



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BLOOMING PRAIRIE
ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 26, 2025
10 am | Luther Rooms

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Confident in God's generosity and gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us praise God and give thanks ...

God, we praise you and give you thanks.

You are good, and your mercy endures forever.

You gave us a garden with good food to eat.

We praise you for food that nourishes us.

You rescued your people from slavery.

We praise you for freedom.

You gave us prophets to correct, rebuke and encourage us.

We bless you for your justice and mercy.

You gave us your Son, Jesus, to love, redeem and save us.

We praise you for his death and resurrection.

You gave us your Holy Spirit to be our Advocate and Comforter.

We bless you for the gifts of every tribe and nation.

Strengthen your church with every spiritual gift

and commission us again to be your servant people.

Multiply in us the fruit of the spirit:

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Send us in your love and mercy,

that the world may know you and praise you.

Now Thank We All Our God



1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voice - es,
2 Oh, may this boun-teous God through all our life be near us,
3 All praise and thanks to God the Fa-ther now be giv-en,



who won-drous things has done, in whom this world re-joice-es;
with ev-er joy-ful hearts and bless-ed peace to cheer us,
the Son, and Spir-it blest, who reign in high-est heav-en,



who, from our moth-ers' arms, has blest us on our way
and keep us all in grace, and guide us when per-plexed,
the one c-ter-nal God, whom earth and heav'n a-dore;



with count-less gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.
and free us from all harm in this world and the next.
for thus it was, is now, and shall be ev-er-more.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 840

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586-1649; tr. Cathering Winkworth, 1827-1878

Music: NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, Johann Crüger, 1598-1662

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you are the giver of every good gift. Bless us with all that we need for ministry in your name, that we might be a blessing to others. In the name of the one who broke bread and fed the multitudes, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

ANNUAL MEETING

First Lutheran Church, Blooming Prairie, MN

Sunday January 26, 2025 10:00 am

CALL TO ORDER	President Jennifer Wayne
DEVOTIONS	Pastor Heidi and Evan Westphal
PASTORS' REPORTS	Pastor Heidi Heimgartner
SECRETARY'S REPORT	Deb Lindquist, Council Secretary Minutes from the Annual Meeting on January 28, 2024 Minutes from the Quarterly Meeting on December 1, 2024
TREASURER'S REPORT	submitted by Sylvia Myre, Treasurer, presented by Trustee, Matt Madsen 2025 Budget- approved December 1, 2024
2024 STATISTICS REPORT	Pastor Heidi Heimgartner
SPECIAL PROJECTS REPORT	Pastor Heidi Heimgartner

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Board of Trustees
Board of Deacons
Parish Education Board
Youth Board
Endowment Committee
Stewardship Committee
First Lutheran Church Women (FLCW)
Memorial Committee
Scholarship Committee
Worship and Music Committee
Report from Southeastern Minnesota Synod ELCA
Report from Lutheran Campus Center of Winona
Report from Gustavus Adolphus College

NEW BUSINESS

- Report of the Nominating Committee- Michelle Southworth (Presentation of the Ballot)
- Election of Officers, Board and Committee Members

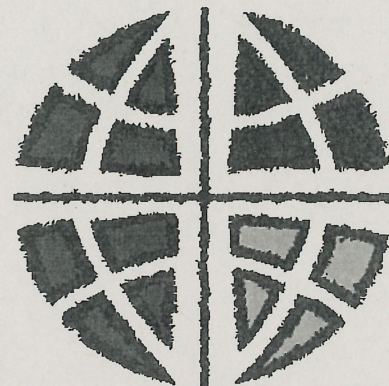
OTHER BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR Diane Olson, President-elect

ANNOUNCEMENT Installation of Committee/Board Members: 9am service on Sunday February 9, 2025

MOTION TO ADJOURN

CLOSING PRAYER Debb Bjornson, Deacon

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH



January 2025

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Luke 3:16

Dear Beloved Members of First Lutheran,

An unseen spark can change everything. We are learning how quickly fire can reshape an entire landscape in California. It is a popular metaphor in Scripture, too. Fire is a force...a symbol for God's presence...which reveals, refines, and calls us to what truly matters.

2024 was a year of refinement for us. We installed LED lighting in late January and quickly met our financial obligation in May. We dedicated worship banners from the Imogene Symes family—a visual celebrating Pentecost growth and renewal—in June. We called our new Associate Pastor Laurel Meester in August; and nearly simultaneously welcomed our next Director of Children's Ministry, Tracey Madsen. And all the while, ministry moments continued: weekly worship, baptisms, funerals, weddings, education for all ages, service projects, a women's retreat, Lutefisk dinner, pastoral care, and a dream come true for Pastor Laurel—a donkey in the courtyard at Christmas.

And our refinement continues. With guidance from our Trustees, wise resource planning from Sylvia and Executive Team, and gifts from many of you, we will be addressing the roof in 2025. We are also enhancing accessibility in the sanctuary by introducing a new hearing assist system. This initiative—made possible through the estate of Burton and Ardis Knutson—reflects our commitment to being a Welcome Place. This project will remove barriers for the hearing impaired, bringing clarity to God's spoken and sung word.

Even as we tend to the tangible, we celebrate the *intangible* gifts that shape our community, too. This year marks the 10th anniversary of our Administrative Secretary, Danielle Hein. Her dedication, compassion, and leadership have been a steady flame. We honor and give thanks for how God's love is made visible through Danielle's daily work.

Fire has the power to destroy, but it also reveals what cannot be burned away. Beyond all we did for our own ministry, the tens of thousands of dollars shared in 2024—with ministry partners, benevolent organizations, and scholarships/camperships—build (and rebuild!) a strong community in places we may never see. God is truly present as we give generously to and for needs in our city, region, and world.

Jesus *has* baptized us...with the Holy Spirit...and with *fire*. And when God's passion finds our hearts, the flame produced is unstoppable!

With gratitude and hope, passion and conviction,

Pastor Heidi Heimgartner



Pastor Laurel

Pastor Laurel Meester

THE WELCOME PLACE - A Congregation Of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota 55917 + P.O. Box 697 + 434 1st Street S.W. + Phone (507) 583-6621
www.firstlutheranbp.com

ANNUAL MEETING
First Lutheran Church, Blooming Prairie, MN
Sunday January 28, 2024 10:00 am

MISSION STATEMENT: As God's people gathering for worship, study, and service, we seek to be a "Welcome Place" for all people. This we do out of love for and obedience to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

COUNCIL GOAL: Our goal is to make our time together be an offering acceptable to God, seeking to honor Jesus Christ.

CALL TO ORDER: The First Lutheran Church Annual Meeting was called to order at 09:59am by President Harvey Farr

DEVOTIONS: Pastor Laurel and Jonathan Heimgartner and Abby Jordison, presented devotions

PRESENT: Congregation members, Council members. A quorum (>60 members) was met.

PASTORS' REPORTS: Pastor Heidi Heimgartner and Bridge Pastor Laurel Meester gave the Pastors' Reports. (copy on file). 2023 Mission was focused on giving beyond our walls, adapting to staff transitions, and embracing new opportunities.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

The minutes from the Annual Meeting on January 29, 2022 were approved.

The minutes from the Quarterly Meeting on December 3, 2023 were approved on a motion by Brian Hoveland and second by Deb Lindquist. No discussion. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: submitted by Sylvia Myre, Treasurer.

Trustee Dan Miner presented the 2024 Budget which was previously approved at the Quarterly Meeting on December 3, 2023.

SPECIAL MISSION REPORT:

Sylvia Myre presented the Mission Support Report for 2023 (\$36,519 total) distributed to the Synod (\$14,725) and other local, regional, and worldwide programs. Also found in packet the FLCW Mission Support disbursements (\$13,600).

