

First Lutheran church Congregational Council

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Meeting in Upper Room or by Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84168009362?pwd=ZUpEQWFwaXF2bmZlVFVnI3Nko0dz09>

- A. Opening Devotion and Prayer – Pastor Erin

- B. Approve Consent Agenda
 - 1. Meeting Agenda
 - 2. Congregational Council Minutes – March 12, 2024
 - 3. Parochial Report
 - 4. Staff Reports
 - 5. Committee Reports

- C. Nominating Committee Presentation and Discussion – Sandy Latshaw

- D. Action Agenda
 - 1. Emergency Action Plan
 - 2. ELCA Guidelines for Congregations –Internal Controls Best Practices

- E. Discussion Agenda
 - 1. Justice in Action Event Report & Discussion –Kari Hoeft and Pastor Andrew
 - 2. Sabbatical Policy –discussion of distributed paper
 - 3. April Town Hall
 - 4. Synod Assembly June 1 & 2 worship coverage
 - 5. Synod Training for Congregational Leaders – April 13, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. online
 - 6. Building Accessibility

- F. Financial Report

- G. Open Comments

- H. Closing Prayer

- I. Adjournment

Executive Committee Meeting
First Lutheran Church
April 2, 2024

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

Opening Prayer: Scott

Topics for discussion:

1. Emergency Action Plan motion
Lee will create a motion to pass on to Council for final action/voting for next week's council meeting.
2. April Council Meeting- Sandy Latshaw, Nominating Committee challenges
Want to have someone from each committee visit council meetings to explain and discuss their committee to council. Next week it will be Sandy Latshaw from the Nominating Committee.
3. Best Practices for Accounting proposal
Scott shared an update on this. He will put together a motion for the April meeting.
4. Sabbatical Policy Discussion
We continued to discuss more in depth about the policy and continuing education. We want the council to weigh in. We will keep reviewing this.
5. April Town Hall
Will be held April 14 (this month). Council members should be there at various tables to answer questions and listen.
6. Synod Training for Congregations
This is April 12 from 9-12 online. Want everyone to be aware that it is happening.
7. Justice in Action Meeting
This is April 8 at First Plymouth Church from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. First Lutheran will be signing their intent to be a member of the Justice in Action. Participation is encouraged.
8. Other?
None

Closed with the Lord's Prayer at 8:07 p.m.

Submitted by Emily Sears, Council Secretary

Information Items

	Baptized	Confirmed
1. MEMBERSHIP as of March 1, 2024	1102	915
Members received:		
A. by baptism (15 years and under)	1	
B. by baptism (adult)		
C. transfer from ELCA congregation		
D. other Lutheran		
E. affirmation of faith		
F. transfer from non-Lutheran congregation		
G. other and statistical adjustment		
Members removed:		
A. death	1	1
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 March 31, 2024	1102	914

Average Attendance for March

<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>
569	527	698	608	594	463	393	192	551	365	276

Added:

Baptism: Emilio Cortinas

Affirmation:

Transfer:

Other:

Removed:

Death: Kenneth Stofferahn

Transfer:

Dropped Due to Inactivity:

Other:

Notes: [Live Stream average for March 2024 is: 70](#), [Holy Week: 51](#)

[In Person: Lent Midweek: 120](#) [Holy Week: 128](#)

Congregational Council Meeting

First Lutheran Church

March 12, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pastor Erin Heidelberger, Lee Rockwell, 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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Scott Williamson, Jennifer Wemhoff

GUESTS PRESENT: Norm Kempf, Property Committee Chair

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 – February 13, 2024
3. Parochial Report
4. Staff Reports
5. Committee Reports

It was moved by Patrick and seconded by Rod to approve the consent agenda.

Pastor Erin stated that the average attendance for January 2023 was 188 and not 288 as shown in the Parochial Report.

The motion passed.

C. PROPERTY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION – NORM KEMPF, CHAIR:

Norm stated that the Property Committee has dealt with a lot of challenges over the years. He thanked the members of the Property Committee – Bob Batterman, Cole Troutman, Steve Doolittle, Rod Johnson, Les Carlson, Richard Draper, Steve Lenzen and new members John Bonaiuto and Brandon Wiebelhaus.

There are several areas in the building that need work:

1. The north wing roof needs to be replaced.
2. HVAC – there are three boilers. The controls need to be updated.
3. Parking lot – crack filling and coating was done last summer. That will need to be done again.
4. Tree removal
5. The temperature control in the sub-basement heaters failed during the cold weather in January.

6. Bats – three bats were found recently.

- Steve Lenzen has been filling in until a new Building Manager is hired.
- How do we pay for this deferred maintenance?
- We need more people familiar with the building in case of an emergency.
- Steve Lenzen has put together a list of the locations of the water shut offs. He will be working on the electrical systems next.
- Roof insurance – there has not been much movement in the last year.
- Norm thinks that we may need to do a fundraiser to pay for everything that needs to be done.

D. DISCUSSION AGENDA:

1. Emergency Action Plan

The most recent draft of the Emergency Action plan was distributed for review and discussion. The goal is to approve the final plan at the April Council meeting.

- Brian Niebuhr developed maps for every room in the church facility.
- The upper level and lower level should be color coded.
- Kari recommends that there is an evacuation route for every room.
- A date has already been set for those with medical expertise to learn about the plan.
- May 5 is the date that ushers, committee members and others will have an opportunity to learn about the plan.
- Thanks were given to Mandy for her assistance in preparing the plan.
- The church council should own the plan. It will be included on the church website. Lyle and Mandy are working to add it to Realm.
- Lee thanked Rod for his work on the plan.

2. Justice in Action status

Kari gave a report on Justice in Action.

