

# FIRST STORIES



JULY - DECEMBER 2024



## CELEBRATING OUR SHARED MINISTRY

by Kathleen Simley, Communications Director

What an incredible six months we've had as a congregation! It's amazing to see how we've grown in faith, deepened our connections with one another and made an impact in our community.

From festive celebrations to quiet reflection, we've shared meaningful experiences. Here are a few of the highlights:

- Christmas Worship – A joyful celebration of Christ's birth with beautiful music and candlelight and a festive fun photobooth.
- Baptisms – A reminder of our promises and responsibilities to all baptized children of First.
- Gifts of Hope – Together, we brought hope to those in need, with record-breaking giving.
- Fall Festival – A fun-filled outreach event of smiles, laughter and community.

- Quilt Blessing – Sending our handcrafted quilts reminded us how small acts of love create a global impact.
- The Gift of an Icon - Learning the story of Pastor Mary Jensen's passion for icons and her lasting gift to First Lutheran.
- Serving and Caring Initiatives – From "Kicks for Kids" to other efforts, we've shown God's love in action.
- Lego Contest – Who said ministry can't be fun?
- Celebrating Our Oldest Member – Honoring 105 years of life of one of our cherished members.

This is just the beginning! Check out the newsletter for Spirit-filled stories from First Lutheran. Each reflects our love for God and one another. You will be amazed by what we've done in ministry together!

Here's to a new year, filled with more opportunities to connect, celebrate, serve and grow!





## QUILTING: A MINISTRY OF LOVE AND COMFORT

by Mary Phelan, First Lutheran Member

One Sunday morning about ten years ago, I walked into the Sanctuary at First Lutheran and saw quilts draped over every pew, filling the space with color and warmth. It felt magical, and I thought, “I could do this.”

Having sewn my whole life, I was immediately drawn to this ministry. A few weeks later, I noticed a basket in the church with quilt kits to take home. I picked one up, gave it a try and was hooked. Soon after, I started attending the monthly quilting meetings and I haven’t looked back since.

For me, quilting has been a meaningful way to use my talents in service to the church. Each quilt starts as fabric and thread but becomes so much more - a symbol of hope, comfort and care for someone in need. Whether it’s a family recovering from disaster, a community affected by war or someone in poverty, these quilts offer more than warmth; they show that someone cares.

Phyllis Frickel was a true inspiration to our group. Her dedication to this ministry and her role as a mentor left a lasting impact, reminding us how one person’s faith and service can touch so many lives.

Participating in the quilting ministry helps me live

out my Christian values of love and service. While sewing, we often think about the person who will receive the quilt. Who are they? What challenges are they facing? We like to imagine the quilt bringing them comfort and strength during a tough time. This ministry has deepened my faith and reminds me to care for others, as Christ teaches us.

Hearing stories about how the quilts are used always reminds us why we do what we do. I recently spoke with a pastor who shared her experience visiting Africa. She described seeing quilts used to wrap newborn babies, cover patients in hospitals or even serve as room dividers in homes. Sometimes, these quilts become the only truly “nice” thing a person possesses in a third-world country. Knowing that something as simple as a quilt can bring such comfort fills us with gratitude and renews our commitment to this ministry.

If you’re looking to get involved at First Lutheran, try the quilting ministry! You don’t need quilting experience to join. You can help by tying quilts, cutting fabric or sewing pieces together. It’s also about connecting with a wonderful group of women who share a purpose - to serve others. We laugh, share stories, and sometimes tear up, knowing these quilts make a difference.

Join us and spend a Thursday morning with some of the most inspiring women I’ve ever met. Together, we can share warmth, hope and love with people in need around the world. Who knows? You might just get hooked - like I did.







## THREADS OF HOPE: FIRST LUTHERAN QUILTERS BRING COMFORT TO THOSE IN NEED

On October 20, we blessed 120 beautifully handcrafted quilts made by the dedicated quilting group at First Lutheran. Each month, these volunteers gather to create quilts for Lutheran World Relief (LWR), which partners with agencies worldwide to distribute them to people displaced by disasters, political unrest and war - those in urgent need of shelter and warmth.

Over the years, First Lutheran quilters have made and shipped over a thousand quilts to communities worldwide and in the U.S. Recently, we received a message from LWR about quilts that reached homeless veterans in Asheville, North Carolina, after Hurricane Helene. LWR shared, "Yesterday, we spent the day at a local hotel housing 168 homeless veterans. Before the hurricane, these men were living in transitional housing and rebuilding their lives. The hurricane devastated Asheville, leaving them without possessions or stability. A local hotel was secured to serve as their home for the next six months. Thanks to the generosity of Lutherans, each man received an LWR Quilt and Personal Care Kit. To say they were grateful is an understatement. One man, after placing the quilt on his bed, said, 'Ma'am, I put that new quilt on my bed, and the room just shone with those beautiful colors. Thank you for all the love in that quilt.'"

During worship, the quilts cushioned the backs of attendees as they prayed over them and blessed them, preparing them to bring comfort and show God's love to those facing homelessness, disaster or conflict.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Even if you can't join the quilters on the fourth Thursday of every month at 9:00 AM, there are plenty of ways to support this ministry:

- Take a kit home to sew. Each kit has everything you need to create a quilt top and your work helps provide more finished quilts each year.
- Donate fabric. Each quilt needs 8 yards of 100% cotton fabric, either whole yards or pieces at least 11" square. If someone you know is clearing out fabric or hosting an estate sale, think of our quilters!
- Donate used sheets. Full, queen or king-size sheets (flat or fitted) make great quilt backs.
- Contribute financially. Donations help buy fabric and ship quilts to Lutheran World Relief. You can give directly to this ministry.
- Come to the Intergenerational Quilting Day Celebration on March 16 at 9:30 AM. Help tie quilts with the quilters!





## KICKS FOR KIDS – THANK YOU FIRST LUTHERAN!

Every leap on the playground, every step into class and every big smile on a child's face - these moments are brighter because of you. Thanks to your generosity, Kicks for Kids continues its mission to provide new athletic shoes and socks to children in need and this year has been extraordinary.

With your donations of shoes, socks and monetary gifts, we've helped 265 students this year! These children, from 10 elementary schools, Las Abejitas Childcare Center and two middle schools, are walking taller because of your support. Requests are still coming in, but the impact you've made is already huge.

In the past nine years, we've provided 2,286 pairs of shoes and 6,858 pairs of socks to children in need. For many families, shoes are an unaffordable luxury - not something easily "passed down" like coats or shirts. Athletic shoes, in particular, wear out quickly from active little feet. That's where Kicks for Kids comes in - and it's all possible because of you.

We couldn't do this without our wonderful and compassionate congregation. Time and again, you step up with heart and purpose. Thank you for embodying the spirit of giving so beautifully through Kicks for Kids.

