

## NOMINEES

*In addition to biographical information, all nominees were asked to respond to two requests:*

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

### CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL (Vote for 5)

#### **Scott Williamson**

Occupation: Gift Officer-Madonna Foundation

1. I have served in many leadership roles of different organizations during my lifetime. I was board chair at a previous church we belonged to. I also have a background in banking and mortgage lending, aside from my current role of fundraising.
2. I love the fact that First Lutheran is welcoming to all people. I also appreciate that women are allowed prominent roles in the church. We came from a Missouri Synod church in Lincoln that was not progressive in either of these areas and found the message that was being sent from the pulpit and the Synod to be very disturbing. I feel that there is no place in the church for exclusivity. Jesus didn't discriminate, so why should we?



#### **Emily Sears**

Occupation: Associate staff for Lincoln Education Association

1. I have been a member since birth and am now 34. I think I have a good understanding of the history yet can bring a more youthful perspective to the council. Even though I am mid 30s I still am very traditional when it comes to church services and traditions.
2. I deeply agree with the mission that we need to be a welcoming place for all different walks of life and make everyone feel comfortable in our church. I want our church to be a stable community for all and a beacon of hope to those who are lost. I think we need to get the youth more involved and after getting to know some of them (volunteering my time with youth group) they are amazing people whose voices need to be heard as well. I hope I can be a voice for them. I also hope that we can recruit more mid 30s people to our church because I feel like we are lacking in that age range. I would love to see our church back at the level it was before the pandemic.



## **Rod Johnson**

Occupation: Retired

1. We have been members of First Lutheran for over 25 years. During that time I have been involved in various activities, Education Committee, Transportation Ministry, usher, reader, alter guild, choir and the Property Committee. During my career I was Executive Director of a couple of trade associations, working with boards of directors, budgets, business planning and consumer relations. I feel this has given me a background for working with people and an understanding how an organization with staff and volunteers works. I like to listen and analyze situations and help come to a consensus on how to move forward.
2. First Lutheran has been through a challenging period, with construction, pandemic and staff changes. I think we need to now focus on our church family, the community and making sure we are a welcoming place. We need to focus on the care and commitment we have to our older members. We need to encourage involvement from our youth and younger families, and focus on reaching out within our neighborhood and community, welcoming others to join us in our mission to serve Christ where we work and live.



## **Trish Flury**

Occupation: Retired Medicaid/Long-Term Care Administrator, Nebraska DHHS

1. In my career, I gained leadership skills and experience in areas such as project development and implementation; contract management; and staff development. I also served as a team member committed to inviting input from all partners to work respectfully together to achieve goals. Although I have not been in an official position during my 10 years at First Lutheran Church, examples of my involvement in previous denominations include chair of staff-parish relations and various offices on the Executive Committee. My social work background shows in the "mission" work with which I have been involved here at First Lutheran such as Afghan Refugees, Kicks for Kids, and Stephen Ministry.
2. This church's variety of activities for spiritual growth, fellowship, support, and mission astounds me. With our strong Welcoming Statement as guidance, I would appreciate the opportunity to join the leadership team as we continue to implement that vision. New members and diversity may lead to new or revised directions. As we value one another, we can each become both learner and mentor. We are on a blessed path of welcoming, connecting, believing, learning, and giving. Let's joyously forge ahead. To God be the glory.



## **Linda Maack**

Occupation: Receptionist (part-time)

1. I was a teacher and administrator for over 40 years, working with students (ages 0-12), parents and staffs. I was a financial director at Dimensions Early Education Programs and currently work for an accounting office. I feel that I can relate to all age groups for the benefit of our church family. I am a current Stephen Minister, Lydia Circle member and worship volunteer at least monthly. In the past I have taught VBS and Faith Trek and been on the Fellowship and Nominating committees. I developed the Transportation Ministry program for First Lutheran several years ago when I saw a need for that service for our congregation.
2. I appreciate our church's mission statement and think the most important thing we can do is love one another and serve not just our church, but support others in Lincoln and around the world. Our newly renovated facility is leading us to serve others not just locally, but globally. Just a few examples are the Fall Festival, First Friday Jazz, CROP, a place for AA meetings, a child care program, Matt Talbot and Lutheran World Relief quilting. God is calling us in various ways to help others and we are stepping up to that call.