Twenty-four interfaith churches participate in Justice in Action in Lancaster County. Six hundred twenty-seven people shared issues that “keep them up at night.” After discernment, the following issues were prioritized for the current year:

- a. Mental Health Care
- b. Diversion for those in jail
- c. Affordable housing

- The April Town Hall would be a good time to discuss Justice in Action with the congregation.
- Those interested should show up on May 2 at St. Mark’s Church from 6:30-8:00 to let politicians know of our support.
- Within five years, the goal would be to contribute 1% of our budget to Justice in Action. We are in year one now. A plan needs to be developed to get us to the

contribution goal. Several members of the congregation are passionate about Justice in Action.

- Amy, Barb Johnson Frank, Kari, and Pastor Andrew participate in Justice in Action.

3. April Town Hall

- The April Town Hall will be held on April 14 at noon.
- There will be a potluck.
- Council members should make every effort to attend.
- A Council member should be seated at each table.
- A video on the Vitality Initiative that summarizes interviews with select members of the congregation will be shown at the Town Hall.
- Other discussion items include a financial update as well as a property update.

4. Council Member Committee Assignments

Lee distributed a list of committees such that Council members could choose which committee they wanted to serve on.

5. Draft document for April discussion

- a. Sabbatical policy
- b. Council size/nominating committee
- c. Staff evaluations

At its April meeting, the Executive Committee will discuss the items above.

E. FINANCIAL REPORT:

YTD receipts through February 29 were \$12,379 over budget; YTD disbursements through February 29 were \$340 under budget; YTD surplus through February 29 was \$12,719.

F. OPEN COMMENTS:

It was moved by Judy and seconded by John to go into Executive Session. The motion carried.

G. CLOSING PRAYER:

H. ADJOURNMENT:

MEETING DATE: April 9, 2024

SUBJECT: First Lutheran Church Emergency Action Plan

PROPOSED ACTION: Approve the revised Emergency Action Plan of First Lutheran Church

BACKGROUND: The Emergency Action Plan has not been updated since its original development several years ago. A revision and updating is required to accommodate the new building construction and renovation, plus the addition of Las Abejitas daycare and pre-school to the church programming activities. The revision was chaired by Council member Rod Johnson with support from Parish Coordinator, Mandy West and others.

SPONSOR: FLC Executive Committee

MEETING DATE: April 9, 2024

PROPOSED ACTION: Adopt the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's *'Guidelines for Congregations – Internal Controls Best Practices'*, and as a part of that, have authorized account signers be the officers of the Executive Committee.

BACKGROUND: Current practice has been for the person writing the checks and reconciling the bank statements to also be an authorized signer on the checking account. In order to keep the church, as well as our financial staff safe, best practices dictate that reconciliations should be performed by a person who is not an authorized signer on the account.

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH SABBATICAL POLICY

For discussion only

1. **BACKGROUND:** FLC has had a policy in place for several years to provide sabbatical opportunities for our Called Pastors and rostered staff. However, the policy is general in nature and in many instances lacks specific guidelines. This paper has been developed to address elements of a proposed policy elaboration and seek Congregational Council input and eventually approval of a policy. The policy should take into consideration the latest Nebraska Synod guidelines (2023), current FLC policy, and areas which may be missing for more complete FLC sabbatical policy.

The Nebraska Synod *strongly* recommends that congregations provide sabbatical leaves for clergy. In the long run they are often cost effective, eliminating burnout due to busy schedules and 24-hour on-call availability for emergencies.

2. **ELIGIBILITY:** Sabbatical leaves are available to full time Called Pastors and full time Rostered Staff of FLC following five years of continuous FLC service.
3. **LENGTH:** Should be negotiated between pastor or rostered staff member and the Congregational Council. Generally they should cover three months in length and should occur during a period of time which is agreeable to both the applicant and the Council. The applicant should commit to serving the FLC congregation for a minimum of one year following the conclusion of the sabbatical.
4. **FINANCING:** Applicant's full-time salary, benefits and earned vacation will not be affected by the sabbatical. Continuing education funds can be "banked" for use during the sabbatical term, but normally they should be used on a yearly basis. Special sabbatical funding may be provided by the congregation, but will be determined through negotiation between the candidate and the Council. External funding may be available to support some sabbatical elements and should be explored by the applicant.
5. **WRITTEN PROPOSAL:** Applicant will prepare and submit a proposal which will fully describe the sabbatical, rationale for specific elements, funding sources, and detailed suggestions for covering specific duties while on sabbatical and away from the church.
6. **CONGREGATIONAL BENEFITS:** Some sabbatical elements may provide a specific benefit to the FLC congregation as well as the applicant. While this is not a requirement for the sabbatical, it is encouraged so that it becomes a win-win situation for all involved. Such proposals should be jointly developed, and where appropriate, seek outside funding for implementation.

7. FOLLOW-UP: The applicant will provide a follow-up report to the congregation at the conclusion of the sabbatical. It should take the form of a personal, recorded or printed presentation to the congregation and any outside funders.

Ministry Items of Note/Celebrating:

- **Communion Faith Milestone** –We had a Communion Milestone blessing in worship for two young people on March 17 as we welcomed them to the Lords' Supper.
- I attended a clergy text study in Ashland on March 7 (we meet every 6 weeks and cover several weeks of texts).
- Much of my time and effort in March focused on preparing services for midweek **Lent** and **Holy Week**. We averaged 125 in attendance (noon and 6:30 combined) at our Wednesday Lenten services, which is about 50% of our weekend average attendance. This is a great turnout for the midweek services! A couple new services this year included the Family Good Friday service (noon), intended to engage children in the events of Good Friday and all of Holy Week. We had an attendance of about 18, including children and adults. While a relatively small number, I think it's worth continuing a Good Friday service that focuses on children in the future but possibly at a different time. We also collaborated with other ELCA congregations on a Saturday evening Easter Vigil service. Pastor Andrew took the First Lutheran pastor lead on planning this service along with pastors from Shepherd of the Hills (Hickman), Spirit of Hope, Zion Lutheran (Emerald), and the Lutheran Center at UNL. 92 people from all of these congregations attended the service. I look forward to the possibility of collaborating on this service again next year. My deep gratitude goes to all of our First Lutheran staff who worked very hard on all of these services!
- On March 19 Pastor Andrew and I attended the **Chrism Mass** service led by Bishop Johnson at American Lutheran in Adams. The Chrism Mass is a service typically held during Lent for those who serve the church as ministers where we renew our ordination vows.
- I presided at the funeral service of Ken Stofferahn at First Lutheran on March 23.

