

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



402-488-0919
www.flclincoln.org



1551 S. 70th Street
Lincoln, NE 68506

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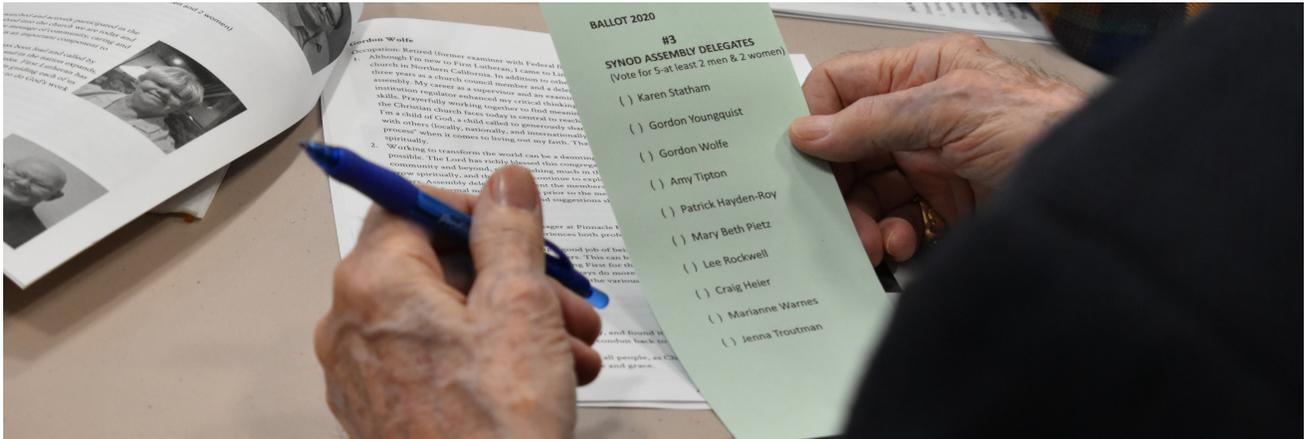
ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH | 03



One Hundred and Fifty First Annual Meeting January 31, 2021 / 12:30 PM / Lincoln, NE

- I. Call to Order and Establishment of Quorum (Michael McDannel, President)
 - II. Opening Devotions (Pastor Stephen Griffith)
 - III. Approve Agenda (Michael McDannel)
 - IV. Approve minutes of the Congregational Council meeting of the 150th Annual Congregational Meeting on January 26, 2020
 - V. Nominations and Elections (Kim Cordonier, Council Liaison to the Nominating Committee)
 - a. Endowment Fund Board
 - b. Nominating Committee
 - c. Synod Assembly
 - d. Church Council
 - VI. 2020 Membership Report (Pastor Stephen Griffith)
 - VII. Staff and Leadership Recognition (Michael McDannel)
 - VIII. New Business
 1. Motion to approve the Ministry Budget for 2021 (Kim Cordonier, Treasurer)
 2. Update on Call Process for Lead Pastor (Steve Eicher; Call Committee Chair)
 - IX. Old/Unfinished Business
 - X. Q&A: Reports of President, Staff, Committees and Boards
 - XI. Open Comment Period (Michael McDannel)
 - XII. Closing Prayer (Pastor Bill Peterson)
 - XIII. Adjournment
-



One Hundred Fiftieth Annual Meeting First Evangelical Lutheran Church January 20, 2020 / 12:30 PM / Lincoln, NE

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

The 150th Annual Meeting of First Evangelical Lutheran Church was called to order at 12:35 p.m. by President, Barry Graham. Church members signed in as they arrived. It was determined that a quorum (5% of members) was established. There were 979 confirmed members as of December 31, 2019. (5% x 979 members = 49 members is a quorum.)

II. OPENING DEVOTIONS

Pastor Warnes led the opening prayer.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved. It was approved by consensus.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND RATIFICATION OF THE ACTIONS OF THE 149th ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ON JANUARY 27, 2019

It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved. They were accepted by consensus.

V. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

a. CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Kim Cordonier, Chair of the Nominating Committee, read the names of the Council Nominees (Vote for 5): Bill Watts, Judy Batterman, Mark Wemhoff,

MINUTES OF 2020 MEETING

V. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS (cont)

a. CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (cont)

Karen Staham, Tracy Knezevic, Byron Fischer, Juli Johnson, Joan Johnson, Brian Niebuhr and Tony Anderson. No nominations were made from the floor. Barry declared nominations to be closed by unanimous consent.

b. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Kim read the names of the Nominating Committee Nominees (Vote for 3): Emily Mills, Kristy Williams, Tim Maack, Rebecca Simley, Angie Ripa and Steve Janssen. No nominations were made from the floor. Barry declared nominations to be closed by unanimous consent.

c. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Kim read the names of the Synod Assembly Nominees (Vote for 5 – at least 2 men and two women): Karen Staham, Gordon Youngquist, Gordon Wolfe, Amy Tipton, Patrick Hayden-Roy, Mary Beth Pietz, Lee Rockwell, Craig Heier, Marianne Warnes and Jenna Troutman. No nominations were made from the floor. Barry declared nominations to be closed by unanimous consent.

d. ENDOWMENT BOARD

Kim read the names of the Endowment Board Nominees (Vote for 1): Ann Carlson and Mary Boschult. No nominations were made from the floor. Barry declared nominations to be closed by unanimous consent.

VI. 2019 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Pastor Warnes stated that there were 1,181 baptized members as of December 31, 2019, 979 of whom have been confirmed. The names of those baptized in 2019 were read: Jordyn Murrell, Marielle Heydt, Logan Dufault, Collin Dufault, Finn Vogel, Carson Vasek, Alden Rarig, Nash Wiebelhaus, Jones Koffa, Jr., Willa Havens, Charlotte Reckmeyer, Wyatt Westhoff, Ryan Mitchell and Heidi Strasheim. The names of those who entered everlasting peace in 2019 were read: Corinne Pedersen, Stan Carlson, Ronald Johnson, Mable Jones, Clara Wasenius, Margaret Angelos, Virginia Meyer, Nancy Reissig, Garrison Glenn, Eleanor Hayes, Floyd Zobel, Anne Sandin, Terry Clementson, Dona Watermeier, Kristen Miller, Barbara Lyles, Varro Clarke, Jean Clarke, Gary Hansen, Bill Tesar, Noah Amland and Evan Bell.

MINUTES OF 2020 MEETING

VII. STAFF AND LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION

Barry recognized and thanked all staff, those who served in elected positions and those who served on formed committees. He thanked the Nominating Committee for their work as well as those who collected ballots. This was an especially difficult year for all of us as there was a need to adapt to change during construction.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINISTRY BUDGET FOR 2020 (BRIAN NIEBHUR, TREASURER):

It was moved and seconded that the congregation of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, approve the proposed 2020 ministry budget. Discussion followed.

The 2020 ministry budget recommended by the Finance Committee is based on total receipts and expenditures of \$992,200.

Projected offering receipts of \$968,450 represent an increase of 0.8% over 2019 offering receipts of \$960,528.

Total Benevolence/Serving giving of \$164,637 represents 17% of projected offering receipts, with 11.9% to the ELCA and Nebraska Synod (\$115,246) and 5.1% to local benevolences (49,391).

Program expenses (Worship, Learning and Hospitality/Care) total \$36,912; a decrease of (1.3%) over program expenses of \$37,400.

Support expenses total \$790,652; an increase of 3.6% over 2019 support expenses of \$763,020. More than half of the increase is due to \$35,180 transferred to the mortgage transition fund.

The motion passed.

b. 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Judy Bailey summarized the upcoming schedule for our 150th Anniversary Celebration. Information on the celebration will be posted in The Voice, Facebook and First Glance.

MINUTES OF 2020 MEETING

b. 150TH ANNIVERSARY (cont)

- Sunday, February 9; 9:30 am- Judy Batterman will share information about pastors through the years.
- Ed Zimmer will give a presentation on what the City of Lincoln was like 150 years ago.
- Sunday, February 23; 4:00 pm – There will be a tour of the church where First Lutheran was previously located (17th & A). We may be discussing a service project for the church that currently resides at 17th & A.
- Friday, April 24; 7:00 pm – Reception for Sons & Daughters of First Lutheran
- Saturday, April 25; 5:30 pm – Worship with Bishop Brian Maas preaching
- Saturday, April 25; 7:00 pm – Reception with past Vicars of First Lutheran
- Sunday, April 26; 8:15 & 10:45 am – Worship with Bishop Brian Maas preaching
- Sunday, April 26; 9:30 am – Dedication of our Welcoming & Accessibility Project
- Sunday, April 26; 11:45 am – Anniversary Banquet Dinner (ticket sales begin March 1 – consider buying a ticket for one of our guests)
- Sunday, April 26; 1:30 pm – Anniversary Program in new Sanctuary
- Sunday, June 14 – Community Open House

Judy thanked everyone who purchased coasters and ornaments. A few are left. Sales will resume in April.

Team is working on a timeline and photos.

We have three new banners that will be on display.

Patrick Hayden-Roy will work on church history.

Boyd Bacon is working on a new hymn.

We have a new Heritage Room where our history will be displayed.

The 150th anniversary is not a budget line item. The committee received a grant in the amount of \$1,000.

Additional funding came from the Endowment Board and Memorials. Contributions from the congregation are welcome.

IX. OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

MINUTES OF 2020 MEETING

X. Q&A REGARDING REPORTS OF PRSIDENT, STAFF, COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

Pastor Dan stated that First Lutheran has been successful because we have always had amazing leaders. He recognized Barry Graham, all Council members and the church staff for their great work.

XI. OPEN COMMENTS

A construction update was given.

- Things are going well.
- Lights are installed.
- Pews are under construction.
- Choir rehearsal room is nearly done.
- The offices of the pastors are nearly finished.
- The lower levels are nearly done. Dimensions will be here the 3rd week in August.
- For anyone who tours the new construction, care needs to be taken so we do not step on any tile before it is completed.
- Pastor Dan thanked the Building Committee an its Chair, Jim Handeland, for their great work.
- The new kitchen was used to serve up our spaghetti lunch. We may be able to see the new space on Palm Sunday, April 5.

We will have Lenten services at round tables in the Activity Center. We will have conversations about the future of First Lutheran. Prayers should be submitted to Pastor Dan.

A request was made for our youth to serve up smaller portions of spaghetti.

Barry relayed a conversation with Pastor Megan Morrow and Pastor Dan about why our conversation is special. This congregation is engaged, responsive and willing to have a conversation about anything. We treat each other respectfully.

Our constitution requires that we nominate two individuals for each position.

MINUTES OF 2020 MEETING

ELECTION RESULTS:

Congregational Council: Bill Watts, Judy Batterman, Byron Fischer, Brian Niebuhr and Tony Anderson

Nominating Committee: Kristy Williams, Rebecca Simley, Angie Ripa

Synod Assembly: Gordon Youngquist, Gordon Wolfe, Amy Tipton, Patrick Hayden-Roy and Marianne Warnes

Endowment Board: Ann Carlson

XII. CLOSING PRAYER

Pastor Warnes led the closing prayer.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:16 pm.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Ministerial Acts

Baptisms	7
Confirmations	7
Weddings	1
Funerals	13



Lucy Jo Zimmerman was the first person baptized in our new Sanctuary.



The wedding ceremony of Anna Ripa and Riley Johnson was the first in the new Sanctuary.

Membership Summary

	Baptized	Confirmed
Membership January 1, 2020	1181	979
Additions:		
Baptized	7	
New Members Received	16	12
Confirmation		7
Return to Active		
Other		
Total	23	19
Subtractions:		
Deaths	13	13
Transfer	14	12
To Inactive	5	5
Other	20	18
Total	52	48
Membership December 31, 2020	1152	950

We give thanks to God for the newly baptized in 2020: River Lynne Glover, Makayla Paige Peters, Veronica Marie Schaffer, Lucy Jo Zimmerman, Harlow Hughes, Camden Miller and Carson David Peters.

We give thanks for the blessed rest of everlasting peace into which each of the following entered in 2020: Carol Chappelle, Helen Lyles, Rex Cook, Carol Reed, Lawrence Glaser, Gerald Stamm, Andrew Morrow, Ann Holm, Elva Mares, Howard Johnson, Helen Bartholomew, Ethel Fairchild and Paul Thoren.

ZOOM

KEPT US CONNECTED

Almost every learning ministry pivoted to the virtual world using the Zoom platform. While it wasn't the same as meeting in-person, it allowed ministries to continue and for members to stay connected.

FAITHTREK APP

AT-HOME LEARNING RESOURCES

The new FaithTrek app provided weekly at-home faith formation resources for families of children, ages 3-5th grade.

GATHER & GAB

A NEW ONLINE LEARNING MINISTRY

A new weekly online ministry allowed members to explore a current news story and how they might respond to it as a Christian.

OUTDOOR LEARNING

NATURE EXPLORE CLASSROOM

The Nature Explore Classroom was renovated, following the building project, and in time for the opening of the Dimensions Education Program in August.



Kids from the Dimensions Education Program enjoy the new Nature Explore Classroom.

7

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

During our livestream worship service on Reformation Sunday, seven 9th graders affirmed their baptism.

SERVE HIGHLIGHTS

**14,000+2,666
+\$500**

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

Over 14,000 pounds of food from a summer food drive, plus \$500 by the Stewardship Committee, plus 2,666 food items from the Advent Drive Through was donated to the Lutheran Food Pantry.

201 + 1005

KEEPING THE FEET OF KIDS WARM AND DRY

Our Kicks for Kids campaign provided 201 pairs of shoes and 1005 pairs of socks for kids in need in the Lincoln area.

55

DELIVERING HOT AND NUTRITIOUS MEALS

Our Sunday and weekday Meals on Wheels ministry involves 55 members/families who deliver a friendly face and hot meal to shut-ins.

\$16,000+

GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

All-time-record-giving through the first Gifts of Hope online market will transform the lives of others locally, nationally and globally.



The middle and high school youth hosted a Red Cross blood drive that provided enough blood for 48 people.

192

HELPING THE HOMELESS

The middle and high school youth assembled 192 sock kits with donations from members (tube sock, lip balm, bottled water and hand sanitizer) for Matt Talbot and the home in-secure population they serve.

26 & 7,345

PRE-RECORDED WORSHIP

Starting Sunday, March 29, through Sunday, September 6, 26 pre-recorded online worship services were produced with a total of 7,345 people viewing the services [online](#).

5,338 & 254

LIVESTREAM WORSHIP

We livestreamed our first Sunday worship service from the Sanctuary to members through our [Facebook page](#) on September 13. Our livestream services have engaged 5,338 people, averaging 254 each Sunday.

COMMUNION

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Rite for Celebrating Communion at Home in Exceptional Circumstances was provided for individuals/families worshipping at home.

VIRTUAL CHOIRS

STILL SINGING PRAISE

The Spirit Ringers, Adult Choir and children's choirs met weekly for rehearsals on Zoom and pre-recorded their performances for Sunday worship - allowing us to continue hearing the music we have come to love and appreciate.



Cantors provided music during livestream worship while practicing social distancing.

CHURCH SEASONS

MISSING THE NORMAL

Our favorite in-person worship services - Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, Reformation Sunday, Advent, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day - were either pre-recorded or livestreamed to members.

7

ONE-TO-ONE CARE

Seven members completed Stephen Ministry training online, and joined the current team of seven, to provide confidential one-to-one care to members in need.

FELLOWSHIP

STAYING ENGAGED

The new [Facebook Fellowship Group](#) (boasting over 100 members), [Easter Surprise](#) video, [Grateful Hearts](#) online concert, [Parking Lot Christmas Caroling](#) event and Drive Throughs during the year kept members engaged with one another.

PRAYER

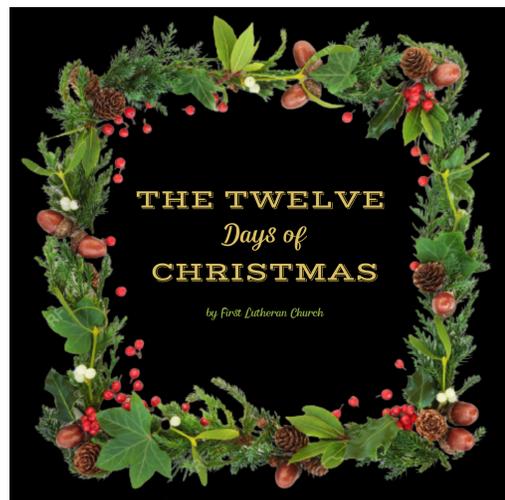
TURNING IT OVER TO GOD

Living through a pandemic required extra prayer and spiritual practice. A Facebook Prayer Vigil (prior to Election Day), regular check-in calls to members and helpful practices from our Spiritual Directors was vital.

150

ANNIVERSARY PUT ON HOLD

After kicking off 2020 with several activities in honor of our 150th anniversary, the pandemic forced us to postpone all scheduled events for the year.



The [12 Days of Christmas](#) digital book kept members engaged with daily Christmas carols performed by First Lutheran musicians.

\$13,400

GROWING FUND HELPS OTHERS

The First Lutheran Endowment Board disbursed \$13,400 to support First ministries and local charities.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

5%

DECREASED OFFERING RECEIPTS

Even with curtailed church activities for nearly ten months of 2020 our offering receipts decreased less than 5 percent, which certainly is a tribute to our stewardship commitment.

OVER \$50,000

CHARITY GIVING

Members contributed over \$50,000 to the Gifts of Hope charities, Food Pantry, Pastor's discretionary fund and Kicks For Kids!

