



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BLOOMING PRAIRIE
ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 25, 2026
10 am | Luther Rooms

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

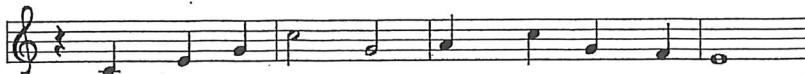
Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

Founded on Faith



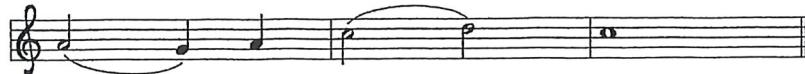
1 Found - ed on faith, the church— a - live by grace—
2 Your cross, O Christ, re - news our life each day.
3 E - quipped by prayer, we live the Spir - it's call.
4 Grow - ing in grace for God's cre - at - ed earth,
5 Found - ed on faith, called forth, em-pow'red to serve,



pro - claims the gos - pel here and ev - 'ry place.
Bap - tized in you, we learn and teach and pray.
Em - pow'red to serve with gifts, both great and small,
we yearn for jus - tice, peace, and hu - man worth;
we share God's end - less love with - out re - serve.



The word of God re - sounds through time and space:
Fed by your love, with thank - ful hearts, we say:
we bring the liv - ing hope of God to all.
a world re - stored; a faith - ful, car - ing church.
Then let us shout a - loud the liv - ing Word!



A1 - - le - - lu - - - - ia!

All Creation Sings, 1048

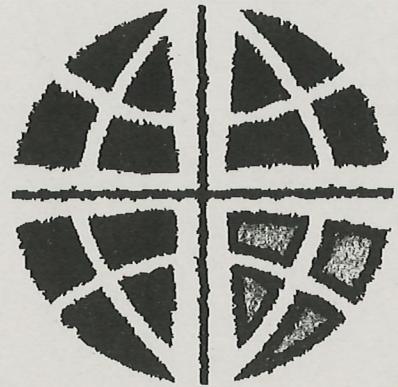
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Augsburg Fortress. Reproduced by permission.

ANNUAL MEETING
First Lutheran Church, Blooming Prairie, MN
Sunday January 25, 2026 10:00 am

CALL TO ORDER	President Diane Olson
MISSION STATEMENT	A 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 and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.
DEVOTIONS	Pastor Laurel Meester and Hailey Schlichter
PASTORS' REPORT	Pastor Laurel Meester
SECRETARY'S REPORT	Michelle Southworth, Council Secretary: (copies of minutes in packets on tables) Minutes from the Annual Meeting on January 26, 2025- (motion to approve) Minutes from the Quarterly Meeting on December 7, 2025- (motion to approve)
TREASURER'S REPORT	submitted by Sylvia Myre, Treasurer, presented by Trustee, Matt Madsen 2026 Budget- approved December 7, 2025
2025 STATISTICS REPORT	Pastor Heidi Heimgartner
REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES (reports in packets on tables)	
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 Good Earth Village	
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	Doug Hillson, President-elect
ANNOUNCEMENT	Installation of Committee/Board Members: Sunday February 01, 2026 9am service
MOTION TO ADJOURN	
CLOSING PRAYER	Ashley Boehnke, Deacon

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

January 2026



"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." - Matthew 4:19

Dear Beloved Members of First Lutheran,

Jesus calls his first disciples from their work as ordinary fishermen into lives of service and sharing the gospel. We too are called to new lives in Christ where work is done a hundred different ways.

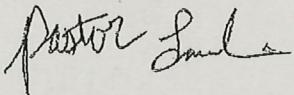
In 2025 we cast a wide net and drew in people, projects and purpose.

We welcomed the newly baptized all year long, confirmation students and new/renewing members in the fall and even a new staff member in Wanda Edge, our assistant custodian! We also continued to welcome guests such as The Lutheran World Relief director for Community Engagement and be in community with one another.

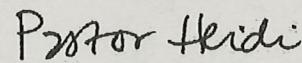
We tackled projects big and small. Our nets became chainsaws cutting down trees, hands lifting pews, ladders that reached the roof and drones examining our steeple.

We served the needs of the world through quilting projects, luminaries made by confirmation students, feeding the hungry, and bearing one another's burdens in love through prayer and hosting funerals. Our committees worked on budgets, camperships, scholarships, contracts, hearing loops and new carpets. We were gifted a wonderful piano, a number of tech upgrades and built a beautiful new baptismal font. Our deacons hosted Evening of Sharing and prayed for the needs of all people. Children were taught about the love of God and brought forth their own offering.

Fishing is not necessarily glamorous work. Yes, it can be peaceful and fruitful. It can also be cold and wet and full of bugs. God has called each and every one of us to be disciples in the midst of both great joy and great struggle. The work we have done this past year will continue as we heed the call of our savior: "Follow me!"



Pastor Laurel Meester



Pastor Heidi Heimgartner

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 Jan 26, 2025 10:00

CALL TO ORDER: President Jennifer Wayne called the meeting to order at 10:08am. A quorum was met.

DEVOTIONS: Pastor Heidi Heimgartner introduced Evan Westphal who read the opening liturgy.

PASTOR'S REPORT AND STATISTICS: Pastor Heidi Heimgartner thanked our exec, board, and committee members , office staff and custodians, along with our many volunteers who make our church services happen and make our church The Welcome Place. She read the 2024 Statistics and pointed out how our church membership is trending younger.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Deborah Lindquist, Council Secretary , directed members to the two pages for the Annual 2024 meeting minutes and the December 2024 Quarterly meeting minutes for review. Jennifer Milton made a motion to approve both sets of minutes, seconded by Doug Hillson. The minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Trustee Matt Madsen presented the Treasurer's report that was submitted by Sylvia Myre. He discussed the operating statement, pointing out the income and the expenses. He noted that the miscellaneous income line appeared much higher than 2023 because of lighting fund.

SPECIAL PROJECTS REPORT: Pastor Heidi Heimgartner presented the Hearing Assist project to the church members. It will be a hearing loop which will work with hearing aids that have the T Coil. It will go under the carpet in the sanctuary. The Hearing Assist and the carpet are covered by a bequest by Burt and Ardis Knudson for improvements.

REPORTS: President Jennifer Wayne directed church members to their packet for the different board and committee reports. Karla Iacovino came forward on behalf of the Worship and Music Committee to remind everyone that the Senior Choir isn't just for Seniors, any adult members are welcome to join.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Report of the Nominating Committee:** Nominating Committee member Michelle Southward presented the ballot of committee and board members. Doug Kinney made a motion to approve the slate of officers, board and committee members. Donna Maixner seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS: Outgoing President Jennifer Wayne was presented a gift from our newly elected President Diane Olson on behalf of our church staff and council. President Diane Olson asked if there was any other business. There was none.

ANNOUNCEMENT: President Diane Olson announced the installation of board and committee members will be Sunday February 9, 2025 at 9am service.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Jean Schwartz made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mary Worke seconded it. The meeting was adjourned.

CLOSING PRAYER: Deacon Debb Bjornson gave the closing prayer.