## CHANGING LIVES ONE PAIR AT A TIME

There's something magical about a new pair of shoes. Trish Flury sums it up: "New athletic shoes mean pride, acceptance and inclusion." One little boy told his teacher he had never had new shoes before. Imagine how it feels to have something brand new, just for you, when it's been a lifelong dream.

Julie Reineke highlights this mission, saying, "It's thanks to the hearts of First Lutheran, their generosity and support for Kicks for Kids that we can continue this ministry." Your support isn't just about shoes - it's about the confidence and joy you bring to these children's lives.

The stories don't stop there. After delivering shoes to Las Abejitas, a little girl proudly showed off her "new shoes from her daddy." Donice Kaspar recognized the bright Kicks for Kids shoes and told her they were perfect and that she bet she could run faster than anyone. Her smile said it all - a true win-win moment for everyone.

Pastor Justin Eller, a former pastor of First, often talked about accompaniment - walking alongside those in need in our community. He would say, "These are OUR children! This is our chance to help other families with their basic needs."

The shoes and socks you donate to Kicks for Kids aren't just practical - they're transformational. They help kids run faster, jump higher, and, most importantly, feel seen and valued. For these children, it's about more than footwear - it's about belonging, confidence and dignity.





## RECORD-BREAKING TOTAL FROM GIFTS OF HOPE MARKET

Through the energy and compassion of the congregation, an incredible \$24,539.50 was raised at the 2024 Gifts of Hope Market to support 11 life-changing organizations! This is the largest amount ever raised in the history of Gifts of Hope!

Held on December 7 and 8, the proceeds, along with strengthened connections and opportunities, are helping turn the congregation's Welcome Statement into meaningful action.

Here are some highlights from the weekend:

- \$5,000 raised online in just 38 hours as members engaged with video clips and photos in the online catalog.
- \$19,539+ raised in 4 hours during the in-person Sunday event, which was filled with buzz and excitement.

The in-person event showcased education and connection. Shoppers explored interactive displays and met representatives from local nonprofits like ECHO Collective, OutNebraska, Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach and I've Got a Name. Volunteers worked tirelessly as cashiers, educators and advocates, sharing programs like Food Backpacks, Quilting for Lutheran World Relief and ELCA World Hunger.

To make gift-giving even more meaningful, partners like Mission Market Place and Refined & Co. offered handmade items that truly embodied "gifts that give twice."

[Click here](#) to hear heartfelt messages from our partners as they share their gratitude for your generosity!



## TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH GIFTS OF HOPE: HOW YOU CAN KEEP MAKING AN IMPACT

Your Gifts of Hope generosity is making a huge impact. While the funds have been counted, the difference goes far beyond numbers. From providing baby chicks to support food security to offering scholarships for education, families and individuals are gaining critical resources for stability and growth. Migrant families, LGBTQ+ advocates, and those overcoming trauma are finding support, while new housing recipients receive essentials for healthier futures.

This is more than a donation – it's real, hope-filled change for communities near and far.

The Gifts of Hope Market was a big success, but the work continues. Our eleven Gifts of Hope partners need support all year. Here's how you can stay involved:

- **Make a Donation:** Every gift makes an impact and you can still direct donations to one of our partners.
- **Volunteer Your Time:** Whether packing meals, sewing quilts, or listening, volunteering is just as important as donating.
- **Advocate and Share:** Spread the word about the work our partners are doing.

The educational pages from the [Gifts of Hope online catalog](#) are available year-round! Use them to learn, stay inspired and share the partners' missions with others. How will you support Gifts of Hope today and beyond?



## THE QUIET IMPACT OF EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Every Sunday, the congregation at First Lutheran Church gathers for worship, sharing in fellowship and receiving the Eucharist as a community. But what about those who can no longer join us in person due to illness, age or other life circumstances? For them, the extension of our church community - the Eucharistic Ministers - becomes a life-affirming source of comfort, faith and connection.

Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs) quietly serve behind the scenes, carrying the consecrated bread and wine from Sunday worship to our homebound members who cannot attend church. But it's not just about delivering the sacrament. These visits serve as a lifeline, reminding recipients that they are seen, valued and deeply cared for by their church family.

With just under two hours a month, the Eucharistic Ministry provides a meaningful, life-affirming connection for all involved. It serves as a vital bridge, ensuring our homebound members remain connected to the heart and life of the congregation.

Does this sound like something you would like to be part of? No experience is needed - just a willing heart and a desire to help. Contact Pastor Erin or Pastor Andrew to get started.

To our current LEMs, thank you for your quiet, faithful service - it truly makes a difference. Your ministry is a beautiful example of how we extend our worshiping and fellowship community beyond the walls of the church. It's about more than just the sacrament - it's a tangible expression of our love and faith in action.

## THE RIPPLE EFFECT DIFFERENCE

Terry Kruse, one of our dedicated LEMs, describes the Eucharistic ministry as deeply personal and faith-affirming. "I consider this ministry something that helps me to live out my faith in Jesus by serving other people," Terry shared. "I love my visits with Margaret, and she has told me, 'Thanks for everything you do for me. I can't tell you how much I enjoy your visits.'"

It's more than a ritual; it's a relationship. Terry emphasizes the importance of listening and connecting. She spends about an hour with Margaret, sharing stories, relating to her past as a nurse, and ensuring she feels valued and connected to her church. Margaret has even mentioned how much she cherished previous Ministers, describing them as kind and fun.

For Tim Maack, a decade-long Eucharistic Minister, the experience is equally humbling and inspiring. "I am both honored and humbled every time I meet with those who receive the body and blood of Christ," he explained. Tim currently visits three individuals at Savanna Pines, one of whom is not even a member of our congregation. Yet, through the simple act of sharing bread and wine, he has formed meaningful connections.

"Every time I meet with others for this administration of communion, it reinforces my belief in God and in Jesus Christ," Tim shared. For him, this ministry is not a one-way street—it's a mutual exchange of faith, love, and gratitude. It offers an important reminder of the power of service in strengthening both the giver's and the receiver's relationship with Christ.





First Lutheran members volunteer their time to read to the children of Las Abejitas. The children were thrilled to each get a new book given to them at Christmas by the readers!

## LAS ABEJITAS & FIRST: CELEBRATING OUR PARTNERSHIP

*by Kayla Munoz, Las Abejitas Bilingual Education Center Director*

At Las Abejitas Bilingual Education Center, we're excited to share updates with our valued partner, First Lutheran Church.

Liz Garcia, our former Lead Toddler Teacher, has been promoted to Assistant Director. Originally from California, Liz moved to Nebraska 10 years ago and brings six years of experience in early childhood education. She recently earned her Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and is thriving in her new leadership role. Her dedication continues to drive our mission forward.