\$3,905

INVESTMENT IN LIVESTREAMING

Installation of the livestream equipment in the Sanctuary was an investment that will increase our outreach to members and others.

\$110,798

SURPLUS FUNDS

Together, the operating surplus and Paycheck Protection Program funds, resulted in a total surplus of \$110,798 - allowing us to respond to the potential continued impact from the pandemic and any extra-ordinary expenses in the future.



Opening the Dimensions Education Program assists with our newly acquired mortgage payment, but more importantly, helps our community with child care challenges.

92%

BUILDING PLEDGES CONTRIBUTED

The building project was completed with high quality results and 92% of the building pledges already contributed.

BUDGET REPORT

by Bryan Hanson, Church Accountant

Operating Results

Total receipts decreased \$46,080 (-4.7%) due to pandemic curtailed church activities while at the same time our total expenses decreased \$108,878 (-11.2%) mainly due to staffing changes - resulting in a \$62,798 operating surplus for 2020.

In April, the Church Council had the foresight to apply for a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan for \$48,000. The funds were received on May 1. In November, documentation was provided to the Small Business Administration on how the funds were used and notice was received on November 16 that the loan was forgiven.

Together, the operating surplus and PPP funds, resulted in a total surplus of \$110,798. On January 5, 2021, the Council approved \$9,279 of additional benevolence payments with the remaining \$101,519 transferred to a Contingency Fund II account. From this fund, the Council approved purchase of a new copier for the office and Call Committee/Pastor relocation expenses incurred in 2021 will be paid from this



Contingency Fund. The remaining funds will be used for potential continued impact from the pandemic and any extra-ordinary expenses for use at the direction of future Church Councils.

In addition to the operating results, our members have shown tremendous generosity!! Examples include \$16,650 for the Gifts of Hope charities; \$16,292 for the Food Pantry/World Hunger (plus several tons of food donations); \$12,218 to the Pastor's discretionary fund; and \$6,134 for the Kicks For Kids campaign.

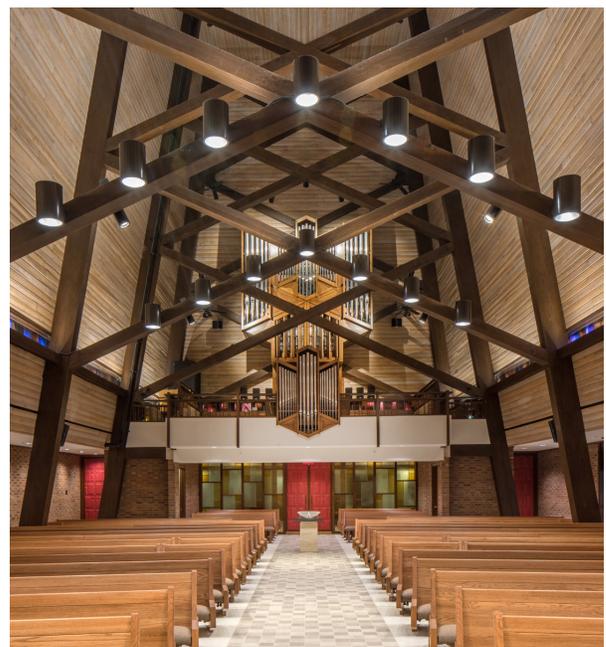
Building Project

\$2.53 million has been contributed by our members since April 2018 when the three-year capital campaign began, which is 92% of the total pledged amount of \$2.74 million. Expenses for the building project totaled \$4.4 million,

BUDGET REPORT (CONT)

requiring a beginning mortgage of \$1.978 million. Interest only payments were made through July, with the monthly principal/interest mortgage payment of \$11,726, beginning in August 2020.

As we progress into the follow-up three-year 'soft' pledge drive in 2021 those funds will be used to make the mortgage payments through 2024, with any excess funds applied as pre-payments to drive down the monthly mortgage payment to an amount that can be absorbed into the regular operating budget in 2025 - with the assistance of the Mortgage Transition Fund which we will continue to build-up through 2024.



BUDGET MOTION



MEETING DATE: January 5, 2021

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2021 Budget

PROPOSED ACTION: The Church Council of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, approve the proposed 2021 budget.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS: The 2021 budget recommended by the Finance Committee is based on total receipts and expenditures of \$948,100. Projected offering receipts of \$920,100 represents an increase of 0.7% over 2020 offering receipts of \$913,865.

Total Benevolence/Serving giving of \$147,216 represents 16% of projected offering receipts; with 11.2% to the ELCA and Nebraska Synod (\$103,051) and 4.8% to local benevolences (\$44,165).

Program expenses (Worship, Learning, and Hospitality/Care) total \$33,775; represents an increase of 21.0% over 2020 program expenses of \$27,918. Program expenses in 2018 totaled \$37,400.

Support expenses total \$767,109; an increase of 12.6% over 2020 support expenses of \$681,162. Support expenses in 2018 totaled \$763,020. The majority of the 2020 budgeted increase is for compensation and benefits as we work towards full staffing. In addition, our strategy of transferring funds to the Mortgage Transition Fund will continue for the third year.

SPONSORS: Kim Cordonier, Council Treasurer, on behalf of the Finance Committee, and Michael McDannel, Council President.

2021 Budget

RECEIPTS	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
Envelope Receipts	967,689	952,221	912,791	916,000
Loose Receipts	6,380	8,106	992	4,000
Sunday School	245	201	82	100
Offering Receipts	974,314	960,528	913,865	920,100
Misc & Building Use	7,911	8,514	3,370	4,000
Thrivent Choice Funds (Fund II transfer if needed)	7,000	4,273	-	-
Dimensions Early Childhood Income	-	-	10,000	24,000
PPP Funds (Paycheck Protection Program)	-	-	48,000	-
Other Receipts	14,911	12,787	61,370	28,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	989,225	973,315	975,235	948,100

EXPENSES	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
ELCA & Nebraska Synod Benevolence	136,404	121,027	108,750	103,051
<i>% of Offering Receipts</i>	14.00%	12.60%	11.90%	11.20%

Benevolence / Serving	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
World Hunger	8,000	6,500	6,500	8,000
LWR Disaster Relief	500	500	-	1,000
Food Bank / BackPack / Bridges Out Of Poverty	5,400	5,189	2,500	3,500
Lutheran Food Pantry	1,500	1,000	1,000	3,500
Bread For The World	500	500	500	500
Global Mission in Action (GMIA)	3,000	200	-	-
Lutheran Family Services	3,000	3,300	2,537	4,000
Matt Talbot Kitchen	1,451	1,444	825	1,200
Fresh Start	2,000	1,700	1,700	2,500
Tabitha / Meals on Wheels	3,385	3,500	3,695	6,000
Prison Ministry / Bridges To Hope	2,250	1,750	1,750	2,000
UNL Lutheran Center	1,000	500	-	1,000
UNL Capital Campaign	20,000	20,000	20,000	-
UNL Intern Support	5,000	4,500	4,000	4,000
Nebraska Campus Lutheran Ministries	1,000	700	500	1,000
Hunger & Clothing Discretionary Fund	473	585	100	965
Friendship Home	-	-	-	2,000
Clinic With A Heart	-	-	-	2,000
Camp Carol Joy Holling	-	-	1,000	1,000
Benevolence / Serving: Total	58,459	51,868	46,607	44,165
<i>% of Offering Receipts</i>	6.00%	5.40%	5.10%	4.80%

ELCA / Nebraska Synod, Benevolence / Serving	194,863	172,895	155,357	147,216
Grand Total % of Offering Receipts	20.00%	18.00%	17.00%	16.00%

Worship	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
Devotional Materials	244	386	422	425
Worship Supplies	6,274	4,967	7,324	4,700
Celebration/Speakers	150	-	-	-
Music Honoraria	850	300	-	500
Music/Choir	3,460	3,292	2,358	3,200
Music Conferences/Workshops	500	300	98	300
Organ/Piano Maintenance	1,890	1,200	1,378	1,750
Choir Fellowship	150	102	-	150
Drama Ministry	75	-	-	-
Worship: Total	13,593	10,547	11,580	11,025
<i>% of Offering Receipts</i>	1.40%	1.10%	1.27%	1.20%

Fund II Benevolence Giving 12 mos 2020

Gifts of Hope	\$ 16,650
Food Pantry / World Hunger	\$ 16,292
Pastor & Social Ministry discretionary fund	\$ 12,218
Kicks for Kids (cash donations)	\$ 6,134
Matt Talbot	\$ 2,770
Lutheran World Relief/Disaster Response	\$ 1,000
Endowment fund	\$ 5,020
Peoples City Mission	\$ 1,500
Noisy Offerings	\$ 1,094
Other	\$ 4,670
TOTAL	\$ 67,348
% of Offering Receipts	7.4%

Learning	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
Early Childhood	671	562	83	575
Elementary	2,603	1,319	1,261	1,900
Middle School	3,021	3,678	3,117	3,650
High School	7,359	7,113	7,079	7,000
Adults	615	731	245	650
Library & Media	279	294	-	100
The Lutheran	3,941	3,826	834	850
Advocacy	-	-	-	50
Creation Care	100	185	-	150
Learning: Total	18,589	17,708	12,619	14,925
<i>% of Offering Receipts</i>	1.91%	1.84%	1.38%	1.62%

Hospitality / Care	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
Hospitality	6,323	4,989	1,054	4,250
Stewardship	1,148	1,203	1,108	1,200
Fellowship	250	136	204	200
Funeral Lunches	46	1,225	129	150
Stephen Ministry	1,497	1,562	1,224	1,900
God's Work Our Hands	(24)	30	-	125
Hospitality / Care: Total	9,240	9,145	3,719	7,825
<i>% of Offering Receipts</i>	0.95%	0.95%	0.41%	0.85%

Support	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
Compensation	463,370	465,264	419,886	449,775
Pension/Health Insurance	132,712	127,938	91,150	125,874
Payroll Tax	37,819	38,139	36,671	35,937
Continuing Education	5,000	5,000	4,083	5,000
Pastors Professional Expense	275	264	165	400
Staff Professional Expense	190	124	100	200
Staff Hospitality	591	321	98	325
Staff Development	297	369	303	400
Conferences/Workshops (staff)	1,924	2,773	-	2,750
Synod Assembly (non-staff)	1,877	2,071	-	2,100
Auto & Travel	11,390	12,332	6,644	8,500
Postage	3,047	2,256	1,508	1,900
Background Checks	640	228	162	250
Office Supplies	5,097	4,914	3,779	4,350
Banking Fees	1,711	1,762	2,123	2,250
Communications	2,704	3,071	4,382	4,300
Printer Expense	6,651	7,191	3,602	800
Computer Needs	1,289	612	1,071	1,200
Insurance	17,738	20,174	22,423	23,544
Utilities/Telephone	42,129	34,071	30,473	32,250
Janitorial Supplies	1,858	1,832	1,645	1,000
Repairs & Maintenance	16,279	10,286	11,645	12,000
Maintenance Reserve Fund	6,000	5,000	6,000	7,000
Mortgage Transition Fund	-	9,900	25,180	36,804
Service Contracts	3,653	4,548	6,295	5,500
Lawn Care/Snow Removal	3,920	2,580	1,774	2,700
Support: Total	768,161	763,020	681,162	767,109
<i>% of Offering Receipts</i>	78.84%	79.44%	74.54%	83.37%

TOTAL EXPENSES	1,004,446	973,315	864,437	948,100
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TOTAL RECEIPTS	989,225	973,315	975,235	948,100
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	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
RECEIPTS LESS EXPENSES	(15,221)	0	110,798	(0)
	DEFICIT		SURPLUS	

\$9,966 transferred from Fund II Maint. Reserve	Transferred \$4,273 Thrivent funds to balance budget	Council approved \$9,279 additional benevolence payments
\$5,255 transferred from Fund II undesignated member gifts		Transferred remaining \$101,519 to Fund II Contingency Fund

12/31/2020

FUND II ACCOUNT ANALYSIS

POST-CLOSING

		BALANCE 12/31/2019	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	INTEREST	TRANSFER	BALANCE 12/31/2020
Housing Fund	Checking Acct	637.48	1,250.00		0.04	(1,600.00)	287.52
	Money Mkt Acct	5,820.61			5.49	1,600.00	7,426.10
	Housing Loan - Pastor Eller	10,000.00		(1,250.00)			8,750.00
Designated Fund	Checking Acct	123.65	94,532.59	(88,571.34)	0.19		6,085.09
	Money Mkt Acct	128,580.22			114.64		128,694.86
Memorial Fund	Checking Acct	1,432.74	7,508.00	(20,444.26)	0.12	12,000.00	496.60
	Money Mkt Acct	34,925.80			29.19	(12,000.00)	22,954.99
Flower Fund	Checking Acct	1,309.26		(416.16)	0.04	(1,000.00)	(106.86)
	Money Mkt Acct	1,724.46			1.71	1,000.00	2,726.17
Music Fund	Checking Acct	1,046.65	395.00		0.06	(1,000.00)	441.71
	Money Mkt Acct	2,267.10			2.19	1,000.00	3,269.29
Youth Fund	Checking Acct	552.71	15,813.94	(6,373.59)	0.18	(9,700.00)	293.24
	Money Mkt Acct	1,078.60			2.42	9,700.00	10,781.02
Capital Campaign Fund	Checking Acct	61,053.08	550,445.77	(337,102.63)	3.16	(268,000.00)	6,399.38
	Money Mkt Acct	81,028.67		(243,585.37)	40.21	268,000.00	105,483.51
	Mission Investment Chkg Acct	241.31	424.18		136.03		801.52
Mortgage Transition Fund	Checking Acct	400.41	26,835.00		0.60	(26,800.00)	436.01
	Money Mkt Acct	22,532.82			23.13	26,800.00	49,355.95
Maintenance Reserve Fund	Checking Acct	116.90	6,000.00		0.09	(6,000.00)	116.99
	Money Mkt Acct	41,047.23			37.67	6,000.00	47,084.90
Sabbatical Fund	Checking Acct	371.65					371.65
	Money Mkt Acct	10,932.38			9.88		10,942.26
Ministry Initiative Fund	Checking Acct	556.54			0.01		556.55
	Money Mkt Acct	12,149.99			10.97		12,160.96
Fair Trade Fund	Checking Acct	2,063.11	1,992.87	(1,573.63)	0.10		2,482.45
Seminary Scholarship Fund	Checking Acct	12.05	2,657.20	(1,000.00)	0.03	(1,000.00)	669.28
	Money Mkt Acct	3,776.41			3.52	1,000.00	4,779.93
Contingency Fund	Checking Acct	0.00	110,797.59				110,797.59
	Money Mkt Acct	0.00					0.00
		\$425,781.83	\$818,652.14	(\$700,316.98)	\$421.67	\$0.00	\$544,538.66

Called To Welcome Building Project

	Receipts	Disbursements					Balance
		Walsh		Hampton	MIF	MIF	
		Fundraising	RDG	Construction	Loan Advance	Loan Interest	Other Expenses
2015 - 2017	\$21,635.03						\$21,635.03
2018							
January	\$2,155.93	(\$40.31)					\$23,750.65
February	\$1,065.90	(\$15,092.88)					\$9,723.67
March	\$59.01	(\$11,728.84)					(\$1,946.16)
April	\$132,702.70	(\$28,855.69)	(\$13,597.18)				\$88,303.67
May	\$176,394.78	(\$13,447.34)	(\$39,887.50)				\$211,363.61
June	\$104,624.45	(\$12,342.49)	(\$49,494.06)			(\$2,600.00)	\$251,551.51
July	\$210,612.02					(\$1,040.00)	\$461,123.53
August	\$125,693.33		(\$21,292.26)			(\$4,742.35)	\$560,782.25
September	\$118,057.06					(\$860.00)	\$677,979.31
October	\$23,693.52	(\$441.48)	(\$31,263.88)				\$669,967.47
November	\$84,170.99		(\$50,430.58)			(\$6,403.86)	\$697,304.02
December	\$124,991.13		(\$14,058.05)			(\$13,933.86)	\$794,303.24
	\$1,104,220.82	(\$81,949.03)	(\$220,023.51)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$29,580.07)
2019							
January	\$51,289.55		(\$7,310.07)			(\$31,745.81)	\$806,536.91
February	\$42,564.32			(\$127,203.50)		(\$248.86)	\$721,648.87
March	\$83,469.91		(\$5,479.20)	(\$160,149.53)		(\$20,350.26)	\$619,139.79
April	\$34,268.96		(\$8,239.86)	(\$216,397.90)		(\$1,753.76)	\$427,017.23
May	\$18,690.20		(\$6,684.00)			(\$5,350.26)	\$433,673.17
June	\$84,244.95		(\$6,146.87)	(\$752,503.94)	\$295,000.00	(\$608.76)	\$53,658.55
July	\$175,316.02		(\$5,421.87)	(\$429,094.68)	\$273,000.00	(\$608.76)	\$66,849.26
August	\$98,797.81		(\$5,928.53)	(\$251,972.37)	\$97,000.00	(\$1,644.72)	\$2,348.69
September	\$29,655.99		(\$5,721.19)			(\$2,473.30)	\$23,362.83
October	\$39,581.22		(\$5,871.87)	(\$504,563.19)	\$458,000.00	(\$2,601.66)	(\$10,341.53)
November	\$61,631.18		(\$4,175.43)			(\$3,946.96)	\$21,338.65
December	\$164,859.95			(\$579,357.74)	\$540,000.00	(\$4,268.94)	\$142,323.06
	\$884,370.06	\$0.00	(\$60,978.89)	(\$3,021,242.85)	\$1,663,000.00	(\$14,935.58)	(\$102,192.92)