Submitted by Deborah Lindquist, Council Secretary

**QUARTERLY MEETING
(Budget approval)
First Lutheran Church, Blooming Prairie, MN
December 7, 2025**

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Council President Diane Olson at 10:20 am.

Confirmed quorum was met.

Devotions: Led by Pastor Heidi Heimgartner

Presentation of 2026 Ministry Budget: Matt Madsen, Trustee representative presented the proposed 2026 FLC ministry budget. The proposed budget had previously been reviewed by the Trustees and the FLC council. Motion to approve the proposed 2026 ministry budget was made by Barry Olson, seconded by Brian Hoveland. Questions were answered. The budget was then voted on by the membership present and was approved unanimously.

Announcements/Updates: The annual meeting will be Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 10 am. Snow make up date would be Sunday, February 8, 2026.

Closing prayer was given by Deacon Debb Bjornson.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.

**First Lutheran Operating Statement
Income and Expense
January through December 2025**

	Jan - Dec 25	Jan - Dec 24	\$ Change	% Change
Income				
800 OFFERING	355,933.26	346,286.17	9,647.09	2.8%
801 SPEC GIFTS	6,032.07	2,692.50	3,339.57	124.0%
806 LOOSE	5,434.50	6,022.24	-587.74	-9.8%
815 CHRISTMAS OFFERING	1,097.00	6,846.00	-5,749.00	-84.0%
816 EASTER OFFERING	5,337.50	4,487.87	849.63	18.9%
817 THANKSGIVING OFFERING	2,536.87	2,106.00	430.87	20.5%
830 INTEREST	271.39	29.55	241.84	818.4%
841 PARISH EDUC	5,801.41	5,227.75	573.66	11.0%
855 MISC	2,217.68	22,594.86	-20,377.18	-90.2%
860 RENT	115.00	245.00	-130.00	-53.1%
Total Income	384,776.68	396,537.94	-11,761.26	-3.0%
Gross Profit	384,776.68	396,537.94	-11,761.26	-3.0%
Expense				
101 MISSION SUPPORT	37,179.00	34,873.00	2,306.00	6.6%
201 DIR. of CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	7,424.00	7,722.38	-298.38	-3.9%
202 WORSHIP	4,795.06	5,797.56	-1,002.50	-17.3%
203-C WORSHIP MUSICIANS	3,650.00	3,550.00	100.00	2.8%
206 EDUC EXPENSE	7,715.49	10,430.50	-2,715.01	-26.0%
208 MTG&CONF	1,640.60	1,250.00	390.60	31.3%
302-A SENIOR PASTOR	47,422.00	43,735.00	3,687.00	8.4%
302-Aa SR. PASTOR HOUSING	30,000.00	30,000.00	0.00	0.0%
302-Ac SR. PASTOR PROF EXP	1,728.74	2,161.63	-432.89	-20.0%
302-Ae SR. PASTOR FICA	3,628.00	3,345.84	282.16	8.4%
302-Af SR.PASTOR CONT ED	88.28	0.00	88.28	100.0%
302-Ag SR. PASTOR Med Reimb	3,098.17	4,355.63	-1,257.46	-28.9%
303-B PORTICO Benefits	8,510.28	8,517.50	-7.22	-0.1%
303- D PORTICO Benefits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
303- E PORTICO Benefits	19,546.12	14,751.06	4,795.06	32.5%
305-A ASSOC PASTOR	44,694.00	14,898.00	29,796.00	200.0%
305-Aa ASSOC PASTOR HOUSING	13,408.00	4,469.44	8,938.56	200.0%
305-Ab ASSOC PASTOR PROF EXP	0.00	109.71	-109.71	-100.0%
305-Ac ASSOC PASTOR FICA	4,444.82	1,481.60	2,963.22	200.0%
308-Bridge Pastor	0.00	21,174.72	-21,174.72	-100.0%
308-A Bridge Pastor Housing	0.00	6,352.64	-6,352.64	-100.0%
308-Aa Bridge Pastor FICA	0.00	2,106.08	-2,106.08	-100.0%
308-Aaa Prof Expense	0.00	21.58	-21.58	-100.0%
401 SEC SALARY	31,938.10	32,200.46	-262.36	-0.8%
402 OFFICE SUPPLIES	13,768.48	10,952.32	2,816.16	25.7%
404-B EQUIP REPLACE	1,250.00	750.00	500.00	66.7%
404 OFF EQUIP USAGE	5,886.48	6,314.66	-428.18	-6.8%
501 CUSTODIAL	15,723.85	13,578.24	2,145.61	15.8%
502 BLDG MAINT	7,162.15	10,130.74	-2,968.59	-29.3%
504-A GAS	11,415.36	8,506.42	2,908.94	34.2%
504-B ELECT	10,380.19	10,177.05	203.14	2.0%
504-C TELE	3,058.83	2,689.91	368.92	13.7%
504-D GARBAGE	772.20	772.20	0.00	0.0%
505 INSURANCE	16,410.90	13,871.80	2,539.10	18.3%
506 LONG TERM MAINT	10,000.00	6,000.00	4,000.00	66.7%
507 LAWN MOWING	4,400.00	4,400.00	0.00	0.0%
508 SNOW REMOVAL	3,325.50	1,503.00	1,822.50	121.3%
509 MEDIA MINISTRY	2,500.00	2,400.00	100.00	4.2%
600 MED REIMB	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	0.0%
601-A FED	-1,320.00	-752.00	-568.00	-75.5%
601-B STATE	-865.00	-466.00	-399.00	-85.6%
601-C FICA	-3,415.33	-3,317.24	-98.09	-3.0%
601-D MEDICARE	-798.80	-776.06	-22.74	-2.9%
601 PAYROLL TXS	10,420.86	9,397.46	1,023.40	10.9%
602-A ADV	150.00	244.00	-94.00	-38.5%
602 MISC	3,833.73	4,915.88	-1,082.15	-22.0%
Total Expense	385,970.06	355,596.71	30,373.35	8.5%
Net Income	-4,193.38	40,941.23	-42,134.61	-102.9%

Beginning Balance 1-1-2025	95,782.69
Income YTD	384,776.68
Expense YTD	(385,970.06)
<u>Expense Roof</u>	<u>(17,500.00)</u>
Balance	77,089.31

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Designated Funds

December 31, 2025

Bible Fund	\$1,623.10
Contingency Fund	\$29,665.74
Education Fund	\$3,799.52
Kitchen Fund	\$2,829.43
LongTerm Maintenance	\$34,308.21
A-Roof	\$12,327.41
Media Ministry Fund	\$6,757.15
Memorial Fund	\$16,523.30
A-Faith Chests	\$2,022.06
B-Beautification Fund	\$2,173.32
Mission Fund	\$2,732.01
A-Local Missions	\$2,618.21
Music Fund	\$8,817.51
Office Equipment Fund	\$2,091.42
Property Improvement Fund	\$35,534.21
Scholarship Fund	\$5,178.20
A-Camperships	\$537.57
Sunshine Worship Bags	\$927.69
Youth Fund	\$13,788.24
Total	\$184,254.30
Money Market	\$59,254.30
CD Investments	\$125,000.00

Mission Support 2025

Each year, 10% of our offerings are joyfully extended outside church walls, to a wide variety of ministry partners

HERE'S A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT \$37,029 BENEVOLENT DOLLARS MADE POSSIBLE:



SE MN Synod ELCA \$14,813

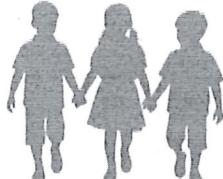
Our regional network of over 98,000 baptized people in 165 congregations. It is one of the 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The synod includes five Sudanese worshipping communities, two campus ministries, and one camp.

