

First Lutheran Church Congregational Council

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Meeting in Upper Room or by Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84168009362?pwd=ZUpEQWFwaXF2bmZlVFlvVnl3Nko0dz09>

- A. Opening Devotion and Prayer – Pastor Erin
- B. Approve Consent Agenda
  - 1. Meeting Agenda
  - 2. Congregational Council Minutes – February 13, 2024
  - 3. Parochial Report
  - 4. Staff Reports
  - 5. Committee Reports
- C. Property Committee Presentation and Discussion – Norm Kempf, chair
- D. Discussion agenda
  - 1. Emergency Action Plan
  - 2. Justice in Action status
  - 3. April Town Hall
  - 4. Council Member Committee Assignments
  - 5. Draft document for April discussion
    - a. Sabbatical policy
    - b. Council size/ nominating committee
    - c. Staff evaluations
- E. Financial Report
- F. Open comments
- G. Closing Prayer
- H. Adjournment

## Information Items

	Baptized	Confirmed
1. MEMBERSHIP as of January 1, 2024	1097	910

### Members received:

A. by baptism (15 years and under)		
B. by baptism (adult)		
C. transfer from ELCA congregation	1	1
D. other Lutheran	2	2
E. affirmation of faith		
F. transfer from non-Lutheran congregation	4	4
G. other and statistical adjustment		

### Members removed:

A. death	2	2
B. transfer to ELCA congregation		
C. transfer to other Lutheran congregation		
D. transfer to non-Lutheran congregation		
E. other and statistical adjustment		

MEMBERSHIP as of January 31, 2024	1102	915
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### Average Attendance for January

<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
420	446	547	393	486	237	391	online	166	288	239

### Added:

Baptism:

Affirmation:

Transfer: Christine Wilhelm, Nguyet Ho, Brandon & Shannon Meyer, Ricky Hulse, Dennis & Donna Haberstick

Other:

### Removed:

Death: Sheila Exstrom, Nancie Kobza

Transfer:

Dropped Due to Inactivity:

Other:

Notes: [Live Stream average for January 2024 is: 52, Ash Wednesday - 42](#)

Executive Committee Meeting  
First Lutheran Church  
March 5, 2024

Present: Judy, Pastor Erin, Scott, Lee, Pastor Andrew

Opening Prayer: Judy

Topics for discussion:

1. Council Retreat Review  
Went well but missed the members who weren't there. Good interactions.
2. Staffing Update  
Richard, our Facilities Manager resigned so we are again advertising for someone to fill that position.  
Hours have been added to Mandy's position so that she can work at updating some of our policies.
3. Church Safety Plan  
Reviewed the plan submitted by the Task Force, made a few suggestions and will send it back to the group.  
Hope to be able to finalize by April Council meeting.
4. Synod Accounting Guidelines  
Scott has spoken with Wyatt and Bryan and received input from them. Scott will recommend we adopt the Guidelines at the April meeting.
5. Council members committee assignments  
Three people signed up for the Christian Ed Committee which does not yet exist. We will get feedback from Sharon on how a Chris Ed Committee can be of benefit.
6. April Town Hall/Potluck  
Will be held on April 14. Council members should be at various tables to answer questions and listen.  
The video put together by the Vitality Initiative Group will be shown and they will give an update.  
Representatives from Justice in Action will also be there.

Submitted by Judy Batterman, Council Vice-President

## Congregational Council Meeting

First Lutheran Church

February 13, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pastor Erin Heidelberger, Lee Rockwell, Scott Williamson, Rod Johnson, Amy Harrison, Dave Pfister, Jenna Troutman, Judy Batterman, Emily Sears, Pastor Andrew Kitzing, Brandon Wiebelhaus, Bev White, Kari Hoeft, Patrick Hayden-Roy, Karen Statham, John Bonaiuto, Jennifer Wemhoff

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

MEETING RECORDER: Ann Carlson

### A. OPENING PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY:

The meeting was called to order by Council President Lee Rockwell at 7:00. Pastor Erin led the opening prayer and Bible Study.

### B. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Meeting agenda
2. Congregational Council Minutes – January 9, 2024
3. Parochial Report
4. Staff Reports
5. Committee Reports

It was moved by John and seconded by Rod to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried.

### C. ACTION AGENDA:

1. Audit Committee Appointment

It was moved by John and seconded by Patrick to approve the appointment of Steve Doolittle as a member of the FLC Audit Committee for a three-year term 2024-2026.

Beth Strasheim's term was to end in 2024. Tera Beermann's term ended in 2023. Tera agreed to fill the remainder of Beth Strasheim's term.

The motion carried.

### D. DISCUSSION AGENDA:

1. Financial Report – Scott Williamson

- Scott encouraged all new council members to review all tabs in the excel workbook of financial information provided by Wyatt.
- The Receipts-Expenses Graph tab is an excellent resource for visualizing receipts and expenses month over month. This tab can also be used to review historical trends from past years.

- The receipts in January 2024 may be down because the receipts were over budget in December. In addition, we missed a week of church in January due to inclement weather.

The January receipts were \$3,345 under budget; the January expenses were \$5,523 under budget; the January surplus was \$2,178.

2. Council Orientation Retreat – Date

The retreat will be on March 3, starting at noon. Council members will have lunch at the church. The retreat will last 3-4 hours.

3. Safety Plan update – Rod Johnson

- Rod distributed a few copies of the draft Safety Plan to be shared by council members.
- Brian Niebuhr is working on the church floor plan.
- Members of the congregation with medical credentials are being contacted to see if they want their name listed in the Safety Plan.
- John stated that ushers should have an orientation to the Safety Plan when it is finalized.
- Mandy and Lyle Petersen are working to see how the Realm (new management software) will fit into the plan.
- Las Abejitas is included in our plan. First Lutheran should be in their plan as well.
- Mandy has been helpful with the development of the Safety Plan.
- Once the plan is finalized, the Executive Committee and Council will have an opportunity to review it in advance of a vote.

4. Town Hall dates – April 14, July 14, November 17

The Town Hall dates have been identified. The agenda for the April 14 Town Hall has not yet been determined.