2020

January	\$62,658.88		(\$1,181.96)	(\$118,990.22)		(\$5,513.63)	(\$38,352.84)	\$40,943.29
February	\$64,197.70			(\$71,395.37)		(\$7,007.57)	(\$8,103.86)	\$18,634.19
March	\$45,338.98			(\$131,915.89)	\$130,000.00	(\$6,110.96)	(\$248.86)	\$55,697.46
April	\$54,081.97		(\$1,735.00)			(\$6,532.40)	(\$44,438.86)	\$57,073.17
May	\$51,821.90			(\$60,654.80)	\$50,000.00	(\$7,079.42)	(\$15,990.72)	\$75,170.13
June	\$31,803.89		(\$29,575.82)	(\$211,173.31)	\$225,000.00	(\$7,239.45)	(\$248.86)	\$83,736.58
July	\$35,993.98					(\$7,005.93)	(\$248.86)	\$112,475.77
August	\$66,224.51				(\$93,032.52)	(\$8,693.48)	(\$42,561.84)	\$34,412.44
September	\$16,204.61				(\$3,615.03)	(\$8,110.97)	(\$4,350.00)	\$34,541.05
October	\$24,975.34				(\$4,300.58)	(\$7,425.42)	(\$336.98)	\$47,453.41
November	\$46,919.41				(\$3,999.26)	(\$7,726.74)	(\$2,447.83)	\$80,198.99
December	\$44,211.42				(\$4,264.72)	(\$7,461.28)		\$112,684.41
	\$544,432.59	\$0.00	(\$32,492.78)	(\$594,129.59)	\$295,787.89	(\$85,907.25)	(\$157,329.51)	\$112,684.41

Total Disbursements To-Date (\$4,400,761.98)

TO-DATE TOTALS	\$2,554,658.50	(\$81,949.03)	(\$313,495.18)	(\$3,615,372.44)	\$1,958,787.89	(\$100,842.83)	(\$289,102.50)	\$112,684.41
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**Expected
Pledge Receipts**

2018	\$1,082,296
2019	\$832,788
2020	\$488,485
2021	\$286,474
2022	\$50,050
	\$2,740,093

OTHER EXPENSES:

\$ 7,342.35	TD2 Engineering - surveying
\$ 23,725.00	Bockmann - asbestos removal
\$ 7,015.00	Mission Investment Fund - closing fees
\$ 5,226.06	Builders risk insurance
\$ 3,787.20	PODS storage/refuse container
\$ 86,319.00	Ratigan-Schottler - pews/chairs
\$ 62,190.00	Wood Specialties - liturgical furnishings
\$ 15,000.00	Pianos Unlimited
\$ 3,576.38	White Castle Roofing - gutters/downspouts
\$ 8,100.00	AFL Fences - Dimensions playground fence
\$ 2,100.00	Allo - pull 12 data lines
\$ 11,646.47	Twin City Hardware - door hardware/re-key
\$ 5,274.27	Landscaping
\$ 9,483.00	Wenger Corp - choir risers/accessories
\$ 38,317.77	Skylight replacement
\$ 289,102.50	

CASH FLOW PROJECTIONS FOR MORTGAGE TRANSITION FUND

	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Budget 2021	Projected 2022	Projected 2023	Projected 2024	Projected 2025	Projected 2026	Projected 2027	Projected 2028
Offering Receipts	\$ 974,314	\$ 960,528	\$ 913,865	\$ 920,100	\$ 956,904	\$ 968,865	\$ 983,398	\$ 1,000,608	\$ 1,020,620	\$ 1,043,584	\$ 1,069,673
<i>% Change in Offering Receipts</i>	-0.92%	-1.41%	-4.86%	0.68%	4.00%	1.25%	1.50%	1.75%	2.00%	2.25%	2.50%
Other Receipts	\$ 14,911	\$ 12,787	\$ 51,369	\$ 4,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,200	\$ 8,400	\$ 8,600	\$ 8,800	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,200
Dimensions Early Childhood Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 989,225	\$ 973,315	\$ 975,235	\$ 948,100	\$ 988,904	\$ 1,001,065	\$ 1,015,798	\$ 1,033,208	\$ 1,053,420	\$ 1,076,584	\$ 1,102,873
Operating Expenses	\$ (794,362)	\$ (790,520)	\$ (683,900)	\$ (764,080)	\$ (779,362)	\$ (791,052)	\$ (802,918)	\$ (814,962)	\$ (827,186)	\$ (839,594)	\$ (852,188)
<i>% Change in Operating Expenses</i>	-0.90%	-0.48%	-13.91%	11.72%	2.00%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%
Benevolence	\$ (194,863)	\$ (172,895)	\$ (155,357)	\$ (147,216)	\$ (143,536)	\$ (145,330)	\$ (157,344)	\$ (170,103)	\$ (183,712)	\$ (198,281)	\$ (213,935)
<i>% of Offering Receipts</i>	20%	18%	17%	16%	15%	15%	16%	17%	18%	19%	20%
Transfer to Mortgage Transition Fund	\$ -	\$ (9,900)	\$ (25,180)	\$ (36,804)	\$ (66,007)	\$ (64,683)	\$ (55,537)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Mortgage Payment from Operating Budget	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (48,143)	\$ (42,522)	\$ (38,709)	\$ (36,751)
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ (989,225)	\$ (973,315)	\$ (864,437)	\$ (948,100)	\$ (988,904)	\$ (1,001,065)	\$ (1,015,798)	\$ (1,033,208)	\$ (1,053,420)	\$ (1,076,584)	\$ (1,102,873)
BUDGET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 110,798	\$ (0)	\$ (0)	\$ 0	\$ (0)	\$ (0)	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
MORTGAGE TRANSITION FUND:											
Estate Distribution rec'd November 2018	\$ 13,000										
Estate Distribution rec'd February 2020			\$ 1,655								
Transfer From Operating Budget (plus interest)	\$ -	\$ 9,933	\$ 25,204	\$ 36,844	\$ 66,067	\$ 64,763	\$ 55,637	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Mortgage Payment from Mortgage Transition Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (31,801)	\$ (37,422)	\$ (41,235)	\$ (43,193)
MORTGAGE TRANSITION FUND BALANCE	\$ 13,000	\$ 22,933	\$ 49,792	\$ 86,636	\$ 152,703	\$ 217,466	\$ 273,103	\$ 241,302	\$ 203,880	\$ 162,645	\$ 119,452
CALLED TO WELCOME											
Capital Campaign Receipts <i>(pledge total = \$2,740,093)</i>	\$ 1,104,221	\$ 884,370	\$ 544,433	\$ 286,474	\$ 50,050						
Three-year 'soft' capital campaign extension <i>(goal = \$822,000 30% of original capital campaign)</i>					\$ 274,000	\$ 274,000	\$ 274,000				
Monthly mortgage payment			\$ 11,726	\$ 11,726	\$ 10,060	\$ 8,831	\$ 7,788	\$ 6,662	\$ 6,662	\$ 6,662	\$ 6,662
Total mortgage payments for the year			\$ 58,630	\$ 140,712	\$ 120,720	\$ 105,972	\$ 93,456	\$ 79,944	\$ 79,944	\$ 79,944	\$ 79,944

Mortgage
started
8/1/2020
\$2,068,000

- Principal for year	\$ 19,212	\$ 45,634	\$ 42,649	\$ 39,208	\$ 31,802	\$ 31,522	\$ 33,012	\$ 34,571	\$ 36,204
- Interest for year	\$ 39,418	\$ 95,078	\$ 78,071	\$ 66,764	\$ 61,654	\$ 48,422	\$ 46,932	\$ 45,373	\$ 43,740
- Final year construction costs	\$ 425,441	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
- Change in capital campaign fund balance	\$ (29,639)	\$ (60,000)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
- Principal Pre-payments	\$ 90,000	\$ 205,762	\$ 203,330	\$ 168,028	\$ 180,544	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ 544,433	\$ 286,474	\$ 324,050	\$ 274,000	\$ 274,000	\$ 79,944	\$ 79,944	\$ 79,944	\$ 79,944
MORTGAGE BALANCE (end of year)	\$ 1,958,788	\$ 1,707,392	\$ 1,461,413	\$ 1,254,177	\$ 1,041,831	\$ 1,010,309	\$ 977,297	\$ 942,726	\$ 906,522

A REPORT FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

by Michael McDannel; December 12, 2020

We wrestled with new questions last year. For example: How are we church during a pandemic? And, how are we members of the church during a pandemic?

None of us had to answer those questions before 2020. There were no easy answers to those questions. However, looking back at last year it appears we answered those questions through our actions.

Last year:

- In July, we welcomed Stephen Griffith as our Transition Minister. Pastor Steve, as we know, is an excellent shepherd, pastor, guide, resource and much more.
- In April, Lindsey Boyle agreed to serve as Elementary Christian Education Coordinator and has provided First Lutheran with gifted direction in childhood education.
- In November, Kathleen Simley agreed to take on full-time, expanded duties as the First Lutheran Communications Director. Her passionate work kept us expertly informed and connected.
- Throughout the entire year, First Lutheran staff gracefully embraced additional duties and kept us operating efficiently and competently. THANK YOU, CHURCH STAFF!!



- We said goodbye and Godspeed to Lead Pastor Dan Warnes, Associate Pastor Justin Eller and Deacon Sunni Richardson.
- We said goodbye and Godspeed to Greg Fisher as church custodian.
- We began a partnership with Dimension Education Program.
- We established a very helpful and knowledgeable COVID & Crisis Management Task Force.
- We experienced COVID as a church family disrupting all areas of our personal and worship life.
- We connected virtually for worship and small group meetings. This presented us new

A REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT (CONT)



The 2020 Church Council

challenges, along with new opportunities.

- We finished an approximate 4 million dollar building project.
- We diligently continued to focus on funding the building project through a dedicated and reasoned budget (thank you, thank you, thank you to Bryan Hanson for his dedicated, spot-on service).
- During May and June we collected over 14,000 pounds of food for the Lutheran Food Pantry.
- In October, Kicks for Kids provided 201 pairs of shoes and 1005 pairs of socks for area students.
- The Church Council worked diligently and overtime as it tackled

COVID related issues regarding how are we “safely” the church.

- The Council took on several staffing questions that focused on both rostered and non-rostered staff.
- The Council established a Lead Pastor Call Committee and the full Council drafted the 2020 First Lutheran Ministry Site Profile.
- The Council's Executive Committee provided the Council with superb guidance. That Committee is comprised of Denise Mainquist, Vice President; Judy Bailey, Secretary; Kim Cordonier, Treasurer; and Pastor Steve Griffith. Rev. Megan Morrow,

A REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT (CONT)

Assistant to the Bishop, provided us timely and complete answers to numerous questions as First Lutheran lay leadership worked on questions relating to transitional ministry, the call process and saying goodbye to Pastor Dan, Pastor Justin and Deacon Sunni.

- As of the date of this report, our church budget had a significant surplus for 2020. (Congratulations to us!)
- We observed our 150th anniversary as a church throughout the year. However, we were unable to celebrate as we had planned and hoped.
- And there is much more...

Throughout last year and the years that preceded 2020, First Lutheran Church experienced great times and challenging times, times of growth and times of renewed dedication.

Throughout the years we are accompanied by a God who comforts, counsels and encourages us. A God who never fails us and who will accompany us and First Lutheran Church in 2021 and beyond.



Pastor Dan and Marianne Warnes



Deacon Sunni Richardson



Pastor Justin, Kari and Everette Eller

A REPORT FROM THE TRANSITION PASTOR

by Rev. Stephen Griffith

Who could have imagined what the year 2020 would bring? The year was marked by both disappointment and joy, often simultaneously. In the midst of pastoral transitions, pandemic-induced isolation, racial unrest, and social upheaval, we have wondered what else could happen. Anxiety is a natural response in such times, and we have known times of fear, uncertainty and doubt. But we also have accomplished much good that must be celebrated. I will refer you to the reports of other staff and committees for many of the details, but I want to highlight a few significant areas of the congregation's life.

Building Project

The Welcoming and Accessibility project was completed in July. The new entrance and Gathering Space provides an open and inviting area for people coming into the building. The completely renovated Sanctuary is a place of beauty where the congregation will worship and encounter God's presence. The remodeled lower level south classrooms are home to Dimension Education Program, offering a place for excellent early childhood education. The new kitchen is spacious and functional.



We offer many thanks to the Building Committee for their hard work and commitment to making our facility an exceptional resource for worship and prayer, learning and fellowship, and serving the community in Christ's name. I commend the committee members, Brianna Brass, Steve Eicher, Steve Janssen, Brian Niebuhr, Cindy Timperley, Dara Troutman, Robin Westhoff, and especially chairperson Jim Handeland, who spent countless hours reviewing details and following up with questions, decisions and tasks to be completed.

We look forward to the time when we can come together as a congregation to celebrate this accomplishment and dedicate this renewed facility.

A REPORT FROM THE TRANSITION PASTOR (CONT)

COVID-19 Pandemic

Just as the building project was nearing completion, the spread of COVID-19 illness reached pandemic levels and, like businesses, schools, and churches across the country, we drastically changed the way we do ministry. A team of volunteers called and emailed members regularly to help people isolated at home stay connected. Since March we have worshiped electronically, first providing pre-recorded worship resources, then streaming live video services from the Sanctuary. Brian Niebuhr designed and installed a system to present worship services live on our website and Facebook page, as well as recording them for later viewing. We plan to offer this way of participating in worship even after we resume live worship in person. Sharon Hardel and Lindsey Boyle of our staff developed ways of engaging our FaithTrek children, youth and families in learning and faith development. Bible studies, fellowship groups and committees met online using Zoom. Our church office remained open for business purposes. The Council and I have appreciated good advice from a task force including, Dr. Bob Rauner, Bill Watts, Judy Batterman, Bryan Hanson, Sharon Hardel and Masako Bacon. These are great joys!



The pandemic forced staff to work from home and engage with one another through virtual meetings.

Call Process and Ministry Transition

All three rostered leaders of First Lutheran accepted other calls in 2020. Pastor Dan Warnes is now a chaplain with Tabitha Hospice. Pastor Justin Eller accepted a call with the Southeastern Synod as Associate to the Bishop for Latino Ministry Strategy, based in Atlanta, Georgia. It is unusual to say farewell so many times in one year, and some members wondered aloud if something was wrong in the congregation. Although I am a newcomer, I have known this congregation in the community for many years. I can testify that nothing at all is wrong. In fact, it is very right. God is at work in First Lutheran, and in the ministries of Dan, Justin and Sunni. It is because of this congregation's faithfulness, strength and deep

A REPORT FROM THE TRANSITION PASTOR (CONT)

spiritual life that these three gifted ministers were able to hear and respond to new callings and follow where God is leading.

Now the process of calling a new lead pastor is under way. The Council has prepared an impressive Ministry Site Profile which is now shared across the country. The Call Committee is chaired by Steve Eicher, and also includes Wendy Bonaiuto, Grace Monson, Bol Ngok, Dave Schmitter and Amy Tipton. They will soon receive names of candidates and begin working to discern who they will recommend as the next lead pastor.

Late in December, the Council hired Pastor Bill Peterson as a second Transition Pastor. He will serve three-quarter time on a six-month contract, beginning January 11.

I am pleased to have been with you here for these past six months. Serving as your Transition Pastor is a joy and I'm honored to be able to walk with you during this process. I'm also very pleased that Pastor Bill Peterson is joining me in this ministry. He will be a welcome addition to the First Lutheran staff.



Pastor Justin and Pastor Steve do a skit, written by a FaithTrek student, during Sunday morning FaithTrek hour.

Staffing

Three other staffing changes must be noted briefly. In June, Lindsey Boyle began a half-time position as Elementary Christian Education Coordinator. In this role, she works with the FaithTrek children and their families.

In September, Greg Fisher resigned as our Building Superintendent to devote time to his own business. We are presently contracting with an outside company for custodial services and we are interviewing for a part-time Building Superintendent.

A REPORT FROM THE TRANSITION PASTOR (CONT)

In December, Kathleen Simley began a full time position as Communications Director, expanding her previous part-time job to include the increased responsibilities added in response to the pandemic.

Advent and Christmas

I want to say a special word of thanks to Masako and Boyd Bacon, Kathleen Simley, and more than 90 members of the First Lutheran family who participated in Advent and Christmas services and activities. For our Wednesday Advent Services, musicians and speakers recorded the Holden Evening Prayer service each week, which then was posted on our website and Facebook. Similarly, two recorded Christmas Eve services were shared online, featuring many musicians. An Advent Drive Through and a Parking Lot Carol Sing brought people together to celebrate outdoors. The Gifts of Hope alternative market went completely digital with an online catalog and store, and raised over \$16,000 for nine non-profit organizations. And more musicians contributed to daily posts celebrating the Twelve Days of Christmas. Even when kept apart by the pandemic, the congregation found creative ways of celebrating together and encouraging one another.

Thank you

I began by noting that we have experienced both disappointment and joy. One disappointment, of course, is that of the exciting celebrations planned for the 150th Anniversary. I'm sure we will return to these when we are able to gather again. Perhaps we can look forward to the 150th+1! But even in the midst of disappointments and challenging circumstances, the people of First Lutheran have continued worshiping and praying, learning and growing in faith and fellowship, and serving Christ in the community in remarkable ways. You completed a major construction project and continued your strong support for the church. You showed incredible generosity in giving to the Lutheran Food Pantry, Lutheran Family Services, Kicks for Kids and other community ministries. Such faithfulness is a joy and an inspiration.

