FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL
Meeting Agenda
7:00 PM Tuesday, October 13, 2026
Meeting in Upper Room and Via Zoom
Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84168009362?pwd=ZUpEQWFwaXF2bmZlVFIvVnI3Nko0dz09

A. Opening Devotion/Prayer and Church Leadership introduction – Pastor Andrew

B. Approve Consent Agenda
1. Meeting Agenda
2. Congregational Council Minutes – Sept 8, 2026
3. Parochial Report
4. Staff Reports
5. Committee Printed Reports

C. Action Agenda
1. Employee Health Insurance

D. Financial Report
1. September Financials
2. Finance Committee
3. Fund II Accounts

E. Discussion Agenda
1. Action from Committee Meeting Sept 9, 2026
2. Connection Point update
3. Constitution Review, (Anticipated Completion/presentation for approval)
4. Staff Updates
   Employee Handbook Updates
5. Committee liaison,
   a. Worship and Music (Mark, Alissa)
   b. Christian Education: Youth (Bev, Jenna); Adult Forum (Patrick, Rod)
   c. Social Ministry (Karen)
   d. Property (Rod)
      Roof discussion
   e. Stewardship (John)
      Pr. Erin Proposal
   f. Fellowship (Shanon, Julianna)
   g. Nominating (Bryce)
   h. Gifts and Memorial discussion – (Karen)
   h. Community Connections and Collaboration – (Kari)

E. Open Comments

F. Sending Prayer

G. Adjournment

Parochial Report

	Baptized	Confirmed
1. MEMBERSHIP as of September 1, 2026	1088	902

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
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 September 30, 2026	1088	902

Average Attendance for September - *in-person only*

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	202	2024	2025	2026
436	382	345	294	Online	193	224	228	222	222	164

Added: 0

Baptism:
Affirmation:
Transfer:
Other:

Removed: 0

Death:
Transfer:
Dropped Due to Inactivity:
Other:

Notes: Live Stream average for September 2025 is: no data available

Congregational Council Meeting

First Lutheran Church

September 6, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rod Johnson, Alissa Sandin, Pastor Andrew Kitzing, Bryce Anderson, Jenna Troutman, Shanon Meyer, Bev White, Julianna Peters, Karen Statham

MEMBERS ABSENT: Pastor Erin Heidelberger, Patrick Hayden-Roy, Mark Mesarch, John Bonaiuto, Kari Hoeft

GUESTS: Bryan Hanson

MEETING RECORDER: Ann Carlson

A. OPENING DEVOTION/PRAYER:
The meeting was called to order by Council President Rod Johnson at 7:05. Pastor Andrew led the opening devotion and prayer.

B. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA:
1. Meeting agenda
2. Congregational Council Minutes – August 11, 2026
3. Parochial Report
4. Staff Reports
5. Committee Printed Reports

It was moved by Bryce and seconded by Julianna to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried.

C. ACTION AGENDA:
1. Flag Resolution
It was moved by Jenna and seconded by Bev to maintain the current church policy of not displaying flags and non-religious symbols in the church or on church grounds. The motion carried.

D. FINANCIAL REPORT:
1. August Financials
YTD receipts through August 31, 2026, were $25,146 under budget; YTD expenses through August 31, 2026, were $11,192 under budget; YTD deficit through August 31, 2026, was $13,954.

- Pledged receipts collected thus far in 2026 are right on target.
- Non-pledged receipts are way down this year.
- At this point, Bryan is projecting a $21,000 deficit at the end of the year.
- Las Abejitas is behind in paying its rent due to Department of Health and Human Services (“DHHS”) for families.

- The actual cost of improving the parking lot was $4,495. It will be paid from Fund II.
- Bryan and others are working on the first draft of the 2027 budget.
- For 2027, there will be a 15% increase in the cost of health insurance through Portico, assuming we continue with the same coverage. Health insurance will need to be reviewed.

2. Employee Handbook (Health Insurance)
   Any changes to health insurance will need to be communicated and included in the employee handbook.