5. Sabbatical policy

- Pastors are eligible for a sabbatical every five years. Typically, a sabbatical is for three months.
- A sabbatical will not be provided for non-rostered staff.
- An exception is being made for a sabbatical for Sharon as a sabbatical was promised to her by Pastor Dan.
- Some council members remembered that Bonita had a sabbatical. Bonita was an AIM (Associate in Ministry) when she took her sabbatical.
- There are many opportunities for continuing education for staff members. Staff members are encouraged to take advantage of what is available.
- The existing sabbatical policy is short. A new policy will be developed so the Council can vote on it.

6. Congregational Council/Nominating Committee

According to the Constitution, there are to be two candidates for each elected position, if possible. At the last Annual Meeting, nine individuals were running for seven council member positions as the Nominating Committee could not find enough individuals willing to run.

- Pastor Erin expressed concerns about the size of the Council.
- One possibility is for the Nominating Committee to present a slate of candidates to the congregation and the congregation would vote on the slate. If this is put in place, can the congregation add to the slate?
- Another idea to get more individuals to run for elected offices is to change the commitment from three years to two years. Individuals could then be reelected for another two-year term.
- We want to avoid a small group of decision makers.

Kari asked how members get put on a committee? Committees should have an open invitation.

- This topic could be discussed at a Town Hall, a Temple Talk, or a Committee Fair in the Activity Center.
- Some committees lend themselves to adding people or having people in and out.
- The Annual Report had summaries from various committees.
- Rod discussed the Property Committee and Judy discussed the Fellowship Committee as examples.

#### 7. Vitality Initiative update

The team is finishing Phase 1 of the Vitality Initiative process: Discovering Who We Are. They are collecting and processing interview information. A five-to-seven-minute video that reflects our history and interviews completed could be presented at a Town Hall.

The next phase is who are our neighbors? Where are we trying to do ministry?

#### E. OPEN COMMENTS:

Rod stated that the Property Committee has been working on several items that will need to be brought to the attention of the Council. Steve Lenzen was given credit for recognizing many of the issues. The Property Committee meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month and council members with interest are invited to attend. A brief history of our roof matters and insurance settlement was given.

Lee stated that he would like a council member to serve on each committee. This could be discussed at the Retreat.

#### F. CLOSING PRAYER:

Those in attendance recited the Lord's Prayer.

#### G. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 8:20



# **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

**UPDATED MARCH 2024**

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**1551 SOUTH 70<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA 68506  
402.488.0919**



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## **TRAINED EMERGENCY PERSONNEL**

### **DESIGNATED OFFICIALS:**

Pastor Erin Heidelberger Phone: 402-488-0919 Cell: 605-252-0320

Pastor Andrew Kitzing Phone: 402-488-0919 Cell: 402-676-1756

### **SECURITY TEAM MEMBERS:**

Mandy West 402-890-7181

Boyd Bacon 402-890-5602

Masako Bacon 402-304-7025

Kathleen Simley 402-580-0107

Sharon Hardel 717-805-4569

Laura Gaulty 402-499-2198

Norm Kempf 402-890-3425

Lyle Petersen 402-540-2442

Al Williams 402-430-9124

Rod Johnson 402-570-6756

Steve Lenzen 402-580-6231 cell, 402-489-9145 home/night

Steve Doolittle 402-202-4446

Las Abejitas: Kayla Munoz(C-402-770-4903), office: 402-488-2859

## EVACUATION ROUTES

Evacuation route maps have been posted throughout the church. The following information is marked on evacuation maps:

1. Emergency exits.
2. Primary and secondary evacuation routes.
3. Locations of fire extinguishers.
4. Location of landline phones on each floor.
5. Assembly point is the North Church Parking Lot (Main Glass Doors).

People should know at least two evacuation routes.

Please reference pages 21-22 for floor plans.

## **EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS**

### **CHURCH LOCATION:**

1551 S. 70<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506  
402-488-0919

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:** 911

**PARAMEDICS:** 911

**AMBULANCE:** 911

**POLICE:** 911

**POISON CONTROL:** 800-222-1222

### **ALARM COMPANY:**

Electronic Contracting Co.      402-466-8274  
Church Account number      I1001270  
FALSE ALARM Report:      (877) 532-1500 – Alarm Central

### **UTILITY COMPANY EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

ELECTRIC – LES: Life-threatening: 911 / Outage: 888-365-2412

WATER – Lincoln Water Systems: 402-441-7571

GAS – Black Hills Energy: Life-threatening: 911 / Outage: 800-694-8989

TELEPHONE COMPANY – ALLO: 855-559-2708 / 402-480-6570

HVAC: MMC Contractors 402 861-0681 – Bret Hixson 402-440-1237

Or Control Services 402-339-4344

ELECTRICAL WORK: Hy-Electric: 402-466-6606

PLUMBING: Dunrite Plumbing 402-613-7600

## MEDICAL EMERGENCY

**Call medical emergency phone number immediately: 911**

- Provide the following information:
  1. Nature of medical emergency.
  2. Location of the emergency:  
**First Lutheran Church**  
**1551 South 70<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Lincoln, Nebraska 68506**  
(Include Entrance #, Floor & Room of Emergency)
  3. Your name and number of which you are calling from.
- Call on medical personnel listed below in attendance, trained in CPR/First Aid to assist prior to the arrival of First Responders:

<b>FLC MEDICAL PERSONNEL</b>	<b>SAT 5:30</b>	<b>SUN 8:15</b>	<b>SUN 10:45</b>	<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>
Rebecca Pfabe	X			402-477-1833
Matt Reckmeyer		X		402-432-5550
Dave Timperley	X			402-770-1400
Terry Kruse			X	402-781-2179
Bob Rauner			X	402-450-1859
Lisa Rauner			X	402-450-1859
Chris Wilhelm			X	402-781-2348
Nguyet Ho			X	402-781-2348
Peg Westerhold			X	402-499-7515
Debby Harper		X	X	402-310-8522

- Meet First Responders at FRONT DOOR and direct them to the person needing medical help.
- If personnel trained in First Aid are not available, at a minimum, attempt to provide the following assistance:
  1. Stop the bleeding with firm pressure on the wounds. (Note: Avoid contact with blood or other bodily fluids.) Gloves are in each first aid kit, in the Usher's Bag, or if the emergency is in the Kitchen, check cabinet marked with First Aid symbol.
  2. Clear air passages using the Heimlich Maneuver in case of choking.
  3. In case of rendering assistance to personnel exposed to hazardous

materials, be careful about your contact with the person lest you put yourself at risk – **CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.**

4. Attempt first aid ONLY if trained and qualified.
5. Do not move victim unless absolutely necessary.

### **Reporting an Incident**

- When incidents occur, fill out and file the ***Incident Form*** obtained in the main office. All incidents not involving First Responders need to be filed/reported no later than three (3) days after the incident.