I am grateful to you for the patience, flexibility and grace you have shown me and each other. I count it a privilege to be here in ministry with you in this extraordinary time. I owe special thanks to the church staff, our Council and Executive Committee, and especially Council President, Mike McDannel, for their guidance and support.

A REPORT FROM THE FORMER ASSOCIATE PASTOR

by Pastor Justin Eller

Blessings

"We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3) It was a huge blessing for me to serve with you for the past four years as one of your Pastors and witness God at work in you, in our midst, and in our community. I am grateful for the opportunities to worship, pray, learn, and serve alongside you. I am indeed proud to have served this congregation. A special thanks to our Church Council and Executive Committee, for all the extra care and hours they put in this year. May God continue to bless you all.

Pandemic

A year or so ago, staff read together the book, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* by Tod Bolsinger. The adaptive leadership theories were great, but it all made more sense when the pandemic hit mid-March and First Lutheran had to adapt and close our church facilities to keep the community safe from the coronavirus spread. While none of us anticipated that the pandemic would last as long as it has,



it has affected every aspect of congregational life. All of First Lutheran Church's ministries shifted in 2020 to reflect the new ways we were adapting as a congregation.

Transitions

Not only did the pandemic push the congregation to assume a posture of adaptability, but so did staffing transitions in 2020. In March, Deacon Sunni Richardson left her call as Director of Discipleship to become the Director for Leadership Development for the Nebraska Synod. In May, Pastor Dan Warnes left his call as Lead Pastor to become a Hospice Chaplain for Tabitha in Lincoln. In July, Pastor Steve Griffith joined First as Transitional Pastor. In

A REPORT FROM THE FORMER ASSOCIATE PASTOR (CONT)

October, I left my call as Associate Pastor to become the Assistant to the Bishop for Latino Ministry Strategy of the Southeastern Synod. This year, we also welcomed Lindsey Boyle as our new Elementary Christian Education Coordinator in June and said thanks and farewell to Greg Fisher as our Building Superintendent in October. A big thanks and kudos to all the staff who faithfully served with care, flexibility, humor and grace in the midst of all the change.

Worship & Prayer

- **Worship in a Global Pandemic.** When the pandemic hit, we quickly pivoted to virtual worship. Over the weeks and months, our worship services evolved from voice recording only of sermons, to audio of the whole liturgy, to audio of the liturgy and video for the children's message and sermon, to members offering musical and reading videos for worship, to before and after worship announcement slides, to live streaming worship from the Sanctuary, to eventual reintroduction of in-person worship in the newly renovated Sanctuary. This year, we provided the Rite for Celebrating Communion at Home in Exceptional Circumstances to all members. What a journey we have been on together!



Members provided recorded readings from home for pre-recorded Sunday worship services during the pandemic.

- **150th Anniversary.** Shortly after our congregational tour of our previous church facility at 17th and A on February 23rd, the coronavirus pressed the pause button on all celebrations connected to large gatherings: former pastors, vicars, daughters and sons of the congregation; dedication of ourselves and our newly remodeled space of the Welcoming and Accessibility Building Project; and the Open House to the city of Lincoln.

Learn

- **Dinner + Learning Confirmation Program.** The hybrid model of

A REPORT FROM THE FORMER ASSOCIATE PASTOR (CONT)

virtual and presencial family faith learning continues to be a successful model that we have developed at First Lutheran for our confirmation program. The reality of this learning program being a hybrid model with a virtual learning component, made the pivot to all online learning in the early months of the pandemic easier. In October, we resumed in-person learning with the youth. We currently have 14 middle school families in the program (6 seventh graders and 8 eighth graders). We will approach the learning modality in the spring of 2021 with a spirit of adaptability and nimbleness. For more information, you can [check out the parent information webpage](#),

- Dimensions Education Program and Nature Explore Classroom. This new partnership with Dimensions, that began in August, was a long anticipated return to having little learners in the church facilities throughout the week. We are excited to have the opportunity to partner in this way with a top-notch early childhood education organization.
- Adult Learning Opportunities. All Bible studies, book groups, Circles, Adult Forum and other adult learning



Confirmation Retreat at Camp Carol Joy Holling

opportunities pivoted to virtual learning via Zoom from mid-March to the time of this report.

Serve

- High School Accompaniment Experiences. Before the summer 2020 Accompaniment Trip to the Appalachian region of North Carolina, I partnered with Sharon Hardel and others to work on the mountain culture orientation, stereotypes and role of power in our serving relationships with the high school youth.
- Serve Task Force. Early in the year, I served with others on a task force aimed at creating guiding principles, frameworks,

A REPORT FROM THE FORMER ASSOCIATE PASTOR (CONT)

language and theology around why we serve the way we serve and with whom. This team took a break when Deacon Sunni took her new role with the Synod and the pandemic made our meetings more difficult.

- We Are Church for the Sake of the World Working Group. My role as Co-Chair of this Nebraska Synod Strategic Vision Working Group continued in 2020 and concluded in the fall with a look back over the past four years of the Synod's strategic vision. You can read more about what we did by [visiting this site](#).

Care

- Stephen Ministry. In 2020, we trained 9 members in the Stephen Ministry, one-to-one confidential Christian caregiving ministry, with 7 of them being commissioned in the summer. The learning sessions started in person at the beginning of the year, took a pause early in the pandemic, and resumed virtually for the participants to finish. We are grateful for the dedication and care of our Stephen Ministers for folks who are journeyng through difficult life moments.
- COVID-Care Calling. A new ministry began with church volunteers



I heard nothing but gratitude for getting a call from a fellow church member.

FIRST LUTHERAN COVID-19 OUTREACH CALLER

calling other church members to check in with them through a caring phone call or email. This helped parishioners stay connected despite the pandemic.

Sustainability

- DHHS-Personal-Protective Equipment for Faith Communities Grant. \$500, Funded. We applied for and were awarded for PPE and cleaning supplies from the city.
- Immanuel Vision Foundation "Service to Others" Grant. \$10,000, at the writing of this report, the funding is pending. Awards will be decided in November 2020. We applied for a grant to help us with the materials and learning installations in the

A REPORT FROM THE FORMER ASSOCIATE PASTOR (CONT)

Nature Explore Classroom that comes with the Dimensions Education Program. These expenses are not listed in the congregation budget.

- First Lutheran Seminary Scholarship Fund Statement of Operating Policy and Application Packet. A new operating policy was created to help the congregational leadership make decisions with regards to awarding financial support to current and future seminarians. Additionally, the policy presents a clear understanding of the parameters around the scholarship support to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the Seminary Scholarship Fund. An application packet was designed to help current and future seminarians apply for financial support from the First Lutheran Seminary Scholarship Fund.
- New Members. We postponed our spring new member sessions due to all the activities around our anniversary celebrations and Lent. Then we postponed the session due to the pandemic, until we were able to hold the new member sessions virtually in the early fall and receive our newest members in October.



Pastor Justin, Kari and Everette with members at their Farewell Drive Through.

Family

I give thanks to God for my family and the many blessings of 2020. Kari continued her work as a Program Coordinator with the William H. Thompson Scholars Learning Community and began her doctoral studies at UNL. Everette was super flexible with adapting to remote learning for the end of 3rd grade and the first semester of his 4th grade year. I could not be the pastor and teacher that I am if it were not for Kari and Everette; their love, support, prayers, and reminding me to laugh and play. For all of that and so much more, I give thanks to God for them both each day.

A REPORT FROM THE DIRECTORS OF MUSIC & WORSHIP

by Boyd and Masako Bacon

Thanks be to God for the Lord's blessings and guidance, even in the midst of the crazy pandemic that took most of 2020. As many normal events were canceled, other unusual things developed. We are grateful for the faithful, resilient people of First Lutheran who never ceased serving during this wild transitional year. My annual report focuses on gratitude to those who led us to finish the year of 2020 strong.

Worship and Music Committee

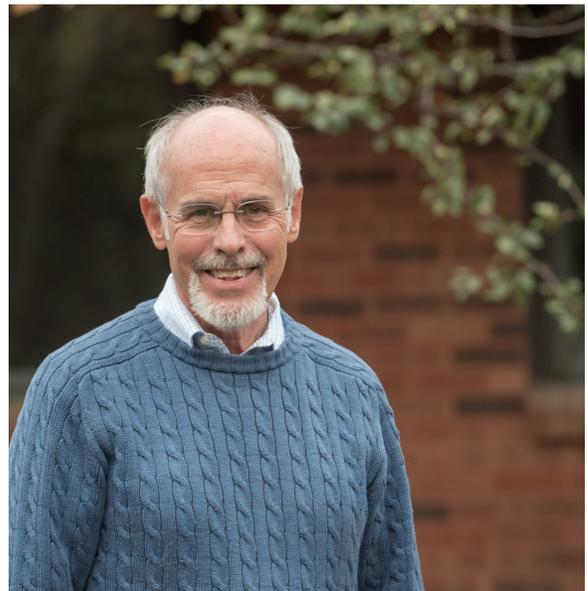
You will read their report for the details, though, their hard work planning for the transition to the newly remodeled Sanctuary, turned into setting up online/livestreaming worship and setting up a policy for when we resume in-person worship services.

Worship Assistant Coordinator

Judy Bailey has served for the last three years setting up online sign-up for worship assistants. She served with such care, leading us through the transition from an "assigned" format to "volunteering" online. We are grateful for her ministry. Harold Sutter has graciously taken over this duty.

Live Streaming

After several months of hard work by



Kathleen Simley creating pre-recorded online worship services, the proposal to purchase livestream equipment by Brian Niebuhr was approved by the Church Council. Brian designed, installed and tested it before the first livestream worship

A REPORT FROM THE DIRECTORS OF MUSIC & WORSHIP (CONT)

service on Sunday, September 13. He spent many volunteer hours in the evenings and on weekends. His efforts saved the church financially and will help with future maintenance immensely.

Music Ministry Team

This was a very challenging year for all to rely on digital devices. We are so grateful for the people who made extra efforts and stepped out of their comfort level in order to continue our music ministry in worship services.

- Adult Choir: Resumed their rehearsals in late August on Zoom. Like other choirs, the rehearsal time was shortened. We met weekly for devotions and a brief rehearsal. The first virtual choir sang on Christ the King Sunday. The second virtual choir sang on Christmas Eve with the number of participants doubling.
- Spirit Ringers: Resumed their rehearsal in late August in-person while the COVID dial remained at the “orange” or “yellow” level. Since the dial moved to “red” in the beginning of November, the rehearsals were moved to Zoom and recorded virtually.
- Chorister Choir: Transformed them as an “Orff Ensemble” and met in-person



Members shared recorded music from home for Sunday pre-recorded worship services.

from the end of August until the COVID dial moved to “red” in November. It is a unique blessing to have the number of Orff instruments that we do and have the director, Erin Niebuhr, who completed all the certification to teach Orff ensembles. We welcomed a few new members and borrowed extra instruments from Nebraska Wesleyan University. We purchased two instruments using memorial gifts. We also applied for the “Bring Back Music Redemption” program, offered by Academic Alliance (COVID stimulation program), to receive one free instrument.

A REPORT FROM THE DIRECTORS OF MUSIC & WORSHIP (CONT)

- Cherub Choir: Has met weekly on Zoom since late August. Jan Mares kept them engaged with singing and simple rhythmic activities. They recorded their first virtual choir which was featured in worship the last Sunday in December.
- Brass: Shared their music on Reformation Sunday and Christmas Eve. They rehearsed outside while the weather was reasonable and then moved the rehearsals into the Activity Center and the Sanctuary with bell covers (masks for the instruments).
- Cantors: Amazing First Lutheran treasures. I never had a trouble finding cantors. Dedicated people, with musical gifts, who have blessed us to lead our worship services.

Soli Deo Gloria!

(To God alone be the glory!)



Prior to the pandemic, worship was held in the Activity Center while the Sanctuary was being renovated.

A REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

by Sharon Hardel

2020 was a challenging year...it started in the usual way with service opportunities, like the Souper Bowl of Caring, serving a meal at Matt Talbot, the spaghetti feed, pancake dinner, Valentine's party, Confirmation Dinner + Learning sessions and Middle and High School Sunday morning classes. But, it quickly became the year of Zoom, mask wearing and creative ways to do ministry while social distancing...not to mention all the staff changes.

We were not able to go on our summer accompaniment trips or overnight retreats, or gather for Vacation Bible School, but we still managed to stay connected through technology and outdoor activities and as I looked back through pictures I realized we still did a lot. I want to thank parents, students, and congregation members who have been patient and understanding as we have tried new ways to "do church". Thank you for participating, praying, learning Zoom applications, supporting drive through pickups and drop offs, using emailed lessons and family conversation pages to practice faith in your homes and wearing masks to keep each other safe.



As you will see through the photos on the following pages, it has still been quite an active year with many creative ways to continue doing ministry. I am looking forward to 2021 and hope we can be back together face-to-face. I am praying for all of you to remain healthy and safe and thanking you again for your help in getting through 2020!

A REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY (CONT)

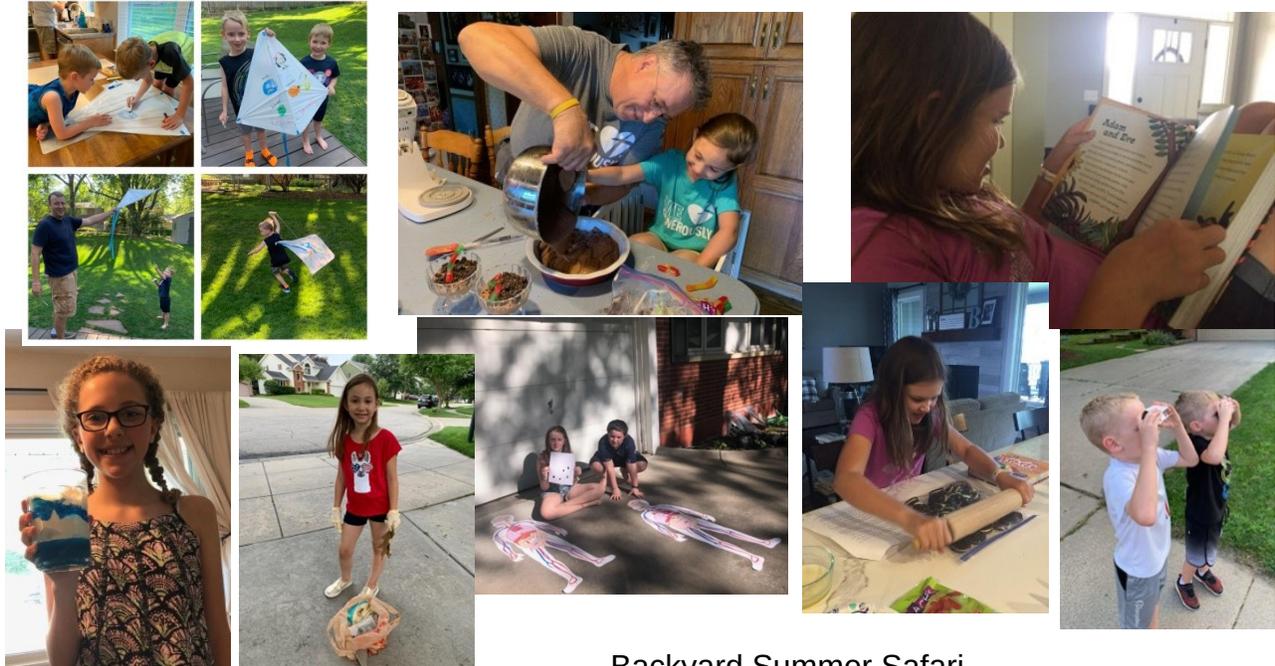


Dinner + Learning



Middle and High School Youth Groups

A REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY (CONT)



Backyard Summer Safari



Backpack Blessing and Advent Drive Through

A REPORT FROM THE ELEMENTARY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR

by Lindsey Boyle

In June I was happy to begin my new job as part-time Elementary Christian Education Coordinator. I began attending staff meetings, meeting weekly with Pastor Justin and imagining with Pastor Justin and Sharon Hardel what the remainder of 2020 would look like.

In July I began planning for FaithTrek registration and meeting with staff of the Dimensions Education Program to plan our shared spaces. I also attended a staff workday at Camp Carol Joy Holling.

August was a busy month of planning for a virtual semester of FaithTrek and launching the First Lutheran FaithTrek app. We also hosted the Backpack Blessing Drive Through event in August.

In September we launched the FaithTrek app and kicked off FaithTrek with an outdoor family style event. Families traveled to different stations to complete service projects.

In October we were able to gather outdoors for another family FaithTrek event. This time we learned about



different talents God has blessed us with and kids talked in groups with their FaithTrek Guides about their own abilities.

On November 22 families were invited to participate in the congregational Advent Drive Through event. We handed out Advent kits at this event, as well as Thanksgiving conversation and scripture activities.

In December we supplied families with daily Advent activities and weekly family devotionals. We



A REPORT FROM THE ELEMENTARY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR (CONT)

hosted a family Zoom movie night on December 13.

Each week the First Lutheran FaithTrek app was updated and families were communicated with by e-mail.

It has been a challenge and a blessing to help families grow in faith together during this time and I am looking forward to finding more creative ways to connect in 2021.



FaithTrek kids and parents gathered outdoors on Sunday mornings for learning hour while much of the learning happened in the home with weekly resources provided.

COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS

696 & 613 & 49,288

FACEBOOK REACH

Our [Facebook page](#) garnered 130 new followers (for a total of 696), 81 new page likes (for a total of 613), and our posts reached 49,288 people in 2020.

173 & 979

INSTAGRAM REACH

Our [Instagram](#) following increased in 2020 to 173 followers and our posts reached 979 people - a 72.7% increase from 2019.

273

NEWS POSTS

The [News blog](#) on our website was home to 273 posts in 2020.

60% & 30%

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Our [Wednesday First Things First](#) newsletter was sent to a record high of 585 people in 2020. The average open rate of the emails was 60% (17% higher than the average in the church industry). Our average click rate on links within the email was 30% (10% higher than the industry average).

2,409

LIVESTREAM

Since our first livestream worship service on September 13, 2020, our [livestream web page](#) has had 2,409 views.

16,681 & 48,648

WEBSITE REACH

The [homepage](#) of our website was visited 16,681 times in 2020, and with all webpages combined, we had 48,648 total page views.

A REPORT FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

by Kathleen Simley

“Faith doesn’t mean trusting God to stop the storm, but trusting him to strengthen us as we walk through the storm.”

This was a quote that accompanied a prayer and devotion I posted on our Facebook page on March 17, 2020 – four days after we closed our doors to in-person activities due to COVID-19. Out of 325+ posts I put on our Facebook page in 2020, it was the post that garnered the most response and reached the most people during the year. After being shared by 60 people, it reached over 6,100 people around the world.

The quote seemed to speak to the hearts and souls of many. It didn’t matter who you were or where you lived in the world, everyone felt like they were in a storm – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

As your part-time Communications Coordinator at the time, I remember preparing the email that was sent to all First Lutheran members on March 13, 2020, stating “the church is closing indefinitely due to the coronavirus.” I felt the magnitude of the message was larger than any other message I had ever sent during my five years of serving in this



position. Now in hindsight, my feeling was spot on. The impact that one message had on us, individually and as a congregation, has been long-lasting.

My response during the first three months of the pandemic was a “Take the Bull by the Horns” response. In a matter of days after the church was closed, I went from worshiping in the pew on Sunday mornings to producing pre-recorded online worship services each week. My calendar was filled with meetings and conversations with staff, leaders and lay people to re-think how to do

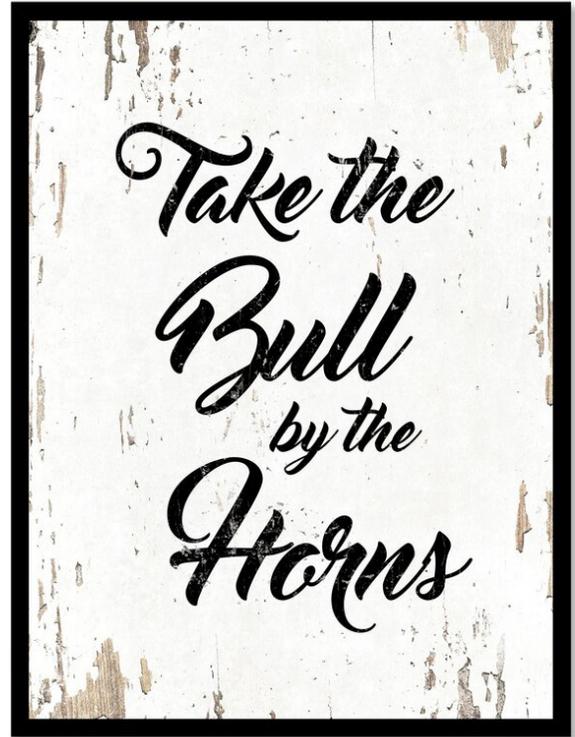
A REPORT FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR (CONT)

ministry during a pandemic. Over time and the longer the pandemic continued, my role in the life of First Lutheran expanded beyond my normal responsibilities.

The first three months of this “Take the Bull by the Horns” response for me came with a lot of energy, passion and optimism. Then came part two of my pandemic response, which I call my “Ennui pandemic response.” It hit me in late summer and this phase included increases in forgetfulness, disorganization, irritation and fatigue.

Turns out, this Ennui pandemic response was a real thing. I recently read an article that said many of us 3-4 months into the pandemic experienced what experts call “surge capacity depletion.” According to journalist, Tara Huelle, surge capacity is “a collection of adaptive systems - mental and physical - that humans draw on for short-term survival in acutely stressful situations, such as natural disasters.” But as Huelle observes, our surge capacity isn’t endless; it has to be renewed.

The surge of energy I had at the beginning of the pandemic had become depleted and with the pandemic forecasted to continue into the winter, I questioned whether I had the capacity and strength to continue as



your Communications Coordinator. I felt called to a time of renewal and discernment. And so, I began a week-long vacation at home in late September.

Four days into my vacation I was in my backyard enjoying a beautiful, quiet and peaceful afternoon. I remember feeling very present in the moment – more than I had been in a long time. And then, right there in the middle of my backyard, in that moment, I received a message. The message was so loud and clear it stopped me from doing what I was

A REPORT FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR (CONT)

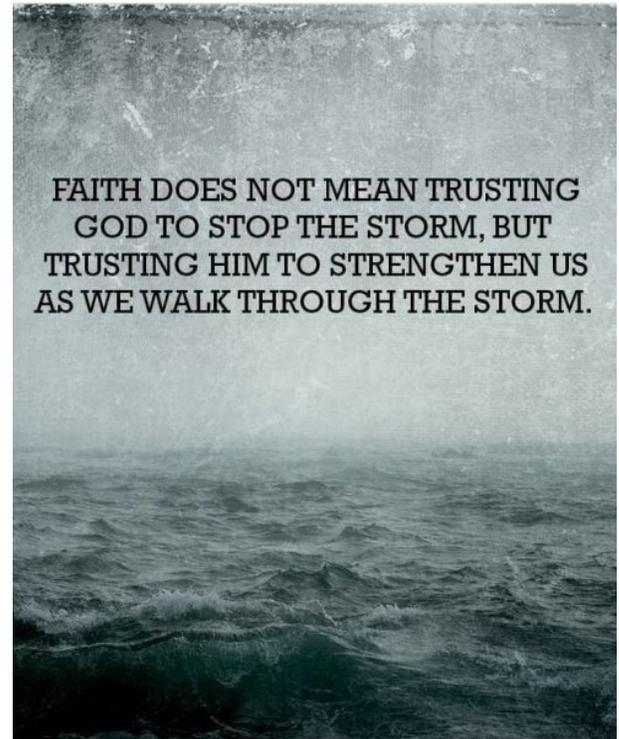
doing. But, as quickly as I heard it, I dismissed it and went about my work in the backyard.

Until...I received the message again. This time it was at 3:00 am the next morning when I awoke to the same message. At this point, I realized who was sending the messages to me. It was God.

For the rest of the night, I tried ignoring what God was telling me, but I couldn't. I laid in bed, arguing, and at times, negotiating with him. His plans for me and my future were not the plans I had for myself. Yet, as much as I tried to convince him and myself why his plan wouldn't work, I couldn't get his plan out of my mind.

Eventually, I succumbed. I gave in and was reminded once again that God always has the final word.

Three months after those encounters with God, I now write this report to you as the new full-time Communications Director for First Lutheran Church. I bear this title not because it was my will, but God's will. This is what God called me to do that September afternoon in my backyard and again in the middle of the night. He asked me to let go of my own plans, have faith in him and to trust that he will give me the energy and strength I needed to serve First Lutheran Church in a greater capacity as we journey



through this “pandemic storm” together. Little did I know that the quote I posted on Facebook on March 17, that resonated with 6,100 people, would now resonate so personally with me.

I am humbled and honored to be called by God to serve as your Communications Director. This calling has energized me, filled my heart with gratitude and inspired me to share your stories of discipleship even more than ever.

The depth of ministry that you accomplished this past year – despite

A REPORT FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR (CONT)

a pandemic – is extraordinary. Almost every page in this annual report tells at least one, if not many, stories of your faithfulness to learning, serving, praying, worshipping and giving this year. Look at how many pages are in the report and then do the math to get an idea of the overwhelming number of stories YOU were the authors of this past year. This is also the magnitude of stories you gave me to communicate and share with others through our website, social media, newsletters, digital media and videos. It's no wonder God called me to serve full-time at First Lutheran!

Let the annual report be a summary of my work in 2020, a testament of your commitment to our mission at First Lutheran Church, evidence that God has given you the strength to walk through the storm and proof that the doors of the church never really closed on March 13, 2020.

COMMITTEE REPORT: 150TH ANNIVERSARY



First Lutheran members visit the previous location of the church, located at 17th & A, in February in honor of the 150th celebration.

by Judy Bailey

The 150th Anniversary Committee was so very disappointed that we had to put the celebrations on hold last spring. We will plan to celebrate at some point in the future, 150+1 (hopefully not 2), when in-person activities resume again. The committee will determine whether we go with the full celebration, as originally planned, or do something on a smaller scale. It's an important milestone for First Lutheran and it needs to be recognized and celebrated!



COMMITTEE REPORT: A FEW GOOD MEN



by Lee Rockwell

We started with only a few men about ten years ago, but this past year we have gained more and while we are still few, we enjoy the fellowship each Tuesday morning from 7:00 to 8:00 am. This past year we transitioned from face-to-face meetings with breakfast at church to Zoom gatherings. Our studies and discussion have recently focused on Pastor Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Life*. We are currently discussing a book of devotions,

authored by Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, which were written prior to his imprisonment and death by the Nazi party toward the end of WW II. We encourage members of First Lutheran to join us for our weekly gatherings.



COMMITTEE REPORT: ADULT FORUM



by Connie Kisling

Adult Forum launches for the first time on Zoom on Sunday, June 14.

2020 Highlights

Topics specific to First Lutheran and our church community:

- Pastors Through the Years
- Women and Climate Change
- How to Socially Connect with Others via Zoom
- Dimensions Education Program (2 parts)
- Introduction of New Transitional Minister
- The Meaning of Disease
- Argentina Trip: Pastor Justin's Experience
- Developing New Learning Tools for FaithTrek
- Transition Plans, Call Committee Updates and Q&A (held multiple times)
- UNL Lutheran Center: COVID-19 and Building Update
- Gifts of Hope 2020
- Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska
- Twas the Night Before Christmas: The Origins of Christmas Traditions & A Christmas Offering (2 parts)

COMMITTEE REPORT: ADULT FORUM (CONT)

Videos:

- Video from 155th Anniversary of Juneteenth: An Evening with Sherrilyn Ifill, President & Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

Health-Related topics:

- Fall Detection Devices and How Strength Training Helps Aging Adults
- COVID-19 Update
- Obesity - A Crisis Among Us

Community-Related topics:

- CenterPointe
- The Lighthouse
- Human Trafficking
- Gotta Be Me
- Nebraska College Preparatory Academy
- Kurd Who Found Peace in Lincoln
- Matt Talbot
- Black Lives Matter - Black Leaders Matter
- Nine-Mile Prairie
- Climate Change
- Vets Moral Injury: The Invisible Wounds of War
- Eastern Nebraska's Unique Saline Wetlands: Past, Present and Future
- Recycling & Alternative Products

Our 2021 goals are to offer a continuum of learning through a variety of topics that are about service to God and our neighbors.

This equips and empowers us with knowledge and skills to be better disciples of Christ, to help us care for each other and for our neighbors, both here and around the world, and be a more welcoming congregation.

As the situation was with everyone on God's earth, the year 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic caused all sorts of scheduling challenges. We stopped having in-person Adult Forums in our church building because it closed March 13, 2020. However, we were blessed with the Zoom platform! It allowed us to resume our forum sessions on Sunday mornings online and live beginning June 14. We were able to offer a regular schedule and recorded each of the presentations so those that were not able to join live could catch the recorded version on our website. We were also able to touch base with a small portion of our church family during these special Sunday morning times. We were and are so blessed!

Our committee members are Connie Kisling (Chairperson), Gene Brass, Patrick Hayden-Roy, Jim Kisling, Brian Niebuhr, Lyle Petersen and Kay Rockwell. We were sorry to have Sunni Richardson leave us in the spring and Amy Tipton in November.

COMMITTEE REPORT: COLUMBARIUM



by Bill Shaner

The committee met twice during 2020 - in April and October. The committee would like to thank Jeff and Lisa Culbertson for taking care of the Memorial Garden where the Columbarium is located.

There are 112 niches in the present Columbarium. Thirty-nine individuals have been inurned, 53 have been reserved and 20 niches are not reserved at this time. In order to reserve a niche, just [click here](#) and you will go to our page on the website. There you will find the

rules and regulations and a reservation form to reserve a niche(s). The cost of a niche is \$1,000. Once you have filled out the reservation form, please return it to the church with your payment. You will be asked to pick out the niche(s) you wish to reserve. You then will receive, in the mail, a copy of the reservation form and a copy of the niche(s) you have reserved (there will also be a copy of the form in the church office and the committee files).

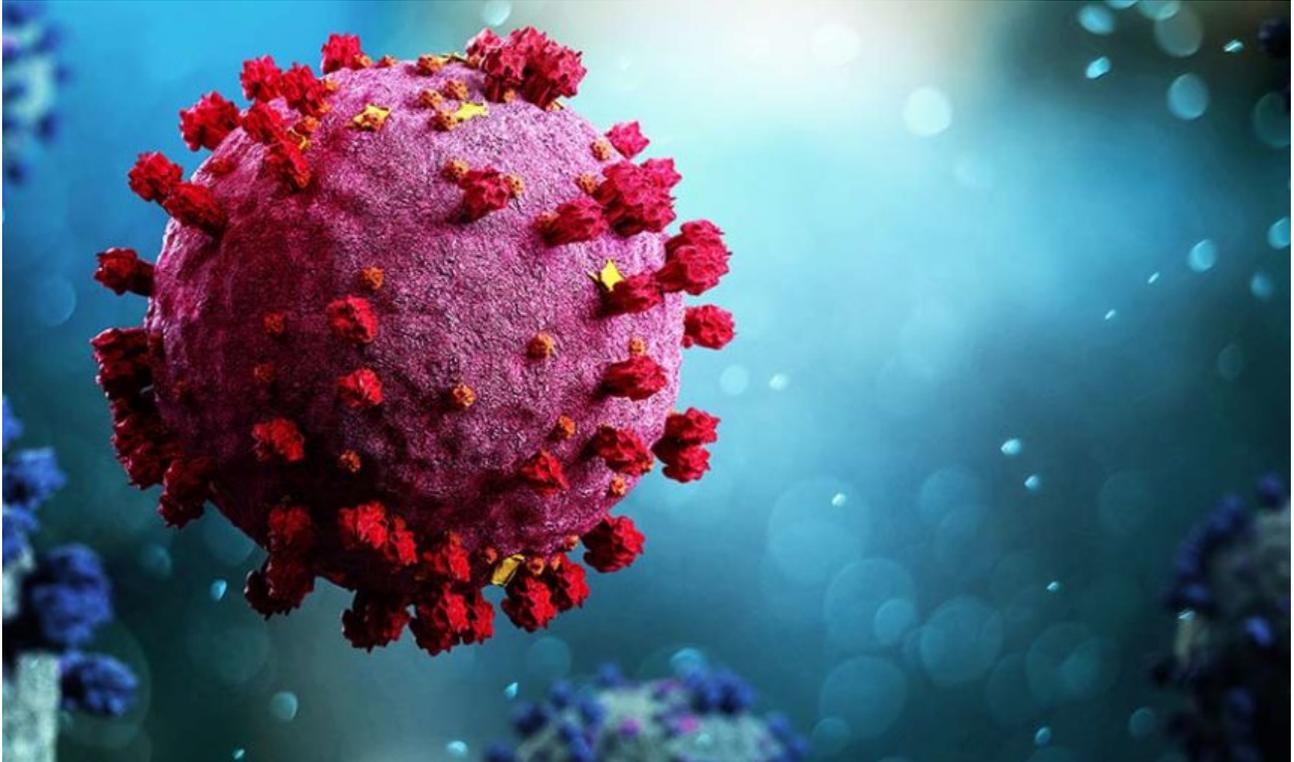
COMMITTEE REPORT: COLUMBARIUM (CONT)

When you get to the Columbarium page on the church's website, you will also find a "Book of Remembrance". There is a single page for each individual inurned. Our thanks to Tom Tiedgen for getting all the information needed for each individual page.

The committee spent some time discussing the expansion of the Columbarium. There is room at the present site for 40 more niches to be installed. Dale Bowder is contacting the Armento Company in Buffalo, NY. We will not be ordering until later in the spring of 2021. The committee has the funds for the new niches as the cost is not part of the church's budget.

Please feel free to contact the church office or one of the members of the committee if you have questions or need assistance in securing a niche(s). Members of the committee are Bill Shaner, Chair; Kay Rockwell, Secretary; Dale Ripa, Dale Bowder, Tom Tiedgen, Jeff and Lisa Culbertson and the Lead Pastor.

COMMITTEE REPORT: COVID & CRISIS MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE



by Pastor Steve Griffith

Review

In response to the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic, First Lutheran cancelled worship services and all activities in mid-March 2020. We began presenting worship services online, with music and scripture readings recorded by members, and sermons recorded by the pastors. The office re-opened for business purposes in June. All persons entering the building are required to wear a mask, use hand sanitizer and sign in. We cancelled plans for the dedication of the construction project and the 150th

Anniversary celebrations. We adapted curriculum for FaithTrek children, youth and confirmation to engage our learners online. In May, June and October, we held drive-through farewell events in the parking lot for Deacon Sunni, Pastor Dan and Pastor Justin.

