



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 18, 2026

Our Staff

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Carolyn Kellert

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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 are nearing the summer time, and this newsletter will be our last for May. I will begin our summer schedule of publishing every other week. So, for now—I hope you all have a good memorial day weekend coming up. For those who are graduating, blessings on this milestone and on next steps in the journey of life. For those finishing a school season, may this extended summer break provide respite and renewal so you are prepared to re-engage structured learning next fall. And for those caring for family in all stages of life, may God fill you with strength and goodness in your role as caretaker. A schedule for upcoming newsletter publications date is listed later in this newsletter.

Going into this summer, we know we have our June Strawberry Festival, and we have a congregation challenge to read the Gospel of Matthew throughout the summer. These are the big items we have going on this summer. Make sure you are inviting friends and neighbors to join us in reading the Gospel of Matthew. Every week there will be several resources on our website and social media pages that will help in this reading challenge. And of course at the end of the summer months, we will have our prime beef drive-through.

I am looking forward to celebrating all these moments with you this summer. And I look forward to sharing various adventures I will be taking this summer, including a week at Scout Camp, a week hiking with the scouts (50 miles!), and a vacation to Yellowstone National Park, to experience some really amazing wilderness spaces there and along the way there and back.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM Worship

Sunday School

May 10 & 24

9:45 AM

**Wednesday Bible Study returns
in May**

A Season of Creation—Worship Themes and Bible Study

Throughout May, we will enter a season of creation. In worship, we will use resources developed by the Northern Illinois Synod Creation Cares Committee. These resources include liturgy elements written for worship, and selected readings themed around “Forest Sunday”, “Land/Prairie Sunday”, “Wilderness Sunday”, and “River/Stream Sunday.”

Along with our worship themes, we will also have a weekly Bible study on Wednesday mornings at 10 AM in the pastor’s study that will explore the scriptures view on God as Creator. We will talk about our tenet of God is Creator; we will talk about our calling by God to be co-creators in this world; we will explore ways that creation has always cried out in pain from human sin, not just in our modern era; and finally we will talk about the restoration of creation that is promised by God and that we can bring about today.

Summer Bible Reading Challenge

During the months of June, July, and August, we will embark on a reading challenge. Over the course of 14 weeks, we will read through the entire Gospel of Matthew. Our current lectionary cycle centers on Matthew, so this summer we will get to read all of Matthew, not just the parts that are read aloud during worship.

Each week will have readings from two chapters of Matthew. The series will feature an introduction/overview of the week; a deep dive into each of the two chapters; a video to read along with Pastor Jamie; and a devotional recap. That is 5 different ways to engage the readings throughout the week.

The reading challenge will be posted on our website and our Facebook page. As you join in through the summer, you are encouraged to share with friends, comment on the Facebook posts throughout each week to share your encounter with God's Word, and discover what the Gospel of Matthew offers for you today.

Updated Security System for Day Care/ Office Entrance coming soon

If you come to the church during the week, you know we have a camera/buzzer system for letting visitors in. This comes with a key card as well. Over the last few months our current system has not been working properly and we have been evaluating new options. In the coming weeks a new system will be installed. If you have a current key card, we will be able to transfer that key card to work with the new system. More information will come about installation dates soon.

Strawberry Festival

Our annual Strawberry Festival is coming on Thursday, June 11th. Please mark your calendars to join us that evening. The Monmouth Municipal Band will perform in our sanctuary at 6 PM.

Vision and Purpose

Do you have a connection with the Teen Recharge Center here in Monmouth? Are you passionate about the Lutheran World Relief kits (school and health)? Talk with Pam Van Kirk or Pastor Jamie about how your vested connection can help bring greater awareness to those causes as we support them with our vision and purpose giving in upcoming months.

Northern Illinois Synod

Learning Opportunities

The Northern Illinois Synod has occasional zoom learning opportunities. These are called CRE + Events. The CRE stands for Congregational Resourcing Event, which is an annual event held in March and which provides a huge list of learning opportunities.