### **Ushers Note:**

- **An AED is located in the entry reception area.**
- Oxygen Unit and First Aid Equipment (and gloves) are located in the **small room on the left side as one enters the Sanctuary (marked with a First Aid symbol)**. - Parish Coordinator will have unit checked for Oxygen along with Fire extinguishers, emergency lights and First Aid Supplies on quarterly basis
- **A wheelchair is located at the Chapel entrance.**

## **FIRE EMERGENCY**

### **When fire is discovered:**

- Pull Fire Alarm, notify the local Fire Department by calling 911.
- Church address is 1551 South 70<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Assist all physically challenged people in emergency evacuation.
- Shout, “FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!” Wait 3 seconds, shout, “FIRE, FIRE FIRE!”
- Evacuate all occupants.

### **Fight the fire ONLY if:**

- The Fire Department has been notified.
- The fire is small and is not spreading to other areas.
- Escaping the area is possible by backing up to the nearest exit.
- Fire extinguisher is in working condition and personnel are trained to use it. Parish Coordinator will have Fire extinguishers checked quarterly.
- **PASS** – **PULL** pin, **AIM** at base, **SQUEEZE** trigger, **SWEEP** spray.

### **Upon being notified about the fire emergency, occupants must:**

- Leave the building using the designated escape routes.
- If it is a weekday, assist Las Abejitas staff in moving children to safety.
- Assemble in the designated area (North side of Parking Lot) so ALL are accounted for. DO NOT HINDER ACCESS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONDERS.
- Remain outside until competent authority (Fire Department or congregational leader) announces that it is safe to re-enter.

### **Designated Official, Emergency Coordinator, Ushers, or Trained Personnel:**

- Disconnect utilities and equipment unless doing so jeopardizes his/her safety.
- Coordinate an orderly evacuation of personnel.
- Perform an accurate head count of people who reported to designated area.
- Determine a rescue method to locate missing people.
- Provide the Fire Department personnel with the necessary information about the facility (Church Floor Plan).

- Perform assessment and coordinate emergency closing procedures.
- Ensure that all people have evacuated the area/floor (Assigned by Lead-Usher or Trained Personnel during non-service time).
- Report any problems to the Emergency Coordinator at the assembly area



## SEVERE WEATHER AND NATURAL DISASTERS

### **Tornado:**

- If a warning is issued by sirens, there is weather radio located in work room of the office that is on 24/7. Recommend in case of threatening weather, ushers and staff monitor weather radio or phone closely. Seek inside shelter as needed.
- Safe shelter, in the interior Youth Rooms in the lower level and the Hallway going to those rooms, the space under steps from 1<sup>st</sup> Floor to LL. The Kitchen is an alternative site.
- The Sub-Basement of the church building is only accessible with key.
- Assist people with disabilities/elderly in finding a safe place.
- Stay away from outside walls and windows.
- Use arms to protect head and neck.
- Remain sheltered until the tornado threat is announced to be over.
- Continue to listen to weather radios before leaving shelter area.
- We cannot force anyone to stay but encourage them to stay in the building.
- If outside doors are open, leave them open for anyone outside seeking shelter.
- If injuries, seek medical help from First Lutheran medical team and call 911, if needed.
- If it is a weekday, assist - Las Abejitas Personnel in moving children to hallway or Sub-Basement, only accessible with key.

### **Blizzard:**

- Stay calm, await instructions from the Pastor or designated official.
- Stay indoors!
- Turn on weather radio, monitor phones for weather notices and stay aware to open and closed snow routes.
- If there is no heat:
  - Contact Facility Maintenance Manager or Bret Hixon.
  - Close off unneeded rooms or areas.
  - Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
  - Cover windows at night.

- Have emergency medicine supplies ready.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, light-weight, warm clothing, if available. Use quilts from the Quilters Room, if necessary.

**Flood:**

- Be aware of driving conditions on roads before evacuating church.
- Be ready to evacuate as directed by the Pastor, or designated official.
- Follow the recommended primary or secondary evacuation routes.

**Earthquake:**

- Stay calm and await instructions from the designated official.
- Keep away from overhead fixtures, windows, filing cabinets and electrical power.
- Assist people with disabilities in finding a safe place.
- Evacuate, as instructed, by the designated official.

## UTILITY ISSUES

### Electricity is Off

- If electricity is off when church is closed, the Parish Coordinator, Communications Director or a Staff member should make an announcement on the website home page and Facebook page, that church is closed until power is restored.
- If electricity goes off during functions or hours of operation, report the outage and call LES PowerLine at 1-888-365-2412 or use the *Report Outage Form* on the LES website - [www.les.com](http://www.les.com).
- Do not open refrigerators while electricity is off. Unplug computers, appliances and non-essential electrical equipment. Complete an *Incident Report* and give to Parish Coordinator or staff.

### Bathroom Plumbing is Overflowing

- Turn off water: Immediate shutoff valves are identified on master plumbing plan. Consult Parish Coordinator or Facility Maintenance Manager. Each individual fixture (sink, toilet, etc.) has a shut-off, but it may require tools.
- Coordinate with Parish Coordinator to determine if the problem is with the city sewer line or a private matter. Lincoln Water System website has a page identifying health/disease measures to consider during clean-up.
- Call Parish Coordinator at 402-488-0919 to report the problem. Complete an *Incident Report* and give to Parish Coordinator.

## CHILD MISSING

We work hard to ensure the safety of our children. In the case of a missing child, follow this procedure:

- Call trained Emergency Response (ER) members and Ushers in the building to respond immediately.
  - All doors get covered by an ER member/Usher. If you see someone at a door, go to another one.
  - All hallways get covered by an ER member/Usher. If you see someone in a hallway, go to another one.
  - Three ER members or Ushers go outside to check the parking lots and lawns.
  - Other members begin a search of the building, floor by floor. Be sure to check the elevator; it is a favorite place for children to explore. Check all rooms and closets.
- **If the child is not found, call 911 with all the information available:**  
The time of the child's disappearance, color and style of clothing the child was wearing, hair color, age, etc.