Upcoming Items of Note/Working On:

- The **Vitality Initiative team** will meet again with our cohort of churches and synod staff on April 21. We will show the video the team created about what we discovered in Phase 1 at the April 14 Town Hall, where the team will also give an update on its work moving into Phase 2, which is focused on our neighbors around First Lutheran.
- **Pre-marriage sessions:** I continue meeting with one couple who will be married at First Lutheran in June 2024.
- **Staffing:** We have not filled the facilities maintenance manager position and continue to publicize that position and accept applications.
- **Bible studies** (Pr Andrew leads the Tues evening study and I lead the Wed morning) paused during Lent and will start again after Easter studying the book of Ephesians.

Calendar: I plan to take vacation May 22-27 (1 Sunday; daughter graduating from Southeast HS on May 26).

Associate Pastor Report March 2024

March 19 – Chrism Mass

24-31 – Holy Week

April 8 – Justice in Action Rally

April 11 – Micah 6:8 meeting

13-14 – Justice in Action day at First

18-26 – Vacation

28 – Middle School Milestone

May 1 – Final Confirmation Class

2 – Justice in Action gathering

10 – Synod boundaries training

13-16 – Festival of Homiletics

As you might suspect, the majority of my attention has been on Holy Week. I thought everything went really well. As the rep for First's participation in the Eater Vigil, I was really very pleased with how the service went. My hope is that we can continue having community/cluster gatherings and worship services, not just at Easter but the rest of the year.

You have likely received a bunch of information on Justice in Action, already. April 13-14 will be the weekend where we introduce the Justice in Action staff members to First and have a chance to hear from them about what they do and how we can help. There will be temple talks at each service that weekend and an adult forum presentation. It will be worth hearing what they have for us that weekend.

I'm out of town the April 18-26.

Confirmation class wraps up for the year on May 1. I've already started looking at next year's schedule and making plans for class. I'll plan on being in touch with each family during the summer before we begin classes in the fall.

I'll be attending the synod boundaries training May 10. There are several throughout the year and they are all online. I'll then be taking part in the Festival of Homiletics the next week. It too is online, so I'll still be in for evening activities that week.

Blessings,

Pr. Andrew

Sharon Hardel's Report to Council March 13, 2024 – April 9, 2024

Highlights of the month:

Discipleship University met on April 3 to have conversation on the 2nd article of the Creed. We had 15 participants, 2 volunteers to help cook dinner, 2 small group helpers, and Pastor Andrew and me in attendance.

Youth Group Activities: On March 14, 8 youth (on spring break) and 3 adults went to the Center for People and prepped and put on a base coat of paint on 2 rooms that became the new food storage area and diaper distribution room. Some youth also helped to sort food for the day's distribution then they enjoyed lunch together. We went to play mini golf at Prehistoric Putt on Sunday March 17th since the combined Lincoln Youth group activity was postponed. We had 5 youth and 3 adults come to play. Youth were invited to the Niebuhrs' concert on March 24, I did not take a count of who attended but it was an excellent concert. March 31 was Easter so no activities were held. On April 6 we will do some yard cleanup for 1 or 2 people that we served last year for a trip fundraiser, we have 5 – 6 youth and 2 adults that are able to help with these requests. On April 7 we have a scavenger hunt / game night planned. And we have 4 Middle School Youth and 1 High School Youth helper, and 2 adults registered for the Middle School Synod rescheduled event on April 13.

Youth Learning did not meet on March 17 as it was the last day of Spring Break, and we did not have anyone attending during the learning hour. On March 24 we had our intergenerational Lego Holy Week build, I hope you had a chance to see the amazing creativity from our participants which we displayed in the welcome area, I didn't count but guessing we had about 30 participants. On Easter Sunday, we handed out Building Blocks and / or Sidewalk chalk to children and received lots of smiles and thank yous. On April 7 we will use a Visual Faith lesson for conversation on the topic "Suddenly Alone".

We have added one additional youth to our Gathering Trip, Leah Eggen from Elkhorn NE. Her father John works at Churchwide and heard about our open spots. Leah will travel with Sheridan to the Gathering since we already gave our 2 airline tickets to Pastor Eric Spruth-Janssen and his youth Josie, and an additional ticket is too expensive. Leah and Pastor Eric and hopefully Josie will join our getting ready meeting on April 21 to meet our group.

I was able to attend Kayla Peter's school play on March 8 before taking youth to the Middle School Camp retreat and will attend Lincoln High's Musical April 5 to see Eliana Genis-Frank in The Addam's Family. Several more concerts are coming up in May and I am hoping to see some soccer and baseball games as well. I sent out dates of activities involving our youth to a few First Lutheran members who signed up to be on the Pep Squad.

I continue to meet with the Monday Coffee Talk Group, this past week we celebrated and said God speed to Joan Carlson, and Gather and Gab group weekly as well as attend the monthly Adult Forum meetings and weekly staff meetings. I will miss the Stitchers group on April 8th, however I have been collecting the finished afghans for our high school seniors and will be connecting with our current

Juniors to get color choices so the stitchers can get busy with next year's afghans. We have 10 seniors this year and will have 10 again next year.

Projects Working On:

1. Youth Gathering and Louisville KY trips and fundraisers
2. Discipleship University final gatherings for this year and our celebration on May 1
3. VBS
4. Beginning to look at the fall schedule with Pastor Erin and Laura before I go on Sabbatical

Blessings,

Sharon Hardel

FaithTrek Council Report March 2024

The Lego room is just about ready for action. I need to make a few rule signs, and have the security camera installed in the room before it can be opened. All the legos I have either through donations or through a Thrivent grant have been washed and sorted into labeled bins.

