

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Meeting in Upper Room and Via Zoom

Zoom link: <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 – December 10, 2024
  - 3. Parochial Report
  - 4. Staff Reports
  - 5. Committee Reports
  
- C. Action Agenda
  - 1. 2024 Budget Final Report and 2025 Budget Proposal
  - 2. Staffing Proposal
  
- D. Discussion Agenda
  - 1. Social Ministry Discussion with Council
  - 2. Accountant Job Description
  - 3. Head Usher Position Opening
  
- E. Open Comments
  
- F. Sending Prayer  
**Prayer of Good Courage**  
O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,  
by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown.  
Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go,  
but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
  
- G. Adjournment

Executive Committee Meeting  
First Lutheran Church  
January 7, 2025

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

We started the meeting receiving the budget report from Wyatt.

- A. **Opening Prayer:** Lead by Pastor Andrew
- B. **Budget Update**  
We received this from Wyatt at the beginning of the meeting before opening prayer.
- C. **Annual Congregational meeting and Planning**  
We went over the agenda for the annual meeting. Pastor Erin gave some great new additions to include.
- D. **Social Ministry**  
We discussed an inquiry about social ministry donations and the endowment fund.
- E. **Accountant Replacement**  
Wyatt will be leaving us, so we discussed the church accountant job description and different ways of recruiting/promoting the position.
- F. **Special Meeting Follow Up**  
We discussed possible actions (in relation to our special meeting on Monday) to bring to the Council meeting next Tuesday.
- G. **Other**  
None

We ended at 9:00 p.m. and closed with the Lord's Prayer

Submitted by Emily Sears, Council Secretary

## Parochial Report

	Baptized	Confirmed
1. MEMBERSHIP as of December 1, 2024	1095	910
Members received:		
A. by baptism (15 years and under)	1	
B. by baptism (adult)		
C. transfer from ELCA congregation	1	1
D. other Lutheran		
E. affirmation of faith		
F. transfer from non-Lutheran congregation		
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 December 31, 2024	1095	909

### Average Attendance for December

<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>
395	378	373*	372**	336	298	online	201	234	240	219
* # w/o Xmas Eve (Sat) and Xmas Day (Sun); w/Xmas Eve & Day, Dec 2016 avg = 503 ** # w/o Xmas Eve (Sun); w/Xmas Eve, Dec 2017 avg = 463										

### Added:

Baptism: Lyra Rarig

Affirmation:

Transfer: Susan Richardson (Luther Memorial Church ELCA, Syracuse, NE)

Other:

### Removed:

Death: Mariann Schafer, Judith Heller

Transfer:

Dropped Due to Inactivity:

Other:

Notes: [Live Stream average for December 2024 is: no data available](#)

Congregational Council Meeting  
First Lutheran Church  
December 10, 2024

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jennifer Wemhoff

STAFF PRESENT: Wyatt Swanson, Church Accountant

MEETING RECORDER: Ann Carlson

A. OPENING DEVOTION AND PRAYER:

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

B. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Meeting agenda
2. Congregational Council Minutes – November 12, 2024
3. Parochial Report
4. Staff Reports
5. Committee Reports
6. Pastor's Designated Housing Allowance

It was moved by Patrick and seconded by John to approve the consent agenda.  
Discussion followed.

- Pastor Erin stated that the Executive Session should contain the discussion topics, which are Personnel Visitation Pastor and Youth and Family Ministry.
- The time for the Annual Meeting will be 1:00. The time needs to be communicated to Mandy and Kathleen.
- Masako requested the Council's help to fill the 10:45 Head Usher/Coordinator Position.

It was moved and seconded to modify the meeting agenda to include the items listed above. The motion carried.

It was moved and seconded to approve the modified consent agenda. The motion carried.

C. DISCUSSION AGENDA:

1. 2024 Financial Report and 2025 Operating Budget – Scott Williamson and Wyatt Swanson
  - YTD receipts through November 30 are \$21,357 under budget; YTD expenses through November 30 are 14,123 over budget; YTD deficit through November 30 is \$35,480.
  - The YTD receipts are under budget due to non-pledge receipts.
  - Wyatt discussed sources to fund any 2024 deficit as well as 2025 budget funding sources and potential 2025 budget adjustments.

