



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 :: May 12, 2025

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Chip Algren

Pam Best

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Adam Sanberg

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Dear Friends and Family,

Once again Happy Mother's Day to all who celebrate. As we lift to God our joyous thanks for all who have been mothers, and all who have been mother-figures in our life, we also lift to God all who live in the silent pain of the loss of a mother, the silent pain of the loss of a child, or the silent pain of never having the dream of become a mother realized. As with all holy days, there is this mix of celebration and quiet pain. And so, for all who feel silently washed away or unheard or unseen, please know you are not washed away, you are very much heard and seen. And your story is very important this day as well.

God is way too often associated with the identity of "Father" but scripture also lifts many mothering images for God. Jesus uses the image of a mothering hen to gather her brood as an image to describe himself; the ancient psalmist writes "the Lord is my shepherd," which comes with many mothering elements. Women are lifted up as the earliest apostles—Mary Magdalene and the others who went to the tomb returned to the others to be the first to say "Jesus is risen!" Women served as influential early church leaders.

Mother's day may be a typical American greeting card holiday, celebrated with brunch and flowers for our moms. But it becomes a day in the church when we must remember the continuing work of breaking patriarchal world views and bringing equality to women in roles in the church and the world, and especially the need to celebrate the right to bodily autonomy for women, especially when considering healthcare needs.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM Worship

**The Spring Bible Study will be
Wednesday mornings in the
month of May at 10 AM**

Spring Bible Study

The Book of Revelation is our focus for our Spring Bible Study. We meet at 10 AM on Wednesdays in Pastor's office.

Revelation is often misunderstood as a blueprint for future events or as an outline for God's plan to "Rapture" believers off the earth. Well, these are not at all what Revelation is about, in fact, the "Rapture" is not even a biblical concept ... it was a concept made up in the mid 1800's. More on that later in this week's devotional reflection.

This week's study will take a look at the 7 churches the author is writing to, their circumstances, and how we connect to those circumstances today. From the actual places the letter was written to all the way to today, this is an offering of hope and faithfulness in the midst of all our circumstances. Join us as we dive deeper into Revelation.

Strawberry Festival

Our Annual Strawberry Festival will be held on Thursday, June 12th.

Dinner served from 5 PM to 7 PM. The Monmouth Community Band will play a concert at 6 PM in the sanctuary.

Menu: BBQ sandwiches, chips, dessert includes ice cream and strawberry topping.

Free Will Donations.

Volunteers and donations will be needed.

Community Care Days

Community Care Days will be held this year on June 13th and 14th

Applications for projects you would like done by a community care days volunteer are now available in the office.

Volunteers are needed to help accomplish the projects that are approved. Please speak with Steve Erlandson about your availability to help on either Friday, June 13th or Saturday, June 14th. Basic home skills needed, but all the supplies are provided, and you will be working with other volunteers to accomplish these tasks.

Monmouth Roseville High School

Pops Concert

Tuesday, May 13th at 6 PM is the MRHS Pops Concert. This concert features the high school bands and choirs and wonderful desserts — a variety of baked goods and ice cream

At the Pops Concert, the music department will recognize it's state championship. This year, the department is giving First Lutheran the same medal the students receive, to demonstrate their gratitude for our congregation providing practice space throughout February. Pastor Jamie will be receiving the medal on behalf of the congregation. All are welcome to come for the concert.

Jeopardy Watch Party Invitation

(some may know that our own Heather Ide was a contestant on the TV Quiz Show Jeopardy. The episode she is featured on airs May 30th. This is an invite to a watch party to celebrate with Heather her airing on this popular Answer/Question game show)

All are invited to a Jeopardy viewing/Grad school graduation party for Heather Ide on Friday, May 30th from 4 PM to 6 PM at Simulation Sports (the former Review Atlas Building, 400 South Main Street, Monmouth). Enter at the back (west side) entrance.

Heather earned her Master's Degree in Library Science from the University of Illinois in December, 2024.

She also earned a spot on the game show Jeopardy!. She filmed her episode in March and it will air on May 30th at 4:30 PM.

Refreshments will be served and there are several big screen televisions and comfortable seating. Please join us if you are able!