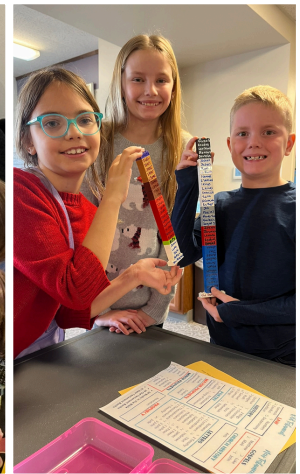
We've also submitted our rating with Nebraska's Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) program, having surpassed quality benchmarks. While awaiting classroom observations, our SUTQ coach is working closely with us to maintain excellence. Our administrative staff has completed training to provide teachers with constructive feedback and impactful action plans.

Thanks to community support, enrollment at Las Abejitas is rebounding after many families transitioned to our central location at First Plymouth for shorter commutes. We currently have openings for children 12 months and older and maintain an infant waitlist. Of the 57 children in our care, 72% are from minority backgrounds, and 31% receive child care subsidies. Unfortunately, many families just miss subsidy qualifications and still face financial challenges. If you'd like to help, you can donate to Lincoln Littles, specifying support for First Lutheran Abejitas families. For donations, contact Sarah at [Sarah.Dankenbring@lincolnlittles.org](mailto:Sarah.Dankenbring@lincolnlittles.org). Learn more about Lincoln Littles at [www.lincolnlittles.org](http://www.lincolnlittles.org).

We're deeply grateful for the continued support from First Lutheran Church. Your Gifts of Hope event has provided crucial tuition assistance for families. Recently, a generous member donated \$2,500 through Lincoln Littles, contributing to a total of \$9,046.13 for scholarships for our east location families. These funds have helped us deliver quality care to hardworking families in our community.

Thank you, First Lutheran Church, for your unwavering support. Together, we are making a lasting impact!





## FAITHTREK CHERUBS: BUILDING FAITH AND A FOUNDATION FOR OUR CHURCH

*By Laura Graulty, FaithTrek Coordinator*

These cherubs keep me young! They are as interesting as they are diverse and they make me smile.

I have been told that the enrollment is bigger than before the pandemic, and for that, we are thankful. These vibrant, funny, exuberant children are the foundation of the church - our church. We learn about parables and the life of Jesus, we connect with music and lego blocks and they are encouraged to take what they learn to their daily life.

I'm so thankful to the parents for getting them to FaithTrek every week, as they really are too young to drive. Seriously though, it is a huge role, and a building block to our success. I value the parents that faithfully and excellently sign up to lead a class. Every week is a different parent and I know that the children notice this. I think it underscores how important we feel Christian education through FaithTrek is.

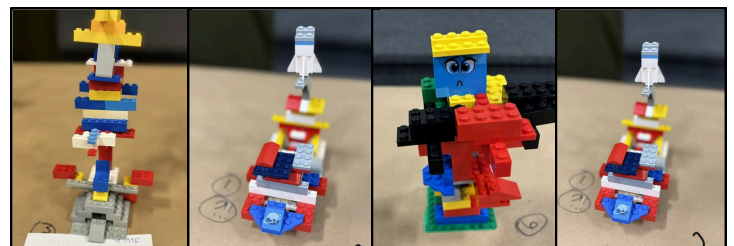
Do you know how I know cross generation contact is important? I saw it one recent Sunday: A couple of cherubs raced down the aisle for the children's sermon and their parents were grappling with

papers, etc. and were a little behind. Kayla P. (a high schooler) popped up, turned to the parents and mouthed "I've got them", and proceeded to sit with them during the children's sermon. It brought tears to my eyes, basking in that show of love and care.

Get to know our cherubs by name - ask me if you want to know, or better yet, ask them! I guarantee they will make you smile.

The FaithTrekks would like you to know a few things they know:

- Noisy Offering is our favorite offering of the month.
- Miss Laura calls us cherubs, which means special angels.
- Music is great because we get to play instruments and sing.
- Miss Laura is loud and funny.
- The Lego room is awesome.
- We love doughnut holes.



Congrats to the winners of our 50-piece Lego contest on Gratitude Sunday! Huge thanks to our judges, ages 4 to 90! Winners: (left to right) Tallest - John and Wendy Bonaiuto, Most Creative - Anonymous, Wackiest - Elaine Kruse and I Just Really Like It! - The Meyer Family.



# PRACTICING EMPATHY AND LIFE SKILLS ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

*By Sharon Hardel, Youth & Family Ministry Director*

One recent Sunday during our Middle/High School Learning time, we explored a lesson called "Practicing Empathy." It's a skill we often talk about, but it's not always easy to define or apply. We started by breaking it down, defining empathy as understanding and sharing someone else's feelings.

Next, I gave the youth real-life examples like losing a pet, moving to a new school or failing a test. I asked them to come up with two responses for each: one empathetic and one not. They quickly identified phrases and reactions that made someone feel understood versus those that could feel dismissive. It was inspiring to see them recognize the nuances - it's not easy to step into someone else's shoes, but they were clearly giving it serious thought.

We then took the lesson further by heading to the Lego room. I asked each youth to build something that represented their "ick" - a challenge or frustration they've faced. Sharing these personal moments required vulnerability, but they stepped up.

One youth built her classroom and shared about helping a friend who found out during class that her grandmother had passed away. She explained how she helped her friend leave the room, find adult support and stayed by her side to comfort her. Listening to her story brought us all into that moment and I couldn't help but admire her act of empathy.



Another youth built a scene representing the pressure of getting good grades to earn a summer vacation. The group immediately rallied around him, offering advice, encouragement and the idea of finding a tutor if needed.

One youth made a project symbolizing the struggle to stay focused during lessons or homework. Before I could say anything, another youth jumped in, saying, "I totally get it—I've had the same problem!" He then began offering tips to help.

What moved me most was watching our youth let down their walls, share their challenges and offer empathy to one another. Being vulnerable takes courage and their kindness and support were remarkable.

I believe these moments of practicing empathy on Sunday mornings extend far beyond our time together. They're learning kindness, compassion and how to listen and carrying those lessons into their daily lives. Whether comforting a struggling classmate or understanding someone else's perspective, they're reflecting the love of Jesus in their interactions.

I'm so thankful for these Sunday mornings and the young people who are willing to learn and grow together.

## JOIN US ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

9:30-10:30 AM

FaithTrek for 3 year olds through 5th grade - Upper Room  
6th-12th Grade - Lower Level Youth Room



# PARENTS AND YOUTH EXPLORING FAITH TOGETHER AT DISCIPLESHIP UNIVERSITY

Discipleship University (aka Confirmation) is becoming more than a series of lessons - it's a space where youth and parents engage in meaningful faith conversations together. Sharon Hardel, Youth & Family Ministry Director, shared that the ministry offers a unique opportunity for families to explore faith together. "At first, conversations are slow to start, but over time, we're seeing youth and parents open up and share more with each other," Sharon said.

