



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 :: August 18, 2025

Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher

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Musicians: Janice Algren

Carolyn Kellert

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Bobbi Nees

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Congregation Council

President: Pam Van Kirk

Vice President: Chip Algren

Secretary: Diane Carlson

Pam Best

Brian Elliott

Adam Sanberg

Kurt Volz

Dee Dee Yez

Dear Friends and Family,

School is back in session; fall sports have begun. Harvest is right around the corner. Halloween is nearly here (already in most retail centers). And Baby Jesus will be sleeping quietly in a manger before we know it. Yikes! Time sure does fly by quickly. As summer rapidly comes to a close, we turn our attention as congregation to many fall ministry traditions, from Prime Beef drive-thru to Halloween Fun Night; from feeding the MRHS Marching Titans on homecoming parade day to a congregational soup luncheon for All Saints Sunday.

It can feel overwhelming when we hear all we are doing as a congregation. And yet in the middle of these activities we will soon also be announcing a fall Bible study, and a fall watch party for season 5 of the tv series The Chosen. We engage in these ministries because it gives us joy* to be about the work of the church. Here we can express our gratitude* for all God is doing in our lives by giving back, so that others may come to know Jesus, too. Being about the work of the church allows us to appreciate the grace* that comes from God, that leads us to have more compassion* for others.

By the way, I have been purposefully reminding us of our mission statement. Check those Asterisks, how many of those words did you recognize from our mission statement. We say it every Sunday before worship. It is right up above this text box as part of the newsletter header. We use this statement to summarize why we are a part of First Lutheran Church. We are not here because we have to be—we are here because we know God is gathering us* and leading us to live our faith* in ways that positively impact the world. I look forward to all this fall brings us.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM Worship

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

Prime Beef Drive Thru

Our Annual Prime Beef Drive-Thru will be held on Thursday, August 28th.

We will serve Lunch time from 11 AM to 1 PM and we will serve Dinner Time from 4 PM to 6 PM.

The Menu is: \$13 Ribeye Sandwich, chips, and choice of pie; or,

\$10, Sloppy Joe Sandwich, chips, and choice of pie

Volunteers will be needed all day for many tasks. Connie Larimer will be coordinating these needs.

We look forward to serving our community together on August 28th.

School resumes Wednesday, August 20

Join Pastor Jamie on the mornings of Aug 20 to 22 (Wed to Fri). Students begin parking between 7:45 AM and 8:00 AM. On these opening days of school, we will remind students where they can park during the school day, and we will be passing out water bottles. We will have donuts on Thursday, Aug 21 as well.

This is also a reminder that beginning soon, we are back to sharing our parking lot with the high school students. It isn't always easy to remember that while it is our lot, it is also considered a public lot. A little kindness in welcoming students and preparing them for school each day does go a long way.

Upcoming Bathroom Remodeling Project

The church WELCA unit, the Building and Grounds Committee, and the congregation council, have agreed to complete a renovation of the women's bathroom in the basement of the sanctuary building.



This project will convert the current bathroom into an all-gender, handicap accessible bathroom. The cost for this will be covered mostly from congregation investments and a donation from the WELCA circles. However, if you would like to contribute and help cover some of the costs of this, please feel free to donate by the end of September. Any dedicated funds for this project will help offset the over \$15,000 cost for this project.

Why are we undertaking this project? Well, the bathroom needs updating. And it needs more than a simple coat of paint. So, the project will be completed by bringing it up to ADA standards as well as allowing for a single user of the bathroom to lock the bathroom while using it.

The current men's bathroom in the basement will remain and any considerations for it will be taken up in the future.

If you have any questions regarding this project, you can talk with council president Pam Van Kirk.

Looking Ahead...

Mark Your Calendars Now:

Friday, September 19, MRHS Homecoming Parade, we provide dinner for MRHS Marching Band

Tuesday, October 28, Halloween Fun Night

Sunday, November 2, Congregational All Saints Soup Luncheon, following Worship

4 PM at Faith Lutheran, Rochelle, the Northern Illinois Synod Gathering to celebrate accomplishing the ELCA World Hunger Giving Challenge

Sunday, November 23, following worship decorate for Advent/Christmas

Sunday, November 30, First Sunday of Advent

Wednesday, December 24th, Christmas Eve Worship

MRHS Marching Band Homecoming Dinner

On Friday, September 19th, our congregation will once again provide a dinner to the MRHS Marching Band between the homecoming parade and the homecoming game.

The parade is at 4 PM, the call time for heading to the game is 6 PM. There is a brief window the band members have to eat, and we are here to make that happen.