E. DISCUSSION AGENDA:

1. Committee Meeting September 9, 2026
   - Kathleen Simley and Sunni Richardson will lead off the meeting with a guidebook.
   - Approximately twenty-five people are expected to attend.
   - Light hors d'oeuvres will be served.
   - The meeting will take place in the upper room.
   - One suggestion is that committees would schedule their meetings on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month and that confirmation would take place on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month. If Wednesdays won't work, maybe Tuesdays would work.

2. ConnectioN Point
   - Twenty-two to twenty-three people signed up at the Town Hall to assist at ConnectioN Point. Those individuals have been contacted.
   - A $1,500 grant has been received for ConnectioN Point.
   - Patrick will take a leadership role in First Lutheran's participation.

3. Constitution Review (Anticipated Completion/presentation for approval)
   The Constitution Review continues to be in process.

4. Staff Updates
   Pastor Andrew discussed the visitation schedule of Reverand Ron Drury.

5. Committee Liaison
   a. Worship and Music (Mark, Alissa) – no meeting

   b. Christian Education: Youth (Bev, Jenna); Adult Forum (Patrick, Rod)
      Faith Trek teachers are still needed.

   c. Social Ministry (Karen)
      Kicks for Kids is the next Social Ministry event.

d. Property (Rod)
The insurance money from the roof has been received. The Property Committee is reviewing the options for fixing the roof and will make a recommendation to Council.

The new dishwasher has been received, but it came in incorrectly.

e. Stewardship (John) – no report as John was absent.

f. Fellowship (Shanon, Julianna)
The Veteran's Day brunch was scheduled for November 8. It will need to be rescheduled. The Fellowship Committee will come up with a way to recognize Veterans.

g. Nominating (Bryce)
The Nominating Committee will have another meeting tomorrow. Some names have been suggested, and some contacts have been made.

h. Gifts and Memorial discussion – (Karen) – no report.

i. Community, Connections and Collaboration – (Kari)
Pastor Andrew has a lead on a flat-top grill.

F. OPEN COMMENTS: None.

G. SENDING PRAYER: Pastor Andrew led the closing prayer.

H. ADJOURNMENT: the meeting adjourned at 8:35.

MEETING DATE:	October 13, 2026
SUBJECT:	Health insurance option for 2027
PROPOSED ACTION:	FLC to sponsor the Select HDHP plan for 2027
BACKGROUND:	In 2026 FLC sponsored the Select Copay health insurance option with a flexible spending account feature. The Select HDHP plan for 2027 will have a health savings account feature. There will be no change in the deductibles and total out of pocket limits with the Select HDHP option. FLC needs to notify Portico by October 14 which health insurance option will be sponsored.
SPONSORS:	Executive Committee

Lillie Rademacher

Youth Ministry Coordinator

October 2026 Council Report

With a full month of the new year under our belts, it's safe to say that things don't slow down! The temptation to write "I did things this month, the end" was very strong. But I persisted, and now you have this report. Yay you!

In all seriousness, this month has been full of wonderful ministry! The M&M fundraiser has been very well received, and I'll count the total funds raised after it ends on October 18th. We also had bingo on October 4th, and that raised a total of $506.98. Considering this was a fast rescheduling with not a lot of time to advertise. I think that both fundraisers will go into our rotation for future years!

Priority registration opens on October 21st, and so far, we have 6 students confirmed to go, with two more potentially able to commit! I'm very excited to continue to track us our progress on the roadmap and plan events and t-shirt designs for the kids.

FaithTrek and Sunday school have been going well. We have had steady attendance across all grades and have the rest of the semester covered for teachers. Middle school attendance has been hit and miss, but weekends have been very busy for our families, and I think that once fall sports calm down, we'll see more consistent participation. I still need teachers for this semester, so please let me know if you would like to volunteer!

I'll also be taking a few kids to MW Climbing, followed by lunch and service at ConnectioN Point on October 15th! This will be our first day off activity of the year, and I'm really looking forward to it!

I will also be giving a short presentation at the November council meeting. I'll be discussing what my day-to-day looks like, and what the congregation can expect this coming year, and what my goals are for our program in the future.

I'm looking forward to another amazing month with the kids and doing ministry!

