

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL
Meeting Agenda

7:00 PM Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Meeting in Upper Room and Via Zoom

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84168009362?pwd=ZUpEQWFwaXF2bmZlVFlvVnI3Nko0dz09>

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

A. Dwelling in the Word & Prayer – Pastor Erin

B. Approve Consent Agenda

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

FLC Vocational Words

ACCOMPANY:

Welcoming, Discipling,
Advocating, Discipling,
Partnering

C. Action Agenda

1. Appointment of Alissa Sandin to Council

D. Financial Update

1. March Budget report
 - a. Gift and Memorial Committee
 - b. Script Program, Bev White (Hill's)a
 - c. Brick Sales

D. Discussion Agenda

1. Vitality Initiative/mission/next faithful step for ministry
2. Star City Pride
3. Sunday greeters and worship assistants
4. Review Town Hall meeting
5. Endowment discussion
6. Staff adjustment discussion

E. Open Comments

F. Sending Prayer: Prayer of St. Patrick

Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger. Amen.

G. Adjournment

Executive Committee

March 30, 2025

The Executive Committee met following the March 30th town hall meeting, instead of the scheduled April 1, 2025 meeting. No new business was discussed.

Parochial Report

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

Members received:

A. by baptism (15 years and under)		
B. by baptism (adult)		
C. transfer from ELCA congregation	3	2
D. other Lutheran	1	1
E. affirmation of faith		
F. transfer from non-Lutheran congregation	1	1
G. other and statistical adjustment		

Members removed:

- A. death
- 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, 2025	1099	909

Average Attendance for March

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
411	490*	382	417	345	313	117	205	212	276*	233

*includes easter

Added:

Baptism:

Affirmation:

Transfer: Julianna Peters (Our Saviors Lutheran in Kansas City, ELCA), Michael Bruntz (St. Luke Methodist in Omaha), Courtney Bruntz (Rejoice Lutheran in Omaha, ELCA), Daphne Bruntz, Deborah Schlatter (Good Shepherd Lutheran in Lincoln, Missouri Synod)

Other:

Removed:

Death:

Transfer:

Dropped Due to Inactivity:

Other:

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

[In Person: Lent Midweek: 124 average](#)

Congregational Council Meeting

First Lutheran Church

March 11, 2025

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dave Pfister, Patrick Hayden-Roy

MEETING RECORDER: Ann Carlson

A. OPENING DEVOTION/PRAYER/CHURCH LEADERSHIP INTRODUCTION:

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

B. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA:

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

It was moved by Kari and seconded by Bryce to add the vacancy on council to the discussion agenda. The motion carried.

It was moved by Judy and seconded by Ann to approve the consent agenda as amended. The motion carried.

C. FINANCIAL UPDATE:

1. February Budget report

Kari went over the budget recap. YTD through February 28, receipts were \$27,577 over budget; expenses were \$5,473 under budget; surplus was \$33,050. After the listening session, there was an increase in pledges in the amount of \$9,000.

2. Insurance Update

The insurance on the church building is up for renewal. As a result of the building materials being incorrectly classified, the premium is going down by \$6,000/year. Previously, we had a \$10,000 deductible for wind/hail. The deductible for wind/hail will now be 1% of the value of the building (\$14 million x 1% = \$140,000). The 1% deductible for wind/hail will be locked in for three years. There is a possibility that the deductible could increase to 2% after three years.

Council members considered a buy-back deductible for this year. For the \$6,000 in insurance premium savings, the deductible could be reduced to \$70,000 rather than

\$140,000 for a wind/hail claim. The consensus was not to buy back the deductible this year.

The council also discussed investing the \$6,000 savings for future deductibles or events where we might choose not to file a claim.

3. Gift and Memorial Committee

The First Lutheran Church Constitution, C18.01D.13, established a Gifts and Memorials Committee. This committee has not been active since it was created. After Easter, Judy, Karen, and another volunteer will make a recommendation as to who shall serve on this committee.

4. Endowment

Council members discussed Appendix B of the First Lutheran Church Constitution. Any undesignated bequests to First Lutheran Church shall be distributed 10% to the Endowment Fund with the remainder distributed by a majority vote of the First Lutheran Church Council.

5. Scrip Program, idea from Bev White

Bev mentioned the idea of Gift Card Fundraising (Scrip). The church would purchase gift certificates from popular retailers at a discount. Members of the congregation would then buy the gift certificates from the church at face value. Someone would need to get the gift card during the week and keep the books.

