

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Meeting Agenda

7:00 PM Tuesday, February 10, 2026

Meeting in Upper Room and Via Zoom

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

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

- A. Dwelling in the Word and Prayer – Pastor Erin
- B. Approve Consent Agenda
 - 1. Meeting Agenda
 - 2. Congregational Council Minutes –January 13, 2026
 - 3. Parochial Report
 - 4. Staff Reports
 - 5. Committee Reports
 - 6. Approval of lead pastor’s salary
- C. Financial Update
 - 1. January financials
 - 2. Matching fund challenge update
- D. Action Agenda
 - 1. Dates of town hall meetings: May 3, July 26, Nov. 8
 - 2. Appointment to audit committee
 - 3. Mutual ministry committee
- E. Discussion Agenda
 - 1. Council retreat/goal-setting
 - 2. Town hall meetings: volunteer recognition, church picnic
 - 3. UNL Lutheran Center Created Concert sponsorship
 - 4. Immigrant accompaniment: response protocol
 - 5. Committee/ministry team updates from council liaisons
 - a. Worship & Music (Bryce)
 - b. Christian Education: Youth (Bev, Jenna); Adult Forum (Patrick, Rod)
 - c. Social Ministry (Karen)
 - d. Property (Rod)
 - e. Stewardship (John)
 - f. Fellowship (Judy)
 - g. Nominating
 - h. Gifts and Memorials (Karen)
 - i. Community, Connections, and Collaboration (Kari)
- E. Open Comments
- F. Sending Prayer
- G. Adjournment

FLC Vocational Words

Accompany

Welcoming

Embracing

Discipling

Advocating

Partnering

First Lutheran Church Council Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Feb 3, 2026 7:00 pm

Present: Bryce Anderson, Rod Johnson, Pastor Andrew Kitzing, Pastor Erin Heidelberger, Patrick Hayden-Roy

Meeting called to order at 7:02

Opening Prayer--Pastor Erin

Treasurer/Budget Committee –

Challenge Update: Making excellent progress with much of the pledges to come by the March date. Suggestion was made about making thank you calls to those who pledge when the campaign closes.

Next Council Feb 10th

Approval of Lead Pastor Salary: 3% increase.

Constitutional updates: How do we want to proceed with this process--one big project? Or smaller projects each month. We will look for volunteers, including Alissa Sandin, who has already spoken up. We can look for others outside the Council.

Discussion

Council Retreat: What would be a good date? We will consult with Council, possibly Feb. 28th.

Goal Setting would be on the agenda, but we can get ideas in the Feb. Council meeting. Otherwise it will involve the usual orientation content.

Town Hall Meetings: We anticipate keeping to a quarterly schedule, as in the past. First would be in April/May/June--May 3rd might be the best, given other commitments. July 26th was put forward for the next date. Final Town Hall would be November 8th, which is the date of the Half Marathon (no early service). The July Town Hall might involve a picnic. Volunteer recognition might also be part of one of the Town Halls. Ministry Fair might also be involved, or through some other vehicle to highlight the Committees and their work.

Audit Committee: Lanny Carlson, Steve Doolittle, Angie Ripa. Lanny is in the last year. Brian will be looking for a name to step on to this Committee. Steven Henn might be a good one to ask. No rush given they won't meet until the end of the year.

Committee Liaisons:

Endowment Board: P or VP should make meetings from time to time. They will next meet next Wednesday, Feb. 12, 7:00 pm.

Nominating Committee: Need a Council representative--we can ask for a volunteer.

Need a new chairperson to lead the Stewardship pledge campaign next year. Perhaps the Henns as co-chairs? The committee needs a few more people to fill it out. Need to ask for ideas.

Rod will circulate a sheet for sign-ups to Committees.

Las Abejitas review: Kari will be getting the group together.

Community Connections and Building: Committee has come up with a number of ideas. We will want to make sure that they understand the support of the Council for their work. Look at how the Council can work with them. We may want to have attendance of a representative at Council so we can get a better sense of their objectives.