Pastor Andrew highlighted a recent breakthrough during a session on the Psalms. In small groups, the youth grew more comfortable sharing their thoughts, even with parents present. "It's been amazing to watch them come out of their shells and connect through these discussions," Pastor Andrew said.

Discipleship University also includes hands-on learning. In a recent session, youth and adults built Lego representations of stories from Joshua, Judges and Ruth. For some, these stories were entirely new. "Several hadn't heard these faith stories before," Sharon explained. "We read and built together, learning about the strength and courage of key figures in the Bible."

What made the activity memorable was the creativity. Parents and youth not only built scenes but also shared them with the group. "I think they'll remember these stories because they created them piece by piece," Sharon said. "It's a powerful way to connect with the narratives and reflect on the trust and courage these figures had



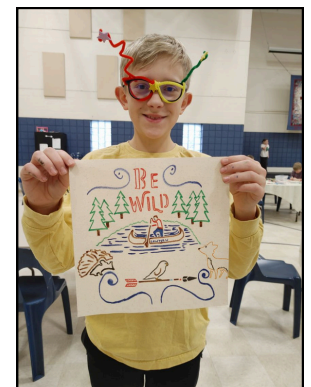
in God - something they can draw on in their own challenges."

Through thoughtful conversations and creative activities, Discipleship University is building deeper connections among families and a stronger understanding of faith. Sharon and Pastor Andrew hope Discipleship University leaves a lasting impression, helping youth and parents grow spiritually together.

## WRAPPED IN LOVE: MINI VBS

Over three days (Dec 29-31), the Wrapped in Love Mini VBS brought members of all ages together to serve and give back in meaningful ways. Highlights included decorating quilt squares for a quilt the First Lutheran Quilters will assemble

for the Camp Carol Joy Holling quilt auction, hosting reading and craft activities with the Las Abejitas children, packing 60 cold weather kits for the homeless at Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach, crafting angel ornaments and weaving plastic bag mats for the Center for People and distributing food to 630 of their families. The event ended with a fun pizza lunch and a New Year's countdown and celebration! Thank you to everyone who participated and made an impact!



One of the decorated quilt squares!



## PRAYER PILLOWS NURTURE CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD

Have you heard about Bubble Prayer or 5 Finger Prayer? On September 8, our youngest learners joined Pastor Erin for a hands-on prayer experience that brought families together in faith. Each child received a prayer pillow made by First Lutheran quilters. These pillows remind children to include prayer in daily life, whether kneeling by their bed, cuddling their pillow or seeking comfort during the day. They help kids feel God's love and build a prayer habit with their parents.



## FOUR YOUNG DISCIPLES AFFIRM THEIR BAPTISM

November 3 was a significant day for four young members of First Lutheran Church as they participated in the Affirmation of Baptism, or Confirmation. This rite celebrates the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in their lives, following their baptism. They prepared through studying Scriptures and the foundations of Lutheran faith while building meaningful relationships. The ceremony marks their transition into a new stage of spiritual growth, with the support of mentors, families and the congregation, and reminding everyone of their shared responsibility in nurturing faith. The First Lutheran community looks forward to supporting these young disciples on their faith journey.



Christopher Purvis, Makayla Peters, Christian Paulsen and Maxx Clark affirmed their baptism on November 3. Each of them served in a worship assistant role during the service. Makayla even gave the sermon - [take a listen!](#)



ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER AND BUILD UP EACH OTHER. 1 THIMONIAN 5:11

## BAPTISMAL SPONSOR

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 HAS TAKEN ON THE JOYS AND DUTIES  
 OF BAPTISMAL SPONSORSHIP FOR \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF BAPTIZED \_\_\_\_\_  
 WHO WAS BAPTIZED IN THE NAME  
 OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON,  
 AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ON \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

CONGREGATION \_\_\_\_\_

CONGREGATION ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE OR PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_

HAS WITNESSED THIS SACRAMENT,  
 AND WILL GLADLY HELP IN GUIDING  
 THIS NEW CHILD OF GOD  
 TOWARD A FULL LIFE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.

PASTOR \_\_\_\_\_

## THE BIG REVEAL AND PROMISE INSIDE A WHITE ENVELOPE

*By Barb Johnson Frank, First Lutheran Member*

For some reason, it was after I got home on the afternoon of January 28, 2024 and I opened the big white envelope that I really understood the promises we make in the Service of Holy Baptism.

Surrounded by dozens of guests as well as fellow members of the congregation, Nyakoat and Lam, their three children and the sponsors their parents had chosen for them stood with Pastor Andrew in the middle of the congregation that Sunday. It was clear that all who gathered to experience this precious welcome, to hear the words of life, were honored to be present. Joy and gratitude were in the air. Smiles mingled with solemn respect for what was unfolding at the font.

I listened as the congregation promised each child and their parents “to support \_\_\_\_\_ and pray for them in their new life in Christ.” Sponsors promised “to nurture this child in Christian faith as you are empowered by God’s Spirit and to help them live in the covenant of Baptism and in communion with the Church.”

After the service there were photos and congratulations. Lam and Nyakoat hosted a gathering in their home. The words, rituals and habits of this baptismal day were familiar, like those at other baptismal services I’ve witnessed over the years.

But, it was opening that large white envelope and reading the words on the beautiful certificate that Pastor Andrew prepared for each baptismal sponsor that keep me thinking. “Barbara Johnson Frank has taken on the joys and duties of baptismal sponsorship for Sunday Duer, has witnessed this sacrament and will gladly help in guiding this new child of God toward a full life in the body of Christ.”

I promised that I would rejoice in the opportunity to guide this precious child toward a life lived in the midst of a community of faith. What would that look like, I immediately wondered? How, along with her family, could I care for and nurture her? What does it mean for her to live fully at First Lutheran Church and among all of God’s people?

I wondered, too, about the congregation. How can members of a congregation assure that each and every child is welcomed into a full life in the body of Christ? What does that mean, not only for us corporately, but for individual relationships we build with children and their families? What support could become natural for us to offer one another as we grow in faith?

I still have many questions, few answers. I’m thankful for the big white envelope and for words that remind me that witnessing a baptism means much than experiencing a ritual, being honored as a sponsor or in attendance at worship that day. I intend to make it a practice to live into my holy “joys and duties.” I hope you’ll join me, offering your own questions and suggestions along the way.







## HANDMADE BAPTISMAL REMEMBRANCES

Prayers take many forms within our church community. Some are voiced aloud during worship or at gatherings, while others are quietly offered in individual homes. At times, these prayers become tangible expressions of care - Afghans lovingly crafted for high school graduates, quilts sent across the world to bring comfort to others or baptism garments and napkins symbolizing a sacred moment.