D. ACTION AGENDA:

1. Election of Angie Ripa to Audit Committee

It was moved by John and seconded by Bev to elect Angie Ripa to the First Lutheran Church Audit Committee for a three-year term 2025-2028. The motion carried.

2. Review Dates of Town Hall Meetings

The next Town Hall Meeting will be Sunday, March 30.

3. Pastor Erin Sabbatical

A summary of Pastor Erin's Sabbatical Proposal for the 2025 Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program was distributed. The council will sign off on the proposal and it will be submitted on March 12.

E. DISCUSSION AGENDA:

1. Council vacancy

Emily Sears resigned from the Council. Steve Eicher was the Chair of the Nominating Committee. He will be contacted to get some names for Council to consider for the vacancy. Rod will talk to Patrick about serving as Secretary of Council on the Executive Committee.

Pastor Erin stated that the church accountant who was just hired cannot take the job due to a family situation. Kari suggested finding out the cost of having an accounting firm do the work. Pastor Erin will follow up with Southwood Lutheran to see which accounting firm does their work.

2. Review Council Retreat/Vitality Initiative Discussion

The Vitality Initiative Discussion was the highlight of the council retreat. It was suggested that the Adult Forum time slot be used to start utilizing the results from the Vitality Initiative by having a group meeting of all committees.

The council briefly discussed the idea of having one service on Sunday during the summer. Will Adult Forum meet during the summer? What is the ideal time for Sunday service?

3. Committee structure, Council Liaison Role

Council members received information about the committee assigned to them. They will check with that committee to see what is needed.

4. Review Congregational Listening Session, Council Commitment to Congregation for next Town Hall

- The council needs a prepared response for where we are with the 2025 budget.
- The 2026 budget should be ready in September, before the first meeting of the Stewardship Committee. The Stewardship Committee could then have a goal of the receipts needed to cover the projected expenses.
- Kari discussed a few options for reducing expenses.
- The survey results could be shown in a graph.
- The Executive Committee will finalize the agenda for the Town Hall.

5. Survey Results discussion

The group discussed the results of the survey.

6. Church Closing Policy

Most places like churches follow the Lincoln Public Schools closing policy as it is easy to follow. We will need to get a written policy in place stating this information.

F. OPEN COMMENTS: None

G. SENDING PRAYER: The group read the printed sending prayer together.

H. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:05.

Associate Pastor

I want to begin my report by reminding you of how my report is organized. The list that I include only includes the activities/programs/meetings that happen infrequently. This does not mean that those few activities are 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. Listing those would make my report far too long to read. The things you will see listed in the report are those that happen less often, i.e. Justice in Action, Micah 6:8, cluster gatherings, etc. These are not scheduled in regular intervals and happen on a less frequent basis and I want to keep you informed of the special/infrequent/extra activities in my calendar related to being the associate pastor. Below you will find a list of what I've done this month, which is not inclusive of all I've done this month, and a list that includes what is already scheduled for next month...

March 13 – Chrism Mass

16 – potluck and board games

23 – First communion class

30 – Town Hall

April 3 – Justice in Action

April 5 – NLOM Gala

11 – NLOM board meeting

13-20 – Holy Week and Easter

30 – Youth committee

May 1 – Justice in Action

12-16 – Festival of Homiletics online

25 – wedding

30-June 2 – Synod Assembly

Our Lincoln Area Cluster Easter Vigil service will be held at Spirit of Hope on April 19th. Come and celebrate the vigil with other ELCA members from around Lincoln. Several churches are participating this year – First, Grace, Zion, Spirit of Hope, Shepherd of the Hills, the Lutheran Center. Come and worship with fellow Lutherans. Worship begins at 6:30PM.

I was asked a few months ago to teach an Emmaus class on the book of Job for the synod. That class will take place throughout the month of April. I have three PMA students and a deacon as part of the class, there getting continuing ed hours. We obviously won't be able to get through the entire book in our class periods, but we should be able to read through enough of it so that everyone gets a sense of Job. Fun fact, Job is actually an epic poem. Think something similar to the Odyssey. Several people in the class mentioned that they have a hard time understanding Job, but when they looked

at it through the lens of it being a poem, it began to make more sense. That class will wrap up April 30th.

