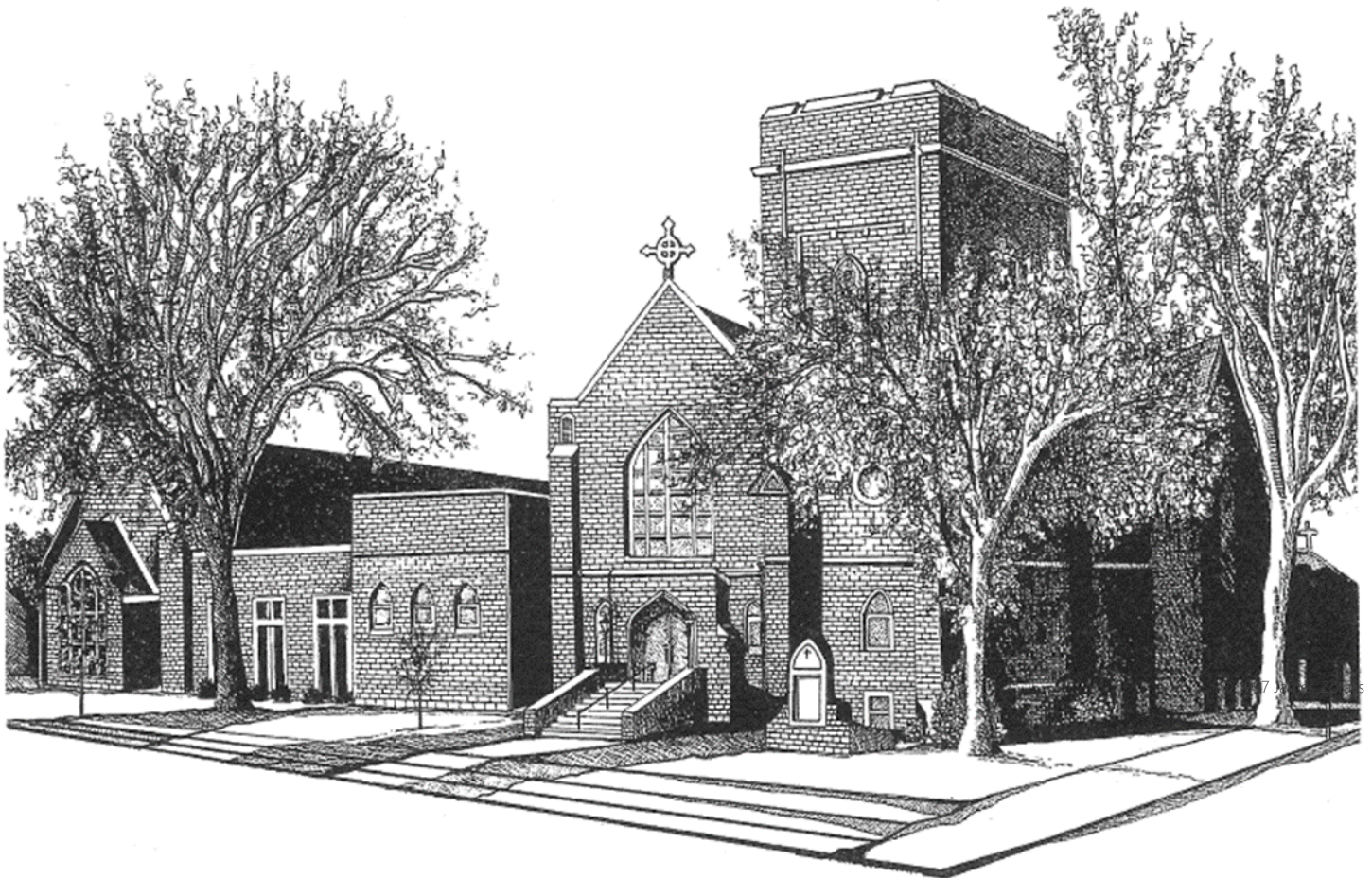


# FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

FERGUS FALLS, MINNESOTA

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God’s love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ’s love. In Psalm 93, we read: “More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore” (4-5).

God’s love is a majestic thing, and it moves us to share it in word and deed. The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together to share God’s love with people in our neighborhoods, across our country and around the world.

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has bolstered the church’s ability to share the message of God’s love to people who are longing for it. Through your

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“More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.”

—Psalm 93:4-5

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financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you’ve helped carry this message of God’s majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God’s promises, sure of God’s love and goodness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# CONTENTS

A Message from the ELCA Bishop Eaton .....	2
Contents Page.....	3
Mission and Vision Statements .....	4
Church Staff .....	4
Church Council.....	4
Agenda.....	5
Membership .....	6-7
152 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting Minutes.....	8
Senior Pastor Tim O’Shields .....	9-10
Visitation Pastor Kate Bruns.....	11
President’s Report .....	12
Director of Children’s Ministry.....	13
Director of Youth & Family Ministry.....	14
Adult Education Committee.....	15
Children, Youth, & Families Committee .....	15
Community Life/Fellowship Community .....	16
Outreach Committee .....	17
Property Committee .....	17
Worship Committee.....	18
Personnel Committee .....	19
Stewardship Committee .....	20
Finance Committee.....	20
2023 Financial Reports.....	22-24
2024 Proposed Ministry Spending Plan.....	25
Women of the ELCA (WELCA) .....	26
WELCA Treasurer’s Report.....	27
First Lutheran Church Foundation .....	28-29
First Lutheran Church Cemetery .....	30-31
Northwest Minnesota Synod Report.....	32
Luther Crest Bible Camp Report to Congregations.....	33

## **MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS**

### **MISSION**

"As faithful disciples, we serve God and welcome all people with open hearts."

### **VISION**

We, as members of First Lutheran, glorify God in all of life,  
with the Bible as our authority and the Holy Spirit as our guide.

We pledge to minister to all, loving as Christ loved us.  
We will seek out new avenues to spread the good news, to build relationships  
with our fellow believers, as well as those who have yet to believe.

## **CHURCH STAFF**

Rev. Tim O'Shields	Senior Pastor (Jul-Dec)
Rev. Tiffany Sundeen	Interim Senior Pastor (Jan-Jun)
Rev. Kate Bruns	Visitation Pastor
Kristy Wicklund	Director of Children's Ministry
Jen Estad Petersen	Director of Youth & Family Ministry
Keith Melberg	Organist, Choir Accompanist
Linda Mellon	Handbell Choir Director
Anne Taylor	Worship Team Accompanist/Director
Harriet Wicklund	Adult Choir Director
Jennifer Hubrig	Church Administrator
Mary Johnson	Office Assistant

## **CHURCH COUNCIL**

Presidents – Rick & Linda West  
Vice-President – Jeani Trosvig  
Secretary – Lorri Holt (Jan-Oct)  
Treasurer/Property – Leonard Hatzenbuhler  
Adult Education – vacancy  
Children, Youth, & Families – Kristi Dinsmore  
Community Life/Fellowship – Sue Toso  
Outreach – Ann Mathison  
Worship – Harriet Wicklund  
Personnel – Steve Fitz  
Stewardship – Kris Werner

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH 153<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA**  
**JANUARY 26, 2025**

Call to Order & Confirm Quorum

Opening Prayer

Adoption of 2025 Annual Meeting Agenda

Remarks:

Senior Pastor

Council Co-Presidents

Approval of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

Ratification of 2024 Constitution Amendments

Approval of 2024 Treasurer's Report

This is Us, Spirit Filled – Spirit Led

Presentation of the 2025 Ministry Spending Plan

Presentation of the 2025 Ballot

Voting

Closing Remarks by 2025 Council President

Closing Prayer

Motion to Adjourn

## MEMBERSHIP

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
<i>Membership as of December 31, 2023</i>	<i>1313</i>	<i>1099</i>
<b>Members received during 2024</b>		
By baptism (children 15 & under)	7	0
By baptism (adults 16 & older)	0	0
By affirmation of faith	15	10
By transfer	17	11
From other sources and statistical adj.	0	0
<b>Total members received in 2024</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Members removed during 2024</b>		
By death	13	12
By transfer	12	12
For other reasons and statistical adj.	273	201
<b>Total members removed in 2024</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>MEMBERSHIP END OF 2024</b>	<b>1054</b>	<b>895</b>