- At the January 2025 Council meeting, the final 2024 financials will be presented along with the proposed final 2025 budget.
- The first Annual Meeting preview session will discuss the final 2024 financials. The second Annual Meeting preview session will discuss the proposed 2025 budget.

## 2. Congregation Member Telephone Calls

- Council members received a short script and a list of households to call.
- The phone numbers in Realm should be used to the extent possible. Pastor Erin can provide missing phone numbers.
- It is fine to leave a message.
- Calls should be made by the end of the year.

## 3. Vitality Initiative Update

The committee is moving into Phase III adaptive phase development. After January 1, members can add their comments on a board in the commons.

Judy thanked everyone on the committee for their work.

## 4. Realm account for Council Members

Council members should review their Realm instructions before making their congregation member telephone calls.

## 5. Sabbatical Grant Proposal

First Lutheran will apply for a Sabbatical Grant from Lilly. The deadline is March 12, 2025, for the year 2026. The congregational portion will cover the time when the pastor is away. Pastor Erin is working to put together a team for the congregation's input.

## 6. Annual Meeting Agenda

The Annual Meeting will take place at 1:00 in the Activity Center.

## 7. Council role in Ministry

In 2025, Pastor Erin would like the Council to focus on a deeper understanding of council member's roles as liaisons to FLC ministries with each council member matched with a committee/team and serving as a steward of that ministry. Discussion followed.

- What about a new area such as a hospitality team?
- What areas need some sort of structure?

## 8. Council Retreat – March 2

A proposed date and time is Saturday, March 1, from 11:00-3:00 at the Pioneer Park Nature Center.

## 9. 10:45 Head Usher/Coordinator Position

- As a starting point, Dave will see if he can locate the list of ushers.
- Can the head usher position be for a monthly basis or another time period?

## D. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Rod moved and Dave seconded that we move into executive session at 8:30. The motion carried.

Kari moved and John seconded that we move out of executive session at 9:04. The motion carried.

There was general agreement that we need a special meeting to further discuss the 2025 budget

E. OPEN COMMENTS:

None

F. CLOSING PRAYER:

Closed with the prayer Pastor Erin gave us on the agenda.

G. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 10:21 p.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL  
Special Meeting, Monday January 6, 2025, 7:00 p.m.  
Meeting in Upper Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pastor Erin Heidelberger, Pastor Andrew Kitzing, Lee Rockwell, Rod Johnson, Dave Pfister, Judy Batterman, Emily Sears, Brandon Wiebelhaus, Bev White, Kari Hoeft, John Bonaiuto, Scott Williamson, Jennifer Wemhoff

MEMBERS ABSENT: Karen Statham, Jenna Troutman, Patrick Hayden-Roy

GUESTS PRESENT: Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Greg Berger

MEETING RECORDER: Emily Sears

A. OPENING DEVOTION AND PRAYER

The Meeting was called to order by Council President Lee Rockwell at 7:03. Pastor Erin led the opening prayer and devotion.

B. APPROVE AGENDA

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

C. WELCOME TO: Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Greg Berger

President Lee Rockwell extended a welcome and thanks to Greg for being with us and council showed their appreciation as well.

D. DISCUSSION AGENDA:

1. Discussion of proposed 2025 congregational budget per motion approved at the December 10, 2024, Council meeting
  - We went over data that several members of council collected and researched. These items included: our staff compared to other churches that are our size, declining membership, and serious expenses that have had impact on our budget.
2. Recommendations for budget approval at the January 14, 2025, Council meeting pending final 2024 financial statements
  - The Council discussed at length several different scenarios and possibilities for the 2025 budget.
  - The Council discussed the trends in our church, other churches, and how we are all facing the same challenges.

E. CLOSING PRAYER:

Closed with a prayer led by Assistant to the Bishop Rev Greg Berger.

F. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

MEETING DATE: January 14, 2025

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Deficit

PROPOSED ACTION: Transfer funds to cover the 2024 budget deficit of (\$20,889.65)

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS: Receipts in 2024 totaled \$982,845 an increase of \$59,413 (+6.4%) from 2023

Expenses in 2024 totaled \$1,003,735 an increase of \$121,386 (+13.8%) from 2023

Resulting in a (\$20,889.65) operating deficit for 2024

Motion to cover this deficit with the following funds (in Fund II):

- \$20,889.65 member(s) designated funds received in 2024 to help offset the increased maintenance and repair expenses incurred by FLC in 2024.