Director of Worship and Music
September 2026

Sunday Morning Musicians

September 6	Jenna Troutman (8:15), Betsy Bjerke (10:45)	
September 13	8:15	Bryce Anderson, Adult Choir
	10:45	Amy Thorpe
September 20	both	Spirit Ringers
	8:15	Kari Hoeft, Adult Choir
	10:45	Amanda Andersen
September 27	8:15	David Pitts, Adult Choir
	10:45	Konnor Garrett, Erin Pfister, Youth Orff Ensemble

Saturday Musicians

September 5, 19, 26 - Christine Carman September 12 – Kristina Hanson

Back to "Regular Schedule": As much as the Summer worship service experience was wonderful with more attendance and stronger singing in one service, it seems people are glad to find their normalcy on their preferred worship time. All the weekly music groups kicked off their rehearsals. **Adult Choir** welcomed 6 new/returned members! Tenor section was doubled. It sure gives a new energy added to this wonderful group. **Spirit Ringers** kicked-off with returning full-ringers. Surprisingly hardly anyone has to sign-out for their playing Sunday. It is quite remarkable. **Youth Orff Ensemble** and **Faith Trek** started with our gifted-dedicated directors. We are very fortunate to have Erin Niebuhr, Amanda Andersen, and Kristina Hanson. **Jazz Team** didn't have "Summer Break." They are back at their schedule to play on the first Sunday of month.

Worship Assistants: We are seeing a bit of challenge again as we resumed two worship services. Thanks to the people who fill in wherever needed. Also thanks goes to Bonita who recruits communion related roles.

Pipe Organ Repair: The memory system of organ started causing problems. The Bedient Organ Company problem shot and found the battery of the computer that control the memory system is dying. They have ordered the replacement battery and will be fixed.

Respectfully submitted,
Soli Deo Gloria
Masako Bacon

COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

AUGUST 2026

Kathleen Simley, Communications Director

COMMUNICATIONS SNAPSHOT

August communications focused on helping the congregation move from the slower summer rhythm into a new ministry year, while continuing to share the stories of worship, service, fellowship and community. Highlights included summer music and fellowship opportunities, welcoming Pastor Ron Drury, wrapping up the Member Photo Directory photography sessions, and continued work on the Vitality Initiative, website refresh and First Stories podcast.

KEY COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

- Promoted and shared stories about August events, ministries and activities through newsletter articles, social media, slides, worship communication and follow-up storytelling, helping members stay connected to what was happening across the congregation.
- Trained Stephen Fisher to assist with worship livestreaming with limited supervision, with Brian Niebuhr providing the initial orientation and training.
- Designed a mailer postcard to promote the 16th season of First Friday Jazz, beginning October 2.
- Met with the Gifts of Hope planning team for the December 5-6 market and proposed a theme along with a communication, engagement and marketing plan.
- Created a proposed communication plan for the Stewardship campaign beginning October 18, including a logo, weekly themes and scripture, speaker and reflection ideas, and a promotion timeline.
- Introduced and welcomed Pastor Ron Drury as First Lutheran's visitation pastor through newsletter, social media and worship communication, including promotion of his August 16 preaching and welcome reception.
- Continued Member Photo Directory communication with reminders about the final August photography sessions and options for submitting personal photos. Designed and mailed a postcard to households we had not yet heard from. In all, 110 households were photographed by Jenn Potters.
- Prepared communication for the return to First Lutheran's regular fall worship schedule, the Sunday learning hour for kids and the many ministry opportunities available for all ages throughout the year.
- Worked with Sunni Richardson and Pastor Andrew to continue developing the Vitality Initiative Planning Guide and the rollout and communication plan following the August Congregation Council

presentation. This included launch materials and a social media/newsletter series introducing the five vocational words: advocating, partnering, welcoming, discipling and embracing.

- Continued conversations with Storyhook about the website refresh and kept moving the First Stories podcast forward, including story ideas, potential guests, format and production details.