## SUSPICIOUS PERSON

- If someone you do not know enters the church, engage them in friendly conversation.
- Ask them to introduce themselves and state their reason for being here.
  - Pay attention to how they look.
  - Are they uneasy?
  - Perspiring?
  - Dressed inappropriately for the season? (For example, wearing a coat on a warm day.)
  - Do they seem to be lost in the building? It may be entirely innocent, and you can be hospitable.
- It may suggest they want to create trouble.
- Trust your instincts and call for others to assist.
- This is private property, and we have the right to escort people out.
- If they resist leaving, call 911.

## DISRUPTER

A “*Disrupter*” is someone who takes over worship or another gathering in church, uninvited. Disrupters typically verbally impose themselves into the “spotlight” and may choose to take a physical location in the front of the sanctuary. They might “take over” the lectern or pulpit or chancel area by the altar, wanting attention for a cause, for their anger, or for some other reason. If this happens:

1. Call 911.
2. A group of people—ushers or other trained leaders—may surround the disrupter to contain him or her.
3. They can try to escort the person out of the sanctuary or other space in the building. If the disrupter refuses to leave, wait for the police to arrive.

# ACTIVE SHOOTER

An “*Active Shooter*” is defined as an “armed person whose action is immediately causing death or great bodily injury.”

## **Before an incident:**

1. Stay alert and report any suspicious behaviors and people.
2. **Call 911 if you have reason to be concerned.**

## **When an incident is happening:**

### **If Indoors: RUN, HIDE, FIGHT**

1. Identify the general location.
2. Alert others.
3. Close and lock any doors between you and the shooter.
4. **Call 911:** Church Address is 1551 South 70<sup>th</sup> Street.
5. **Turn cell phone sounds to silent but leave your phone on so 911 can hear what is happening even if you cannot speak.**
6. If you can escape safely, do. Always know where your closest exits are in the building.
7. If you cannot escape, blockade the door, if possible.
8. Turn lights and computer screens off.
9. Silence cell phone ringers.
10. Lead people to hide between or behind furniture. **Do not huddle together.**

### **If Outdoors:**

1. Seek shelter wherever it is safe.
2. If you cannot get inside a building:
  - a. Run with group toward the opposite or a safe direction.
  - b. Spread out in small pockets.
  - c. Run between objects.

## LOCKOUT AND LOCKDOWN

Some threats or hazards may require a building Lockdown or Lockout to optimize safety, which will be announced by a designated responsible official or other leader:



### LOCKOUT

#### “Secure the Perimeter”

Procedure to safeguard people within the church building from a threat or hazard **outside** the building, such as:

- Criminal activity in area.
- Dangerous events in the community.
- Dangerous animal on church grounds.

Recover all church staff, Las Abejitas staff and children and visitors from outside the building and lock all outside doors.



### LOCKDOWN

#### “Locks, Lights, Out of Sight”

Procedure to secure individual rooms within the church and keep people quiet and in place, when a threat or hazard **inside** the building, such as:

- Disrupter.
- Angry or violent visitor.
- Active shooter.
- Dangerous animal within church building.

Lock door to room/area in which located, turn off lights, locate people out of sight of any hallway windows and maintain silence.

Lockdown does not mandate locking outside doors, as attempts to do so may put people at risk in exposed areas and may inhibit entry of first responders.

There may be situations when both Lockout and Lockdown are needed, in which both are identified and conveyed to emergency services or 911.



## TELEPHONE BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST

**Instructions:** Be calm, be courteous. Listen. Do not interrupt the caller.

Since call will likely be on a church landline phone, notify staff and others present in the building immediately.

Parish Coordinator has a BOMB THREAT phone worksheet in a binder, that can help prompt questions to ask or blanks to fill in. All staff and office assistants need to be aware of these and know where to access.

## THE FIRST LUTHERAN COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

First Lutheran Church uses an app called **Realm** for crisis information distribution. You can download it free on your smart phone. The emergency protocols in this booklet are available on **Realm** in the Crisis Response Information area under groups.









Training is available on the various emergency response processes with the information and instructions available in the Crisis Information area of **Realm**. If you are not using First Lutheran's **Realm** app and would like to be, please contact the church office or Pastor to download the app to your phone. Updates made to these protocols will automatically be updated and made and available in **Realm**.