2023 STATISTICS REPORT:

Pastor Heidi Heimgartner (copy in packet, and on file)

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES: Full 2023 Report, including minutes, Board and Committee reports and slate of nominees are available in a packet on a table in the Sanctuary and on the First Lutheran Church website. Reports were reviewed and no additions or corrections were noted.

Board of Trustees

- Lighting Committee- update for project installation (completion anticipated by end of the coming week) and funding (\$15,200 remaining) provided by Adam Klocke

Board of Deacons

Parish Education Board

Youth Board

Endowment Committee

Stewardship Committee
First Lutheran Church Women (FLCW)
Memorial Committee
Scholarship Committee
Worship and Music Committee
Report from Southeastern Minnesota Synod ELCA
Report from Good Earth Village
Report from Lutheran Campus Center of Winona and Mankato
Report from Gustavus Adolphus College

NEW BUSINESS

- Nominating Committee: presentation of the ballot by Mary Worke. Slate of Officers may be found in the packet. Motion by Brian Hoveland, second by Paul Heimgartner to accept the unanimous ballot. No discussion. Motion carried.
Jennifer Wayne will be President, Diane Olson Vice President, and Deb Lindquist Secretary. The full list of officers is available on the church website.

OTHER BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Jennifer Wayne, President-elect entertained additional business for discussion. No new business noted. She thanked Harvey and presented a gift of appreciation and also thanked all outgoing committee/board members.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Installation of Committee/Board Members will take place during the 9am service on Sunday February 11, 2024

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Motion by Doug Kinny and second by Barry Olson to adjourn. No discussion. Motion carried.

CLOSING PRAYER

Deacon, Doug Kinny offered the closing prayer

Meeting adjourned at 10:43am

Respectfully Submitted,
Diane Olson, FLC Council Secretary

QUARTERLY MEETING
First Lutheran Church
Blooming Prairie, MN
December 1, 2024, 10:00am

The First Lutheran Church Quarterly meeting was called to order by President Jennifer Wayne at 10:08am on December 1, 2024. The attendance count confirmed a quorum was met.

Devotions were led by Pastor Heidi Heimgartner on being grateful that God provides for us.

A presentation of the 2025 Ministry budget was given by Dan Miner, Chair-Board of Trustees. A motion was made by Tom Peterson and seconded by Jeff Kramer to approve the 2025 Ministry budget of \$396,600.00. President Jennifer Wayne asked for discussion. There was none. President Jennifer Wayne asked for a vote by raise of hands, the motion to approve the budget was passed unanimously.

President Jennifer Wayne announced the Annual Meeting would be January 26, 2025 at 10:00am.

The closing prayer was given by Deacon Debb Bjornson.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20am.

Minutes submitted by Deborah Lindquist, FLC Council Secretary

First Lutheran Operating Statement
Income and Expense
January through December 2024

	Jan - Dec 24	Jan - Dec 23	\$ Change	% Change
Income				
800 OFFERING	346,286.17	345,317.12	969.05	0.3%
801 SPEC GIFTS	2,692.50	4,312.30	-1,619.80	-37.6%
805 LOOSE	6,022.24	6,158.64	-136.40	-2.2%
815 CHRISTMAS OFFERING	6,846.00	5,859.00	987.00	16.9%
816 EASTER OFFERING	4,487.87	4,616.49	-128.62	-2.8%
817 THANKSGIVING OFFERING	2,106.00	3,870.00	-1,764.00	-45.6%
830 INTEREST	26.45	29.71	-3.26	-11.0%
841 PARISH EDUC	5,227.75	4,439.51	788.24	17.8%
855 MISC	22,594.86	1,248.16	21,346.70	1,710.3%
860 RENT	245.00	40.00	205.00	512.5%
Total Income	396,534.84	375,890.93	20,643.91	5.5%
Gross Profit	396,534.84	375,890.93	20,643.91	5.5%
Expense				
101 MISSION SUPPORT	34,873.00	38,473.04	-3,600.04	-9.4%
201 DIR. of CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	7,722.38	9,750.00	-2,027.62	-20.8%
202 WORSHIP	5,797.56	4,573.45	1,224.11	26.8%
203-C WORSHIP MUSICIANS	3,550.00	3,000.00	550.00	18.3%
206 · EDUC EXPENSE	10,430.50	8,891.67	1,538.83	17.3%
208 MTG&CONF	1,250.00	1,163.70	86.30	7.4%
302-A SENIOR PASTOR	43,735.00	42,270.00	1,465.00	3.5%
302-Aa SR. PASTOR HOUSING	30,000.00	30,000.00	0.00	0.0%
302-Ac SR. PASTOR PROF EXP	2,161.63	412.59	1,749.04	423.9%
302 · Ae SR. PASTOR FICA	3,345.84	3,353.00	-7.16	-0.2%
302-Af SR.PASTOR CONT ED	0.00	960.19	-960.19	-100.0%
302-Ag SR. PASTOR Med Reimb	4,355.63	304.76	4,050.87	1,329.2%
303-B PORTICO Benefits	8,517.50	8,834.04	-316.54	-3.6%
303- · D PORTICO Benefits	0.00	5,898.97	-5,898.97	-100.0%
303 · E PORTICO Benefits	14,751.06	3,223.28	11,527.78	357.6%
305-A ASSOC PASTOR	14,898.00	37,717.28	-22,819.28	-60.5%
305-Aa ASSOC PASTOR HOUSING	4,469.44	9,900.52	-5,431.08	-54.9%
305-Ab · ASSOC PASTOR PROF EXP	109.71	0.00	109.71	100.0%
305-Ac ASSOC PASTOR FICA	1,481.60	2,885.34	-1,403.74	-48.7%
305-Ad · Assoc. Pastor Cont.Ed	0.00	195.00	-195.00	-100.0%
305-Ag · ASSOC PASTOR MED REIMB	0.00	2,994.26	-2,994.26	-100.0%
308 · Bridge Pastor	21,174.72	5,293.68	15,881.04	300.0%
308-A · Bridge Pastor Housing	6,352.64	1,587.92	4,764.72	300.1%
308-Aa · Bridge Pastor FICA	2,106.08	526.52	1,579.56	300.0%
308-Aaa Prof Expense	21.58	0.00	21.58	100.0%
401 SEC SALARY	32,200.46	29,906.13	2,294.33	7.7%
402 OFFICE SUPPLIES	10,952.32	10,089.71	862.61	8.6%
404-B EQUIP REPLACE	750.00	1,626.94	-876.94	-53.9%
404 OFF EQUIP USAGE	6,314.66	5,509.63	805.03	14.6%
501 CUSTODIAL	13,578.24	14,271.48	-693.24	-4.9%
502 BLDG MAINT	10,130.74	13,033.74	-2,903.00	-22.3%
504-A GAS	8,506.42	12,301.62	-3,795.20	-30.9%
504-B ELECT	10,177.05	11,252.28	-1,075.23	-9.6%
504-C TELE	2,689.91	2,773.41	-83.50	-3.0%
504-D GARBAGE	772.20	772.20	0.00	0.0%
505 INSURANCE	13,871.80	10,989.40	2,882.40	26.2%
506 LONG TERM MAINT	6,000.00	64,500.00	-58,500.00	-90.7%
507 LAWN MOWING	4,400.00	2,625.00	1,775.00	67.6%
508 SNOW REMOVAL	1,503.00	3,105.55	-1,602.55	-51.6%
509 · MEDIA MINISTRY	2,400.00	10,942.60	-8,542.60	-78.1%
600 MED REIMB	1,000.00	995.00	5.00	0.5%
601-A FED	-752.00	-600.00	-152.00	-25.3%
601-B STATE	-466.00	-349.00	-117.00	-33.5%
601-C FICA	-3,317.24	-3,343.59	26.35	0.8%
601-D MEDICARE	-776.06	-781.99	5.93	0.8%
601 PAYROLL TXS	9,397.46	9,268.62	128.84	1.4%
602-A ADV	244.00	130.00	114.00	87.7%
602 MISC	4,915.88	4,309.22	606.66	14.1%
Total Expense	355,596.71	425,537.16	-69,940.45	-16.4%
Net Income	40,938.13	-49,646.23	90,584.36	182.5%