Menu details are still be worked on, but volunteers are needed to help prepare the meal, serve the meal, and clean up after the meal. We are preparing for 80 to 90 students, plus 2 or 3 teachers/staff.

To help with this, please talk with Pam Van Kirk.





Ordinary Time

June 15 to November 23

The Sabbath Day is the focal point of an upcoming story with Jesus. Jesus is at the synagogue and a woman who has a deformity is there as well. Jesus is the only one who seems to notice her, and he brings her healing. The deformity is gone. But at this point, the Rabbi, who was presumably just trying to perform the proper order of service, was upset — at the woman and others like her who wanted healing from Jesus, and at Jesus for giving them what they wanted. It was all a distraction, from the Rabbi's point of view, of why they were there—not for freedom from physical deformity, but to worship God.

So, this brings into question — what is the Sabbath for? And this question is not just rhetorical, but it also isn't designed to be given an answer here. This is about you — what is your Sabbath for. How do you experience God on the Sabbath? What distractions prevent you from experiencing God?

Here at First Lutheran Church, we hope the ritual of worship is not a distraction from you experiencing God, and we hope you find value stepping aside from your other distractions to experience God here.

Worship Guild Members

August 24 — Ordinary Time

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

August 31 — Ordinary Time

Usher:	Mark Shrader
Reader:	Julie Blaesing
Com Asst:	David Sandstrom
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Carolyn Kellert

September 7 — Ordinary Time

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

Sept 14 — Ordinary Time

Usher:	David Sandstrom
Reader:	Pam Best
Com Asst:	Mark Shrader
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Carolyn Kellert



The Chosen TV Series Watch Party

Continue watching The Chosen TV Series with your friends at church.

Season 5 is now available and we will watch the episodes on Wednesday mornings at 10 AM with conversation about each episode following the watching.

Our first Wednesday back for this is September 24.

To catch up on the seasons, check your favorite streaming services for options. Each season is 8 episodes long. The Chosen began in season one with Jesus gathering his disciples, and now the timeline of Season 5 brings us to the events of Holy Week.

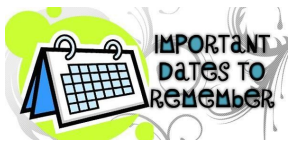
The Chosen is historical/Biblical fiction, yet it follows many stories that we read in the Gospels. Our conversation is often filled with understanding the difference between the fictional TV narrative and the Gospel stories.

Constitution Revision Process

Our Congregation Council is currently undergoing a revision of our constitution. There is need to make adjustments to fit the needs of our congregation today. We are in the editing phase and conversation with the synod constitution committee phase.

The plan is to finalize a revised draft constitution to have available in December for the congregation. We will have a congregation meeting in January to approve the new constitution and a special meeting a month later to ratify the new constitution.

Stay tuned for more information on this process.



Every Sunday

9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering

10:00 AM Worship



For corrections and updates, please call the Church office.

Sunday, August 17th—Ordinary Time

Sun, Aug 17 4 PM Southwest Conference
Worship at Lake Storey, Galesburg

Mon, Aug 18 3 PM Monmouth College
Freshman Walk-Out

Wed, Aug 20 Thur, Aug 21, Fri. Aug 22

7:45 AM First Day of Schools Donuts
Day in Parking Lot

Fri, Aug 22 to Sat, Aug 23 Pastor Jamie and
certain members, attend Scrappy
Congregations Workshop in Sterling, IL

Sunday, August 24th—Ordinary Time

Thur, Aug 28 Prime Beef Drive Thru
11 am to 1 pm; and,
4 pm to 6 pm

Sunday, August 31st—Ordinary Time

Mon, Sep 1 Labor Day

Wed, Sep 3 4 PM Prime Beef Parade

Sunday, September 7th—Ordinary Time

Tues, Sep 9 6 PM Council Meeting

Sunday, September 14th—Ordinary Time

Mon, Sep 15 to Mon, Sept 22, Pastor Jamie is
attending a pair of conference.