### Weapons and Firearm Policy

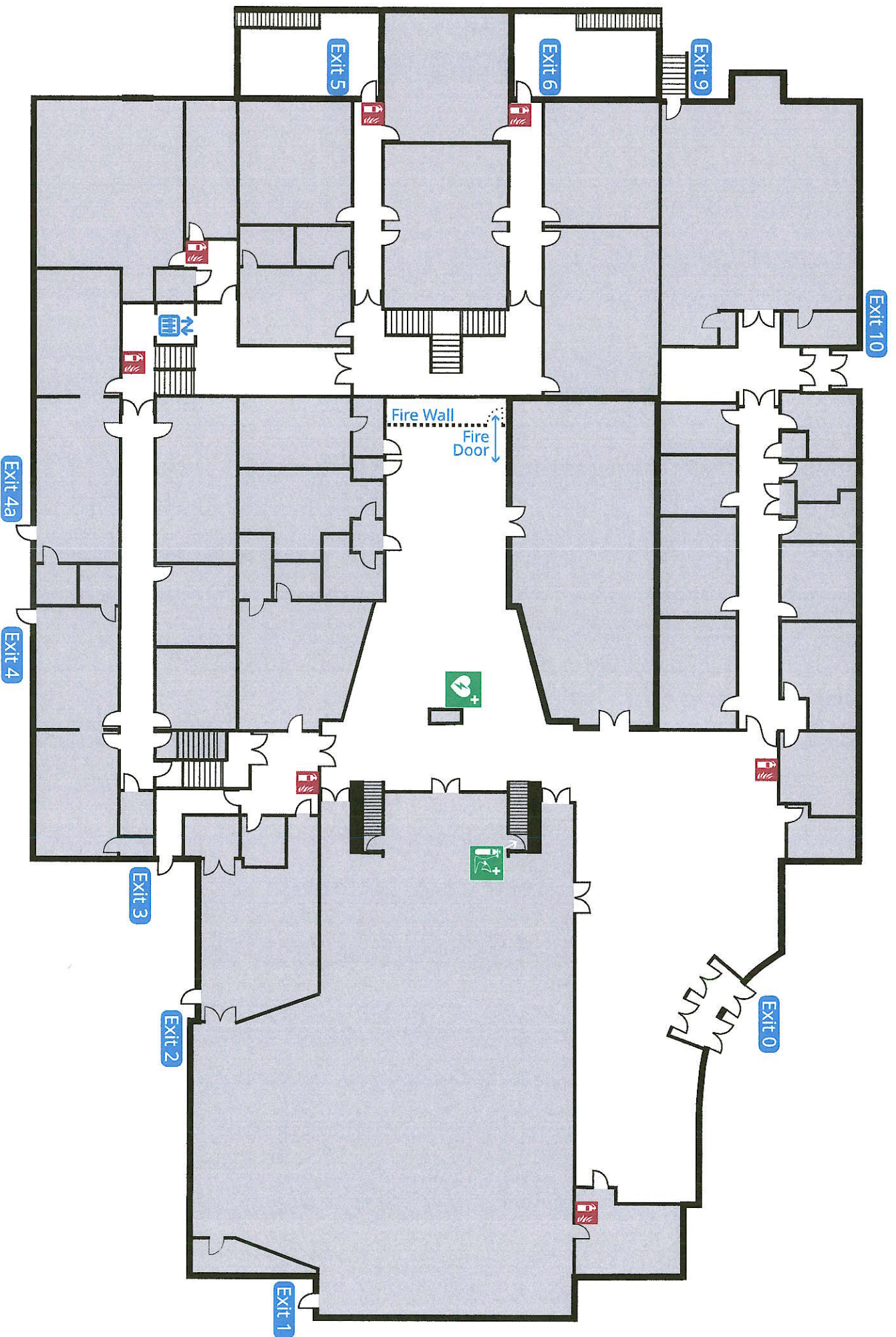
- All weapons including concealed firearms are prohibited on these premises.

For historical purposes, the discussion came out of LB 77, which essentially is Nebraska's 'constitutional carry' statute. Within the statute, along with other types of entities, churches are exempt from the constitutional carry law.

## KEY TO EMERGENCY ACTIONS

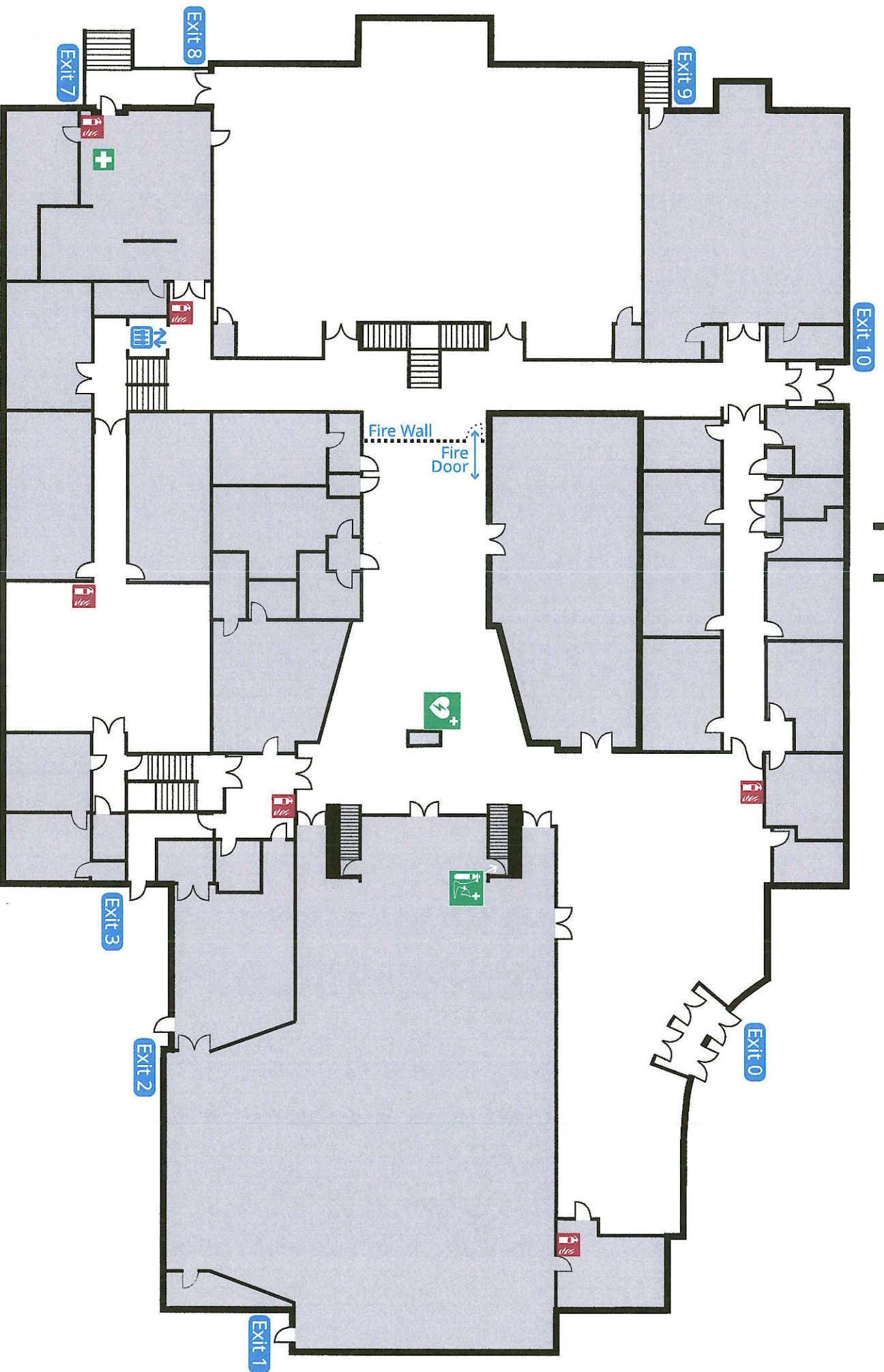
	<b>AED</b>
	<b>First Aid</b>
	<b>Lockout</b>
	<b>Lockdown</b>
	<b>Evacuate</b>
	<b>Shelter</b>
	<b>Fire Alarm</b>
	<b>Fire Extinguisher</b>