Beginning Balance 1-1-2024	117,339.09
Income YTD	396,534.84
Share Certificate Interest	2,505.48
Expense YTD	(355,596.71)
Roof Downpayment	(65,000.00)
General Fund Balance 12-31-2024	95,782.69

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Designated Funds

December 31, 2024

Bible Fund	\$533.93
Contingency Fund	\$29,665.74
Education Fund	\$3,446.52
Kitchen Fund	\$3,684.43
LongTerm Maintenance	\$11,993.75
A-Roof	\$56,199.92
Media Ministry Fund	\$4,341.18
Memorial Fund	\$16,743.34
A-Faith Chests	\$1,942.06
B-Beautification Fund	\$5,476.48
Mission Fund	\$2,957.61
A-Local Missions	\$2,675.21
Music Fund	\$7,849.49
Office Equipment Fund	\$841.42
Property Improvement Fund	\$83,100.76
Scholarship Fund	\$5,565.86
A-Camperships	\$2,041.57
Sunshine Worship Bags	\$854.54
Youth Fund	\$14,326.24
Total	\$254,240.05
 MBT Bank	 \$104,240.05
CD Investments	\$150,000.00

First Lutheran Church
2025 Approved Budget

INFLOWS			2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2024 Budget		2025 Budget
1. Offering			\$345,317.00	\$ 346,286.00	\$363,000.00		\$ 365,000.00
2. Special Gifts			\$4,312.00	\$ 2,693.00	\$4,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
3. Loose Offering			\$6,159.00	\$ 6,022.00	\$5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
4. Thanksgiving Offering			\$3,870.00	\$ 2,106.00	\$3,000.00		\$ 3,500.00
5. Christmas Offering			\$5,859.00	\$ 6,846.00	\$8,000.00		\$ 8,000.00
6. Easter Offering			\$4,646.00	\$ 4,488.00	\$5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
7. Miscellaneous			\$1,248.00	\$ 22,595.00	\$1,000.00		\$ 1,500.00
8. Parish Education			\$4,440.00	\$ 5,228.00	\$3,000.00		\$ 4,500.00
9. Rent			\$40.00	\$ 245.00	\$100.00		\$ 100.00
TOTAL INFLOWS			\$375,891.00	\$ 391,281.00	\$392,100.00		\$ 396,600.00
OUTFLOWS							
10. Mission Support			\$38,473.00	\$ 34,873.00	\$38,600.00		\$ 38,650.00
11. Children Youth & Family Ministry			\$9,750.00	\$ 7,722.00	\$10,500.00		\$ 10,500.00
12. Worship			\$4,573.00	\$ 5,798.00	\$6,000.00		\$ 6,000.00
13. Choir Director: Contingent Expense			\$0.00	\$ -	\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
14. Worship Musicians			\$3,000.00	\$ 3,550.00	\$3,600.00		\$ 3,600.00
15. Education Supplies			\$8,892.00	\$ 10,431.00	\$6,500.00		\$ 6,500.00
16. Meetings and Conferences			\$1,164.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$1,100.00		\$ 1,100.00
17. Senior Pastor Salary			\$42,270.00	\$ 43,735.00	\$43,735.00		\$ 47,422.00
18. Senior Pastor Housing			\$30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$30,000.00		\$ 30,000.00
19. Senior Pastor Social Security			\$3,353.00	\$ 3,346.00	\$3,346.00		\$ 3,628.00
20. Senior Pastor Professional Expense			\$0.00	\$ 2,162.00	\$4,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
21. Senior Pastor Continuing Education			\$960.00		\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
22. Associate Pastor Salary			\$43,006.00	\$ 36,073.00	\$47,643.00		\$ 44,964.00
23. Associate Pastor Housing			\$11,488.00	\$ 10,822.00	\$12,503.00		\$ 13,408.00
24. Associate Pastor Social Security			\$3,412.00	\$ 3,588.00	\$3,645.00		\$ 4,445.00
25. Associate Pastor Professional Expense			\$0.00	\$ 132.00	\$4,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
26. Associate Pastor Continuing Education			\$195.00		\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
27. Visitation Pastor			\$0.00		\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
28. Senior Pastor Medical Reimbursement			\$305.00	\$ 4,356.00	\$4,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
29. Senior Pastor Pension and Insurance			\$8,834.00	\$ 8,518.00	\$8,701.00		\$ 8,485.00
30. Associate Pastor Pension and Insurance			\$9,122.00	\$ 14,751.00	\$7,000.00		\$ 14,771.00
31. Treasurer: Contingent Expense			\$0.00		\$10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00
32. Secretarial Staff			\$29,906.00	\$ 32,200.00	\$30,765.00		\$ 31,000.00
33. Office Supplies			\$10,090.00	\$ 10,952.00	\$12,400.00		\$ 12,400.00
34. Office Equipment Usage			\$5,622.00	\$ 6,315.00	\$5,400.00		\$ 5,400.00
35. Staff Medical Reimbursement			\$995.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
36. Custodial Staff			\$14,271.00	\$ 13,578.00	\$15,500.00		\$ 15,000.00
37. Building Maintenance			\$13,034.00	\$ 10,131.00	\$12,500.00		\$ 12,500.00
38. Gas			\$12,302.00	\$ 8,506.00	\$12,700.00		\$ 12,700.00
39. Electricity			\$11,252.00	\$ 10,177.00	\$8,500.00		\$ 8,500.00
40.. Telephone			\$2,773.00	\$ 2,690.00	\$2,680.00		\$ 2,680.00
41. Garbage			\$772.00	\$ 772.00	\$800.00		\$ 800.00
42. Insurance			\$10,989.00	\$ 13,872.00	\$11,000.00		\$ 14,766.00
43. Snow Removal			\$3,106.00	\$ 1,503.00	\$4,200.00		\$ 4,200.00
44. Lawn Mowing			\$2,625.00	\$ 4,400.00	\$4,200.00		\$ 4,200.00
45. Payroll Taxes			\$4,126.00	\$ 4,093.00	\$4,500.00		\$ 4,500.00
46. Advertising			\$130.00	\$ 244.00	\$200.00		\$ 200.00
			\$348,506.00	\$ 341,540.00	\$383,721.00		\$ 389,319.00

First Lutheran Church
2025 Approved Budget

47. Long Term Maintenance - Prepaid		\$8,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$8,000.00		\$ 8,000.00
48. Office Equipment - Prepaid		\$200.00	\$ 750.00	\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
49. Media Fund - Prepaid		\$2,000.00	\$ 2,400.00	\$2,000.00		\$ 2,000.00
TOTAL OUTFLOWS		\$358,706.00	\$ 350,690.00	\$394,721.00		\$ 400,319.00

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2024 Mission Support

1. SE MN Synod ELCA	\$14,087.00
2. SE MN Synod ELCA Global Ministry	\$2,000.00
3. Feed My Starving Children	\$850.00
4. Lutheran Social Services	\$3,000.00
5. Good Earth Village	\$4,300.00
6. Blooming Prairie Youth Club	\$2,000.00
7. Luther Seminary - St. Paul	\$500.00
8. Lutheran Campus Centers:	
MN State University Mankato	\$1,797.00
MN State University Winona	\$1,797.00
9. Community Pathways	\$2,000.00
10. The Lutheran World Federation:	
Augusta Victoria Hospital - Jerusalem	\$1,000.00
11. BP Backpack Program	\$2,000.00
 TOTAL	 \$35,331.00