## **Judy Batterman**

Occupation: Retired

1. I am completing my first term on the Congregational Council so hopefully, I've gotten the hang of it. As the co-chair of the Historical Committee for our 150th anniversary celebration, I've learned more about the church and its history than anyone should know. I love First Lutheran and hope I can continue to serve another 3 years.
2. It will be an exciting year for First Lutheran. We will be calling a new Associate Pastor and solidifying staff. I would like to see us grow not only in numbers but also in our faith journeys. With a complete staff, that can happen.



## **Nancy Clay**

Occupation: Retired, former vocal music teacher

1. Throughout my life, I have loved working in the church as a volunteer and as a staff person. At the suggestion of our pastor, David Nystrom, I entered three years of study to become a certified Parish Ministry Associate and was certified for the first time in 2000. I served as Director of Children and Youth Ministry for 5 years at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church and as Director of Christian Education and Music Ministries at American Lutheran Church for 3 years. Recently, I have stepped back to retired status as a Parish Ministry Associate. The experiences, training and study over the years gave me a background for lay ministry and church service. If selected to serve on our council, I would be a



## **Nancy Clay cont...**

willing listener and supporter of our pastors and leadership as well as all who are a part of First Lutheran Church. Most importantly, I believe God has a plan for First Lutheran and would seek through prayer and study working together with others to discern where that might lead us.

2. I believe First Lutheran Church expresses our belief in each person as a child of God, created in His image. God places all of us on the same level offering His grace through Jesus. Knowing this is the key to our mission. The universal church is facing many challenges as are we at First. People have busy lives that may present schedule conflicts with what we can offer on site. I believe we are and will be challenged to seek ways to offer ministry on site and in creative new ways to reach out to our members and people and groups in Lincoln and beyond. This became evident in very real ways during the pandemic. Our online worship is one example of outreach in a new way.

Community is an important goal and we face challenges in continuing to grow and remain relevant to all ages. Attracting new members is always important as we grow from new people and new ideas as well as serving the needs of those who call First Lutheran their church home. I think researching what our members want and need from the church is important as well as finding out what other Christian churches are doing in ministry during changes in our society and our place in history. Being a praying and loving church should always be foremost, following the example of Jesus and His love for all as expressed in scripture.

## **Jenna Troutman**

Occupation: Special Programs/Membership Experience Director at Copple Family YMCA

1. Some of the gifts that I see helping me to serve on council are my passion and my empathy. I believe that passion will help me on church council because when I am on a team and I have a passion for the topic or for what we as a team are doing, I go all in. I want to be of help in anyway and I want us to do well and make a difference. I believe that my empathy will help me because I am able to listen to others questions, comments, and concerns, and try to help them in any way I can. Either by providing an ear to listen, or by helping them find the answer to their questions. My current position at the Y has allowed me to learn how write a budget, and stick to it. It has also allowed me to learn and grow in supporting and managing staff.
2. I love First Lutheran's mission! As a lifelong member I have truly enjoyed seeing First Lutheran in many different times. I love how we have evolved as a congregation throughout the years. I believe that God continues to call and lead us through change. God is helping First Lutheran to grow and evolve all the time. I believe that as the years continue God will lead us to continue to make a difference in our community, through the Lutheran Food Pantry and other organizations, as well as continuing to make a difference on our youth, our young adults, and all way through the generations!