Following the CRE in March, the synod has additional workshops that are available for congregation members to join in on zoom to learn and grow in faith.

Two more opportunities are coming up including one titled "The Grief Box" on Tuesday, May 19th, and one dealing with churches and if they have a school or preschool on Tuesday, May 26th. You can sign up to attend these by following the link at www.nisynod.org/pages/cre.

Previous sessions that have been recorded are also available at the same website and can be watched at any time. This includes a session on Caring for Creation, and a session that addressed our church social statement on abortion.

Vacation Bible School

This year VBS will be held from Sunday August 2nd to Thursday, August 6. The times are from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM. First United Methodist Church is hosting. Volunteers are needed, and when we know what supplies they need, we will share that list. If you are interested in helping with VBS at the Methodist Church, please let Pastor Jamie know.



Easter

April 5 to May 24

The season of Easter closes with the celebration of Pentecost. Pentecost is based on an ancient pilgrimage festival. People would return to Jerusalem, 50 days after Passover, for this festival. That is why so many people were present when the Spirit rushed into the disciples and granted them the ability to share the story of Jesus in so many languages.

We are finishing our Season of Creation on Pentecost Sunday, with the theme of rivers and streams. Water is so often associated with the Holy Spirit and with baptism. How we care for water, how we treat water as sacred and holy, is a reflection of how we take care of the Holy Spirit in the world.

Join us as we conclude our season of Easter with this celebration of water.

Worship Guild Members

May 24 — Pentecost Sunday

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

May 31 — Trinity Sunday

Usher: Diane Carlson
Reader: Julie Blaesing
Com Asst: Gary Sanberg
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Carolyn Kellert

June 7 — Sunday after Pentecost

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

June 14 — Sunday after Pentecost

Usher: Kurt Volz
Reader: Steve Erlandson
Com Asst: Diane Carlson
Narthex Host: Linda McGuire
Musician: Janice Algren



Are You Interested in Serving in Worship?

At this time, our list of worship helpers includes:

11 lectors; 12 communion assistants, 12 ushers

Which means a person volunteering helps out about 1 time every 12 weeks or so. Though, some of the folks on this list are on two or even three of these lists. So, often a person is helping in worship more like 2 or 3 times every 12 weeks.

Perhaps you have an interest and would like to help as an usher, or assisting in communion, or reading the scripture passages and prayers of intercession?

Let Pastor Jamie know you are interested in helping out in worship and get your name added into the rotating list of those who help bring our worship services to life.

Summer Newsletter schedule

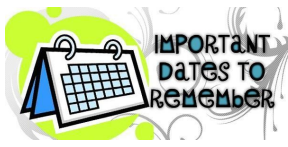
We will not have weekly newsletters through the summer. Please take note of this schedule and watch for our newsletter publications accordingly:

June 1, June 15

July 6, July 20

August 3, August 17, August 31

If additional information or updates need to be shared between newsletters, an email and FB social media post will share that.



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



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.