MY WEEKLY PROJECTS

- First Glance Bulletin Insert
- First Things First E-Newsletter
- The Trekker Times E-Newsletter (for FaithTrek families)
- Sunday Worship Livestream
- TV Slides
- Facebook, Instagram, Realm and News posts
- Website updates as needed
- Digital sign updates as needed

GENERAL TASKS

- Event Promotion, Outreach & Follow-Up
- Social Media Planning and Posting
- Newsletter and Article Writing
- Worship and Livestream Promotion
- Ministry Team Communication Support
- Graphic Design for Print, Digital and Social Platforms

YEAR-TO-DATE DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT COMPARISON

Platform	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Trend
FTF Open Rate	68%	69%	65%	64%	65%	65%	64%	**66%**	Increase
FTF Click Rate	9%	6%	8%	7%	5%	8%	5%	**5%**	Steady
Facebook Views	13,908	14,515	17,523	40,914	19,733	22,884	19,542	**25,502**	Increase
Facebook Interactions	303	352	281	788	410	475	570	**582**	Slight increase
Facebook Followers	1,123	1,128	1,136	1,138	1,137	1,145	1,153	**1,161**	Growth
Instagram Views	1,358	1,727	1,146	3,324	1,504	1,824	4,813	**3,527**	Down from July
Instagram	31	26	25	73	31	26	22	**45**	Increase

Interactions									
Instagram Followers	223	221	219	221	218	218	220	**225**	Increase
Website Page Views	7,775	7,343	6,996	5,914	6,289	5,285	3,391	**3,204**	Slight decrease
Website Users	6,325	6,024	5,370	3,929	4,849	3,662	1,904	**1,657**	Decrease
Livestream Page Views/Visits	131	125	150	163	133	139	104	**180**	Strong increase

OVERALL TREND

August digital engagement showed several encouraging gains. The First Things First open rate ticked up while the click rate held steady. Facebook views, interactions and followers all increased, and Instagram interactions and followers also grew. Website traffic dipped again, while livestream page views rose significantly as we moved closer to the fall worship schedule. Overall, social media engagement remained strong as summer came to a close.

PLANS FOR SEPTEMBER

September communications will focus on the start of the new ministry year and a full calendar of worship, learning, outreach and fellowship. Priorities will also include Pastor Erin's return from sabbatical, support of the Vitality Initiative rollout, development of materials for the Stewardship campaign, continued planning for the Gifts of Hope market, the Member Photo Directory, website refresh and First Stories podcast, along with ongoing promotion and storytelling for ministries across the congregation.

COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY

SEPTEMBER 2026

Kathleen Simley, Communications Director

COMMUNICATIONS SNAPSHOT

September communications focused on the return to the regular fall worship schedule, the start of learning opportunities and a full calendar of outreach and fellowship. Major projects included launching the Vitality Initiative with leaders and staff, developing the fall stewardship campaign plan and timeline, beginning work on publishing the Member Photo Directory, promoting First Friday Jazz's 16th season and continuing preparations for the website update and Gifts of Hope market.

KEY COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

- Promoted fall worship and learning opportunities, outreach campaigns, fellowship events and youth fundraisers. Communication supported Kicks for Kids, the CROP Hunger Walk, Justice in Action listening sessions, Native Planting Day, Prairie Pines, Seasoned Adults, the Pet Blessing and fundraising for the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering.
- Launched the Vitality Initiative on September 9 under Sunni Richardson's leadership, with Council members, staff and team/committee leaders. The gathering reviewed the VI process, the outcomes of First Lutheran's journey and how the VI Guide (see attachment) will help integrate the VI team's recommendations into ministry. Participants received the Guide and were asked to pilot its use in brainstorming, planning and carrying out ministries. Sunni and I offered our assistance during the month ahead.
- Met with Lillie to discuss communication strategies and needs for Youth Ministry. Our conversations will continue as we explore ways to reach and engage all youth at First Lutheran.
- Held several consultations with Erik Miller of Storyhook on the website update. The new site is taking shape, and we anticipate being ready to introduce it in November.
- Began uploading member photos to the online Member Photo Directory and will soon be ready to accept photos from members who plan to submit their own. I hope to introduce the directory in November or December. Thank you to First Lutheran members Jenn and Ben Potters for sharing their time and photography talents and helping bring the directory to life!