## NEW MEMBERS IN 2024

Jill Balgaard & Shawn McCarty; Archer, Waverly	Karen Reams
Lyn Bladow	Bev Richards
Joe & Krysten Foster	Dolores Simdorn
Ivan & Janet Janssen	Danielle Smith-Heacox
Larry Kantrud	David & Suzanne Svare; Emilee
Amy Keilen & Eric Scherbenske;	Casey Thom
Aaron & Shane Baur	Judy & Peter Thom
Judy Kilde	Marie Toso
Nathan Kuhn	Nick Toso
Catherine Olson-Adams	Callista Ward

## BAPTISMS IN 2024

Sophia Lydia Foster	Ryker Ash Mitchell
Miles Gordon Graf	Harper Rae Stigen
Izabella Ann Ibarra	Sullivan Isaac Weis
Kinsley Kay Lausch	

## **CONFIRMED IN 2024**

Carson Anderson  
Keaton Babolian  
Noah Ibarra  
Declan Kugler  
Chardanay Lockett  
Aubrey Neubauer

Colby Reese  
Tyden Rosenthal  
Karmyn Schwartz  
Presley Warren  
Graycie Zelinsky

## **DEATHS IN 2024**

George Fick  
David Kantrud  
Ricky Kraning  
Annlyne Larsen  
Susan Leitte  
Gerald Peterson  
\*Mary Ann Phelps

Catherine Stortroen  
Ronald Tomhave  
Gerald "Jerry" Toso  
Randy Vangrud  
John Wagner  
*\*indicates non-member*

## **MEMBERS REMOVED BY TRANSFER IN 2024**

Danielle Freitag  
Tracy Holdeman  
Branda & Steve Mouritsen; Calen, Dalton Kendal, Nycole  
Bruce & Tiffany Sundeen; Abigail, Rachel

# 151<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

**JANUARY 28, 2024**

Opened with prayer by Pastor Tiffany Sundeen

Call to order by Co-President Rick West. Quorum present.

Motion to accept the agenda made, seconded, passed (M/S/P).

Annual Meeting notes from 2023 were not available.

Treasurers report – Leonard Hatzenbuhler. Motion to approve the report M/S/P.

Remarks by Co-Presidents Rick and Linda West

Remarks from Pastor Tiffany Sundeen

Presentation of 2024 Ministry Spending Plan, Motion to approve M/S/P

2023 Nominating committee presentation of ballot.

President: Rick and Linda West

Vice President: Jeani Trosvig

Treasurer: Leonard Hatzenbuhler

Adult Education: Vicki Berdan

Community Life: Sue Toso

Outreach: Ann Mathison

NW MN Synod Assembly Delegates: Rick and Linda West, Jeannie Trosvig

Pioneer Care Delegates: Dale and Jody Hanson

2024 Nominating Committee: Barret Wicklund, Bruce Anderson, Karen Olson, and Susan Hermes

Request from the President for any nominations from the floor.

Motion to approve the slate as presented M/S/P.

Prayer and Benediction by Pastor Kate Bruns.

Motion to adjourn the meeting M/S/P.

Potluck dinner followed.

Secretary, Lorri Holt



## PASTOR TIM O'SHIELDS SENIOR PASTOR

**2 Corinthians 5:16-19a** *From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself.*

**John 14:25-27a** *“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.*

**Isaiah 11:2** *The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD.*

These three Scriptures give us a powerful perspective about God’s work in the world. The Corinthians passage reminds us that God is always working in the world, in our lives, and in the church. God is always creating and making things new—over and over! We, the church, stand together in mission and unity, and are clearly called to follow the paths that the Holy Spirit leads us on—making things new—over and over! Sometimes the paths are new and surprising. They can even cause fear and anxiety, but God’s work in the world can often be surprising! Surprising or not, God’s work is always life-giving.

The passage from the Gospel of John reminds us of the promise that God, and Jesus, have given us regarding the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is promised as our Advocate and our Friend, to journey with us, to lead us, guide us, and to inspire us to new heights in mission, ministry, and life. This is true in our personal lives, in our families, and in the church.

The Isaiah passage reminds us of what the Holy Spirit is doing, the power of the Holy Spirit can and will move mountains! The Spirit will lead us when we open ourselves to the pulse, the still small voice, of the Holy Spirit. This only happens through individual prayer, corporate prayer (together as church), and family prayer. This means deep, discerning prayer—ongoing!

We have seen clear movement of the Holy Spirit in the past months together. Our Sunday worship is vibrant and life-giving. Our musicians, choir, and Hosanna Bells tell the story of Jesus through glorious music. They never perform. They always offer their music to the glory of God! Our children and youth programs are connecting with children and youth of many ages in learning, fellowship, and worship. We have strong programs for children on both Wednesdays and Sundays. Our Confirmation program and leadership is strong and life-giving. It is also not uncommon that we have more than a hundred people at dinner church. Dinner church is a powerful experience of fellowship and breaking bread—for physical and SPIRITUAL nourishment.

The offering of our Harvest Dinner fed over 600 people in November. Yes, but while the food was important, it was also a powerful example of community coming together in celebration, joy, and



thanksgiving! Our Meals by Wheels offering is another powerful example of community taking care of community. We also are in constant partnership with the Salvation Army to provide “essentials” for people in need.

The Spirit is moving in our congregation and through our congregation!

As we make our way through 2025, AND BEYOND, may we continue to listen to the Spirit and follow the will of God in mission and ministry. This may take us on paths that are new and different. It is always a bit scary to go into uncharted territories. God will guide us. God will empower us. God will lead us.

My prayer is that we bind together with the Spirit as ‘the church’. May the bonds of love, forgiveness, understanding, acceptance, and tolerance hold us together by the power of the Spirit. We are a diverse people with many gifts. My prayer is that we work together to explore and use the gifts we have for the good of God’s mission and to the glory of God. With God on our side, nothing on this earth can stop the movement of the Spirit. To God Be the Glory!

That is exactly where we are at First Lutheran Church in Fergus Falls today. 2024 was indeed a year of transition for the church—from interim leadership to a called Senior Pastor. After careful, prayerful discernment, I believe that God called me here as your Senior Pastor. After careful, prayerful discernment, the Call Committee, and by a congregational vote, this call was extended for the twelfth Senior Pastor of First Lutheran. Let’s work together and build on our current momentum as God leads us to FUTURE CHURCH!

Indeed, we will hit snags and face challenges in our journey. I pray this is a journey of love and trust as we build and nurture this relationship of pastor and congregation.

*May this be our prayer in 2025:*

*Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me. Break me—melt me—mold me—fill me. Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me.*

Love and peace to you all,

Pastor Tim

Senior Pastor, First Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls, MN

## PASTOR KATE BRUNS, VISITATION PASTOR

Two years have flown by since I began my ministry at First Lutheran, and I wonder where the time has gone and am amazed at all the people I've met and gotten to know in that time. We, as a congregation, are well into this transition year from the leadership of Pastor Tiffany Sundeen to Pastor Tim O'Shields, and of course changes have been made in how things are done. I am pleased to be a member of such a strong and talented staff. That being said, when the staff meets every Tuesday morning, and everyone around the table reports on what they are working on, my ready response has become, "The visits continue." What more can I say? We began the year with the number of visits at 52, and in the course of the year, this number remained pretty strong. Several of our members have died, and some folks decided a regular pastoral visit was no longer necessary, moved away, or no longer wished a connection with the church, and the number of folks on the list was reduced. Then, I am delighted to report several new folks were added.



