

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Meeting Agenda

7:00 PM Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Meeting in Upper Room and Via Zoom

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

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

A. Opening Devotion/Prayer – Pastor Erin

B. Approve Consent Agenda

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Congregational Council Minutes – February 11, 2025
3. Parochial Report
4. Staff Reports
5. Committee Reports

C. Financial Update

1. February Budget report
2. Insurance Update
3. Gift and Memorial Committee
4. Endowment
5. Script Program, idea from Bev White

D. Action Agenda

1. Election of Angie Rippa to Audit Committee
2. Review Dates of Town Hall Meetings
3. Pastor Erin Sabbatical

D. Discussion Agenda

1. Review Council Retreat/ Vitality Initiative Discussion
2. Committee structure, Council Liaison Role
3. Review Congregational Listening Session
Council Commitment to Congregation for next Town Hall
4. Survey Results discussion
5. Church Closing Policy

E. Open Comments

F. Sending Prayer – **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

*C18.01.D.13. A **Gifts and Memorials Committee** is hereby established as an advisory committee to the Congregation Council to review and recommend changes to the Gifts and Memorials Policy; to develop, maintain and publicize a regularly updated list of recommended memorial gifts and their estimated cost; and to recommend the use of gifts and memorials given to the church that are not designated by the donor or donor's family for a specific purpose. The committee shall be comprised of the Lead Pastor and six members of the congregation elected by the Council upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee. The Director of Music Ministry shall serve as a non-voting staff liaison to the committee. Regular appointments shall be for a term of two years and members may serve no more than two consecutive terms. Half of the initial appointments will be for a term of one year.*

Executive Committee Meeting
First Lutheran Church
March 4, 2025

Present: Pastor Erin, Pastor Andrew, Rod, John, Kari, Emily

Opening Prayer: Pastor Erin

Items for Council Consent Agenda:

1. **Summary of Retreat**

We discussed how the retreat went and how great it was to hear from the vitality committee.

2. **Audit Committee Appointment**

Rod informed us that Angie Ripa is willing to do the Audit Committee.

3. **Church Closing Procedure (LPS)**

Pastor Erin stated that it is just easy to follow and most places like churches follow LPS. We will need to get a written policy in place stating this information.

4. **Gift and Memorial Committee**

We discussed the reactivation of this committee or if the Council or Property Committee would be best suited to follow up about a past gift for the chapel windows.

Discussion Items:

1. **Council Liaison Role in Committees**

We discussed about what it means for a council member to be a liaison because in the past they had been co-chairs of the committee. Council members need to know their role for the committee they chose to be a part of.

2. **Insurance Review**

Kari updated us on our insurance policy. We discussed the change in the rate and deductible.

3. **Safe Sanctuary Policy Review**

Safe Sanctuary Policy, for child protection, being reviewed, to be put on April Agenda.

4. **Youth Committee Progress**

We discussed that there has been one meeting for this committee and it went well. They are planning another meeting soon.

Financial Update:

1. **February**

Wyatt gave Kari an update on where we stand currently and that they are training the new accountant to provide us with reports.

2. Congregational Expectations on Budget

We discussed what to bring to the next meeting with the Congregation and how to best present it (numbers/visually). We also discussed how to best present the input and ideas from the congregation.

3. Script Program

We discussed this idea given to us by Bev White as a possible fund generator.

General Discussion:

1. Survey Overview

We discussed the best method on how/when to evaluate and share the survey results.

Pastoral Reviews:

We postponed going over their reviews once again. Council President Rod and Council Vice President John will meet with both of the pastors to go over their evaluations that were completed by the previous Council members.

Submitted by Emily Sears, Council Secretary

Parochial Report

	Baptized	Confirmed
1. MEMBERSHIP as of February 1, 2025	1094	905

Members received:

- A. by baptism (15 years and under)
- B. by baptism (adult) 1 1
- 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
- B. transfer to ELCA congregation 1 1
- C. transfer to other Lutheran congregation
- D. transfer to non-Lutheran congregation
- E. other and statistical adjustment

MEMBERSHIP as of February 28, 2025	1094	905
------------------------------------	------	-----

Average Attendance for February

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
346	400	393	359	316	334	online	166	288	239	224

Added:

Baptism: Hannah Torrey (adult)

Affirmation:

Transfer:

Other:

Removed:

Death:

Transfer: Anna Johnson (St. Timothy Lutheran Church [ELCA] Omaha)

Dropped Due to Inactivity:

Other:

Notes: [Live Stream average for February 2025: data unavailable](#)

Congregational Council Meeting

First Lutheran Church

February 11, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judy Batterman, Kari Hoeft, Jenna Troutman, John Bonaiuto, Pastor Erin Heidelberger, Karen Statham, Bev White, Patrick Hayden-Roy, Rod Johnson, Pastor Andrew Kitzing, Emily Sears, Ann Bouma, Bryce Anderson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dave Pfister

MEETING RECORDER: Ann Carlson

A. OPENING DEVOTION/PRAYER/CHURCH LEADERSHIP INTRODUCTION:

The meeting was called to order by Council President Rod Johnson at 7:01. Pastor Erin led the opening devotion, prayer, and the church leadership introduction. She showed a portion of a video on active listening.

B. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Meeting agenda
2. Congregational Council Minutes – January 14, 2025
3. Parochial Report
4. Staff Reports
5. Committee Reports
6. Approval of Lead Pastor's Salary

It was moved by John and seconded by Emily to approve the consent agenda. It was noted that the approval of the Lead Pastor's Salary is a formality at this time. The motion carried.

C. ACTION AGENDA:

1. Selection of Council Treasurer

It was moved by John and seconded by Patrick to move Kari from the position of Vice President of the Church Council to Treasurer of the Church Council. The motion carried.

It was moved by Patrick and seconded by Judy to nominate John for the position of Vice President of the Church Council. The motion carried.