SPONSORS: Scott Williamson, Treasurer on recommendation of the Finance Committee



### **Looking Back**

Advent and Christmas, of course, made up the bulk of worship and preaching planning including regular weekends, midweek Advent services (and experimenting with our first “pray-ground” space for kids in the sanctuary during the evening Wednesday Advent worship), Longest Night service for anyone experiencing loss or hurting during the holiday season, Christmas Eve services (including Christmas Eve for Kids, a service we started last year), and Lessons & Carols for the first Sunday of Christmas.

### **Looking Ahead**

- Staffing: we have just started looking for a new accountant (due to good reasons!) and hope to have that person in place in early February for training.
- I changed my plans for continuing education this month and will now be accessing online the preaching conference that I originally planned to attend in-person January 19-22.
- In conjunction with our annual meeting, we'll hold an all-church care package packing event for all of our college-age young adults.
- The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my ordination is February 21 and I'm thinking about ways to celebrate that lift up all vocations of the baptized, but in particular, the vocation of Word and Sacrament.
- Our council retreat is schedule for March 1 from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and will take place at the Pioneers Park Nature Center.
- Lent: making plans for an addition to the evening Lent schedule to include an all-congregation, intergenerational study on the promises made in the Affirmation of Baptism service, using a curriculum developed by the ELCA as a Life of Faith resource. Council members, please make your participation in this study group a priority on Wednesday evenings this Lenten season as we gather for fellowship, learning, and supporting one another in our ministries in daily life.

Associate Pastor Report

December 20 – inurnment Schaefer

24 – Christmas Eve

25 – Christmas Day

Jan 3 – Heller funeral

8 – Confirmation started up after Advent/Christmas

9 – Cluster coffee

9 – Emmaus teaching

13 – Micah 6:8 meeting

16-22 – Vacation (for friend's ordination)

25 – baptisms

26 – annual meeting

I'd draw your attention to my annual report. It will be a more detailed review.

I was asked several months ago if I would be willing to teach a couple Bible study type classes for the Nebraska Synod Emmaus Learning program. This is being offered to people through the synod as a chance to get to know several books of the Bible better and is being used mostly by PMAs and PMA students. I begin that process in January with the book of James. I will also be teaching on the book of Job in April.

I'll be in Houston January 16-22 for a friend's ordination to the ministry of word and service. He graduated seminary with us and has been doing other good work in Houston until now, mostly as a grant writer for Healthcare for the Homeless – Houston (HHH). After serving there for almost 15 years, and as Operations Director of his church, he is now ready to be ordained as a deacon. He will be serving +Kindred Montrose as the director of the Kindred Kitchen, which is a food truck ministry of the church. He'll be running the food truck while using it to teach classes and provide income for his students, as well as the church. He will also be involved in other ministries of the church. It will be a day for the whole church to celebrate. I'll be back in time for confirmation on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

We are all back into the swing of it after Christmas vacation. Take care and Blessings,

Pr. Andrew

# COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

December 2024

by Kathleen Simley, Communications Director

## SPECIAL AND COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Here's a glimpse into my collaborative and special project efforts in December:

### Gifts of Hope

The first week of December was largely dedicated to launching the Gifts of Hope online store and crafting the online catalog ahead of the market on December 7-8. I approached this project with great care, ensuring the voices of our 11 partners and the communities they serve were authentically represented through quotes, testimonials, photos and videos. The outcome? A record-breaking \$25,000+ in donations to our partners! Heartfelt thanks to this year's Gifts of Hope team for their dedication and for making the market a thoughtful and inspiring success.

### Midweek Worship Livestreams

Together with Jim Overcash and Brian Niebuhr, I livestreamed the three midweek Holden Evening Prayer services, bringing this reflective worship experience to our online community.

### Promoting Christmas Worship

- For our 1:30 PM Kids & Families service: 1) Designed and printed a postcard and delivered them to five local daycares/preschools, including Las Abejitas, 2) Created a targeted Facebook ad which reached 1,816 people and 3) Listed the service on the Macaroni Kid online calendar and sponsored a Facebook post on their page.
- Sent a dedicated mailer with all Christmas worship times to our members, ensuring everyone felt invited and informed.