SE MN Synod ELCA Global Ministry \$2,000

Strengthens & equips our partner ministries in Colombia, Tanzania, South Sudan, & the southern border of the US

BP Backpack Program \$2,486

currently sending food home to 88+ students at BPES and operating a food pantry at BPHS



BP Youth Club \$2,486

For over 20 years, this mission provides educational and recreational opportunities to empower school-age children for their future. bpyouthclub.com



Feed My Starving Children \$850

Founded in 1987, this organization provides nutritious meals in 70 countries around the world to deliver hope and break the cycle of poverty. fsmc.org

Good Earth Village \$4,300

Good Earth Village is a 50+ year outdoor ministry near Spring Valley with retreats, summer camp programs, leadership development, and community service opportunities. goodearthvillage.org



Lutheran Social Services \$3,000

LSS is one of the largest and oldest human service nonprofits in the state! Each year, 1 in 65 Minnesotans is connected to community, health, safety, housing and prosperity through personalized support. lssmn.org

Community Pathways \$2,000

A trusted resource for food, clothing, and other support for all of Steele County in Owatonna. Strives to be a beacon of hope and support for individuals, families, and our community FMI: communitypathwayssc.org



Luther Seminary - St. Paul \$500

Luther Seminary educates 600+ leaders annually for Christian communities with Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, Master of Theology, and specialized Certificate programs. They even conferred a degree upon Pastor Laurel ('18) & Pastor Heidi ('01) luthersem.edu

Lutheran Campus Centers: Mankato \$1797 & Winona \$1797

A place where college students of all backgrounds are welcomed, and questions of faith are taken seriously, campus ministry is as old as Martin Luther.



Lutheran World Federations-Augusta Victoria \$1,000

This Jerusalem hospital got its start as a center of medical excellence after the 1948 war to care for Palestinian refugees. Today, most patients served by AVH continue to be in social need and seeking life-saving specialized care.

First Lutheran Church
2026 Adopted Budget

INFLOWS				2025 Actual	2025 Budget		2026 Budget
1. Offering				\$ 355,933.00	\$365,000.00		\$ 365,000.00
2. Special Gifts				\$ 6,032.00	\$4,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
3. Loose Offering				\$ 5,435.00	\$5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
4. Thanksgiving Offering				\$ 2,536.00	\$3,500.00		\$ 3,000.00
5. Christmas Offering				\$ 1,097.00	\$8,000.00		\$ 7,500.00
6. Easter Offering				\$ 5,338.00	\$5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
7. Miscellaneous				\$ 2,218.00	\$1,500.00		\$ 1,500.00
8. Parish Education				\$ 5,801.00	\$4,500.00		\$ 4,500.00
9. Rent				\$ 115.00	\$100.00		\$ 100.00
TOTAL INFLOWS				\$ 384,505.00	\$396,600.00		\$ 395,600.00
OUTFLOWS							
10. Mission Support				\$ 37,179.00	\$38,650.00		\$ 26,635.00
11. Children Youth & Family Ministry				\$ 7,424.00	\$10,500.00		\$ 8,000.00
12. Worship				\$ 4,795.00	\$6,000.00		\$ 6,000.00
13. Choir Director: Contingent Expense				\$.....0.00	\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
14. Worship Musicians				\$ 3,650.00	\$3,600.00		\$ 3,600.00
15. Education Supplies				\$ 7,715.00	\$6,500.00		\$ 6,500.00
16. Meetings and Conferences				\$ 1,640.00	\$1,100.00		\$ 1,250.00
17. Senior Pastor Salary				\$ 47,422.00	\$47,422.00		\$ 50,657.00
18. Senior Pastor Housing				\$ 30,000.00	\$30,000.00		\$ 30,000.00
19. Senior Pastor Social Security				\$ 3,628.00	\$3,628.00		\$ 6,135.00
20. Senior Pastor Professional Expense				\$ 1,729.00	\$4,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
21. Senior Pastor Continuing Education				\$ 88.00	\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
22. Associate Pastor Salary				\$ 44,694.00	\$44,964.00		\$ 49,039.00
23. Associate Pastor Housing				\$ 13,408.00	\$13,408.00		\$ 14,712.00
24. Associate Pastor Social Security				\$ 4,445.00	\$4,445.00		\$ 4,877.00
25. Associate Pastor Professional Expense				\$ -	\$4,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
26. Associate Pastor Continuing Education				\$. 0.00	\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
27. Visitation Pastor				\$. 0.00	\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
28. Senior Pastor Medical Reimbursement				\$ 3,098.00	\$4,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
29. Senior Pastor Pension and Insurance				\$ 8,510.00	\$8,485.00		\$ 9,085.00
30. Associate Pastor Pension and Insurance				\$ 19,546.00	\$14,771.00		\$ 20,285.00
31. Treasurer: Contingent Expense				\$. 0.00	\$10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00
32. Secretarial Staff				\$ 31,938.00	\$31,000.00		\$ 33,000.00
33. Office Supplies				\$ 13,768.00	\$12,400.00		\$ 12,400.00
34. Office Equipment Usage				\$ 5,886.00	\$5,400.00		\$ 6,000.00
35. Staff Medical Reimbursement				\$ 1,000.00	\$1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
36. Custodial Staff				\$ 15,724.00	\$15,000.00		\$ 15,000.00
37. Building Maintenance				\$ 7,162.00	\$12,500.00		\$ 12,500.00
38. Gas				\$ 11,415.00	\$12,700.00		\$ 10,700.00
39. Electricity				\$ 10,380.00	\$8,500.00		\$ 10,000.00
40. Telephone				\$ 2,690.00	\$2,680.00		\$ 2,680.00
41. Garbage				\$ 772.00	\$800.00		\$ 800.00
42. Insurance				\$ 16,411.00	\$14,766.00		\$ 18,737.00
43. Snow Removal				\$ 3,327.00	\$4,200.00		\$ 4,200.00
44. Lawn Mowing				\$ 4,400.00	\$4,200.00		\$ 4,200.00
45. Payroll Taxes/Paid Leave				\$ 4,215.00	\$4,500.00		\$ 4,900.00
46. Advertising				\$ 150.00	\$200.00		\$ 200.00
				\$ 368,121.00	\$389,319.00		\$ 399,092.00

