



# FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

MONMOUTH, IL

116 S. B Street, Monmouth, IL 61462; (309)734-2106

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## February

**Gathered by God, We Live Our Faith With:  
Compassion, Grace, Gratitude, and Joy.**

### Our Church—This Week :: February 16, 2026

#### Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher

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#### Congregation Council

President: Pam Van Kirk

Vice President: Chip Algren

Secretary: Pam Best

Adam Sanberg

Kurt Volz

Dee Dee Yez

Dear Friends and Family,

We begin Lent this week with Ash Wednesday worship on Wednesday, February 18 at 7 PM in our chapel. Ash Wednesday is a day we remember we are dust and to dust we shall return. It is a morbid reflection in many ways when we think on the fact that our life on earth is fleeting. As pastor, this day is powerful as I have the solemn duty of placing the ashes on each person's foreheads not knowing which of these recipients I will one day also officiate a funeral for, but whether it is I or someone else, indeed the day will come.

Ash Wednesday has a unique place in my own family life, as well as having sacred meaning to me. I have not shared this story before, but my father died when I was a teenager. He died on Wednesday, February 15th, and that year (1989), Wednesday February 15th happened to coincide with Ash Wednesday. On that day I was not in worship myself. I was in a high school class called Naval Junior ROTC. And my father, who was ill at the time with a case of pneumonia, was scheduled to be admitted to a hospital. He did not make it to the hospital, passing away in bed at home. From that day on, my own mortality has always sort of been right there in front of me.

But as somber as Ash Wednesday is, and as grim as my memories of this day are, the ashes we share are not the final story. In fact, this day points us to the more glorious day of Easter, the resurrection of Jesus, which reminds us that dust is not our final story—new life in an eternal kingdom is. So for all of us who share a memory of deep loss of a loved one, and for all of us who face the shared reality that one day dust comes calling for us, too, let's gather this week and be reminded of the hope we have in Jesus and the joy that awaits our grand reunion with all our loved ones in God's eternal Kingdom.

#### **Sunday Schedule**

**9:30 AM Coffee**

**10:00 AM Worship**

**Sunday School**

**January 11 and 25**

**9:45 AM**

**Future Bible Study  
Opportunities will be  
announced soon**

#### **Scout Pancake Supper**



First Lutheran Church is the charter organization for two scouting units. Pack 3705 and Troop 4705. Both units serve families in Monmouth and the surrounding areas.

On Tuesday, February 17th, from 5 PM to 6:30 PM the Troop will host a pancake supper fundraiser. The funds raised will support scouts attending summer camp. Summer camp can cost up to \$425 to attend for a week. So all fundraising really does help the scouts offset that cost.

## Sunday School

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

Our Next three Sundays are: February 22, March 8, and March 22.

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

## Congregation Forum—February 22nd

Join us on Sunday, February 22nd for a congregation feedback forum. The Pathways Discernment Team and the congregation council have wrestled with and prayed over a list of core value identity markers and whittled the list down and crafted 5 brief core value statements:

- We gather because of our faith in Jesus
- We welcome all
- We engage in open, honest, respectful conversation for faith growth
- Everyone has something to contribute
- We create a safe haven, reflecting the hope of God's Kingdom

Before declaring these as official core values, the Pathways Discernment Team and the congregation council invite you to reflect on these statements and share feedback about how these statements do or do not reflect your view of First Lutheran Church.

Sunday, February 22nd, following the worship service, we will gather in the sanctuary. Our conversation will talk about what a core value is, why a congregation often has core values that are implicit and why we are trying to make them explicit, and do these statements fully reflect who we are as a congregation.

Feedback during this forum will be used to help craft the most accurate core value statements for our congregation that will be useful in not only planning current ministries, but will be helpful in future decisions the Pathways Discernment Team helps the congregation and the congregation council take as we discover more about where God is leading us.

## The Season of Lent

Ash Wednesday Worship is Wednesday, February 18th at 7PM in our Chapel. Join us for the start of Lent with the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion. This night recognizes our mortality and sinful nature, and the hope we find in the resurrection of Jesus.

Mid-Week Lent Re-Center Devotions — Join us on the Wednesdays of Lent as we take a break from the busy-ness and overwhelming feelings of our daily life. There is so much pressure on us right now, so much political weight hanging on us, so much cultural divide. We need a moment to just gather and collectively take a deep breath.

Each Wednesday in the season of Lent (Feb 25, Mar 4, 11, 18, and 25) we will meet at 7 PM in the Chapel for a meditative devotion time. We will follow a series of devotions on the themes of Dread, Christ Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, and Life in the Word. These themes will have reflections written by Martin Luther. We will have centering songs, times of silent prayer, and devotional reflection.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, March 29th with our 10 AM worship that will include the procession of palms and the reading of the passion.

Maundy Thursday is April 2nd. We will worship at 7 PM in our Chapel.

Good Friday is April 3rd. We will again worship at 7 PM in our Chapel.

These special days are opportunities to gather and hear the central story of our faith—that Jesus died and we have forgiveness forever more because God's love is more powerful than even death.



## Epiphany

### January 6 to February 15

When you come to worship, you will notice a set of banners on the two sides of the front of the sanctuary. And you will see a series of cloths, called paraments, that adorn the altar, lectern, and pulpit. These will all match in color scheme and may even have similar symbols on them.

Let's break down the colors: We have white banners that come out for very certain days. Christmas and the Sundays of Christmas, the Baptism of the Lord, the Transfiguration of our Lord, Easter and the 7 week season of Easter, Holy Trinity Sunday, and Christ the King Sunday.

So you might notice a pattern here. White paraments align with the days that have something to do with Jesus: his birth, his resurrection, his glory. White has long been associate with Christ' glory and the radiance of God seen in Christ.

