



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 :: December 22, 2025

Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher

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Cell (630)200-3550

Musicians: Janice Algren

Carolyn Kellert

Preschool and Day Care Director

Bobbi Nees

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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,

Merry Christmas! And Happy New Year! May these two weeks of holidays be celebrated well in your home, with your family, and your friends.

We have come to the end of 2025. We are flipping the calendar to 2026. And as a reminder, this is the final weekly newsletter of 2025. Our next weekly newsletter will be on Monday, January 5th.

I am continuing to learn what it means to be a bi-locational family. My wife is home in Monmouth for the holidays, but will be returning to Nebraska right after the new year. I will be headed that way for a couple days as well in the first week of January. There are a few apartment items I will be helping with, like assembling furniture. I will be headed out after worship on the 4th and back on Wednesday, January 7th. While I am away, you are welcome to call, text, or email me, and I will respond as normal.

As we now head into the new year, I look forward to our congregation continuing to work through the Pathways Program, with a team of leaders learning how to discern God's calling for our ministry. What are we to do? Who are we to serve? How best can we lead to do and serve those things? These questions are at the heart of this process that will help give us a firm foundation for ministry for the next generation of growing disciples here in Monmouth.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM Worship

Bible Study Opportunities

**Future opportunities will be
announced soon**



Sunday School

Our Sunday school days will be the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month.

January dates will be: January 11 and January 25.

We will begin at 9:45. Sunday school students will join worship in time to share communion with their families.

Liturgical Arts Workshop

The congregation council invites you to a Liturgical Arts Workshop on Wednesday, January 14th at 6 PM.

During this Workshop, which will be held in the sanctuary, we are going to begin an evaluation of our current paraments/banners and other liturgical arts. We are considering if we want to renew our liturgical paraments and banners and how we display the banners. This conversation will be a beginning of a process, and no final decisions will be made. But input will be appreciated.

Also, during this workshop, we will be reviewing sacristy tasks such as setting up communion and candle care. Right now these tasks are handled by Chip, and we are wanting others to know how to do these tasks as well.

And then, we are looking for volunteers who would like to take on the role of scheduling lectors, communion assistants, and ushers. This role would also be responsible for recruiting others to volunteer in these roles. This role would need to coordinate with Pastor Jamie when worship assistants are scheduled for listing in the bulletin and newsletters.

These three tasks seem like a lot for a workshop, but we should be able to accomplish these tasks within a hour. Please let Pastor Jamie or Pam Van Kirk know if you are interested in attending this Liturgical Arts Workshop.

Two Congregation Meetings in January

A special congregation meeting will be held on Sunday, January 4th for the purpose of adopting our newly revised constitution.

This constitution is available online at our church website, or a print copy may be sent to you if you call the church office to request it. Notable changes include eliminating the semi-annual meeting in May; reducing the number of council members; and adjusting the way committees are formed. If you have any questions, you are welcome to call any council member.

Our regular annual meeting on January 25th will feature the ratification vote for the revised constitution, the vote on our 2026 annual budget, and election of the new council members according to the revised constitution.

If there is any winter weather delays for either meeting, the rescheduled date will be the following Sunday of that planned meeting.

Revised Congregation Constitution

The revised Constitution is now available on our website for review. Or by contacting the church office for a copy to be mailed to you.

Sunday, January 4th, after worship, we are having a special congregation meeting to vote to approve this new constitution

Sunday, January 25th, we will hold our annual meeting and during the annual meeting vote to ratify our new constitution.

If there are any weather related cancellations, the meeting will be postponed to the following Sunday.

Weather Cancellations

With two Sundays cancelled already in Advent, and another Sunday with questionable weather, we continue to wonder what the rest of winter will bring us.

Considerations for weather cancellation are discussed by the pastor, council president, and council vice-president. When a decision is made, an automated phone call will be recorded and issued. An email will be sent. And also, we will post on Facebook.

If the weather is just too uncomfortable for you, and we do not cancel, please trust your own instincts and needs for safety. A worship video is made and sent with our Monday newsletter email, so you can always catch the service through video on YouTube.



Christmas

December 24th—January 5th

The 12 Days of Christmas begin officially on December 25th. Worship for the big day of Christmas once upon a time was held on the holiday itself, and gradually over time moved to the Eve, or night before the holy-day. Like Easter which is celebrated for 7 weeks, Christmas is a feast that is too big for one service. 12 Days probably lines up with other occurrences of 12 in the Bible, like the 12 disciples, or the 12 tribes of Israel. The Day of Epiphany, when we celebrate the arrival of the wise men, is on January 6th and that officially begins the next church liturgical season.

Throughout the season of Christmas there are usually a couple days that are honored and that we miss—for instance the Feast day of the Holy Innocents marks the occasion in Matthew's story that Herod's troops murder all the boys under the age of 2 in Bethlehem. This horror story reminds us that even as God is all powerful, the horrors of the world still rage on. Jesus was saved by the Angel warning Joseph in a dream. These others were not and the sorrow of slaughter stains the Christmas season with blood reminding us of how deep human sin is. And while we can take comfort in Jesus, we must pause to remember all those lost that Jesus may bring us life.