Pastor Erin stated that an offer likely will be made for the open church accountant position by the end of the week.

Rod discussed the January 2025 financials. Receipts were \$17,739 under budget and expenses were \$7,444 under budget, causing a deficit for the month in the amount of \$10,295.

2. Sign US Bank Paperwork

Members of the Council's Executive Committee are signers at US Bank.

3. Dates of Town Hall Meetings

The Town Hall meetings will be March 30, July 27, and November 9.

D. DISCUSSION AGENDA:

1. Council Retreat

The Council Retreat will be held on March 1 from 11am-3pm at the Pioneer Park Nature Center. Retreat topics include community building, council orientation, planning, and goal setting.

2. Lead Pastor Sabbatical

Pastor Erin is applying for the Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Grants Program. The grant proposal is due March 12, 2025. The council can review the grant proposal at its March 11 meeting. Program awards will be announced on August 29, 2025. Pastor Erin's sabbatical would take place during the summer of 2026.

Pastor Erin discussed Wednesdays in Lent this year. It will give our church the opportunity for an all-church Bible study along with Holden Evening Prayer and meals together. Fellowship will serve meals from 5:30 to 6:00. They need fifteen minutes to clean up. The event will end at 7:30.

3. Council Commitment to Congregational Listening

Patrick will be the moderator for a listening session on Sunday from 9:30-10:30 in the Chapel.

Emily and Kari are working on a survey to get additional feedback from the congregation.

4. Committee structure and assignments

Rod discussed the committees required in the constitution and the current status of each. A sheet was passed around where Council members could sign up for the committee where they would like to serve as a liaison.

An additional appointment is needed for the Audit Committee.

5. Head usher position opening

The opening is for the 10:45 service. Dave and Bryce are the Council members assigned to Worship and Music.

E. OPEN COMMENTS:

On March 11, Council photos will be taken. This includes individual head shots as well as a group photo.

First Lutheran is fortunate to have so many active members of the congregation.

If a member of the church community has any questions about something discussed at Council, they are welcome to attend a meeting.

Pastor Andrew will be submitting a request for funds for Justice in Action from the Endowment Board.

F. SENDING PRAYER: Pastor Erin led the Prayer of Good Courage.

G. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:10.

MEETING DATE: March 11, 2025

SUBJECT: Audit Committee Election

PROPOSED ACTION: Elect Angie Rippa to the FLC Audit Committee for a three-year term 2025-2028.

BACKGROUND: The FLC Audit Committee is composed of three members with staggered appointment years. The current members are: Lanny Carlson (3rd Year) Steve Doolittle (2nd Year)

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Occasionally FLC must be closed, and activities must be cancelled. Weather, fire, building failure, or public safety could be a cause for cancellation. The Lead Pastor or her/his designee will make and announce any cancellations.

When making decisions about cancellation, FLC considers not only the needs of the church, but also the welfare of employees and members of the church. There may be days when inclement weather makes it difficult for staff to report to work. FLC encourages staff to use good judgment and common sense when determining the safety of local weather and road conditions. Late starts or office closings will be announced by or before 7:00 A.M.

Inclement weather situations are handled in the following manner for non-exempt and hourly employees:

- When FLC business hours are shortened on a given day due to inclement weather, you are paid for a full day's work only if you are present at work at your scheduled start time and when the office closes, whatever those hours may be. If you arrive at work after your scheduled start time, or if you leave before the end of the business day, you will be paid only for the hours you actually work.
- You receive an excused absence without pay if you notify your supervisor that you are unable to report to work. If you choose, you can request to use vacation pay or a floating holiday or personal day for that time period.
- You and your supervisor or the Lead Pastor may make arrangements for you to make up time missed due to inclement weather.
- On occasion, employees may receive permission from their supervisor or the Lead Pastor to work from home if circumstances warrant.

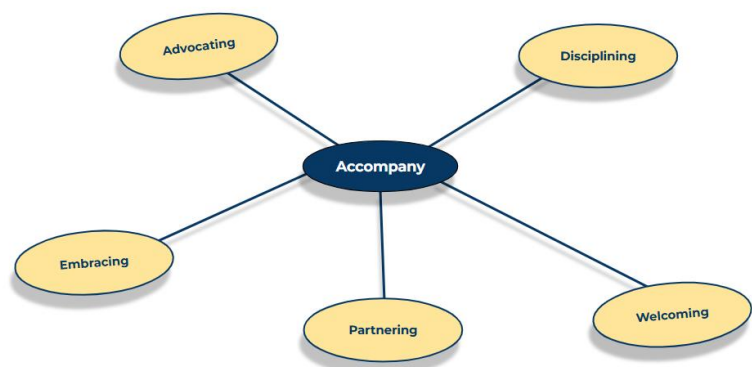
New member classes: First Lutheran 101 is the new member class that has taken shape since resuming newcomer opportunities post-pandemic. I've experimented with different days/times for holding these sessions (we're now holding FLC 101 about twice a year) as I've gotten a sense for what people's schedules allow. In 2024, I offered FLC 101 over two consecutive Sunday mornings during the learning hour, but the only meeting space for us that includes a screen is on the lower level. I realized that getting to the lower level can be somewhat of a challenge for some, even with our elevator, so I thought of options for holding it upstairs. In February, I moved the classes to two Wednesdays in the chapel and I loved using that time and space for the first session. This allowed us to invite new members to supper with the Confirmation families in the Activity Center before heading to the chapel for FLC 101. A Wednesday evening also allows newcomers to see congregational life happening in faith formation, choir, and other groups. At our first session on Feb. 5, we had three of the four people who joined First Lutheran on March 2. With a smaller group, I ended up being able to have much more time with them answering their particular questions and spent about 90 minutes with that group. The second session was cancelled due to weather, so I rescheduled a time to meet with the other new member between services on March 2, again having the time for much more personal conversation.