The color white is actually all colors wrapped into one, where as black is the absence of all color. So, when we see the white paraments we are not only seeing white, we are seeing the full spectrum of colors and we are reminded that God is fully present in all things.

## Worship Guild Members

### February 18— Ash Wednesday — Chapel Worship

Usher: David Sandstrom  
Reader: Ellen Shrader  
Com Asst: Mark Shrader  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

### February 22— 1st Sunday in Lent

Usher: Chip Algren  
Reader: Maddie Blaesing  
Com Asst: David Sandstrom  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

### March 1— 2nd Sunday in Lent

Usher: Dee Dee Yez  
Reader: Kurt Volz  
Com Asst: Chip Algren  
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire  
Musician: Janice Algren

### March 8— 3rd Sunday in Lent

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



## Northern Illinois Synod

### Congregation Resourcing Event

Each year our synod hosts a big learning event for all members of the synod. This is an opportunity to gather with Lutherans from across northern Illinois and learn more about the ministries of our church.

CRE is held at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, IL on Saturday, March 7th. Registration opens at 8:30 AM with the opening worship beginning at 9:30 PM. With a keynote speaker and workshop opportunities, the event goes until 3:45 PM. Lunch is included with the \$40 registration fee.

For more information or to sign up, contact Pastor Jamie

## Strom Center Lent Worship Schedule

Strom Center (211 South A Street) is again hosting breakfast and devotions on the Fridays during Lent. Breakfast begins at 6:30 AM, and the devotion begins at 7:15 AM.

- February 20: First United Methodist Church
- February 27: First Lutheran Church
- March 6: Faith United Presbyterian Church
- March 13: Fairview Center Church
- March 20: High Point Church
- March 27: Heritage Bible Church
- April 3: Immaculate Conception Church



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



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

Sun, February 15th—Transfiguration of the Lord

Tue, Feb 17th— 5 PM to 6:30 PM Scout Troop  
 4705 Pancake Supper

Wed, Feb 18th—7 PM Ash Wednesday Worship  
 In the Chapel

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Sunday, February 22nd—1st Sunday in Lent

Sun, Feb 22—11:00 AM, Congregation Core  
 Values and Vision Forum

Wed, Feb 25—7:00 PM Lent Devotion—Chapel

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Sunday, March 1st—2nd Sunday in Lent

Mon, Mar 2—7:00 PM Building/Grounds

Wed, Mar 4—7:00 PM Lent Devotion—Chapel

Sat, Mar 7—MRHS uses sanctuary for Solo/  
 Ensemble contest

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Sunday, March 8th—3rd Sunday in Lent

Tue, Mar 10—6 PM, Council Meeting

Wed, Mar 11—7 PM Lent Devotion—Chapel

From February 2nd through March 6th, MRHS music department students will be using our facility during school days for solo/ensemble practice. Please check with the church office before using church space during the weekdays during this period.

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



- 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
- 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
- Mar 27 Kurt Volz
- Mar 30 Anna Lovdahl
- Apr 4 Marlys Dobry
- Apr 5 Deb Manuel
- Apr 6 April Icenogle
- Apr 7 Fred Burgland
- Apr 10 Trace Gallagher
- Apr 11 Angela Bradley-Volz
- Apr 13 Elise Blaesing



- 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, Pat Clark, Jennie Best, Dee Dee Yez

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



## Vision and Purpose Giving

In February, our Vision and Purpose Giving will support Lutheran Disaster Response.

Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

January, Mosaic == \$140

February, Lutheran Disaster Response

March, ELCA World Hunger

April, Special Olympics

May, Recharge Center

June, St. Jude Run (Wendy Anderson)

July, LWR School Kits

August, Kiwanis Club

September, Out of Darkness Walk

October, Strom Center

November, Lutheran Day Care and Pre-School

December, Jamieson Center



Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. — Psalm 51:1-2

Psalm 51 is said to have been written by King David. The King had taken Bathsheba, another man's wife, and got her pregnant and after her husband (who was at war for the King) refused to sleep with his wife, David gave orders for the man to be placed on the front line, and then for the commander order all the others retreat so that this man would be killed in battle. Yes, this is a very messed up story. And it has nothing to do with David gazing lovingly on an innocent woman who happened to be bathing one afternoon on her rooftop. It has everything to do with a man filled with tremendous sin. The prophet Nathan confronted David after Bathsheba's husband was killed, after David then took her into his house to look "noble". And David, who was full of his own pride, full of his own head-enlarging royal ego, was convicted by Nathan and humbled. Now, we don't really know who penned Psalm 51. This is why we say it is attributed to David. It may well have been written by someone else and because of the deep sinful regret expressed in the psalm found to describe what David must have been feeling.

In many ways we do not carry the sin of David. We do not have men killed so that we can carry on with their wives. But we do have our own sin. We do have sin of not welcoming neighbors, of encouraging hateful and spiraling out of control acts of aggression towards persons of color or ethnicity that is not the same as our own. We do have our own sin of holding back aid to those who need aid. We do have the sin of standing idly by as atrocities are committed, often in the name of our God, whether we actually agree with the atrocities or not.

We need not to have the prophet Nathan stand before us and convict us, as he did David, with a parable of a man who steals a neighbor's sheep. We simply have Jesus standing before us, pointing us to the commandment of love which is enough conviction for our falling short.

So, now we come to Psalm 51 in our own lives: a song, a prayer, a confession, a plea, a hope, a trust, a yearning, a faithful expression. We know we have been convicted as sinners, yet, God, we confess and profess, has the ability to wash us clean—to turn us away from our sin, to live once again in right ways according to God's love. Let our sin be so melted away as David's was, that we may once again shine with the light of Jesus in a hurting world.

Peace, Pastor Jamie