaborating with the Day Care/Preschool for a date and advertising. As soon as the date is selected, it will be announced. This will be an event open to the public as well.

Saturday, Aug 9th—Ladies Fun Brunch. This new annual tradition is a great opportunity for the women of our congregation to invite friends to gather for a lunch and a topic. More will be announced in our next newsletter, so save the date now.

## **Semi Annual Meeting**

### **DATE CHANGE**

Sunday, June 22nd, following worship, is our semi-annual meeting. This meeting is set for electing council and committee members.

If you are interested in serving our church on council or on a committee, please speak with Pam Van Kirk.

## **Constitution Revision**

The Congregation Council is working on a revision to our constitution. The primary changes we are working toward are:

- reducing the size of the council to 6 members of the congregation, and the pastor having voice and vote.
- Changing our annual meeting system from two to just one in January (essentially cancelling the may meeting)
- Changing the committee structure to more accurately reflect our ministry work

The revised constitution once approved by council in August will be sent to the Northern Illinois Synod Constitution Revision Committee for review. We anticipate completing the work and having a revised constitution ready for approval at the January 2026 annual meeting. A specially called congregation meeting will happen one month later to ratify the revised constitution at which point the approved changes will go into effect.

If you have questions about the process for revising our constitution, please feel free to speak with Pam Van Kirk, Chip Algren, or Pastor Jamie

## **Vacation Bible School**

This summer, VBS is hosted by First United Methodist Church. The dates are July 27 to 31. For more information, call First United Methodist Church at 309-734-9437

## **Theology of the Cross—a Primer**

The Theology of the Cross is one of those concepts that we don't talk much about, so when it is introduced it may be confusing as we don't think about having a framework for understanding the Bible or faith. We just assume the Bible speaks for itself. We just naturally assume all Christians read the same Bible and reach the same conclusions. If we hear the Bible being talked about in ways that go against how we have always thought about the Bible, we quickly assume our long-held beliefs are right and the newfangled concepts are somehow wrong.

The problem here is manifold. Not all Christians think alike about the Bible or faith. Some Christians have a belief that Genesis Chapter 1 is an absolute correct history of 7 literal 24-hour periods of time, and if that is not true, then none of the Bible can be trusted. Other Christians think a concept called "Rapture" which describes the end times is absolutely true and if it is not true, then none of the Bible can be trusted. And there are many other approaches.

We all have an approach that is shaped by the church we attend, the media we pay attention to, the Bible translation we read, the Bible studies we have attended, and our political identities and economic statuses. We cannot approach the Bible without all that shaping how we read scripture and understand faith.

The Theology of the Cross is a framework that doesn't worry about the history of creation, nor does it concern itself with the end times. The Theology of the Cross points us to the moment of God's reconciling work made complete in the cross of Jesus. Here, God's love is revealed at its most fullest. Here, God's promise of renewal for the entire created world is made known. Here, God's command for us to love one another is lived out to the maximum. And so when we read the creation account, we celebrate there is a creation that God loves so fully, Jesus died for it to be renewed. Here when we think about the end times, we gather back at the cross and see God's just judgement on sin is death, and God's just judgement on all God's family is resurrection (see Easter Sunday.) Here when we think about gender, marriage, hurting one another, recycling, nationalism, we come to the cross and see that God is the God of all that collapses under death and God is the God of all that rises to new life. This is the framework that the Lutheran Church teaches, and this is what later this fall we will explore more in a Bible study.



stjuderuns.org



Dear Family and Friends,

I need your help! I am honored to be participating in the 44th Annual St. Jude Memphis to Peoria Run from Tuesday, July 29 - Saturday, August 2, 2025. Over 2,500 runners will run relay-style from 35 different satellite cities to Peoria, Illinois, raising funds for the kids of St. Jude. Each run ends in downtown Peoria where the participants, exhausted and full of excitement, gather to cross the finish line during the 48th Annual St. Jude Telethon. Please consider showing your support by donating to my personal fundraising goal.

St. Jude Runs began in 1982, with the mission to provide funds in support of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, TN. Since inception, St. Jude Runs has raised an astounding \$88,148,379 for this great organization!

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital® is leading the way the world understands, treats and defeats childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases.

Through contributions like yours, families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing or food — so they can focus on helping their child live. Every child deserves a chance to live their best life and celebrate every moment. When you support St. Jude, you can help make cures possible for kids with cancer. Together, we can save more lives.

How can you help? Make a donation today - every penny counts! Please help us raise money for the life-saving mission of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital: Finding cures. Saving children.

How can you donate?