When I'm not out visiting, you might see me singing in the choir, ringing in the bell choir, offering a devotion for "Morning Watch", leading a service for the folks at Mill Street, and helping wherever I am needed. In addition, in the course of this year I presided at the funerals of Geraldine Melby, Edwin Brist, Randy Vangrud, George Fick, David Kantrud, and Betty Skramstad, and the burial of Ben Peterson. I presided/helped with the baptisms of Jordynn Donnay, Lillian Rader, Ava Rader, and Harper Stigen. I presided at the wedding of Mason Tell and Julie Lund. These celebrations of life in its many forms are also part of the joys of ministry here at First and in our larger community.

I believe we together follow the words of Jesus in so many meaningful ways (Matthew 25:35 and 36) "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and visited me." This is what we are called to do as God's people.

By God's grace we serve faithfully,

Pastor Kate

## PRESIDENTS' REPORT

We would like to thank the congregation of First Lutheran Church for allowing us the opportunity to serve as Co-Presidents the past two years. At first, two years seemed a long commitment, but the time has quickly flown. This is thanks to all the wonderful members of First Lutheran that have served whether it be in person or in prayer. Thank you!

2024..what a year it has been, full of change and growth! It's been a wonderful experience to see the various groups with varying ages and strengths work together as one for a common goal.

The Call Committee was given the task of finding a spiritual leader for First Lutheran Church. After many hours and meetings, they called Pastor Timothy O'Shields. We feel the Call Committee made an excellent choice in Pastor Tim. We're thankful to those on the committee that gave of their time.

The Constitution Review Committee is a group that you may not have seen, but they too spent countless hours on the project. The updated Constitution and By-laws were approved by the congregation and will be considered for ratification today.

The youth programs continue to grow at FLC, thanks to Kristi Wicklund, Jen Enstad-Petersen, the Children, Youth and Families Committee, and all the volunteers that teach, guide, and mentor our kids. We currently have 27 students in confirmation that faithfully come on Wednesday evenings, help serve dinner church, and then go to class. Thank you, also, to all their prayer partners who hold our students in prayer.

Our music program continues to add beauty to our services. Thank you to Harriet Wicklund, Linda Mellon, Anne Taylor, and Keith Melberg for their leadership, expertise, and dedication. One new event we were able to experience this year was the youth playing the chimes, an exciting opportunity for them to learn and the congregation to hear.

Wednesday Dinner Church attendance continues to grow, reaching over 100 on a few evenings. Just as the parable of Jesus with the 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread, we have never run out of food. Sue Toso, Sandy Kvern, Lorri Holt, and Lyn Bladow put in many hours behind the scenes in preparation to make dinner church a success. We are very grateful to them and all the volunteers on Wednesday nights.

First Lutheran is a beautiful church with symbolism of our faith journey, whether many years ago or today. Our stained-glass windows are the most beautiful in the area, often receiving compliments from visitors. Thank you for your part in helping FLC restore *The Great Commission* window in the Narthex. Our church is always beautifully decorated to celebrate the seasons. We are blessed with a Liturgical Arts team that has so many wonderful ideas and talents.

Our office staff of Jen and Mary are a wealth of information for First Lutheran Church. They put in hours of organizing, researching, and answering questions whether it be from members of our church, community, or the Co-Presidents. Thank you for your diligence, dedication and patience.

We are blessed with Pastor Kate Bruns who connects with our members that are unable to attend church service in person. She is a blessing to First Lutheran Church as she provides our members with lessons, prayers, and communion. Thank you Pastor Kate!

In the parable of the mustard seed, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed. It is the smallest of seeds, yet when planted it becomes the largest plant in the garden. The seeds have been planted at First Lutheran Church and continue to be lovingly cared for by our members as we continue to grow in faith and community.

1 Thessalonians 5:11: Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Godspeed to all of you!

Rick and Linda West

## **KRISTY WICKLUND, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SUNDAY SCHOOL, F3, ELEVATE, & VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**



It has been a year of connecting with friends, guides, and God. We ended last school year with around 40 children on a Sunday in Sunday School and Butterflies and entered this year closer to 35 children a Sunday (as last year's big group of 6<sup>th</sup> graders have moved up to Youth programs). We have some teachers that have continued to stay with their group of students, and it is wonderful to see those connections continuing to grow.

FLY turned into F3 (Kindergarten-4<sup>th</sup> grade) and Elevate (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade). We had 25 children coming on Wednesdays last school year, and this school year we have 19 in F3 and 13 in Elevate making 32 altogether. These students like to connect with friends, learn about God, do God's work, and have fun under the direction of Jen Enstad-Petersen for Elevate and me for F3.

VBS 2024 was also our third year in a row of having a Joint ELCA VBS. We had 39 Kindergarten- 6th graders that attended Day Camp with Luther Crest at Augustana Church, and 17 children attended Butterflies VBS at Zion Lutheran Church. It has been amazing to watch these children grow at First Lutheran and to see relationships build between children, families, with God, and the church.

A huge THANK YOU to our Children's Ministry Volunteers that help make our Sunday, Wednesday, and VBS programs happen. Also, thank you to the families that have chosen First Lutheran to be the place where connection, growth, and faith formation happen.

Blessings,

Kristy Wicklund

### **BIBLICAL THEME(S)**

2024 Butterflies Vacation Bible School: "All Aboard with Jesus"

2024 Day Camp with Luther Crest: "Created to Be"

2023-2024 School Year: "We are building a solid foundation with Christ." "For we are God's servants working together. You are God's field, God's building."-1 Corinthians 3:9

2024-2025 School Year: "God is Faithful." "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."-Lamentations 3:22-23

## **JEN ENSTAD-PETERSEN, DIRECTOR OF YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY CONFIRMATION, YOUTH CONNECTION, AMIDST THE CHAOS, & E.P.I.C.**

“Time flies when you are having fun” and 2024 has flown!

We have a wonderful confirmation class. In the Spring we focused on the 10 Commandments for our weekly lessons and small group time. We had a retreat where we concentrated on healthy faith, self, and serving others. Our family dessert reception packed the Narthex, and the morning of confirmation was beautiful.

Our Seniors hosted the Palm Sunday brunch with their families. We celebrated them in May with a special service and the traditional handmade blankets to send them off with love.

E.P.I.C., our senior high group, had monthly adventures, but a highlight was the joint lock in with Bethlehem in April. We partnered together again for Bible Studies in the month of August.

This fall we jumped into a fresh year of dinner church and confirmation with Pastor Tim leading our 27 confirmands thru the Old Testament. We had 21 students and 4 brave adults attend the Synod Youth Gathering at Luther Crest in November.

Our E.P.I.C. kids enjoyed Pumpkinpalooza , Trivia with Brian, and another joint lock in over Christmas break with Bethlehem.

If I had to point to my favorite new blessing it would be the 27 prayer partners that are supporting and connecting with the Confirmands. They range in age from families with toddlers to over 100-year-old faithful souls. These people are helping to make the students feel loved and extra connected to our congregation.

Amidst the Chaos is our parent group and it’s small but special – we meet monthly and connect one on one as needed. Parenting is a journey that needs as much support as possible.

God has blessed this congregation with amazing kids who are very talented in many areas and it’s a joy for me to go see them in their activities.

I can’t imagine doing this ministry without our faithful adults who support and care for these kids: Brian Becker, Vicki Hanneman, Kelsee Macintosh Ellig, Jennifer Smestad, Erin Warren, and Linda West.

We have two student leaders who are incredible assets to our programing: John Abrahams and Chardanay Lockett.

It’s a privilege to serve in this role and I thank God for the support of this congregation.

Jen Enstad-Petersen



## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

#### Bible Studies

Results from a congregational survey taken in November indicated that daytime Bible Studies were preferred by the people who responded.