Worship Guild Members

December 24—Christmas Eve

Usher:	Doug Cruce
Reader:	Maddie Blaesing
Com Asst:	Julie Blaesing
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Janice Algren

December 28—Christmas 1

Usher:	Ray Golden
Reader:	Kurt Volz
Com Asst:	N/A
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Janice Algren

January 4—Christmas 2

Usher:	Diane Carlson
Reader:	Doug Cruce
Com Asst:	Dee Dee Yez
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Janice Algren

January 11—Baptism of Our Lord

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



Want to Add Your Name to our Worship Helper List?

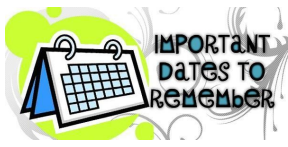
You can — join us at our Jan 14th Liturgical Arts Workshop and learn more about the roles of reader, communion assistant, and usher. We are looking for help scheduling these roles, as well.

You can — email or call Pastor Jamie and ask to have your name added to the list.

Right now the schedule is made using a rotating list. When someone is scheduled and they cannot make, they are simply asked to notify Pastor Jamie and a replacement can be found. And folks in worship are always ready to step up if someone cannot attend that day.

Share your talents in worship .. Volunteer today!





Every Sunday

9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering

10:00 AM Worship



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.

Sunday, December 21st — Advent 4

Sun, Dec 21—9:45 AM Family Sunday School

Wed, Dec 24 7 PM Christmas Eve Worship

Sunday, December 28th — Christmas 1

Sun, Dec 28 — Lessons and Carols Worship

Sunday, January 4th — Christmas 2

Sun, Jan 4—11:00 AM Congregation Special
Meeting for Constitution Revision

Mon, Jan 5—6:30 PM Pathways Meeting

7 PM Building/Grounds Meeting

Sat, Jan 10—Joint Pathways and Council
Workshop

Sunday, January 11th — Baptism of Jesus

Sun, Jan 11 — 9:45 AM Family Sunday School

Tue, Jan 13 — 6 PM Council Meeting

Wed, Jan 14—6 PM Liturgical Arts Workshop

Sun, January 18th — 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Sun, January 25th — 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Sun, Jan 25th — Annual meeting following
worship

Mon, Jan 26th—Thurs, Jan 29th

Pastor Jamie attends Continuing
Education event

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



Dec 23 Derek Johnson

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 12 Evan Shrader

Jan 14 Kathi Cruce

Jan 30 Kay Lovdahl

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



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, Doug Moulden, Marlene Moulden, Teresa Eyler, Pat Clark, Bob Rieck

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



Vision and Purpose Giving

December is our month to support Jamieson Community Center. We have the grocery cart in the Narthex for non-perishable goods. All financial donations may be given through the Vision and Purpose jar.

During the holiday season, times are already tough. With uncertainty surrounding government social safety programs, the times are even tougher and Jamieson Community Center has seen an increase in the number of clients in recent months.

Thank you for all the ways we support the Jamieson Center and all our Vision and Purpose causes throughout the year.

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) == \$772.00

July, LWR School Kits == \$270.00

August, Kiwanis Club == \$460.00

September, Out of Darkness Walk == \$412.00

October, Mosaic == \$261.00

November, Lutheran Day Care and Pre-School, \$468.00

December, Jamieson Center,



For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. — Isaiah 9:6

An ancient prophecy from Isaiah foretells of the birth of Jesus, well, sort of. We hear the Isaiah passage read every Christmas Eve, and other times throughout the church year, as though ancient scripture was looking centuries ahead. And that is part of what we do with scripture, we use it to look ahead into the future. But Isaiah was most likely not talking about a baby named Jesus. Isaiah was speaking to a current reality of his own time. Isaiah was letting the people of Israel know that the current suffering they were enduring was going to be ending and the sign was found in this child who was born at that moment who would rise up to be this restoring king.

Today, we as Christians, interpret this passage through the lens of prophecy and let it refer not only to that child born in Isaiah's day, but also as a passage to refer to the birth of Jesus. We do this because we want to find meaning in Old Testament passages and we want to justify our beliefs about who Jesus is. The Gospel writer Matthew, for example, spends a lot of time picking Old Testament passages and finding ways to use them in new ways to help explain who Jesus is.

As we come to another Christmas Eve celebration, one of the many questions we get to ask ourselves is why do we come to worship Jesus. Is it because a prophecy from the 7th century BC (Isaiah's works are that old) said Jesus would have authority resting upon his shoulders? Is it because, as Luke explains, random shepherds were called into town, leaving their pastures just for a glimpse of a baby? Is it because it is what our parents always did? For a favorite hymn you hope to hear? To hold a candle as 'Silent Night' is sung in near darkness? Sometimes we come because of a connection to who the baby Jesus is; sometimes we come because of sentimental emotion that is disconnected from Jesus, all while still being slightly about Jesus.

Jesus is born. We celebrate that as well as we celebrate our own birthdays. But we are not being worshipped each year. Only Jesus gets worshipped on his birthday. So why? What is your answer to the question, "Why Jesus?"

Peace, Pastor Jamie