2024 Statistics for Office

OFFICIAL PASTORAL ACTS

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Baptisms	20	15
Confirmations	17	22
Weddings	1	4
Funerals, Memorials and Interments	18	31

MEMBERSHIP AS OF DECEMBER 31

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Baptized	2031	2012
Confirmed	1507	1495

AVERAGE WEEKLY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

2024	223 in-person	733 online
2023	227 in-person	747 online

TOTAL NUMBER ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION (INCLUDING CHILDREN)

2024	1272
2023	1313

BAPTISMS

Logan Lawler	Adam Lawler
Matthew Wertish	Maddie Wertish
Annabelle Anderson	Cecilia Anderson
Jackson Anderson	Hunter Laite
Emersyn Hildebrandt	Mia Manges
Alinah Lurken	Charlie Howe
Mia Noble	McKoy Kraling
Lucas Peters	Quinn Lewis
Benson Gathje	Jameson Clennon
David Clennon	Croix Blaedorn

WEDDINGS

Hailey Naatz & Zachary Sisler

ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

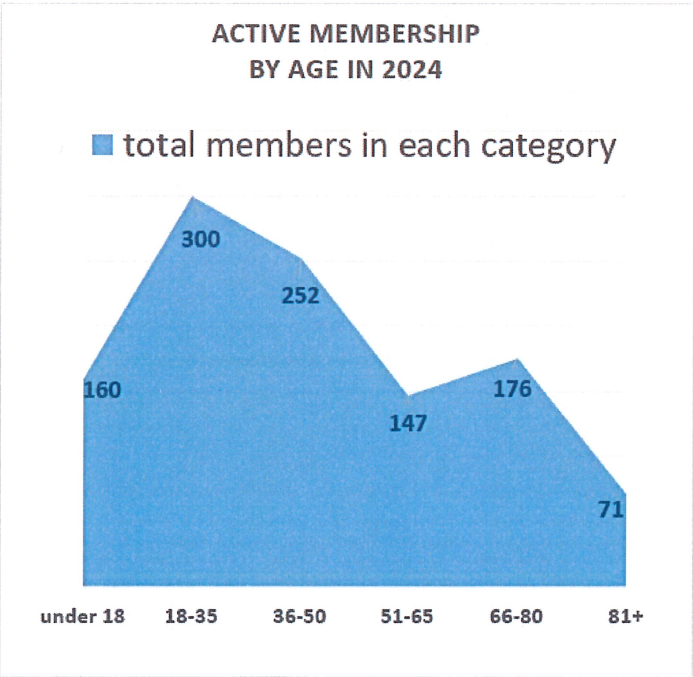
Austin & Chelsey Abbas
Paul, Christina, Laila & Luke Ebeling
Kim Hillson
Kelly, Layne & Leo Krell
Ron & Ann Thorson

CONFIRMANDS

David Clennon	Connor Cooke
Jasper Doocy	Sophia Esplan
Eliot Gimbel	Zachary Green
Shaun Hanson	Daisy Heimer
Alex Hemann	Riley Johnson
Aubrey Klocke	Maeve Nelson
Neila Nelson	Madysan Slowinski
Gabe Staloch	Jaxon Studer
Evan Westphal	

FUNERALS/MEMORIAL/INTERMENT SERVICES

Lory Shaw	Rodney Wenzel
Burton Knutson	Doralene Bakke
Pearl Swanson	Geraldine Oswald
Viola Iversen	Paula Sime
VaLois Thoen	Helen Olsen
Janet Nirk	Roy Olson
Robert Hansen	Naomi Erickson
Christine Martin	Stanley Lindquist
Roger Pfeifer	Dillon Easton



First Lutheran Church Trustee 2024 Annual Report

Trustee Mission Statement: Regularly review and manage financial assets and property so as to provide a “Welcome Place for All People” and by our actions encourage stewardship of servanthood to others.

Board Members: Dan Miner, Tim Wacek, Matt Madsen, Joe Hjelman, Doug Ruther and Paul Tollefson

Overview of our Board decisions and efforts in 2023.

- Lighting project in the Sanctuary and Education Wing was completed early in 2024.
 - New LED lights are providing a brighter worship and education space
 - Updated controls are allowing for easier adjustments as the lighting needs change based on the functions at hand
 - More energy efficient and significantly longer useful life reducing the need for specialized equipment to replace and removal of pews to give the equipment the space needed
- Landscaping lights in the courtyard were repaired and replaced
- Sale of old yard equipment to free up storage space and provide a small amount of funds for the lighting project
- Initiation of a major roof replacement project
 - Total roof replacement cost of approximately \$275,000
 - Agreed upon to split the project into two phases to ease the financial burden
 - Phase 1 cost of \$165,000
 - Phase 2 cost of \$110,000
 - Financing of Phase 1 of the roof will be split between funds prior giving and current fundraising
 - Fundraising has begun for Phase 1, which will commence in the spring of 2025 by Malo Roofing, Inc.
 - Steeple shingles are steel and replacement is not needed at this time. Leaks in the sanctuary are from dried up caulking at the seams. Major repairs have been completed with additional touch ups to happen in the spring of 2025

The trustees would like to thank you for your generosity with your time, talents and treasures given on behalf of First Lutheran Church. You have provided us with the means to have the staff and space to further God’s Work.

Deacons Annual Report for 2024

The Deacons met for an hour as a committee monthly. Though out the year we remembered, prayed for and distributed "Hug n' Mug" who have had the loss of a close loved one the past year. At the close of each Deacon meeting, we review and lift up in prayer the prayer request posted on the Prayer Concern Board located in the Sunday School Hall.

Deacons enjoyed keeping the Sunshine Bags full of fun things to help quietly entertain the young children attending Church services. We refresh the Sunshine Bags with new books and activity notebooks for each new season during the year changing them out 5 times this past year.

On April 14, 2024, the Deacons helped Welcome the 5 new families to First Lutheran Church at the New Member Sunday reception. We organized representatives of the many Church Committees or groups to come and give a little introduction to what their committees and groups do for our Church family. We provided and served bars, cookies and refreshments and visited with the new members and their families. Four of the Deacons were present to help Welcome the new Families to First Lutheran Church.

The end of June we hosted the Church members who participated in the updating of our Church Directory and are awaiting the new directories shortly with around 200 families participating.

On September 15, 2024 we "Official" welcomed Pastor Laurel as our new full time Associate Pastor, even though she had been our Bridge Pastor for the previous 10 months it was good to have her on board full time as we welcomed Pastor Laurel, her husband Chris and daughter Eliora to our First Lutheran Family and it was nice to celebrate her with a reception following her installation in the Luther room, she has made such an impact already in her short time with us.

October 20th, the Deacons once again hosted the Evening of Sharing for the Confirmation students and their families. We provided refreshments for approximately 100 family members and guests. Two of our Deacons participated in the reviewing the Confirmation Students' Faith Statements during the Evening of Sharing Service, and two of the Deacons prepared and served the refreshments following the service.

November found us delivering groceries for a complete family Thanksgiving meal to 10 families thanks to a wonderful anonymous donor. Meals were delivered by four of our Deacons on the Saturday before Thanksgiving Day and all were so appreciative of the kind gesture on behalf of First Lutheran Church for our community.

December 15th we held another Healing Service for those who might have had a family loss this past year at 10:30 am in the Fireside Room. Pastor Laurel led the short service with the help of Pastor Heidi with four of the Deacons present helping with the laying on of the hands and offered quite care and support to those in attendance. About 12 people participated in the service on this very cold and snowy Sunday, attendees were offered refreshments and were invited to take a polished rock "Cross" provided by Pastor Laurel. Refreshments were made and served, the Deacons in attendance. It was a very uplifting service for all in attendance.