In September we began presenting worship livestreamed to the internet, with musicians, readers and pastors present together in the Sanctuary, wearing masks and keeping

COMMITTEE REPORT: COVID-19 EMERGENCY TASK FORCE (CONT)

physical distance. During a time when the Health Department briefly lowered their assessment of the risk of transmission to the moderate (yellow) level, we allowed committees and small ministry groups related to First Lutheran to meet at the church. We have not invited outside groups to begin meeting again. We also began exploring resuming in-person worship services with a limited number of attendees. However, the risk assessment was raised back to the high (orange) level in November and we cancelled plans for worship and closed the building to groups. The risk level has since risen to severe (red), where it remains.

Celebrating Advent and Christmas in the midst of the pandemic led us to hold two parking lot events and to present pre-recorded weekly Holden Evening Prayer and Christmas Eve services.

In October, we convened an unofficial, ad hoc task force to advise the pastors and Council about our responses to the pandemic. Members include Dr. Bob Rauner, Judy Batterman, Bill Watts, Sharon Hardel, Masako Bacon, Bryan Hanson and the pastors. They meet twice monthly to consult on current trends, concerns and possibilities going forward.

Looking Ahead

The recent approval of vaccines offers the promise that we will be able to begin resuming activities as 2021 progresses. However, the risk level in Lincoln remains severe. The Health Department warns that, as of this writing, the number of new cases weekly has increased in recent weeks and the positivity rate remains extremely high. The number of COVID-19 patients hospitalized has increased. Health professionals report that a variant strain of the virus is spreading, making the disease more infectious. It will likely be mid-year before we can envision returning to normal operations. Meanwhile, we encourage people to get the vaccine when it is available and continue wearing masks. Remember “The Three Cs:” avoid Crowded spaces; avoid Close Contact with people beyond your own household; and avoid Confined spaces.

COMMITTEE REPORT: ENDOWMENT BOARD



by Nick Cordonier

Nine scholarships at \$750.00 each were awarded to First Lutheran scholarship applicants.

Board Highlights

- The Board welcomed Ann Carlson as a new member.
- The Board conducted a review to confirm that its accounting practices under the new managed fund strategy were in compliance with the Constitution and bylaws of First Lutheran.
- The Board elected to increase outreach distributions this year as a means of combatting problems brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Investment Fund Activity

The Board elected to distribute \$13,400.00 which amounts to a 3.5% distribution strategy; which matches last year's strategy. While this strategy is the same as last year, it also represents an overall decrease of \$100.00 in distributions. The real decrease in distributions is largely due to market fluctuations over the last year while the community grapples with a global pandemic.

COMMITTEE REPORT: ENDOWMENT BOARD (CONT)

Fund Distributions

The Board's bylaws dictate that a minimum of 10% of the fund's annual income be distributed to fulfill three areas: Education, Outreach and Missions of ELCA. This year's distributions include:

Education - \$6,750.00 (50.4%)

- Nine scholarships at \$750.00 each to First Lutheran scholarship applicants

Outreach - \$5,150.00 (38.4%)

- First Lutheran Pastor's Discretionary Fund - \$1,500.00
- People's City Mission - \$1,500.00
- Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach - \$1,500.00
- Center for People in Need - \$650.00

Missions of ELCA - \$1,500.00 (11.2%)

- Women of the ELCA - \$500.00
- Lincoln Lutheran Food Pantry - \$500.00
- First Lutheran Church Camera Funding - \$500.00

Concluding Remarks

The Board would like to thank Jon Peppmuller for his expertise over the last six years which culminated in the successful transition of the fund to a fund manager. It is also important to

note the tremendous support the Board has seen over the last year from our congregation during a global pandemic. Your donations help to grow a fund that continues to touch so many lives. Thank you for your continued support.

Our committee members are:

- Jon Peppmuller (T) – 2nd Term, 3rd Year
- Al Williams – 2nd Term, 2nd Year
- Nick Cordonier (C) – 1st Term, 3rd Year
- Randy Hinton – 1st Term, 2nd Year
- Ann Carlson – 1st Term, 1st Year
- Pastor Steve Griffith (Staff Liaison)

COMMITTEE REPORT: FAIR TRADE



by Faith Doolittle

Monthly Fair Trade sales continued through March until the church was suddenly closed due to COVID-19. After the church opened for office hours, Cyndi Crouse faithfully served as the sales person for anyone who stopped in to pick up some coffee, tea and chocolate.

A modified in-person sale was held in November during the Advent Drive Through. In November, we also invited people to complete a pre-order form. They could get those orders curbside during either the Advent Drive Through

or in December during the Gifts of Hope pick-up.

As we start 2021, products will continue to be available on an individual sale basis. Call the church office or stop in and Cyndi Crouse will help you.

Thanks to Pat DeWald who is willing to coordinate the monthly Sunday sales once we get the green light to do so and to you who are continuing to support farmers through your purchases of Fair Trade products.

COMMITTEE REPORT: FELLOWSHIP



by LuAnn Snyder

[Watch the video](#) of the
Parking Lot Christmas Caroling

2020 Highlights

- Hosted noon lunch and soup suppers during Wednesday night Lenten services until the church was closed due to COVID-19.
- Set up a [fellowship group on Facebook](#) for First Lutheran members with monthly challenges/activities, including an online scavenger hunt in October and Christmas Joy in December where members shared photos of their Advent wreaths, Christmas lights and other holiday decorations with one another.
- Hosted and coordinated an Advent Drive Through event, which included station stops for Lutheran Food Pantry donations, Noisy Offering, Advent calendar and kits giveaway, Fair Trade store and a bag of donut holes to go!
- Noisy Offering from the Advent Drive Through netted \$680.04, along with a Fellowship

COMMITTEE REPORT: FELLOWSHIP (CONT)

Committee match of \$100.00, and was donated to the Band of the Strong.

- Helped with the Parking Lot Christmas Caroling event in December.

2021 Goals

We hope to get back to normal and resume our regular in-person events that were postponed due to COVID-19. We will continue to support the Fellowship Group on Facebook by hosting online fellowship events and activities.



COMMITTEE REPORT: GIFTS OF HOPE



by Barb Johnson Frank

With gratitude, the planning team members offer this perspective on First Lutheran’s alternative gift market, 2020 Gifts of Hope:

- Convened by Deacon Sunni Richardson, the group first met in March 2020 to plan for First Lutheran’s traditional early December market when the Commons bustles before and after Saturday and Sunday services as members of the congregation select “gifts that give twice.” By August, as the COVID-19 pandemic intensified, it clearly was time to think outside the box. The team decided to investigate options for moving the market entirely online. From then on, all planning meetings were held via Zoom.
- First Lutheran Communications Director, Kathleen Simley, envisioning opportunities for innovative outreach, met with the group, explored options for catalog software and signed on to a major project. The planners received a \$250 Thrivent Action

COMMITTEE REPORT: GIFTS OF HOPE (CONT)

Team grant to assist with software expenses.

- After pondering how 100% of Gifts of Hope proceeds could best be put to work locally, regionally and globally, the planners contacted nine non-profit organizations or programs whose hubs ranged from Lincoln, Omaha and Wahoo, to Tanzania and Liberia and to the ELCA churchwide offices in Chicago. Five had ELCA connections: ELCA Good Gifts, Mission Market Place, Lutheran Family Services, Empowered by Light and Mosaic International. Four were community-based: Matt Talbot Outreach, Center for Legal Immigration Assistance, CEDARS and Gotta Be Me.
 - The Gifts of Hope interactive digital catalog, available for browsing in late November, offered life-saving vaccines, sanitation supplies and personal protective gear for frontline workers, telehealth counseling sessions and access to health care, scholarships and mentoring and solar lanterns for single student mothers, holiday gifts and clothing and infant formula for children in foster care, animals from God's Global Barnyard, soap and laundry supplies and bedrolls for people without a home or shelter, Zoom community building for persons of all abilities, market bags from a microbusiness and more.
 - The catalog went live for shopping at 8:00 am on December 5 using an e-commerce platform. Guests arrived from Washington State and Montana to Minnesota, California to Pennsylvania, Illinois to Ireland. After the doors closed at 10:00 pm on December 6, Gifts of Hope's impact continued in unexpected ways. The ELCA Good Gifts wish list sparked further interest. Phone calls and text messages brought questions about additional giving. Copies of catalog pages were requested as gift enclosures. In all, a market record of more than \$16,000 in donations was received. Orders were mailed on December 8 and the December 13 curbside pick-up hours brought precious (masked and distanced) face-to-face conversations.
 - A myriad of lessons were learned, among them: how very do-able and energizing outreach can be, how powerfully stories can be told with technology, how holiday giftgiving can be steadily
-

COMMITTEE REPORT: GIFTS OF HOPE (CONT)

transformed to work for good locally and world-wide.

The unexpected need to alter a First Lutheran tradition brought fresh opportunities and growth. Thanks be to God, who so richly blesses us with life-giving hope, always!

The 2020 Gifts of Hope Planning Team included Annette Watts, Judy Batterman, Kathleen Simley, Kay Rockwell, Mary Rogge, Nancy Hoppner and Barb Johnson Frank.



COMMITTEE REPORT: HUNGER & CLOTHING



by Karen Lenzen

The COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges in carrying out our ministry in 2020. We pray 2021 will allow us to get back to full steam.

2020 Highlights

- Food Bank / LPS Backpack Ministry - Organized and funded backpacks at Pyrtle and Morley elementary schools. Thanks to the many volunteers and donors who made this possible! NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, LPS closed schools and backpack distribution ended 03/23/20.

It has not resumed as of the writing of this report. We are on hold until we receive further information from the Food Bank.

- Food Bank's Lincoln High Food Market - First Lutheran provides three volunteers at the monthly market. They assist patrons in selecting food. NOTE: This was also put on hold 03/23/20 due to COVID-19.
- Food Bank's "Bridges Out of Poverty" Program - We began supporting this initiative in 2019,

COMMITTEE REPORT: HUNGER & CLOTHING (CONT)

which addresses long term solutions to poverty and hunger through financial education classes. We were not able to provide support through meals for participants due to COVID-19. First Lutheran did provide funding of \$2500 in 2020 for this program.

- Lutheran Food Pantry – From July-September First Lutheran conducted a drive-through food donation on Saturday afternoons for the Food Pantry. While not coordinated by the Hunger & Clothing Team, members participated in different ways. There was an overwhelming response and First Lutheran collected over 14,000 pounds of food and personal care items.
- CROP Walk – We hosted the city-wide CROP Walk for our third and final year. COVID-19 concerns led the city-wide team to make it a virtual walk. First Lutheran had 15 walkers that raised \$2,320. Our three year hosting of this event was a wonderful outreach to the Lincoln community.
- Matt Talbot – We served about 1600 meals by providing a hearty and nutritious meal the 3rd Tuesday each month. In April, the format

changed to carryout meals with less volunteers being allowed in the building due to COVID-19. We adjusted our format to meet the requirement. As of this writing, the carryout format continues.

- Meals on Wheels - Sunday delivery routes continued despite COVID-19. With five routes being covered, we delivered about 116 Sunday routes. Currently, about 55 First Lutheran members are involved in Meals on Wheels delivery (Sunday, plus other weekday routes).
- Kicks for Kids – The fifth year of this ministry provided 201 pairs of shoes and 1,005 pairs of socks to students in nine schools. The campaign format was altered due to COVID-19 and First Lutheran members responded in an amazing fashion. We continue to fill needs as they arise throughout the school year due to your generous financial contributions.

2021 Goals

- Continue supporting the Food Bank/LPS Backpack and “Bridges Out of Poverty” programs.
 - Kicks for Kids - Grow this ministry with a goal of 240 pairs of shoes and five pairs of socks per student.
-

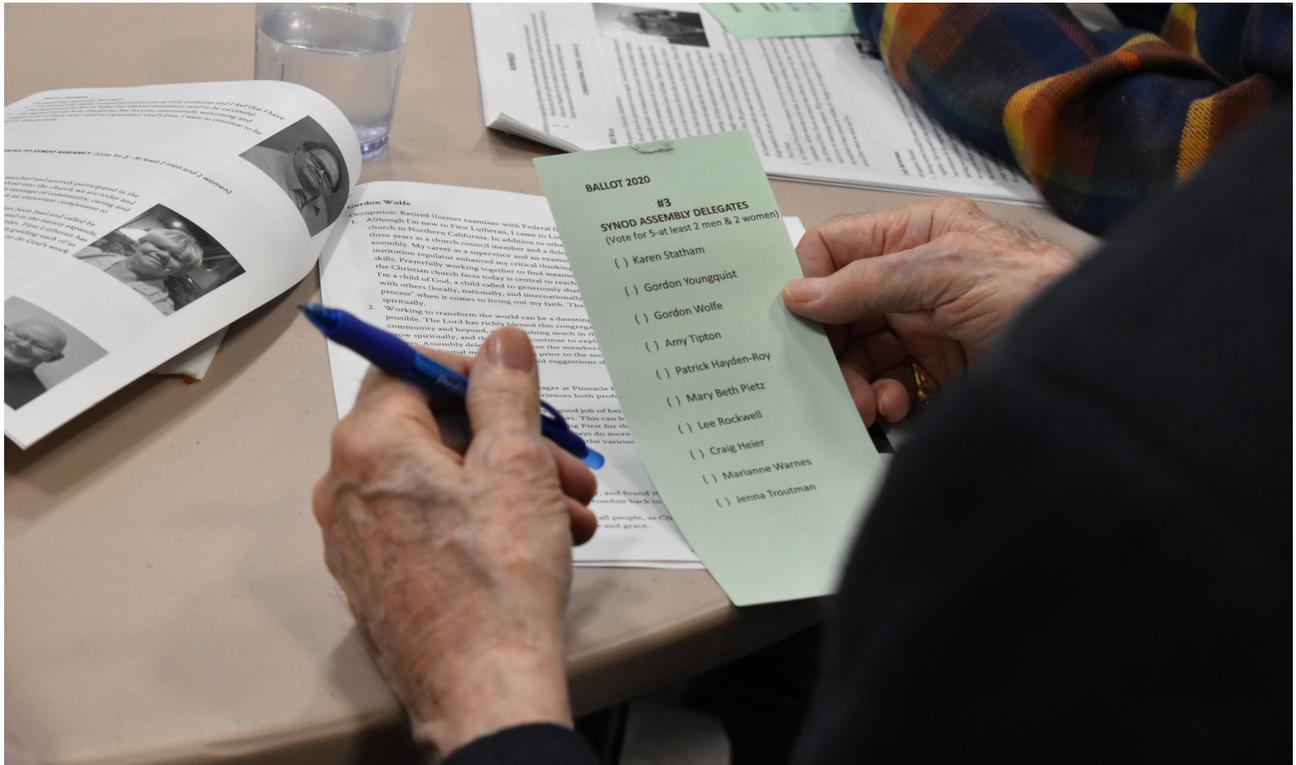
COMMITTEE REPORT: HUNGER & CLOTHING (CONT)

- Matt Talbot - Continue serving a nutritious meal monthly and research other ways to support this ministry.
- Meals on Wheels - Look at expanding the Sunday routes.
- Research short-term serving opportunities to offer throughout the year.
- Continue to support local agencies through service events or in-gatherings of needed items.

Members of the committee are Karen Lenzen, Chairperson; Linda Bogenreif, Cindy Lilleoien, Sandy Latshaw, Kathy Dickey, Donice Kaspar and Sunni Richardson (staff liaison until her departure).



COMMITTEE REPORT: NOMINATING



by Terry Kruse

The committee held an orientation meeting on May 27 to familiarize everyone with the nominating process. We met again on August 4 to begin to compile our list of potential candidates and met again in September as we worked on reviewing and expanding this list. Work on finalizing the nominee lists continued through email.

The nominating committee is pleased to present this year's list of candidates to the congregation and we thank all

candidates for being willing to serve First Lutheran.

This year's committee members were Jan Wigodsky, Linda Hinkle, Angie Ripa, Kristy Williams, Rebecca Simley and Terry Kruse.

COMMITTEE REPORT: PROPERTY



by Norman Kempf

Led by the Property Committee, volunteers clean up and prepare the Nature Explore Classroom.

2020 Highlights

- EFIS (Stucco) repair on west side of Activity Center completed. The area was covered with steel sheeting. To date, there are no more bird holes.
 - Spring and fall yard cleanups completed.
 - Replaced skylight with a solid roof and lighting for stairways.
 - Located the south boundary line. Found steel pins.
 - Determined responsibility for replacement of the board fence.
 - Fence was replaced by the landowners on south side.
 - Spread black dirt and tilled new beds.
 - Spread mulch and rock on beds in the Nature Explore Classroom.
 - Mounted coat racks in the pastor's offices and lowered shelf in the Sacristy.
 - Mounted racks in the Sacristy.
 - Fixed sliding doors in the Sacristy.
 - Improved drainage in the Nature Explore Classroom.
-

COMMITTEE REPORT: PROPERTY (CONT)

- Fall clean up included the removal of the rest of the dirt and gravel from parking lot.
- Trees were removed along the west boundary, according to agreement with adjoining property owner.
- Cleaned area around the storage shed.
- Reviewed the Building Superintendent's job description and associated documents.

The Property Committee members are Norman Kempf, Chairperson; Bob Batterman, Richard Draper, Greg Fisher, Les Carlson, Rod Johnson, Steve Lenzen, Steve Doolittle, Steve Dickey and Pastor Steve Griffith.