Baptism garments and napkins are made by First Lutheran members. Phyllis Frickel, who entered eternal life last year, served as a faithful servant for Altar Guild, the Quilters group, Adult Choir, WELCA and other ministry groups. She made baptism napkins for several decades. Although she retired from making baptism napkins about four years ago, we had her napkins until this summer. It was then that Karen Clementson, stepped up and agreed to make the napkins with the First Lutheran Quilters group with Christine Carman, agreeing to embroider a baptism symbol on them. Gloria Smith has been making baptism garments for many years and she is planning to continue her ministry.

What a wonderful blessing and ministry to share handmade baptism items with families to remember the day their child of God became part of the First Lutheran family!

## WELCOME, CHILDREN OF GOD!

We joyfully welcome these beloved children of God into our faith community, baptized at First Lutheran Church in 2024.

- Sunday Duer 1/28/2024 - Sponsor: Barb Johnson Frank - Parents: Lam Duer Jock & Nyakoat Gachwin
- Duer Duer 1/28/2024 - Sponsor: Bol Ngok - Parents: Lam Duer Jock & Nyakoat Gachwin
- Daniel Duer 1/28/2024 - Sponsor: Daniel Wal - Parents: Lam Duer Jock & Nyakoat Gachwin
- Goy Lam Duer 1/28/2024 - Sponsor: Martha Deng - Parents: Lam Duer Jock & Nyakoat Gachwin
- Emilio Manuel Cortinas 3/30/2024 - Sponsors: Kyle Sheldon, Jordon Wheatly, Jesse Temple, Faith Petro, Steph Sturz, Gabriel Cortinas, Elsa Cortinas, Deziere Stauffer & Tasha Anderson - Parents: Julian Cortinas & Durene Anderson
- Edie Erickson 7/27/2024 - Sponsors: Michael Graham & Trista Hansen - Parents: Sara & Jesse Erickson
- Caden Kasperbauer 9/8/2024 - Sponsors: Ashley & Christopher Dornbusch - Parents: Garrett & Nicole Kasperbauer
- Lyra Rarig 12/08/2024 - Sponsors: Kaela Kane & Phillip Rarig - Parents: Devin & Christopher Rarig



## NOISY OFFERING OFFERS HOPE AND LOVE

Thank you! Your generosity through the Noisy Offering has made a big impact locally and globally. From July to December, we collected \$2,615.57! That loose change helped:

- Provide disaster relief kits.
- Offer safe shelter at the Friendship Home.
- Support animal care at the Capital Humane Society.
- Bring joy to kids through the Center for People's Christmas toy drive.
- Provide hurricane relief to the East coast and tornado relief to the Omaha area.

And the 2024 total? \$5,201.22! That's a lot of change making a lot of change. Every coin (and dollar and check!) you give spreads kindness and hope. Thank you for making a joyful noise for life-changing ministries!

## CELEBRATING REFORMATION AND CHRIST THE KING SUNDAYS IN CREATIVE WAYS

What a Reformation Sunday it was! The brilliance of brass, anthems resounding from the choir and congregation and a spunky dialog between Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon brought energy and joy to the worship celebration! Martin Luther even made a cameo appearance as members enjoyed Reese's while reading his theses, indulging in more treats at the Bake Sale of Indulgences and playing "Who Said It: Taylor Swift or Martin Luther?"

Have you ever experienced worship that encompasses all the seasons of the church year, from Advent and Christmas to Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost, in a single service? This rare celebration unfolded at First Lutheran on November 24 as we marked Christ the King Sunday, the culmination of the church year - our very own liturgical New Year's Eve. Our worship was enriched with songs, scriptures and insights into the colors and meanings of each of the six liturgical seasons. (Challenge: Can you name all six seasons in consecutive order?) [Watch the worship video online](#) to witness how we joyfully sang "Joy to the World" alongside "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" in one uplifting service!

## JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

- Saturdays - 5:30 PM in the Chapel
- Sundays - 8:15 AM (with livestream on Facebook and at <https://flclincoln.org/livestream> and 10:45 AM in the Sanctuary







## CLARENCE THE ANGEL: A WHIMSICAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT WITH A FRESH TWIST

Our Sanctuary came alive on December 15 with a retelling of the Christmas story by members of all ages! This year, our pageant introduced “Clarence the Angel,” whose whimsical attempt at managing life on Earth took an unexpected turn. Through his heavenly misadventures, Clarence learned just how resilient and capable humans truly are. But here's the twist - the story unfolded in a way that brought a fresh perspective on discovering the newborn King and the boundless joy that comes with it. It was a celebration of Christmas with laughter, meaning and a few surprises along the way.

Missed the pageant? Don't worry! [Watch it here!](#)



## AN UNFORGETTABLE CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATION AT FIRST LUTHERAN

Christmas Eve at First Lutheran was a truly unforgettable celebration, filled with joy and spirit. The children brought the nativity to life, helping to create the scene while sharing the Christmas story. The Sanctuary resonated with the sounds of brass, strings, bells, Orff instruments and angelic voices. Emergency confetti added a festive touch as we rejoiced in the good news, along with communion and the singing of Christmas carols. It was a one-of-a-kind birthday celebration, complete with hot cider, cocoa, festive Christmas cookies and a lively photobooth. [Check out this recap video](#) from the celebration! It's filled with photos and music from the worship services - take a look!

By the way, how amazing was the lively photobooth? So much fun! Families and friends had a blast snapping holiday photos with a festive backdrop, sparkly glasses, Santa hats, cheerful headbands and plenty of big smiles and goofy poses. The holiday spirit was truly contagious! Want to relive the fun or download your photobooth memories? Head over to the online [Photobooth Gallery!](#)



## FINDING JOY AND PURPOSE IN WORSHIP

First Lutheran Church is truly blessed with an incredible abundance of talented musicians, spanning generations. From 3-year-olds to members as old as 96, the contributions of these musicians make our worship services vibrant and heartfelt. The participation of FaithTrek, along with middle and high school youth, has brought a renewed sense of joy and energy to our services. Witnessing young people sing with their whole hearts is a source of happiness for everyone present.

The Orff Ensemble has created a space where even those who may feel shy can participate comfortably. Beyond the notes and melodies, every musician brings a unique story to their service. One musician shared a moving testimony:

"When I sing during worship, I experience healing. After a difficult week, my troubled heart is restored. Singing reminds me that I'm good at something, even when I've felt worthless all week. God fills me with such a sense of fulfillment that I can truly say, "Thank you, God."

This powerful reflection highlights how music in worship can be transformative, providing comfort and purpose. Each musician serves for different reasons - some out of pure joy, others as an act of gratitude to God, while some simply want to do their part. For others, it's about stepping out of their comfort zone because they've been taught the importance of giving. Whatever their motivation, their contributions become blessings for both those who perform and those who listen.



And it's not just musicians who find meaning in their service. Volunteers in many other roles also experience profound connections through their contributions. One Altar Guild member shared: "Filling the wine cups for communion takes time, but it became a special moment for me. It's a time to slow down and talk to God. When I realized this, I started enjoying the process of setting up communion."