December always seems to be a very busy month for the Church family and again the Deacons were asked to help deliver another holiday meal for families of our community. Christmas is the time of giving and again, a very generous family donated anonymous - 8 complete Christmas Family Dinners to be enjoyed by the recipients. Four of our Deacons were able to deliver these wonderful gifts and spread Christmas Blessings from First Lutheran Church.

In addition to our monthly Deacon meetings, the Deacons participated in the monthly Church Council meetings and lead the closing prayers.

Respectfully submitted by the Deacons:

Tammy Bordeaux, Dave Streng, Debb Bjornson, Barb Ruhter, Bea Cardinas and Sandy Kae Bass

First Lutheran Church - Parish Education Board - Annual Report 2024

The First Lutheran Parish Board of Education continues to follow the mission statement: "Gathering to learn God's word." Christian Education opportunities for students are planned and prepared by the Parish Education Board and the Director of Children's Ministry Tracy Madsen under the guidance of Pastor Heidi Heimgartner and Pastor Laurel Mester.

The members of the Parish Education Board for 2024 include: Devin Hines, Nicole Schneider, Jacob Schwarz, Marcy Sundine, Mandy Trom and Heather Weber. The Board of Education meets the once a month or as needed, and is overseen by Director Tracy Madsen [August-present] and former Director Emma Basness [Jan-June 2024].

January 2024 Welcome back! Sunday School resumed after winter break on Jan 7. 3rd grade students had their Bible Milestone class that day with Pastors and parents, followed by receiving their Bibles in worship January 14. Children's offering that month was Hats and Gloves for BPES.

February 2024 All students participated in a Valentines party Feb 11 along with snacks, and bingo. Family, Friends and Fun Sunday took place on February 23 for 3 year old- 1st grade students. Noisy Offering was collected for VBS through the Children's Offering.

March 2024 Students participated in Bible Buddies, teaming younger students with the older students in Sunday School. On March 24, students participated in the Palm Parade at the beginning of worship. We had over 90 students join for our annual Easter Egg Hunt that day. In addition, 5th graders had their First Communion Milestone class with parents and participated in making their own communion bread Palm Sunday evening. Children's offering in March was Peanut Butter for Steele County Pathways.

April 2024 Sunday School recognized the 22 students who participated in First Communion on Maundy Thursday, March 28. 6th grade students had a Confirmation preview with Pastor Heidi and Pastor Laurel, and Good Earth Village representatives visited April 21 to talk about camp and lead music time with students. Noisy Offering was collected this month for the Confirmation Summer Youth Trip.

May 2024 Time to celebrate memory work, thank our teachers, and look ahead to summer! Students ages 3 year old-3rd grade sang in worship on May 5, which was also the last day of Sunday school. Weekly average for the Sept 2023-May 2024 Sunday School year was 80 students. Children's offering in May was noisy offering for Good Earth Village camperships.

June 2024 SCUBA! Vacation Bible School was held June 4, 5 and 6, 2-3:30pm each day. 65 students participated in VBS 2024, and we had 32 volunteers. It was a wonderful 3 fun filled afternoons for our students and they learned to trust Jesus! A very special thank you to our Education Board, Pastors, Executive Team, Church Staff, Parents, Students and Volunteers for making this such an amazing VBS. We also thank the Endowment Committee for their financial support of VBS each year. On June 9, VBS Celebration Sunday, Ms. Emma Basness was recognized during worship for her 2 years of working in the Children Ministry program, and officially concluded her time of service. The Board of Ed began reviewing the position description for Director, and working toward candidates for the role with Pastor Heidi.

August 2024 The Board of Education gathered to interview and extend a role to Ms Tracy Madsen as our next Director. She gratefully accepted, and began duties right away on August 6: curriculum was sorted,

and the school year was planned. 30 Sunday school teachers/ helpers and 6 substitute teachers were recruited to teach students this year. We continue to run monthly Children's Offerings for local causes. August children's offering was School Supplies for the BP Elementary School.

September 2024 Teacher Orientation was held Weds, September 4 at 6pm to allow teachers/helpers to come see their classrooms and have a brief orientation with Ms. Tracy before Sunday school begins. Rally Sunday, first day of Sunday School was Sept 8 at 10am. 127 children participated in Rally Day! Orientation for new 3-year-old students and parents was also held that morning. Children's Offering for September was noisy offering for the BP Youth Club to purchase supplies from their wish list.

October 2024 October is Pastor Appreciation Month! The students made and decorated cards and coloring pages and gifted them to Pastor Laurel and to Pastor Heidi to show our appreciation of all they do for us and our Education Program here at FLC. Kindergarten Bible Milestone was October 6th. Kindergarten students received their Spark! Story time Bibles in worship with their parents. We also had a Bible Milestone Celebration with Kindergarten families after worship in the Fireside room with had a snack, group picture, and we personalized our new Bibles together. Our Children's Offering for October was canned vegetables for Steele County Community Pathways.

November 2024 Lots of planning and classroom practice for the Christmas program gets going this month! 3 yo-3rd grade students sang during worship November 17. November 24 is when our Advent Festival took place at 10am. All ages and families were welcome for a fun morning of songs, cookies, games and crafts. We had several Confirmation students help us with this event, along with parent volunteers and the Ed Board and are grateful to all who help put this on. We have around 100 kids attend. November Children's Offering was a Noisy Offering for Local Wish Tree Presents.

December 2024 The 2024 Christmas Program-"Born is The King" was held December 8 at 11am, with a full sanctuary of parents, family and friends attending. We had 130 children participate, and they did a beautiful job of leading worship and telling us the story of the day Jesus was born. A very special thank you to our director-Melissa Stoen, music director - Jaclyn Schlichter. Our Sunday School teachers and helpers did an amazing job leading and assisting our children, as did our Ed Board, and many parent volunteers that even stepped in on the day-of in needed areas. Thank you to BPES for the risers, and Gary Thorson and many others for the setup and teardown. It was a team effort, and such a joy to be a part of the ministry that happened that day. The December Children's Offering was instant oatmeal packets for BP Backpack Program.

Submitted by
Tracy Madsen, Director of Children's Ministry
on behalf of the Parish Education Board

YOUTH BOARD

The Youth Board of First Lutheran Church plans and provides opportunities for the faith growth beyond the classroom through fellowship, travel, service and adventure opportunities.

We had planned to go snow tubing for the Confirmation students but due to lack of snow, the event was cancelled. We are planning on snow tubing this upcoming year on Feb 26, 2025, in Burnsville. Transportation will be provided. More information to come.

The Confirmation students were involved in serving meals during Lent, volunteered at the Advent festival, and had a fun night doing sleigh rides.

This fall, the 10th grade Confirmation students participated in a retreat at Feed my Starving Children. The 9th grade Confirmation students participated in a retreat at Community Pathways in Owatonna where they had a car wash.

There were 17 students that were Confirmed in October. Currently there are 11 group leaders during Confirmation class for small group learning.

We are looking forward to snowtubing, volunteering at Advent, serving meals during Lent, and brainstorming on possible retreats for our youth.

The ending balance for the Youth account is \$14,326.24 in the money market and \$3,046.08 in the checkbook.

Endowment Committee 2024 Annual Report

The First Lutheran Church Endowment Committee members for 2024 were Barry Olson, Steven Busho, Rachel Blaedorn, Judy Engelken, Jeff Kramer, and Pastor Heidi Heimgartner. The committee met 2 times in 2024. The endowment committee fund is managed to support the following:

- 1- capital improvement, debt reduction or building programs of First Lutheran Church
- 2- Scholarships to members of First Lutheran Church
- 3- Outreach into the community
- 4- Missions of the ELCA at home or overseas

In 2024 we were able to support this mission through monetary gifts to the lighting project in the amount of \$1,000.00 and to youth education for \$500.00. The total of these disbursements were \$1,500.