# Lower Level





# Upper Level



**Ministry Items of Note/Celebrating:**

- The **Vitality Initiative team** has been working hard to compile a video about what we learned from the congregation interviews as we transition to Phase 2 of the VI. The video will be shown at our next cohort meeting on March 10 and will be available to show to the congregation at the April Town Hall, through a future enewsletter, and on our website.
- I attended a listening session with synod staff and representatives of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC). The 2022 Churchwide Assembly called for the ELCA Church Council to establish the CRLC to reconsider statements of purpose for the church and its organizational structure. The commission will present its findings and recommendations to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in preparation for a possible reconstituting convention.
- I led **First Lutheran 101** on Feb. 11 and 18 for newcomers to FLC and those interested in becoming members. On March 3, we welcomed five new members (see parochial report).
- I presided at the funeral service of Phyllis Frickel on February 3.
- We had nearly 25% increase in attendance for Ash Wednesday services over the attendance in 2023, and we've had an increase in attendance for the first two weeks of midweek services. It's been great to be gathered with First Lutheran family for these midweek meals and services!

**Upcoming Items of Note/Working On:**

- I'm developing a **family Good Friday service** for the noon service that day. This will be a service developed with children in mind, to engage them in new ways with the events of Good Friday.
- **Communion Faith Milestone** – Pastor Andrew led the first of three Communion Faith Milestone classes, and I led the last two on Feb. 25, March 3, and March 10. We will have the Communion Milestone blessing in worship for two young people on March 17.
- **Pre-marriage sessions:** I continue meeting with one couple who will be married at First Lutheran in June 2024.
- **Staffing:** Our facilities maintenance manager resigned in mid-February, so we are now publicizing that position and accepting applications.
- **Bible studies** (Pr Andrew leads the Tues evening study and I lead the Wed morning) have paused during Lent and will start again after Easter studying the book of Ephesians.

**Calendar:** I plan to take vacation April 1-7 (1 Sunday; Apr 1 is already a holiday) and May 22-27 (1 Sunday; daughter graduating from Southeast HS on May 26).

## **Associate Pastor Report** **Submitted by Pastor Andrew Kitzing**

Feb 13 – Waffleman  
14 – Ash Wednesday  
18 – Communion Class taught  
20 – Micah 6:8 (synod committee) meeting in Omaha  
27 – Synod Nominating Committee meeting  
March 3 – Council retreat  
7 – Sheila Exstrom funeral

March 19 – Chrism Mass in Adams  
24-31 – Holy Week  
30 – Easter Vigil @ 7PM hosted by First  
April 8 – Justice in Action Briefing Rally  
9 – Bible Study begins (Ephesians)  
10 – Gifts of Hope Evaluation  
13/14 – Justice in Action Day in worship

There are several fun and interesting events that have taken place this last month. I serve on two synod committees – I'm not sure how I got on one and I'm not sure how to get off the other! The Micah 6:8 Committee is what used to be the Justice, World Hunger, and Immigration committees. I was a member of the Justice Committee and have continued into the new Micah 6:8 group. Right now, we mostly approve grant proposals for hunger needs. We'll be getting together this spring to start a new visioning process for this committee. I am also on the Nominating Committee for the Nebraska Synod. This story may sound familiar, but we had a hard time filling in the ballots for all the positions that are open. It appears that several will just remain vacant now and be a problem we'll have to deal with next year.

Pr. Erin and I will be attending the Chrism Mass in Adams this year. This is something that Bp. Maas had led during his first term as bishop but has not happened since. It's a nice time to get together as leaders and renew our vows while worshipping together.

First was asked to host of community/cluster Easter Vigil service this year. The hope of several pastors in the cluster is that we will continue to hold a cluster-wide Easter Vigil service in Lincoln. The planning will be shared by the participating pastors and the hope is that churches will be willing to volunteer to host. First was asked to host due to our space and our position in the city. Other churches participating this year are Shepherd of the Hills, Spirit of Hope, and Zion. If you

have questions about the service feel free to ask. Members and pastors from all the churches involved will take part in the leadership of the service.

The first Justice in Action gathering that we'll be a part of as First Lutheran will be in April. There are still a few discussions that I think need to happen before we fully join, such as the finance piece, but we'll begin our participation while we figure that out. You'll see on the calendar that April 13-14 is going to be a weekend where we'll be introduced to Justice in Action as a congregation and have the chance to learn more. Representatives from the organization will be here to give a temple talk and be available after worship to answer questions and talk to folks. That weekend is your chance to ask any question you could possibly think of when it comes to Justice in Action in Lincoln.

That's about the biggest fun stuff this month. Thanks for all you do and have a Happy Easter!



## **Sharon Hardel's Report to Council February 14, 2024 – March 12, 2024**

### **Highlights of the month:**

Discipleship University is on a break until after Easter. Youth and families have been encouraged to attend midweek Lenten services.

Youth Group Activities: We held a trip planning meeting for youth going to the ELCA Youth Gathering on February 18. This was a joint meeting with Our Saviour's Youth. Both parents and youth were asked to attend the meeting. We had a total of 12 First Lutheran youth and parents and 10 from Our Saviour's at the meeting. A Day off School youth hang out event at Scooters on February 19 was held in which 6 youth and 2 parents attended. On February 25, youth met for an evening of 4 square, a "getting ready lesson" on being Authentic, and some updates for the Louisville trip as well as doing a quick service project of tying plastic grocery bags together to weave mats for those that sleep on the ground or cold floors. We had 12 youth and parents participating. Youth were invited to stop by Scooters on Leap Day for a drink and check in and 1 youth and parent, it was a youth that has not been participating in much lately, so was nice to catch up with them and hear about what's going on in their life. On March 3 we traveled to Omaha to "It's Yours Pottery" where we created glass fusion cross art. We talked about the cross being a symbol of Lent and that purple, scarlet, and black are colors of Lent and Holy Week. We also talked about stained glass art being used to help tell Bible stories for people who didn't speak or read Latin and that artwork is often used yet today in many churches, 11 youth and parents participated in this activity. We will not meet on March 10 due to spring break.