- Developed the Let Your Blessings Flow stewardship campaign logo, visual design, rollout timeline and tasks. Designed and mailed a postcard to all member households announcing the campaign and theme. Also updated the stewardship webpage with the campaign introduction, available at www.flclincoln.org/stewardship.
- Created promotional materials for the October 2 First Friday Jazz season opener featuring Camille Metoyer Moten. Wrote a lead article for First Things First for the week of the concert, sharing the series' 16-year history and community connections. Also promoted the League of Women Voters' nonpartisan voter information table at the concert.
- Continued developing Gifts of Hope market branding and communication ideas for December 5–6, exploring connections between the market's mission and the possible Advent theme.

MY WEEKLY PROJECTS

- First Glance Bulletin Insert
- First Things First E-Newsletter
- The Trekker Times E-Newsletter for FaithTrek families
- Sunday Worship Livestream
- TV Slides
- Facebook, Instagram, Realm and News posts
- Website updates as needed
- Digital sign updates as needed

GENERAL TASKS

- Event Promotion, Outreach and Follow-Up
- Social Media Planning and Posting
- Newsletter and Article Writing
- Worship and Livestream Promotion
- Ministry Team Communication Support
- Graphic Design for Print, Digital and Social Platforms

YEAR TO DATE DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT COMPARISON

January through May

Platform	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May
FTF Open Rate	68%	69%	65%	64%	65%
FTF Click Rate	9%	6%	8%	7%	5%
Facebook Views	13,908	14,515	17,523	40,914	19,733
Facebook Interactions	303	352	281	788	410
Facebook Followers	1,123	1,128	1,136	1,138	1,137
Instagram Views	1,358	1,727	1,146	3,324	1,504
Instagram Interactions	31	26	25	73	31
Instagram Followers	223	221	219	221	218
Website Page Views	7,775	7,343	6,996	5,914	6,289
Website Users	6,325	6,024	5,370	3,929	4,849
Livestream Page Views/Visits	131	125	150	163	133

June through September

Platform	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Trend*
FTF Open Rate	65%	64%	66%	66%	Steady
FTF Click Rate	8%	5%	5%	3%	Decrease
Facebook Views	22,884	19,542	25,502	23,717	Decrease
Facebook Interactions	475	570	582	634	Increase
Facebook Followers	1,145	1,153	1,161	1,169	Growth
Instagram Views	1,824	4,813	3,527	2,166	Decrease
Instagram Interactions	26	22	45	15	Decrease
Instagram Followers	218	220	225	229	Growth
Website Page Views	5,285	3,391	3,204	2,880	Decrease
Website Users	3,662	1,904	1,657	1,335	Decrease
Livestream Page Views/Visits	139	104	180	104	Decrease

*Trend compared with August.

OVERALL TREND

September digital engagement showed mixed results. The First Things First open rate held steady at 66%, while the click rate decreased. Facebook interactions increased despite fewer views, and both Facebook and Instagram gained followers. Instagram views and interactions declined, as did website traffic and livestream page views. Overall, audience growth continued on social media, while engagement and traffic varied across platforms.

PLANS FOR OCTOBER

October communications will focus on launching the Let Your Blessings Flow stewardship campaign and supporting its weekly messages, stories, pledge invitations and progress updates. Work will also continue on Gifts of Hope materials and partner information for the online catalog, communication supporting the Vitality Initiative, and preparation of the updated website and Member Photo Directory for their upcoming launches.

Worship & Music Committee Meeting
Oct 5, 2026 @ 7 pm

Attending: Boyd Bacon,Masako Bacon, Jan Wigodsky (from Altar Guild), Gordon Youngquist, Harold Sutter, Mark Mesarch (from Church Council) and Alissa Sandin (from Church Council).

Opening devotions were presented by Harold Sutter on Halloween and Christianity. The following reports and topics were discussed:

Communion Ware: Masako reported, on behalf of Bonita, that the artist engaged to produce the ware encountered kiln problems at UNL and has moved out of the area. A new artist is being sought.

Altar Guild: Jan reported that although the weekly bulletin frequently shows a lack of Altar Guild volunteers, there are, in fact, sufficient volunteers each Sunday. Jan believes the current method is satisfactory.