2021 Goals

- Parking lot repair.
 - Consider damage due to construction and make recommendations to the Church Council.
 - Consider grading for drainage.
 - Consider needs for NW exit.
 - Replace concrete sidewalk on north side of church and area next to steps at NW entrance.
 - Fix sheet rock and paint stains in ceiling of multi-purpose room.
 - Clean up roof tiles and other construction junk left by building contractor.
 - Safety railing for emergency exit for Dimensions Education Program.
 - Work with the Church Council to appoint a liaison to the Property Committee.
-

COMMITTEE REPORT: SOUTH SUDANESE WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY



by Bol Ngok

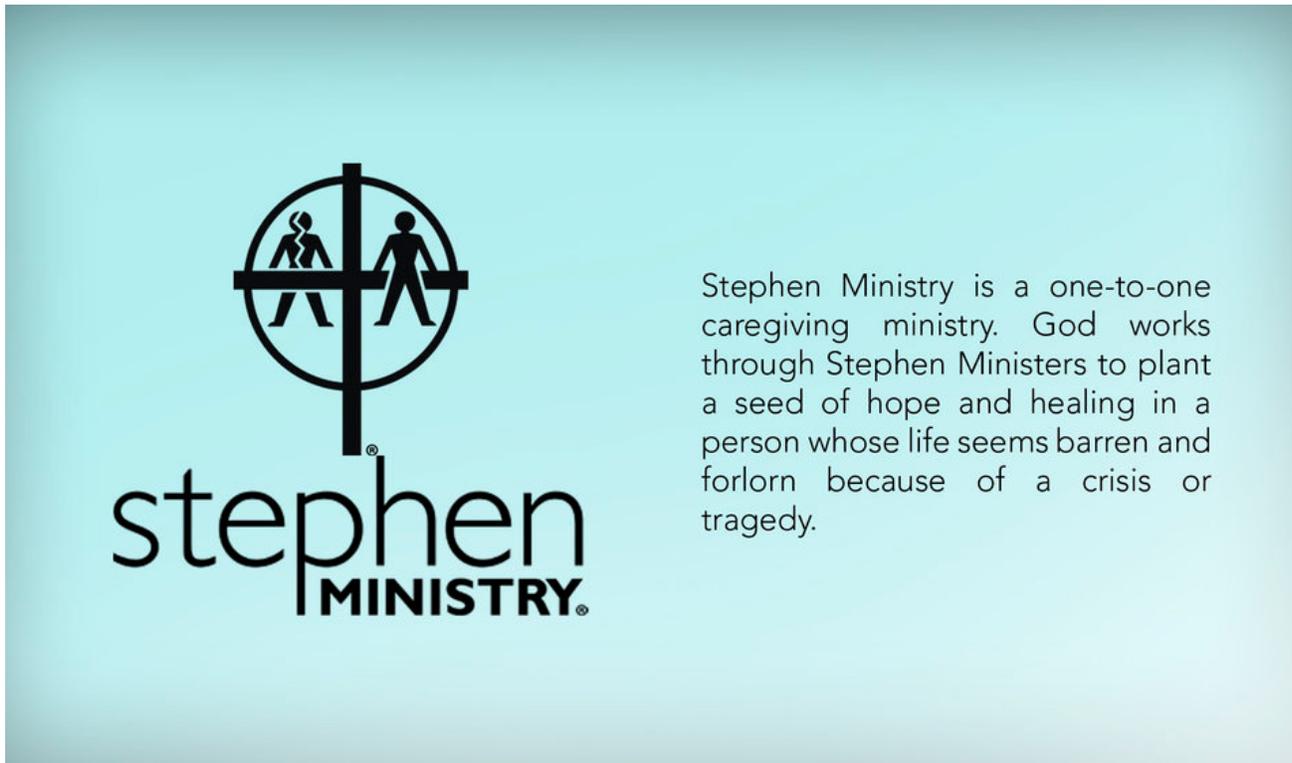
A partnership between First Lutheran Church and the South Sudanese community in Lincoln makes it possible for people who speak Nuer to worship, pray, sing and hear the Bible in their first language. Normally, Nuer language services are held in the Chapel at First Lutheran on Sundays at 12:15 pm, but the COVID-19 pandemic changed this.

Even though it was not possible to gather for worship at the church, members of the South Sudanese community kept in close touch with each other during 2020. They prayed

online from 12:15 to 3:00 every Sunday. Most members of this Nuer worshipping community are also members of First Lutheran Church and Pastor Dan, Pastor Justin and Pastor Steve offered pastoral care at times of sorrow or need.

Martha Deng, Nyanchar Chuol Butjiok, Pastor Justin Eller and I attended a regional ELCA gathering in Rochester, Minnesota. As the spiritual leader of the Nuer group, I serve as a member of the First Lutheran Church Call Committee and attend meetings of the Omaha-area South Sudanese Council of Churches.

COMMITTEE REPORT: STEPHEN MINISTRY



Stephen Ministry is a one-to-one caregiving ministry. God works through Stephen Ministers to plant a seed of hope and healing in a person whose life seems barren and forlorn because of a crisis or tragedy.

by Faye Doolittle

What's the Same

- Stephen Ministry continues to serve the congregation and the community through confidential one-to-one care as it has since 2018.
- Anyone can ask for this ministry of presence by contacting a pastor or a Stephen Leader.
- www.stephenministries.org has a wealth of information.
- Journeying Through Grief booklets are sent to members who have experienced a recent death of a family member.

- The following continue to faithfully serve as Stephen Ministers: Jim Bohl, Kim Janssen, Linda Maack, Gay Sutter, Cindy Timperley, Robin Westhoff and Jan Wigodsky.

What's Changed

- We needed to adapt.
 - 1:1 Care - After we couldn't meet in person, we moved to phone calls or video phone calls. When the weather cooperated, we sometimes met outside at safe physical

COMMITTEE REPORT: STEPHEN MINISTRY (CONT)

distances. We are grateful that technology gives us opportunities to stay connected, but look forward to the time that we can safely meet in person.

- Training - We moved to using Zoom to complete the last half of the training. It was a big learning curve, but the members offered each other grace and support.
- Supervision - We met outside or used Zoom for our twice monthly meetings, if needed.
- Stephen Leaders changed.
 - Karen Statham stepped out of the Stephen Ministers and Pastor Justin left. Daniel Robles is on leave.
- Our fifth group of Stephen Ministers were trained and commissioned.
 - Bev DeGeorge, Eunice Fischer, Trish Flury, Sharon Hardel, Linda Jensen, Martha Tanner and Gordon Wolfe.

Goals for 2021

- Continue to provide confidential one-to-one care to our congregation and our community.
- Continue to support and provide continuing education to current Stephen Ministers.
- Continue to educate the congregation about the Christian care giving ministry.
- Send at least one person to Leadership Training.

Thank you to the congregation for your continued support, for the Stephen Ministers who faithfully give of their time and presence and for the people who are willing to share their journey confidentially with a Stephen Minister.

COMMITTEE REPORT: STEWARDSHIP



CELEBRATING GOD'S
FAITHFULNESS

LUTHERAN FOOD PANTRY

TOM AND LYNN OCHSNER,
VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS

by Mark Wemhoff

2020 Highlights

The theme for this year's Stewardship campaign was, "Celebrating God's Faithfulness." Because of the pandemic, it was decided there was no safe way to have our usual BBQ lunch on Consecration Sunday. Since we did not have the lunch it was discussed what should be done with the money that was budgeted for this event. The Stewardship Committee put forward a motion to the Church Council that the \$500 budgeted be donated to the

Lutheran Food Pantry. The motion was passed and the \$500 check was delivered to Lynn and Tom Ochsner, Coordinators of the Lutheran Food Pantry.

Each Sunday during worship in September, leading up to Consecration Sunday, a video featured a speaker telling how our faithfulness and ministry at First Lutheran changes lives outside our church walls. Speakers from

COMMITTEE REPORT: STEWARDSHIP (CONT)

Dimensions Education Program, Stephen Ministry, the Lutheran Food Pantry and First Lutheran's Serve programs were featured.

On Consecration Sunday, Stacy Martin, President and CEO of Lutheran Family Services, was our guest speaker during worship.

Pledge numbers are down significantly this year. There are a small number of people that have responded and decided not to pledge this year. Most of the decrease has been a lower response rate from members filling out pledge cards or Simply Giving automated donations. We realize this year has created unique circumstances, and with the church not meeting in-person, has affected some people's involvement and willingness to fill out pledge cards. As we get into next year and hopefully start to meet in-person, we will encourage pledge cards to be completed, as well as inviting people to sign up for serving, learning and worship opportunities.

2021 Goals

Continue to tell our story of ministry within our church, as well as how it

reaches outside our church walls.

- Continue to increase the percentage of members who use Simply Giving for electronic automated giving.
- Continue our yearly stewardship appeal and, hopefully, culminate that with our in-person celebration and meal next year.
- Continue to reach out to all our members, no matter their current state, to let them know they are part of the stewardship of First Lutheran.

COMMITTEE REPORT: TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY



FIRST LUTHERAN
TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY

Do You Need a Ride to Medical Appointments?

Contact lindasmaack@gmail.com



by Linda Maack

The Transportation Ministry had an informational and organizational meeting in January of 2020. We have 16 registered volunteer drivers at this time. Due to the pandemic, we haven't been as active as we thought we would be. We have given 15 rides for members of our congregation to date.

Forms for both riders and drivers can be [found here](#).

We are ready and willing to take our fellow members for appointments with at least several days notice.



COMMITTEE REPORT: WORSHIP & MUSIC



by Martha Tanner

The committee met six times during 2020 and had other discussions over email. Our main work in 2020 began with planning for worship in the renovated Sanctuary and then switched to planning for safe worship during the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee worked with Pastor Justin through the summer to create a modified liturgy, safety practices for an eventual return to in-person worship and wrote an executive summary of the plan to be shared with the congregation when we are able to safely re-open.

Despite not gathering in-person for Christmas worship, the Sanctuary was beautifully decorated.

In September, committee members and others participated in a “dry run” livestream worship service in the renovated Sanctuary to help the livestream planners (Brian Niebuhr, Boyd Bacon, Kathleen Simley and Pastor Justin) refine the setup. The committee also provided feedback to staff on plans for pre-recorded Advent and Christmas worship.

The work of scheduling worship volunteers underwent several changes during the year. The number of

COMMITTEE REPORT: WORSHIP & MUSIC (CONT)

volunteers needed for pre-recorded and livestream worship was greatly reduced. We continue to use an online system for sign-up. The committee helped make initial plans for training volunteers for worship in the renovated Sanctuary. In November, Judy Bailey stepped down as Coordinator of Worship Assistants and Harold Sutter took over this role. We thank Judy for her many years of faithful service.

Other committee work completed, included:

- Decided on altar area set-up (paraments, etc.) for renovated Sanctuary.
- Hung artwork in other renovated spaces.
- Decorated Commons, Chapel, and Sanctuary for Advent and Christmas.

Committee members are Martha Tanner and Bonita Johnsen (Co-chairs), Richard Bouma, Judy Bailey, Jan Christensen, Molly Goninan, Priscilla Hayden-Roy, Ryan Luckey, Gordon Youngquist, Pastor Steve Griffith and Boyd and Masako Bacon.

NOMINEES: ENDOWMENT BOARD (VOTE FOR 2)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Tyler Mainquist

Occupation - Financial Advisor

I have been a financial advisor for 13 years with an emphasis on aligning values with investments (sustainable, responsible, and impact investing). A large part of my job involves investment manager evaluation and selection, plus asset allocation. I also have a background in philanthropic giving techniques.

I am heartened by First Lutheran's commitment to being a welcoming and inclusive congregation, with a strong history of outreach to the local community and beyond.



NOMINEES:

ENDOWMENT BOARD (VOTE FOR 2)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Karen Peppmuller

Occupation - CPA

I have been blessed with over 30 years of experience in the accounting field as a Certified Public Accountant. I have worked in both public accounting and held various capacities for private companies, as well as in the non-profit world. I have also served six years on the Board of the YMCA of Lincoln and six years on the Board (including 3 years as Treasurer) of the Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools. I have always been a numbers person, although I could use a lot of help in English and Science! Jon and I have been members of First Lutheran since 1998.

I am continually amazed by the service that First Lutheran provides both inside, but mostly outside of our walls. This includes internationally, nationally and our local community. We have such dedicated and wonderful members that provide their talents and treasures to so many different people and organizations. I can only see this



increasing due to not only our recent renovation that will allow others to use our facilities (including Dimensions, but they'll be many others), but also with the continued needs of those suffering mentally, financially and spiritually because of the pandemic. The First Lutheran Endowment Fund can be an important resource for all of these missions. I think being a part of the Endowment Board is truly an opportunity to help make a difference.

NOMINEES: ENDOWMENT BOARD (VOTE FOR 2)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Tera Beermann

Occupation - Assistant Director & Financial Manager of the University of Nebraska Press

My background has been in accounting and finance for over 35 years. I understand the fiduciary responsibility Endowment Board members have to oversee the Fund assets and distributions. I previously served on the Endowment Board for 6 years and am eager to serve again, if elected.

The mission of First Lutheran is to be a welcoming place for all as we share the good news of Christ. We are called to reach out in our community and in the world, both in action and financially. First Lutheran is blessed to have an Endowment Fund where we can expand our financial stewardship beyond our annual budget.



NOMINEES: ENDOWMENT BOARD (VOTE FOR 2)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Ann Johnson

Occupation - Retired from Assurity Life Insurance Company as a Division Director

As a department director, I have managed budgets and worked with our insureds during difficult times. I am also a member of two groups involved with providing assistance to families and individuals struggling in times of need.

I believe that First Lutheran is strongly committed to supporting individuals locally, nationally and worldwide. As a congregation, with God's leadership, we can expand our commitment to bringing God's word and providing necessities to God's people in need.



NOMINEES: NOMINATING COMMITTEE (VOTE FOR 3)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Laura Graulty

Occupation - Retired Teacher

I have been a member for over 25 years and I enjoy greeting our members as they come to worship. I am outgoing and enjoy most humans. (HA!)

We really need to get younger people infused in our leadership. Honestly, this may be a downfall for my nomination, as I don't really know the younger members as well. Having said that, it is important to have them on our committees and Council. Thank you.



NOMINEES:

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (VOTE FOR 3)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Barb Johnson Frank

Occupation - Community Volunteer and Retired Teacher

I find it rewarding to notice people's unique gifts. As part of the Nominating Committee, I'd be honored to let church members know that their talents were noticed and to offer a suggestion about how they could serve the congregation.

I believe that the Holy Spirit always nudges us to go deeper in living out our baptismal promises to *"live among God's faithful people, hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper, proclaim the Good News of God in Christ through word and deed, serve all people (following the example of Jesus) and strive for justice and peace in all the earth."* What precious challenges those are for us as individuals and as part of a vibrant congregation!

The ups and downs of 2020 brought unexpected opportunities to reflect on what it really means to be the Church dispersed. What surprises were there? What did we learn? What's next? Two



things seem certain: Servant leaders of all kinds will be needed. Everyone's voice is important, whether one serves in an elected position or in other valuable roles. We're a team.

NOMINEES:

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (VOTE FOR 3)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Eunice Fischer

Occupation - Retired from the USDA Farm Service

I have a joyful desire to serve as a disciple of Christ at First Lutheran Church. I have served on various committees, including Church Council and the Executive Council and am currently on the Stewardship Committee. I feel these connections will help guide me as a member of the Nominating Committee.

I am excited that our church has maintained its goals to constantly expand our mission to be all inclusive and welcoming as we reach out in our community. Our church members have so much to share and I'm proud to be a small part of that. This has been a crazy year, but Christ has held us together. I believe that Christ calls us all to serve Him by serving others.



NOMINEES: NOMINATING COMMITTEE (VOTE FOR 3)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Jim Sandman

Occupation - Light Equipment Operator -
LPS Grounds

One of the most important gifts my life at First Lutheran has given me is my ability to remember names and strike up conversations. It helped me in my time serving on the Evangelism Committee. My main focus at the time was new members. I get so excited about how much God and my church family mean to me that I have to share it.

In our family's time at First Lutheran, there have been many changes. Staff, programs, members and committees have changed and evolved, along with the building itself. But, there has been one constant - the message of Christ's love for all. Moving forward with this message is the most important thing we have done, and will continue to do well into the future.



NOMINEES: NOMINATING COMMITTEE (VOTE FOR 3)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Kimberle Hall

Occupation - Operations Manager for Cooper Foundation

I have had the opportunity to serve twice on the Nominating Committee with two different pastors and both experiences were very different. I believe I can bring what I have learned to the process and I look forward to working with the new pastor(s).

I'm hopeful with the call of a new pastor(s) and new church leadership that we will take the time to evaluate where we were as a church before the pandemic, where the church is now, and where we are being called for the future.



NOMINEES: NOMINATING COMMITTEE (VOTE FOR 3)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Andrew Kuhn

Occupation - Happily Retired

I think I'm outgoing and not afraid to meet new people. I feel this will help me to meet people and help to find people to serve on different committees.

I see First Lutheran as being an open church - willing to accept anyone into the congregation. This church has so many different opportunities from stewardship, to music, to fellowship, that anyone should find a home here.



NOMINEES: SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES (VOTE FOR 5 - AT LEAST 2 MEN & 2 WOMEN)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Linda Rasmussen

Occupation - Retired

I am willing to listen to the agenda of the Synod Assembly and to represent First Lutheran to the best of my ability.