Mutual Ministry Committee: One or two committees? Function? If we discuss this in Council we may wish to have a description of its role. We may want to look back to when it was meeting last. We will want to move forward with reconstituting it.

Pastor Erin,

Accompaniment Immigrants: We need a written response were there to be a visit from the ICE; what are we obligated to do, what are they legally allowed to do. She shared a sample from an Iowa church, which could provide a model for us, with some adaptations. Las Abejitas would be the greater concern, given the profile of those families. We need to get out front on this prior to something happening. We would draw something up and get Synod input and any other legal counsel that would be apt. We should introduce the model to Council and get input this month.

Guardian Angel Training: This is available; they are starting this up again in March; we can make this available to those who would be interested--this involves being in court with minors as accompanying support.

Pastor Erin shared a request from the Lutheran Campus Center for support for their Created Concert, which has been held two times so far. They are looking for any contribution that might be forthcoming to support the \$4500 cost of the event. This is something to share with the Council and get input. Liz Kocher, Pastor of the Center has been invited to the next Council meeting.

Closing: The Lord's Prayer was used to bring the meeting to a close.

Recorder: Patrick Hayden-Roy

Parochial Report

	Baptized	Confirmed
1. MEMBERSHIP as of January 1, 2026	1091	907

Members received:

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

Members removed:

A. death	1	1
B. transfer to ELCA congregation		
C. transfer to other Lutheran congregation		
D. transfer to non-Lutheran congregation		
E. other and statistical adjustment		

MEMBERSHIP as of January 31, 2026	1090	906
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Average Attendance for January - *in-person only*

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
352	341	391	366	344	Online	118	189	240	238	205

Added:

- Baptism:
- Affirmation:
- Transfer:
- Other:

Removed:

- Death: Donna Nelson
- Transfer:
- Dropped Due to Inactivity:
- Other:

Notes: [Live Stream average for January 2026: data unavailable](#)

Congregational Council Meeting

First Lutheran Church

January 13, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kari Hoeft, Pastor Erin Heidelberger, Bev White, Rod Johnson, Alissa Sandin, Judy Batterman, Jenna Troutman, Bryce Anderson, Patrick Hayden-Roy, Karen Statham, John Bonaiuto

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dave Pfister, Pastor Andrew Kitzing, Ann Bouma

MEETING RECORDER: Ann Carlson

A. OPENING DEVOTION/PRAYER/CHURCH LEADERSHIP INTRODUCTION:

The meeting was called to order by Council President Rod Johnson at 7:03. Pastor Erin led the opening devotion and prayer.

B. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Meeting agenda
2. Congregational Council Minutes – December 9, 2025
3. Parochial Report
4. Staff Reports
5. Committee Reports

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

C. FINANCIAL UPDATE:

1. 2025 Budget Final Report, Kari-Treasurer

When the 2025 budget was developed, \$77,457 Fund II monies were included in order to present a balanced budget...\$36,000 from Contingency Fund, \$30,000 from Mortgage Transition Fund, and \$11,457 from Memorials/Thrivent Fund.

YTD receipts through December 31, 2025, were \$36,365 over budget; YTD expenses through December 31, 2025, were \$19,192 under budget; YTD surplus through December 31, 2025, was \$55,557.

The \$55,557 surplus includes the monies transferred from Fund II, so essentially, we had a (\$21,900) deficit utilizing only Fund I results.

We saw another year of extreme generosity. In addition to \$96,933 benevolence included in the budget (10% of offering receipts), the congregation donated \$72,368 in additional benevolence. This does not include donations of shoes, clothing, food, etc.

2. 2026 Pledge update/Budget proposal, Kari-Treasurer

The 2026 budget recommended by the finance committee is based on total receipts and expenditures of \$1,015,300.

The council thanked Bryan and everyone who weighed in on the budget for their work.