## **Amy Harrison**

Occupation: University of Nebraska

1. Recently, I took the StrengthFinders test, and my number 1 strength is connectedness. I am a team builder who values the perspectives of others and ensures all voices are heard and represented. I can easily find common ground among diverse groups, and I easily discern the implications of a decision upon individuals and the community at large. I live my life with a belief that we are not isolated but rather, we are part of a larger community, and all members of the community should be shown love, kindness, unconditional acceptance & justice. I excel at building and sustaining relationships within an organization and within the community outside of church. In addition, God has equipped me with the gift of exhortation, the ability to provide words of love, comfort, encouragement and counsel. In the past, I have served on church welcome committees, and was a member of a pastoral care team. I believe if elected to the congregational council, I will provide a genuine care & concern for the members of the council and congregation, actively engage in Christian contemplation to make wise decisions for the betterment of the congregation and practice strong intercessory prayers. I will balance my decisions between what is just and good for the congregation and the community while listening for the promptings of the Holy Spirit. I will passionately commit to this position on the council.
2. I believe we are being called to create new discipleship and community visions that will challenge us to think beyond our current, comfortable practices. This new radical, exciting vision will lay the foundation for new strategies. I believe God is calling us to develop spiritual strategies that will require us to examine our congregation at a deeper level specifically analyzing the needs of our church members and addressing those needs while becoming more relational within the church. A more intentional, relational strategy will also allow us to take the church out into the community. We can then help people discover Jesus and serve others as God has called us to do. External forces upon the life cycle of a church requires we explore new innovative ways to increase the sustainability of FLC. On a micro level, I believe the church will need to create new programs or activities to meet the diverse needs of the community.



## **Dave Pfister**

Occupation: Web Application Developer

1. I am an attentive and empathetic listener, and have been a mentor at my job for over a decade. I'm an excellent problem solver and critical thinker.
2. I fully endorse the mission at First Lutheran. I feel that faith as a call to action is an important cornerstone of the mission. As such, I'd like the chance to help First Lutheran sustain and grow its mission and ministries in the congregation, community and beyond

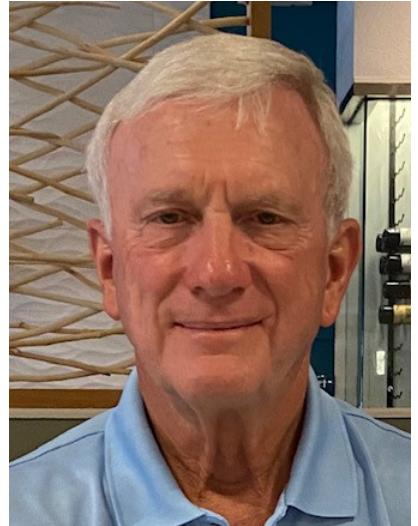


## NOMINATING COMMITTEE (Vote for 3)

### Steve Eicher

Occupation: Director, Human Resources, Pfizer (Retired)

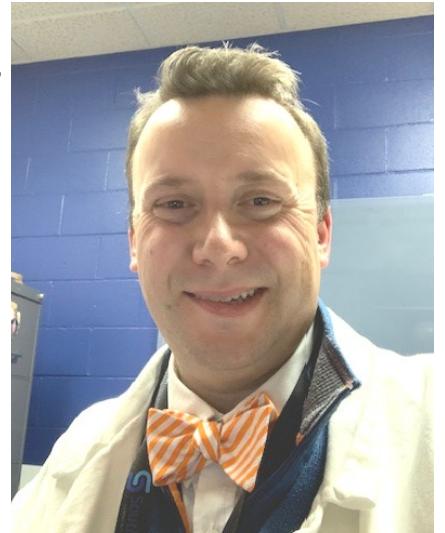
1. My work experience spans 40 years of industrial management, including over 30 years in Human Resources. Following retirement, I consulted for several years and presently serve on the Lancaster County Personnel Policy Board. I have served on numerous committees, professional/non-profit boards and in a variety of human resources organizations. I believe I have the ability to relate to people, understand what is needed for successful organizations and an open mind for reaching consensus within a group. I also believe that serving on the Nominating Committee would be an opportunity to give back to our church.
2. I think the mission of First Lutheran should be to represent what is good in the world and the local community through our acts of ministry, benevolence, welcoming and caring. I believe we are called to serve others and work toward the goal of improving the lives of those in need, serving Christ where we work and live.