First Lutheran Church
2026 Adopted Budget

47. Long Term Maintenance - Prepaid		\$ 10,000.00	\$8,000.000.00
48. Office Equipment - Prepaid		\$ 1,250.00	\$1,000.000.00
49. Media Fund - Prepaid		\$ 2,500.00	\$2,000.000.00
TOTAL OUTFLOWS		\$ 381,871.00	\$400,319.00	\$ 399,092.00

2025 Statistics for Office

OFFICIAL PASTORAL ACTS

	2025	2024
Baptisms	15	19
Confirmations	16	17
Weddings	1	1
Funerals, Memorials and Interments	14	18

MEMBERSHIP AS OF DECEMBER 31

	2025	2024
Baptized	2028	2031
Confirmed	1517	1507

AVERAGE WEEKLY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

2025	240 in-person	1088 online
2024	223 in-person	733 online

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

2025 1208 *statistical adjustment
2024 1272

BAPTISMS

Briggs Arett	Billie Hemingway
Maeva Franczak	Livia Gray
Matthias Meester	Beckett Schroeder
Bowen Abbas	Nova Smith
Harrison Henry	Brindle Jacobson
Robert Hodge	Remington Petefish
Clark Willemssen	Jakson Vermilyea
Brinley Hardecopf	

WEDDINGS

Rebecca Johnson & Kyle Strunk

ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

Rhonda Christensen
Jonny, Jenna, McKinley & McKoy Kraling
Kevin, Samantha, Lyle & Kevin Laures
Renae Weatherley

TRANSFERS OUT

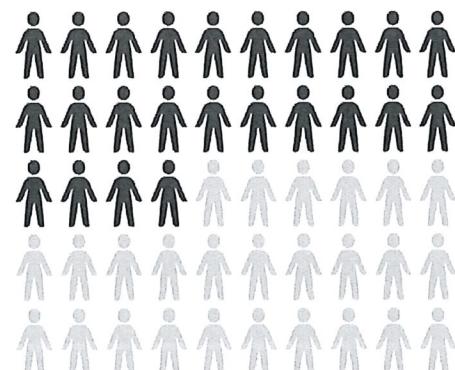
Betsy Blume & Elise Wilker
Joey & Emily Smith, Sophie, Alexander, Olivia, Hudson
McKayla & Sebastian Myer
Mariah Nelson
Kenneth & Kathleen Ryks

CONFIRMANDS

Talon Arndt	Parker Blome
Ryan Cardenas	Evan Halverson
Eli Johnson	Britt Lynch
Haley McIntosh	Jaxon Meier
Bentley Miller	Derek Miner
Raylee Miner	Bella Romeo
Haley Schlichter	Ryder Smith
Preston Stangl	Jakson Vermilyea

FUNERALS/MEMORIAL/INTERMENT SERVICES

Barbara Peterson	Karen Kinny
Matthias Meester	Jeri Alwes
Dennis Underdahl	Ruby Miller
Lee Ingvaldson	Jean Haubenschild
Betty Bush	Betty Goff
Beckie O'Grady	Jeanette Peterson
Judith Johnson	Randy Wurst



First Lutheran Church Trustee 2026 Annual Report

Trustee Mission Statement: Regularly review and manage financial assets and property to provide a "Welcome Place to All People" and by our actions encourage stewardship of servanthood to others

Board Members: Matt Madsen (Chair) Tim Wacek, Joe Hjelmen, Doug Ruhter, Paul Tollefson, and Paul Haberman

Overview of our decisions and efforts in 2025

- Phase 1 of the roof replacement project was completed by Malo Roofing Inc
 - Project was started June 6th and finished June 17th
 - Phase 1 included removing the rock ballast and EPDM membrane from over the Luther Rooms and the Education Wing
 - Lifting the large roof top air handler units and installing new unit bases
 - Added new 4.5" expanded polystyrene insulation
 - Replacing it with 60 mil EPDM membrane and return the rock ballast
 - Total Phase 1 expense was 182,722.25
- Phase 2 roof replacement project fundraising will start February of 2026
- Removed 19 trees from the property due to diseases.
 - Doug Ruhter and Paul Haberman took it upon themselves with help of others to remove them all
 - The plan is early spring of 2026 to have the stumps ground down and filled in with seed
 - Have not come up with a plan on replacing the trees with new ones.
- Removal and installed the pews when the hearing loop and new carpet was installed in the sanctuary and offices
 - Installers found asbestos in the front office. It was removed before the new carpet was installed
- Started to investigate the roof leak in the sanctuary.
 - Had a drone fly around the steeple and found some damage from a lightning strike.
 - Submitted to insurance company- They currently declined our claim.
 - Currently looking into different options to solve the situation

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 2025

Deacons' Annual Report for 2025

The Deacons met for an hour as a committee monthly. Throughout the year we remembered, prayed for and distributed Hug in a Mugs to members who have had the loss of a close loved one this year. At the close of each meeting we reviewed and lifted up in prayer the prayer requests posted on the Prayer Concern Board located in the Sunday School Hall.

The Deacons enjoyed keeping the 22 Sunshine Bags full of fun things to help quietly entertain the young children attending our church services. We refreshed the Sunshine bags with new books and activity notebooks for each season.

On October 5th the Deacons helped Welcome 2 new families to First Lutheran Church at the New Member Sunday reception. We organized representatives of many of the Church Committees or groups to come and give a little introduction to what these committees and groups do at First Lutheran. We served bars, cookies and refreshments and visited with the new members and their families present. Three of the Deacons were present and provided the refreshments for the new members and their families.

On October 19th the Deacons hosted the Evening of Sharing for the 17 Confirmation students and their families. We provided refreshments for approximately 100 family and guests. One of our Deacons participated in reviewing the Confirmation Students' Faith Statements and participated with the confirmants as they shared their Faith Statements during the Evening of Sharing Service, with four of the Deacons participating.

For a second year, the Deacons helped distribute Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinner Meals to ten (10) families in need given by a Church members family to make the Holidays just a little bit brighter for those recipients.

First Lutheran Church had a Healing Service on December 21, 2025 10:30 am in the Fireside room. Pastor Laurel led the short service with five of the Deacons participating in the laying on of hands and offered quite care and support to those in attendance. About 20 people (10 guests) participated in the service, attendees were offered refreshments in the Fireside room. Pastor Laurel gave everyone in attendance a polished rock "Cross" to take with them. Refreshments were served by the Deacons.

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

Respectfully submitted by the Deacons: Debb Bjornson, Barb Ruhter, Allyson Skillestad, Beatriz Cardenas, Ashley Boehnke, Sandy Kae Bass.

First Lutheran Church - Parish Education Board - Annual Report 2025

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 2025 include: Devin Hines, Sam Hardecopf, Jacob Schwarz, Marcy Sundine, Mandy Trom and Heather Weber. The Board of Education meets once a month or as needed, and is overseen by Director Tracy Madsen

January 2025 Sunday School resumed after winter break on Jan 11th. 3rd grade students had their Bible Milestone class that day with Pastors and parents, followed by receiving their Bibles in worship January 25th. Children's offering that month was Hats and Gloves for BPES.