My children's Sermon was over the Backpack program, a cause that I hold dear in my heart. I understand that the offering that day was one of if not the largest collected, which again shows me how wonderful First Lutheran can be.

The intergenerational event was populated mostly by FaithTrek and their families, which disappoints me greatly that the majority of the congregation chose not to attend. I thought their final project with the Holy Week depicted through Lego blocks was OUTSTANDING. Thank you to Sharon Hardel for the ideas. I had some pastors come up to me at the Easter Vigil to ask me about it.

Good Friday "kid friendly" service was fun, and well received. We made "resurrection rolls" and the people loved them.

Sharon and I passed out Lego blocks or sidewalk chalk to children attending Easter service- they had info on them about VBS and FaithTrek.

Wow- a lot went on in March!

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Grauly



Director of Worship and Music

March 2024

Sunday & Holy Week Musicians

March 3	8:15	Aden & Erin Niebuhr, Ann Nitzel, Jazz Team (Bryce Anderson, Spencer Janssen, RJ Metteer, Scott Vicroy)
	10:45	Amanda Andersen, Youth Jazz (Kristi Fisher, Anna Wemhoff, Bennett Bacon)
March 10	8:15	Erin Pfister, Bonita Thomsen, Adult Choir
	10:45	Connie Kisling, Handbell Duet (Roxy Just & Masako Bacon)
March 17	both	Martin & Luthers (University Lutheran Center), Spirit Ringers, Martha Tanner, Bonita Thomsen
March 24	8:15	Adult Choir, String Ensemble (Brian, Erin, Aden, Will, & Xander Niebuhr), Harold Sutter
PALM SUNDAY	10:45	String Ensemble (Kaitlyn Brock, Konnor Garrett, Mai Jacobo, Kyala Peters, Bennett Bacon) David Jacobo, Christian Paulsen
March 28	Noon	Betsy Bjerke
Maundy Thursday	6:30p	Erin Pfister, Adult Choir
March 29	Noon	Children's Good Friday (no music)
Good Friday	6:30p	Amanda Andersen, Lucas Culbertson
March 30	7:00p	Community Easter Service (Pastors of Lincoln Cluster)
March 31	8:00	Liana Sandin, Adult Choir, Brass (Tony Anderson, Spencdr Janssen, Steve Janssen, RJ Metteer, Matt Reckmeyer, Bennett Bacon)
	9:30	T Aden, Will, & Xander Niebuhr, Youth & Family Choir, Brass
	11:00	Tony, Daniel, Nicholas, & Zachary Bushard, Bennett Bacon

Saturday Musicians

March 2, 16 – Christine Carman March 9 - Kristina Hanson

Mid-Week Service

Holden Evening Prayer	March 6	Noon – Betsy Bjerke 6:30pm – Dawn Brock
Holden Evening Prayer	March 13	Noon – Pr. Bill & Judy Peterson, 6:30pm – Sharon Hardel
Holden Evening Prayer	March 20	Noon – Gordon Youngquist, 6:30pm Kristi Fisher

Overview

Worship & Music: Lent season, especially Holy Week and Easter, is a busy time at church. Worship & Music Committee was hard at work - talking through the logistics of the worship services and prepared many behind the scene work tirelessly. Big thanks to those who prepared – palm, lilies, Easter Vigil candles, and communion set-up for many services. Also, thanks to those who served as worship assistants for extra worship services, especially who saw the needs and served multiple worship services (like all of Easter worship services!).

Harold Sutter has agreed to succeed Martha Tanner to chair the committee and I'm so grateful.

Passion Readings: Judy Bailey and Mark Mesarch recruited and coached readers for Palm Sunday. I appreciate their careful preparation and guidance for readers for all to 'experience' the Passion Story of Christ. Thanks to the readers who took a part in Palm Sunday and Good Friday reading.

Musicians: First Lutheran is so blessed with dedicated and gifted musicians. Many of those generously served multiple opportunities with extra rehearsals. We are amazed at the depth of gifts that have been shared at First Lutheran. Holiday time joy is to see a few people from out-state and others making themselves available to serve. My utmost joy was seeing growth in young people – both skills and willingness – this time particularly with the young String Ensemble (a 7th, an 8th, a 10th, and two 9th graders). This only happens as some older advanced players are willing to play with young beginners. I am grateful for adult and upper high school players who patiently and gracefully guided with their mature talents all way through.

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

March 2024

by Kathleen Simley, Communications Director

SPECIAL AND COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

- Met Barb Johnson Frank and Pastor Andrew to organize two events: 1) An assessment session for Gifts of Hope on April 10th; and 2) a brainstorming session for future outreach ministry on April 30th with a group of “dreamers.”
- Crafted an advertisement for VBS to be included in the online Macaroni Kid 2024 Summer Camp Guide.
- Promoted our Holy Week and Easter worship services through the Lincoln Journal Star Religion Notes. Every member household received a postcard, and volunteer walkers distributed door hangers throughout the neighborhood.
- Livestreamed the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship services.
- Ensured that the midweek Holden Evening Prayer worship services were recorded, with reflective messages shared on Facebook and Vimeo within 1-2 days.
- Weekly Lenten devotions were sent out every Sunday to our newsletter subscribers, featuring a special Easter devotion.
- Crafted a digital photo book featuring over 180 mosaic tiles, showcasing pandemic stories shared by First Lutheran members. These mosaic tiles were exhibited in the Commons from Easter 2022 to Easter 2023. Explore it further at: <https://online.flipbuilder.com/zbfu/pjkm>.
- Produced videos highlighting our Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter worship services, which were disseminated on social media and featured in the News blog on our website. You can view them on Vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/flclincoln>.
- Advertised the Facilities Maintenance Manager position with a paid Facebook ad, with the Southeast Community College Job Connect and NEworks.