Sunday, May 17th — Easter 7th Sunday

Tue, May 19th—6 PM rescheduled Council meeting

Wed, May 20th—10 AM Bible Study

Sunday, May 24th—Pentecost Sunday

Mon, May 25—Memorial Day, Office Closed

Wed, May 27 — 10 AM Bible Study

Sunday, May 31st—Trinity Sunday

Mon, Jun 1—7 PM Building/Grounds Committee

Sunday, June 7th – Season after Pentecost

Tues, Jun 9—6 PM Council Meeting

Thurs, Jun 11—5—7 PM Strawberry Festival

6 PM Municipal Band Performs

Fri, Jun 12 to Sat, Jun 13—Synod Assembly

Sunday, June 14th – Season after Pentecost

Sunday, June 21st—Season after Pentecost

Sun, Jun 21 to Sun, Jun 28, Pastor Jamie on vacation



- May 18 Todd Champion
- May 19 Carl Hamberg
- May 22 Lorene Nelson
- May 26 David Sandstrom
- May 27 Charlotte Sanberg
- May 28 Lena Johnson
- May 28 Nancy Reynolds
- May 29 Kaylee Teel
- May 31 Tammy Slater
- Jun 2 Alexia Golden
- Jun 2 Jarrod Hipples
- Jun 2 Susie Jurgens
- Jun 6 Rose Youngquist
- Jun 11 Wendy Anderson
- Jun 21 Aaron Jensen
- Jun 22 Denise Mann
- Jun 30 Collin Nuckles
- Jul 3 Trudy Bergren
- Jul 3 Hal Tate
- Jul 4 Jennifer Sprecher
- Jul 9 Cohen Anderson
- Jul 9 Kris Champion
- Jul 13 Reese Anderson
- Jul 15 Pastor Jamie
- Jul 17 Cecil Lovdahl
- Jul 19 Mark Shrader



- 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
- Jun 26 Dave & Kathy Erlandson
- Jun 26 Gary & Jan Martin
- Jun 30 Chip & Janice Algren
- Jun 30 Warren & Marlyn Dobry
- Jul 2 Jeremy & Wendy Anderson
- Jul 8 Tom & Pam Best
- Jul 12 Steve & Karen Erlandson

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

Prayer Requests

Ila Roseberry, Kathi Cruce, Janet Lowe, Pat Clark, Jennie Best, Dee Dee Yez, Charlotte Volz, Richard Schlicher, Eloise Swisher, Cecil Lovdahl, Sue Gallagher

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



Vision and Purpose Giving

In May, we are supporting the Teen Recharge Center here in Monmouth.

At Recharge, we are committed to helping teens discover their individual strengths & passions, while creating a safe, judgment free environment for them to acquire skills, resources & opportunities within their community.

Thank you for all the ways you support our Vision and Purpose Giving throughout the year.

January, Mosaic == \$140

February, Lutheran Disaster Response ==\$252

March, ELCA World Hunger == \$900.00

April, Special Olympics == \$550

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



4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. — Matthew 4:1

When we think of wild places, we think of places that are devoid of civilization. That is to say, these are spaces we do not have control of. Trees and plants grow with reckless abandon, not tended to or manicured into our pretty gardens and well maintained forest preserves. Animals roam freely, uncaged, challenging humans for the status of highest on the food chain and power. It is in wilderness spaces that we hear of mountain lions attacking or bears mauling. It is in wilderness places that one wrong step off a marked trail could lead to a disaster. We also think of wild places as places devoid of God, as if even God has no desire to control or make order in these places. The story of the baptism of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, always concludes with Jesus being led out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. As if the devil has free range to tempt someone only in wilderness spaces, but in the control of civilization, in the comfort of our towns, God is fully present and the devil cannot touch us here.

These fears of wilderness spaces, though, are philosophical frameworks that we need to re-orient. We do not need to think of wilderness spaces as devoid of God. These spaces are part of natural creation, and God is fully present in all of creation, including wilderness spaces. In fact there are many who find themselves actually getting closer to God in wilderness spaces. The beauty of creation on full display, unharmed by human touch or need to fence it in or control it. Here one can sit next to the lilies of the field and the buzzing pollinating bees, under the watch of soaring scavenger birds, hearing the rustling of a small woodland creature. God is fully present in wilderness spaces, and we do not need to be in control of wilderness spaces to experience God there.

And this notion that the devil can only reach us there, in a space were God is not? We need to re-orient our thinking on that, too. For our cities may appear civilized, and yet we are tempted daily within them to overconsume, overcontrol nature, ignore those neighbors we deem unsightly. So where really is the devil? The devil is anywhere we are tempted to not see God. Where is God—God is in all of creation, from our neatly arranged flower beds, to those wild spaces with creatures too unconcerned about human superiority. May all the wild spaces we are driven into be spaces we have a closer encounter with the living God of all creation.

Peace, Pastor Jamie