February 2025 All students participated in a Valentines party Feb 8th along with snacks, and bingo. Family, Friends and Fun Sunday took place on February 22nd for 3-year-old - 1st grade students with a snack. 3-year-old - 4th grade sang at 9am worship. Noisy Offering was collected for VBS through the Children's Offering.

March 2025 Students participated in Bible Buddies, teaming younger students with the older students in Sunday School. On April 13, 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 2025 Sunday School recognized the 14 students who participated in First Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 2nd. 6th grade students had a Confirmation preview with Pastor Heidi and Pastor Laurel, and Good Earth Village representatives visited to talk about camp and lead music time with students. Noisy Offering was collected this month for the Confirmation Summer Youth Trip.

May 2025 Time to celebrate memory work, thank our teachers, and look ahead to summer! Students ages 3-year-old - 4th grade sang in worship on May 3rd, which was also the last day of Sunday school. Weekly average for the Sept 2025-May 2026 Sunday School year was 80 students. Children's offering in May was noisy offering for Good Earth Village camperships.

June 2025 True North Vacation Bible School was held June 3, 4 and 5 , 2-3:30pm each day. 70 students participated in VBS 2025, 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 8th, VBS Celebration

August 2025 Tracy took time to organize and order curriculum, bibles and cleaning of the classrooms, then went to work finding volunteers for the upcoming Sunday school year. A total of 28 Sunday school teachers/ helpers and 3 substitute teachers were recruited to teach students this year. We continue to run monthly Children's Offerings for local causes. August children's noisy offering is for the ROOFDA

September 2025 Teacher Orientation was held Weds, September 6 at 12pm to allow teachers/helpers to come see their classrooms and have a brief orientation with Ms. Tracy before Sunday school begins, along with Jake showing them how to use the projectors that his family donated. Rally Sunday, first day of Sunday School was Sept 14th at 10am. 150 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 a noisy offering for the BP Youth Club to purchase supplies from their wish list.

October 2025 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 12th. 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 a Noisy offering for the city park.

November 2025 Lots of planning and classroom practice for the Christmas program gets going this month! 3 yo-4th grade students sang during worship November 23. November 30th 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 had around 15 families attending. The snowstorm the day before made travel difficult for families. November Children's Offering was a Noisy Offering for Local Wish Tree Presents.

December 2025 The 2025 Christmas Program - "Go Tell it on the Mountain" was held December 14th 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 – Megan Lynch. 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 Matt Madsen and family 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 Report for 2025

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

We went snow tubing on Feb 26, 2025, at Buck Hill in Burnsville. Transportation and dinner were provided.

This year, around 20 students and chaperones participated in a fun fall event to the Faribault Apple Orchard where we bonded, laughed, and shared treats that were provided. On July 30, students in 8th and 9th grade attended a summer retreat to Community Pathways and the Owatonna Waterpark. On August 6th, students in 10th grade had their own retreat to Feed My Starving Children in Eagan, MN, later returning to First Lutheran to continue work on their final confirmation project.

There were 16 students that were Confirmed in October. Currently there are 12 adults that help us with small groups on Wednesday.

We look forward to planning future retreats for our youth.

The ending balance for the Youth account is \$13,788.24 in the money market and \$2,161.83 in the checkbook.

Thank you to our outgoing board members Chloe Weber, Jonathan Heimgartner and Corey Johnson for your service on this board.

Respectfully submitted, Jonathan Heimgartner

Endowment Committee 2025 Annual Report

The First Lutheran Church Endowment Committee members for 2025 were Barry Olson, Steven Busho, Rachel Blaedorn, Ronny Thorson, Jeff Kramer, and Pastor Heidi Heimgartner. The committee met 2 times in 2025. 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 member of First Lutheran Church
- 3- Outreach into the community
- 4- Missions of the ELCA at home or overseas

In 2025 we were able to support this mission through a monetary gift in the amount of \$500 to parish ed.

Respectfully submitted,

Endowment Committee of First Lutheran Church

DONATIONS TO COMMUNITY PATHWAYS IN 2025

180 pounds of food and/or groceries

One bag of hats

Pajamas

Monetary donations of at least \$50.00

Stewardship Committee Annual Report

Your Stewardship Committee members are Pastor Heidi, Vice President Ron Kubista, Whitnei Abel, Stephanie Thorson, Bri Masching, Matt Madsen, and Deb Lindquist.

This year the committee's focus was on Build Us Up. The members of our congregation are budgeting their own household budgets and everyone knows costs have risen on all the things needed to run a household. Together the congregation shares the running of the biggest household budget, the church. Yes, the church is also seeing the same increases as individual households, which means we need to see increased giving to keep up with the bills.

Timeline Review:

- 11/4 Inaugural Stewardship Meeting/Brainstorming a theme
- 11/13 Second Stewardship Meeting/Theme chosen, refined
- 11/23 Gratitude Sunday/Spoken presentation by Deb Lindquist and Stephanie Thorson, bulletin insert #1 with theme on one side and Vanco information on the other side.
- 11/30 Building Blocks Narthex Display erected
- 12/1 Flock Note newsletter
- 12/7 Bulletin Insert and message in church by Deb Lindquist and Ron Kubista
10am Quarterly Budget meeting: 2026 budget was passed
- 12/14 11am Christmas program special Build Us Up bookmark style insert for the bulletin
- 12/15 Quarterly newsletter with Build Us Up/Vanco 101 information
- 12/23 Pastoral Christmas Letter (delayed 10 days by USPS)
- 1/9/26 Deadline for Annual Report Submission
- 1/11 Spoken presentation by Stephanie Thorson to present daily ads and a challenge for listeners
Bri Masching created a bookmark- type calendar of events for Sunday School parents that will help them keep track of dates and will have the info for Vanco giving.

2025 Costs: Minimal; in house advertising and the purchase of cardboard blocks totaled
Approximately \$85 and blocks can be reused by the Sunday School classes. Decided no giveaways like stickers or signage at this time.

Total Offering Review:

2025	\$355,933	Total Offering in Q4 \$115,906	December alone was \$52,600
2024	\$346,286		
2023	\$345,317		
2022	\$337,952		

Takeaway: There is Vitality, a culture of gratitude and appreciation, and a variety of ways to give online and in-person. Barriers to giving in our congregation are few, but the message must be continually communicated and calibrated (updating Vanco giving info, and acknowledging the radio audience. For example: positive reminders of mission, coupled with clear requests for action, are successful.

Recap of our main goals: Two main asks were the focus of this years Build Us Up

First: Sign up on Vanco for a consistent, secure, and easy way to give weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or a one time gift. This keeps the incoming offering consistent, especially during the summer.

Second: Consider increasing your weekly giving by \$5 or 5%. Current Vanco givers can go back into Vanco to increase their giving, as many may not have made changes since they signed up.

First Lutheran Church is also able to have daily adds on KOWZ 100.9 thanks to some who were able to donate for the special project. The ads are thankful for our members and our listeners we have not met. We want listeners to know they are welcome at our church any time. A small challenge was given to our listeners to send a dollar if they like what they are hearing in our ministry. There are 29K listeners. These ads will run daily for six months and we will look at the results then.