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 and Readers for Sunday Worship

MY MONTHLY TASKS

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

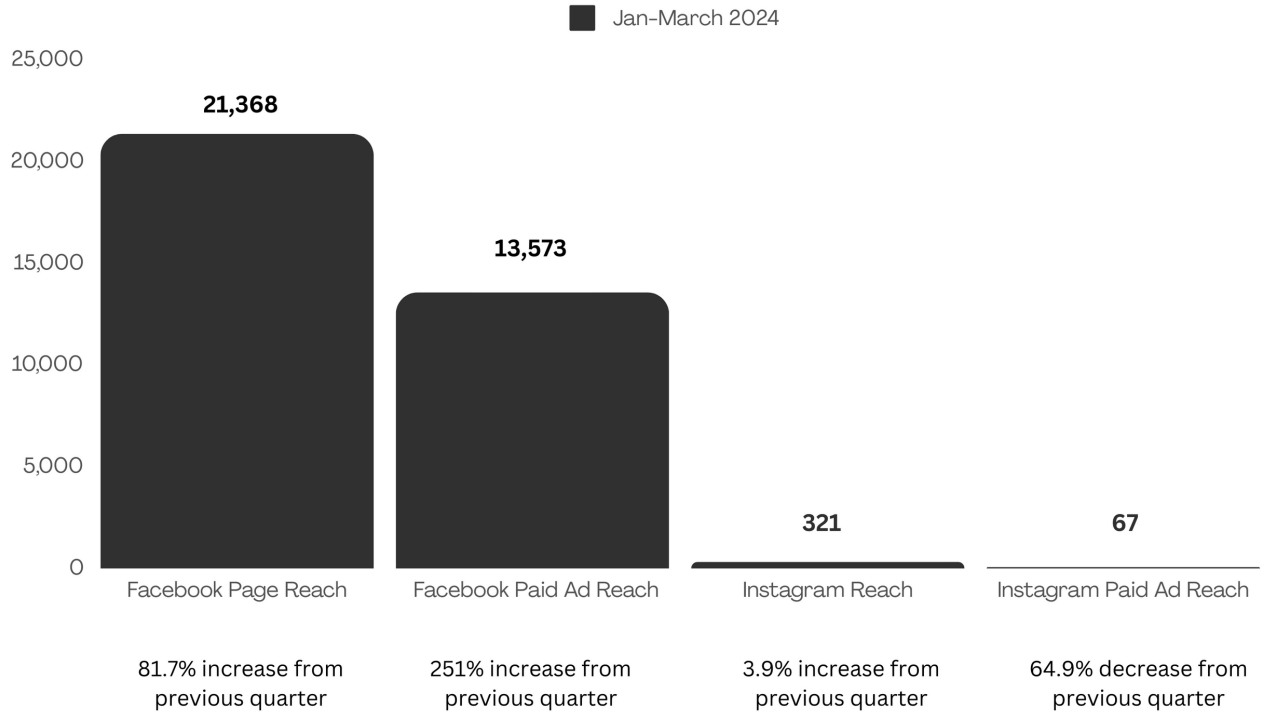
March was extra busy with Lent concluding and Holy Week unfolding simultaneously. Along with additional promotions, livestreamed worship services, and special activities, the routine tasks also continued. Looking ahead to April, I anticipate a chance for some much-needed reprieve.

Attached is a report detailing the impact of our first-quarter 2024 outreach efforts which I am very pleased with. Almost all metrics indicate an increase in our reach compared to the previous quarter (Q4 of 2023), with just one exception. Please review each aspect and feel free to share any thoughts, questions or concerns.

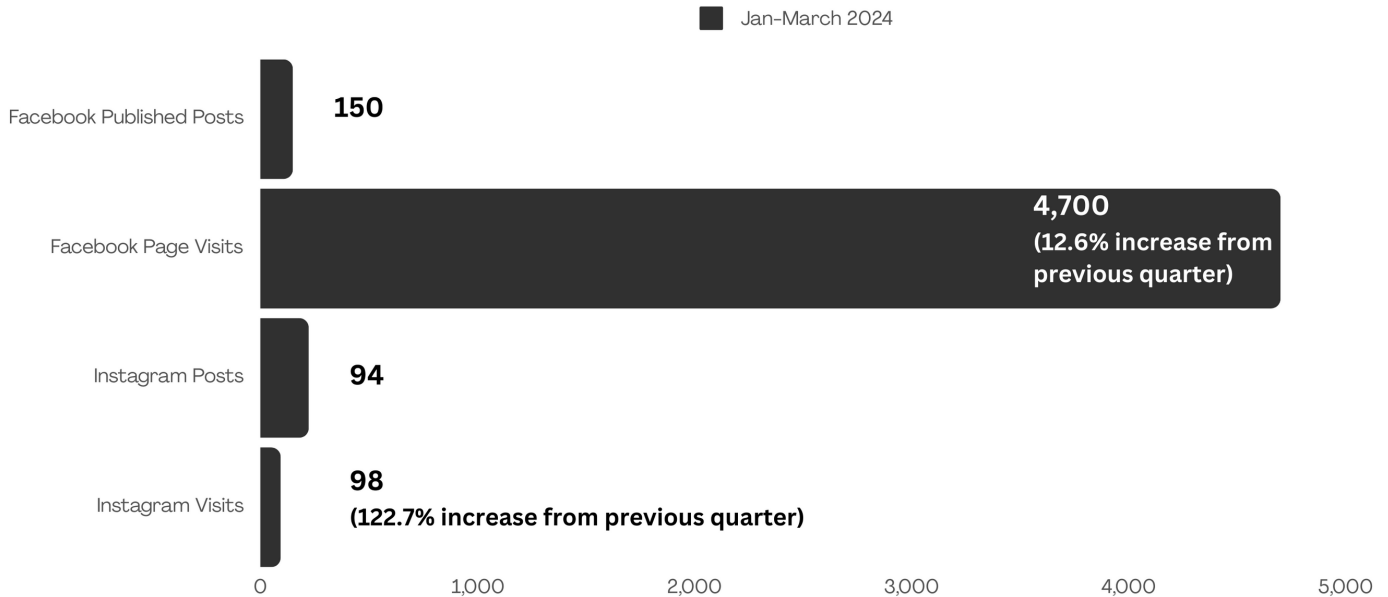
I am reflecting on our livestream metrics and exploring ways to enhance the total viewing duration. It seems that viewers are briefly tuning in but not staying engaged. I will continue to present this data to the Worship & Music Committee to seek additional insights and guidance from them.