3. Mortgage reduction options

- When the construction loan was converted to a 25-year mortgage in 2020, our beginning mortgage balance was \$2,068,000. By the end of 2025, our mortgage balance was \$981,364 after making five years of payments and \$867,500 pre-payments from capital campaigns.
- No prepayments have been made during the past couple of years as we have been earning a higher percentage on the Mortgage Transition Fund investments versus the mortgage rate of 3.95%.
- Our mortgage rate is scheduled to be re-set to current market rate in April 2026. It is anticipated that the new rate for the next five years will be in the 6.25% range. The balance in our Mortgage Transition Fund is \$311,309 with plans being developed to make a mortgage pre-payment early next year when we will not be able to earn an investment rate in excess of the mortgage rate.
- Rod discussed a mortgage challenge. An anonymous member of the congregation has offered to match up to \$100,000 of pledges made to this special campaign.
- The 2026 budget allows for a \$250,000 mortgage pre-payment. If this pre-payment were made, the monthly mortgage payment would go to \$5,402/month, assuming a nineteen-year amortization and a 6.25% interest rate. The current monthly mortgage payment through April 2026 is \$6,333/month. The savings over nineteen years with a \$250,000 prepayment would be \$427,956 and the mortgage balance would be \$720,000.
- If members were to make pledges to this special campaign in the amount of \$75,000 plus the \$75,000 challenge match, the monthly payment would be \$4,277, assuming a nineteen-year amortization and a 6.25% interest rate. The savings over nineteen years with a \$400,000 prepayment would be \$684,456 and the mortgage balance would be \$570,000.
- If members were to make pledges to this special campaign in the amount of \$100,000 plus the \$100,000 challenge match, the monthly payment would be \$3,902, assuming a nineteen-year amortization and a 6.25% interest rate. The savings over nineteen years with a \$450,000 prepayment would be \$769,956 and the mortgage balance would be \$520,000.
- Similar figures were presented if the mortgage was to be amortized over a 15-year period.

D. ACTION AGENDA:

1. 2025 Budget Motion

It was moved by Patrick and seconded by Alissa to transfer the \$55,557 surplus to the following Fund II accounts: \$36,000 Contingency Fund and \$19,557 Mortgage Transition Fund. The motion carried.

2. 2026 Budget Motion

It was moved by Judy and seconded by Patrick to approve the budget of \$1,015,300 for fiscal year 2026. The motion carried.

E. DISCUSSION AGENDA:

1. Annual Meeting preview sessions

- a. Preview Sessions January 11th Completed, comments
The consensus was that the January 11 preview session went well.
- b. January 18th – Agenda Discussion
The agenda for the January 18 preview session will follow the January 11th session agenda.
- c. January 25th Annual Meeting
 - Council members who are not running for reelection are asked to be ballot counters at the Annual Meeting.
 - Dave Pfister and Judy Batterman were thanked for completing two terms on Council.
 - Rod thanked Alissa Sandin and Ann Bouma, who both stepped up to answer the call to complete terms when we needed to fill vacancies on the Council.

2. Verbal pastors' reports

- Council members should save the date of Saturday, February 28, from 9:00 a.m. to noon to listen to Synod Leaders Training via Zoom.
- Goal setting for next year's council will happen at the March meeting.
- Pastor Erin distributed a document entitled Palm Sunday Path. It discusses a strategy for the church to be meeting this moment and contributing to what will move our country in a different direction.

3. Committee/ministry team updates from council liaisons

- a. Worship and Music (Dave, Bryce)
There is a continued need for worship assistants and ushers for Sunday services.
- b. Christian Education: Youth (Bev, Jenna); Adult Forum (Patrick, Rod)
Youth – there will be a meeting tomorrow. There is a new Lego Cart. There are online youth discussions once/month.
Adult Forum – Future sessions include confessional stances and the most recent social statement of the ELCA, Pastor Erin's sabbatical, and Gather Lincoln.
- c. Social Ministry (Karen)
The next meeting will be in February.