First Lutheran Church is thankful for its members and listeners on radio and Facebook. The outreach is great in getting the message of God to all who want to attend church or tune in on the radio and Facebook.

Sign Up, Build Up, Pray Up

Submitted by Deb Lindquist, Stewardship Secretary

2

First Lutheran Church Women (FLCW)

Year-End Annual Report for 2025

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 thirty am. 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 every Monday until Palm Sunday when they were dedicated. Quilts were made for the Education Foundation and for sale in the Craft shop during the Lutefisk dinner. During 2025 202 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 2026 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 has been supported by the women of FLC for many years. The center is a faith based inner city shelter proving food, clothing and Christian Care including summer programs for children. The center has changed direction from providing immediate needs other than daily noontime meals to that of providing job training for youth, weekly kids club and summer camps. Gospel ministry continues on a weekly basis. We will no longer collect items for the Marie Sanvik center unless we hear of a need.

The Lutefisk dinner held on a Saturday in October was a great success. Disbursement decisions were made in December. As in the past, the entire proceeds are donated to various organizations. Financial details are included in the finance report.

A coat drive in November resulted in 63 coats and jackets, vests and snow pants as well as a large bag of hats and mittens and a bag of socks. All of these were delivered to Community Pathways and were very welcome. Thanks to all who donated items.

The Women have supported the radio ministry for many years and during 2026 have committed additional support.

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

Submitted by Kaye Toquam

FLCW Mission Support 2025

The Lutefisk Dinner is the longest-running benevolent project that First Lutheran Church Women (FLCW) sponsors. Since 1934, proceeds have been shared!

HERE'S A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT \$12,650 BENEVOLENT DOLLARS MADE POSSIBLE:



BP Ambulance - \$500
BP Youth Club - \$1100
BP Backpack Program - \$1700
BP Ministerial - \$1500
BP Park Project - \$500



Scholarship Fund - \$500
Youth Camperships - \$650



Dorothy Day House, Rochester - \$250
Good Earth Village - \$1350
The Lighthouse of Southern MN - \$800
Crises Resource Center of Steele County - \$400
Salvation Army of Steele County - \$300
Community Pathways - \$1200
Warrior Wagon Project - \$200



Doctors Without Borders - \$500
Lutheran World Relief - \$1000
Heifer International - \$200

FLCW Table Prayer

Be present at our table, Lord;
Be here and everywhere adored.
These mercies bless, and grant that we
May be of service, Lord, for Thee. Amen

First Lutheran Church Memorial Committee Annual Report-2025

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 2025:

- * Served Sunday coffee
- * Facilitated the moving and installation of the baby grand piano
- * Purchased waterproof cover for the baby Grand piano
- * Facilitated the reception and gift of the Baptismal Font given by the Matthias Meester family
- * Purchased new changing table for the family restroom
- * Lenten Devotionals
- * Purchased new pillow covers for the Fireside Room
- * Purchased dust cover for piano keyboard
- * Facilitated reception of hearing accessibility loop gift of Burton and Ardis Knutson
- Facilitated reception of gift of wall mount television in the Fellowship Room from the Kubista family

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. The Memorial Committee would like to express our gratitude for all of these memorials which enhance the mission of First Lutheran Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Sorenson Tim Wacek
Kim Hillson Pastor Heimgartner

Jack Heather

Kaye Toquam

2025 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 three students from First Lutheran Church were awarded Lutheran college scholarships for the 2025-2026 school term. The three students were Bobbie Bruns, Annika Green, and Cooper Cooke. Bobbie is a senior at Gustavus Adolphus College, Annika Green is a junior at Augustana University, and Cooper Cooke is a junior at Gustavus Adolphus College. Our congregation was able to provide each of the students with a scholarship in the amount of \$1500. 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 First Lutheran Church quarterly meeting 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 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
Michelle Vigeland
Dean Meshke
Marilyn Meshke

Worship and Music Committee End-Of Year Report 2025

The Worship and Music Committee met Tuesday, January 7th, 2025 at 10am. Pastor Heidi and Karla Iacovino were the only attendees. The purpose of this meeting was to plan the music schedule for the Worship Team, and Senior Choir throughout the remainder of the school year.

Senior Choir practice continued to be held each Wednesday evening at 7pm in the Sanctuary. Services with Traditional music and the Senior Choir in attendance providing a choir anthem will be on the first and fourth Sunday's in the months of Jan, and Feb. with some extra anthems and special musicians assisting the need arose.

During January and February the Worship Team (due to unforeseen health issues) was able to lead only once a month but by March, the Worship Team was ready to begin leading the service twice a month as had been the previous situation.

February 23rd and May 4th the Sunday School children provided special music during the service.

Ash Wednesday was March 5th and we used the Hidden With Christ Evening Worship Service All Lenten Services including Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday were held at 6:30pm in the sanctuary.

We also had Soup Suppers again this year and different service groups provided and served the meal. The Senior Choir hosted the meal one of the Wednesday nights.

April 13th PALM SUNDAY 9am service Traditional with Senior Choir

April 17th MAUNDY THURSDAY, 6:30 pm service with Senior Choir

April 18th GOOD FRIDAY NOON service with Megan Lynch soloist

April 20th, EASTER MORNING **7:00 am** Sunrise Traditional Service with Senior Choir, Jon Heimgartner played the Trumpet **9:00 am** Worship Team led the service with special music from Dustin Kremer

April 27th 9am Traditional with Senior Choir

May 7th Last Senior Choir practice of the season

May 25th Memorial Day Sunday Traditional with Senior Choir

During the months of June, July and August, The Worship Team led monthly, and Chris Butler, Megan Lynch and Karla Iacovino took turns playing for the rest of the services during the summer.

In honor of Independence Day, The Senior Choir provided the anthem and also added their voices to the special "Armed Forces" medley at the close of the service on Sunday July 7th.

The Worship and Music Committee met again on August 19th at 10am to plan the Worship music schedule for the months of September 2025 through January 2026.

Those present at the meeting were Pastor Heidi, Pastor Laurel, Melissa Stoen and Karla Iacovino. Chris Butler was unable to attend. Pastor Heidi led in devotions as the meeting began.

The following has been decided thus far. Please Keep in mind that as the times change so must we be flexible, empathetic and compassionate as we strive together for a meaningful worship experience.

Choir rehearsal began Wednesday, September 7th at 7pm and will continue to be held at 7pm on Wednesday evenings unless otherwise noted.

* The first two Wednesday Choir rehearsals were held in the Sunday morning practice room as Confirmation Orientation meetings began in the Sanctuary
Worship and Music Schedule is as follows:

** All Sunday Services began at 9am unless otherwise noted

September, October and November the Senior Choir provided an anthem twice a month and the Worship Team led twice a month. When there were 5 Sundays in the month it was a Traditional Sunday with either Chris and Karla together or separately accompanying with Organ and/or Piano

Oct. 19th was the Confirmation **Evening of Sharing** at 6:30 pm

Oct. 26th 9am Traditional service with special music and at 11am was the Confirmation Service with the Senior Choir providing an Anthem.