I appreciate your dedication to the First Lutheran leadership team. Wishing you a Happy Easter!

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

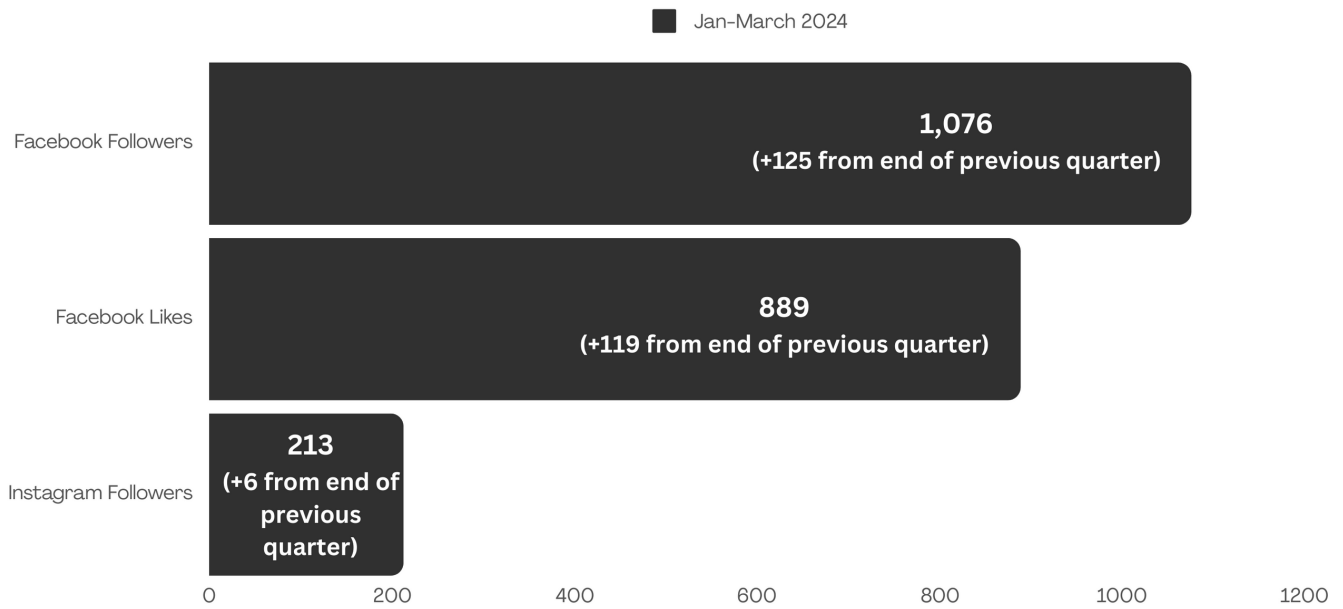


SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT



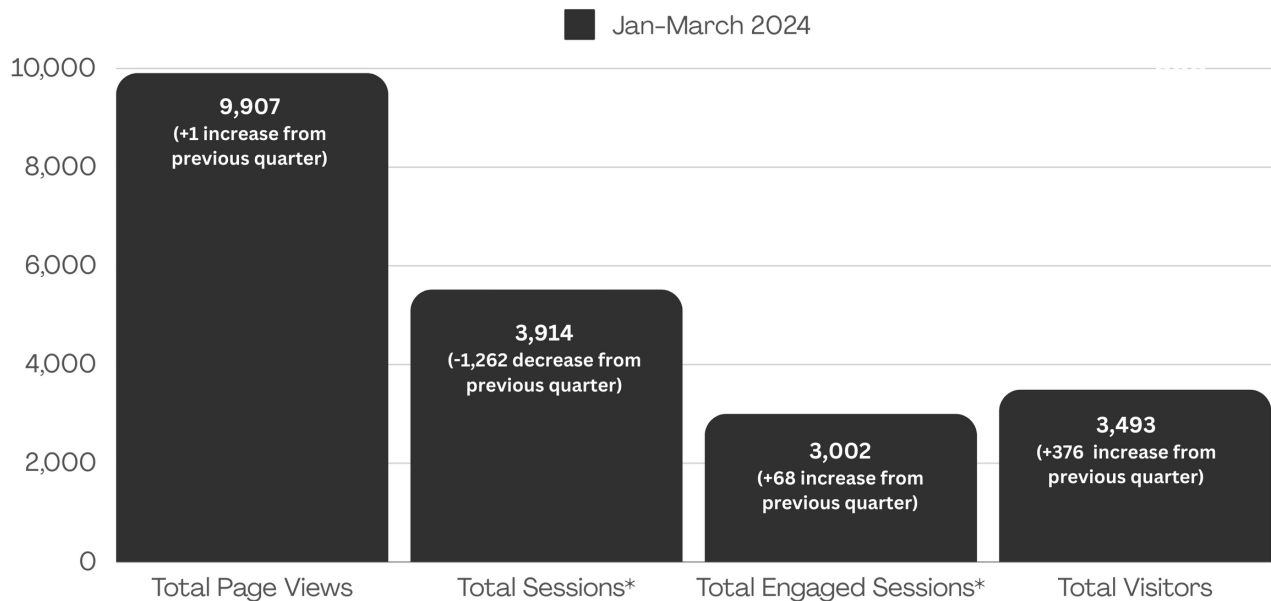
- Facebook post with highest reach - Waffleman followup on February 15
- Facebook post with highest reactions - Vicar Erick Hill's ordination on February 2
- Facebook post with most comments - Cancellation of worship services on January 13
- Instagram post with highest reach - Martin & the Luthers band playing in worship on March 18
- Instagram post with highest reactions - Vicar Erick Hill's ordination on February 2
- Instagram post with most comments - Kim Cordonier reading in worship with her toddler son on February 16