- d. Property (Rod)
A date in July 2026 has been set for the trial regarding the insurance claim on the roof.
- e. Stewardship (John)
The Stewardship Committee has done its work for now. We will need a new Chair of the committee next year.
- f. Fellowship (Judy)
Forty-five people attended Christmas dinner. Lent is coming up quickly. February 25 is the first Lenten meal. Soup will be served for the first three weeks. Something else will be served for the last two weeks.
- g. Nominating (Dave)
No report.
- h. Gifts and Memorials (Karen)
The Gifts and Memorials committee will meet in February. Alissa would like to attend their next meeting.
- i. Community, Connections, and Collaboration (Kari)
This team has been working on many things including:
- Photo church directory (important for the Nominating Committee)
 - Wild Women – next event is February 23
 - Gifts of Hope
 - Spring Fling
 - Fall Event
 - Photo booth for Christmas

Justice in Action – a meeting in conjunction with a pancake feed is being considered.

Raise Rite – approximately \$900 has been raised thus far. There is an increasing need to feed the number of individuals who dine at Matt Talbot. Raise Rite fundraising proceeds will go to the Matt Talbot Fund. Information about a discount at Don and Millies will be published after the Annual Meeting.

Pastor Erin will be meeting with the Mosaic staff.

F. OPEN COMMENTS:

There will be a short organizational meeting for Council after the Annual Meeting.

G. SENDING PRAYER:

Pastor Erin led the closing prayer.

H. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 8:36.

MEETING DATE: February 10, 2026

SUBJECT: Salary increase for Lead Pastor

PROPOSED ACTION: Approve a 3% salary increase for Lead Pastor Erin Heidelberger effective March 1, 2026.

BACKGROUND: According to the Constitution by-laws of First Lutheran Church:

C.18.01.C.13. A Compensation Review Committee is hereby established to prepare staff salary recommendations for the ensuing budget year for Congregation Council consideration. The committee shall be comprised of the Lead Pastor, the Council Designee for Employee-related Matters/Ombudsman, and a member of the Council. The Executive Committee shall prepare for Council consideration a salary recommendation for the Lead Pastor for the ensuing budget year.

The Compensation Committee recommended, and the Council and congregation approved a 3% across-the-board increase for all staff for the ensuing year. As required by the Constitution by-laws, Council must take specific action to authorize any salary increase for the lead pastor. This motion authorizes the 3% salary increase for Lead Pastor Erin Heidelberger effective March 1, 2026.

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

Welcome to our new council members Mark Mesarch, Shannon Meyer, and Julianna Peters! I'm grateful to have you in leadership at First and for the gifts you bring to the council. Thank you, too, to those who are serving a second term and those serving on executive council this year. I also want to express deep gratitude for our matching gift donor and to the congregation who has responded to this matching gift challenge so generously.

Continuing education: I attended the Crossings Community annual theology conference Jan. 11-14 (attended via Zoom) with the theme "In Christ for Good: The Gospel and Christian Behavior".

Vitality Initiative Guide: I have finished the Vitality Initiative Guide, which our VI team planned as the final piece of their work. This is a guide for current and future ministry teams that explains FLC's vocational words and guides teams as they carry out ministry events. I'll have this available to council members at our council retreat.

MOSAIC partnership: We are on track to begin hosting MOSAIC's day services programming in our lower level. They are working with their national supports to finalize everything necessary on their end and will likely begin in May.

Lent: We are gearing up for Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday on February 18. We will once again worship with Holden Evening Prayer at noon and 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays during Lent. With the theme "Good Neighbors", we'll hear from both FLC members and others in our community about being at work in the world for the sake of our neighbors. Our weekly emailed devotions will draw on Luther's writing "The Freedom of a Christian".

Immigrant accompaniment - written response policy and preparedness plan: In light of both the recent expansion of immigration enforcement and the rescinding of Protected Areas Policies (which happened a year ago and removes protected space designation of public areas of houses of worship), it is time for First Lutheran to develop a written response policy and preparedness plan in case Immigration and Customs Enforcement seeks to detain anyone on church grounds. This is a needed step in our accompaniment of immigrants, not only those who are staff or family members of Las Abejitas but also immigrants who are members of First and/or attend the Nuer service, so that we and they know our rights and ensure that these neighbors do not face whatever may come next alone. An example of protocols has been sent to you separately (not included in the council packet); this is a solid resource to start with and adapt to be specific to our context.