Visit my online fundraising site at <http://fundraising.stjude.org/goto/wendyanderson>, VenMo a donation to @Wendy-Anderson-611, mail a donation to 450 S Hall St, Roseville, IL 61473, or give me a call/send me a message and I'm happy to pick up a donation from you at your convenience. Thank you for supporting my 11th year running for St. Jude.

Thank you,

*Wendy Anderson*



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## Ordinary Time

**June 15 to November 23**

Summer Worship is a beautiful time to gather and breathe and relax into God's presence. We are going to be trying a new way for music to end worship — our typical closing hymn will be sung as communion is being served. Then, after the benediction we are bringing back a short "Benediction Refrain" — this short refrain will either be a refrain from a hymn or a short 1 verse from a short hymn. This Benediction Refrain will close out our worship on an upbeat note.

We are also including spoken responsive litanies. Sometimes based on a psalm, sometimes using lyrics to a hymn. For instance for the rest of June, we will use words from a hymn that align with the themes expressed in Psalm 8.

As we take time for rest and renewal this summer, remember worship as Sabbath rest and Sabbath renewal.

## Worship Guild Members

### June 22 — Ordinary Time

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Usher:        | Chip Algren   |
| Reader:       | Pam Van Kirk  |
| Com Asst:     | Kurt Volz     |
| Narthex Host: | Linda McGuire |
| Musician:     | Janice Algren |

### June 29 — Ordinary Time

|                 |                      |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Guest Preacher: | Pastor Vince Marolla |
| Usher:          | Dee Dee Yez          |
| Reader:         | Pam Best             |
| Com Asst:       | Diane Carlson        |
| Narthex Host:   | Linda McGuire        |
| Musician:       | Carolyn Kellert      |

### July 6 — Ordinary Time

|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Usher:        | Doug Cruce      |
| Reader:       | Trace Gallagher |
| Com Asst:     | Diane Carlson   |
| Narthex Host: | Linda McGuire   |
| Musician:     | Janice Algren   |

### June 13 — Ordinary Time

|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Usher:        | Ray Golden      |
| Reader:       | Judy Sanberg    |
| Com Asst:     | Steve Erlandson |
| Narthex Host: | Linda McGuire   |
| Musician:     | Carolyn Kellert |



## Southwest Conference Prayer Calendar

Have you noticed in our prayers lately we have begun praying for neighboring ELCA Congregations and broader ELCA ministries? This is an intentional effort by our conference—the Southwest Conference of the Northern Illinois Synod. We are trying to remind each other of our partnership through these prayers and to strengthen our bonds.

In a time when every congregation is highly focused on its own needs, remembering we are connected to others is a helpful. Watch our FB page throughout the summer as we also begin posting our prayer calendar for our partners there as well.

## Summer Newsletter Schedule

As we approach the summer, we will begin having newsletters twice a month. Worship videos will continue to be made available each week. We will have newsletters:

July 7, July 21

Aug 4, Aug 18

This summer schedule reflects Pastor's summer schedule and fewer ministry activities taking place over the summer.



Every Sunday

9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering

10:00 AM Worship



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

Sunday, June 15th—Ordinary Time

Sun, Jun 15—Father's Day

Mon, Jun 16 (PM) to Sat, Jun 22

Pastor on Vacation

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Sunday, June 22nd — Ordinary Time

Sun, Jun 22 — 11:15 AM Semi Annual Meeting

Mon, June 23—Mon, June 30

Pastor on Vacation

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Sunday, June 29th — Ordinary Time

Fri, July 4 Independence Day

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Sunday, July 6th — Ordinary Time

Mon, Jul 7 9:30 AM Sarah Circle

7 PM Building/Grounds meeting

Tue, Jul 8 6 PM Council Meeting at Pam Van Kirk's House

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Sunday, July 13th—Ordinary Time

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Sunday, July 20th — Ordinary Time

*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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Jun 21 Aaron Jensen