Accessible Audio System: Alissa noted that the synod grant application for an AuraCast system was not approved. Masako explained that further investigation found that the funding source for the grant intended to address movement disabilities, so, of course, we were not selected for the grant.

Discussion of the AuraCast system and the need for such a system at First Lutheran ensued. Both Gordon & Harold reported difficulty hearing with the current loudspeaker system. Harold will discuss with his audiologist whether the AuraCast system would work with his cochlear implant. Gordon noted that he believes that a Bluetooth system (like AuraCast) would work with his hearing aids, but will investigate further. He also noted that as First Lutheran is an older congregation, there are many who use hearing aids and could presumably benefit from such a system.

The system planned if the grant had been received would have been around $5,000. We discussed that we didn't know if the AuraCast system proposed in the grant application would cover all of the Sanctuary, the Activity Center and the Chapel or if separate systems would be required. Masako will investigate what such a system would entail, would provide for us, and what it would cost.

Live Streaming: The discussion of whether FaceBook is a satisfactory venue for our online services was continued. According to Boyd, it appears that there may be a problem with contemporaneous viewing, but later viewing seems to be successful. This issue continues to be investigated. Other vendors may be considered if the conclusion is that FaceBook is less than satisfactory.

Organ Problem: Masako reported that a memory system component needs to be replaced, as stop settings disappear after the organ is turned off, which means that right now all stop settings need to be reset each time the organ is played. Bedient said it was a battery issue and that the part will be around $500 + installation costs.

Hanging of the Greens/ Setting up Nativity Scene Components: Harold discussed the need for volunteers for both of these projects and indicated those who could lift heavy items and climb ladders would be needed.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Alissa Sandin

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & COLLABORATIONS TEAM

AUGUST 2026

OUR MISSION

To welcome and embrace one another, partner with others and grow as disciples through meaningful relationships within our church and beyond our walls.

AUGUST SNAPSHOT

In August, the CCC Team continued creating opportunities for fellowship, connection and community presence while looking ahead to a busy fall. Highlights included a successful Seasoned Adults gathering, the final summer photo sessions for the Member Photo Directory and a Helping Hands project that put member-to-member care into action. The team also continued planning for First Friday Jazz, the 2026 Gifts of Hope Market, Veterans Day outreach and a possible transportation partnership with Immanuel Living Communities. The planned First Friday Night Tailgate & Battle of the Bands was cancelled, but the team will revisit the idea for a possible future date.

MEETING DATE

August 10, 2026

TEAM MEMBERS

Gene Cotter, Sherri Cotter, Mark Wemhoff, Lee Rockwell, Cindy Lilleoien, Lisa Culbertson, Linda Bogenreif, Kari Hoeft, Terry Kruse, Sunni Richardson and Staff Liaisons Kathleen Simley and Pastor Andrew

CELEBRATIONS & IMPACT

Seasoned Adults Gathering: The August 23 Seasoned Adults Gathering was a big hit! Thanks to Sandy Latshaw and Linda Sears for planning an afternoon that brought out plenty of friendly competition with Scattergories and Charades. Al and Kristy Williams are planning the September 25 outing, a tour of the American Motor Speedway Museum led by First member and museum volunteer Tim Maack. Kay Rockwell is already planning the October 23 event, which will include a tour of Wyuka Cemetery and the Pershing Auditorium mural. This lay-led ministry for members age 65 and beyond is off and running, with members taking turns planning activities that help people build relationships and stay connected to the life of the congregation.

Member Photo Directory: Summer photo sessions wrapped up in August, with 110 households photographed by First member Jenn Potters. The next steps are to give members instructions for submitting their own photos and to arrange photos for homebound members who were unable to attend a session. The directory will help members put names with faces, strengthen relationships and build a greater sense of belonging across the congregation.

Helping Hands Ministry: Helping Hands continues to offer a simple, practical way for members to care for one another. In August, three members helped another member move furniture before new carpet was installed in their home. It was a great example of the ministry at work—connecting a need with people willing to lend their time and a helping hand.

First Friday Night Tailgate: The First Friday Night Tailgate & Battle of the Bands planned for August 21 was cancelled after the marching band programs at Standing Bear and Lincoln Northwest were unable to commit to participating. The team will talk more about the idea at its next meeting and consider whether it could work at a future date.