I am now an official member of the Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (NLOM) board. I will be at the gala this weekend and have board orientation and training next week. The board meets quarterly, usually at Carol Joy Holling, and usually on Thursday mornings.

The two bigger Justice in Action gatherings take place a month apart. The big one to keep an eye on and be prepared to be a part of is the Nehemiah Convention on May 1st. This will be a gathering of over 1,000 community members who care about the direction of our community. Free tickets are available if you have not been asked to attend and would like to. Just ask and we'll get you in.

The Festival of Homiletics is an annual continuing ed opportunity for pastors and preachers hosted by Luther Seminary. Pr. Carla at American will be hosting an online watch party for the Festival. I'll plan on attending many of those sessions at American.

That is about all I have to highlight this month. As always, feel free to ask if there are other details you would like to know about.

Thank you all for what you do. And happy Holy Week and Easter!

Pr. Andrew, Associate Pastor.

March 2025

Sunday Morning Musicians

March 2	both	Jazz Team (Bryce Anderson, Tony Anderson, Kristi Fisher, Alex Hinton, Spencer Janssen, RJ Metteer, Bob Schoettger, Jay Sears, 8:15- Martha Tanner, 10:45 – Tom Thorpe, Malcolm Pfister, Kyle Schmitter, Anna Wemhoff)
March 9	both	Spirit Ringers 8:15 Adult Choir, David Pitts 10:45 Kathy Havlicek-Cook
March 16	both	Brian Niebuhr, Connie Kisling 8:15 Martha Tanner, Adult Choir 10:45 Erin Niebuhr, Will Niebuhr
March 23	8:15	Ann Nitzel, Vocal Quartet (Betsy Bjerke, Priscilla Hayden-Roy, Ann Nitzel, Martha Tanner), Adult Choir 10:45 Navy Mathes, Youth Orff Ensemble
March 30	8:15	Brian Niebuhr, Erin Pfister, Bonita Thomsen, Adult Choir 10:45 Amanda Andersen, Bennett Bacon, String Ensemble (Kaitlyn Brock, Konnor Garrett, Mai Jacobo, Kayla Peters, Jenna Troutman, Elsa Wemhoff, Bennett Bacon)

Saturday Musicians

March 1, 8, 22, – Christine Carman March 15, 29 - Kristina Hanson

Ash Wednesday

March 5 Noon Cancelled due to snow
 6:30 Bryce Anderson, Adult Choir

Holden Evening Prayer

March 12 Noon	Sharon Hardel, Christine Carman	6:30 Pr. Bill & Judy Peterson
March 19	Cancelled due to blizzard	
March 26 Noon	Kari Hoeft	6:30 Martha Tanner

HOLY WEEK/EATER WORSHIP SERVICES

April 13 (Palm Sunday)	Both	Passion Reading
	8:15am	Bagpipe, Cello
	10:45am	Adult Choir, String Ensemble
April 17 (Maundy Thursday)	Noon	Cantor
	6:30pm	1 st Communion, Adult Choir
April 18 (Good Friday)	Both	The Seven Last Words of Christ (multiple readers)

April 19 (Easter Vigil)	7:00pm Combined ELCA churches at Spirit of Hope (no 5:30pm worship at First Lutheran)
April 20 (Easter)	8:00am Brass 9:30am Brass, Adult Choir 11:00am Youth/ Faith Trek

Overview

- Worked on Lent, Holy Week, and Easter Worship service details. (included in Worship & Music Minutes)
Especially please take a look for special worship services and worship time change proposal.
- March snow impacted 2 Wednesdays: No Ash Wednesday Noon service (3/5) and no Adult Choir or any events on March 19.
- Grateful for wonderful volunteer music leaders (Brian & Erin Niebuhr and Bonita Thomsen) while we are away.
- We had a large number of children gather to practice Easter music on March 30.
- Thanks to those take on Worship Assistant roles week after week. We have been receiving about difficulty of using Realm to sign-up.

Respectfully submitted,

Soli Deo Gloria

Masako Bacon

March 2025 Council Report

This month, we built on the lessons of the lectionary involving the Parables of the fig tree and the prodigal son. The cherubs also practiced for the 11:00 upcoming Easter service. We talked about how Mary M cared for Jesus by washing his feet, and how we are shown care as well as how we care for others.

We had 2 FaithTrekks receive education from the pastors over their first communion, and are excited to receive it on Maundy Thursday this month. The quilters gave us a demonstration of how they make quilts for multiple agencies, and we made quilt squares for future quilting projects.