I've also held "FLC 201" class that goes deeper into Lutheran theology. It was geared to new members and those newer to the Lutheran church, but invited all who wanted to have a Lutheran theology refresher. I've only held this class once (over 4 weeks in June), but hope to be able to offer it again soon.

Council retreat: Thank you, council, for carving out time in your schedules to participate in our March 1 retreat! Your pastors appreciated the chance to be with you in a new place and space for orienting to the work of church leadership and leading the congregation in being the Body of Christ for each other and for the world. You can find some of the resources we used on the Nebraska synod website here: <https://nebraskasynod.org/for-congregations/resources-in-support/> (click on "Best Practices"). It was also a joy to hear from our Vitality Initiative coach Sunni Richardson and VI team members Dara Troutman and Natalie Peters—thanks to you for sharing with and updating the council!

Vitality Initiative:

The Vitality Initiative team is charged with bearing the vocational words of our congregation and to keeping the Vitality practices front and center for our church as we stay continue to live into the "lifestyle" (as opposed to a program) of three listenings: listening to God, listening to ourselves (the church), and listening to our neighbors. Sunni R. is available to continue coaching our team for the next six months. The team's planned next step is to develop a guiding document for leadership and ministry teams to guide starting, sustaining, and evaluating ministries based on FLC's vocation of accompaniment. As we talk about this at council this month, we'll consider how we



as the council will bear the vocational words and how we can lead our committees and teams to do that as well. What are helpful ways council can lift up the work of the Vitality team and these vocational words? What insights do you have to help communicate with the whole congregation the good work that the Vitality team has accomplished and is leading us into?

Council liaisons: We've included council liaison discussion on our agenda, but here are some thoughts ahead of the council meeting. FLC has taken different approaches to the roles of council members in relationship to ministry teams over the last decade, and this is a good time to redevelop and build up the council liaison role. So, to get us thinking: What can you as liaisons do to support the ministry teams you've signed up for? What questions can you be asking these committees/teams? What are good ways to keep regularly connected with these teams and bring their joys and challenges to council attention?

Staffing: We were able to offer the Church Accountant position to Gina Hughes and are pleased that she accepted. Gina will be a great asset to our staff. She began training with Wyatt in mid-February and will continue that onboarding for the next few weeks. The accountant position is 40 hours/month.

Building: Many thanks to facility maintenance manager Janis, Steve Lenzen, and other members of the property committee who have been installing carpeting in the office hallway. When I asked Janis recently about possibilities for sound dampening in that hallway, he found that we had just enough leftover carpet squares at the church to cover that hallway. Thanks to that in-house material and the hard work of this group, we have a beautifully carpeted hallway that is much quieter!

Looking ahead: At staff meetings and Worship & Music committee, we've been exploring moving to **one Sunday morning service during the summertime** (returning to two services after Labor Day). It wouldn't be the first time doing this at First (some may remember this happening in the 1960s), but it would certainly be a change for more recent years. Having one Sunday service in the summer (but maintaining the Saturday evening service throughout the summer) helps with some of the logistical details of worship. Summer travel typically affects our worship assistants' availability, for example. But it's about more than logistics. One summer Sunday service gives us the opportunity for worshipping and fellowshiping with those who normally worship at a different service and for building community.

Pastoral acts: Hannah Torrey baptism February 23

Time off: I plan to take vacation after Easter April 21-30 (one Sunday).

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Erin

Associate Pastor Council Report

I want to begin my report by reminding everyone of how I write my report. The calendar list that I include will only include the activities/programs/meetings that happen infrequently or less often than monthly. This does not mean that those few activities is all I do during a month. For example, I will not list worship leadership, sermon prep, Bible study, confirmation, home visits etc., because those take place on a regular basis and are scheduled to happen regularly. The things you will see listed in the report are those that happen less often, i.e. Justice in Action, Micah 6:8, etc. These are not scheduled in regular intervals and happen on a less frequent basis. So, below you will find a list of what I've done this month, which is not inclusive of all I've done this month...

February 17 – Micah 6:8

19 – ELCA Advocacy zoom meeting

26 – Global Refuge zoom meeting

26 – Education/Youth committee meeting

March 1 – Council retreat

4 – Pancake feed

5 – Ash Wednesday

13 – Chrism Mass

30 – Town Hall

April 3 – Justice in Action

13-20 – Holy Week and Easter

We had the first meeting of a new youth/education committee, which I will usually just refer to as the youth committee. I thought it went very well. We had good ideas that came up and plans already set in motion to act on a few of them. What I heard, that I want to ensure happens this spring, is that parents have missed having the chance to give input on the youth calendar. We have planned the year as staff in previous years, but I understand the want to be more involved, so will ensure that happens as we approach the summer so that we can have a calendar in place before the next school year.

Now that Lent is upon us, we will be having worship and study time on Wednesdays, along with food. Please come and share in the fellowship, Bible study, and worship time together.

I had fun helping with the pancake feed this year. It's always nice to put on a different hat, literally, and try something new. We had a good turnout, considering what the weather was doing that day. I would be open to doing it again next year, and I bet we could convince Mandy to help again, too.

The last thing is something that has happened far more often this month as I've talked with our homebound people than what has happened before, and I want to be sure to have everyone's help in correcting this. This past month I've spent more time correcting misinformation that many of our shut-ins are hearing. Most of it is harmless and doesn't matter much. Based on the questions and comments shared with me, some of it can only be described as the wrong information being shared. We need to be sure that the information we share with the congregation, especially those who are unable to attend in person, is accurate information. It may just be a coincidence that there is more confusion this month among our homebound. And I know people want to be helpful and are doing their best, and I'm sure there is no information that is shared that is intentionally wrong or misleading. But a gentle reminder that accurate information should be getting to all our members. That is part of why I included the first paragraph in this month's report. And this isn't just directed at the council, but I am putting it in my report because I know many other members read the council reports. Thank you all for your help with this, and I'm sure none of it is done intentionally.