Our worship services thrive on the dedication of many hands. The word "liturgy" comes from the Greek word "leitourgia," meaning "work for the people" or "work of the people." Worship is a shared ministry, requiring the support of ushers, crucifers, communion assistants, Eucharistic assistants, Altar Guild members, Bible bearers, readers, greeters, choir members, musicians, teachers and even those who clean the pews and building. Each of these roles plays a vital part in creating a meaningful worship experience.

We invite you to consider how you might connect with God by serving during worship. Whether through music, volunteering or supporting behind the scenes, your contribution is an integral part of our shared ministry and a true blessing to our church family.

*No storm can shake my inmost calm  
while to that Rock I'm clinging.  
Since Love is Lord of heav'n and earth,  
how can I keep from singing (playing or serving)?*

*(From the refrain of How Can I Keep from Singing by Robert Lowry, 1826-1899)*





*Jenna Troutman and Maykayla Peters serve as Assisting Ministers during worship.*

## THE BENEFITS OF SERVING ON A SUNDAY MORNING

Have you ever wondered what it's like to serve as a worship assistant at First Lutheran Church? For many, it's more than giving back - it's a chance to grow, connect and deepen their worship experience.

Jenna Troutman, a member of First Lutheran Church, shares how serving has shaped her spiritual life and strengthened her faith. Her story is an invitation for others to step into this meaningful role.

For Jenna, serving as a worship assistant is about supporting worship and learning along the way. "I volunteer because I enjoy helping with worship," Jenna shares. "I want to be a pastor, so this helps me understand the flow of a service while learning and observing what happens."

Worship assistants take on key roles like leading prayers, reading, and assisting with communion. Jenna finds joy in these responsibilities. "I grow each time I serve," she says. "I've also loved working with Kayla - seeing her confidence grow has been a highlight. We make a great team."

### FACING CHALLENGES

Public speaking can be intimidating and Jenna admits it's not always been her strongest skill. "The first few times I served, I was really nervous," she admits. "It's

gotten easier with practice, but I still feel a little nervous sometimes."

Her experience reminds us that even seasoned assistants face challenges, but confidence comes with time and practice.

### GROWING THROUGH SERVICE

For Jenna and others, serving as a worship assistant is a meaningful way to connect with the church community while growing personally and spiritually. It's more than lending a hand - it's becoming a deeper part of the worship experience.

Serving as a worship assistant brings Jenna a sense of purpose. "It's not a dramatic change in my faith but more of a confirmation that I'm where I need to be," she says.

Serving has also made her more intentional during worship. "I listen closely to the readings, sermon and prayers. With each service, I learn something new," she shares.

### ADVICE FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS

Feeling unsure about volunteering? Jenna recommends starting small.

"Roles like Bible Bearer or Crucifer are simple and don't require speaking," she advises. (continued on page 18)



## THE BENEFITS OF SERVING ON A SUNDAY MORNING (CONT)

(continued from page 17) Once you're comfortable, try something like Reader or Communion Assistant. It gets easier each time."

She also encourages asking questions. "Everyone is there to help. Don't hesitate to ask - they'll guide you through everything."

Her favorite tip? "Sign up with a friend or family member. It's more fun and less scary when you're serving with someone you know."

### JOIN US

Could serving as a worship assistant be your next step? Whether it's helping with communion, leading prayers or starting with a smaller role, every contribution makes a difference.

Consider joining us and discovering the joy of service. Sign up today and take the first step in enriching your faith while supporting our church community. We would love to serve with you! Sign up on Realm (see the story on the right) or call the church office to discuss options with Mandy West.

## SIGN UP AS A WORSHIP VOLUNTEER ON REALM

The [online signup for worship assistants](#) is now open for January, February and March! We've moved our signup process to Realm!

The sign-up process is quick and straightforward. Follow these steps to get started using your desktop (the steps are similar on the Realm app):

- Log in to your Realm account (<https://onrealm.org>)
- Click Serving on the left-hand menu.
- At the top, select Opportunities.
- Click Browse by Role to view all available worship assistant roles. Select the roles you're interested in and submit each for approval. (Approval is a one-time process handled by Mandy West as a Realm safety precaution.)
- Once approved, you will receive confirmation. Return to Serving in Realm.
- You'll now be part of the Worship Assistants team. Click Worship Assistants and select Schedules to access the January-March Worship Assistant sign-up.
- The 8:15 AM and 10:45 AM service schedules will appear. Choose your preferred date and time and add yourself to the roles you would like to fill.

Steps 1-5 are a one-time setup. After approval, just follow Step 6 to sign up for future opportunities.

Haven't activated your Realm account yet? [Email Mandy](#) for a time-sensitive link. Check out the article on page 20 for resources to help you get started with Realm!



# PUMPKINS, SPICE AND EVERYTHING NICE: HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR FALL FESTIVAL

Our Fall Festival on October 6 was an absolute blast, brimming with joy, laughter and the vibrant colors of autumn. Together, families, friends and members of our community came together to embrace the brilliant fall colors to the warmth of pumpkins and spice. The event offered something for everyone - pumpkin painting, games, crafts, balloon animals, a bounce house, a book fair, a pet blessing, live jazz music and, of course, delicious food. Experience the highlights of the Fall Festival through our [video recap](#), capturing its vibrant sights and sounds!

A huge thanks to everyone who joined us for the fun, as well as to the dedicated volunteers whose hard work and enthusiasm made this outreach event possible!



## FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE: DEDICATED TO FOSTERING CONNECTION & COMMUNITY

A Night at the Saltdogs, town hall potlucks, Sunday morning fellowship, soup lunches and dinners on Wednesdays during Advent and festive meals for Thanksgiving and Christmas - does it all sound a bit overwhelming? Rest assured, these events are the result of the hard work and dedication of our Fellowship Committee, tirelessly creating opportunities for connection, joy and a strong sense of community among First members. We encourage you to participate in these gatherings and on the rare occasion they ask for assistance - such as bringing a crockpot of soup - don't hesitate to lend a hand! We are truly fortunate to have such dedicated individuals working tirelessly to make these events possible. Next time you attend a Fellowship Committee - sponsored event, take a moment to express your gratitude to the incredible team behind the scenes.



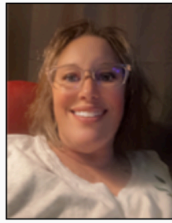
## WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!



Paul and Robyn  
Runyan



Lillie Rademacher



Ann Ling

Jacquelyn Venner

Deborah Marr

### Meet Our Newest Members

## REALM: CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

Over the past year, First Lutheran Church has adopted Realm Connect, an online member management platform designed to keep our community connected anytime, anywhere. With Realm Connect, you can access key features on-the-go from any device, making it easier than ever to stay engaged with church activities and fellow members.