Grace + Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Erin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Associate Pastor Council Report

February 2026

Jan 6 – Cluster Epiphany service at Grace

8 – JIA Clergy Caucus

26 – Synod Micah 6:8 Meeting

Feb 13 – Parent’s Night Out

17 – Mardi Gras Pancakes

18 – Ash Wednesday

26 – Cluster Clergy Gathering

March 9 – Lutheran Legislative Day at the Capitol

21 – Synod Guardian Angel Training on zoom

Last month’s Epiphany service was a great opportunity to gather with our friends and neighbors across Lincoln for soup and worship. Grace hosted the service this year. Thank you to everyone from First who took the opportunity to gather for worship.

Two synod activities that I want to draw everyone’s attention to. First, the Lutheran Legislative day is on Monday, March 9. The day begins at St. Paul’s Methodist and involves conversations with leaders from our serving arms and a chance to meet with legislators. All senators are invited to attend and meet with ELCA members. We do know that the two senators who belong to ELCA churches will be attending. There is more information and a sign-up page on the synod website – nebraskasynod.org.

Secondly, the synod will host a Guardian Angel training session on March 21 on zoom. This is in conjunction with AMMPARO. This is open to anyone who would like to be trained in how to be a guardian angel for those moving through the immigration process. Guardian angels attend hearings at the immigration court in Omaha as a non-anxious presence. It is not a legal service, and you will not be asked to be part of anyone’s specific legal case. Guardian angels sit in court to provide moral support and a kind face. More information can be found on the synod website.

Don’t forget about pancakes as Chef’s Mandy and Andy provide entertainment and nourishment. You can sign-up and pay on the church’s website, or come on Feb. 17 from 5-7:30 to eat. Proceeds go towards the summer trip and summer camp opportunities for our youth.

Blessings,

Pr. Andrew

Director of Worship and Music
January 2026

Sunday Morning Musicians

January 4	Christmas II	8:15	Bryce Anderson, Courtney Bruntz, Erin Niebuhr
		10:45	Julianna Peters, Bennett Bacon
January 11		8:15	Adult Choir, Gordon Youngquist
	Baptism of Our Lord	10:45	Betsy Bjerke, Boyd Bacon
January 18		8:15	Adult Choir, Martha Tanner, 10:45 Amanda Andersen
January 25		8:15	Adult Choir, Bryce Anderson, 10:45 Tracy Knezevic

Saturday Musicians

January 3,17, 24, 31 – Christine Carman January 10 - Kristina Hanson

Overview

- Taking down of Greenery had a smaller group of volunteers due to the weather and schedule conflicts. Some mentioned decoration was tastefully done and missing the greens after they are taken down.
- There were a few extremely cold Sundays that impacted attendances. We are grateful for people filled the Worship Assistant roles consecutive weeks. Also, thanks go to Adult Choir's steady faithful attendance rain or shine.
- Children/Youth mirrored general attendance. But the Year of our Lord 2026 was kicked off with well-prepared music by Erin Niebuhr, and wonderful direction by Amanda Andersen and Erin.
- January is "catch up time" from Christmas time which changes regular preparation rotation. It is exciting to see the lineup of Jazz Team and Brass for the upcoming months. Our church is blessed have dedicated and talented people.
- A few young people are added to the Cantor/Soloist list!
- Seeking ways to involve young people actively in worship service in coordination with Lillie Rademacher.

Respectfully submitted,
Soli Deo Gloria
Masako Bacon

Lillie Rademacher

Youth Ministry Coordinator

January and February 2026 Council Report

It's been a very busy start to the year, but it's been full of ministry I'm super excited about.

Starting the year off, the Youth hosted and served lunch for First Friday Jazz. In total, we made \$1,500, and all those proceeds went toward our summer accompaniment trip and camp scholarships. We served a walking taco bar, and it was a huge hit! I'll plan to serve that again for Jazz next year.

At the end of January, the Youth also served spaghetti for the Annual Meeting. We had two more kids ask to bring friends, and one was able to join us for the meeting. We raised *almost* \$1,200, so we still have about \$1,700 left to raise for our trip. After Mardi Gras Pancakes, we'll see where we land and go from there!