Thank you all for what you do. And happy Lent!

Pr. Andrew, Associate Pastor.

Youth and Family Ministry Report to Council Feb. 12 – March 11, 2025

VBS update we had a decorating and room assigning meeting on February 24, Joan Johnson was present from First Lutheran at the meeting and Bev White volunteered to help as able prior to the event. We are looking for volunteers for the event June 16 – 20 at First Lutheran. First Lutheran has the following volunteers at this point Beth Wiebelhaus and Anna Wemhoff for the PreK group, Tracy Way and Carlene Falos for Breakfast and Snacks, Erin Pfister for Simulation Station, and Laura Gaulty to help as needed for one day.

Sunday Learning with middle school and high school has continued to meet. 5 of our youth that gathered on March 2nd were given a selection of photographs and asked to pick one or two that reminded them of a Bible story or Jesus in some way. They each shared their story and then were challenged to think deeper as to why that story resonated with them. We had some conversations and then youth were asked to write down their reflections and questions for the Lenten Devotional. Please read their reflections when they come out and feel free to ask them more about their thoughts, some were quite deep.

Youth Group Youth helped to take the almost 500 Souper Bowl of Caring food items collected to the Food Pantry at St. Andrews. Under the guidance of Steve Lenzen, they sorted the food and were able to put some on the shelves. Steve also gave us an overview of how the food pantry operates and who they serve (8 of us participated). Youth also helped stock shelves and sort food items at the Center for People over their President Day break (coldest day of the year couldn't stop them). The Center staff told me they had never had a youth group that worked so hard (5 of us participated). Our pancake feed was successful despite the blizzard, we served 80 + and collected over \$800 (10 of us worked the feed). A movie night was held for families in which about 30 people enjoyed "Wild Robot" and snacks. Youth worshipped with and served lunch at the Lutheran Center before going on Spring Break. 4 youth (and 5 adults) enjoyed a cultural experience when we went to see Fiddler on the Roof starring Mark Mesarch (one youth that planned to attend was unable to due to illness). 1 Youth attended the Middle School Lock-in at Camp Carol Joy Holling. A service project is also planned during Spring Break for youth and will be help at First Lutheran on Wed. March 12, youth and families will be encouraged to attend the soup dinner, Bible Study, and Worship service after the project.

Discipleship University was cancelled on February 12 due to LPS closing for cold / winter weather. On March 5 our confirmands and families met with their mentors (for the Lenten season). We enjoyed pizza together and had "get to know you" conversations before the Ash Wednesday worship. From what I could tell, the conversations went well. One family told me they found many connections with their mentor and thanked me for pairing them together...Holy Spirit moment. Thanks to David Pitts, Mark Mesarch, Doug Lind Olson, Lyle Petersen, Laura Gaulty, and Julianna Peters for saying yes to being mentors. Mentors will meet with their students at the Lenten Soup

suppers and Bible Studies. Please try to sit with some of our pairs when you attend the mid-week meal so you get to know the students and hear their thoughts.

Education / Youth Committee Meeting: I attended an organizational meeting trying to get this committee started again. There were lots of ideas shared. We are still seeking more volunteers to help make the ideas a reality. A family game day and potluck on Sunday March 16 at noon and a Lenten weekly Photo texted to High Schoolers asking them to share where they see God or how that photo speaks to their faith are ideas currently put into place. A new Background check and training program, "Safe Gatherings" was introduced, there will be a resolution presented at Synod Assembly encouraging all NE Congregations to use this program. More discussion will happen at the council and the next committee meeting.

Summer Nashville and South Dakota Trips Update: We have 9 youth, and 2 adults registered for the Nashville trip. Final paperwork is due to the Synod on March 15, I am still waiting for 2 youth and 1 adult to give me paperwork. We have 3 youth that paid for South Dakota so far and I am hoping for at least 2 more youth to sign up. We have 3 adults currently going as well to South Dakota. I have not gotten any firm numbers from the other 2 congregations; however, it looks like each will have about 5 youth attending.

Other Items:

The Lincoln Youth Workers met at First Lutheran on February 20th and are working on planning some combined activities for spring. We will meet for some training and more planning at Camp Carol Joy Holling in March.

I am working on filling in the table sponsored by First Lutheran Church for the Camp Carol Joy Holling on April 5. We would like a representative from the council to go, so please let me know if there are any volunteers. Currently, I have checked with 2 families having younger children and a couple representing the quilters, Kent and I will represent staff. The table seats 10 so we need 2 more people.

Patrick Hayden-Roy and I will be teaching Bonhoeffer for 4 weeks of Adult Forum starting March 9.

I continue to meet with Coffee Talk, Gather and Gab, and the Stitchers groups regularly and attend staff meetings and Lutheran Center Governance Board meeting.

Upcoming Activities:

Intergenerational Events: Quilt Sunday and Family Game Day March 16 and Palm Sunday April 13

Soup to go Fund Raiser April 13 to support youth summer trips

Prayer Stations set up for Holy Week in Chapel

Blessings,

Sharon Hardel

Dir. of Youth and Family Ministry

February 2025

February 2	both	Jazz Team (Bryce Anderson, Tony Anderson, Kristi Fisher, Spencer Janssen, Matt Reckmeyer, Bob Schoettger, Martha tanner, Tom Thorpe)
February 9	8:15	Kari Hoeft, Carol & Matt Reckmeyer
	10:45	Konnor Garrett, Mark Mesarch, Faith Trek Orff/Choir, Adult Choir, String Ensemble (Konnor Garrett, Kayla Peters, Jenna Troutman, Elsa Wemhoff, Bennett Bacon)
February 16	both	Sprint Ringers
	8:15	Brian & Erin Niebuhr, Heather Poysa
	10:45	Martha Tanner, Adult Choir
February 23	8:15	Scott Vicroy, Dawn Brock
	10:45	Betsy Bjerke, Adult Choir, Youth Orff Ensemble