Youth Learning met on February 18 with the Adult Forum to hear Erin Pfister's presentation on Invisible and Visible disabilities and then had impromptu conversations on February 25 and March 3 in the Activity Center / Commons area. We have had 3 – 5 youth participate, and Pastor Andrew and a few parents and members will also join us in conversation at times.

On February 27 I met with Pastor Eric Spruth-Jannsen from St. James Lutheran to discuss ELCA Gathering plans. We had 2 youth back out of going to the Gathering in New Orleans and Pastor Eric and his youth Josie will go with us instead. Josie traveled with our youth to Denver last summer, so she will fit in fine with our group. I am glad we were able to fill out extra spots.

Spring concerts and drama programming is now in full swing. I was able to attend North Star's production of Mary Poppins on March 1 to see Liz Scharton perform. I also am attending the Southeast concert to see Maya Troutman and Vin Trampe on March 5 and Lux choral concert on March 7 to see Kaitlyn Brock.

I continue to meet with the Monday Coffee Talk Group and Gather and Gab group weekly as well as attend the monthly Adult Forum meetings and weekly staff meetings. I also meet monthly with the Stitchers group, and we meet March 11.

### **Projects Working On:**

1. Lego Intergenerational Palm Sunday activity
2. Discipleship University starting again in April
3. Summer Youth Accompaniments Trips and fundraisers
4. VBS

Happy New Year,

Sharon Hardel

## FaithTrek Council Report January 2024

The Lego room for the whole family here at First Lutheran is starting to take shape. I cleaned out the lower room, and took a lot of recyclable electronics (With Steve and Lyle's consent) to the recycle location. I rearranged the room and brought bins from my house to organize donated Lego blocks- I received a large donation from Bryce and Eleanor Anderson. I washed and separated the blocks by color. (Whew!)

My children's Sermon was over Border Servant Corp. and I appreciate the information I learned through creating the lesson.

The Faithtrekkers made Valentine's for homebound members, and sang before church (wonderfully). I'm looking forward to warmer weather and Easter festivities.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laura Gaulty



## Director of Worship and Music

February 2024

### Sunday Morning Musicians

February 4    both    Jazz Team (Bryce Anderson, Courtney Bruntz, Kristi Fisher, Alex Hinton, RJ Metteer,

Christian Paulsen, Anna Wemhoff)

8:15    Jenna Troutman                      10:45    Tom Thorpe

February 11    8:15    Dakota & Kristi Fisher, Heather Chesnut

10:45    Faith Trek, Adult Choir, Kathy Havelicek-Cook

February 18    both    Spirit Ringers

8:15    Will Niebuhr, String Ensemble (Kaitlyn Brock, Konnor Garrett, Mai Jacobo, Brian Niebuhr, Aden Niebuhr, Will Niebuhr, Xander Niebuhr, Kayla Peters, Jenna Troutman, Bennett Bacon)

10:45    Adult Choir, Martha Tanner

February 25    8:15    Dawn Brock, Kaitlyn Brock                      10:45    Adult Choir, Sharon Hardel

### Saturday Musicians

February 3, 17, 24 – Christine Carman

February 10 - Kristina Hanson

### Mid-Week Service

Ash Wednesday (2/14)    Noon - Betsy Bjerke                      6:30pm – Betsy Bjerke, Adult Choir

Holden Evening Prayer                      February 21    Noon – Kari Hoeft, 6:30pm – Mark Mesarch

Holden Evening Prayer                      February 28    Noon – Gordon Youngquist, 6:30pm – Martha Tanner

### Overview

**Musical Offering:** It is such blessings to be able to have multi smaller groups for a few ensembles. In order to have Jazz once a month along with brass playing on festive Sundays can be little overload for some players as many play in both groups. String Ensemble welcomed a few members. It is a joy to see growth with young players as well. It is always good to have Spirit Ringers in the routine. Adult Choir's weekly musical offering deepens our worship experiences.

**Lenten Liturgy:** It involves contemporary setting of Liturgy and traditional setting of chanting Psalms. It stretches people both ways. Some appreciate 'new' sound and others expressed frustration with the highly syncopated music.

Many appreciate chanting, but others expressed more comfortable to speak.

**Worship Assistants:** There has been some improvement on the sign-up. It seems that same strong volunteer's names in more frequency and some new members and new volunteers. As we move to implementing REALMS software, we need to find a way to have wider demographic to be on the database in order for the software to be successful for Worship Assistants.

**Head Usher/Usher Coordinator for 10:45:** The position is still vacant. Prayerfully seeking a leadership for this important ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Masako Bacon

# COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

February 2024

by Kathleen Simley, Communications Director

## SPECIAL AND COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

- Completed the compilation of ministry interest data gathered from members' Discipleship Plans during the fall Stewardship campaign. The data has been shared with staff and will soon be conveyed to ministry/committee leaders along with strategies to engage interested members effectively.
- Conducted a collaborative in-person orientation session with Mandy West for members who volunteered to join our soft launch group for Realm Connect. Additionally, a Zoom orientation was provided for those unable to attend in person. The group is now actively engaged with Realm!
- Boosted the February 13 Waffleman fundraiser through a \$50 paid Facebook ad, reaching 2,790 individuals and eliciting 257 comments, reactions, or shares. Promotion was also carried out on the Macaroni Kid online calendar and in the Lincoln Journal Star Religion Notes section, featured in the Saturday edition of the Neighborhood Extra.
- Publicized our Ash Wednesday and midweek Lenten Holden Evening Prayer worship services weekly in the Lincoln Journal Star Religion Notes.
- Livestreamed the Ash Wednesday worship service.
- Ensured the midweek Holden Evening Prayer worship services were recorded, with reflection messages posted on Facebook and Vimeo within 1-2 days.
- Sent weekly Lenten devotions every Sunday to our newsletter subscribers.
- Invested \$35 to boost our Facebook page for 7 days, targeting individuals in Lincoln to expand our follower count. The effort was successful, reaching 802 people and gaining 120 new followers/page likes!