### Dave Schmitter

Occupation: Physics Instructor, SCC Milford

1. I have been a leader in many different parts of my life. In college, I was the president of a juggling club for two years. When we lived in a Rhode Island, I was the Senior Warden of an episcopal church (the equivalent of the council president) for three to four years. Currently, I am the chair of my department at SCC. In all of those experiences, I have worked with different people with different personalities and have helped them to achieve specific goals. I think these experiences serve this position well because I have delegated responsibilities. I have asked people to participate. As a result, I recognize the skills needed to follow through with goals and activities. I am also willing to work alongside them to achieve those goals.
2. I believe our Welcoming Statement is what will push us forward in the future. It speaks so much to me about what our church stands for and makes me proud to be a part of it. We need to embrace this statement and allow it to push us outside of our walls to the surrounding areas so that all know what unconditional love is.



## **Karen Statham**

Occupation: Surveyor/consultant for DHHS

1. I bring a vast array of interpersonal experiences that allows me to listen with an open heart and to participate with respect and trust. My faith has guided me in all things and I believe strongly that through Christ, God has brought me to where I am today.
2. Having been a member of First since 1985, I've had the privilege of being a part of a congregation that "leans in" and steps up, regarding service to our members, the local community and our world at large. This is not a tradition at First, but a way of life. I believe First Lutherans mission has been and will continue to be one of service.



## **Michelle Sitorius**

Occupation: Attorney

1. For several nonprofit entities on whose boards I currently serve, I have been and continue to be on the nominating committees for these entities. As a result, I have a good deal of experience evaluating the needs of an organization, the strengths currently reflected in the board, and the compatibility of individuals to work effectively with current board members and the organization's staff. Generally, I enjoy meeting new people and learning about what motivates them to serve.
2. Our mission at First Lutheran includes service to our community as well as our congregation. I see us being led to continue the work we do to serve those in our community and to continue to press forward to enhance existing opportunities for service and to create new opportunities for service.



## **Carlene Falos**

Occupation: Retired Teacher

1. I have been a member since 1971, and have served on many different committees. I have met many wonderful people in our congregation serving along side of them.
2. As our mission so clearly states, we are a welcoming community. Together we strive to learn and grow in the spirit, to care for those around us, celebrate all of our gifts and to serve Christ where we work and live.

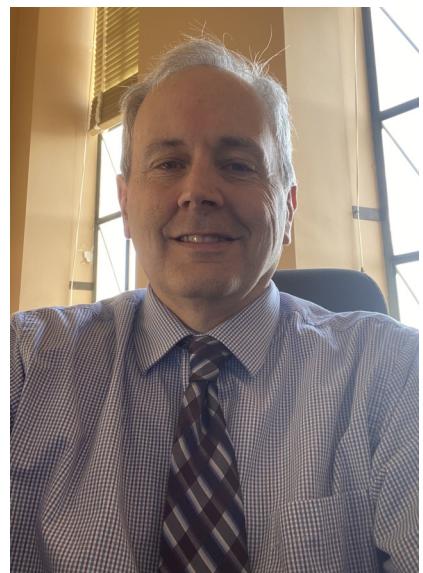


## **Gene Cotter**

Occupation: Deputy Administrator for Operations at The Administrative Office of Courts and Probation 2022

1. I have been involved in the bigger picture of the Church from high school forward. From an expertise perspective, I have helped draft policies and procedures, vision and mission statements, strategic plans, and recruited and selected People for a myriad of positions over time. I have served two terms on Church Council, including time as President, a youth group planner, and sponsor, as well as numerous committees and workgroups. From a gifts perspective, and as it pertains to Synod Assembly, especially with the task before this Assembly of selecting a new Bishop, I would like to believe that my gifts include an ability to see the bigger picture, and the ability and willingness to ask questions, including the hard ones, to ensure the greater needs are being accounted for and met. All of this I believe would serve the needs of First and our needed voice within the Synod.