### Christmas Eve Festivities

- Organized and managed a photo booth for all Christmas Eve services, which was a big hit with families and friends.
- Recruited readers and greeters for all worship services.

## MY WEEKLY TASKS

- First Glance Insert
- First Things First E-Newsletter
- FaithTrek E-Newsletter
- Sunday Worship Livestream
- TV Slides
- Facebook, Instagram and News posts (daily)
- Readers for Sunday Worship

## MY MONTHLY TASKS

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

- Created a welcoming and joyful atmosphere with warm cider, hot cocoa and over 40 dozen cookies generously donated by our members.

### **Longest Night Service**

Promoted this reflective service with a Facebook ad that reached 1,952 people, offering solace to those who needed it during the holiday season.

### **Advent & Christmas Devotionals**

Designed and shared five weekly devotionals to our First Things First subscribers.

### **Special Worship Materials**

Created a unique bulletin and First Glance insert tailored for the 1:30 PM Kids & Families worship service.

### **Christmas Worship Recap**

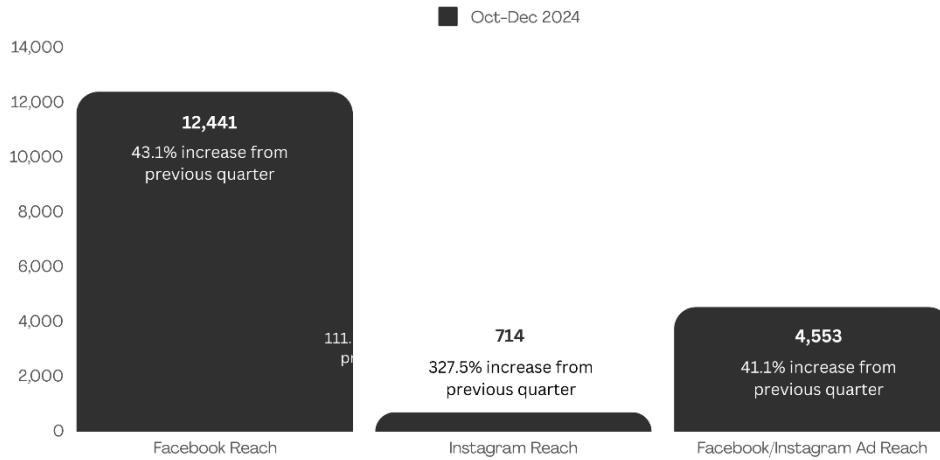
Produced a [video summary of Christmas Eve worship](#), published on Facebook and our website on December 31 and featured in the First Things First e-newsletter on January 1.

### **4th Quarter Outreach Report**

This report provides a snapshot of our social media, e-newsletter, and website performance from October 1 to December 31, 2024. Overall, we experienced growth across all metrics, with one exception - social media engagement. While engagement saw a slight dip, it remains consistent with typical fluctuations from previous quarters and is not a cause for concern. Variations in social media reach and engagement are common, and we continue to rank within the top 75th percentile when compared to other faith-based social media pages, demonstrating strong overall performance.

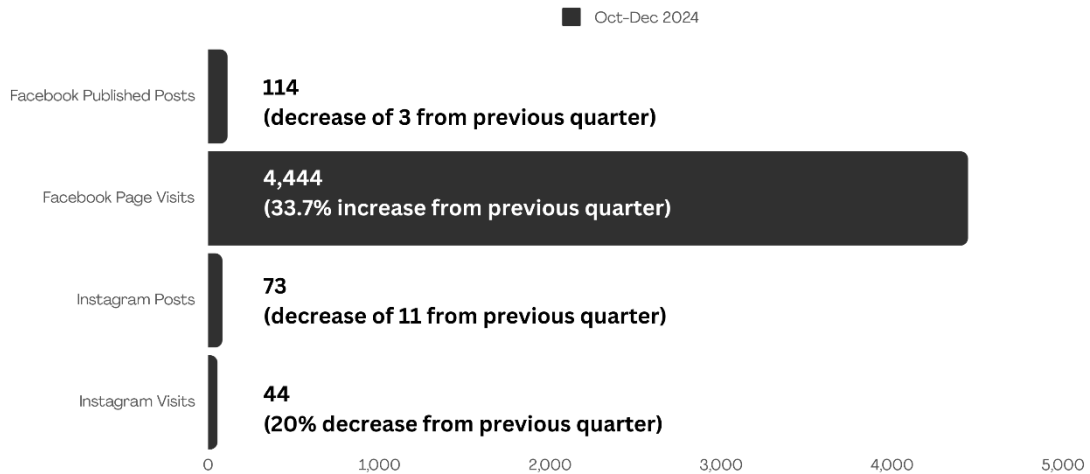
This month was a busy one, filled with a lengthy to-do list, yet balanced by moments of creativity, collaboration and meaningful worship. I hope your holiday was equally meaningful and special!