IN PROGRESS

First Friday Jazz: The lineup is set for the 2026–27 season—First Friday Jazz's 16th year. A season postcard, designed by Communications Director Kathleen Simley, was mailed to 1,900 people interested in jazz music and events in Lincoln and the surrounding area. The season kicks off Friday, October 2, at 11:30 AM with Camille Metoyer-Moten.

Gifts of Hope: The planning team—Kari Hoeft, Sunni Richardson, Linda Bogenreif, Sherri Cotter and Kathleen Simley—met in July and August to begin shaping the 2026 Gifts of Hope Market, scheduled for December 5 and 6. Partner organizations have been identified and initially contacted about participating, and the response so far has been positive.

Veterans Day Brunch: Plans are underway to provide a catered brunch at the VA Hospital on Veterans Day. More details will be shared in next month's report.

Immanuel Living Communities Transportation Partnership: The team continues exploring a possible partnership with Immanuel Living Communities to bring residents from Grand Lodge, The Landing and Yankee Hill Village to Sunday morning worship using the communities' van transportation. The idea could make worship more accessible for residents while also creating new connections between First Lutheran and area senior living communities.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, September 14, 2026 – 6:30 PM
Second Monday of the month

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & COLLABORATIONS TEAM

SEPTEMBER 2026

OUR MISSION

To welcome and embrace one another, partner with others and grow as disciples through meaningful relationships within our church and beyond our walls.

SEPTEMBER SNAPSHOT

In September, the CCC Team continued strengthening connections within the congregation and exploring partnerships beyond our walls. Seasoned Adults and Helping Hands offer opportunities for fellowship and practical care, while work continues on the Member Photo Directory. Team members received the Vitality Initiative Guide, and planning moved forward for First Friday Jazz, Gifts of Hope and Veterans Day outreach. Transportation discussions focused on a possible Immanuel Communities partnership and ways to connect members with First Lutheran's existing volunteer drivers.

MEETING DATE

September 14, 2026

TEAM MEMBERS

Gene Cotter, Sherri Cotter, Mark Wemhoff, Lee Rockwell, Cindy Lilleoien, Lisa Culbertson, Linda Bogenreif, Kari Hoeft, Terry Kruse and Staff Liaisons Kathleen Simley and Pastor Andrew

CELEBRATIONS & IMPACT

Seasoned Adults: The first two gatherings drew between 30 and 35 participants, with members taking turns planning activities. September's outing was planned as a car museum tour with Tim Maack, and a tour of Nebraska Public Media is being considered for October. This lay-led ministry gives members ages 65 and beyond opportunities to build relationships and enjoy time together.

Helping Hands Ministry: Members who have received help through this ministry have expressed appreciation for the assistance. Business cards with contact information were distributed at September's town hall meeting, where members learned more about this practical way to give and receive support.

Vitality Initiative: Team members received the Vitality Initiative Guide. Review and discussion will continue at the next meeting.

IN PROGRESS

Transportation Ministry: The team connected with Pastor Brian Maas about a possible Immanuel Communities van partnership to bring residents to worship at First Lutheran. Immanuel leadership will explore its feasibility. We will also explore whether First Lutheran's Transportation Ministry, which has 12–15 approved volunteer drivers, can help members who want to attend worship but need a ride.

Veterans Day Lunch and Ingathering: Catering and decorations are being finalized for the Veterans Day lunch at the VA Apartments. Member donations will support the lunch, and CCC will partner with Social Ministry to collect requested hygiene items for residents.

Member Photo Directory: Jenn Potters photographed 110 households for the directory. Instructions for members who wish to submit their own photos will be shared soon.

First Friday Jazz: Approximately 1,800 season postcards were mailed ahead of the October 2 kickoff concert. A flyer promoting the following month's concert will be placed on tables. The back will feature First Lutheran's welcome statement, worship times and upcoming activities that may interest attendees, such as Seasoned Adults.

Gifts of Hope: Community partners are finalized for the December 5–6 market. Work is moving forward on marketing, the online catalog, volunteer recruitment and ways to engage members of all ages, including elementary, middle and high school youth.