2. Ever mindful of the FACT that all people are children of God, First Lutheran has always been a leader in demonstrating the commitment to serve as, and practice, discipleship across the city of Lincoln and the Synod as a whole. Whether our philanthropic giving, our service opportunities, or participation in greater causes such as refugee resettlement, disaster response etc., First has always been at the front of the pack, leading the way. Especially today, as we continue in the throes of a pandemic, and find ourselves in increasing political and civil discord, First must continue to serve in this capacity. Especially now, as the Synod elects a new Bishop, First has an opportunity to rise up and serve as a leader once again.



## **SYNOD ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBERS (Vote for 5 - At least 2 men and 2 women)**

### **Jay Sears**

Occupation: Retired Lobbyist- Nebraska State Education Association

1. In my prior employment, I worked with legislators and State Board of Education members educating them about education issues. I had to build relationships and trust through meeting with individuals. I am a great listener and know how to collaborate to achieve results.
2. First Lutheran has been a leader in the community, state, nationally and globally in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. First Lutheran is a welcoming church. We will continue to engage others in our mission. Our new facilities will support us well in engaging the local community.



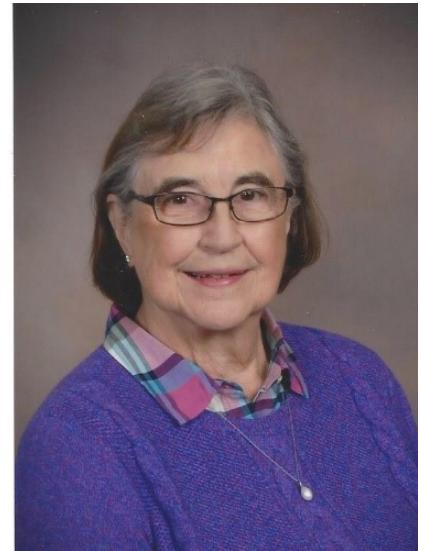
## **Kay Rockwell**

Occupation: Former nurse, stay at home mother, Professor Emeritas (monitoring & evaluation) UNL, and currently a volunteer in our Federal Government through USAID to teach subsistence farmers in East Africa about production practices to improve their families' livelihood.

1. Decisions made at Synod Assembly will be shared in educational activities for both children and adults, in standing committees as appropriate, through FLC's newsletter, in personal conversations with individuals and groups in FLC, other groups within the community, and internationally with the Inland Protestant Church near Kitui, Kenya.

The spiritual experiences at Synod Assembly will inspire me as I interact with others individually or in groups such as when I play cards at the bridge table, participate in my book clubs, dine with friends, etc.

2. God calls us as a spiritual community to celebrate his gifts that empower us to engage in life's struggles, to care for each other and serve Christ where we work and live. God calls us to go forth in Lincoln and our surrounding area, as well as internationally where the need is great, and someone's cross is hard to bear. Go calls us into leadership roles among congregations in our Synod to go forth and share the good news.



## **Teresa Brohimer**

Occupation: Retired from USDA with 37 years of service.

1. My husband, Mike, and I have been members of First since early 2008, shortly after we moved to Lincoln. We were drawn to First by the welcome feeling we received whenever we visited. It didn't take us long to decide to become members. When working, my job was based on being able to analyze, compromise, work on difficult issues, organize, assist in keeping programs running smoothly, and network with many partners. Since retiring, and after the church reopened due to the Covid shutdown, I have begun to volunteer in various areas of the church, including being a greeter before worship and altar guild. I have been on the Stewardship Committee for the last three-four years. I currently volunteer with the Lincoln chapter of TeamMates as a mentor. I am in my fourth year with the same mentee, who is now in the 6th grade.