## SOCIAL MEDIA REACH



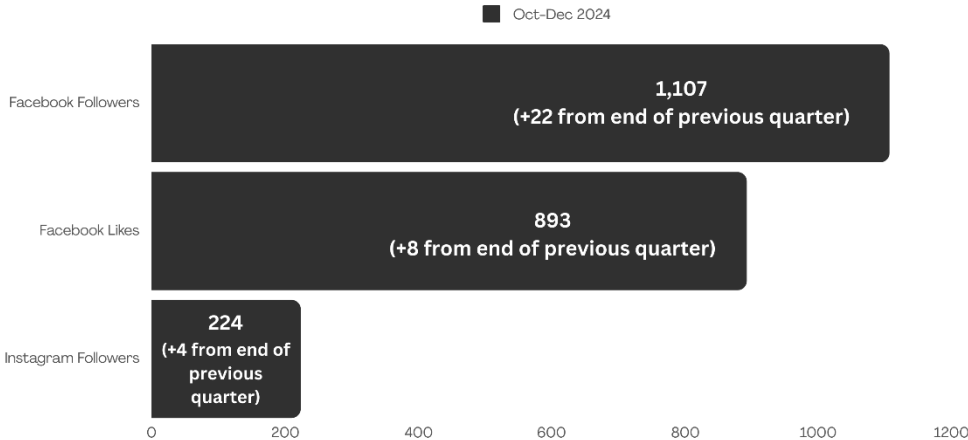
We experienced a huge increase in our social media reach this quarter - including both our Facebook and Instagram accounts. The posts seemed to engage and connect with many in ways that we haven't seen before. In addition, our paid ads or boosted posts also reached a significant number of people. These are all trends we want to continue seeing each quarter.

## SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT



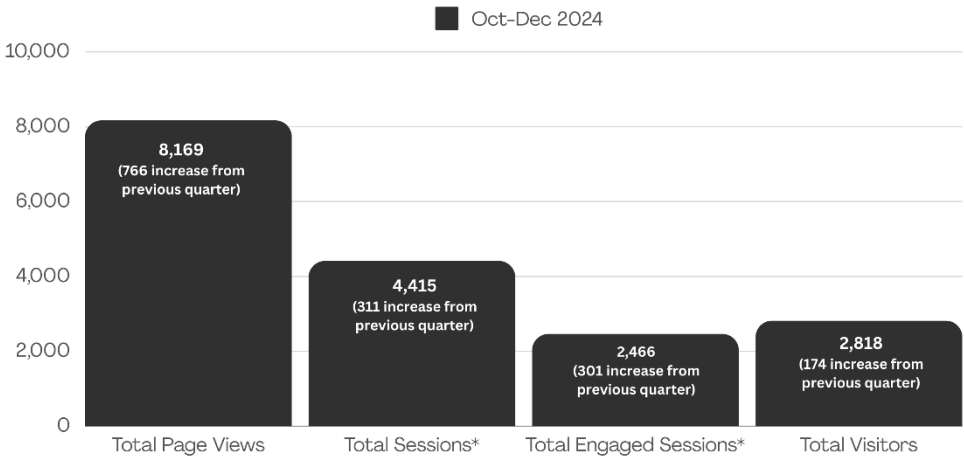
- Facebook post with highest reach - Fall Festival, published October 4 (reached 3,246 with 16 shares)
- Facebook post with highest reactions - Ruby's 105th Birthday, published December 11 (104 interactions, 70 likes & 33 comments)
- Instagram post with highest reach - Justice in Action TV story reel, published November 25 (reached 168)
- Instagram post with highest reactions - Quilt Blessing, published on October 21 (15 interactions) & Fall Festival followup, published on October 7 (15 interactions)

# SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWING



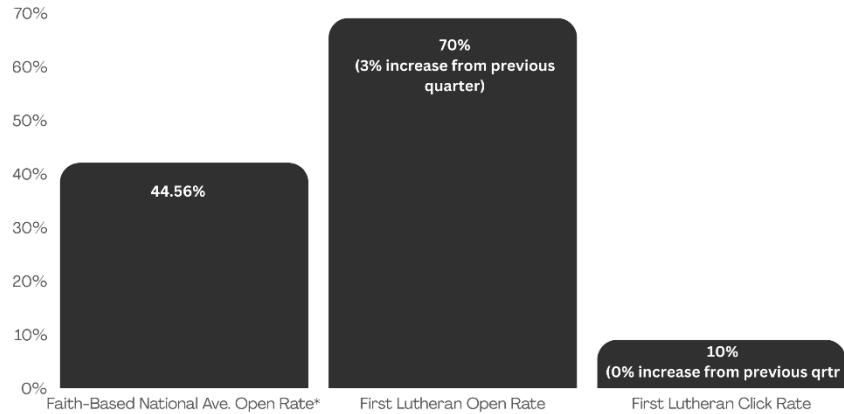
We continue to maintain a steady following of our social media pages. One interesting thing to note is that of the total people reached with our Facebook content this quarter, 91% of them were non-followers. This means we are reaching a significant number of people who are not “official” followers.

# 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. It's worth noting that we had a nice increase in our website traffic and engagement this quarter compared to the previous. Of the 2,818 visitors to our website, 2,671 of them were new visitors. Notably, the top three pages for viewership continue to be the same as last quarter - Home Page, Calendar and About Us.

## FIRST THINGS FIRST WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER OPEN RATE



Our open rate increased 3% this quarter to one of our highest overall open rates in a quarter and 34% higher than the national average open rate! The click rate for an email measures the contacts who received the email and then clicked on any link in the email. This is an important number. It shows us how interested or engaged our contacts are. We maintained a very high average click rate of 10% this quarter compared to the national average of 2.60%\*. We also gained ten new subscribers for a total of 555.

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) and death notices we upheld an outstanding 68% overall open rate.

\*According to a report published October 2024 by Constant Contact







### **Sharon's December – January 14 Report to Council:**

- Established a Prayground for the mid-week Advent worship services where children (of all ages) can do some hands-on activities that reinforce the theme and lessons of Advent during the service. I was amazed at how the kids still heard what the Pastors were saying in their messages because they would make comments about something, then go back to working on their crafts.
- Took adults and youth to St. Benedict Retreat Center to experience “Christmas on the Hill”. We marveled over beautiful nativity sets that came from around the world and shopped at local craft vendors booths. It was a great time to fellowship.
- Judy Bailey and I had been working since October to pick, cast and practice our Christmas Pageant. It was a big hit and so many complimented us on what a wonderful pageant it was. Some of the cast have begun asking what we will do for Easter...stay tuned!
- Attended the Lincoln Youth Workers Christmas Lunch gathering at Lazlos on Dec. 12
- Attended one of our youth's Orchestra concert on Dec. 16
- Held a Youth Christmas Party on Dec. 15 and a movie outing on Dec. 23
- Attended the Lutheran Center Board meeting on Dec. 17
- We ended our year like it started with our Intergenerational Mini VBS “*Wrapped in Love*”. See the pictures and story of our event in the Wednesday e-mail (1/8) photos of the week.
- Helped youth serve the Baked Potato Bar at First Friday Jazz on Jan. 3

Director of Worship and Music

December 2024

Sunday Morning Musicians

December 1 both Jazz Team (Tony Anderson, Dakota Fisher, Kristi Fisher, RJ Metteer, Matt Reckmeyer, Bob Schoettger, Jay Sears, Martha Tanner, Bennett Bacon)