February 1, 15, 22, – Christine Carman

- Two 6th Graders began preparing for March Jazz Sunday. They will be wonderful addition to the Jazz Team.
- Holden Evening Prayer: Cantors have been recruited.
- Adult Choir lost 3 rehearsals, 3 Wednesdays, in a row, due to weather (severe cold temperature and snow).
- Youth Orff prepared a challenging piece. We had a small crowd (as a whole church) over LPS break, which also impacted for Faith Trek. It is good to have opportunities to gather and preparing music for worship services.
- Worship & Music discussed in change of worship times and preparation needed for upcoming Lenten services. (See the minutes from Worship and Music Committee)

We are blessed to have wonderful volunteers to offer their talents and time for setting Lord's Table weekly, for cleaning altars, for music making, and more. Many services are done quietly.

Respectfully submitted,

Soli Deo Gloria

Masako Bacon

UPDATES on March 6, 2005:

Pastor Erin decided to cancel Saturday worship service on April 12 (Palm Sunday) for congregation to participate in the full Palm Sunday experience.

Palm Sunday (April 13) 8:15 Palm Procession led by a bagpiper

10:45 Children's Palm Procession

Notifying Saturday Worshippers: Informing Saturday worshippers for canceling the Saturday worship service on April 12 and joining combined Easter Vigil (April 19, Saturday, 6:30pm) at Spirit of Hope (5801 NW 1st Street) – no 5:30pm worship service at First Lutheran- will be informed in the Saturday worship insert (starting March 15) as long as other regular communication methods.

February Council Report

This month was fun-filled and informative. We built on the lectionary regarding how the disciples were chosen, what the Beatitudes mean, all about Transfiguration, and how Joseph forgave and fed his brothers. The cherubs also sang and played for the prelude at the 3/2 service, so there was a lot of deep and wide going on in the upper room.

I gave a children's sermon that I adapted from Pastor John Steven's idea covering the Beatitudes. I actually had to practice a bit of "sleight of hand" to accomplish the message to reinforce the Beatitudes, and that God is with us especially through the hard parts of life.

I coordinated with Camp Carol Joy Holling to have a guest speaker during FaithTrek. The goal is to talk about camp and teach camp games and songs to us.

Pastor Erin referred a member from the NE Synod to me who was interested in our lego room and how we operate it. I spoke and corresponded with her, and sent her pictures of the room in action.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura G

COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY
FEBRUARY 2025
BY KATHLEEN SIMLEY, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

SPECIAL NOTE

On Monday, February 24, 2025, I informed Pastor Erin and Council President Rod Johnson via email about my upcoming medical leave, starting February 25, 2025, and expected to last 4-6 weeks. I provided a medical note from my primary care provider to confirm the need for leave.

I have enough accrued sick leave to cover my absence. If my leave needs to extend beyond the anticipated timeline, I will notify Pastor Erin and Rod Johnson. My intention at this time is to return to my role and responsibilities once my leave ends.

On February 24, I notified the staff via email and informed the congregation through the February 26 First Things First e-newsletter. In the newsletter, I advised the congregation to contact the office or Pastor Erin for any questions or assistance during my absence.

Before my leave, I emailed Pastor Erin a detailed status update on my current work and ongoing projects. Below is a brief summary of that update.

I deeply appreciate your prayers and support during this time. Thank you for your understanding.

CURRENT TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The digital sign and TV slides were fully updated with the latest information I have on current events. The FaithTrek Weekly Blast email for February 25 and First Things First e-newsletter for February 26 were finalized and scheduled for release. Website headers and News posts were current, though upcoming events will require header updates once they conclude. Livestreams for Sunday services and Ash Wednesday are ready to go, managed by Jim Overcash and Brian Neibuhr. However, the Holden Evening Prayer services will not be streamed. The weekly Lenten devotional submissions, written by members, were forwarded to Pastor Erin, though a template is still

MY WEEKLY TASKS

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

MY MONTHLY TASKS

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

needed for the email distribution. Social media posts were scheduled up to my departure. A First Glance publication was not prepared for the weekend of March 1. Finally, login credentials for all necessary platforms were stored in the church's Google Drive.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR COMMUNICATON

Here are events and activities I was working on and/or will need communication in the coming weeks:

- American Speed Museum Tour: February 26 (Confirmation emails were sent to registrants and Tim Maack, the tour guide)
- Pancake Feed: March 4
- Ash Wednesday Worship: March 5
- First Friday Jazz Concerts: March 7 and April 4 (Lee Rockwell is the contact)
- Wednesday Lenten Schedule: Includes Soup Lunches and Dinners, Holden Evening Prayer and the Called & Claimed Study
- Soup Sign-Up: Contact Judy Batterman
- International Quilting Day and Intergenerational Activity: March 16
- Hygiene Network Drive: March 16–April 6 (Contact: Karen Lenzen)
- Weekly Adult Forum Sessions: Patrick Hayden Roy is the contact person
- Noisy Offerings: March 2 and April 6
- Buzzy Bargains and Kids' Stuff Sale for Las Abejitas: March 28–29
- Town Hall Meeting: March 30
- Palm Sunday: April 13
- Easter Events: Includes purchase of Easter Lilies, Easter Breakfast and sign up for food donations and the Easter Egg Hunt, along with donation of candy (Judy Batterman is the contact)
- Holy Week Worship Schedule
- Council President and Monthly Finance Updates to the Congregation: Contact Rod Johnson and Wyatt Swanson or Gina Hughes

PROJECTS ON HOLD

These projects, as they relate to my 1st quarter goals, will remain on hold until I return:

- SMS Messaging Opt-in Campaign
- Website Update and Refresh
- Updated First Lutheran Brochure and Brochure Rack Purchase
- First Stories Newsletter Interviews and Story Development

FLC Endowment BD Financials: 09/30/24

K. Peppmuller

ELCA Ministry Growth Fund Activity & Balance

Updated 11/05/24

Date	Additions	Withdrawals	Reinvest - MMA	Change in Market Value	Market Value	Distribution	Cumulative Distributions	Annual Distribution Projection
					623,736.96			
3/31/2023	-	-	-	24,700.42	648,437.38	(6,563.70)	(6,563.70)	
6/30/2023	-	-	-	14,867.49	663,304.87	(6,563.70)	(13,127.40)	
9/30/2023	-	-	-	(21,957.94)	641,346.93	(6,563.70)	(19,691.10)	
12/31/2023	-	-	-	42,397.16	683,744.09	(6,563.70)	(26,254.80)	
1/31/2024	-	-	-	1,819.64	685,563.73	-	-	
2/29/2024				7,734.03	693,297.76	-	-	
3/31/2024				14,261.60	707,559.36	(6,810.20)	(6,810.20)	
6/30/2024				6,593.41	714,152.77	(6,810.20)	(13,620.40)	
9/30/2024				31,506.70	745,659.47	(6,810.20)	(20,430.60)	
blank								
2024 YTD	-			61,915.38	745,659.47	(20,430.60)		

US Bank

Date	Deposits: Contributions	Transferred to CD	Deposits: ELCA MGF	Transferred to ELCA MGF	Distributions	Interest	Balance	Outstanding Checks	Balance Net of O/S Checks	US Bank Statement	Recon Variance
							34,819.27				
1/31/2024	1,290.00					0.31	36,109.58	1,000.00	37,109.58	37,109.58	-
2/29/2024	100.00					0.28	36,209.86		36,209.86	36,209.86	-
3/31/2024	49.41	(25,000.00)	6,810.20			0.28	18,069.75		18,069.75	18,069.75	-
4/30/2024						0.14	18,069.89		18,069.89	18,069.89	-
5/31/2024						0.15	18,070.04		18,070.04	18,070.04	-
6/30/2024			6,810.20			0.15	24,880.39		24,880.39	24,880.39	-
7/31/2024						0.21	24,880.60		24,880.60	24,880.60	-
8/31/2024	4,000.00				(11,000.00)	0.19	17,880.79	1,000.00	18,880.79	18,880.79	-
9/30/2024	20.00		6,810.20			0.15	24,711.14		24,711.14	24,711.14	-
10/31/2024											
11/30/2024											
12/31/2024											
blank											
Activity 2024	5,459.41	(25,000.00)	20,430.60	-	(11,000.00)	1.86	24,711.14		24,711.14		
2024 remaining MGF distributions							6,810.00				
Maturity of CD							25,000.00				
Expected cash balance							56,521.14				
Certificate of Deposit - matures 10/27/2024 4.55%									25,000.00		

Total Portfolio

795,370.61

Principal 618,877.77

In Excess 176,492.84

Disbursements in 2024:

Date	Ck#	Payee	Amount	Cleared	Date Cleared	Outstanding
8/5/2024	1085	University of Iowa	1,000.00	1,000.00	8/12/2024	
8/5/2024	1086	Colorado State Univ.	1,000.00	1,000.00	8/13/2024	
8/5/2024	1087	UNL	3,000.00	3,000.00	8/12/2024	
8/5/2024	1088	Ferris State	1,000.00	1,000.00	8/12/2024	
8/5/2024	1089	St. Olaf	1,000.00	1,000.00	8/29/2024	
8/5/2024	1090	UNO	2,000.00	2,000.00	8/23/2024	
8/5/2024	1091	UNMC	1,000.00	1,000.00	8/14/2024	
8/5/2024	1092	University of Wyoming	1,000.00	1,000.00	9/10/2024	
			11,000.00	11,000.00		-

Distributions:

Distribute		Scholarships	ELCA Missions	Community Outreach	Remaining Total	Average 3 Yr Balance	
%	\$'s					Balance	\$
3.0%	21,004.57	11,000.00	min 2,100	min 2,100	10,004.57	12/31/2021	736,167.25
4.0%	28,006.09	11,000.00	min 2,801	min 2,801	17,006.09	12/31/2022	645,726.05
5.0%	35,007.61	11,000.00	min 3,501	min 3,501	24,007.61	12/31/2023	718,563.36
						Average	700,152.22

The purpose of the First Lutheran Church Endowment Board is to grow the portfolio such that the annual distributions do not expend any of the principal of the fund and the portfolio meets a socially responsible investment strategy. It shall be the policy of the Board to distribute up to 6% of the preceding three-year average balance, while never expending the donated principal of the fund. The Board determined that the current method of distributions coming from ELCA Ministry Growth Fund are not in conflict with the language of the First Lutheran Church By-Laws.

First Lutheran Church Endowment Board Agenda

Meeting Date – Wednesday, November 13, 2024 at 7:00 pm First Lutheran Church

Meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m.

Members present: Ann Carlson, Steve Doolittle, Karen Peppmuller, Madalyn Popken, Tracy Way

Opening Devotion – Madalyn Popken

Madalyn provided the opening prayer.

A. Review of Board Members:

Ann Carlson – 2nd Term, 2nd Year

Karen Peppmuller – 2nd Term, 1st Year

Steve Doolittle – 1st Term, 3rd Year

Tracy Way – 1st Term, 3rd Year

Madalyn Popken – 1st Term, 1st Year

It was discussed that Steve and Tracy's terms are expiring, however, they have agreed to be on the ballot again for possible re-election.

B. Approve Agenda

Motion by Steve to approve the agenda, second by Karen. All in favor. Motion approved.