2. First Lutheran's mission is very strong. In part, it includes the continual commitment to 20% of the budget going to benevolences beyond the congregation, and serving ALL of God's people. We have a very strong welcoming statement and we, as a congregation, show that we are truly a congregation that believes in our statement. I believe First has to keep working hard to maintain and grow our congregation. This isn't unique to First, but I believe we have the tools and disciples, including a beautiful and welcoming building, to get the job done.

## **Barb Monson**

1. I hope to use my listening and communication skills to learn some new ideas for our church to better serve our community and congregation.
2. What I have always loved about First Lutheran is that not only do we grow faith within our congregation, but we reach beyond by intentionally welcoming everyone, serving those in need and calling attention to social injustices, environmental needs, and inequities. God calls us to care for ourselves, care for others, and care for our world. The world is a complicated place. More than usual now, it seems. I feel like it will take more than a business as usual approach to continue to grow and serve our community in the best way. I would love to be a part of a synod-wide discussion of what that might look like.



## **Craig Heier**

Occupation: Grocery Retail

1. I have experience both as a candidate and a visitor to the Nebraska Synod Assembly. I have great interest in the work of the greater church and like to participate in the decisions made at the assembly.
2. The mission of FLC is stated in its' mission statement. I think that we, as a congregation, need to keep listening to the needs of our members and our community. We need to be open to listening to new ideas as we discern how our congregation carries out its mission statement.



## **Heather Chesnut**

Occupation: Client Service Coordinator - Retirement Plans

1. I am a very good listener and see multiple perspectives to any issue or situation.
2. I desire to be more involved with the Church. I also believe it was divine intervention that helped me change jobs in 2020. Being more involved will help me stay tethered.



## **Kari Hoeft**

Occupation: Insurance Agent

1. Having been an active member of FLC for 15 years, I have served on a variety of committees and participated in various activities and opportunities within the church. I have volunteered teaching Sunday school, serving on the Vicar committee, the call committee, as well as participated in a number of short term commitments. Given the multiple perspectives these opportunities have provided me, I believe I have the ability to consider different perspectives within the church.
2. We joined First Lutheran because of the many ways the church lives out serving one another and the community. The pandemic caused temporary hiatus in many of the projects we held near and dear to our church community however, I am excited to see the momentum we have now bringing not only previous initiatives back, but new ones as well! Just as every church is finding it's way back to a post COVID norm, I know First will thrive through living and following our mission.



## **Clay Ehlers**

Occupation: Manager

1. I love finding ways to serve in our community and problem solving.
2. I believe that our church does not end at the exit doors, it is in the community, walking around in all the hearts and hands of our whole congregation. Jesus showed us how to support the needy, the new, the ignored, and the reviled- that is done on the streets, at the mission, at the food bank, and in our schools. I am hopeful that we can continue to find funds and volunteers to get our message of service and love to our community.



## **Verdell Bohling**

Occupation: Retired from the Department of Health and Human Services after 33 years in January 2019, as Social Service Supervisor for Medicaid programs.

1. Since I have worked in the Social Service area and in particular the Refugee Resettlement Program I have begun to understand different cultures and people with different socioeconomic backgrounds. For a church to continue to grow we must be understanding of people who, to use a cliché, come from all walks of life and be understanding of daily and long term issues they may be facing.
2. First Lutheran became a life saver for me, after not attending church for about 30 years. My life style had created numerous conflicts for me over the years. Those of you that know me have heard some of my stories. At a particular low