December 8 8:15 Carol Reckmeyer, Matt Reckmeyer, Brian Niebuhr, Erin Niebuhr,  
10:45 Adult Choir, Faith Trek Children, Ann Nitzel

December 15 both Spirit Ringers  
8:15 Dawn Brock, Christine Carman  
10:45 Adult Choir, Navy Mathes

December 22 8:15 Brian, Erin, Aden, Will, & Xander Niebuhr  
10:45 String Ensemble (Konnor Garrett, Mai Jacobo, Kayla Peters, Jenna Troutman, Bennett Bacon)

December 29 10:45: Morgan Cowell (guest organist), Judy Peterson

Saturday Musicians

December 7,15, 28 – Christine Carman

December 21 (Longest Night) - Kristina Hanson

Mid-Week Service (Holden Evening Prayer)

December 5 Noon Gordon Youngquist  
6:30pm Pr. Bill Peterson, Judy Peterson (piano), Handbells  
Handbells (Kristi Fisher, Lillie Rademacher, Shirley Rogge, Karen Statham, Martha Tanner)

December 12 Noon Kari Hoeft  
6:30pm Martha Tanner, Kathy Havelcek-Cook (flute)

December 18 Noon Betsy Bjerke  
6:30pm Amanda Andersen, Handbells

Longest Night (Brief Service) December 21, 6:30pm Dawn Brock

Christmas Eve Worship Services

1:30pm Rebecca Kokes, Jenna Troutman  
3:30pm String Ensemble (Kara Baxter, Sebastian Baxter, Aden Niebuhr, Brian Niebuhr, Erin Niebuhr, Will Niebuhr, Xander Niebuhr, Bennett Bacon), Youth Orff Ensemble, Faith Trek & Youth Choir, Amanda Andersen, Christian Paulsen  
5:30pm Brass (Tony Anderson, Alex Hinton, Steve Janssen, RJ Metteer, Matt Reckmeyer, Jay Sears, Bennett Bacon), Spirit Ringers, Tony, Zachary, Nicholas, & Daniel Bushard, Amy, Tom, Tommy, Myles Thorpe  
7:30pm Anna Kruse, Ann Nitzel, Liana Sandin, Brass, Adult Choir

Christmas Day

10:00am Erica & Jasmine Buss, Erin, Malcolm, & Vivi Pfister, Bonita Thomsen

### Overview

**Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy** is a special way to celebrate the coming of Christ as a church. It was wonderful to have families who lead the liturgy as their first time and a family in our prayers this year.

December 1 8:15am Clint, Megahn Will & Eli Schafer

10:45am Tracy & Daria Knezevic

December 8 8:15am Matt, Natalie, Carson, & Logan Peters

10:45am Jesse, Roxy, Marceline Just

December 15 8:15am Jim & Connie Kisling

10:45am Brandon, Beth, Milo, Nash, & Dax Wiebelhaus

December 22 8:15am Ben, Kathy, Oliver, & Reese Logdson, Kaleb and Becky, Sawyer, & Kenton White

10:45am Mike, Sarah, Daniel, & Sofia Long

**Musical Offering:** It is wonderful to see the depth of musical talents in this church. With many special worship services in December, numbers of people served. It is especially a joy to see the people who come home for Christmas Holidays. We have people who play for both Jazz Team and Brass. They dedicated their time to multiple worship services and numbers of rehearsals. Many families attended 3:30pm Christmas Eve Worship service for Children and Youth Choir/Orff Ensemble. All Orff instruments are being used! We need to purchase new Orff instruments to solve this wonderful problem.

**Preparation of the Lord's Table:** It is such a blessing that Bonita Thomsen and Jan Wigodsky built a group of Altar Guild. They take care of preparing communion week by week. Their work goes beyond just setting up wine and bread. Many take care of cleaning altar/kneeling area as well. This year, there are a few families joined for "clean-up" duties after 10:45 am worship service. I am grateful for the leadership to engage families to do whatever they have time and feel comfortable. Big shout out for Linda Bogenreif for her detailed cleaning of the sanctuary before Christmas.

**Worship Assistants:** The worship sign-up was moved to Realm software from Ivolunteer. As we encourage people to register on Realm, we expect some transitional moments.