Following the Annual Meeting, Laura and I were able to attend Extravaganza, a youth worker's conference in St. Louis from January 29th through February 2nd. This conference was very valuable for me; I came back with several ideas I want to implement in our youth program. I want to work out how those ideas will translate to our congregation before announcing them, but stay tuned!

The rest of February will be busy with the start of Lent, and we'll have a couple more fundraisers and a fun activity for the youth—all in one week! On February 13th, we'll be hosting Parent's Night Out. Laura has some very fun Valentine's Day crafts planned, we'll be getting pizza, and watching *The Incredibles!* This is a fundraiser for our summer trip and camp scholarships, so we'll have all our youth going on the trip in attendance to help with the kids. We did not require an RSVP to encourage people who decided at the last minute to bring their kids.

On February 16th, I will be taking Youth Group to Country House on 84th and Old Cheney to play activities with the memory care patients, and following, we'll have lunch at Dairy Queen. We will meet at 10:15 to be at Country House by 10:30.

Finally, on February 17th, we will be hosting Mardi Gras Pancakes. I ordered some fun table decorations, tablecloths, and beads for everyone to get into the Mardi Gras spirit! We do have an RSVP available on Realm, but a reservation is not required. Tickets will be sold on Realm and at the

door for \$10, kids 5 and under eat free. We will start serving pancakes at 5:00 and go until 7:30; hopefully we won't have a blizzard this year!

I'm also working on VBS with Karrie from Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in town, VBS will be June 22nd – June 26th. I am meeting with Karrie soon to discuss curriculum and logistics. I hope to have materials in print and sent out within the next couple of weeks.

For our trip to Pittsburgh, I am planning pre-trip events. I'm looking at dates to schedule but need to line those up before announcing to our participants, and I'm compiling a list of crafts and fun activities to help give our kids a fun experience on this trip.

Again, I'm very excited about the ministry we're doing with our youth, I can't wait to introduce ideas and continue to explore ways we can continue to do ministry with our youth.

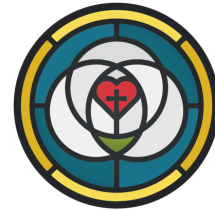
COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

JANUARY 2026

BY KATHLEEN SIMLEY, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

EVENT PROMOTION, OUTREACH & FOLLOW-UP

- Produced two social media videos capturing the essence of our Christmas Eve celebrations: one highlighting the poignant Candle Lighting set to "Silent Night" (<https://vimeo.com/1151740685>) and another featuring a compilation of music and scenes from three of our four worship services (<https://vimeo.com/1151736802>).
- Promoted and shared follow-up stories for the Annual Preview Sessions and the Annual Meeting.
- Supported promotion of the Spaghetti Feed.
- Promoted the Clothing Drive supporting individuals released from the Correctional Center
- Promoted the First Lutheran 201 (FLC 201) class and shared reminders across communication channels.
- Highlighted the Monday Office Volunteers ministry and opportunities for participation.
- Promoted the Community Epiphany Worship Service at Grace Lutheran Church.
- Supported promotion of RaiseRight and Don & Millie's Sunday fundraising efforts.
- Promoted the start of The Matching Fund Mortgage Challenge.
- Promoted the January First Friday Jazz concert.



MY WEEKLY TASKS

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

MY MONTHLY TASKS

- Digital Sign Updates
- Website Updates
- First Friday Jazz

OTHER COMMUNICATION WORK

- Created a task list and timeline for publishing a new Member Photo Directory. The plan was reviewed and approved by the Community Connections and Collaborations (CCC) Team and Pastor Erin. Work will continue on this project in the coming months.

COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY
JANUARY 2026
BY KATHLEEN SIMLEY, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

OTHER COMMUNICATION WORK (CONT)

- Continued work on the next issue of First Stories, with publication scheduled for February.
- Vacation taken January 19-21.