Respectfully submitted,

Endowment Committee of First Lutheran Church

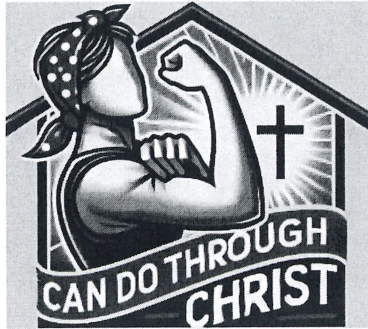
2024 Contributions to Community Pathways of Steele County

175lbs of food (from basket in narthex)

Numerous rolls of toilet paper

Many coats, hats and gloves from the winter coat drive

2024 Stewardship Campaign Update



Our First Lutheran Church 2024 Stewardship Campaign kicked off in November with our “Can Do” theme based on Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

And we at First Lutheran Church certainly demonstrate our “Can Do” spirit!

Highlights:

- In late October, we kicked off our “Can Do” giving challenge by encouraging giving through Vanco for both congregational support and to the Long-Term Maintenance Fund for our new roof project
- Monthly Long term Maintenance Fund updates will be shared to help keep the excitement going!
- Three Temple Talks held in November based on the themes: ***Giving, Growing and Supporting*** were led by our talented Associate Pastor, Laurel Meester. Sunday Bulletin inserts included information about each of the ministries highlighted and encouraged our congregation to think about how and in what ministries they might use their talents
- Coordinated three social media photo postings with our Sunday School students
- Stewardship is for all ages!

Sincere thanks to our Stewardship Committee!

H. Peterson, Pastor Heidi Heimgartner, Shelley Prihoda, Matt Madsen, Whitney Abel and Stephanie Thorson, with special thanks to our talented consultant, Haley Tollefson!

Diane Olson,

FLC Vice President, Stewardship Chairperson

First Lutheran Church Women (FLCW)

Year-End Annual Report for 2024

The First Lutheran Church Women are committed to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another and serve our church and community. We help support and provide services for mission action projects throughout the year.

Bible study is held monthly on the third Wednesday of the month at nine a.m. All women of the church are invited. The bible study is led by a member of the group and the study comes from the WELCA magazine Gather. Coffee and snacks are provided and items of interest are discussed during coffee time. The meeting usually ends around 10:30.

Delivering meals for SEMCAC continued throughout the year during the months of February, July and December. This is an ongoing commitment of the First Lutheran Church and deeply appreciated by both the recipients and SEMCAC. Many thanks to all those willing to deliver meals. If asked to assist in this important outreach, please consider being a volunteer.

Quilting resumed in January and continued to Palm Sunday when they were dedicated. Quilts were made for the Education Foundation and for sale in the Craft shop at the Lutefisk Supper. During 2024 quilts were made. Donated pillow cases were given to homeless shelters or Community Pathways. Sheets and blankets that were unsuitable for making quilts were also donated to Community Pathways. Thanks to all those who donated sheets and fabric. Help assembling quilts is always welcome. No sewing experience is needed.

Pillow cleaning took place in April. It will be planned for 2025 as well. Feather and down pillows can have additional fill added in addition to the usual cleaning and new covers.

The Marie Sanvik Center in Minneapolis continues to be a focus for FLCW efforts. The center is a faith based inner city shelter providing food, clothing and Christian Care including summer programs for children. Donations were boxed and delivered to the center. The items most appreciated were mens socks and hats and mittens. There is a box in the narthex where donations are welcome. There are also lists of requested items available.

The Lutefisk Supper held on a Saturday October was a great success. Financial details are included in the finance report.

A coat drive in November resulted in 54 adult coats, 25 light jackets and vests and 14 children coats and snow pants. The elementary school requested the children's items and several adults coats. A large bag of hats and mittens also were donated to the elementary school.

The women provided Sunday morning coffee on several occasions to raise money for various needs.

Submitted by Kaye Toquam

[illegible]

First Lutheran Church Memorial Committee Annual Report-2024

The mission of the Memorial Committee is to receive and administer designated and undesignated memorials. It is our goal to see that these memorials are used in projects which advance the work of the church and, in many cases, assist in community outreach. It is also our goal that these gifts reflect the lives and values of those memorialized.

The following items are the areas of participation by the Memorial Committee in 2024:

- * Microphone replacement
- * Stainless steel garbage cans
- * Leaves for Memorial tree
- * Sanctuary video camera-font camera
- * Foldable utility wagon for education wing
- * Pastoral stole-gift for Pastor Laurel's installation
- * Involvement in memorial banner project
- * Placed memorial wall display in Fireside Room
- * Beginning consideration of expansion and revision of photo carousels in Narthex.

One can see that there are many varied and interesting projects and needs within our congregation and in our community. Memorials given to facilitate these projects listed above as well as other meaningful activities such as faith chests or beautification are a wonderful means to memorialize your loved ones. Accordingly, the Memorial Committee would respectfully ask that you keep First Lutheran Church in your thoughts and prayers as you consider memorializing your loved one with either a designated gift or an undesignated gift.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Sorenson
Karen Thoen

Tim Wacek
Pastor Heimgartner

Jack Heather

Kaye Toquam

2024 Annual Report to the Congregation

First Lutheran Church Scholarship Committee

“Providing a foundation to assist students' pursuing a Lutheran faith-based education.”

The First Lutheran Church Scholarship Committee is pleased to inform the congregation that two students from First Lutheran Church were awarded Lutheran college scholarships for the 2024-2025 school term. The two students were Bobbie Bruns and Annika Green. Bobbie is a junior at Gustavus Adolphus College and Annika Green is a sophomore at Augustana University. Our congregation was able to provide each of the students with a scholarship in the amount of \$2000. First Lutheran Church can be proud of the Scholarship program as we assist many of our students who are faced with ever increasing costs at Lutheran colleges.

The Scholarship Committee raised money through a Garden Produce Sunday in August, a Pancake Breakfast served on Rally Sunday in September, serving coffee, bars, and cookies before Confirmation in October, the Children's Christmas program in December and after the last day of Sunday School in May. The Scholarship Committee would like to thank all the individuals and families who have supported the Scholarship Committee throughout the year and also giving church memorials on holidays.

The Scholarship Committee asks that you continue to keep this program in mind and pray as we assist our youth who wish to attend Lutheran Colleges. We would also ask that students that are enrolled in Lutheran colleges and prospective Lutheran students fill out a scholarship application at the First Lutheran Church office by April 30th this year. Also the students need to be active members of First Lutheran Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Zellmer
Carol Kirkebon
Dean Meshke
Michelle Vigeland
Marilyn Meshke

WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024

The Worship and Music Committee met throughout 2024. The members of this committee include Pastor Heidi Heimgartner, Pastor Laurel Meester, Chris Butler, Melissa Stoen and Karla Iacovino. The main business discussion centers around worship planning and the scheduling of musicians and musical groups for upcoming services and special events throughout the year.

January

Sunday Worship services are held throughout the year at 9am unless otherwise noted.

January 7th and 21st were Traditional Services with Senior Choir. The Senior Choir is led by Chris Butler with Ruth Earl substituting as needed. Karla Iacovino is the accompanist with Diane Olson or Megan Lynch substituting as needed.

January 14th and 28th the Worship Team lead the service. The Worship Team is led by Melissa Stoen, Allyson Skillestad (Keyboard) Dennis Sauke (guitar) Pastor Laurel Meester (guitar) and Tom Blome, Dustin Kremer, and Jaclyn Schlichter (vocalists).

The schedule deviated from month to month this year but during the school year twice a month there was a Traditional Service which included the Senior Choir and twice a month the Worship Team led the service.