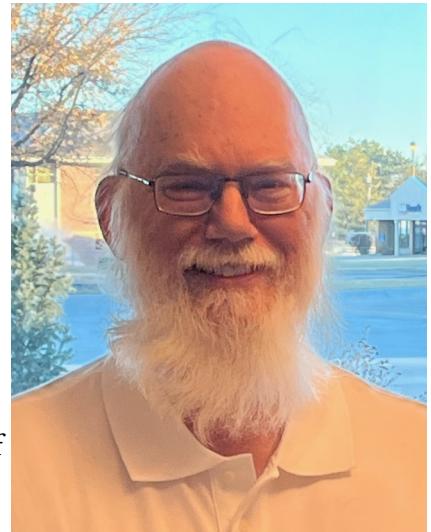
## **Verdell Bohling cont...**

point in my life I called First Lutheran, in part because I was raised, baptized and confirmed Lutheran in the previous ALC synod. I was fortunate to speak with our former Assistant Pastor Aaron Erdley. I feel the Holy Spirit was speaking through him and I credit him with bringing me back to the church and a feeling I'm no longer damned. This in part lead to me run and being elected to the church council. I felt this was an honor to be asked let alone to be elected. While on the council we developed the welcoming statement. During this time, we had several meetings getting the congregations input for what the statement should say. We also developed a Welcoming Committee that checked for accessibility for the disabled and based on their report approved the remodeling of the church to be ADA accessible. Later My partner Daniel and I were nominated and then elected to the Synod Assembly when Bishop Maas was reelected. As a mission, I feel that God has lead us to be a welcoming Church and to follow the ELCA Social Statements including in particular the 2009 statement. That being said First Lutheran needs to work on inviting others not just saying we are a welcoming church. Given my background with different cultures, experience on both the Church Council and Synod Assembly I feel I would represent First Lutheran and our mission well.

## **Richard Bouma**

Occupation: Retired

1. The skills that I have are being able to communicate and work with people. When I worked for Nebraska Department of Revenue, I needed to trouble shoot and communicate between the legislature and my department. I was able to understand, interpret and analyze intent.
2. I support our message printed out on the wall in the Commons. Our mission is to welcome everyone. My attitude as a Christian, is to be inclusive. If I turn someone away, it doesn't do anyone any good or bring them into the family of Christ. I believe other view points need to be heard.



## **ENDOWMENT BOARD (Vote for 1)**

## **Terry Kruse**

Occupation: Retired Registered Nurse

1. I am a lifelong Lutheran and member of First Lutheran Church since 2006. I have served as a youth leader, committee member on various committees and on church council throughout my time at FLC. My experience as a nurse, an outreach task force member and having served with many local organizations will help me be of service on the Endowment Board as they discern the needs of our community and congregation and how the gifts of God through our church can be of service. I would be honored to be able to serve FLC as a member of this Board.



## **Terry Kruse cont....**

2. First has always placed community outreach as a priority of their ministry and continues to strengthen that commitment through our mission statement and service. Our prayerful and deliberate focus on community needs and living out our faith through service remains a strength of this church.

## **Steve Janssen**

Occupation: Account Manager

1. I've served at First Lutheran in various ways including council treasurer, building committee, budget committee, youth group sponsor, Sunday School teacher, choir and brass. I'm familiar with the operation and mission of First Lutheran as well as the many ways we serve and welcome.
2. First Lutheran is a family that welcomes and supports all who seek belonging, while maintaining an outward focus towards serving God's people. I feel that we strive to love God and love one another.



## **Ann Carlson**

Occupation: Retired

1. I have been blessed to have served on the Endowment Board the past three years. My gifts center around organizational and leadership skills. Prior to retirement, I worked at Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. and National Bank of Commerce as a Tax Manager in the Wealth Management Department. After graduating from Nebraska Wesleyan University, I worked for two years at Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co., now KPMG. I previously served on the Audit Committee and the Finance Committee as well as being the Recorder for Congregational Council for First Lutheran Church.
2. Our congregation has a tradition of giving and the Endowment Board is an important part of that function by giving scholarships to students in our congregation along with giving funds to various missions and outreach. I am proud of our mission to be a welcoming church that serves our community and beyond. We are all disciples of Christ who are called to share our strengths.