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWING



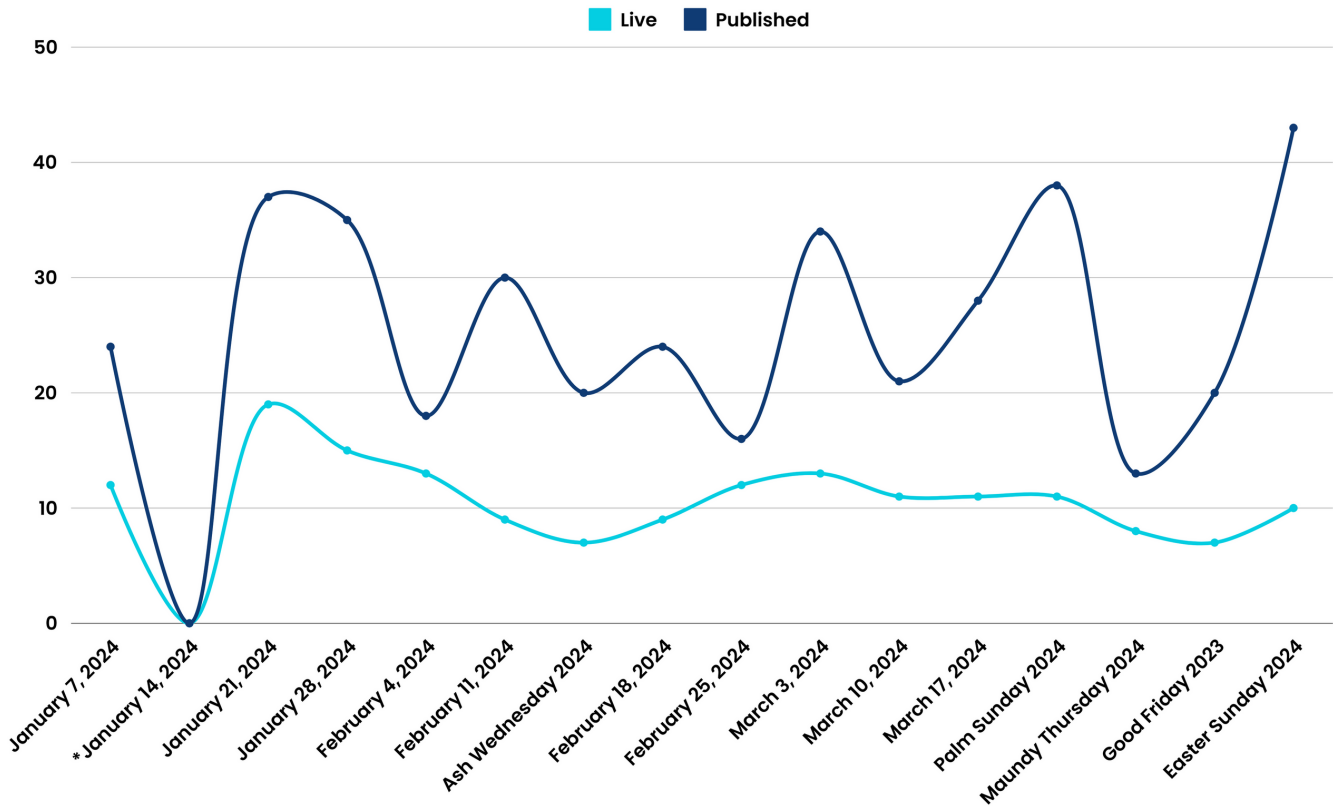
Invested \$35 to boost our Facebook page for 7 days in February, targeting individuals in Lincoln to expand our follower and like count. The effort was successful, reaching 802 people and gaining 125 new followers and 119 new page likes!

WEBSITE TRAFFIC



*A session is tracked as a session whenever a user first lands on our site. An engaged session is a session that lasts longer than 10 seconds or has at least 2 pageviews or screenviews. Although the number of sessions declined from the previous quarter, we observed a higher percentage of engaged sessions this quarter. Furthermore, all other metrics indicate an uptick in our web traffic and viewership. Notably, the top three pages for viewership were the Home Page, Calendar and About Us.

LIVESTREAM VIEWING

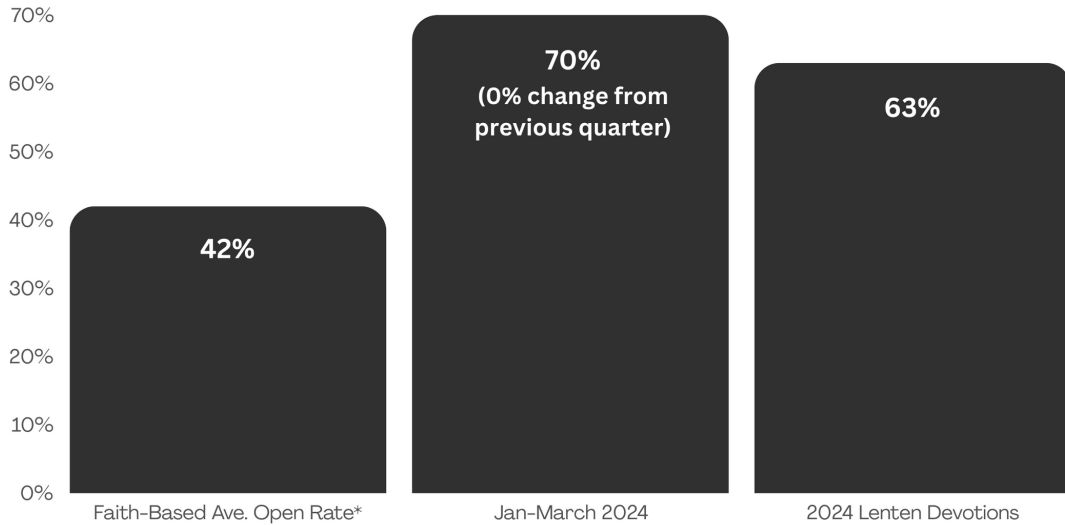


During our worship services on Facebook, we typically had an average of 11 live viewers and 27 published viewers watching the recordings. The live viewers spent an average of 5 minutes watching, while those viewing the recordings spent 2 minutes.