C. Approve Minutes of Board Meeting on August 14, 2024

Motion by Karen to approve the minutes, second by Steve. All in favor. Motion approved.

D. Financial Report – Karen Peppmuller, Treasurer

Karen reviewed the 9/30/24 Endowment Fund Financial Report (copy attached). The total market value of the Endowment Fund as of 9/30/24 was \$745,659.47. Karen noted that the CD had matured and she talked about the possible new rates and whether or not we should reinvest. After discussion, \$35,000 will be reinvested in a CD. It was also discussed what percentage we wanted to spend for distributions. Motion by Steve to approve the financial report, second by Tracy. All in favor. Motion approved.

E. Determine dollar amount of distributions to be made by the end of the year as well as how those funds should be distributed.

The requests for distributions were reviewed and the percentage of distribution was discussed and it was decided to give as follows:

Tabitha Meals on Wheels	\$1,500.00
Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries	\$2,000.00
Camp Carol Joy Hollings Scholarships	\$1,000.00
FLC Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$2,500.00
WELCA (Quilts)	\$1,000.00
Lincoln Littles	<u>\$2,500.00</u>
	\$10,500.00

Motion to approve the dollar amount and where money was to go made by Karen and seconded by Madalyn. All in favor. Motion approved.

F. Endowment Fund Contribution Education - discuss presentation by Sarah Callahan

Presentation was briefly discussed by those who were able to attend and said Karen did a good job getting Ms. Callahan to present to Adult Forum.

G. ELCA Investor Call

- a. Summary of the last investor call, which was October 25 at 11:15.

Ann listened to the call. Markets were reviewed. The quarter fund results were 5.4% and YTD 12.1%. This exceeded the 3rd quarter benchmark of 5.3% and YTD benchmark of 11.7%.

H. First Lutheran Constitution Appendix B

Changes were made and voted on at a special congregational meeting. Congregation approved changes.

I. Internal Review

- a. This is a placeholder for the 2024 review to be done in 2025.

This was noted.

J. Mailbox Review – Karen

Karen will continue to check the mailbox.

K. Other

- a. Determine the next meeting date in January or February 2025

Next meeting was scheduled for February 26, 2025.

L. Closing prayer – Madalyn Popken

Madalyn provided the closing prayer.

US Bank Contacts – Johnny Chacon johnny.chacon@usbank.com and Burgundy Hajek burgundy.hajek@usbank.com
ELCA Ministry Growth Fund Contact – Gregory Kramer gregory.kramer@elca.org. The planned giving contact
(Omaha) is Sarah Callahan scallahan@lutherangiving.org

Fellowship Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February, 11, 2025

Attending: Carlene Falos, Judy Batterman, Judy Bailey, Linda Bogenreif, Gordon Wolfe, Teresa Brohimer, Karen Moser, Pat DeWald

Devotions were given by Gordon Wolfe. Next Month: Pat DeWald

Upcoming Events:

1. **Lenten Wednesdays - March 12, 19, 26, April 2 and 9.** We will be serving soup on the 12th, 26th and April 9th including ice cream sandwiches. Judy Batterman will get a signup list for those three Wednesdays for volunteers for soup. Will need at least 10 soups for March 12 for both the afternoon and evening meal. Pat purchased 9 bags of soup crackers at HyVee when they were 99 cents a bag.

For the Wednesday Lenten meal on March 19, we decided to serve pulled pork sandwiches on a bun with chips, pickles (sweet & dill) and cake. Judy Batterman checked at Sam's and they have pulled pork with no sauce, 2 pounds for \$11.00. Goodscents sandwiches and pizza was going to cost more so therefore decided on pork sandwiches. Judy Batterman will get the items from Sam's that will be needed and Carlene will get the buns and pickles. We will watch sale ads for chips to possibly be on sale at HyVee as well as bbq sauce otherwise Judy will get at Sam's. Members volunteered to bring cake for the meal on March 19th.

For the Lenten Wednesday meal on April 2nd, we decided on taco bowls (rice, taco meat, beans, salsa, sour cream, & cheese). We will discuss more on this meal at the next meeting.

Judy Batterman advised us that the Lenten schedule is as follows. There will be an all church Bible study with confirmation youth and mentors.

Noon - 11:00-11:50 Bible study, 12:00-12:30 Holden service, 12:30 lunch

Evening - 5:30-6:15 evening meal, 6:15-7:00 Bible study in activity center, 7:05-7:25 Holden service in the sanctuary.

We discussed since the Bible study is in the activity center and cleanup of the tables would be disruptive we would want to have tables cleaned up before Bible study started. It was decided to serve the evening meal from 5:30-6:00 so we had time to clean-up the tables before Bible study started. Judy Batterman will have the serving time for the evening meal put in the publication for the Wednesday Lenten meals. She also shared the serving time with council.

2. **Easter Egg Hunt - Saturday April 12th at 10am.** Judy has gotten this on the church calendar and we have the church from 9 till noon. We will have crafts and possibly a puppet show which the kids seem to enjoy. Will discuss again at next meeting.

3. **Easter Breakfast, April 20** - Judy advised that the services that day will be at 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00. We will serve breakfast from 8:30 to 10:00. Egg casseroles and muffins will be served.

4. **Coffee between services** - this Sunday, February 26th, is our responsibility. Carlene offered to start coffee and Gordon and Karen volunteered to assist. Anyone else available to assist is welcome.

5. **Town Hall Meetings** - Judy Batterman advised they are set for March 30, July 27 and November 9th. It was questioned whether there would be a pot luck meal before the March 30th town hall meeting and Judy

Batterman will find out at council. Judy did confirm there is a potluck meal before the March 30th town hall meeting.

Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday, March 11th at 5:30pm**. Pat DeWald will give devotions.