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

- First Things First email open rates averaged 68%, holding steady from December (68%). The mailing list grew to 568 subscribers (up from 556 in December, +12 new subscribers).
- Facebook engagement included 13,908 views (up from 13,046 in December), 303 interactions (down from 930) and 1,214 visits (down from 1,922). The page added 4 new followers for a total of 1,123 (down one from 1,124 in December).
- Instagram recorded 1,358 views (down from 3,676 in December), 31 interactions (down from 55) and 13 visits (down from 23). Five new followers were added for a total of 223 (up from 221).
- Website traffic continued to grow with 7,775 page views (up from 7,153 in December) and 6,325 users (up from 5,373). The livestream page recorded 131 views. Notably, the Resources page ranked among the top three most-viewed pages alongside the Home and About Us pages — a shift from recent months when Events or Calendar pages typically appeared among the top pages.

PLANS FOR FEBRUARY

- Publish the next issue of First Stories.
- Seek vendor bids for a website refresh and update.
- Prepare for Lenten season communications, including Ash Wednesday and Holden Evening Prayer midweek livestreams and weekly devotions.
- Complete preparatory tasks for the Member Photo Directory.
- Recruit an additional volunteer to assist with livestream worship.
- Support the CCC Team as needed

January 2026 Council Report

A few weeks into Jan, we resumed FaithTrek with music and scripture lessons. Roxy had her healthy baby, and parents have stepped up to replace her volunteering in the K group.

Here's a list of items I accomplished this month:

- Continued monitoring and adjusting signup sheet for FaithTrek teachers - there are 2 empty spots in K to fill and the rest is complete until the end of the school year
- Attended the monthly Education committee meeting
- Emailed parents at least weekly with news and updates
- Made lesson plans, copies, and compiled all supplies needed for each week of FaithTrek for all 3 age groups
- Met with Liilie Rademacher for future planning
- Attended staff meetings
- Planned and executed noisy offering for the Malone Center program
- Made, stocked, advertised, and initiated the Lego tray program for all ages during church service- recruited kids to make the Lego "sanctuary" to go along with this.
- Attended the Extravaganza in St Louis with Ms. Lillie
- Chose sessions and workshops during the "E" (if you're cool, you know :)) that I felt would benefit my age group of FaithTrekks
- Wrote my council report :)



Respectfully submitted,
Laura Gaulty

Fellowship Committee Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2026

Attending: Judy Batterman, Gordon Wolfe, Karen Moser, Linda Bogenreif, Carol Tesar, Pat DeWald, Linda Carlson

Devotions were given by Linda Bogenreif.

Review of Past Events: 1. The final **Advent Wednesday meals** were fine, with the usual number of people participating.

2. We were glad to participate in the **Advent candle lighting** at both Sunday services on December 14.

3. The **Christmas Day dinner** fed over 40 people, who were grateful for the community meal. One ham was sufficient to feed all. Judy made lovely placemats, and Janis (who was attending) fixed the dishwasher so that the committee didn't have to wash dishes by hand.

Upcoming Events: 1. Our committee is responsible for serving **coffee between services** this coming Sunday, January 18.

2. **Wednesday Lenten Meals** – There are five Wednesdays in Lent: February 25, and March 4, 11, 18, and 25. (NOTE: Ash Wednesday is on February 18, with a pancake supper Tuesday evening, February 17. Our committee is NOT responsible for this meal.) The committee decided to serve soup for just the first three Wednesdays, and to serve pulled pork sandwiches and burrito bowls for the remaining two. (See minutes from February and March of 2025 for a list of ingredients.) Based on previous years, we expect to need 4 soups for noon and 5 soups for supper. We discussed changing our strategy for finding volunteers to bring soups. We know the congregation members who have donated in the past, and we will call them to determine if they are willing to do so for the season of Lent. In this way, we should have a more reliable expectation for weekly soups.

3. **Easter Egg Hunt** – We will make plans for this event at the March meeting.

Other Business: Judy read to us the report from our committee that will be included in the congregational annual report. The annual congregational meeting will be held on January 25. We are grateful to her not only for the report but for leading our committee. It is a time-consuming job, and she tackles it with great enthusiasm and skill. THANK YOU, JUDY!

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 10, at 5:30. Devotions will be given by Linda Carlson.