I am preparing for end of year activities, and providing thank you gifts for teachers, as well as attending multiple soccer and school events of FaithTrekks. I believe that it's important that they know I care outside of the church walls.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura G

Youth and Family Ministry Report to Council March 11 – April 8, 2025

VBS update we had a decorating night on March 24, Joan Johnson, Bev, Sawyer, and Kenton White, and Beth Wiebelhaus represented First Lutheran, 4 members of Our Saviour's Lutheran also joined us. We made flowers, sketched out animals, and made posters of interesting facts for each country we will learn about. Karrie and I met for more planning on April 3. The registration form is up and ready to receive attendees.

Sunday Learning Thanks to Dave Schmitter, Mark Mesarch, and Jenna Troutman for leading the Middle and High School learning sessions for a few weeks while I facilitated the Adult Forum Bonhoeffer lesson with Patrick Hayden Roy. After seeing Mark in Fiddler on the Roof, the song "Miracles of Miracles" inspired me to write a lesson for the youth to look at the bible stories in the song and have conversation about where they see God and how God acts in the world today. I will lead the lesson on April 6 and we will look at the Faith Lens lesson on Lent, Sorrow, and Joy.

Youth Group March 12 we had 3 youth gather to put together water filters to be sent to people experiencing natural disasters and / or clean drinking water from contaminated rivers and wells. We used Thrivent sponsored kits through the "Wine to Water" company. We also held an intergenerational game day on March 16 with a pot luck lunch...we had about 25 – 30 people of all ages. 3 youth joined us on March 23 for lunch and a movie after worship. We had some great conversation about what they had discussed in learning that morning and what was going on in their lives. On April 6 we will go to lunch and a round of mini golf. I have been sending out a photo each week during Lent to the High School students and parents asking them how the photo speaks about faith and God.

Discipleship University was cancelled on March 19 due to a blizzard. Youth gathered with their mentors on April 2 for conversation and some youth have been coming on other Wednesday evenings as well. We had 2 youth that did not attend any of the mentor sessions, with one parent contacting us about their absence both times and one only contacting us early in March to say they would try to attend but scheduling was difficult due to other obligations. A special thanks to those who served as mentors.

Summer Nashville and South Dakota Trips Update: Final registration paperwork for the Nashville trip has been submitted, with final payment due on May 1. Plans are still developing for the South Dakota trip. A Soup-to-Go fundraiser is currently up and running for Sunday April 13. Be sure to place your orders...families have volunteered to make 6 different kinds of soup for the fundraiser.

Other Items:

I had ordered 12 tickets for the Nadia Bolz-Weber Red State Revival on April 3. Jenna and Maya represented our "youth" and several others from our Gather and Gab group attended. We saw many members of First Lutheran who secured their own tickets. It was a powerful night of singing and inspiring words of hope.

I have texted several of our UNL students about the Lutheran Student Center Creative Concert with Flamy Grant and plan to attend on April 4.

We have 10 attendees going to the Carol Joy Holling Camp Gala on April 5 and are looking forward to the evening. Attendees are Rod and Anne Johnson, Pastors Andrew and Lori Kitizing, Erin and Malcolm Pfister, Lillie Rademacher, Evan Fort (Lillie's fiancée), and Kent and Sharon Hardel.

I began attending the Las Abejitas / First Lutheran committee. First Lutheran has been asked to sponsor meals for a parent education program for 4 nights, April 8, 10, 15, and 17. Harold Sutter and I have each received a Thrivent grant for buying food. Carla Osberg and I are fixing baked potatoes on April 8, Donice Kaspar and other committee members plus some of our readers are taking care of the other evenings. First reader volunteers and Confirmation class will also be preparing the outdoor classroom planters so that oldest group of children can plant seeds. Confirmands will put in some plants on April 27. A Thrivent grant will also cover the cost for soil, plants, and seeds.

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.

I attended Kent's Annual Ataxia Conference in Vegas from 3/3/27 – 3/31.

Upcoming Activities:

Intergenerational Events: 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

The scheduled synod middle school event in Omaha was cancelled due to only having 2 people register – Stephen Fisher and me.