February-May

This year all Lenten services were held at 6:30pm including Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. Ash Wednesday was Feb 14th, The Senior Choir sang for the service.

Soup Suppers began the following Wednesday at 5:45, with The Holden Worship Service following at 6:30, and Senior Choir Practice remaining at 7pm as regularly scheduled.

March 28th was Maundy Thursday with the Senior Choir singing for the service.

March 29th was Good Friday with a Traditional Noon service and special music.

Sunday, March 31st was Easter Sunday with Traditional music and the Senior Choir at the 7am Sunrise Service and the Worship Team leading at the 9am Service. Luke and Jonathon Heimgartner played their trumpets at both services. Special Thanks for their assistance.

The Senior Choir Practice ended for the season on May 8th although they continued to sing on their scheduled dates til June 2nd.

Summer Services 2024

During the summer of 2024 the Worship Team was able to lead worship one Sunday a month. The remainder of the summer Sundays were Traditional music and liturgy with either organ or piano accompanying and sometimes both with special soloists and small groups, a women's group from the choir and also a men's group from the choir some younger soloists also emerged.

This year the Worship Team was asked to entertain with their music at the pavilion in the park at 10am on July 4th.

September-Dec 2024

Senior Choir began rehearsing again on September 4th.

The Senior Choir meets each Wednesday evening at 7pm generally in the sanctuary occasionally in the Sunday morning practice room. Depending upon sanctuary availability.

September 8th Worship Team led

September 15th Pastor Laurel Meester was installed and both Worship Team and Senior Choir participated in the service which was held at the regularly scheduled 9am time.

October

The Worship Team led the first two Sundays and The following two Sunday's the Senior Choir was on board with Traditional music and liturgy. This year the 11:00 am Confirmation Service had traditional music and liturgy with the Senior Choir providing the special music.

During the month of **November** the Worship Team needed time off due to illness so all Sundays were Traditional music and liturgy with the Senior Choir providing special music on the 1st and 4th Sundays.

December

Advent Services began on Wednesday, Dec 4th at 6:30. We used the Holden Worship Service again this year. Chris Butler was the Pianist for these Advent Services with Megan Lynch as the Cantor. Senior Choir practice immediately followed the service.

The Worship Team led the 1st and 2nd Sundays, the 3rd and 4th Sundays were Traditional music and liturgy with the Senior Choir providing the special music.

On **Christmas Eve** there were two services Both the 3:00 and 5:00 were Candlelight Services with Traditional music and liturgy. There was a solo for the special music at the 3:00 and the Senior Choir Sang at the 5:00. **Jonathon Heimgartner** played the trumpet for both services. Thank you Jon, we are all so thankful that you were willing to share your talents once again.

Christmas Day service was at 9:00 and was Traditional music and liturgy with a solo for special music.

December 29th was the **Lessons and Carols Service** at 9:00 **Megan Lynch** played for the service and also sang the solo "Oh Holy Night" as special music. Thank You Megan for sharing your talents with us throughout the year.

A very special thank you to everyone who provided special music during the summer months or at any other time during the year. Also a huge thank you to everyone who regularly participates in choir or the Worship Team. Your time and talents are much appreciated.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to be a part of our music ministry please come join us.

We always have room for one more!

Respectfully Submitted

Karla Iacovino

Southeastern Minnesota Synod ELCA Looking Toward Ministry in 2025



For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so, through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 1:20, NIV)

The Use of the Means of Grace, a teaching document of our denomination, emphasizes the importance of baptism happening in the midst of the gathered assembly. In baptism, we claim the promises of God for the baptized, and the gathered assembly has the distinct privilege of hearing those promises for themselves, too.

Baptism happens in community because the promises of baptism are for the community.

Indeed, in the rite of baptism, members of the congregation participate as the newly baptized is welcomed among them. Promises to accompany the newly baptized in the journey of faith are spoken aloud.

In baptism, we remember the promises of God as we hear them spoken, again and again, by those in our midst.

I spent a number of years in a faith tradition that emphasized the power of personal testimony. Individuals would testify to the work and power of God in their lives and the lives of those they knew. In these spaces of testimony, we collectively remembered the promises of God. The faith of those gathered was buoyed as they were reminded of God’s work in the world.

Testimony. Reclaiming of the promises. These essential practices in the Christian faith keep us grounded and assured in who God is and what God does, especially in times when it is hard to see. We hear the promises of God over and over again because we often need to be reminded of them. We need to be reminded that in Christ, all God’s promises are “Yes!” Practicing faith in community strengthens us to reply, “Amen!”

As we look ahead to the coming year, I want to pay particular attention to our claiming, naming, and proclaiming of God’s promises for us and all of creation. There may be days in which our faith wobbles, when the promises of God seem a far cry from fulfillment. On those days, harkening back to our baptisms, we benefit from hearing the promises of God proclaimed by our communities loud enough for others to hear. *(continued)*

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- 42 congregations were engaged in call process
- 13 Rostered Ministers were welcomed to the synod
- 1 new worshiping community was created: the Nuer Community Lutheran Church
- 3 Power+Boundaries workshops were hosted to equip lay people, church staffs, and Rostered Ministers
- A Chrism Mass Advent Worship was offered to leaders for the first time



In the first part of 2025, members of the Office of the Bishop will intentionally collect stories of God's work in the world from members throughout the synod. Our hope is to create a library of stories told by all kinds of voices that give testimony to what God has done and hopes of what God will yet do.

How have the promises of God been fulfilled in your life? In the lives of those you love? In the aspects of creation you explore? In the life of your congregation or larger community? What testimony can you share for the sake of building up the community of faith?

The life of discipleship is, in the words of the late Rev. Eugene Peterson, "a long obedience in the same direction." It is an obedience best undertaken in community with a chorus of believers surrounding us crying, "Yes!" and "Amen!" as we lift our voices to do the same.

May this year in ministry be one in which we claim and proclaim the fulfillment of all the promises of God so that our faith might grow and the world might live more fully into abundant life.

How is the Spirit inviting your congregation to join the chorus of "Yes!" and "Amen!"?

In Christ,

Rev. Regina Hassanally

Bishop Regina Hassanally



2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- Synod Assembly took place with roughly 360 people in attendance, celebrating the theme: **"Every Congregation Connected"**
- Fall Theological Retreat took place with 145 attendees (including Rostered Ministers and congregation staff) in La Crosse, WI, with the theme **"Will You Be My Neighbor? Called to Community"**
- Gatherings were hosted to support leaders who are new to the synod, in their first years of ministry, and retired





2024 Annual Report from the Lutheran Campus Center, Winona

A few times in my tenure at the Lutheran Campus Center (LCC), I have floated the idea of reimagining our mission statement. Once, we thought about adopting LuMin's (our ELCA Lutheran Campus Ministry network) mission statement: *"Building Community. Deepening Faith. Expanding Minds. Inspiring Service."* While that is lovely and fitting, I keep coming back to the one developed just before I accepted the call to be Campus Pastor of the LCC: *"Working Together. Living Through Faith. Taking Action in our World."* In my first presentation for the Root River Conference at the LCC, I used our mission statement to describe what happens through our ministry. Though much has changed in the last eleven years, the sentiment holds. In particular, the first part, "Working Together", aptly describes 2024.

About a month into the Spring Semester, I gave birth and went on maternity leave for two months. In that time, the students, board, staff, and volunteers stepped up in big ways. When I returned for a meeting in April, our board, including student leaders, reflected on the year, noting that the LCC is: "strong, resilient, joyful; we embody a depth of community, and teach, cultivate, and model 'eulogy values.'" One person shared that they felt more present as a board member. A little later, in that same meeting, people offered to bring breakfast items for students as they headed into Final Exams Week. We indeed *work together*.