ADVENT SERVICES were held **Wed. Dec. 3rd; Wed. Dec 10th; Wed. Dec 17th**

***ALL ADVENT SERVICES began at 6:30pm with Choir immediately following

Chris played for the Advent Services with Karla as a substitute. Megan Lynch was the Cantor.

Dec. 7th Traditional with Choir

Dec 14th Worship Team assisted **at both services** 9 am **Worship Service** and the **Sunday School Program** at 11am

Dec 21st Traditional with Choir

CHRISTMAS EVE, WEDNESDAY, DEC 24th

3pm Worship Team led the service

5pm Traditional with Choir and special musicians Nathan Butler on Flute and Jonathon Heimgartner on the Trumpet. We also had some guest singers in the Senior Choir

Christmas Day Thursday, Dec 25th

9am Traditional service with piano, and Special Music from Shelby Schultz and Payton Esplan

Dec 28th was our Traditional "Lessons and Carols" Sunday with TJ and Megan providing special music.

During the Month of January '26 Traditional Service will be on the 1st and 3rd Sundays and The Worship Team will lead on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

The Worship and Music Committee will meet next on January 13th, 2026 at 11am.

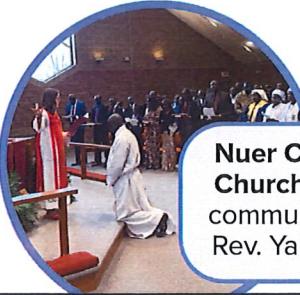
Respectfully Submitted

Karla Iacovino

Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA 2025 Ministry Report



We gathered at **Council as Leaders** to think collaboratively and further equip ourselves for ministry as lay and rostered leaders.



Nuer Community Lutheran Church, a new worshipping community, was established! Rev. Yang Tut was ordained.



We had four new entrants to the **Candidacy** process! 13 were in process as '25 concluded. 19 attended the annual **Candidacy Retreat** at Good Earth Village.



A variety of **Power and Boundaries educational workshops** were offered to equip church council members, faith formation professionals, and rostered ministers for leadership.

“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, **and that is what we are.**”
—1 John 3:1 (emphasis added)

Through Christ, we have been made children of God! What good news! It is out of this identity, the truest proclamation of who we are, that we live as followers of Jesus in this world.

As members of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA, we strive to *walk together proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ*. We live in this community of faith, across sixteen counties with 100,000 baptized members as the children of God. Because this is who we are, we celebrate all the ways God is at work in us and through us – not only in our own communities but throughout the synod and church - for the sake of the world.

Join me in celebrating all the ways God has been at work in our midst over the past year, and let's look ahead, together, with joyful anticipation for what God will yet do, in us and through us, for the sake of the good news of Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

Rev. Regina Hassanally
Bishop Regina Hassanally



Synod members participated in the **Lutheran Church of Colombia's National Assembly** where Rev. John Rojas was elected as bishop.

We gathered under the theme *“Remember what God has done. Prepare for what God will do.”* at the **Synod Assembly**. Three resolutions were passed regarding *Support for the Least of These and the Ministries that Serve Them and Expanded Preaching and Teaching on the Stories of Women in the Bible and Use of Female Imagery of God and of God's Work in the World*. On the first ballot, Bishop Hassanally was elected to a second six-year term.



About 140 ministry leaders attended the **Fall Theological Retreat**, which includes fellowship, education, and retreat. Rev. Leila Ortiz led the presentations and discussion on pneumatological estuaries, with the theme of Baptism in Muddy Waters.





2025 Annual Abbreviated Report to Congregations

Good Earth Village gratefully acknowledges the many faithful investments from our congregational members and partners. From your financial contributions to volunteer hours to providing program leadership to hosting our staff to your prayers and other service, **you all make the Village.**

FINANCES

The total budget for Good Earth Village in 2025 was \$1,366,756. Over 59% of annual financial needs are met by donations from individuals, congregations, WELCA groups, conferences, and businesses. Congregational and WELCA giving comprised 10% of our total gifts received for the year.

Good Earth Village gratefully acknowledges congregational financial support that was offered in monthly, annual, and special gifts/grants.

- **71 congregations** made a financial, missional investment in this outdoor ministry through unrestricted donations, event sponsorships, and grants totaling \$75,175. This is a decrease in participation of 7%, and a reduction in funds of 20% from 2024.
- **38 WELCA partners** made combined contributions of \$9,289. This is a 19% decrease in participation and an 25% decrease in funds.
- **29 congregations** held retreats at Good Earth Village. This is an increase of 26%!

PROGRAMMING *Highlights*

Summer Camp 2025

1. Twenty young adult leaders, including six international staff from Colombia (3), England (1), Ireland (1), Mexico (1).
2. We served 598 campers onsite representing 104 congregations.
3. We provided 7 off-site day camps at congregations.
4. The Good Earth Village endowment covered the cost of four high school students in the staff-in-training program.
5. Provided financial assistance to 80% of campers in campership and discounts.
6. A curriculum committee was assembled with pastors from six congregations.

Lunch and Learn Series

We offered seven programs in 2025 that included themes of nature, mental health, grief, race, and music.

Women's Day

We moved our annual Women's Day program to March from June to coincide with International Women's Month. The topic was "Crafting Wellness" and it was led by Juli Johnson of Iowa City, Iowa. Fifteen congregations were represented by 29 women. The program was a "mini camp experience" with devotions, presentations about different types of wellness, activities, and (naturally) food.

Community Sing Events

1. Coffee & Carols in Austin – December 2025 co-sponsored with St. Olaf Lutheran Church
2. Beer & Carols in Albert Lea – December 2025 co-sponsored with First Lutheran Church, Grace Lutheran Church, and 112 on Broadway
3. Beer & Carols in Rochester – December 2025 co-sponsored with People of Hope ELCA and Little Thistle Brewery

Mission

To EXPLORE God in creation, GROW faith in community, and ENGAGE the world as followers of Jesus.

Purpose

To be a place for Christ-centered retreat and community.

Core Values

Community, Faith, Friendship, Fun, Openness, Peace, Service

Join us for our **Annual Meeting** on March 1, 2026.

25303 Old Town Drive, Spring Valley, MN 55975

Registration will begin at 2:00 and the meeting will begin at 2:30.

Our full annual report will be available at this meeting.

www.goodearthvillage.org for more information

Good Earth Village is committed to being an effective ministry partner and welcomes your ideas. Please look for new and continued ways to lift outdoor ministry to make faith formation stronger together. When we partner, our youth and families benefit by growing stronger in their faith and relationships.

Good Earth Village Staff are available to worship with you and/or present portions of your worship services or adult education hour. Please contact us at 507-346-2494 or info@goodearthvillage.org to schedule.



• ANNUAL REPORT FROM GUSTAVUS CHURCH RELATIONS — DECEMBER 2025 •

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 2026.