On our website, we saw an average of 21 viewers per week for our published worship services.

*Worship was cancelled on this day due to winter weather.

FIRST THINGS FIRST WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER OPEN RATE



Alongside the weekly First Things First e-newsletter, lenten devotions were sent every week from Ash Wednesday, February 14, to Easter, March 31. Typically, increasing the number of emails sent during the week leads to a decrease in the overall open rate. Surprisingly, this trend did not apply during this period. Remarkably, we sustained a very high open rate for First Things First, achieving our highest ever rate of 74% on January 31! We currently have 539 subscribers (we gained four and lost 7 during this period).

When consolidating all emails sent during this period, encompassing FaithTrek Weekly Blast (for parents of 3-year-olds to 5th grade), First Look (for middle and high school parents), death notices, and various announcements such as weather updates, we upheld an outstanding 69% overall open rate.

*According to a report published December 2023 by Constant Contact

Fellowship Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Attending: Judy Batterman, Carlene Falos, Gordon Wolfe, Judy Bailey, Linda Bogenreif, Karen Moser, Carol Tesar, Verla Youngquist, Linda Carlson

Devotions: Judy Batterman read a beautiful piece she had received from Nancy Clay. Next month's devotions will be given by Pat DeWald.

Review of Events: 1. **Lenten Meals** have been served for three Wednesdays; two weeks remain. Attendance at both lunch and supper has been 40- 45. While we are extremely grateful to congregation members for soup-making, the committee has made many of the soups. We wondered if people were tired of soup or if we had not publicized the need often enough. We were encouraged, however, to have sufficient number of soups for the next day, March 13. We continue to serve ice cream sandwiches for dessert. *The final Lenten meals are next week, March 20th.* We will serve taco bowls with rice, ground beef, and toppings. The best prices are at Aldi's, and Judy Batterman offered to buy everything we need. **The committee is asked to be at the church at 11:00 to prepare the lunch.**

Upcoming Events: 1. **Third Sunday Coffee** is this Sunday, March 17th, for which we are responsible. Masako contacted Judy Batterman to let us know that the UNL Lutheran Student Center's praise band will be playing at both services, and asked if we might augment the usual coffee, juice, and donut holes. Judy suggested that we serve vanilla yogurt with granola and mini-cinnamon rolls. Carlene and Judy offered to serve, but all members who can are encouraged to help with the preparation and serving. Funds will come from either music or hospitality.

2. **Palm Saturday Children's Easter Egg Hunt – Saturday, March 23 – 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.** Publicity for registration of toddlers to 5th graders has been and will continue to be online. As of today, three are registered. Deadline is Monday, March 18th. Judy Batterman created 45 bi-lingual flyers for Kayla to give to all children in Las Abejitas, as well as flyers to enclose in bulletins. People are asked to bring candy for the eggs. Judy Bailey has purchased chalk, bubbles, and buckets for 40 children. Linda B. and Judy Batterman have purchased craft items to amuse children while waiting for the program to begin. Bev White has agreed to present a puppet show again this year, and Laura Graulty will lead the children in songs. **Our committee will fill eggs on Wednesday, March 20th after Lenten lunch, at around 1:30.**

On the day of the Easter Egg Hunt, the committee is asked to be at the church by 1:00.

3. **Easter Breakfast:** March 31, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00. (Worship services are at 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 a.m.) **Committee members are asked to be at church at 7:30 to begin serving at 8:00.** Publicity is/was online. Judy Batterman created a flyer for bulletins inserts. We need people to bring casseroles (egg or non-egg), cinnamon rolls, and coffee cakes.

4. **Town Hall Meeting - Sunday, April 14** Our committee will set up and serve at the potluck.

5. **Birthday Party for Bob Falos' 90th** – April 6, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in Activity Center. Our committee will help serve and should arrive by 12:30.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 9, at 5:30 p.m.

Pat DeWald will give the devotions.

Submitted by Linda Carlson, Secretary

**First Lutheran Church
Property Committee Minutes March 26, 2024**

Attending: Chair Norman Kempf, Bob Batterman, Cole Troutman, Steve Doolittle, Rod Johnson, Les Carlson, Richard Draper, Steve Lenzen, Doug Lind-Olson, Brandon Wiebelhaus

Meeting time: 7:00 PM

Opening prayer: Bob B.

Minute taker: Les

Minutes of the February PC meeting were approved.

Agenda:

1. Norman introduced two new PC members attending the meeting - Doug Lind-Olsen and Brandon Wiebelhaus.
2. Norman reviewed the PC 2024 updated prayer list.
3. Rod brought the PC up to date on the Emergency Action Plan and circulated a version of the FLC layout plan developed by Brian Niebuhr that reflects the FLC renovations. Rod mentioned that the Emergency Action Plan should be reviewed every year.
4. Steve L reported the larger trees slated for removal are gone.
5. Norman thanked PC members who helped in last week's shrub removal.
6. Norman informed the PC about his invited meeting with FLC church council. He provided updates to the council about FLC's past bat issues, HVAC concerns, parking lot repair needs, and other items. Council requested estimates on repair costs pertinent to these items. Brandon may be able to provide some cost estimates regarding parking lot repairs. Discussion followed on items in need of repair and Steve L noted that while the HVAC boilers are ok for now, the cooling component of the HVAC system has yet to be considered as a potential future repair need.
7. Updates regarding the status of hiring a new building superintendent were provided by Norman and Brandon.

Prayer April: Les

Note taker: Les