Those two words took on a deeper meaning in the fall of 2024 as we had a fire at our building. Students, including some who had only started coming to the LCC a month prior, showed up to help clean up, secure space on campus, and support one another through this challenging time. In the Sunday worship following the fire, I offered space for people to speak about how they were feeling. Every single person in the circle spoke, and the phrase I heard over and over was how the LCC is their second home, or home away from home. To lose one's home is a profound loss. So, it was perhaps even more important that we "work together" and "live through faith, taking action in our world."

I could write a whole report on the many and varied ways people have accompanied us through this time, and in fact, I have written about some of them in previous communications. Suffice it to say I believe in the communion of saints, dear ones. And, your prayers? We feel them. They sustain us as we walk through the wilderness. God provides manna, enough for each day, through you and all who are woven into the fabric of the Lutheran Campus Center in Winona. We work together. God is at work; that is so very clear.

I already can't wait to share next year's report with you. I imagine it to be full of redemption, gratitude, and more stories of "strength, resilience, and joy." Until then, we'll keep *working together, living through faith, and taking action in our world*. After all, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

Trusting in God with you,
Pastor Corrine Haulotte



• **ANNUAL REPORT FROM GUSTAVUS CHURCH RELATIONS — DECEMBER 2024** •

Greetings to you from your partners in ministry at Gustavus Adolphus College! The definition of community at Gustavus has always included the wider ELCA community. The network of institutions and relationships which holds our Lutheran congregations, synods, camps, colleges, seminaries, and social agencies together plays a vital role in nourishing and advancing our collective and important contribution to the world. We all make a greater impact because of this diverse network to which we belong.

Through the Gustavus Association of Congregations, the Office of Church Relations at Gustavus is connected to over 500 congregations from across the country. These relationships are an important source of Christian faith inspiration and ministry encouragement for the college. We have so very much to be grateful for and always look forward to our time together at the annual Gustavus Association of Congregations business meeting in April 2025.

As you gather for congregation annual meetings and synod assemblies, we would like you to know our gratitude for your ministry and hope you are inspired by the reminder of the many others who walk alongside you in mission. The Office of Church Relations at Gustavus exists because as a college we live from our Christian faith and desire to be in service to the wider community within which we are rooted. We seek to be a place you might consider as a ministry partner and resource for your congregation's educational goals and growth.

MARK YOUR 2025 CALENDARS AND JOIN US FOR THESE SPECIAL EVENTS:

- **Annual Gustavus Association of Congregations Business Meeting Luncheon — APRIL 26, 2025** The Annual Business Meeting of the Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations will gather for a luncheon meeting and feature updates from the Gustavus President and Chair of the Board of Trustees as well as inspiration from Gustavus students. For more information: gustavus.edu/businessmeeting.
- **The Gustavus Academy for Faith, Science, and Ethics — JUNE 21-27, 2025**, an exciting resource for high school youth interested in exploring creative alliances between faith and science. The theme for the 2025 Academy is "*The Sweet Life? Getting Granular with Sugar.*" For more information and to nominate a high school student: gustavus.edu/chaplain/academy.
- **Annual Nobel Conference® — OCTOBER 7-8, 2025** "*Sugar: Bringing Sweetness to Light*" Sugar. In the form of glucose, it's the most important source of energy for the human body...and also a substance that can induce cravings as robust as those for cocaine. In the form of cane, beets, and corn, it's an important crop and commodity...and was a driving force in European colonization and the Atlantic slave trade. It's a seemingly-irreplaceable element in celebrations, festivals, and special treats...and a source of "empty calories" in many prepared and processed foods. Sugar in the form of glucose plays a contributing role in adverse health conditions such as diabetes, fatty liver disease, high blood pressure and cancer...and in the form of glycans—complex carbohydrates that cloak the cells of our bodies—it shows promise for playing crucial roles in the treatment of diseases including cancer. Nobel Conference 61 will seek to shed light on this complicated carbohydrate, whose roles in human life are anything but simple. More details can be found at: gustavus.edu/events/nobelconference.
- **Christmas in Christ Chapel — DECEMBER 5-7, 2025** This annual tradition in Christ Chapel celebrates and reflects upon the birth of Jesus Christ through worship that features music, dance, spoken word, and the visual arts. Ticket information and archived live stream services can be found at: gustavus.edu/events/cc.

For more information about these events and the many resources we offer congregations, please contact the Office of Church Relations or visit us on-line at: gustavus.edu/churchrelations. Thank you for your partnership and prayers!

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Dr. Grady St. Dennis
Executive Chaplain/Associate Vice President of Mission

2025 First Lutheran Church Slate of Officers

Officer / Board / Committee	Names (red = new elects)	Term of Office	Term Ends
President	Diane Olson	One year	Jan. 2026
Vice President	Ron Kubista	One year	Jan. 2026
Secretary	Michelle Southworth	One year	Jan. 2026
Treasurer	Sylvia Myre	Two years	Jan. 2027*
Deacons	Ashley Boehnke	Three years	Jan. 2028
	Allyson Skillestad	Three years	Jan. 2028
	Beatriz Cardenas	Three years	Jan. 2027
	Barb Ruhter	Three years	Jan. 2027
	Debb Bjornson	Three years	Jan. 2026
	Sandy Bass	Three years	Jan. 2026
Trustees	Paul Habermann	Three years	Jan. 2028
	Matt Madsen	Three years	Jan. 2028**
	Paul Tollefson	Three years	Jan. 2027
	Doug Ruhter	Three years	Jan. 2027
	Joe Hjelman	Three years	Jan. 2026
	Tim Wacek	Three years	Jan. 2026
Board of Education	Sam Hardecopf	Three Years	Jan. 2028
	Marcy Sundine	Three Years	Jan. 2028**
	Heather Weber	Three years	Jan. 2027**
	Devin Hines	Three years	Jan. 2027**
	Jake Schwarz	Three years	Jan. 2026*
	Mandy Trom	Three years	Jan. 2026
Youth Board – Adults	Anna McIntosh	Three years	Jan. 2028
	Eric Westphal	Two years	Jan. 2027
	Darren Schultz	Three years	Jan. 2026
	Corey Johnson	Two years	Jan. 2026
Youth Board – Youth	Aubrey Klocke	One year	Jan. 2026
	Evan Westphal	One year	Jan. 2026
	Chloe Weber	One year	Jan. 2026*
	Jonathan Heimgartner	One year	Jan. 2026*
Endowment Committee	Ron Thorson	Three years	Jan. 2028
	Rachel Blaedorn	Three years	Jan. 2028*
	Jeff Kramer	Three years	Jan. 2027
	Steven Busho	Three years	Jan. 2026*
	Barry Olson	Three years	Jan. 2026*
Memorial Committee	Kim Hillson	Three years	Jan. 2028
	Jack Heather	Three years	Jan. 2028*
	Roger Sorenson	Three years	Jan. 2027*
	FLCW rep – Kaye Toquam	One year	Jan. 2026*
	Trustee rep – Tim Wacek	One year	Jan. 2026*
Scholarship Committee	Michelle Vigeland	One Year	Jan. 2026*
	Randy Zellmer	One year	Jan. 2026*
	Dean Meshke	One year	Jan. 2026*
	Marilyn Meshke	One year	Jan. 2026*
	Carol Kirkebon	One year	Jan. 2026*

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God's love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ's love. In Psalm 93, we read: "More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore" (4-5).

God's love is a majestic thing, and it moves us to share it in word and deed. The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, across our country and around the world.

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has bolstered the church's ability to share the message of God's love to people who are longing for it. Through your

“More majestic than the thunders
of mighty waters, more majestic
than the waves of the sea,
majestic on high is the Lord!
Your decrees are very sure;
holiness befits your house, O
Lord, forevermore.”

—Psalm 93:4-5

financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you've helped carry this message of God's majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God's promises, sure of God's love and goodness.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at **LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA**.



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America