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



Aug 23 Kenny Reynolds

Aug 24 Pam Best

Aug 25 Robin Johnson

Aug 25 Tammy Ravel

Aug 27 Kathy Fillman

Sep 1 Ila Roseberry

Sep 2 Kristi Millar

Sep 4 Chris Algren

Sep 8 Brian Elliott

Sep 12 Don Fillman

Sep 15 Harber Sprecher

Sep 23 Dennis Mann

Sep 25 Lacey Elliott

Sep 28 Maddie Blaesing

Oct 1 Kaylie Champion

Oct 4 Jamie Reynolds

Oct 7 Margaret

Hackspacher

Oct 10 John Van Kirk

Oct 11 Julie Blaesing

Oct 16 Ayla Johnston

Oct 18 Loretta Reynolds

Oct 21 Betty Bruyn

Oct 26 Paula Buban

Oct 28 Jackie Heerwagen

Oct 30 Bryan Osborn

Nov 9 Ted Hanson



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

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 1 Rodger & Linda Ellison

Jun 4 Gary & Judy Sanberg

Jun 7 Dennis & Becky

Terpening

Jun 8 Ben & Jenny Sanberg

Jun 12 Neal & Jackie

Heerwagen

Prayer Requests

Linda Ellison, Ila Roseberry, Kathi Cruce, Dean Sandstrom, Emily Agema, Janet Lowe, Brian Elliott, Hannah Taylor, Wes Lovdahl, Pam Best, Doug Moulden, Marlene Moulden, Katie Fry

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



Vision and Purpose Giving

Throughout August, we will be supporting the Kiwanis Club of Monmouth. This club helps in our community in tremendous ways. We will hopefully get a speaker from Kiwanis one Sunday morning to share about their work and encourage our support for the club.

Synod World Hunger Campaign

The Northern Illinois is in the middle of a campaign to raise funds for ELCA World Hunger. Funds raised by October 16 up to \$100,000 will be matched by an equal grant. As of July 31st, the Synod has over \$43,000 received. We are well on our way to achieving this tremendous goal. To continue your support of this campaign, go to NISynod.org/hunger

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

September, Out of Darkness Walk,

October, Mosaic,

November, Lutheran Day Care and Pre-School,

December, Jamieson Center,



“Do you think I came to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!”

Jesus speaking to his disciples, Luke 12:51

Jesus says a lot of very difficult things. Like take this quote from Luke 12, which if you have been reading Luke from the beginning, as the reader your answer is “Well, these angels did announce your birth by declaring peace to God’s people on earth.”. So, yes. We thought you came to bring peace to the earth. Now there are times Jesus does bring peace. There are times Jesus does bring restoration and healing. There are times Jesus feeds a hungry stomach and a hungry soul. And we gravitate to those stories so easily, we think the angels’ declaration over the shepherds’ fields was right—here is our Savior of Peace.

But then we look around us, and wow is there a lot of division going on right now. Christians can’t even figure it out, let alone all the political divisions between colors like “red” and “blue”. Christians are currently fighting over their role in government policy, their role in determining women’s rights; their role in blessing or not blessing people who are LGBTQIA+, their role in securing peace in conflicted places around the world. And that is just the surface. For we Christians are also in quiet fights over the role of saints, the place (and occupants) of hell, the right songs for worship, the right use of creeds or prayers in worship, and more. Jesus, for all the times we laud him as the Prince of Peace, surely does not seem like a source of peace. I cannot celebrate (preside over) the sacrament of communion at our neighboring Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, nor can that priest even offer me communion if I attended a mass there. I cannot go to a Missouri Synod Lutheran Church and be welcomed in as a preacher, let alone as someone who can take communion. All because Jesus is a sword.

But of course all our human conflicts are not because of Jesus. And the sword Jesus brings is not about any of those conflicts. Jesus isn’t the reason Catholics and Lutherans, let alone some Lutherans versus “other” Lutherans, can’t get along at the communion table. The sword Jesus brings is the sword that wants to cut all that division out of us, all that stuff we want to cling with. And we fight against the sword Jesus brings, much like a parent and child might fight over how to mow the lawn properly, or brothers might fight over which political candidate to support in an upcoming election, or so on. We cling to all the stuff Jesus wants to cut out. And it isn’t peaceful when Jesus cuts this stuff out of us. We want to hold onto our stuff. We want to cling to our ways. We want to be right, all the time, not just sometimes, but all the time. But we need that sword. We need that Jesus to come in with a sword of grace to slice us up and then to take what remains and let it flourish into new life.

I could imagine a day when with the sword of Jesus at true work in our lives, we still have separate denominations—but priest and pastor stand together to declare the Lord’s presence at the table, when different traditions proclaim God’s Word not in debate against each other, but in dialogue with each other to learn more about God. Yes, what Jesus says is still difficult. Because we don’t want a sword to cut off what we cling too, we would rather a God who just simply endorsed all that we wanted to believe is right and not change us at all. But that is not why Jesus came into the world. True peace, True Shalom-holy-God-Peace, is not achieved until all that needs to be cut away is, and God can fully enter in and flourish everlasting life within. Til we receive that God, Peace, Pastor Jamie