Blessings,

Sharon Hardel

Dir. of Youth and Family Ministry

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

Attending: Chair Norman Kempf, Pastor Erin Heidelberger, Rod Johnson, Les Carlson, Steve Lenzen, Bob Batterman, Janis Strautkalns, Richard Draper, Brandon Wiebelhaus, Steve Doolittle

Meeting time: 7:00 PM

Opening prayer: Les

Minute taker: Les

Minutes of the February PC meeting were approved.

Agenda:

1. Steve L gave another update on HVAC software progress. This project is almost completed but requires some additional adjustment. Steve also said there is a minor leak downstairs that he can monitor when a camera for that area is installed.
2. According to Rod the FLC constitution confirms the Gifts and Memorial committee as one of the FLC regular committees and it will be (re)established with two council members being responsible for this committee. Discussion of this committee occurred because Shirley Huls' daughter had asked about the status of a prior funded request by the Huls family for new window treatments in the chapel. The PC is now responsible for moving this project forward which at this stage will entail Steve L contacting Molly Goninan for ideas on designs for the windows.
3. Rod discussed various ideas and plans for funding future large projects such as the parking lot and sidewalks and mentioned that additional information and conversation about such issues will occur at the luncheon on Sunday. He also told the PC about adjustments regarding the building insurance premium.
4. Norman provided details about the forthcoming church inspection by Brotherhood Mutual on April 8th at 10:30 am and contacts by Hair Shunnarah. PC members, church staff, and church members are not to sit for depositions during this inspection. Contact Samatha Corcoran if additional guidance is needed. Her phone number is 504 384-2561.

Prayer: April Bob

Note taker: Les

Norman Kempf, Chairman

Fellowship Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Attending: Judy Batterman, Judy Bailey, Teresa Brohimer, Pat DeWald, Carlene Falos, Ann Allen, Linda Carlson

Devotions were given by Pat DeWald. (Remember Matt 5:14)

April devotions: Linda Carlson

There were no past events to review this month.

Upcoming Events:

1. **Lenten Lunches and Suppers** – First meals are tomorrow, March 12. Thus far there are commitments for five soups. Several committee members offered to make soup to complete our needs. There will be enough kitchen helpers from the committee for both lunch and supper. This year's proceeds will go to Lutheran Family Services.

March 19 – Meals will be pulled pork sandwiches with barbeque sauce mixed in the pork. Carlene will supply the buns and pickles. Judy Batterman will pick up the pork. We will need salsa and chips as well. Those who offered to bring sheet cakes are Pat, Judy Bailey, Ann, Carlene, and Linda C.

Confirmation students, parents, and mentors will come for the non-soup suppers on **March 19 and April 2**, possibly adding 18 more people.

March 26 – Three have signed up to bring lunch soup so far, and none for supper. Judy will keep her eye on that and let us know if we need to make more soups.

April 2 – We will serve taco bowls. For that, we will need hamburger, taco seasoning, rice, beans, sour cream and cheese. Those who offered to bring cakes were Ann and Teresa. Judy Batterman will let us know before this date as to what we will need.

April 9 – So far two people have offered to bring soup. We will meet on April 8, and will be able to plan accordingly for the next day's meals.

2. **Easter Egg Hunt** – April 12, the Saturday before Palm Sunday. Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Committee members should be at church at 9:00 a.m. **All registration will be through bulletin inserts and NOT online.** The committee considered information needed on the sheet, and Judy Batterman will ask Mandy to create them. **Deadline for registration: Monday, April 7.** Our hope is that Bev White will again give a puppet show; Judy Batterman will ask her. We wish to invite the children of Las Abejitas to join the event. Judy Batterman will work with the director to create a bilingual registration form for the children's parents.

3. **Easter Breakfast** – April 20. Serving from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. (Worship services will be at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00.) **The sign-up to bring breakfast casseroles and/or coffee cakes will NOT be online, but via bulletin inserts.**

4. **Town Hall Potluck & Meeting** – March 30. We will organize the food, serve the meal, and clean up.

5. **Saltdogs Tailgate & Game** – Judy Bailey has been working with their events director, Kanae Kuhuel, who asked us to choose a date from the following Fridays with fireworks: June 20 & 27, July 11 & 18, August 1 & 15. **We chose July 11.** Tickets will be \$16. Judy Bailey will get 40 tickets, with the option of getting more as needed.

Our next meeting will be at 5:30 on April 8.

Devotions will be given by Linda Carlson.

Submitted by Linda Carlson, Secretary