Here's what you can do with Realm Connect:

- Register for events and track your giving with ease.
- Connect with staff, committee chairs or other members through messaging.
- Stay informed about church-wide meetings, events and ministries.
- Communicate seamlessly with committees, teams and ministries you're involved in.
- Access a member directory complete with photos.
- Receive important alerts instantly via text messaging.

Many of our members have already made the switch to Realm - have you? Don't miss out on this powerful tool! To activate your account, contact Mandy at [mandy@flclincoln.org](mailto:mandy@flclincoln.org) for assistance. Once your  
(continued on page 21)

## NEWEST MEMBERS SHARE WHY THEY FOUND FIRST LUTHERAN TO BE THEIR CHURCH HOME

At First Lutheran, we're excited to welcome new members into our community. Here's what some of them have shared about their journeys to joining our church family.

Paul and Robyn Runyan discovered First Lutheran through the First Friday Jazz concerts. "We were introduced to the church through these welcoming events," they said. What started as an appreciation for the concerts grew into something deeper. "The church is friendly, with many involved in the music ministry. The leadership is strong and the music is inspiring. We're spiritually nourished through Bible study, worship and singing in the choir."

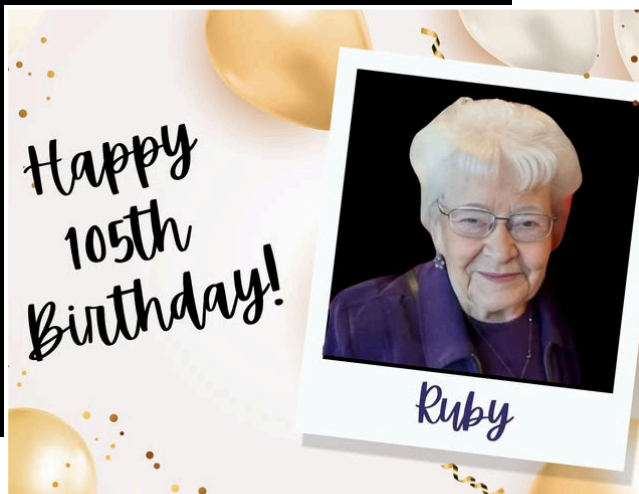
After a disappointing experience at another church, Lillie Rademacher turned to First Lutheran. "Its location near my home and ELCA affiliation were important to me," she shared. What followed was uplifting. "The Lenten services immediately captivated me: the warm welcome, inspiring music and traditional worship resonated deeply. The kindness of everyone was heartwarming."

Since joining, Lillie has become very involved. "I was impressed by the congregation's strong commitment to mission outreach within the church and the Lincoln community. I've joined the Spirit Ringers and Quilting Circle and look forward to getting even more involved."

These stories reflect the spirit of First Lutheran - where community, worship and mission nurture faith and belonging. If you're new or considering joining, know you're stepping into a warm, welcoming congregation. We're glad you're here!







## REALM: CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY (CONT)

(continued from page 20) account is set up, check out our [Realm Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions or watch these [videos](#) to get started.

Need help? Join us Sunday, February 2, from 9:30–10:30 AM in the Chapel. Kathleen Simley, our Communications Director, and Realm mentors will guide you through the platform. Already using Realm? Stop by to learn about exciting new features coming soon. Stay connected with Realm Connect!

## EXPLORE THE ARCHIVED CONFIRMATION CLASS PHOTOS ONLINE

From as far back as 1899 to as recent as 2023, photographs of First Lutheran Confirmation classes have been thoughtfully archived online for your enjoyment. Discover a picture that holds special significance for you or someone you know? Feel free to print it or share it! Each photo includes the names of the class members. A big thank you to First member Judy Batterman for her efforts in preserving this important aspect of our history at First Lutheran!

[Explore the Online Archive of First Lutheran Confirmation Photos](#)

## CELEBRATING 105 YEARS OF LIFE AND WISDOM: MEET RUBY AUGUSTINE

Meet Ruby Augustine, our oldest member at First Lutheran, celebrating an incredible milestone: her 105th birthday on December 12! She even made the front page of the Lincoln Journal Star newspaper on her birthday! ([Read the full story](#))

Ruby is nothing short of inspiring. She's vibrant, engaged and full of life - so much so that she looks 20 years younger (just check out her latest photo!)

Over her extraordinary 105 years, Ruby has witnessed a world transformed beyond imagination. From horse-drawn carriages to self-driving cars, from gas at just 21 cents a gallon to the smartphone revolution and even humanity's first steps on the moon - Ruby has lived through it all.

When Ruby was born 105 years ago, life was starkly different. Most homes lacked indoor plumbing, telephones and bathtubs. Teenagers rarely attended school, the world was battling the Spanish Flu pandemic, and vaccines to protect children from deadly diseases didn't yet exist. Life expectancy was just 47 years and no respectable woman would step out in public without her hat and gloves.

Ruby's life is a testament to resilience and a front-row seat to over a century of progress.

Want to hear Ruby's incredible stories firsthand? Join us on March 9 at the Adult Forum session (9:30–10:30 AM), where Ruby will share her journey through history, her secrets to living such a full life and the wisdom she's gathered over a century. Our Communications Director, Kathleen Simley, will sit down with Ruby for an unforgettable conversation. Don't miss this chance to learn from a true legend!



## REMEMBERING THE SAINTS OF FIRST LUTHERAN

We honor all First Lutheran saints who have entered heaven in 2024:

Fred Monnich - 1/13/2024

Iris Winkelhake - 1/22/2024

Phyllis Frickel - 1/29/2024

Sheila Exstrom - 2/21/2024

Nancie Kobza - 2/21/2024

Kenneth Stofferahn - 3/18/2024

Merl Scott - 4/15/2024

Margaret Fahrnbruch - 5/22/2024

Tom Schmitter - 5/29/2024

Cole Dalby - 6/12/2024

Barbara Howard - 6/20/2024

Jane Mickelson - 6/24/2024

Rev. Mary Jensen - 8/15/2024

Dan Howard - 9/11/2024

James Howat - 9/21/2024

Harold Borchert - 11/20/2024

Mariann Schafer - 12/11/2024

Judith Heller - 12/20/2024

[Click Here for Photos of Each Saint](#)

## A GIFT OF FAITH AND BEAUTY: PASTOR MARY JENSEN'S ICON LEGACY AT FIRST LUTHERAN

The story begins in Jerusalem in 1986. Pastor Mary Jensen, then completing her seminary work at Wartburg Seminary, was on an internship in the city. One day, as Mary walked to a Lutheran church, something unexpected happened - a moment that would profoundly shape her spiritual life.

She passed a small shop and noticed art in the window that stirred something within her. Curious, she stepped inside and spoke with the shop owners, discovering the store focused on icons - sacred religious pieces with deep spiritual meaning. That chance encounter sparked Mary's lifelong passion for icons, a moment her brother, John Halvorson, fondly remembers. "It was a random stumble," he said, "but it became a major part of her faith for the rest of her life."