— Invitation from Pam and Tom Best and Heather Ide

Northern Illinois Synod Hunger Challenge

In March, we heard the Northern Illinois Synod announce a ELCA World Hunger giving challenge, and our congregation stepped up huge. So far, as of the end of April, nearly \$15,500 has been received by the synod towards this challenge.

And we celebrate \$2600 of that is from our congregation alone.

We continue to support this challenge. You may go to www.nisynod.org/hunger to donate online and continue helping our synod achieve the goal of raising \$100,000 by October 16th to receive a matching grant of that same amount.



Easter Season April 20 to June 1

Join us this week Sunday for a special guest preacher. Pastor Mark Juliot will be coaching our church this next year through our Pathways Discernment Team. Our Pathways Discernment Team will have the task of learning more about our history, our present, and discerning God's future for our congregation.

Pastor Mark will preach on Sunday and meet with the Council and Pathways Team and anyone who wishes to join in the session after worship.

The Pathways Discernment Team, as appointed by Council, is Chip Algren, Pam Best, Ray Golden, Mark and Ellen Shrader, and Ben and Jenny Sanberg.

We lift them in prayer as they begin the work for our congregation and for the Spirit to fill this time and guide our way.

Sacred Prayer

We join with our Roman Catholic friends and siblings in Christ in praying for the new Pope elected this last week:

Gracious God, we pray for Pope Leo XIV in his ministry. Pour out your Holy Spirit on him, and on the people of the Roman Catholic Church. Strengthen and sustain our ministries of dialogue and partnership as we strive to love and care for your people and your creation. Amen

Worship Guild Members

May 18 — Easter 5th Sunday

Guest Preacher: Pastor Mark Juliot
Usher: Adam Sanberg
Reader: Maddie Blaesing
Com Asst: Chip Algren
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren

May 25 — Easter 6th Sunday

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

June 1 — Easter 7th Sunday

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

June 8 — Pentecost Sunday

Usher: Steve Erlandson
Reader: Julie Blaesing
Com Asst: Gary Sanberg
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren



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:

May 19
June 2, June 16
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.



Vision and Purpose Giving

The Teen Recharge Center in Monmouth serves youth from ages 13 to 19. It is a safe place for local teens to go after school to hang out with their peers, work on homework and participate in fun programs and events.

The Recharge Teen Center offers a variety of activities such as gardening, art, cooking, mental health practices, and more.

Teens enroll at the center with parent/guardian permission. And a calendar of events is posted at their website: www.eagleviewhealth.org/teen-center

Thank you for supporting our local teen center.

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

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,



“See the home of God is among mortals, He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them.

Revelation 21:3

The book of Revelation is one of the great mysteries of the Bible, filled with images and metaphors and allegory, it is no wonder that it is easily misunderstood. One of the ways it is misunderstood is through a concept known as “the Rapture.” The “Rapture” describes a time when God will claim the faithful off the earth and begin an era of great judgement on who is left behind until a final moment when those who still reject God will be cast into fiery pit and those who repented will join the saved. It is not going to be easy to debunk this fully in the space I have here, but here are a few brief reasons the “Rapture” is not biblical.

First, the word “Rapture” does not appear in the Bible. It is not in Revelation. John Darby, an evangelical preacher in Britain in the mid 1800’s created this theological framework as a way to understand how God is working in the world. He did so, using a vision of a young girl in 1830 Scotland, and a portion of 1st Thessalonians 4:17. The framework established the notion that God has created seven distinct eras of human history, with different rules applying in each era, all leading up to a final time. Darby was trying to answer the question—how will we know when the end is, and how will we know what will happen when the end happens. This framework was resoundly rejected by mainstream theologies –such as Roman Catholic, Protestant (including Lutheran), and Orthodox. But became very popular in revivalism movements and in exceptionalism movements (the notion that God favors certain nations, certain ethnicities, or certain races among people over others).

Second, the concept of the “Rapture” goes against exactly the promise the author of Revelation makes — that is when the Rapture suggests God takes the faithful away from earth, and God runs away from earth, Revelation actually says God comes here to earth, to live with all of God’s people here on earth. So there is no need to lift anyone away from where God is coming.

There is so much more that can be said about both of these points, as well as so many others that assure us the notion of a “Rapture” will not happen. Join our May Bible study for more conversation about this. Peace, Pastor Jamie