Submitted by Linda Carlson, secretary.

**First Lutheran Church
Property Committee Minutes
January 27, 2026**

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

Meeting time: 7:00 PM

Opening prayer Steve Doolittle

Minute taker: Les

Minutes of the November PC meeting were approved.

Agenda:

1. According to Norman the jury trial on the FLC roof has been scheduled for July 13, 2026. Some PC members may be asked to participate.
2. Rod reported that after the recent FLC elections, all FLC council positions remain the same except for a new FLC council Vice Chair.
3. Steve L's knee is ok after surgery; his other knee operation is scheduled for March.
4. Paul Scheel has volunteered to donate time and labor toward repairing FLC property projects. Janis and Steve L provided several project idea options such as lighting for the west parking lot, coordinating and synchronizing lighting in the sanctuary and rooms adjacent to the sanctuary so that one switch can control light in all of these areas, replacing bulbs/repairing light fixtures in the activity center, replacing a light on the southside of FLC, checking capacity of the electrical outlets in the kitchen.
5. Rod updated progress regarding the \$100,000 matching fund offer.
6. PC discussed procedures that might follow the jury trial on July 13, 2026.
7. Steve L offered to obtain an estimate for parking lot surface replacement. Discussion also included the need to develop a long-range plan for financing this project.
8. Norman will put discussion on the cleaning contract on next month's agenda which will include the role that the PC should play regarding this contract.
9. Janis said Pastor Erin had asked about the old pew in the hallway by the north entrance. The PC recommends that the pew stay where it is as it is used by parishioners.
10. Norman will invite Bryon Hanson to the next PC meeting to summarize and explain the current state of FLC utilities costs.

Prayer: February Norman Kempf

Minute taker: Les

Attendants: Harold Sutter, chair; Bryce Anderson, Council representative; Bonita Thomsen, Jan Wigodski, Gordon Youngquist, Boyd Bacon, Masako Bacon

1. Opening Devotion – led by Harold Sutter
2. Review for Christmas Eve Worship Services
 - 3:30pm Communion, which has been challenging due to the extra 2 stations in the back, went very smoothly. Kudos to Bonita for the planning the workable system. Also the extra instruction session ahead of the day was effective.
 - Calling all Worship Assistants 30 minutes prior to each service was helpful.
 - Ushers need an extra instruction including lighting.
3. Summer Worship Time Reconsideration: Recommend to stay at 9:30am.
With Pr. Erin's request, the committee discussed the time for the summer worship service (one service) with various feedback (too early – difficult to have assistance, too late for other commitment, Adult Forum timing, etc.). After discussion, the Committee recommend to stay at the same time from the last year for the consistency as no time is ideal for everyone.
4. Live Streaming responsibility for Worship and Music: Pr. Erin feels strongly this is one of important part of worship that this committee needs to engage. As it is much simplified system being used, the committee members need to be aware how it is operated. The Committee feels this should remain responsibilities for the Communication Director's responsibility. Some concerns is to do with hesitance with technical aptitude.
5. Upcoming Worship/Events :
 - Ash Wednesday is on February 18 (Noon & 6:30pm worship services). Midweek service begins February 25. Pastor plans to have Holden Evening Prayer at 6:30pm time (not like last year with extra classes).
 - No Saturday worship on March 28. Encouraging people to attend on Sunday.
 - Holy Week services, Maundy Thursday & Good Friday Services will remain the same time (Noon & 6:30pm).
 - Easter Vigil will be held as combined among some Lincoln ELCA churches on April 4, Saturday. The details is TBD. No regular Saturday worship at First Lutheran.
 - Easter Worship Service, April 5, (8:00 Adult Choir & Brass, 9:30 Youth, Faith Trek, & Brass, 11:00 solo & ensembles)
 - Nebraska Synod Worship, May 31 (Holy Trinity Sunday)/ beginning of Summer Worship Time. Holy Communion (regular worship service with a guest pastor).
 - Pr. Erin Sabbatical June 24 - September 26
6. Meeting adjourned with the Lord Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Masako Bacon