Submitted by Pat DeWald

**First Lutheran Church
Property Committee Minutes February 25, 2025**

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

Meeting time: 7:00 PM

Opening prayer: Doug

Minute taker: Les

Minutes of the January PC meeting were approved.

Agenda:

1. Steve L reported that Toby Duncan and a scaffolding company visited FLC on Tuesday to determine whether the FLC structure could support scaffolding that would be necessary during roof repair. Steve was also notified about a leak above the pipe organ and that he may have fixed the cause of the leak. In addition, Steve learned that toilettes downstairs were again plugged. By accessing a cleanout port, a plumber removed items such as baby wipes which were the likely cause of the plug. Steve will have a conversation with Pastor Erin and Kayla to remind that only toilette paper should be flushed in these toilettes. Finally, Steve also related that both sump pumps have been replaced and that carpeting installation in the hallway outside of the pastors' offices has been completed.
2. Bob B set a date and asked for volunteers for additional removal of wood from the Troutman property.
3. Steve L updated the PC on HVAC progress and noted the "cutover" to the new software to control this system will occur on March 3rd of next week.
4. Norman circulated the prayer volunteers list for 2025 for PC members to sign.
5. Norman and Les agreed to serve again as PC Chair and note taker.

Prayer: March Les

Note taker: Les

Social Ministry Team
02-11-2025 Meeting
(Action items in red)

Present: Karen Lenzen, Cindy Lilleoien, Linda Bogenreif, Sandy Latshaw, Donice Kaspar, Rebecca Pfabe

Endowment Fund - Ann Carlson, Chair of the Endowment Board, joined us for conversation regarding Social Ministry requesting funds for programs in Lincoln. This would be in addition to the operating budget benevolence \$ this team allocates. A good exchange of information and ideas was held. For 2025 we need to submit requests no later than November 1st. We developed a list of potential programs/agencies. Several members will pursue more information that will help us make a final decision later this year.

Lincoln Hygiene Network – Based on a referral from a member, Karen is working with this group. We will have a collection of hygiene items from March 16 – April 6 (three weeks). **Karen will send information to Kathleen to promote this and set up a display.** This is a new group for FLC, helping meet our goal of introducing new causes. They organize collections through churches, etc. and distribute them to 25 nonprofit community partners that serve families, youth, immigrants and underserved populations.

Lent & Advent Soup Suppers – Fellowship Committee asked what organization we would like the 2025 soup supper proceeds to be designated and we determined Lutheran Family Services. Karen has informed Judy Batterman.

Kicks for Kids – Donice reported she has provided an additional 30 pairs of shoes/socks since the main drive in October. This increases our total to 272 pairs. Our K4K Fund II money is in good shape so Donice and Julie can purchase shoes when a bargain pops up, getting ready for Fall 2025.

Lancaster County Jail – Linda has visited with Sherri Cotter who works with people being released from the jail. She often encounters individuals that need clothing such as winter coats or don't have a way to get from the jail to their next destination. We discussed several ideas to help. **Linda will follow up with Sherri and come back to the team with potential actions we might be able to take at FLC.** This would be a great outreach project for our community. Linda will keep us posted.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Lenzen

Next Scheduled Meeting:
April 8, 2025
6:30 pm

Participated Committee Members:

Jan Christensen, Dave Pfister, Marth Tanner, Jan Wigodsky, Boyd & Masako Bacon

1. Lenten Wednesday worship services

Minor time change for the evening was proposed: 5:30 – 6:00 supper

6:05 - 6:50 Learning Hour (Claimed & Called)

7:00 – Holden Evening Prayer

7:30 - Choir

2. Set-up for Lenten/Easter Worship services

- Ash Wednesday Set-up: Thanks to Bonita

- Ash Wednesday: March 5, Noon & 6:30pm

Imposition of Ashes will be distributed in a part of Invitation to Lent Season

Communion will be distributed toward the end in silence at the altar

- Holden Midweek Services: A brief Reflection from the Learning Hour (Claimed & Called) may or may not shared from the pastor during the Holden Evening Prayer

- Palm Sunday Set-Up: April 12, Saturday, for decorating with Palm branches and plants

- Palm Sunday: April 13, 8:15 – trying to hire a bagpiper for the procession

10:45 – Children's procession will be organized (no bagpiper)

- Maundy Thursday: April 17, Noon & 6:30pm

Communion set-up

Bearing Altar: Servers from Worship & Music, staff, and other group will be organized for Noon & 6:30pm

- Easter Vigil: April 19, Saturday, 6:30pm at Spirit of Hope Lutheran Church (5801 NW 1st Street)

Assignments for First Lutheran: A reader (Pr. Erin)

A Chalice

3 dozen cookies (to start asking volunteers in First Things First)

- Easter Set-Up: April 19, Saturday, 11am

Lilly set-up (Lillies delivery dates will be determined between Jan C. and Mandy)

Decorating the Sanctuary entrance from the Gathering Room and the Balcony (Further discussions need at the next meeting)

- Easter Sunday – 8:00am (brass), 9:30am (brass & choir) 11:00am small ensemble

Children & Youth Choir will participate either 8am or 11am (consulting with the families)

3. From Last Meeting:

- Change Saturday worship time to 5:00 p.m. - Pastors will ask Saturday worshippers

If they vote to change the time, it will be effective when the Summer worship schedule begins.

- One Sunday Worship Service during summer:

This can be done by the Lead Pastor's decision. Pr. Erin will consult for the time with the Church Council and Adult Forum. (Suggestion from Worship & Music for the 9:30am time has been shared).

- From Gifts and Memorials sub committee to W&M to review and act on memorials left to FLC
Dave Pfister, Council liaison, brought to the Church Council.

4. New Committee Member: Bryce Anderson has joined as another Church Council liaison!

5. Next Meeting: failed to set-up the time. Masako will communicate with the members via email.

Respectfully Submitted,

Masako Bacon