Catering and Committee Coordination: The team is exploring catering costs and options with ChefauChef, including the possibility of using him as the exclusive caterer for congregation-wide meals.

First Friday Night Tailgate: The team reviewed the obstacles that led to the tailgate's cancellation and will continue exploring ways to try again or offer other events.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, October 12, 2026, at 6:30 PM
Second Monday of the month

Fellowship Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Attending: Judy Batterman, Carlene Falos, Karen Moser, Gordon Wolfe, Teresa Brohimer, Julianna Peters (Council Rep.), Shanon Meyer (Council Rep.), and Linda Carlson

Devotions were given by Carlene Falos. The topic: Reconciliation through Christ.

Review of Past Event: It was a good welcome reception for Pastor Ron Drury, our Visitation Pastor. The large sheet cake was excellent, and served everyone with little left over.

Upcoming Events: 1. In August we discussed the possibility of displaying the American flag in honor of Veterans Day. The Council at their August meeting requested that we not do that. Our committee moved on to find another way to thank and honor the veterans at First Lutheran. We discussed at length the possibility of providing a brunch between services on November 8th. This would require some coordination with the adult Forum and the adult discussion group. Shanon said that they would present the idea to Council that evening and that she would email to our committee their response.

2. Judy announced that on Wednesday, September 9, at 6:00 p.m., there will be a meeting for discussion of the next step in the Vitality Initiative. Those attending will be members of the Congregational Church Council, committee leaders, church staff, and ministry leaders. They will be introduced to the Vitality Initiative handbook, and will discuss the accompaniment model.

3. Our committee will serve coffee between services on September 20.

Announcements: 1. Judy let us know that the new dishwasher will be installed very soon. Yay!

2. Our Council representatives shared with us that Council plans to arrange a common time for committees to meet in the future. It is an attempt to coordinate committee meetings.

Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday, October 13, at 5:30 p.m.**

Linda Carlson will give the devotions.

Submitted by Linda Carlson, Secretary

Addendum to the minutes: Shanon Meyer reported to the committee in a September 9th email the outcome of Council's discussion concerning a brunch for our veterans. She presented the idea, and Council LOVED it! Their only concern was the date, due to the Lincoln Half Marathon being held on November 8. Their suggestion was that we wait until November 15 to have the brunch. We will discuss this further in October.

First Lutheran Church
Property Committee Minutes September 22, 2026

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

Meeting time: 7:00 PM

Opening prayer: Rod Johnson

Minute taker: Les

August meeting minutes were approved.

Agenda:

1. The PC discussed the settlement with Brotherhood Insurance and the status of bids for roof repair. Rod said the settlement money is in the bank. We're awaiting a bid from Toby. Norman suggested that moving forward should begin with confirming whether Toby wants to participate in the bidding process followed by obtaining further information about all participating roofers. This would include acquiring references for each roofer as well as onsite inspection of work roofers have completed in the area. Norman and Rod will develop a plan for contacting Toby to gauge his interest in participating further in the roof repair bid process. Norman reiterated that our settlement with Brotherhood is partially due to Toby. Another roofer contacted Norman recently and that individual and Steve did a walk-through of the FLC facility on Monday. A bid may be forthcoming from this individual. The PC moved to eliminate asphalt shingles as an option for any part of the roof repair.

2. Steve L updated progress on the parking lot. This work is almost completed but there are some remaining low spots that require more material to fill/level these areas. Rod mentioned that the lot needs additional handicap parking spaces.

3. Steve L said the new dishwasher installation is not yet completed. Orienting the tables for moving dishes into and out of the washer is part of this issue as well as fixing and placement of the splash guard. Steve L said this installation is a "work in progress".

4. According to Steve L there are continuing issues with the HVAC system which include two of the four compressors not operating, software incompatibility with existing hardware, and thermostats failing to communicate with HVAC equipment. Certain of these have been discussed in prior PC notes.

5. Steve L said the annual fire alarm testing will need to happen soon. Simplex has been contacted about a booster panel ground fault that has been identified.

Prayer: October – Steve Lenzen

Minute taker: Les