## MY WEEKLY TASKS

- First Glance Insert
- First Things First E-Newsletter
- FaithTrek E-Newsletter
- Sunday Worship Livestream
- TV Slides
- Facebook, Instagram and News posts
- Publish Sermon Online
- Publish Adult Forum Session Online
- Greeters for Sunday Worship

## MY MONTHLY TASKS

- Digital Sign
- Website Updates
- First Friday Jazz Concert
- First Look E-Newsletter

## INSIGHTS AND THOUGHTS

It was cool to see the impact of the paid boost on our Facebook page! And guess what? It was only \$35 for 7 days! Just think if we boosted it for more than a week with a tad more spending! I'm planning to boost our page every quarter - a great way to get First Lutheran on the radar of folks who might not otherwise know what's going on!

Our social media reach in February was impressive:

- Facebook posts reached 7,590 people (257.9% increase from January 2024) with over 1,600 visits to our page (18.5% increase).
- Out of the 7,590 reached, 3,745 were through our two paid ads.
- We received 877 likes, reactions, comments, shares, and replies on Facebook (a 24% increase).
- Instagram posts reached 146 people (35.2% increase), with 22 profile visits (10% increase) and gained 5 new followers (100% increase).

Another exciting thing that happened in February was the arrival of my grandson! Oliver Neal Simley joined our family on February 15, born to Christopher and Jordyn. I've been working remotely part-time from their home in Elkhorn for the last few weeks, assisting them as they adjust to being a family of four. I'm grateful for the flexibility of my work and Pastor Erin for supporting me in this. Thank you!

## Fellowship Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

**Attending:** Carlene Falos, Judy Batterman (Chair), Judy Bailey, Linda Bogenreif, Verla Youngquist, Gordon Wolfe, Pat DeWald, Karen Moser, Ann Allen, Linda Carlson

**Devotions:** Instead of our regular devotions, we read in unison Phyllis Frickel's favorite poem/prayer that appeared in her memorial service bulletin. Next month's devotions will be given by Pat DeWald.

### Upcoming Events:

1. **Lenten Soup Lunches and Suppers:** There are five Wednesdays in Lent – February 21 and 28; March 6, 13, and 20. Thus far for February 21 we have four soup-makers signed up for lunch and three for evening. Judy Batterman will continue to check the progress of sign-ups on the FLC website. On the fifth Wednesday (March 20) we will serve taco bowls provided by our committee. Pat will again purchase ice cream bars for dessert for all lunch and evening meals. Monetary donations this year will be given to the Backpack Program.

2. **Easter Egg Hunt:** The annual event will be held on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, March 23. After some discussion, we decided that we do not have the resources (space, funds) to invite the greater neighborhood/community to participate, but that we do wish to be inviting as a congregation. So we will open the event to members, friends, and family, including the children, parents, and staff of Las Abejitas. So that we can adequately prepare, we will continue to require registrations. Judy Batterman will talk with Kayla, the director of Abejitas, to invite the children in the program, their parents, and the staff. As in the past, we will request that FLC members contribute wrapped candy and crackers (Goldfish, graham teddy bears) to place in the eggs. We will be specific as to candy size and what is appropriate for the younger children.

- Carlene will talk with Bev White about performing a puppet show.
- Pat will buy at least 25 beach buckets, sidewalk chalk, and bubbles.
- Linda B. will look for craft kits, as will everyone on the committee.

Other ideas for programming included face painting and a game to entertain children while we are gathering.

3. **Easter Breakfast:** Easter falls on March 31. We will provide a breakfast of egg casseroles and cinnamon rolls. Further planning will take place at our next meeting.

4. **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Coffee** between services will be this coming Sunday, February 18. We will serve. Gordon has offered to make the coffee.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 12, at 5:30 p.m.

Devotions will be led by Pat DeWald.

Submitted by Linda Carlson, Secretary

**First Lutheran Church  
Property Committee Minutes February 27, 2024**

Attending: Chair Norman Kempf, Bob Batterman, Cole Troutman, Steve Doolittle, Rod Johnson, Les Carlson, Richard Draper, Steve Lenzen

Meeting time: 7:00 PM

Opening prayer: Steve L.

Minute taker: Les

Minutes of the January meeting were approved. Les noted Steve L had been inadvertently not included as an attendee at the January PC meeting.

Agenda:

1. Norman circulated the 2024 PC prayer list for PC members to sign.
2. Steve L reviewed circumstances pertinent to the resignation of the FLC Facilities Maintenance Manager.
3. Rod gave a review of the Emergency Action Plan together with a timetable for final plan approval. Rod solicited additional input on the plan from PC members which involved discussion of whether it should include locations of items such as electrical panel sites, water shut off valves, emergency oxygen tank, fire extinguishers etc. It was determined that such information about at least some of these items is important but not necessarily needed in the final plan version. A motion was passed to approve Rod's work/suggestions for improving the plan.
4. Steve L updated HVAC and Plumbing repairs. Vince from Johnson Controls will offer a proposal for revising the HVAC software. Brett is still working through FLC HVAC systems which include determining if certain HVAC controllers require replacement.
5. Norman cited two items from Mandy.
  - a. Need for an additional volunteer to take key and access code for church. Steve D volunteered.
  - b. Need for a volunteer for inspection compliance checks. May include some ladder work. Steve D and Les volunteered.
6. Steve L presented information on removal of the tree southeast of FLC. Actual date of removal to be determined, FLC will dispose of tree limbs when removal occurs.
7. Norman discussed removal of evergreen shrubs northwest of FLC as well as equipment needed. This project may occur soon.
8. Steve L believes the current fix for the leaky sink drain is sufficient for now.
9. Steve L updated the status of his project to create access to the south wing attic. So far, he has cut a hole and covered it to retain heat. Once he has the correct ladder he needs, he'll enter the attic space to determine whether it is a bat sanctuary.
10. Norman and Les will remain as PC Chair and Recorder.
11. Steve L mentioned parking lot projects for this summer which include spreading additional surface crack sealer as well as sealer for the parking surface as a whole. Another project may involve concrete work on the southeast corner of FLC to resolve the persistent drainage problem that still exists there.

Prayer March:

Note taker: Les