First Lutheran's mission statement is a statement that I am proud of. I admire the congregation's commitment to this. The many efforts of working for inclusiveness has not slacked off. I pray this continues and will be supported by our Synod.



Gordon Youngquist

Occupation - Retired

I am willing to listen and make decisions with First Lutheran Church as my guide.

I believe that First Lutheran is a community of people who are trying to live as God instructs us through the word and welcoming all who are searching for answers to the questions of life's challenges.



NOMINEES: SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES (VOTE FOR 5 - AT LEAST 2 MEN & 2 WOMEN)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Sharon Seagren

Occupation - Retired

My family became members of First Lutheran in the early 60s so we have been members a long time and seen many changes. I was a teacher in the Lincoln Public Schools for over 20 years. As a teacher, you must be organized and plan ahead and these skills should help me be a representative to the Synod Assembly. Communication is key in organizations and keeping members informed and excited about the various activities at First Lutheran. We need to provide activities and communication for all members, keeping in mind that the older members are strong supporters of our church, and communication through computers, iphones, ipads, etc. are not the easiest or the best way for them to communicate. I can represent long time members and the older generation of members because I am one.

The mission statement of First Lutheran encompasses all individuals and leaves no doubt that our goal is to include



everyone. This is a wonderful goal and the congregation is working to encourage this to occur. These are difficult and challenging times for all organizations to be inclusive and caring. Leadership is key among the pastors and staff to guide and lead the congregation and to develop the members as disciples of Christ. We need to be a welcoming and an inclusive (caring) congregation and to be living examples of our mission statement. Don't talk the talk unless you can walk the walk. Telling members of the greater community about our congregation and our mission is the responsibility of each church member, the pastors and staff.

NOMINEES: SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES (VOTE FOR 5 - AT LEAST 2 MEN & 2 WOMEN)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Patrick Hayden-Roy

Occupation - University Professor

I've been a representative previously, and found it an engaging and inspiring experience. I'm eager to serve as a conduit back to the congregation of the decisions and activities of Synod Assembly.

Our mission to reach and serve all people, as Christ did and does, and through this become vehicles of God's love and grace.



Michelle Michl

Occupation - Data Analyst

I believe in accountability and compassion. I enjoy the development of good policy from a big picture point of view. I am a solution-driven person who works towards purposeful consensus.

The pandemic has created a severe degree of isolation. I believe this isolation has challenged the definition of church. It has forced each of us to be the church on our own, rather than as a community. I think it has been an opportunity to recalibrate our mission and our response to times where being together is not possible.



NOMINEES: SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES (VOTE FOR 5 - AT LEAST 2 MEN & 2 WOMEN)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Jeff King

Occupation - Aerospace Engineer

"In humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others" (1 Cor. 7:17). I will use my gifts of attention to detail, integrity and discipline to support the church and the position in which I will be serving.

God calls us all to nurture, support and engage church members as unique individuals and as a congregation in our relationships and relating them to the worldwide mission and witness of the whole church.



NOMINEES: SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES (VOTE FOR 5 - AT LEAST 2 MEN & 2 WOMEN)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Susan Myren

Occupation - Retired

I like to listen, learn and then try to share what I have absorbed. As a longtime member of First Lutheran, I continue to be wowed by the different bodies our congregation is involved with and a member of. The Nebraska Synod of the ELCA is one of those and attending the annual Assembly a few times has opened my eyes to the many arms we partner with and that minister to Nebraska. I am willing to participate through virtual meetings and share with you what I have learned.

In times of transition and challenges, our mission statement is there nudging and encouraging us. As a member of First Lutheran, I have been nurtured on our unique paths by you, my fellow members and our staff. The Nebraska Synod is our next larger body which is one of the 65 synods of the ELCA. As our congregation transitions in many different ways, support from our fellow



travelers is vital. Sharing conversation with our fellow members and Nebraskans can provide us with needed support as we all transform together.

NOMINEES: SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES (VOTE FOR 5 - AT LEAST 2 MEN & 2 WOMEN)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

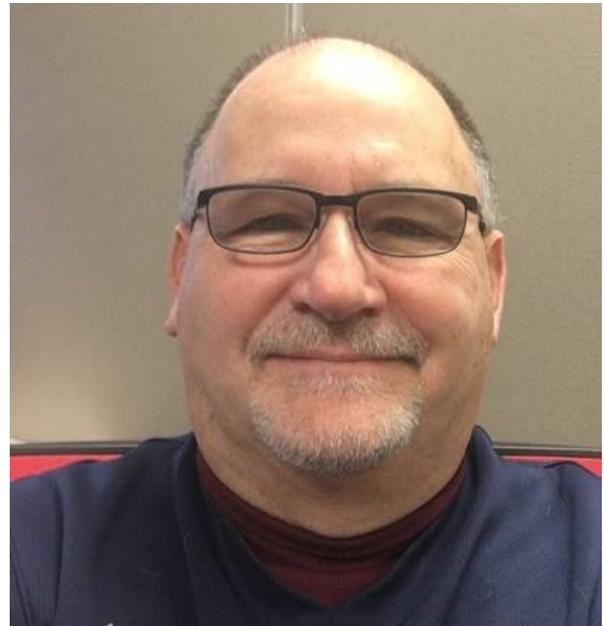
Bob Michl

Occupation - Director - Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UN-L

I've served in the field of education for my entire life... first as a teacher and coach, then as a school administrator. Now, I'm serving as the Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I see my gifts and expertise as those that bring people together, where shared decision making is not me making a decision and sharing, but instead bringing people together, to learn, discuss and discern, and SHARE in making critical decisions.

As a lifelong learner, I've come to know that we all learn at different rates, at different levels and with different perspectives and beliefs. As a delegate to the NE Synod Assembly, I will use what I've learned and continue to learn to make decisions that are representative of not only what I believe, but what I believe is best for our church and community.

The mission of First Lutheran has strength and hope in it. We are living in a world



(and country) that is currently riddled with division and doubt. This is not how God has called us to live our lives. As a congregation, we must strive to lessen the doubt, to bring people together, to learn how to not only recognize and accept differences, but to affirm the values of those differences. Christ calls us to be one people... a people of God, and we must all strive to attain that goal, following Christ's lead, to transform the world into a place where all are treated equally and with dignity.

NOMINEES: SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES (VOTE FOR 5 - AT LEAST 2 MEN & 2 WOMEN)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Todd Hall

Occupation - Semi-Retired

I have been a member of First Lutheran for 20 years. Over this period, I have served in a variety of offices, committees, and activities. My engagement has included, but not limited to, Church Council, Treasurer, Property Committee and high school co-instructor. I also served on the Synod Committee in 2012.

While COVID-19 has tested my faith, I remain committed to the church and our community. I long, as we all do, to gather again in fellowship and worship. But as we are separated by health needs, I remain committed to service to Christ, community and the uplift of us all in Christ's name.



NOMINEES:

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (VOTE FOR 5)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Lyle Petersen

Occupation - Retired from Information Technology Management – NTT, NRECA, Nanonation, etc.

Member since 1975. Past member of Hamilton Club. Served as youth leader with Yvonne Steindahl. Past instructor for 7th grade confirmation class. Served on Church Council under Pastor Fred Nelson. Served as confirmation mentor for four confirmands. Served as youth leader for two AWOL trips. Served on Call Committee for Pastor Brian Maas and Pastor Aaron Erdley. Participated in multiple First Lutheran Lenten play productions. Participate in MAN group for spring and fall property clean-up projects. Served as usher, reader and assisting minister for Sunday services. Serve on Adult Forum committee. Serve as computer system and network administrator for church office since 1985.

I look forward with anticipation to the continuing ministries of First Lutheran, especially under Pastor Steve and the new pastoral leadership, including the long-term



vision of the Vision 2020 group and welcoming statement.

NOMINEES: CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (VOTE FOR 5)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Amy Tipton

Occupation - Human Resources Manager -
Pinnacle Bank Arena

I feel that I have many strengths that can be used in the position of Church Council. As a Human Resources Manager, I need to look at things from all sides and make decisions based on the facts and what is best for the employee and employer. This will be useful when handling issues on Council. I have been a member at First for many years and have gone through many different life events with the church. This will help me see things from different perspectives.

We took a big step towards being welcoming to all with the changes to the building. However, it can't stop there. This should be something that is practiced every day in all aspects of our lives, along with being disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world. Let's continue on this journey together.



NOMINEES:

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (VOTE FOR 5)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Zachary Schafer

Occupation - Director of Educational Services - Lighthouse

Finding ways to help our members, young and old, to identify their own source of discipleship in the context of our greater goals as a congregation, is key. There is great strength in this diversity, though, it too means, that flexibility, patience, listening, and building strong relationships among those in the congregation is a need. Fulfilling this need will ensure that the vision for the "transformation of the world" has the ability to shift while remaining true to the individuals in the congregation, allowing each member to learn and grow according to their own sense of discipleship.

I first started coming to First Lutheran because my brother and sister-in-law had invited me. I loved the environment and the sermons. It always felt like home and as if I were welcomed. It only made sense that I become a member myself. Since being a member, the lessons and direction of the community seem to be growing in new and exciting ways; the mission seems to be deepening. This is something I want to be a part of.



The deepening mission will be crucial as we look to address the challenges in front of us. In the last year, the world has been challenging and will have reparations that will linger long after the challenges subside. We need to find ways to help the members of our congregation to process all that is happening and find peace in the community and through scripture. Finding ways to connect these in a way that not only leaves people feeling good, but leaves them with a means to finding peace in the day to day, is crucial.

NOMINEES:

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (VOTE FOR 5)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Fred Ohles

Occupation - Retired

I had a career of nearly 40 years in higher education. My responsibilities concentrated first in teaching, then in administration of academic programs, and finally in leadership. I've always been good at studying a situation or a set of materials and reporting on it as it is or developing a plan, such as to organize it or improve it. Through the course of my work I learned the importance of getting a variety of points of view on an opportunity or issue before attempting to decide what happens next. One of my gifts is writing and speaking effectively with an economy of words. I also have a strong work ethic.

First Lutheran's focus on our discipleship for the sake of the world's transformation is bold. Since my wife, Rosemary, and I came to Lincoln and joined First Lutheran in 2007, I have been impressed by the high level of engagement that members have with each other and with the community around us. First Lutheran is an unusually welcoming congregation. Under the current stresses of a global pandemic, the departure during



2020 of our two pastors, and the high levels of division and distrust that pervade American society, we are going to need to be especially strong at the work of sustaining these commitments over the months ahead. I'm confident that we'll do that and as a result we'll be a beacon of hope for each other and for people who come newly to us from many different backgrounds.

NOMINEES:

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (VOTE FOR 5)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Judy Bailey

Occupation - Retired from Gallup

My Gallup Strengths are achiever, empathy, relator, positivity and woo. This is who I am. Along with my strong faith, these strengths are the gifts and expertise I bring to the Church Council. They guide me to get things done and to be a good listener and in tune with what others in the congregation are thinking and feeling. Besides secretary of the Church Council, I am on Fellowship Committee, quilting group, 150th Anniversary Committee (yes, we still hope to celebrate), Lydia Circle and do grief counseling. I believe these interactions help me stay in tune with the pulse of several different groups of the congregation. I have been a member of First for 40 years so I am able to approach many topics from the historical viewpoint.

Our mission statement is very powerful and I believe all encompassing. It speaks to each of us in different ways. I think it reiterates how the Bible tells us we should be living. We have to hold hard to our faith and each other. 2021 will be an interesting year with lots of work for each and every individual within the congregation - and oh, how exciting it will be. As a church we will be calling new pastors - we all need to be



prepared to accept change and support what they bring. There may be other new staff members. We need to be ready to support them, to work closely with them and each other to bring our physical facility back to the hive of activity that we had before the pandemic. Through the pandemic, many lost jobs, homes and loved ones. We need to be a welcoming church for all of those who have suffered such hardship, and be prepared to help them emotionally and with whatever else they need. Everyone has been so generous during the pandemic, we need to continue and find other creative ways to help our world recuperate. I believe God is calling us to be the best we can be for our community and the world.

NOMINEES: CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (VOTE FOR 5)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Rod Johnson

Occupation - Retired from Agricultural Association Management

As the Executive Director/Manager of Agricultural Trade Associations, I have worked with boards and membership to accomplish goals and objectives. I served on the Church Council at a previous congregation. We have been members of First Lutheran for 25 years. During that time, I served on the Education Committee. I am currently serving on the Property Committee and have been for the last 15 years. I have sang in the choir and serve on the Transportation Ministry team.



First Lutheran's mission is to serve our members and the community. I feel that God has led us to expand our footprint within the community through the partnership with Dimensions Education Program, the commitment to remodel our facility into a welcoming place and through the message developed in our mission statement.



NOMINEES:

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (VOTE FOR 5)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Alexis Sandman

Occupation - Student

After being a member for the past 14 years at First Lutheran, this community has shaped my upbringing and granted me multiple leadership opportunities. From student council, to being a state delegate for the Nebraska 4-H foundation and now the president of my sorority, I have grown into the strong woman I am now.

If I were to be placed in this position, I believe I could contribute to the magnitude of leadership, listening and contribution. One of my experiences that I value is being on the Lutheran Youth of Nebraska Planning Team where we planned the annual gatherings. Not only did this guide me to find my place in Christ's plan, but to see how others contribute to that plan as well.

Something I cherish about First's mission is the inclusivity that has blossomed within the last few years. First has embraced these changes and



extended effort in making sure that everyone feels like they can belong. This is something that, while First is taking steps to being inclusive, there are still leaps and bounds to make. I believe that as a congregation we are just scratching the surface and I can see that the future holds the continued work to having fully open arms.

NOMINEES:

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (VOTE FOR 5)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Jennifer Wemhoff

Occupation - Communications Manager

I'm a lifelong Lutheran and have been a member of First Lutheran since 2007. My husband, Mark, and I have two girls, Anna (9) and Elsa (6). I spent 20 years working in the nonprofit sector, and have experience prioritizing action, based on need, impact, capacity and reality. I understand that the true impact of what we do goes beyond what basic numbers may tell us and lies in how people's lives are changed for the better. In my current marketing role, I work closely with nonprofits of all types, share stories of how these organizations are doing good, and create a variety of content. I've been a FaithTrek Guide for a number of years, was part of the Worship/Accessibility Assessment team, served on the Creation Care committee and was a member of the Campaign Cabinet for the building project's capital campaign.

Many exciting things lie ahead for our church - calling new pastors, reconnecting as a faith community, and finally getting to fully utilize our remodeled building. This past year has been unprecedented and difficult in so



many ways. I'm proud of how First Lutheran found ways to keep us connected while we are physically apart and that the health and safety of our members has been paramount in determining the best path toward reopening the church. Even amid the challenges of 2020, in addition to pastoral and staff transition, we as a church never strayed from our focus to welcome all. That's what I love the most about our church - we welcome all because God welcomes all. I see God calling us to live out our welcoming statement, and First Lutheran continuing to be a leader in the community in the years ahead, by serving others, loving our neighbors, and working toward unity in Christ, no matter what challenges we may face.

NOMINEES:

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (VOTE FOR 5)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Rebecca Pfabe

Occupation - Nurse Practitioner

I have been on the Church Council for 3 years. It's been wonderful to get to know so many other members I probably would not have gotten to know, even with Zoom! We all have a role in making decisions that impact First and I have learned so much from so many. I hope the experience I have gained over the past 3 years would help in the next 3 years. Over the many years I have been a member, I have been involved in a variety of aspects of the church, from teaching Sunday School when my children were much younger to being a member of the former Social Ministry committee and the Creation Care committee. This involvement has enriched my knowledge of the church.

We have an amazing mission statement. God led us to accept that as our mission and it is what directs and guides us in what we do inside and out of the church, with God's help. One of the most immediate goals we have is to find new



pastors, but the work of the church has not stopped. I have been in awe at what the staff and members of First Lutheran have done to keep our church going during the pandemic. Although the life of the church looks so much different than it did in early 2020, it is enriched in ways we couldn't have imagined. God is making this all work through all of us.

NOMINEES:

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (VOTE FOR 5)

How do you see your gifts and expertise being used in the position you may be serving? Share your thoughts on First Lutheran's mission and where you see God leading/calling us as a congregation and disciples of Christ.

Linda Bogenrief

Occupation - Retired from Banking

I've been a member of First Lutheran since the mid 70's. The church has been the place that has offered and encouraged me to use gifts and expertise I didn't know, and often denied, that I had. The Hunger and Clothing Committee, youth, Endowment Board, Stewardship Committee, Altar Guild, Sunday School, Healing Service, Prison Ministry and organizing children's baskets have all directed me to grow and share what I have witnessed from First.

First Lutheran's mission statement is an inspiration. It's a mission encouraging us to be of open mind and widespread understanding and forgiveness. This past year of separation could have led to a stalemate of stagnation, and instead the leadership and fellowship has been awesome. I can't image what can be accomplished when we can be back together in mission, but I would like to be part of it.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH: WE WELCOME ALL BECAUSE GOD WELCOMES ALL



Each person is a unique creation of God and, through grace, is a child of God. The people of First Lutheran Church welcome all because God welcomes all, without regard for race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity or relationship status, physical or mental challenges, imprisonment, addictions, socio-economic circumstances, or anything else that too often divides us. First Lutheran Church is a spiritual community that celebrates the gifts of God that can empower us to engage in the struggles of life, to care for each other, and to serve Christ where we work and live. Our unity is in Christ.

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