Respectfully submitted,

*Soli Deo Gloria*

Masako Bacon

## Fellowship Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

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

We all signed get well cards for Ann Allen and Verla Youngquist, wishing them total recovery from their surgeries. Judy Batterman brought the cards.

**Devotions** were given by Karen Moser.

**Review of Past Events:** 1. **Thanksgiving Dinner** – Between 60 and 65 people attended. Judy Batterman began the event by affirming that all in attendance were family. The meal was enjoyed by a large group, with Carlene having roasted five turkeys. Some leftovers were given to those who wanted them, and others were frozen. The event went very well.

2. **Advent Meals** – The first of three Wednesdays in Advent saw an attendance of forty at noon and thirty in the evening. We had sufficient quantity and variety of soups, and Pat purchased for dessert ice cream sandwiches at Aldi's. (Their price was better than HyVee's discount.) On the three Wednesdays of Advent, the committee members who can be there are asked to arrive at 11:00 or 11:15. If there are not enough soups provided by congregation members, our committee will provide.

3. **Refreshments following the Christmas Pageant** on Sunday, December 15 – Our committee was asked by Sharon Hardel to provide cookies and hot chocolate following the pageant. The pageant, directed by Judy Bailey, is from 9:30 to 10:15. Gordon will make the coffee early that morning, and those who can be there will begin making instant hot chocolate at 9:00. Those of us attending the 8:15 service will serve and help as the clean-up crew.

4. **Christmas Dinner** – As of this date, eleven people have signed up to attend Christmas dinner. Judy has recommended that the deadline be moved to December 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Upcoming Plans/Ideas** – Judy Batterman offered an idea for us to consider: An event of finger food and bingo/bunko. We will think about this possibility for a February event.

**A Follow-up** on the generous donation made to the kitchen by the WELCA circles. Linda Bogenreif said that thirty-six matching forks will be ordered, and that we will continue to look for replacement/new tablecloths and some new pots. Power strips for the serving counter have already been bought and installed by Steve Lenzen.

**Annual Report:** Judy Batterman had written our committee's annual report and read it to us. We are always surprised and pleased with how many events we have provided or participated in.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. Judy Bailey will give the devotions.

Submitted by Linda Carlson, Secretary

**Social Ministry Team**  
**12-17-2025 Meeting**  
**(Action items in red)**

**Present:** Karen Lenzen, Cindy Lilleoien, Linda Bogenreif, Sandy Latshaw,

The focus of this meeting was to do our allocation of the budgeted benevolences money for 2025. Wyatt provided an initial amount of \$23,262 which was a **reduction of \$3,993 from 2024**. This presented some challenges. If additional funds become available once the budget is finalized, we will add those to our allocations. Our discussions included reviewing the agencies we have been supporting and making some changes.

In past years the benevolences budget has included several items initiated and decided by church council. There are four items involved: UNL Student center (2 items), NE Campus Lutheran Ministries (Synod) and Camp Carol Joy Holling.

We have proposed that starting in 2025 those items, if the council wants them supported, should come from the **Endowment Fund**. If so, it leaves our team very close to the same \$ amount we've had to work with the past two years. **Karen earlier sent an email to church council President Lee Rockwell**. He in turn shared it with Pastor Erin, Wyatt and Scott Williamson (Treasurer). There seems to be support for this change but a final decision won't be made until after the January council meeting. If more benevolence money becomes available to us, we will revise our 2025 allocations.

The reduction from 2024 of \$3,933 is due to FLC joining the **Justice in Action** city-wide organization and this was planned to come out of the benevolence budget in 2025. **We have recommended that the JIA annual donation also comes from the Endowment Fund**. If that happens perhaps it would free up additional benevolence money for the Social Ministry team to allocate in 2025. That will be a council decision.

We had a good discussion about the status and purpose of the **Endowment Fund**. Linda has served on that board so was able to help us understand more about it. Through discussion, we agreed that perhaps the Social Ministry Team should begin making specific requests to them for support of local agencies. An example from Cindy - The Hub - which supports young people who have aged out of the Foster Care system. Once the funding situation for the total benevolences for 2025 is resolved, we can move forward with that.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Karen Lenzen**

**Next Scheduled Meeting:**  
**February 11, 2025**  
**6:30 pm**