Mary's passion for icons went beyond admiration. They became central to her spiritual and ministerial work, culminating in a 200-page doctoral dissertation. She shared her love and knowledge of icons through classes at First Lutheran and other ELCA churches.

### ICONS AS "WINDOWS TO HEAVEN"

To truly understand the depth of Pastor Mary's passion, it's essential to grasp what icons mean in the context of faith. Henri Nouwen once wrote, "Icons are created for the sole purpose of offering access, through the gate of the visible, to the mystery of the invisible." The Eastern Orthodox Church sees icons not merely as art but as "windows to heaven" - portals that connect the often broken realities of this world to the grace and beauty of the next.

(continued on page 23)





## A GIFT OF FAITH AND BEAUTY: PASTOR MARY JENSEN'S ICON LEGACY AT FIRST LUTHERAN (CONT)

(continued from page 22) Icons invite reflection, prayer and contemplation. They transcend form, offering a quiet place where the sacred can meet the seeker. The original creator of many cherished icons was Andrei Rublev, a Russian iconographer whose life spanned from 1365 to 1430. Rublev's work defied the rigidity of Byzantine Christian art, bringing forth a softer, introspective and celestial beauty. His icons radiated calm and compassion - painted during a time of societal unrest but rooted in a profound faith in God's peace.

### THE VIRGIN OF VLADIMIR – PASTOR MARY'S GIFT TO FIRST LUTHERAN

Before her passing on August 14, 2024, Pastor Mary carefully chose a parting gift for First Lutheran, a gift that reflects her faith and the depth of her connection to the church. The icon, a reproduction of Rublev's The Virgin

of Vladimir - also known as Theotokos of Tenderness - was presented to First Lutheran during a Saturday night worship service in December by Mary's brother, John Halvorson, and her son, Dan.

The Virgin of Vladimir is one of Rublev's cherished works, created around 1400. Its composition reveals a tender interaction between Mary and the Christ Child. The Virgin's head tilts gently, her gaze extending out and away over the child's head, evoking an emotional depth that reshaped iconography through its connection between parent and child. Unlike traditional Byzantine icons, Rublev's approach captured moments of deep, divine tenderness - a trait later adopted by the Moscow School of Iconography.

### HOW THE ICON FOUND ITS WAY TO FIRST LUTHERAN

Mary's gift was crafted with care and devotion specifically for First Lutheran by the iconographers at Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Monastery in rural southwestern Wisconsin. Iconographers see their work as prayer in action, spending weeks in reflection while creating their pieces. It took around four weeks to complete this reproduction, ensuring that every brushstroke held the spiritual weight the piece deserved.

Once the icon was finished, John and his daughter, Mary's niece, drove to the monastery from Illinois to receive it, before delivering it to First Lutheran. The icon will now be hung in the Chapel, the very space where Pastor Mary worshipped many Saturday evenings. It will serve as a lasting reminder of her faith, her love for her congregation and her desire to share her passion for icons as a vehicle for spiritual contemplation. Spend a moment in stillness in the Chapel and reflect before the icon she carefully chose for us. May her memory live on through this window to heaven.



# Cultivating LOVE

## CULTIVATING LOVE TOGETHER: CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS OF THE 2025 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Thanks to your generosity and commitment, we not only met our 2025 stewardship goal of \$750,000 – we surpassed it! With 193 pledges totaling \$775,420, we saw a 7.6% year-over-year growth in repeat pledges (pledged in 2024 and 2025), totaling 177, the largest increase since the pandemic.

This milestone reflects the love within our congregation and the many ways God has moved through us. Each pledge embodies this year's campaign theme, Cultivating Love, inspired by Nebraska Synod Bishop Scott Johnson's words: "Cultivating love means that we steward this church that God has entrusted to us in such a way that the world knows the love of God through us."

This pledge season was more than a financial commitment; it was an expression of our love and faith in God's work through our church. Rooted in Ephesians 3, we're reminded that Christ calls us to grow in his love - a love that inspires us to serve, give and welcome others into his grace. Financial giving reflects our trust in God's abundance and deepens our reliance on him.

Throughout the campaign, we reflected on how God's love has flourished in our lives through community, connection and grace. Members of First shared inspiring video stories of how they've built community, fostered connections or extended grace - and how they've been blessed in return.

If you haven't pledged for 2025 yet, it's not too late! A pledge is a commitment to give a specific amount throughout the year - weekly, monthly, or annually - in a way that feels meaningful to you.

Thank you for your generosity, prayers and faith. Together, we continue to grow our ministry, support our church and share God's transformative love with a world that needs it more than ever.

The invitation to pledge is always open! Scan the QR code or [jump online](#) to make your 2025 pledge.



Scan the QR code or [go online](#) to watch the video testimonies of members sharing how they've built community, fostered connections or extended grace and how they have been blessed in return.





# LOOKING AHEAD

- FEBR 2** NOISY OFFERING
- FEBR 5 & 19** FLC 101 NEW MEMBER CLASSES / 6:30 - 8:00 PM
- FEBR 7** FIRST FRIDAY JAZZ / 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
- MARCH 2** NOISY OFFERING & NEW MEMBER WELCOME
- MARCH 5** ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP / NOON & 6:30 PM
- MARCH 7** FIRST FRIDAY JAZZ / 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
- MARCH 12, 19, 26** MIDWEEK LENTEN WORSHIP / NOON & 6:15 PM
- MARCH 16** CELEBRATE NATIONAL QUILTING DAY / 9:30 - 10:30 AM
- APRIL 2 & 9** MIDWEEK LENTEN WORSHIP / NOON & 6:15 PM
- APRIL 4** FIRST FRIDAY JAZZ / 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
- APRIL 6** NOISY OFFERING
- APRIL 13** PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP / 8:15 AM & 10:45 AM
- APRIL 17 & 18** MAUNDY THURSDAY & GOOD FRIDAY / NOON & 6:30 PM
- APRIL 19** COMMUNITY EASTER VIGIL / TIME & LOCATION TBA
- APRIL 20** EASTER WORSHIP / 8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 AM



## CONNECT WITH US



[www.flclincoln.org](http://www.flclincoln.org)



[www.flclincoln.org/calendar](http://www.flclincoln.org/calendar)



[First Lutheran Church -  
Lincoln, NE](#)



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Worship - Saturday 5:30 PM and  
Sunday 8:15 & 10:45 AM



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prayer request.

## ONLINE GIVING



Operating Budget  
Building Fund  
Endowment Fund  
ELCA World Hunger  
Flower Fund  
Pastor's Discretionary Fund  
Food Pantry



Pastor Erin Heidelberger  
Lead Pastor  
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Pastor Andrew Kitzing  
Associate Pastor  
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