Winter/Spring: Pastor Tiffany led two separate, month-long Bible studies on the Books of Acts and Revelation. These were held on Thursdays at noon and lunch was provided with a free will offering.

Fall: Pastor Tim led an eight-week Thursday noon lunch study on theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer based on the book, The Cost of Discipleship. In September, a study was offered on a trial basis on Sunday mornings after the church service. Pastor Tim determined fellowship was valued during that time, so this study time was discontinued in early October.

Pastor David Strom continues to lead a men's Bible study on the second and fourth Mondays of the month at 7:00 a.m. Committee members have also discussed the possibility of adding a Women's Bible study, possibly led by Pastor Kate.

#### Other Activities/Projects

An adult book study continues to meet every third Monday of the month January-May and September-December at 11:45 am. Two of these meetings featured guests that had personal experience and expertise on the monthly book topics (Dr. Patricia Lindholm - Being Mortal and retired navy nurse captain, Donna Hendel - The Women).

The church library team continues to host the Sunday School children once a month for book check out. Library volunteers also refresh the books in the family pew area, narthex, play room (old nursery) and Little Free Library. Through generous book donations and purchases, there are many new children's books and adult Large Print books.

On April 14, 2024, the adult education committee participated in the volunteer fair held in the narthex during Sunday morning fellowship time. During this event, our table was represented by committee member Vicki Berdan. She was able to answer questions and direct people to sign up sheets for sharing their adult education ideas, as well as volunteering opportunities.

#### Discussion Topics

The adult education committee members have discussed hosting special learning opportunities on topics such as mental health, childhood trauma, and the Palestine/Israel conflict. These subjects remain under consideration, and the committee welcomes suggestions as they look forward to offering new opportunities for learning and adult faith development.

Committee Members: Vicki Berdan, Cindy Larson, Jack Pearson, Susanne Ronning, *Pastor Tim O'Shields*, 2 vacancies

### CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILY COMMITTEE

It has been another year of growth in our CYF programs, and we are so thankful! We have both an active Sunday School program and Wednesday youth programs (F3, Elevate, and Confirmation). At a time when many churches are struggling to keep youth involved, our programs are thriving. Kristy

Wicklund and Jen Enstad-Petersen continue to build connections with our kids at First Lutheran, and work with other ELCA churches in town to hold special events for our youth such as Vacation Bible School and lock-ins.

The programs this committee oversees would not be possible without many volunteers. Thank you to our teachers, confirmation leaders, committee members, and everyone who helps create a fun and welcoming church home for our youngest members and their families!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kristi Dinsmore, Chair

Committee Members: Melissa Duenow, Megan Neubauer, Michelle Shearer, Jennifer Smestad, Erin Warren, Dani West, *Pastor Tim O'Shields, Jen Enstad-Petersen, Kristy Wicklund*

## **COMMUNITY LIFE/FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

“Community is both a feeling and a set of relationships among people. People form and maintain communities to meet common needs.”

The work of Community Life (formally Fellowship) Committee is to strengthen the bonds of fellowship among members both spiritually and socially.

It is the responsibility of the Community Life Committee to coordinate fellowship events and church meals, plan celebrations for congregational life events, support congregation members in their homes through visitation and in support groups, assist and encourage small special interest groups, assign a funeral team leader and support them as needed, organize and coordinate the use of volunteers for social functions, and make recommendations regarding the use, layout, and supplies of the kitchen.

In the past year we have:

- Served at four funerals.
- Planned and served meals for the Annual Meeting, New Member Sundays, Lenten Services, Pastor Tiffany's farewell, and Pastor Tim's welcome celebrations.
- Made 25 weeks of meals for Wednesday Dinner Church while seeing attendance nearly double.
- Helped with Palm Sunday Brunch, Senior Sunday, Summer Worship, and Kick-off Sunday.
- Supported members in their homes. Pastor Kate has been visiting regularly with them and the Cookie Brigade delivered Christmas treats to them in December.
- Maintained a support group for anyone who has lost and misses a loved one that meets monthly.
- Hosted a Puzzle and Popcorn event.

The OWLS (Older Wiser Lutherans) went to several events and WOW (Women of the Word) had a Cookie decorating demonstration.

We will continue to be where we are needed and to share our talents when possible. Thank you to all the FANTASTIC volunteers that set up and help out when they are needed. You are appreciated more than you know.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Toso, Chair



Committee members: Lyn Bladow, Lorri Holt, Sandy Kvern, Cindy Larson, JoAn Whitlock, *Terry Gervais*, *Pastor Kate Bruns*, *Pastor Tim O'Shields*

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

Outreach Ministries of First Lutheran Church have reached out to numerous charitable agencies as well as to individuals in our community and beyond. Our church members reach out each time they speak with kindness or offer assistance to another person. Each month the church budget allows for a specified amount of money to be given to charities and to the NW Minnesota Synod. Groups helped this past year include the following: FF Foodshelf, LRH Cancer Center, Someplace Safe, ELCA Lutheran World Relief, YMCA children's programming, FF Habitat for Humanity, ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response, The Blessing Closet, Salvation Army, Matthew & Barbara Houses, and A Place to Belong.

Other activities that fall under the umbrella of Outreach Ministry include the Harvest Dinner which served over 500 people in the Fellowship Hall and another 100 people benefited from dinners outside the church. Christmas gifts were donated by church members for people at A Place to Belong. Items in need are collected each month and are taken to the Blessing Closet. Many volunteers faithfully deliver Meals by Wheels several times a year and FLC members help the Red Cross each time they hold their blood drive at FLC. The church aids those in recovery by offering meeting space in our building for Al-Anon and AA.

Special, very successful fundraisers in 2024 revolved around LRH Cancer Center and FF Habitat for Humanity. Major contributions for these groups were much appreciated and are dear to the hearts of our congregation. Another special effort was to fill the Emergency Pantry at the Salvation Army with personal hygiene and household cleaning products as well as diapers and baby care items.

The members of First Lutheran have obviously heard the words of Jesus in regard to those having difficult times and are always willing to act in a generous and loving way. Many people first feel the love of Christ through the hands and kindness of strangers. I am proud to be a part of such a congregation and I thank you for opening your hearts to others.

We at First Lutheran truly are "Blessed to be a Blessing"!

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Mathison, Chair

Committee Members: Wendy Anderson, Lyn Bladow, Neil Herman, Sue Hermes, Karen Olson, *Pastor Tim O'Shields*.

## **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

The Property Committee is responsible for the care and maintenance of church properties, buildings, and grounds.

It was another busy year for the Property Committee.

Here is a list of some of the projects in 2024:

- Removed divider walls in lower-level classrooms.
- Replaced gutters and fascia on the south side canopy entrance.
- Deep cleaned the chairs in the fellowship hall and choir room.
- Developed a maintenance checklist to help prioritize tasks and prepare for large expenditures.

- Had tuckpointing done on the exterior of the choir and organ nave.
- Updating our Building Use Policy.
- Re-graded the landscaping around the church to keep water out of the building.
- Had the elevator inspected and repaired.
- Deep cleaned the carpet in the fellowship hall.
- Installed new A/V equipment in the rec room.
- Had the lighting in the decorating room brought up to code.
- Scraped paint and plaster from walls in a basement storage closet and repainted it.
- Saw the completion of the repairs of the narthex stained glass window.
- Rick West continued to work with our heating companies to repair and complete deferred maintenance on the boilers and heat exchange system.

This committee is dedicated to the function and appearance of our church building and grounds. Thank you for supporting us and entrusting us with this important work.

Leonard Hatzenbuhler, Property Committee Chair

Members of Property Committee: Jody & Dale Hanson, Mark Hermes, David Holt, Denny & Ruth Hystead, Ivan Janssen, Keary Toso, *Pastor Tim O'Shields, Jennifer Hubrig*

## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

*Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs ~ Psalm 100:2*

The work of the Worship Committee this year has been focused on providing support in planning and preparing for the worship experiences of our congregation. We meet monthly to accomplish our many assignments.

In the year 2024, we have celebrated the work and said farewell to our interim pastor, Tiffany Sundeen. We welcomed and celebrated the installation of our new Pastor, Timothy O'Shields. We adjusted the time of our Sunday worship service to 9:00 a.m., for the purpose of accommodating our Sunday School teachers and students.

Attendance in worship has continued to increase this year, and we are grateful for Pastor Tim's leadership and his support given to our committee as we work together planning our congregation's worship experiences. Finding volunteers to participate in our worship services continues to be a significant part of our committee's work. We are grateful for all those who currently serve as volunteers in our services and are working to expand the number of volunteers who are comfortable filling these roles.

Highlights of our committee's work in 2024 include:

- Maintaining our committee's agenda and supporting our pastor as requested
- Monitoring and supporting live-streaming and sound system issues
- Coordination with our Altar Guild
- Messenger articles on liturgical purpose and history
- Working with our Pastor on planning and executing festival and other services

Again, I want to express our gratitude to all who serve regularly as musicians, liturgical arts, ushers, sacristans, and as members of the altar guild. We look forward to another year of shared blessings through our worship experience; filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit. Thanks be to God!

Respectfully submitted,  
Harriet Wicklund, Chair

Committee members: Jody Hanson, Judy Jensen, Robbie Olson, Carol Thompson, Kari Vaughn, *Pastor Tim O'Shields*, *Keith Melberg*, *Linda Mellon*, *Anne Taylor*, 1 vacancy

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

As we began 2024, we knew our interim pastor, Pastor Tiffany Sundeen's two-year contract was ending and that our intentions were to call a new senior Pastor to First Lutheran. A call committee was formed in late 2023, and a new senior Pastor was called in May of 2024. Pastor Timothy O'Shields accepted that call and started at FLC on July 8, 2024. We appreciate all that Pastor Tiffany did for our church and our congregation in the two and a half years she served as our church leader. Thank You Pastor Tiffany. During Pastor Tim's first five months at FLC we have felt the Spirit moving and leading our congregation. We welcome and appreciate his leadership.

Pastor Kate Bruns continues to serve as our visitation pastor. During the first half of 2024 she also served as a fill-in for Pastor Tiffany when she could not get to Fergus from Fargo. Pastor Kate's hours were increased from 20 hours per week to 30 hours per week during this time. Now that Pastor Tim is on staff and living in Fergus Falls, Pastor Kate's hours have returned to 20 hours per week. She continues to call on more than 50 members of our congregation that can no longer attend services at FLC on a regular basis. Pastor Kate's knowledge and experience have been a true blessing to our staff.

There have been no other additions or changes to the staff at FLC this year. Kristy Wicklund continues in her role as Director of Children's Ministry (children ages birth to 6th grade). Jen Enstad-Petersen serves as Director of Youth and Family Ministry and works primarily with 7th through 12th graders but helps Kristy with 5th and 6th graders on Wednesdays. Our youth programs continue to thrive under their leadership. Both Kristy and Jen appreciate the parents and volunteers who are devoting their time to support our youth.

The remaining staff members are: Keith Melberg-Organist, Harriet Wicklund-Adult Choir Director, Linda Mellon-Hosanna Handbells Director, Anne Taylor-Worship Team Director, Jennifer Hubrig-Church Administrator, and Mary Johnson-Office Assistant.

A cost-of-living adjustment of 2.9% was approved for all staff for the 2025 calendar year. This is right in line with federal and state government and many local Ottertail County employers.

I would like to thank the current members of the personnel committee for their dedication to this committee and for their service to FLC. I would also like to welcome the new members to the committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Steven Fitz, Chair

Committee Members: Al Jensen, Andrea Loomer, Bob Ronning, Cody Ward, Kim Ward, *Pastor Tim O'Shields*

## **STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

*Use your gifts to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace ~ 1 Peter 4:10*

I want to thank all our great committee members for all their work and input this past year. Some educational events were held and we also put together a volunteer appreciation Sunday in April to thank all our outstanding volunteers at FLC.

In August we started work on our stewardship theme of Spirit Filled – Spirit Lead. Stewardship is a way of life. Five weeks leading up to Spirit Sunday we had the five ministry areas (worship, adult ed, CYF, outreach and community ed) submit stories each week on how they felt their spirit moving in their ministries. We would again like to thank the volunteers from each ministry that submitted these wonderful stories.

Spirit Sunday was held on November 17<sup>th</sup>. We had a great response with commitment cards. Thank you so much for your pledges. Your generous gifts help our ministries with all the other great things that happen at FLC. The Stewardship Committee will continue to work on more educational events in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kris Werner, Chair

Committee Members: Steve Fitz, Kristi Goos, Donna Quam, Paul Sanderson, *Pastor Tim O'Shields, 1 vacancy*

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The primary responsibility of the Finance Committee is to coordinate and supervise the financial activities of the congregation. This includes giving accurate reports and preparing a Ministry Spending Plan for the year.

The finance committee started off the year by updating its description and duties for the Constitution Review Committee. We assembled an audit team and a set of guidelines for them to follow. They submitted their report in May and it was published in The Messenger.

The work on the large stained-glass window in the narthex was able to proceed in 2024. In April this committee started a campaign to raise the \$30,000 needed for repairs. An anonymous donor gave \$1 for every \$4 we raised. We ended up raising \$27,353 from the congregation and receiving \$2,627 from the FLC Foundation. Work was completed in December.

Also, in April, we ran into shortages in both the General Fund and Building Improvement Fund. We decided to recommend using the Jean Dahling Estate Fund (which had not been designated for other use) and the Durner Cash Fund (which was a major gift received in 2008 that was intended to be spent down over a course of 10 years but had not been) to offset those shortages. We also recommend that \$6,000 be moved from the Parking Lot Fund to the Building Improvement Fund and that future parking lot rent would be split evenly between those two funds.

In July we faced a shortage in our General Fund again. We looked into getting a Line of Credit but recommended using our Durner Investment Fund money instead. A gift of \$100,000 had been invested in 2012 by the Church Council for a period of 10 years with the intention of having the 2022 Church Council decide how to use that money. Its balance had grown to \$115,236 and in 2024 the Council decided to put \$64,206 into the General Fund and apply \$22,042 to the Organ Fund which had been carrying a negative balance.

We reviewed our entire insurance policy with our Church Mutual agent in 2024 and determined that the policy accurately covers our needs and would be renewed. We also gained a new member, Lyn Bladow and thanked David Holt for his time with us on the committee.

In November we learned that the tuckpointing project came in \$13,874 over budget so we made a request to the FLC Foundation for the overage.

Our final challenge for the year was to make sure that our income covered our expenses. We asked the congregation to Bring it Home-Wrap it Up with a gift of \$77,290. The congregation obliged and brought home over \$105,000!

Thank you to all staff, volunteers, and members of First Lutheran Church for your faithful stewardship of God's abundance.

Leonard Hatzenbuhler Treasurer

Committee Members: Suzanne Demuth, David Holt, Teri Spangler, Barret Wicklund, *Pastor Tim O'Shields, Jennifer Hubrig*

# FINANCIAL REPORTS

## GENERAL FUND REVENUE & EXPENSES

As of December 31, 2024

### Revenues

#### Contribution Revenues

Envelope Offerings	
Advent	\$ 1,080
Ash Wednesday	\$ 554
Christmas	\$ 1,300
Easter	\$ 1,008
General Fund Env	\$ 477,806
Thanksgiving	\$ 1,284
Loose Offering	\$ 9,244

#### Miscellaneous Revenues

Life Insurance Policy Gift	\$ 12,740
Rebates and Refund Revenue	\$ 225
Reimbursed Expense Revenue	\$ 1,018
Thrivent Choice Dollars	\$ 988
Bank Interest	\$ 216

**Total for Revenues** **\$ 507,461**

### Expenditures

#### Budgeted Expenses

Adult Education Exp	\$ 189
Community Life	\$ 4,936
CYF Exp	\$ 4,318
Insurance	\$ 15,870
Music Exp	\$ 3,920
Office & Admin	\$ 40,997
Outreach Expenses-Monthly Benevolence	\$ 5,500
Outreach Expenses-Synod Mission Support	\$ 18,000
Personnel Exp	\$ 381,284
Property	\$ 47,888
Stewardship Exp	\$ 1,677
Utilities	\$ 30,606
Worship Exp	\$ 4,782

#### Miscellaneous Expenses

Expenses to be Reimbursed	\$ 965
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**Total for Expenditures** **\$ 560,931**

**Net gain (loss)** **\$ (53,470)**

Carry-over from 2023	\$ 8,815
Durner Cash Fund Transfer	\$ 12,050
Durner Investments Transfer	\$ 64,206
Jean Dahling Estate	\$ 9,264
Transfer from Specials Account	\$ 263

**Net Change in General Fund** **\$ 41,128**

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For all Accounts  
December 31, 2024

<b>Assets</b>	
<b>Bank</b>	
General Checking Account	41,488 *
Specials Checking Account	61,431
<b>Total Bank</b>	<b>102,919</b>
<b>Other Current Assets</b>	
Dorn & Co Durner Investments	32,469
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	<b>32,469</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>135,388</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Building Use Deposits	375
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>375</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>375</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
ADULT BIBLE STUDY FUND	28
ALTAR FLOWER FUND	440
BUILDING IMPROVEMENT FUND	533
CHILDRENS BIBLES	1
CHILDRENS EDUCATION FUND	469
DAYCAMP/VBS FUND	1,048
FAMILY MINISTRY FUND	1,968
FELLOWSHIP FUND	5,295
FLC BOOK STUDY FUND	412
GENERAL FUND	40,959
GOOD SAMARITAN FUND	9,881
GRAD FLEECE BLANKET FUND	76
HANDBELLS FUND	983
LIBRARY FUND	1,204
MEETING DOOR ACCESSIBILITY	700
MUSIC FUND	230
OUTREACH FUND	9,583
OWLS FUND	4,413
PARKING LOT FUND	4,872
RADIO BROADCAST FUND	2,294
SENIOR CHOIR FUND	6,488
STAINED GLASS REPAIR	-9,168
UNDESIGNATED MEMORIALS FUND	8,753
WORSHIP FUND	212
YOUTH FUND	5,934
YOUTH MISSION TRIP FUND	4,934
DURNER INVESTMENTS	32,469
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>135,013</b>
<b>Total Liabilities + Net Assets</b>	<b>135,388</b>

*\*the general checking account contains the general fund and building improvement fund balances.*

## BENEVOLENCE

First Lutheran Church experiences blessings and joy through greater generosity. In 2024, we “invested” 8.6% of our annual resources to benefit those outside our congregation through budgeted benevolence to the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA in addition to non-budgeted benevolence to selected organizations and individuals made possible with additional funds through the church’s designated gifts and individual giving.

Annual Resources	
Total Income to FLC Budget	\$ 507,461
Total Income to other benevolence	\$ 21,803
<b>Total Annual Resources</b>	<b>\$ 529,264</b>

Non-Budgeted Benevolence	
Cemetery Landscaping	\$ 2,914
Christmas Food Baskets	\$ 1,140
Habitat for Humanity	\$ 2,500
Lake Region Cancer Center	\$ 5,025
Lutheran Disaster Response	\$ 2,875
Lutheran Social Services	\$ 155
Matthew & Barbara Houses	\$ 2,274
Salvation Army	\$ 807
Various Persons in Need per Pastors	\$ 1,698
VBS for Local Children	\$ 120
WELCA	\$ 2,295
<b>Total Non-Budgeted Benevolence</b>	<b>\$ 21,803</b>

Budgeted Benevolence	
Blessing Closet	\$ 500
ELCA World Hunger	\$ 500
Fergus Falls Food Shelf	\$ 500
Habitat for Humanity	\$ 500
Lake Region Cancer Center	\$ 500
Lutheran Disaster Response	\$ 500
Matthew & Barbara Houses	\$ 500
NW MN Synod Mission Support	\$ 18,000
Salvation Army	\$ 1,000
Someplace Safe	\$ 500
YMCA	\$ 500
<b>Total Budgeted Giving</b>	<b>\$ 23,500</b>

Benevolence	
Total Budgeted Benevolence	\$ 23,500
Total Non-Budgeted Benevolence	\$ 21,803
<b>Total 2023 Benevolence</b>	<b>\$ 45,303</b>

Percent of Annual Resources Given	<b>8.6%</b>
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## BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

2024 Building Improvement Fund	
Balance 1/1/2024	\$ 13,832
Income	
<i>Durner Cash</i>	\$ 12,050
<i>Facility Rental Revenues</i>	\$ 902
<i>Jean Dahling Estate Funds</i>	\$ 8,764
<i>Offerings</i>	\$ 13,455
<i>Transfer from Parking Lot Fund</i>	\$ 7,890
<i>Youth Offering</i>	\$ 151
Total Income	\$ 43,212
Expenses	
<i>Door locks to fire code</i>	\$ 10,794
<i>Gutters on Canopy</i>	\$ 2,475
<i>Heating Repairs</i>	\$ 18,242
<i>Tuckpointing</i>	\$ 25,000
Total Expenses	\$ 56,511
<b>Balance 12/31/2024</b>	<b>\$ 533</b>

2024 Parking Lot Fund	
Balance 1/1/2024	\$ 5,192
Income	
<i>Rents</i>	\$ 8,694
Total Income	\$ 8,694
Expenses	
<i>Property Taxes</i>	\$ 624
<i>Railroad Lease</i>	\$ 500
<i>Transfer to Building Fund</i>	\$ 7,890
Total Expenses	\$ 9,014
<b>Balance 12/31/2024</b>	<b>\$ 4,872</b>



# PROPOSED 2025 MINISTRY SPENDING PLAN

	2024 Actual	2025 Intent
<b>WORSHIP</b>	<b>\$ 8,701</b>	<b>\$ 15,197</b>
Adult Choir	\$ 139	\$ 500
Dinner Church Musicians	\$ 510	
Dinner Church Media Resources	\$ -	\$ 1,365
Handbell Choir Music	\$ 399	\$ 600
Instrument Maintenance	\$ 1,871	\$ 2,500
Lighting/Sound/Livestream	\$ 1,240	\$ 3,160
Liturgical Arts	\$ 188	\$ 1,000
Music Licenses	\$ 807	\$ 1,097
Special Music	\$ 250	\$ 750
Worship Supplies	\$ 2,547	\$ 3,325
Worship Team Musicians	\$ 750	\$ 900
<b>OUTREACH</b>	<b>\$ 23,500</b>	<b>\$ 24,000</b>
Monthly Benevolence	\$ 5,500	\$ 6,000
Synod Mission Support	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
<b>ADULT EDUCATION</b>	<b>\$ 621</b>	<b>\$ 1,910</b>
Adult Education/Bible Study	\$ 189	\$ 1,400
Devotionals	\$ 432	\$ 510
<b>CHILDREN, YOUTH, &amp; FAMILIES</b>	<b>\$ 4,318</b>	<b>\$ 7,800</b>
Confirmation	\$ 415	\$ 600
Daycamp/VBS	\$ 100	\$ 2,000
Sunday School/FLY	\$ 2,966	\$ 4,000
Youth Activities	\$ 838	\$ 1,200
<b>COMMUNITY LIFE</b>	<b>\$ 4,936</b>	<b>\$ 9,250</b>
Appreciation Events	\$ 224	\$ 600
Church Meals	\$ 252	\$ 500
Dinner Church Meals	\$ 4,366	\$ 7,750
New Member Reception	\$ 94	\$ 400
<b>ADMIN AND LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>\$ 42,242</b>	<b>\$ 30,790</b>
Meetings	\$ 517	\$ 1,500
Office Supplies & Technology	\$ 36,943	\$ 23,800
Publicity/Advertising	\$ 598	\$ 600
Subscriptions & Dues	\$ 2,507	\$ 2,590
Stewardship	\$ 1,677	\$ 2,300
<b>PERSONNEL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$ 381,284</b>	<b>\$ 332,242</b>
Background checks	\$ 49	\$ 100
Compensation & Benefits	\$ 367,663	\$ 325,552
Substitute Organist	\$ 300	\$ 600
Other Employee Benefits	\$ 13,272	\$ 5,990
<b>UTILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 30,606</b>	<b>\$ 33,500</b>
Electricity	\$ 14,213	\$ 15,000
Gas	\$ 9,933	\$ 12,000
Telephone	\$ 1,946	\$ 2,000
Water & Waste	\$ 4,514	\$ 4,500
<b>PROPERTY</b>	<b>\$ 47,888</b>	<b>\$ 47,425</b>
Supplies	\$ 1,422	\$ 1,500
Building Equipment Maintenance	\$ 15,262	\$ 5,000
Grounds	\$ 252	\$ 250
Vehicle Maintenance	\$ 60	\$ 500
Service Contracts	\$ 30,892	\$ 40,175
<b>INSURANCE</b>	<b>\$ 15,870</b>	<b>\$ 19,618</b>
	<b>\$ 559,967</b>	<b>\$ 521,732</b>

The 2025 Ministry Spending Plan is **13.9% lower** than the 2024 Ministry Spending Plan.

The 2025 Ministry Spending Plan is **7.3% lower** than the 2024 Expenses.

## WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA (WELCA) 2024

### Our Purpose

As women of the ELCA we are called to grow in faith, support one another, and engage in ministry and action to promote healing and wholeness in the church, society and world.

### Fellowship

All Women of First Lutheran Church are members of WELCA, the ELCA Northwest Minnesota Synodical Organization and of Conference 7. This includes the WELCA Board, Hannah Circle, and Love Days Quilters. All are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Conference 7 Spring Gathering was held in April at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls.

Women's Day at Luther Crest Bible Camp was held in the last week of June.

The ELCA Northwest Minnesota Women's Organization Annual Convention was held in September at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Moorhead, Mn.

Conference 7 Fall Gathering was held in October at Zion Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls, Mn.

### WELCA Board

Quarterly meetings are held on Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. In April the board participated in the Stewardship Volunteer Appreciation Sunday.

### Misson

Our annual campaign "Coins, Cash and Checks Change Lives" held in October received a generous response. All proceeds were given to local and global missions.

November Thankoffering showed how truly thankful we are. Donations were sent directly to the National ELCA offices to address concerns of women and children in crisis.

### Hannah Circle

Circle meets monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, with the exception of June and July. We gather at 1:00 p.m. in the Narthex for fellowship, refreshments, and Bible Study from the *Gather* magazine. Pastor Tiffany, Pastor Kate or Pastor Tim have led the Study. In April we helped host Gertrude Larson's 108<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration. The November "Sunshine Aide" program for the residents at the Pioneer Care Center was provided by the Circle.

### Love Days Quilters

Every Monday, except for Mondays in January and February, there is quilting and other activities going on in the Quilting Room. In June 57 quilt and 32 school kits were sent to Lutheran World Relief and 5 quilts were given to Vivie Hospice in November. In December 10 quilts were given to Slumberland and 10 full size quilts and 4 baby quilts were given to the Salvation Army.

2024 WELCA Board: Gayle Fitz, Donna Quam, Judy Mouritsen, Sandra Pearson and Joan Anderson

# WELCA 2024 ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance as of January 1, 2024

Checking	\$	262
Savings	\$	1,303

## Receipts

Circle Offerings	\$	1,496
Thankoffering	\$	1,005
Fall Event (Cash & Checks Change Lives)	\$	1,290
Registration for Conf 7 Meeting	\$	182
From Savings	\$	500
Thank you	\$	100
Interest on savings account	\$	17

<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>4,590</b>
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## Disbursements

Benevolences		
A Place to Belong	\$	250
Blessing Closet	\$	250
KBRF Morning Watch	\$	250
LutherCrest	\$	250
LSS-Camp Knutson	\$	200
Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$	200
OBA	\$	500
Pioneer Home Foundation	\$	200
Someplace Safe	\$	350
WELCA Synodical	\$	250
WELCA Thankoffering	\$	1,005
Gift Card for Pr Tiffany	\$	112
Gather Magazine Subscriptions (7x19.95)	\$	140
Postage & Bank fees	\$	25
WELCA Conf 7 registrations	\$	182
WELCA Conf 7 offering and fee	\$	180
WELCA Convention		
Registration	\$	100
Expense Fund	\$	25
Synod offering	\$	50
Women's Seminary fund	\$	50
Triennial Convention offering	\$	75

<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>4,643</b>
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Balance on hand December 31, 2024

Checking	\$	202
Savings	\$	810

Sandy Pearson, Treasurer

# THE FOUNDATION

## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT FUND INCOME AND EXPENSE For Year End December 31, 2024

### Income

Memorials	\$	50	
Income from Investments	\$	84,060	
Total Income			\$ 84,110
Less dedicated Income	\$	7,279	
<b>Income Available for Benevolence 2025</b>			<b>\$ 76,831</b>

### Benevolence Expense: Paid in 2024

A Place to Belong	\$	1,000	
AFY	\$	1,000	
Bibles for FLC Children & Youth	\$	390	
Blankets for FLC High School Seniors	\$	800	
Blessing Closet	\$	1,200	
Cemetery Mower	\$	4,080	
Day Camp for FLC Children	\$	2,000	
FLC OWLS (Older, Wiser, Lutherans)	\$	2,500	
FLC Stained Glass Window	\$	2,647	
Food Cards Salvation Army	\$	9,766	
Food Shelf	\$	4,500	
Jail Inc.	\$	400	
Jeff Fitzkappes	\$	1,000	
Lake Region Halfway House	\$	500	
Luther Crest Bible Camp Operations Fund	\$	5,000	
Luther Seminary Rural Focus	\$	2,000	
Meals By Wheels	\$	2,500	
Morning Watch	\$	500	
Otter Cove Children's Museum	\$	500	
Pastor Development	\$	1,852	
Salvation Army	\$	2,200	
Scholarships - Church Colleges	\$	1,500	
Scholarships to Luther Crest for FLC Kids	\$	1,753	
Shop With a Cop	\$	3,000	
Someplace Safe	\$	1,000	
United Way Feeding Backpack Program	\$	4,500	
Women's Love Days Quilters	\$	1,500	
Total Benevolence			\$ 59,588
Other Expenses - Stamps - Insurance			\$ 3,134
<b>Total Expense</b>			<b>\$ 62,722</b>

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH FOUNDATION  
 ENDOWMENT FUND  
 For Year End December 31, 2024**

**Bank Accounts**

Treasury Money Market	\$ 5,000	
Money Market for 2023 Budget	\$ 76,781	
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>		<b>\$ 81,781</b>

**Investment Accounts**

American Balance Fund	\$ 9,074	
Otter Tail Power Stock	\$ 178,397	
Star Fund	\$ 23,529	
Vanguard Total Bond Market Index	\$ 641,186	
Vanguard Total International Bond Market Index	\$ 79,748	
Vanguard Total International Stock Market Index	\$ 31,240	
Vanguard Total Stock Market Index	\$ 870,941	
DL "Lindy" Thoreson & Harriet K Thoreson		
Balance Stock Fund	\$ 292,977	
Franklin Income Series	\$ 88,215	
Franklin Strategic Income	\$ 60,015	
Franklin Templeton Utilities	\$ 125,722	
Templeton Global Bond	\$ 38,249	
<b>Total Investments</b>		<b>\$ 2,439,294</b>

<b>Total Endowment Fund</b>		<b>\$ 2,521,075</b>
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**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Tim Johnson, President  
 Linda Mellon, Vice President  
 Vicki Hanneman, Secretary  
 Leonard Hatzenbuhler, Treasurer  
 Brad Larson, Trustee  
 Jennifer Smestad, Trustee  
 Barret Wicklund, Trustee

## **FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CEMETERY**

First Lutheran's two cemeteries are open to all First Lutheran members as well as people from other faiths and traditions. The largest cemetery, referred to as the North Cemetery, is in Fergus Falls Township about three miles northwest of the church. The other cemetery, referred to as the South Cemetery, is located in Dane Prairie Township approximately two and a half miles southeast of the church. The committee's goal is to keep these areas well groomed, i.e., grass mowed regularly, weed control, trees pruned, and removal of old flowers and ornaments and to keep driveways in good condition. Our main objective is to assist families in selecting a proper burial plot for their loved ones at the time of need. Another important task is to see that a written notice is sent to each family of their plot selection including the rules and regulations of the cemetery. All plot ownership records are available at the church. The committee also assists local funeral homes and monument companies in locating and marking grave plots when requested. Within the North Cemetery is a shelter in which a detailed directory is housed to assist families and other visitors in locating the resting place of their loved ones.

During the calendar year of 2024 there were a total of 11 burials in the North Cemetery including 1 cremation remains interred in the columbarium. There also were 2 burials in the South Cemetery. The committee continues to maintain both cemeteries to the highest standards so as to make them inviting to all who choose to visit their deceased loved ones.

Also, during 2024 the following took place:

1. A member donation of a 40-crypt cremation columbarium was erected in the North Cemetery.
2. A storage shed was erected in the South Cemetery.
3. A bake sale at church raised well appreciated funds towards spring landscaping surrounding the columbarium.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Hermes, Secretary

Committee Members: Terry Gervais (President), Mary Johnson (Vice-President), Leonard Hatzenbuhler (Treasurer), Steve Leitte, Keary Toso, Lowell Wendel, McKenna Kvern, Todd Kvern

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CEMETERIES  
FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR 2024**

**Maintenance Account**

Balance January 1, 2024		\$	<b>4,745</b>
Income			
From Foundation	\$ 4,080		
Dividend from investments	\$ 4,277		
Columbaria Landscape	\$ 3,642		
Total Income and Transfer		\$	11,999
Expense			
Columbaria Expense	\$ 4,043		
Directory Update	\$ 271		
Shed South Cemetery	\$ 641		
Supplies	\$ 671		
Mowing	\$ 1,850		
Total Expense		\$	7,476
Investment on savings		\$	6,417
Balance December 31, 2024		<b>\$</b>	<b>2,852</b>

**Permanent Care Account**

Balance January 1, 2024		\$	<b>1,369</b>
Income			
Memorial	\$ 200		
Lot Sold	\$ 2,900		
Interment Fee	\$ 1,545		
Transfer Fee	\$ 1,500		
Interest	\$ 0		
Total Income		\$	6,145
Amount transferred to Investment		\$	5,000
Balance December 31, 2024		<b>\$</b>	<b>2,514</b>

**Investment Funds**

Balance January 1, 2024		\$	<b>83,201</b>
Amount invested	\$ 11,417		
Increase (Decrease) in value	\$ 6,072		
Balance December 31, 2024		<b>\$</b>	<b>100,689</b>

**All Funds**

Fund Balance January 01, 2024		\$	<b>89,315</b>
Fund Balance December 31, 2024		\$	<b>106,055</b>
<b>Value Increase (Decrease)</b>		<b>\$</b>	<b>16,741</b>

Leonard Hatzenbuhler  
Treasurer

# NORTHWESTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD



Northwestern Minnesota Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## A year end message from Bishop Bill Tesch:

*Faith, however, is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different [people], in heart and spirit and mind and powers; and it brings with it the Holy Spirit. O it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith!*

-From the "Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther

Dear Beloved Siblings in Christ of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod,

The faith that is stirred up in us by the Holy Spirit and that reaches the depths of our hearts is more than merely agreeing to specific ideas about God. A Living Faith roots our lives in Jesus and transforms us into lovers of the world and of our neighbor. This is the faith we want for ourselves, our children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors. **Such a faith needs a living, active, mighty congregation** where the good news is proclaimed and where the faithful collaborate to teach the word of God and love their neighbors. Everything we do as your synod staff is for this purpose. Here are just some of the ways that your synod staff partnered with you in the last year to foster **living, active and mighty congregations**.

- ❖ We ordained and installed 4 new ministers into their first calls.
- ❖ We welcomed 6 new individuals into candidacy for rostered ministry. Our synod now has a total of 16 people in candidacy, as we prepare gifted leaders for the future of our congregations.
- ❖ We installed 13 new pastors or deacons who joined our synod's congregations and ministries.
- ❖ We placed 10 new Synod Authorized Ministers in congregations while guiding and supporting the work of 53 authorized ministers in total.
- ❖ We empowered 13 congregations to share the Gospel in innovative ways on Synod Vitality Day.
- ❖ We fortified 18 congregations who were experiencing divisive internal conflict with coaching, mediation and accompaniment.
- ❖ We traveled 100,000+ miles to show up for the joys and struggles of our congregations and leaders.
- ❖ We provided 4000 hours of face-to-face engagement with leaders and congregations across the 21,100 square miles of our synod's territory.
- ❖ We inspired and equipped 36 congregations to grow their members' generosity through two synod-sponsored stewardship days or through synod-created video resources.
- ❖ We gathered 14 Sr. Pastors for collaboration, learning and fellowship at our annual Sr. Pastor retreat.
- ❖ We paid off just under \$60,000 worth of student loan debt for 13 pastors or deacons.
- ❖ We are forming and equipping dozens of leaders with innovative programs such as Jeremiah 29 and FACES of leadership.

And the list could go on, but we must stop here because we are out of space! THANK YOU for your partnership in sharing the Gospel and for your generosity of time, treasure and spirit. God bless all of you as you gather in annual meetings to make important decisions about the ministry of your congregation.

In Christ our Savior,

Pastor Bill Tesch, Bishop of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA



## BOARD PRESIDENT REPORT

### Greetings, Luther Crest Association!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to express our deepest gratitude for all that you do to make Luther Crest the incredible place it is today—and for all that it will continue to be in the next 80 years. **Yes, next year we'll be celebrating 80 years of ministry at Luther Crest!**

It's been a wonderful year, and as a board, we are both excited and grateful to see a full staff working hard to carry out the ministry and mission of Luther Crest. Their passion and dedication have helped build a strong and inclusive community, where everyone is welcome to celebrate this milestone together. We have seen tremendous work from our committees, all contributing to the vision of full inclusion and preparing to mark our 80th anniversary with joy.

This summer, I had the opportunity to attend the closing worship on a couple of occasions, and it was a truly inspiring experience. The **joy and excitement** from the campers were palpable as they reflected on the meaningful experiences they had at camp. It's moments like these that remind us why **Luther Crest's ministry is so vital.**

The theme for this summer's camp was **Created to Be**, and it perfectly captured the essence of what we strive for: to be passionate, authentic, and accommodating in all we do. These values have been at the core of our work this year, and they will continue to guide us and our campers into the future.

As we look ahead to the next chapter, we're thrilled to embark on this journey with all of you. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in making Luther Crest a place where lives are transformed, and where the spirit of community thrives.

### Here's to the next 80 years of ministry!

With Gratitude and Blessings,



Greg Tvrdik - Luther Crest Board President