Jun 30 Collin Nuckles

Jul 3 Trudy Bergren

Jul 3 Hal Tate

Jul 4 Jennifer Sprecher

Jul 8 Marlene Moulden

Jul 9 Cohen Anderson

Jul 9 Kris Champion

Jul 13 Reese Anderson

Jul 15 Pastor Jamie

Jul 17 Cecil Lovdahl

Jul 19 Mark Shrader

Jul 20 Ron Manuel

Jul 21 Patt Holland

Jul 25 Barb Peterson

Jul 26 Konner Elliott

Aug 2 Karen Erlandson

Aug 4 Doug Cruce

Aug 6 Angi Martin-Prudent

Aug 13 Brandon Reynolds

Aug 16 Rodger Ellison

Aug 17 Cara Jensen

Aug 23 Kenny Reynolds

Aug 24 Pam Best

Aug 25 Robin Johnson

Aug 25 Tammy Ravel



Jun 19 Stan & Diane Carlson

Jun 23 Mike & Susie Jurgens

Jun 23 John & Pam Van Kirk

Jun 26 Dave & Kathy

Erlandson

Jun 26 Gary & Jan Martin

Jun 30 Chip & Janice Algren

Jun 30 Warren & Marlys Dobry

Jul 2 Jeremy & Wendy

Anderson

Jul 8 Tom & Pam Best

Jul 12 Steve & Karen

Erlandson

Jul 13 Kevin & Jennifer

Sprecher

Jul 24 Michael & Julie

Blaesing

Aug 4 Ray & Shelly Golden

Aug 13 Jack Coombs &

Lindsay Martin

Aug 28 Hal & Kathy Tate

Sept 2 Dennis & Denise Mann

Sept 5 Bryan & Keri Osborn

Oct 11 Jamie & Katie

Gallagher

Oct 15 Ken & Teresa Miller

Oct 25 Mark & Ellen Shrader

## Prayer Requests

Linda Ellison, Ila Roseberry, Kathi Cruce, Dean Sandstrom, Emily Agema, Cecil Lovdahl, Janet Lowe, Brian Elliott, Hannah Taylor, Wes Lovdahl, Kay Baily, Barb Rees, Pam Best, Doug Moulden, Marlene Moulden

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





## Vision and Purpose Giving

Throughout June, we will support Wendy Anderson's Run to Peoria, the fundraiser for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. See her letter earlier in this newsletter for more information from Wendy about this run.

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital was founded in 1962 by entertainer Danny Thomas. It focuses on children's catastrophic diseases such as leukemia and other cancers. It prides itself on providing most of its medical care at no charge to the patient or the patient's family. As a designated nonprofit medical corporation, St. Jude relies on donations to cover its work, at a cost of nearly \$2 million a day.

We look forward to joining Wendy once again this year in supporting this wonderful health ministry. Blessings to Wendy as she trains and prepares for and then goes on this inspiring run.

January, Strom Center == \$250.00

February, Lutheran Disaster Response == \$515.00

March, ELCA World Hunger == \$2,609.00

April, Special Olympics == \$410.00

May, Recharge Center == \$407.00

June, St. Jude Run (Wendy Anderson)

July, LWR School Kits,

August, Kiwanis Club

September, Out of Darkness Walk,

October, Mosaic,

November, Lutheran Day Care and Pre-School,

December, Jamieson Center,



Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. — Matthew 28:19

In the final words of Jesus, as recorded by Matthew, Jesus gives these instructions for baptism, invoking what we now know as the Triune Name of God. The Trinity is a concept that appears Biblical, and because we have been trained to find it in the Bible, we do. But the Trinity is not something Matthew was thinking about, nor anyone else in the Bible. The concept of the Trinity is a theological framework, kind of like the Theology of the Cross, that helps us make sense of how the Bible addresses the nature of God in so many different ways across all the Books of the Bible, Old and New Testament, and even across the Gospels and the early letters.

So what is happening in Matthew? Well, Matthew is writing during a period of history when the sacrament of Baptism is still in flux and has not been worked into a full tradition everyone participates in the same way. The baptism of John is still being practiced by many, this was a baptism for repentance of sin, and was about the action of the one being baptized. We see in the book of Acts stories of some being baptized only in the name of the Spirit, or others being baptized in the name of Jesus and later needing another baptism to receive the gifts of the Spirit. We read across Paul's letters that some are being baptized in the names of the disciple or Apostle who did the baptism, which leads Paul to give thanks that he does not baptize anyone, except a few notable exceptions whom he then lists.

So, Matthew is using this final speech from Jesus to give legitimacy to a standard way to practice baptism, for all to use. But again, this was not about recognizing God yet as a Triune Being—somehow three persons yet one substance. This concept of trinity would be developed later in the 4th and 5th centuries and is still being worked out today. How does God function sometimes as Father, sometimes as Son, sometimes as Spirit, and yet is fully present in all times as Father, Son, Spirit, co-equally. Many who try to explain this get labeled as heretics, because God, who cannot be separated, either ends up functioning only as one person and not the full three, or as the one, and never individually, and all of a sudden we have a mess on our theological hands. So how do we wrap this up briefly? The trinity is a concept, it helps us to name God, it helps us to standardize practices within worship, it gives us a sense of unity across the breath of scriptures and the whole of time. To break it down beyond that will lead to heresies every time. So we celebrate we can know God, we celebrate God knows us. And we rejoice in all the mysteries that we may never be able to fully explain.

Peace, Pastor Jamie