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 2026 CALENDARS AND JOIN US FOR THESE SPECIAL EVENTS:

- **Annual Gustavus Association of Congregations Business Meeting Luncheon — APRIL 18, 2026** 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 20-26, 2026**, an exciting resource for high school youth interested in exploring creative alliances between faith and science. The theme for the 2026 Academy is ‘*The Mississippi: Scared Waters, Life-Giving Stories*’ For more information and to nominate a high school student: gustavus.edu/chaplain/academy.
- **Annual Nobel Conference® — OCTOBER 6-7, 2026** ‘*The Mighty Mississippi: Currents of Change*’ The Mississippi River is a dynamic intersection of geological forces, biological communities, human cultures, and ecological systems. On official maps, the Mississippi is merely the water that lies between two banks; however, as people Native to this place have known since time immemorial, “water is life”. This conference invites us to challenge conventional definitions by considering the indissoluble connections between the land, the water, and the beings who live in these places. The Nobel Conference 62 will explore how the basin has evolved, how the introduction of new fish and plant species has altered the river’s ecology, and how climate change, industry, river engineering projects, and other human uses pose challenges to the future health of the river and those who depend upon it. Indigenous perspectives will help us honor the river’s complex ecological, social and metaphysical contexts. More details can be found at: gustavus.edu/events/nobelconference.
- **Christmas in Christ Chapel — DECEMBER 4 -6, 2026** 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 found at: gustavus.edu/events/ccc.

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

2026 First Lutheran Church Slate of Officers

Officer / Board / Committee	Names (red = new elects)	Term of Office	Term Ends
President	Doug Hillson	One year	Jan. 2027
Vice President	Jennifer Wayne	One year	Jan. 2027
Secretary	Michelle Southworth	One year	Jan. 2027*
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
	Cheryl Olson	Three years	Jan. 2029
	Judy Brudwick	Three years	Jan. 2029
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
	Erik LaRock	Three years	Jan. 2029
	Doug Kinny	Three years	Jan. 2029
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**
	Nicole Wenzel	Three years	Jan. 2029
	Mandy Trom	Three years	Jan. 2029*
Youth Board – Adults	Anna McIntosh	Three years	Jan. 2028
	Eric Westphal	Two years	Jan. 2027
	Darren Schultz	Three years	Jan. 2029*
	Kelly LaMotte	Two years	Jan. 2028
Youth Board – Youth	Aubrey Klocke	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Evan Westphal	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Jakson Vermilyea	One year	Jan. 2027
	Haley Schlichter	One year	Jan. 2027
Endowment Committee	Ron Thorson	Three years	Jan. 2028
	Rachel Blaedorn	Three years	Jan. 2028*
	Jeff Kramer	Three years	Jan. 2027
	Sandy Kae Bass	Three years	Jan. 2029
	Barry Olson	Three years	Jan. 2029*
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. 2027*
	Trustee rep – Paul Habermann	One year	Jan. 2027
Scholarship Committee	Michelle Vigeland	One Year	Jan. 2027*
	Randy Zellmer	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Dean Meshke	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Marilyn Meshke	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Carol Kirkebon	One year	Jan. 2027*

Head Ushers	Wayde Bishop	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Mark Noble	One year	Jan. 2027*
Financial Secretaries	Harvey & Nancy Farr	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Bob & Joanne Nahlovsky	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Rich & Jean Schwartz	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Mark & Karen Thoen	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Cheri Krejci (alternate)	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Becky Noble (alternate)	One year	Jan. 2027*
Stewardship Committee	Brianna Masching	Two years	Jan. 2027
	Deb Lindquist	Two years	Jan. 2027
	Whitnei Abel	Two years	Jan. 2028*
	Stephanie Thorson	Two years	Jan. 2028*
	Trustee rep – Paul Tollefson	One year	Jan. 2027
	Chaired by Vice President – Jennifer Wayne	One year	Jan. 2027
Nominating Committee for 2026	Becky Noble	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Stacey Busho	One year	Jan. 2027*
	Julie Noble	One year	Jan. 2027
	Past President – Diane Olson	One year	Jan. 2027
	Council Sec.— Michelle Southworth	One year	Jan. 2027
	Pastor - Convener		
Synod Assembly Voting Members		One year	May 2, 2026
May 2, 2026 - Mankato		One year	May 2, 2026
		One year	May 2, 2026
		One year	May 2, 2026
		(lay alternate)	May 2, 2026
		(lay alternate)	May 2, 2026
	Pastor Laurel Meester		May 2, 2026
	Pastor Heidi Heimgartner		May 2, 2026

Offices independent of, but representing, First Lutheran put in nomination:			
Prairie Manor Representative	Julie Peterson	Three years	Jan. 2027*
Good Earth Village Rep.	Emma Basness	One year	Jan. 2027*
Gustavus Adolphus College Rep.	John & Lisa Bruns	One year	Jan. 2027*
First Luth/Westfield Cemetery Assoc	Jennifer Milton	Five years	Jan. 2031
	Julie Peterson	Five Years	Jan. 2027*
	Brian Hoveland	Five years	Jan. 2028
	Scott Sherva	Five years	Jan. 2029*
	Jennifer Wayne	Five years	Jan. 2030*

Key: * = second or more term

** = second and final term

+ = filling a term

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP YEHIEL CURRY

Dear friends in Christ,

As Lutherans, we are set free to love our neighbors and seek justice. In Colossians 2, we read: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (6-7).

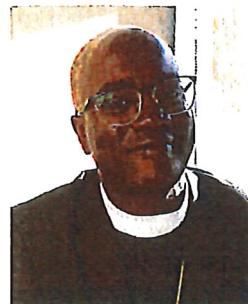
I am abounding in thankfulness for you, church. You are an integral part of this mission as we envision a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. The ministries of congregations including yours, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together today and every day so more people may know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love. From providing food to people experiencing hunger, to helping train the next generation of leaders that will lead this church, your support is at work here at home and around the world.

Your generosity to each of the three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has made it possible for us to do this work

together. Your financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices are so valued.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to continue to walk in Christ, remembering you are rooted and established in faith, and free to love and serve your neighbors. Thank you, church, for the ways you connect with and support our siblings across the ELCA and in our communities.

In Christ,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yehiel Curry".

The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America.

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

—Colossians 2:6-7

THROUGH YOUR GENEROSITY, GOD IS AT WORK ACROSS THE ELCA.

MISSION SUPPORT

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.

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Part of our church's long tradition of meeting human needs, ELCA World Hunger testifies to our hope for and commitment to God's promise of a time when we will hunger and thirst no more. ELCA World Hunger walks alongside communities in more than 60 countries — including the United States — to create unique solutions to hunger and poverty.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

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

WHERE NEEDED MOST

Where Needed Most supports the powerful ways we work together around the world — supporting leaders, inspiring young people, fueling ministries and championing global mission. Gifts to Where Needed Most support and sustain the people, congregations, synods and ministries working around the world to realize the hope-filled future God promises.



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Sign up to hear more stories of impact from the ELCA churchwide organization at ELCA.org/subscribe.

Read about Mission Support and learn more at
LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA.