

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

Over the past year we have continued to experience changes in the world around us. Even as our church finds ways to adapt to this changing world, we find hope in the unchanging and always present promise of God’s love through Jesus Christ. We change and adapt not to conform to the world but because we believe that the gift of God’s Son is for the world, and that our congregations and worshiping communities are places to gather and be sent into the world, where we will tell the story of God’s love in word and deed.

The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the churchwide organization provide ways for the church to move beyond the boundaries of structures and geography and to share God’s love with people in our neighborhoods, our cities, our country and beyond. We engage in this ministry knowing that our church walks by faith, trusting in God’s promise in the gospel, and that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word. In John 15:5, Jesus reminds us, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” We are connected by the promise that we do all through Christ and can do nothing apart from him.

God gives the Holy Spirit, who uses gospel proclamation — in preaching and sacraments, in forgiveness and in healing conversations — to create and sustain this faith. Just as we rely on God to sustain our faith, we rely on each other to sustain the ministries that offer God’s love to the world. Through your generosity to each expression

of this church — your congregation, your synod and your churchwide organization — you add to our collective voice proclaiming God’s love for all.

I am grateful for your generosity over this last year. My gratitude spreads far beyond your generous financial gifts. You’ve shared your gifts of time through countless hours of volunteering, serving and accompanying. You’ve shared the gifts of your voices as we’ve tried to discover and learn how God is calling us to be the church now and into the future. And, finally, dear church, you have shared the gift of the realness of God’s love with the world around you. Be well, dear church, and stand steadfast in the promise of God’s love and grace as you take that promise with you into the world.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

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

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” —John 15:5

2023 Annual Gathering of Stories

First Lutheran Church

Growing in Faith

Spreading God's Love

Gathering in Community

Lead Pastor Pr. Dianne O. Loufman

Program and Support Staff

Pastoral Associate	Ann Beck
Director of Music	Karen Sande
Director of Chorale Activities	Michael Fuchs
Director of Contemporary Music	Bryan Gatten
Office Manager	Jim Lunderoff
Finance Specialist	Kelly Cossey
Custodial Team	Duane Sieger
	Carl Guldner
Audio Team	Carter Zupancich
Video Team	Sam Weston
	Shania Krause

2023 Vision Council

Lead Pastor	Pastor Dianne Loufman
President	Mark Boyce
Vice President	Susanna Ojakangas
Past President	Beth Storaasli
Secretary	Amy Merchant
Treasurer	Linda Mettner
Councilor at-Large	Bob Ardren
Councilor at-Large	Tyler Klingfus
Councilor at-Large	Kirsten Bich
Ministry Board Chair	

Ministry Board

Julie Samuelson, Chair; Pastor Dianne Loufman, Ann Beck, Margaret Broderius, Lorie Haglin, Carol Prochaska, Jonathan Rova, Jason Warner

Ministry Team Chairs

Evangelism & Welcome	Lorie Haglin
Life Long Learning	Mike Peterson
Local & Global	Mark Bryngelson
Stewardship	Carlene Sippola
Worship & Music	Sarah Climis

First Lutheran Church 1100 E. Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802

FLC's Participation in God's Mission

February 11, 2024

Welcome and Opening Prayer
Approval of Agenda
Reception of Minutes of June 11, 2023 Congregational Meeting
Lead Pastor's Report
Presentation and Invitation on Reimagining Our Structure
Introduction and Vote on New Call Committee Members
Finance Report
Approval of Mission Support Plan
Approval of Annual Gathering of Stories
Debt Reduction Challenge
Elections: Synod Delegates
Nominating Committee Members

50th Anniversary of World Hunger Ministry
Conversation on Global Ministry
Closing Prayer

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faithlovecommunity
First Lutheran Church

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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
WINNER
BEST PLACE OF WORSHIP

Pr. Dianne O. Loufman

Lead Pastor



Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

Jim Zastrow and I traveled down to the Cities to attend the Westminster Forum one Thursday evening in preparation for FLC's Foundation's Inaugural Speaker Event featuring Robert P. Jones on May 15, 2024. (We are using the Westminster series as a model for our own). While we were there, I looked at their beautiful art gallery and took a photo of one painting by Yousef Katalo from Palestine. The painting is of Jerusalem with a broken barbed wire fence and a dove of peace. The image is entitled: *The City of Love, in spite of everything*.

I look at the world with all its animosity, division, anger, negativity; the world where so many expressions of Christianity seem bereft of love and grace; the world where people are claiming to not believe in God or to believe in God but want nothing to do with organized religion; where what used to be is no more and what is coming has yet to arrive and yet, in spite of everything, we are still here — a community of faith holding onto hope and love. In spite of everything, we gather every week around water, Word, and meal. In spite of everything, we believe in the power of God's Word to make a difference. In spite of everything, we continue to proclaim Christ's forgiveness, grace and mercy for a broken world.

Forty one people, most from our congregation, were to travel to the Holy Land beginning on October 20, 2023. With the attack by Hamas and the Israeli response, our trip was canceled. This was crushing, not because we couldn't go but because of the suffering and devastation that has taken place. And yet, in spite of the current situation in the region, Mark Holman, living in hope says, "We will go next November."

Now we have different factions in our country fighting about the truth, seeking to control the narrative and censor others' views. College campuses have erupted. In spite of this, we are coming together with Jews, Muslims, Christians and others in the Twin Ports at First Lutheran to raise monies for the humanitarian needs of Palestinians and to listen to a speaker educate about the historical realities leading to the current realities on the ground. In spite of everything, we seek to follow Jesus bridging divides and coming together to raise money for suffering peoples and to listen and to learn.

In spite of it seeming way overdue that First Lutheran become a Reconciling in Christ Church, the Welcoming and Affirming Team moved us forward to publicly proclaim this community a sanctuary for the LGBTQIA2S+ community. Now people looking for an affirming church can find us as one of two Lutheran churches in Duluth that are listed as Reconciling in Christ. In spite of our society seeking to unravel gains for these siblings of ours, we proclaim our Christian solidarity.

The Minnesota Council of Churches was putting together a second truth-telling event in Duluth for the fall but it fell apart. The Native American and African-American people on the team said this is what happens, an event like the killing of George Floyd mobilizes everyone and then the energy and interest falls away. In spite of that reality, our racial justice team has not fallen away from this work putting together a well-received publication *Sankofa* and leading a book discussion of *Killers of the Flower Moon*.

Pr. Dianne O. Loufman

Lead Pastor

In spite of wondering if college care packages make a difference to college students, we sent 27 out and received thank yous and a card that moved me to tears. In spite of everything, God's Spirit continues to surprise.

In spite of Ann Beck retiring and the new associate pastor we are hoping for not arriving on our time schedule, ministries have continued thanks to Laura Stahl and the team of Sunday School leaders; Mark Boyce and Kirsten Bich meeting with the middle schoolers; Dana Varland arranging for pizza; the Caring Ministry team members visiting their people once again; Aidan Zeissler, a UMD student, showing up one Sunday afternoon when the doors didn't lock and I was the only one around, "Do you need any help?" "Yes! Did God send you?"

In spite of our ministry structure falling apart, ministry keeps happening. The Creation Care team put in a pollinator garden; Jacob Warren put in a bench made of plastic; Steve Samuelson moved our community garden project forward; women's and men's small groups have continued to meet and grow; Yvonne Anderson reignited the Quilting group and gathered many of the older homebound women together twice at Ecumen.

In spite of the push and pull of livestream community v. in-person community, we are welcoming people from up the shore, from across the bridges, from Ohio! In spite of the challenges, we are figuring out how to welcome and connect these two communities.

In spite of struggling to find office staff, we held on and were rewarded when Jim Lundorff arrived. What a Godsend to our community and those of us in the office! Since in addition to his computer and organizing skills, he brings a great sense of humor, we now can boast that we have a Jim in the office.

In spite of people's shyness and embarrassment, more people than ever got their feet washed on Maundy Thursday. Who cares if as one church member explained, "It's because our pastor challenged us to be brave."

In spite of my getting sick and being unable to come and lead the funeral for Tara Lien and the Sunday worship, Pastor Mark Holman, Beth Storassli and others stepped in and God's people were fed.

In spite of everyone's busy lives, the young adults are making time to gather in community twice a month at Ursa Minor. Every month I think of new people to invite and I look forward to how they will shape their relationships and time. Some of us gathered to watch *Barbie* together; some of us gathered at Brad and Dawn Anderson's for a shrimp boil; some of us came together to roll lefse for our second annual Lefse Fun Run, raising funds for Safe Haven.

In spite of not being a church society any more, people keep coming. We are challenged to meet their needs, to gather people together to know one another, to build relationships with each other and God. This is sacred work; we listen to how God will help us continue to reimagine what it means to be church.

In spite of having four services on December 24th and one on December 25th and everyone saying, "Oh, you must be so tired!", this year was the least tired I have ever been on Christmas. Why? Because Kelly preached the morning Advent service and the worship volunteer board was almost totally filled. I shared during morning announcements that we needed a cross bearer for 5pm and Aaron Wedge texted from home that son Gavin would carry the cross.

Why wasn't I tired? Partly because I wasn't running around trying to fill slots on the day of the services, but mostly I wasn't tired because I felt like we were in this together — a community coming together to worship and celebrate Jesus, Immanuel, God-with-us. That in itself was evidence that God was and is in our midst.

In spite of everything, we are here proclaiming the gospel, growing in faith, spreading God's love, gathering in community. Thanks be to God and thanks be to you for being partners in this holy adventure.

Another translation of Hebrews 11:1, puts it this way: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." In other words, in spite of everything, we continue to live in trust and in hope.

Membership Statistics – 2024

Baptisms

Wren Marie Bergman
Ettora Marie Dornhecker
Sverre Mikkel Knutson-Hughes
Olivia Jean Papke-Larson

Funerals/Deaths

Carol E. Anderson
Phillip Eckman
Tara Lien
Kris Liljeblad
Max Morath
Robert Prusak
Anna Roettger
Gordon Slotness
Annelie Sober (Former member)
Linnea Cecile Swenson
Annette Ulrich

Marriages

Rachel Emery and Jack Anderson
Levi Gregg and Sophia Langr
Paige Storsteen and Eric Zimmerman

New Members

Laura Bechard
Jane Braband
Savannah and Jacob Brooks
Karen Climis
Cheryl Glass-Schell
Susan Gulbranson
Jeff and Patti Hallback
Dave Holte
Conrad Johannesson
Erik, Hannah and Hope Johnson
Cindy and Brad Kaeter
Walter Karlson and Molly Burgstahler
Katie and Mark Kaufman
Paula and Greg Mangan
Ashlee and Michael Martz
Kevin and Joy Michalicek
Joe and Kirsten Stasney
Jill Tapper-Smith, Cordelia, Bennett and Harvey

Confirmation **Sunday, May 28, 2023**

Victoria Goehring
Bennett Linval
Nina Thorson
Zach Warner

FLC CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

June 11, 2023

First Lutheran Church Congregational Meeting
Sunday, June 11, 2023

Quorum attained at 9:13am

Welcome and opening prayer by Mark Boyce, Vision Council VP.

Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve by Sam Weston, 2nd by Tom Boman, unanimous approval by oral vote.

Reception of the Minutes from 2/12/2023: Motion by Dave Sproat, 2nd by Teresa Zupancich, unanimous approval by oral vote

Finance Reports: Mary Dontje

This is Mary's last treasurers report. Review of year to date through April 2023 income and expense report. Total income at 95% (\$299,695) of the planned income of \$316,051 and expenses are at 94% or \$288,660 of the planned expenses of \$306,163. We are slightly under for both income and expense as of the end of April 2023. Planned Net income is \$9887 and we are at \$11,034, so we are currently doing okay. The three-year comparison is nice to take a look at but we will not discuss it. Time for Renewal has been changed to Retire Our Debt. Currently we need \$2200 in monthly offerings to make our Principal payment, but we have only met that amount once in 2023. We did make a \$10,000 principal payment in May 2023, using the first four months of NEMN Synod Rental income. We will continue to make this payment Quarterly.

Presentation of "Help Make Our Cactus Bloom"

The finance committee has put together a plan to retire our current debt. Please take a scorpion off of the cactus in the dollar amount you choose to commit to, then write on a flower what you would like to see happen with the offerings once the debt is gone and place the flower on the cactus. We are very excited to retire the debt, hopefully by Easter Vigil 2024 we can burn all of the scorpions and our mortgage. There is roughly \$133,000 that we need to collect in order to retire the debt, this amount does NOT include the rental income from the NE MN Synod.

Mary is stepping down as treasurer because she has served the maximum two two-year terms but is staying on the finance committee. Motion to approve reports by Suzanne Rauvola, 2nd by Sam Weston, unanimous approval by oral vote.

2023 NE MN Synod Assembly: Sam Weston

Please take the time to read over the report in your packet to see what the Synod has been doing over the past year.

Call Committee: Mark Boyce

Explanation of the call process, a summary of where we currently are in the call process for an Associate Pastor. We have an identified candidate and are currently awaiting permission from their Local synod Bishop. We currently do not have a timeframe. No other candidates have applied. During this time, we will need help to bridge the gap between Ann Beck's retirement and an Associate Pastor's arrival. You can all help fill this gap by sharing in the leadership listed on the agenda, including Sunday School, Pastoral Care, Sunday Service Projects, Local & Global Team & administration and communication.

In the meantime, we have exciting things planned and invite everyone to look at the list to see where and how you can help.

Reconciling in Christ (RIC): Cindy Monroe

The process of becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) church started a few years ago. The latest things that have been done are listed in the handout. We learned a lot at Gloria Dei's celebration of RIC.

FLC CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

June 11, 2023

We will submit our pledge this week and should be a RIC church soon. We will keep you updated. The NE MN Synod has also started looking into the RIC process.

Staffing Update: Carolyn Karsell

We did recently let our office manager go, but we have interviewed a candidate and hope the vacancy will be short.

Areas of Need: Mark Boyce

Sunday School volunteers, please talk to Mark Boyce or Laura Stahl. Pastoral Care, connecting with and conducting home visits to share in conversation and friendship with our homebound members. We will need help planning and implementing the Second Sunday Intergenerational Service Projects. If you are interested in helping with or being a member of the Local & Global Team please talk to Mark Bryngelson or Denise Scheer. We are also in need of leadership for the Lifelong Learning Team.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Dianne Loufman

The candidate's Bishop is holding up our identified candidate for Associate Pastor, hopefully with the changing of the Bishop this will be approved and happen soon. Let's talk about the joys that have been happening: the pollinator garden will start taking shape soon; the community garden will happen thanks to a \$10,000 grant provided by the FLC Foundation; Jacob Warren collecting enough plastic to make two benches, becoming a RIC church soon; BIPOC reaching out to us to help with the Juneteenth Celebration; the planning of a sacred walk; the LSS Teen Closet under Laura Stahl's leadership; the Community Meal served over 50 people last month and thanks to Susanna Ojakangas we have banana bread made for new members. We have been learning about our Spiritual Gifts and we have a candidate for Associate Pastor who wants to be here!! We have started a young couple's group to meet on Thursday. I am very excited about retiring the debt. We need a team to help with Ann Beck's farewell and celebration of ministry in September; we also want to put together a book of memories for her. If you have anything you would like to submit please email it to office@flcduluth.org. We need the Communication Committee to start meeting and give feedback on the digital sign, the website, the Mustard Seed, First News and our social media presence.

Personal Stories: Andy Frey, Dale Stahl, Barb LaMaster & Amy Merchant shared stories about how they feel when they volunteer with worship from carrying the cross to reading, assisting minister and helping with communion. It all may be scary, but the rewards are well worth it. The feeling of participation, and being a part of a family.

New Worship in the Park Signs: Pastor Dianne Loufman

There is a copy of the worship in the park signs in your packet, take a look and let's agree on our new sign. Suggestions included: having the address of the church listed, adding our website address... It was mentioned that we should keep it short and simple with lots of white space, too much information can be overwhelming. Suggestion to remove the raining notice and approve the sign. Sam motioned, 2nd by unknown, unanimously approved by oral vote.

Worship Leader Sign-up: Pastor Dianne Loufman

Here is the board that lists what we need to make worship happen on Sundays, I can do the whole thing alone but that gets boring so let's have other voices. So please sign-up.

Thank you to the outgoing Vision Council Members: Pastor Dianne Loufman

Thank you to Carolyn Karsell, she was brand new to the congregation when we asked her to be the Vice President, president and past president and has served as part of the personnel committee. We appreciate you!! Thank you to George Rennan, he has always been willing to help with anything and we have truly valued his opinion on Vision Council. Thank you to Mary Dontje for your four years of service as treasurer. It has been wonderful to have you!

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer at 10:02am.

Minutes Submitted by Kelly Cossey, Finance

Mark Boyce Vision Council President

Mark Boyce, Chair; Susanna Ojakangas, Vice President; Beth Storaasli, Past President; Linda Mettner, Treasurer; Amy Merchant, Secretary; Dianne Loufman, Lead Pastor; Julie Samuelson, Ministry Board Chair; Bob Ardren, Member at-Large; Kirsten Bich, Member at-Large; Tyler Klingfus, Member at-Large

FLC Vision Council President report, 2023-2024

This year I've reconnected with cousins that I've not visited frequently over a gap of several years. I was spurred to action on Sunday mornings as I took a photograph of Leif Erikson Park and Lake Superior when I was preparing for the park service. I would text the weekly photo to my cousin, and this allowed for a smooth entry into a visit to their new home near Detroit Lakes. It was a joy to reconnect with them.

My sense of a glimpse of First Lutheran Church is the park service. I see toddlers cascade down the hill to share thoughts in the children's message. I hear passersby join the band and congregation in songs of praise. I pass members lingering over lawn chairs to visit with one another and new persons. I am touched by listeners asking for further explanation of the theme of the pastor's sermon. All of this is surrounded by fog (or sun), wind, locomotive noise, unhoused persons and the skyline of the city as it wakes. This is where, I see us as the "church today." As Vision Council president I have a unique perspective to observe the operations of the church.

As a Vision Council we are elected in June and seek a devotional time with reading and discussion this year of the book "One Coin Found" by Emmy Kegler which is an autobiography of their journey through acceptance of sexual orientation in a changing community and church. The themes remind us of the expansive nature of God and of our own difficulty in finding a pathway in Lifelong Learning.

The Vision Council seeks to give structure to the operations of the church with a goal of Lifelong Learning. Periodically, the structure gives roadblocks rather than guidance. The church changes in structure to some of the changes in our community. Our steps together reflect our gratitude and grace as we listen and learn about the changes in our community. We attempt to set measured goals for the year, but we are often distracted by the discussions and tasks at hand. We try to brainstorm and broaden the appeal of the roles in the church as we address the needs of our families, staff, church communities, and our broader community within the city and beyond borders.

We plan for the annual meeting in February to allow the election of our Synod representatives and to allow for long term goals and budget to be articulated and published. This year we wish to draw attention and inspection to the structure of the church to allow for changes to make our planned work guided by your thoughts. This may allow for the growth of new opportunities such as the Lefse run and the Community Garden. The garden will take on the final raised bed forms that will allow growth of both the opportunity to work with each other and the plants that will bless the space. I can only imagine the late summer park worship with produce from the garden. Hopefully, there is room for some flowers to compliment the veggie burgers.

The Vision Council is grateful to the dedication of volunteers with worship, Sunday School, music in worship and special events, Bible studies, and the joy which is shared in your participation.



Ann Beck Pastoral Associate



Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage May 1 - June 13, 2023 REFLECTIONS August 28, 2023

It has been just over two months since my return from Spain. On this beautiful early morning, my first day of retirement from FLC, I pulled on my Camino trail shoes, grabbed my beloved hiking poles acquired there, and set out for a intentional pilgrimage walk in the neighborhood streets and trails.

Uncertain of what would arise, I only wanted to clear my mind of thoughts of past experiences and of wondering about the future - both of which are abundantly occupying my head, and just be present to this very moment of existence.

And it was glorious, letting the familiar rhythms of foot strides and swinging poles gradually ease me out of my mind and into the intense awareness of my body and the world around me. The fragrance of fresh grass in the yards and the cedar in the deep woods, as well as the acrid smell of fresh asphalt on a new road. Blue skies and golden tansies in the ditches, petunia pots drooping on their last flowering of the season, and dog-doo and dirty candy wrappers along the road. The feeling of power and strength in my body and the twinges in my knee reminding me to slow down. Fellow walkers to greet, and the times I avoided people, not wanting to talk.

Its all here, in my neighborhood, the essence of a pilgrimage that came home with me. The beautiful and the not-so-much; the highs and the lows that can come in waves. Letting go and just being present to what is; awareness with out judgement. This was/is not easy for me. I am all too quick to judge experiences as good or bad, worthy or not. Although I definitely set out on the Camino with the intention to be open and receptive, to see God in all things, that intention was challenged almost daily. It was largely due to the need for daily practice in dealing with the unexpected and the uncomfortable, that relaxing into the moment eventually became more of peaceful habit than a forced attitude.

So what were the experiences that shaped and gradually changed me over the course of the Camino? Much of the influence was in the land itself. In 32 days I traveled 626k (389 mi) from Logroño to Santiago de Compostela. This brought us through the rich, rolling hills of the Rioja countryside, laden with vineyards and olive groves; the 110 mile stretch across the flat, high plains Meseta, walking dusty roads through unbroken fields of blue-green young wheat stalks, huge skies, and unrelenting exposure to the sun; and finally to the verdant, moist, and mountainous coastal region of Galicia. We were fortunate to have exceptionally good weather throughout the journey, especially across the Meseta with unexpected cooler temps and a strong wind from the east pushing us along. To my surprise and joy, each stage of the trail across Spain was lined with red poppies: even the most desolate areas were cheered up by the perpetual presence of poppies, and they made for happy walking companions!

One of the truths of the Camino is that everyone has their own walk, even as they walk side-by-side. While many, including my partner Andy, find the open expanses of the Meseta to be monotonous, a required purgatory to be gotten through to reach the ultimate reward of Santiago, I was surprised how much I thrilled to the wide-openness of the land. It felt like my whole soul was opened up, just breathing the spaciousness of it. Perhaps it is my early North Dakota roots that were triggered, but I also recognize the same feeling when kayaking on Lake Superior, facing the endless horizon. Something about understanding my own insignificant smallness, yet feeling intimately connected with and part of the whole, God and the vastness of creation.

On one of our longest days on the Meseta, a hot grinding walk with few diversions for attention on a stretch of 25K to our next stop, it threatened to be a miserable slog of a day. Andy put his head down and powered through, step by slow sweaty step, and I was hanging on by a thread after only a couple hours. But then I recalled it was Mother's Day, and it all changed. One of my primary purposes in walking the Camino this spring was to honor my mom, a healthy vital woman who died unexpectedly of cancer at 65, my current age. Remembering Mother's Day was the jolt needed to move beyond the fatigue and blister pain, and return to the sheer wonder

Ann Beck Pastoral Associate

of the moment. I was buoyed up, drawing on the internal energy received from my mom, a dear aunt, and my godmother: the loving maternal pillars of my life. All are passed on to new life, and I felt them walking with me, with encouragement and support. This was a defining Camino moment.

The diversity of landscape was surpassed by the diversity of people on the trail. I had heard that Americans were about 20% of the pilgrim population last year; it will be interesting to learn the statistics for 2023, but that feels accurate to our experience. And I loved it; if there was a choice, we would be drawn to the company of non-Americans. While it was tempting to see the stereotypical versions of people: the constant jovial banter and casual meandering of the Spaniards; the efficient movement of the Germans, the well-decked out and equipped Koreans traveling in large, tight groups — most stereotypes broke down quickly with personal interactions.

Friendships on the Camino are isolated moments in time: sleeping in the same hostel room; sharing a table at a crowded cafe; walking a stretch of the trail in conversation one afternoon; sharing a taxi ride; even standing in long lines at an unexpected toilet opportunity (yes, this is a real thing; there are no biffies on the Camino) — we meet as strangers, have eclectic conversations in mixed languages, and wish each other a good Way — “Buen Camino”, as we return to our individual walks. There is no expectation of anything beyond that, but one of the great joys is running into fellow pilgrims repeatedly and unexpectedly over the journey. A bond of familiarity develops with shared experiences no matter how brief, and sometimes it is profound. We impact one another’s lives in small ways that will never be forgotten. A poignant memory is the end of my last day of hiking, 20K up a steep rugged trail struggling with pain, limping into the village, and being unexpectedly welcomed and cheered on by the hoots and hollers of “old” friends Trulayne and Ulrich from Australia. We’d crossed paths a number of times; their authentic kindness and hilarity were like water in the desert, and bridged all the differences of our lives. That was our last encounter, but we marked each other lives forever.

One of the most basic challenges was overcoming my deeply innate need/desire for personal space and privacy. Sharing a sleeping space with four to twenty strangers in a hostel room, though it did get easier, was never comfortable. Typically provided with bunk beds, Andy always generously gave me the bottom bunk, and I learned to create little boundaries by hanging my small towel, a fleece, even a bandana from the top bunk, all for the semblance of a little privacy for changing and sleeping. Bathroom and shower space varied, were always shared and limited, with no amenities, and were sometimes co-ed. Another shock to my system.

In the end I did learn to not care, at least not very much. The line between dignity and vanity was exposed. I also was deeply aware that I was doing this by choice, could always upgrade to a private room (which we did, not infrequently), and would eventually be returning to my comfortable home. It maybe is a stretch, but it exercised my empathetic muscle for the life of migrants in detention centers, or refugees in camps, or even those who by reasons of poverty or cultural circumstances live in cramped, overcrowded quarters without an inch of privacy. My situation was not comparable, but it did expand awareness and capacity for imagining that existence.

It’s been over two months, and I hadn’t really felt ready to dive into this writing until recently. Until recently, any conversation about the Camino, any reflection or memory, was inevitably torpedoed with the caveat: “but I didn’t finish it.”

It took me by surprise to discover that succeeding at the physical challenge of the pilgrimage took such a high place in my goals. I was walking it for a spiritual journey; I was walking it for my mom; I was walking as a rite-of-passage into the next phase of my life; I was walking for Andy & me as a couple moving forward into our future. I had never been driven to walk every mile like Andy was, and went into it with the understanding that if I wanted a day off, I’ll take a bus ahead and meet him with a drink in hand at the end of the day. I worried about blisters and muscles strains and fatigue - and trained for it - but never, ever did I really think I wouldn’t be able to go the distance. In a pre-Camino journal musing, giving voice to some of the angst and anxiety about being prepared physically, emotionally, mentally for what’s ahead - I wrote this affirmation:

Ann Beck Pastoral Associate

“Yes, it will be hard, but I am in good shape, and have the mental toughness to do this. I will be up to the challenge. It would be hugely disappointing if there is some physical obstacle that I can’t work through — but that would be extreme, and not to worry about.” But half way through the journey, I couldn’t continue to work through, walk through, the pain of Achilles tendonitis, and my pilgrimage, as well as Andy’s, was changed. We contracted with a booking company so that we had lodging secured for every night, and which provided transfer of backpacks so I didn’t have to carry my heavy pack. Instead of heading out with Andy early each morning, I was the last to leave the hostel, and even then typically had to vacate by 8:30 a.m.

Armed with only a small daypack and my hiking poles/now serving as defacto crutches, I was no longer part of the hiking community and yet still had to get 25-30K down the road to our next lodging. There was suddenly much to learn about the local bus schedules and ambiguous stops (i.e. “in front of the town hall”), in tiny villages and large towns, with a big language barrier. Empowered with my iPhone and with no other options but to find a way, every day was an adventure. It was lonely, but I did discover a small tribe of temporarily disabled hikers, occasionally meeting up at bus stops, sharing tips and information.

Although I’ve shed some of my fierce independence over the years, I learned how far I had yet to go. While I “know” that a willingness to be vulnerable is a sign of strength not weakness, it didn’t come easily. But I couldn’t even pretend to be self-sufficient, and had to accept- and ask for — the help of others. Which of course opened the door to countless rich experiences with the best of humanity: the young woman working in a busy cafe, who left her patrons to walk me down a block to point out the distant, unmarked spot where the bus would eventually come. Another woman in the local bar/cafe was initially brusque, suspicious, and impatient with my incredibly poor Spanish attempts to ask for information. When she finally understood my predicament, specifically that there was not a bus route from this village to our next location, she sat me down and talked to the cook in the kitchen. In minutes there was a delicious breakfast spread on the table (no charge) and assurance that they would find a taxi driver for me. The experiences and stories multiplied each day, small gifts of kindness that offered me hospitality and hope on this unwanted version of the Camino.

Finally, as if walking the pilgrimage trail wasn’t slow enough, this twist to the last 10 days of my Camino journey forced me to literally stop. Perhaps that is what I needed most, to be removed completely from that physical drive to be on the move. Most days the bus would drop me off at the next village mid-morning, often hours before the albergue (hostel) would open for check-in. Being physically unable to explore the location, I simply had to find places to sit, observe, think, pray. Even in my frustration and often boredom, holy moments kept me going. God sat with me. In two towns there happened to be an ancient stone church right nearby, so I was able to spend that time basking in their sanctuaries, releasing myself from time and space and letting the spirit hold me. Earlier in the pilgrimage I had been enraptured by the immense, gilded, and wondrous cathedrals of Burgos and Leon, but these simple, unpretentious yet beautiful sanctuaries offered healing to the soul that I hadn’t experienced elsewhere. And gratitude began to emerge.

The end of the pilgrimage trail, in the grand square of the magnificent Cathedral of Santiago, left no emotions unturned. We arrived almost at the same time; Andy on foot, me by bus and taxi. We wept with the joy of being there, the fulfillment of our postponed 2020 dream trip, and his successful hike; and with the heartbreak of not sharing the last stage and walking in together. Happy as I was to be there, still there was the shroud of disappointment, the feeling of being a “fake” pilgrim in the midst of all the celebrations going on in the square.

Thankfully, over the last weeks of returning and re-entering “life”, the lessons of the Camino began emerging, and the weight of disappointment, of perceived failure, has been cast off. The hard truth of Camino came to life: we each walk our own walk. As long as we are authentic to ourselves, fake goes the way of ego. Our lives are full of personal pilgrimages: journeys, bidden or not, that take us to places we didn’t expect. We make choices along the way, but ultimately there is much that we cannot foresee or control. Leaning into that truth lightens the journey, opens us up to fellow travelers, lessens fear, and liberates!

Ann Beck Pastoral Associate

This particular walk, the 2023 Camino, was incredible from beginning to end. I am thrilled with the 200+ plus miles I DID walk. And I am proud of the inner resilience that kept me going when it all felt lost, and growing through the vulnerability. I am pretty spiritually grounded and didn't go on this pilgrimage to seek God. And yet — of course! — God sought me out, revealed in so many ways. I walked my own Camino, but was never alone.

To Pastor Dianne and the FLC Vision Council — thank you for your support. I am forever grateful to you for the opportunity to make this journey. Blessings, and Buen Camino

~ Ann

Blessing for Ann's Pilgrimage April 30, 2023

*Taken from John O'Donohue To Bless the Space Between Us and
the Pilgrim's Prayer with additions and edits by Pastor Dianne*

For a journey postponed by COVID
hands upon her

For a pilgrimage long overdue
This trip where your longing
has pressed hard enough
inward, on some unsaid dark,
to create a crystal of insight
you could not have known
you needed to empower and illumine
your way.

On this pilgrimage,
may you have the deep experience you seek
where life and love and God break through
into your soul and bless you in new ways.

May you travel in an awakened way,
with all senses open
so that you may not miss the invitations
along the way which await to transform you.

Way. Amen
May you travel safely;
May your body not disappoint you;
May you live your time away to its fullest;
May you leave all worries and concerns behind you;
May you return home enriched and free
With a sense of where you have been and
Where you are being called.

*Here you can gather around Ann and lay
as one of you prays this prayer:*

God who accompanies all sojourners —
Be for Ann her companion on this walk,
her guide at the crossroads,
her breath in her weariness,

her protection in danger,
her refuge on the Way,
her shade in the heat,
her light in the darkness,
her consolation in discouragements,
and her strength in her intentions.

With your guidance
may she arrive at the end of this journey
enriched with grace and wisdom;
may she be returned safely home and to us
filled with joy and a sense of fulfillment

In the name of Jesus Christ, the One who is the
Way. Amen



Karen Hanson Sande Director of Music



This was an exciting and meaningful year of making music at FLC. The Soli Deo Gloria and Chamber Choirs, under Michael Fuchs' direction, continue to gain new members and sing diverse and challenging music weekly for 8:30am worship and for the holy days and festivals of the church year.

The Rising Sound contemporary ensemble, under Bryan Gatten's direction, plays a variety of styles, providing music for 11:00am worship, summer worship in the park and peace garden, and jazz at both services for festive days such as pledge Sunday and Transfiguration/Mardi Gras. The Jubilation Ringers, which I lead, grew in numbers and skill this year: we offered summer "learn-to-ring" sessions, welcomed new members, and attended a community ringing event. A small group of ringers played for the FLC Foundation lunch/meeting, and played Advent/Christmas music and led a carol sing-a-long in the chapel at Ecumen.

Intergenerational instrumental ensembles continue to play for festive Sundays and services, and a wide variety of instrumental and vocal soloists and small ensembles add to our worship, especially during Lent when we use the Holden Evening Prayer. As organist and accompanist, I am always looking for new and diverse hymns and organ music, and ways to engage our many musicians of all ages.

One of our young members, Paavo R, received partial support from the FLC campership fund to attend the Lutheran Summer Music Academy at Valparaiso University. Paavo continues to study organ with me, and plays handbells and string bass in our ensembles.

I truly enjoy working with our FLC staff, congregation and musicians of all ages! Please let me know if you would like to participate in our music ministry!



Paavo Rova

Michael Fuchs Director of Choral Activities



The year 2023 featured an astounding amount of beautiful and meaningful choral music. Highlights include the St. John Passion on Good Friday, a successful performance on Indigenous People's Sunday of Ambe by Andrew Balfour, Lessons and Carols service in Advent, and Christmas Eve worship. I am most grateful to the staff and congregation of First Lutheran for their continued support for the music ministry. I am especially indebted to all of the members of the music ministry for countless moments of beauty and spiritual fulfillment. Thank you!

ST. JOHN PASSION

The musical and liturgical high point of the year was the Good Friday Liturgy featuring the St. John Passion by J.S. Bach. The choir and guest musicians performed this challenging masterwork with authenticity, integrity, and at a high artistic level. It was the culmination of many months of challenging and diligent work. Several members of the choir stated that it was one of the most challenging and rewarding things they have ever accomplished. From a spiritual perspective, the work was a powerful way to commemorate one of our most holy days. Many people, both performers and members of the congregation, shared how meaningful and moving the music was for them. One could see it in the faces and eyes as people left the sanctuary that evening: the music touched them on a deeply spiritual and personal level. I can personally attest to the power of this music in sharing the story of Christ's Passion in a manner that brings the theology and story into the specifics of our daily and modern life.

The Good Friday Liturgy with the St. John's Passion brought together FLC and the wider community in an unprecedented manner. Nearly eighty musicians performed this music, including sixteen guest instrumentalists, twelve choristers from St. Paul's Episcopal Church, eleven choristers from the University of Wisconsin-Superior, and half a dozen additional vocalists from other parts of the community. In addition to the performers, there were close to three hundred people in attendance at the Good Friday liturgy. While many members of the congregation were regular First Lutheran attendees, there was a large contingent of visitors and members of the community who came to worship at FLC because of the special music presentation. I know that I will always remember when the congregation stood and sang the opening hymn; I don't think I have ever heard that or any sanctuary filled with such full and robust singing. Ten months later, that memory is still fresh in my mind.

LESSONS AND CAROLS

Our annual Lesson and Carols service, based on the service begun in the World War I years at King's College, Cambridge, England, is filled with biblical readings, hymn and carols, anthems and instrumental music. Our theme was How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We Sing Stories of Hope. We presented a musical meditation from the Old Testament stories of hope of the coming savior to the New Testament stories of the birth of Jesus. Musicians included choirs, brass and string ensembles, handbells, harp, pianists and organists.



Michael Fuchs presenting
a Sunday Forum on the
St. John Passion

Bryan Gatten Director of Contemporary Music



The year 2023 was another fun and fruitful year for the FLC worship band. Highlights from the year include our annual “Mardi Gras Jazz” Sunday, which featured some new musicians and arrangements, worship in the park during July and August, and the Fourth Sunday of Advent, which allowed the group to explore a different set of music outside the normal repertoire.

We were blessed to be able to hold additional services outside in the Peace Garden in September, and that has become a great thing to look forward to each year after our usual services in Leif Erikson Park end.

We were able to add even more Hearing Assist receivers for use in the sanctuary, which has been a big help. We also worked to refine the overall sound for the worship-in-the-round sanctuary setup, and now have a better idea of how to improve it for the future.

Over the next year, the band will continue to add to our repertoire and refine various elements, including our sound booth within the sanctuary and over the livestream.

The worship band has become a unique and positive experience; rather than just a gathering of various musicians, it feels like an actual band, each using their unique gifts to help lead and facilitate worship. I’m very grateful to be able to be a part of it and I look forward to the coming year.



Personnel Report

Susanna Ojakangas, Chair

In July, we welcomed Jim Lundorff as our assistant office administrator.

Property Report

We are excellent stewards of our building – most evenings or days it is alive with people. We are welcoming and open to groups looking for a place to meet, to sing, to work.

These are just some of the groups that meet outside of our regular worship and faith community offerings:

- The Northeast Minnesota Synod fully moved in the beginning of the year.
- Four of the rooms on the 3rd floor have become offices for Chum.
- AA, Al-Anon and Nar-Anon all hold weekly meetings in our building.
- The District AA meetings are held at FLC.
- We are the home for Arrowhead Chorale.
- We have a Tai Chi group on Tuesday evenings.
- Flukes meets twice a month on Sunday afternoons.
- LSS Teen Closet is housed in our basement; open on Thursdays from 2 to 6pm.
- A couple of people use our building to offer music lessons.
- We playfully have one room on the third floor designated for Braun, a Choice employee who stuffs our bulletins each week.
- In the summer, different church groups from out-of-town ask to stay here either on their way north or as a base for service projects in Duluth.

One of the advantages of people using and moving into the building is that it forces us to clean up our spaces. When Chum moved in we had to cull through one of our resource rooms and the financial records closet. We have disposed of records from 1970 and some so far back it would be embarrassing to record. It's not fun work but it feels good to free up space so that it can be used for ministry.

In the process, we have discovered a new closet that most of us did not know existed. Maybe someone would like to help clean that one?

2023 Projects:

Sanctuary lighting fixed in 2023 (and now flickers again already!!!)
Removal of Ballast on numerous fixtures to use live voltage with standard bulbs
Circulating pump on glycol system
Condensate return pump replaced

2024 Dream Projects:

Pulleys so that we can hang the banners behind the high altar once again.
New rug in the lower commons.
Floor rug under the table in the lower commons outside synod office.
Air filtration in the bathrooms outside the kitchen.
Lights or some sort of welcoming on our tower – it can be seen from the new hospital.



Nominating Committee Report

Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee met in the early spring to fill vacant positions within the Vision Council and Ministry Board.

Vision Council President - Susanna Ojakangas

Ministry Board Chair - Julie Samuelson

Vision Council Member at Large - Kirsten Bich

Vision Council Treasurer - Linda Mettner

Steve Samuelson, Julia Sampson, Brand Anderson, Suzanne Canfield

Terea Zupancich, committee chair

FLC EVANGELISM TEAM

*Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers,
for by so doing some people have shown
hospitality to angels unawares.
Hebrews 13:2*

Our purpose is to practice Jesus' radical hospitality inside and outside of the church building.

We fulfill this ministry by:

- sharing faith outside our walls
- inviting guests to journey with us
- providing hospitality and a welcoming space

Action Teams include:

- inquirers (new members) team
- intentional nurturers
- greeters
- simple meals
- hospitality for Grandma's Marathon
- hospitality for Gobble Gallop
- Lefse fun Run
- Trick or treat
- potlucks for 8
- welcoming and affirming



faithlovecommunity
First Lutheran Church
Duluth, Minnesota

Evangelism & Welcome Ministry Team

Lorie Haglin, Chair; Craig Grau, Ginny Nelson

First Lutheran Church, dedicated to the mission of Jesus Christ, welcomes you into this community of faith, where we share life in its entirety, with all its joys and sorrows. We believe all people are created in the image of God and are offered God's love, grace, and forgiveness, regardless of: religious tradition, age, gender identity, race, education, economic status, sexual orientation, family structure, mental or physical abilities. We acknowledge the indigenous culture of this land. We extend a special welcome in Christ's love.

Welcoming and Affirming Team



Brenda Schrader



- EVANGELISM AND WELCOME MINISTRY ACTION TEAMS**
- Inquirers Team (New members)
 - Intentional Nurturers
 - Greeters
 - Simple Meals
 - Hospitality for Grandma's Marathon
 - Hospitality for Gobble Gallop
 - Lefse Fun Run
 - Reconciling in Christ
 - Trick or Treat
 - Potlucks for 8
 - Welcoming and Affirming

First Lutheran Church has been recognized by Reconciling Works as the most recent Reconciling in Christ congregation in Duluth. This recognition comes after the congregation officially adopted a public statement of welcome for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, and a commitment to racial equity or anti-racism. The reconciling in Christ (RIC) recognition means that the congregation will be listed on a roster of congregations, organizations and synods in the United States and Canada.

Members of First Lutheran Church proudly and joyfully carry a new feather banner in the Pride parade, proclaiming that as of Trinity Sunday, they are now Reconciled in Christ! ELCA churches with this designation from Reconciling Works have demonstrated a commitment to inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ members and visitors including education, signage, celebrations and hiring of staff. The horizontal banner shows FLC member partnership with the Rainbow Initiative, of Episcopal Migration Ministries for the asylum of migrants prosecuted for being LGBTQIA+ in their home countries.



Evangelism & Welcome Ministry Team

New Members



May 2023

Laura Bechard
Savannah & Jacob Brooks
Cheryl Glass-Schell
Dave Holte
Walter Karlson & Molly Burgstahler
Katie & Mark Kaufman
Joy & Kevin Michalicek

October 2023

Jane Braband
Karen Climis
Susan Gulbranson
Jeff and Patti Hallback
Conrad Johannesson
Erik, Hannah & Hope Johnson
Cindy and Brad Kaeter
Paula and Greg Mangan
Ashlee and Michael Martz
Joe and Kirsten Stasney
Jill Tapper-Smith, Cordelia,

Safe Haven Fundraiser



+



= LEFSE FUN RUN



Kirsten Bich helping Sully, a young lefse maker



Mini Golf



Evangelism & Welcome Ministry Team



Young adults gathering for conversation and libations

Some of our topics:

- Your Favorite Christmas Memories
- Favorite Childhood Christmas book
- What are your Spiritual Gifts?
- Star Words for the journey



Sunday treats are provided by different groups each week.



Fellowship at Ecumen

People can't always gather at the church building — so thanks to Yvonne Anderson's leadership, women of the church, some of whom are homebound, met at Ecumen. What a gift to be together! One woman shared how she didn't realize how much she missed her friends!

Banana Bread



Susanna Ojakangas has organized a team of bakers to make banana bread to present to visitors at worship services.

Evangelism & Welcome Ministry Team

Comments from St. Luke's Lutheran Church Summerville, SC

Thank y'all for letting us stay! ~ Maddy

Thank you for hosting us! Your city is so gorgeous, my southern heart is jealous of the clean lakes

— LOL ~ Jenna

This town is pretty, thank you for hosting us! ~ Will

Thanks for the view! ~ Mike

Thanks for allowing us to stay. You have a beautiful town and church! God Bless! ~ Kevin

We appreciate you letting us stay at your church ~ Chris

Thanks for letting us stay in your church! It was fun! ~ Elisa

Thank you for hosting us! My youth had so much fun taking photos on your big rock when we went to grab the keys! Blessings to you and First Lutheran. ~ Kali Kadelbach

Trunk or Treat



Gobble Gallop

For the past few years we have opened our church doors on Thanksgiving morning during the Gobble Gallop. Each year more and more people stop to enjoy a cup of hot chocolate or coffee, an indoor bathroom, and a warm place to wait for the races to start. Not all the action is inside the church. Pastor Dianne brings out the cow bell and we cheer on the runners from the littles running in the 1/4 mile Fun Run, to the big 5K race. It's a great way to kick off Thanksgiving Day.



Welcoming Spirit

“I heard that First Lutheran was stuffy, but three people welcomed me.”

A church musician from another town was visiting, “You guys are doing something right — everyone has been so welcoming.”



Lifelong Learning Ministry Team

*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
Colossians 2:6-7*

Our purpose is to nurture people of all ages to grow in faith as followers of Jesus Christ.

We fulfill this ministry by:

- teaching and studying God's Word
- deepening our relationships with God and with others
- connecting our story to God's story through study, fellowship, service and celebration

Action Teams include:

- book study groups
- family fellowship
- intergenerational projects
- discipleship small groups
- library team
- children's Sunday school
- middle school youth group



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First Lutheran Church
Duluth, Minnesota

Lifelong Learning Ministry Team

Mike Peterson, Chair; Ann Beck, Kristen Palm, Marion Rova, Kyle Marynik,

Lifelong Learning Action Teams

- Book Study Groups
- Children's Sunday School
- Family Fellowship
- Intergenerational Projects
- Discipleship Small Groups
- Library Team
- Middle School Youth Group



Women's Bible Study

Bible study groups meet monthly during September-May. We offer both in-person and Zoom options each month. The Bible studies offer insight into the Word of God and how it shows up in our every day lives. Our conversations enrich and challenge, plus an evening with other women is always a welcome thing.



Intergenerational Event

Blessing Bags



Intergenerational Sunday School Native American Sunday



Lifelong Learning Ministry Team



We often think of our building as “church” but FLC Kids, through their Sunday School offerings, learned that church is a verb, not a noun.

Late in the fall Laura Stahl received an email inquiring about the Faith Quest Sunday School offering sponsorship opportunity that was shared in the e-news. Laura didn’t recognize the name but contacted the woman who was excited to sponsor the Community Garden that the kids were supporting in December. In January after the offering totals were shared with this and other sponsors, who were obligated to \$20-\$30, this generous sponsor, who shared that she lives in Ohio, matched the offering 100%! She also wrote a beautiful note for the kids to hear why she was supporting their offering outreach project. Her act was church, the verb!

Communion: A Place for You

On Ascension Sunday, Camden Hansmeier, Nolan Hansmeier, Alex Johnson, Connor KenKnight, and August Nemeth were welcomed to the Lord’s Table using Daniel Erladen’s material *A Place for You*.



Left to right: Camden Hansmeier, August Nemeth, Alex Johnson , Ricky Sieger, Connor KenKnight, and Pastor Dianne. Not pictured: Nolan Hansmeier.

**Jesus Welcomes You
Into His Family**



Lifelong Learning Ministry Team

Confirmation on Pentecost Sunday

Victoria Kay Goehring

1In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed such dreams that his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. 2So the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. When they came in and stood before the king, 3hesaid to them, "I have had such a dream that my spirit is troubled by the desire to understand it." 4The Chaldeans said to the king (in Aramaic), "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will reveal the interpretation." 5The king answered the Chaldeans, "This is a public decree: if you do not tell me both the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. 6But if you do tell me the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation." 7They answered a second time, "Let the king first tell his servants the dream, then we can give its interpretation."

~ Daniel 2:1-7

Bennett Richard Linval

8For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — 9not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

~ Ephesians 2:8-10

Katrina Natasha Thorson

1If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

~ Philippians 2:1-4

Zachary Adam Warner

*I didn't believe before,
but now I think I believe
a little. ~Zach*

1Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, 2he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. 4When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." 5Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." 6When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. 7So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. 8But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" 9For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; 10and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." 11When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

~ Luke 5:1-11

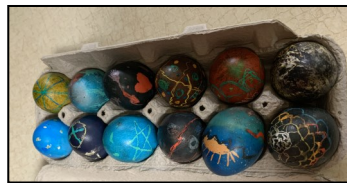
Lifelong Learning Ministry Team



Confirmation Students Making Ukrainian Easter Eggs



Breck Burns



Bentleyville



Pizza at Old Chicago for confirmation students and their families. Thanks to Anya Powell for organizing this and Bentleyville.



Confirmation youth disappointed in a Vikings loss, except for the two Packers fans.

Lifelong Learning Ministry Team

Youth Candle Making



One person said,
"This is soothing.."

Youth Lefse Making



Lefse Pro Mark Boyce giving the youth a lefse lesson



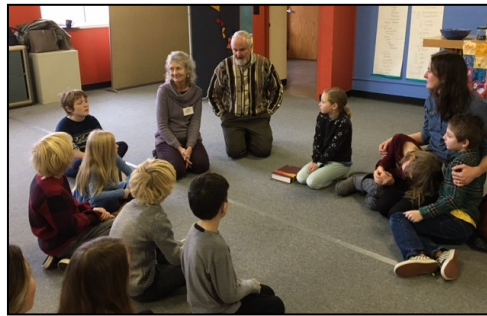
For Confirmation one evening we made Christmas cookies and black ash stars.

Lifelong Learning Ministry Team

Sunday School Fun



I had an awesome morning with 4th-5th grade Bible Scholars (SS kids) learning about the synoptic gospels. After seeing that the story of Palm Sunday was told in the three synoptic gospels, we explored seeing a story from different perspectives. With a few volunteers out in the hall, the rest of the group watched a scenario acted out with a Jesus doll. When the volunteers rejoined the group, the designated observer told them what had happened. Each person then wrote the story that they experienced in a notebook. After all were done, we shared our stories. The kids totally got how each story was accurate as experienced or perceived by the writer. They wanted to do another scenario so they took turns providing a scenario, observing or perceiving second hand. I think we did 5-6 rounds before the class time ended. I'm so proud of my students for their inquisitiveness and creativity in Bible exploration. They are also amazingly kind and not just in their classroom community. — Laura Stahl



SS Children learning about how their offerings impact the community.

What a joy to spend the morning with the children in Sunday school. They come in ready to sing, play, create art, and have fun. FLC is lucky to have a great group of dedicated and creative people working with our youngest members. A big shout-out to Laura Stahl who leads the Sunday school program with grace, ingenuity, creativity, and good humor. — Suzanne Rauvola

Lifelong Learning Ministry Team

Sojourners III

Our Sojourners III men's group meets Monday evenings to read and discuss the essay and Lectionary scripture passages published each week on the *Journey With Jesus* website (www.journeywithjesus.net). A recent highlight was a Saturday morning "Retreat." Each of us briefly shared about how the results of our individual Spiritual Gifts Inventory relate to our lives of faith. The variety of experiences, insights and perspectives shared gave us a fuller awareness of our different journeys of faith, which merged with a deeper appreciation for each other and the faith that unites us.

Confirmation Thanksgiving Prayers

God of Glory, thank you for all that's good. For a sense of purpose, for joy in my life, and for all the opportunities in my life. It makes me complete.

Thank you for trusting us.

Thank you for insulation in houses that keep me warm.

Thank you God for the amazing fresh Duluth air that we get to breathe.

Creator, thank you for giving us affection and love to share.

Thank you God for being forgiving.

God of Mercy, thank you for your unknowing love and faith in us.

Thanks for my dog.

Thank you for being kind and forgiving.

Thanks God of earth for giving us life and the ability to love my family and to see all of the people I see every day.



Local & Global Ministry Team

*So we are ambassadors for Christ,
since God is making his appeal through us...
2 Corinthians 5:20*

Our purpose is to offer support for and create opportunities to live out Jesus' commandment to love our neighbor.

We fulfill this ministry by:

- nurturing inclusive relationships of mutual respect
- walking with the most economically and socially marginalized
- promoting peace, righteousness, and justice

Global Action Teams include:

- El Salvador Sister Parish
- Petrozavodsk Ingrian Lutheran Church
- South Sudan Leadership/Community Development (refugee camp)

Local Action Teams include:

- Chum food shelf
- Damiano center soup kitchen
- LSS Teen Closet (Lutheran Social Services)
- Meals on Wheels
- Angel Tree Project
- Community Meal
- Migrant Justice Support



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First Lutheran Church
Duluth, Minnesota

Local & Global Ministry Team

Mark Bryngelson, Chair; Ann Beck, Dave LaMaster, Jonathan Rova, Denise Sheer, Janet Ward

FLC Quilters



Ladies tying a quilt



Jane Miller



Marcia Holman

The FLC Quilters began meeting again in 2023 after taking a break due to COVID. The many quilts that are made are given to Lutheran World Relief and given to those in need around the world.

Local & Global Action Teams

- Angel Tree
- Chum Food Shelf
- Damiano Center Soup Kitchen
- El Salvador Los Ranchos
- Meals on Wheels
- Community Meal
- Petrozavodsk Ingrian Lutheran Church
- Racial Justice
- South Sudan Leadership Community Development
- Quilting

Rhubarb Fest



A St. Urho rhubarb leaf print.

Local & Global Ministry Team

Indigenous Peoples

The Racial Justice Team invited congregation members to join Confirmation students to attend “The Blanket Exercise” facilitated by Colleen Bernu from the NE MN Synod office. This is an interactive workshop for confirmation age through adults to engage in learning by “walking” through 300 years of US history concerning indigenous and government/settler relationships.

To love our neighbor is to honor the journey of our neighbor.



The reading of *Josie Dances* by Johanna Bernu at our Intergenerational Sunday School event October 8, 2023, honoring Indigenous People’s Day at FLC. We heard the story of Josie, learned some Ojibwe words, decorated our own bandolier bag, danced and ate traditional native foods. Families donated books mostly written by and about native peoples. All books were donated to AICHO, Duluth’s American Indian Community Housing Organization to distribute to children living there.



Linnea Swenson-Tellekson was very excited when her meal arrived at the Jamrock Café. The Racial Justice Team encourages everyone to try restaurants and other businesses owned by our BIPOC neighbors. She said, “It was great, you should go!”

Racial Justice

The Racial Justice Team developed the *Sankofa* document. It tells the stories of Black and Indigenous people and events from our Duluth history that are unknown to many of us, with voices and music of their communities. Copies are available to the congregation at the Welcome Desk. Also, Pastor Carlson from Gloria Dei says of it, "It is wonderfully made and I am eager to use it here to raise awareness around MLK Day and Black History month."



As a member of our racial justice team, I had the honor of interviewing a friend and author of *Gitchigami Hearts*, a narrative of her life and local history she heard growing up in Duluth with her Native American family. She shared one of her spell binding stories on Chief Buffalo while another friend, Rosalyn Amikikwe Vier, played her native flute on the recording prefacing the story. When she asked for 4 more copies of the pamphlet to share with family members, I knew we had done a good thing. — Beth Holst

Local & Global Ministry Team

CHUM Dinner



FLC always has a big turn out to raise monies for the Center for Changing Lives

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service



LIRS (Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) sent out an email and the Ruth Gathering Bible study group with the support of First Lutheran Church Women, responded by sending 6 women's kits to the new Fresh Change Program, which supplies women a fresh change of new clothing and a welcome card as they leave detention to settle in the US to await their asylum hearing in safety. It was wonderful to be a part of showing Love to our neighbors in, hopefully, the first steps of a new life. — Beth Holst

Meals on Wheels

Winter of 2022-2023 was a tough one for many with lots of snow, and very large snow piles to get through for Meals on Wheels deliverers. Yet the meals prepared at Ecumen were faithfully delivered by FLC volunteers to those who were homebound and in need of a good meal. Our drivers are the faces of FLC in our neighborhood and I thank God for them in this important ministry.



We have welcomed many new members to our regular every other monthly team and our substitute list this past year. If you are interested in joining us in this ministry, we welcome you!

Contact Beth Holst
FLC Meals on Wheels Coordinator

Sock Drive



Members are encouraged to bring in socks for the needy. People are then able to pick up socks from the little house on Superior Street made by Steve Broderius.

Local & Global Ministry Team

Miracle of the Undies



Miracles happen every day if we open our eyes to them. Here's one that happened in July 2023.

Joy Michalicek (Angel #1) stopped me after worship to inquire if the Sunday School was in need of supplies. I stammered a bit and mentioned that FLC recently had been the recipient of the supplies and furniture donated when Promise Preschool ended their lease. Additionally, in the previous week, Ann Beck reported that the Mother of Preschoolers group, now meeting in another location, had donated craft and play supplies rather than move them. I told Joy that FLC might have Sunday School supply needs but I would not know until we sorted through all of those donations. "But," I said off-handedly, "the Teen Closet Store really needs underwear." With that remark, Joy and I went our separate ways.

Later that week Pastor Dianne mentioned in passing that \$100 had been donated for Teen Closet needs. I suspected that this donation had come from Joy.

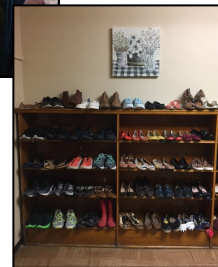
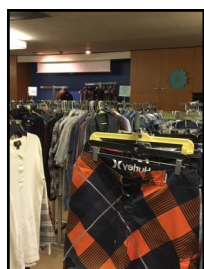
The next week while attending worship in the park, Gale Tate (Angel #2) approached me to inquire of my interest in bookshelves for the Teen Closet, remnants from her renters. Again, I mentioned the desperate need for new underwear. "Oh," she said, "Kohl's is having their 1/2 off sale on all clearance items this week. You might check there."

Dale and I included a stop at Kohls during our Monday errands where I purchased underwear in a variety of sizes and styles for men and women — all 50% off the Clearance Price. I spent \$90 for approximately \$275 retail of underwear. And on the way into the store, a woman visiting from Canada (Angel #3) approached us with \$40 in Kohl's cash that she was not going to be able to use because it would not be valid until the following week. I thanked her, explaining that we would use the Kohls Cash to purchase underwear for teens in need. The following week I placed an online order for \$40 of underwear (also 50% off Clearance).

Later Joy and I had the chance to chat while waiting for other Mary & Martha Gathering Group participants to sign in on Zoom. When I asked if the generous donation was from her, she confirmed. Joy has a side ministry of teaching a workshop entitled *How to Cut Your Grocery Bill in Half*. Although the workshop is free, hosts often insist on paying her. This income she donates to charities. Her donation of \$100 was from one of those workshop hosts (Angel #4). She noted that one of the participants (Angel #5), upon hearing that Joy was donating the money to FLC ministries, donated an additional \$10. So in total Joy brought Teen Closet \$110!

Thanks to these five angels, FLC experienced the Miracle of Undies. The Teen Closet is well stocked with thongs, bikinis, hipsters, boxers and boxer briefs from small to XXXL!

LSS Teen Closet



Local & Global Ministry Team

LSS Diaper Drive



Friendship Lutheran Congregation in Petrozavodsk, Russia Impact of the War in Ukraine

Pastor Alex Krongolm and Nadia continue to serve their congregation in Petrozavodsk by ZOOM communications during the week, periodic weekend trips from their location in Finland to Petrozavodsk. The latter now involves risky (fear of military conscription) and exhausting border crossings from Finland through Estonia into Russia. Alex is fulfilling an internship in Finland. Despite the emotional and financial toll of the Russia-Ukraine war, under Alexei's leadership and an active Church Council and lay leadership, the congregation is continuing their ministry of care and creative outreach, while also carrying on their program of humanitarian aid for Ukrainian refugees.

A draft Newsletter from the Church Council reveals the difficulties of the war on the economy, on people's well-being (despondent, depressed), and on church ministry, but which also provides opportunity for outreach with care and the Good News. The difficulty is availability of funds. The *Vision Petrozavodsk* Advisory Committee is pursuing options for how to raise urgently needed funds, including, e.g., purchase of a reliable car for Pastor Alex for travel between Finland and Petrozavodsk and funds for their Crisis Center caring for Ukrainian refugees.

Nadia is securing medical attention through the Finnish health care system for her ongoing serious illness.

FLC member Paul Anderson has stepped down as Coordinator of *Vision Petrozavodsk*, but will continue as a member of the Advisory Committee, along with Carol. (Paul will also continue to serve on our NEMN Synod/Russian Lutheran Church Companion Synod Task Force, home of *Vision Petrozavodsk*.)

Cookie Exchange

We made 20 dozen cookies for the Family Christmas Party at the St. Louis County Jail.



Local & Global Ministry Team

Community Meal



Candy Madich
Marcia Lothner
Millie Frey

Thanks to those volunteers who put out the signs in the neighborhood, plan the menus, cook and serve the food, and welcome our guests!



Angel Tree

I've been helping my mom with the Angel Tree for a long time. I don't know what my exact age was when I started, but my mom estimates that I was still in high school at the time. And for a long time, I actually didn't like helping with Angel Tree. ~ I didn't like going in to sit with the tree and make sure everyone filled out their contact information for their angels because it meant waking up even earlier on a weekend. I didn't like going into the church at night to inventory the gifts because by the time we were done there wasn't any time left to do anything besides homework and going to bed.

And for a long time, I was deeply unsatisfied with the giving of the presents itself. Not because of the cost or the time it took to pick them out, I was fine with all of that. I was unhappy with the fact that I would never know if the person I was giving a gift to liked the gift or not. See, we're never there for the moment they open the gift. We don't even get to hand the packages off to families themselves, they're always taken in by volunteer and distributed later. I've been told that in the past we've received thank you letters from the facilities, but never from the families themselves. For a long time, I wondered, what was the point of giving a gift if you will never know how it was received?

But, over time, I learned that that was never the point of the Angel Tree. It's not about any kind of satisfaction on our end, not to pat ourselves on the back and say 'job well done.' It is about gift giving in its simplest, purest form. Its about giving a gift without any expectations of the one receiving it. It's about saying, I know times are hard for you, but you still deserve something nice on Christmas. It's about that very first Christmas gift, given by God, with love, without caring if the world deserved him or not.

So, looking back, I want to thank the Angel Tree, for teaching me what a million Christmas stories couldn't. That it's the act of giving that makes the gift worth it, not any kind of validation from the person who receives it.

And thank you to my mom for making me participate in the first place. I might not have always vocalized my complaints, but I know you know how annoyed I was. — Bailey Johnson



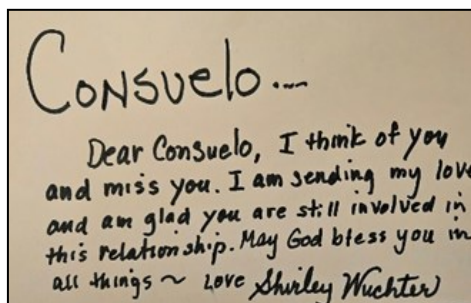
Local & Global Ministry Team

San Antonio Los Ranchos, El Salvador

- Video calls made every other month with Los Ranchos community members including the scholarship students
- Information posted on FLC website and in the Mustard Seed newsletter with updates from the Los Ranchos community and from the students
- FLC and Los Ranchos members discussed the impact of Archbishop Romero on our lives.
- We at First Lutheran celebrated the 25th anniversary of our first delegation, as well as, our continuing relationship with El Salvador on October 22, 2023, between services in the Gathering Space.



Former delegates and Current
El Salvador Team Members



Note written by Shirley Wuchter



Migrant Justice

For I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Matthew 25:35

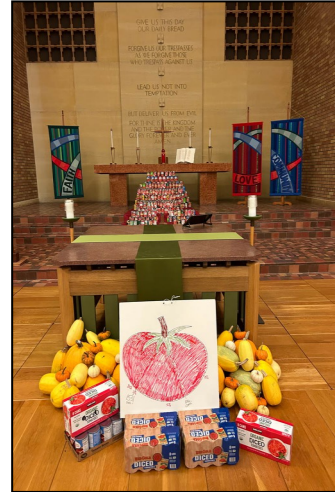
Adama, the asylum seeker who came to us one and one-half years ago from Burkina Faso, was a stranger to us, was “given” a birth date as he came to our country -- January 1, 1988. When we have a reason to celebrate, we do! We gathered in community with the people who have had an opportunity to spread God's Love to him since he arrived. We went to Incline Station to bowl, eat pizza and Birthday cupcakes. It was a wonderful evening all around. God's presence can even be found in a bowling alley, as we shared the joy of gratefulness and life together. As this new year begins, we grow in faith that God will be with our asylum seeker as he defends his need to live in the US at his upcoming hearing.

Local & Global Ministry Team

Food Shelf



We sliced and diced the numbers, and we crushed our goal of 500 cans of tomato products for the Chum Food Shelf. No one stewed about it and the whole congregation participated. We delivered over 650 cans of tomatoes to the Chum Food Shelf and with the support of Thrivent, our food drive also netted a \$500 gift to the Chum Food Shelf. This drive was big news, but our work didn't end here. We have a monthly commitment of tomato products for the Food Shelf and encourage everyone to regularly bring canned tomato products to church.



Local & Global Ministry Team

Meals For CHUM

Each month FLC provides 25-30 individual meals to CHUM's St. Francis Apartments. Folks who live there are elderly and have been long-term homeless. The building is the old "Best Western" on 2nd street so it is considered a "Single Room Occupancy" (SRO) facility. Each room is a motel room with limited amenities. There is a small dorm style refrigerator and a microwave in each room.. Residents go to CHUM or Damiano for most of their meals but sometimes they just want a home made meal to eat in their rooms. FLC members cook taco hotdishes, chicken or turkey vegetable soups, hamburger/tomato hot dishes or other "comfort foods" for the residents. The 2nd Tuesday of each month we deliver meals which are kept in a freezer in the office so folks can stop in and ask for a meal when they wish.

We have received reports back saying they LOVE everything we make. There have been requests for soups and burritos!

We also provide 6-8 family meals to Steve O' Neil apartments quarterly. These meals are generally prepared and frozen following FLC's Monthly Community Meal. These meals are given out to residents when they have something going on in their families like illnesses, births, etc. and a family needs prepared meals.

Both CHUM programs are delighted to be the recipients of FLC's helping hands!

Stewardship Ministry Team

*Think of us in this way,
as servants of Christ and stewards of God's
mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards
that they may be found trustworthy.*
1 Corinthians 4:1-2

Our purpose is to grow in our understanding
and practice that everything belongs to
God.

We fulfill this ministry by:

- caring for creation
- caring for our whole selves
- discovering our spiritual gifts
- practicing generosity with our resources
- caring for relationships

Action Teams include:

- creation care
- college care packages
- financial stewardship
- Yogadevotion
- homebound visitation



faithlovecommunity
First Lutheran Church
Duluth, Minnesota

Stewardship Ministry Team

Carlene Sippola, Chair; Dianne Loufman, Lead Pastor; Ann Beck, Margaret Broderius, Jane Miller, Jason Warner

Caring Ministries

Homebound Visitation



Our visitation team has been rejuvenated and we have visitors for most of our homebound members. What a joy to be engaged in this ministry! Over 30 poinsettias were delivered to homebound members during Advent.

Stewardship

- Creation Care
- College Care Packages
- Financial Stewardship
- Homebound Visitation
- Care of Relationships

College Care Packages

Dear FLC,

Thank you so much for the care package! I appreciate you guys thinking of me and all the other college kids — it means a lot!

See y'all for Christmas,
Tyler Zupancich



There were 27 care packages sent out to FLC college students. Thanks everyone who made cookies, shopped, and helped pack the boxes! It was fun receiving notes back from students.

Stewardship Ministry Team

Creation Care

Earth Day

The 2023 Earth Day Fair was a huge success because of so many who helped plan and work to make it happen. A shout-out to Faith Love CC Team members for planning the event: **Janet, Trent, Mark, Sally, Katie, and Tim**, among others. Gratitude to worship planners (**Karen Sande, Michael Fuchs, and Bryan Gatten**), readers (**Mark Kaufman and Tim LaMaster**), Monarch butterflies (**Sally, Emil and Annie Goodman**), photographers (Suzanne Rauvola and Arthur Goodman) musicians, ushers — not to forget our office staff and (especially) our custodians **Karl and Duane** who haul stuff, water the gardens, and keep our grounds so hospitable — not to mention all members and friends who share their faith and love for creation in Word, song, and blessed stewardship of the lands and the homes they are privileged to steward. Thank you to Snake Man (**Tim LaMaster**), Monarch Preacher (John Sippola), **Glenn and Erna Peterson**, and their 25 passion-driven years, which included 47 FLC garden members and friends! Can you imagine that? Our exhibitors: **Leif Ringsred** and UMD's **Violet Forstner and Emma Koep** (Readers and Bees), Ruth's Vegetarian Gourmet (**Nick Bendas and family**), Ecolibrium 3 (**Cameron Kadlubowski**), **Jacob Warren** (Eagle Scout Bench project), and **Dan Schutte** of Shoreview Natives for showing over 30 FLC members how to plant the 2,300 plants! Pr. Dianne for her support and advocacy!

The Pollinator Garden

Thirty people planted pollinators. Within four weeks, the plants were shooting up, and Rollie Bockbrader (Synod Staff) caught the deer browsing on the fresh shoots.

The Bench

Even as the garden was planted, Jake's Eagle Scout project bench was inaugurated by Mark and Katie Kaufman. Thanks to Jacob Warren for organizing and completing the Eagle Scout project and everyone who helped collect plastic and make it happen: the Scouts, members of FLC, the Lions of Duluth, and Glen Avon Presbyterian Church.



Mark and Katie Kaufman



John Sippola and Jacob Warner

Stewardship Ministry Team

STEWARDSHIP EMPHASIS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

giftstest.com

Your Top 5 spiritual gifts!

1 2 3 4 5

Exhortation, Helps, Hospitality, Administration, Leadership

Exhortation
The gift of exhortation is the divine strength or ability to strengthen, comfort or urge others to action through the written or spoken word and Biblical truth.
Acts 14:22; Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:24-25

Helps
The gift of helps is the divine strength or ability to work in a supportive role for the accomplishment of tasks in Christian ministry with the ability to often see the need before others do.
Mark 15:40-41; Acts 9:36; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:28

Hospitality
The gift of hospitality is the divine strength or ability to create warm, welcoming environments for others in places such as your home, office, or church.
Acts 16:14-15; Romans 12:13, 16:23; Hebrews 13:1-2; 1 Peter 4:9

Administration
The gift of administration is the divine strength or ability to organize multiple tasks and groups of people to accomplish these tasks.
Luke 14:28-30; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Corinthians 12:28

Leadership
The gift of leadership is the divine strength or ability to influence people at their level while directing and focusing them on the big picture, vision, or idea.
Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 5:17; Hebrews 13:17

Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts Sharing your Spiritual Gifts Living Out Your Spiritual Gifts

Giving

On October 29th Dana Varland stood in front of the congregation and gave her mission moment. She said that giving is “Responding to the Spirit.” Giving is like singing, its freeing and feels good. She and her family are called to give to show they are grateful to God for his blessings. The FLC community is a circle of support for her and her family. Thank you to Dana for sharing her thoughts and inspiring us to give.

Stewardship Ministry Team

Years ago, in a Lutheran Church in another city, I was where each of you is today...sitting in church (or in front of your radio or streaming device) and listening to yet another Mission Moment about Stewardship because it was almost Pledge Sunday. In front of that congregation was this gray-haired person about to talk about why his family gives to that congregation, and more specifically why they tithe.

Briefly, Max told us about the decision his family had made years ago to try increasing their pledge over a period of years until they were tithing. Max was a police officer and his wife was a stay-at-home mom and they had 3 children, so they were by no means “well off”. The family talked and prayed, and decided together that they could “sacrifice” some things like a meal out, or an extra pair of shoes, or giving up popcorn and a soda when they went to a movie. Every family member did their part and within a couple of years they were able to reach their goal of tithing to the church. But, Max told us, that they never once felt like they “sacrificed” anything. Instead, it was a joy to be able to tithe and to see new mission opportunities start within the congregation. Max added that he and his wife were still tithing and living very well on his police officer’s pension. And he invited each of us to prayerfully and intentionally consider becoming a tither.

So, I did as Max asked, I prayerfully considered and incrementally became a tither over the course of several years. It was easier than I thought it would be! And I, like Max and his family, discovered that it was not a sacrifice. It has been a joy and privilege to give back to God a small portion of what I have so undeservedly received as a child of God.

So, today it’s my turn to ask you to prayerfully and intentionally consider how you may become a tither, or to increase your pledge incrementally...or at the very least fill out your pledge card and send it or bring it to church. We here at FLC have new mission opportunities and your joyful giving can help make those opportunities realities. Thank you. — Jane Miller



This mission moment is brought to you by Pastor Dianne’s persuasive abilities. It turns out it’s really hard to say no to her! So...last Sunday Pr. Dianne asked me to speak about why we give to the church. The obvious reasons: pass the plate, keep the lights on, pay the pastor.

Even listening to the gospels these last couple Sundays and they seemed to be teaching us to not be greedy, help the less fortunate, and forgive your debtors. But at its heart, giving to the church is more than that. For us, it’s right there next to the altar ... Community. We give because of the community that we love here. The deep rooted multigenerational community that lifts up and supports each other.

The community that brought Kaitie and I food when we were first time parents with Conor, when we could barely keep our eyes open. It’s the community that comes together to sing the Holden Evening Prayer at Lent and share their personal faith stories. It’s the dedicated Sunday School staff teaching the next generation of God’s love and forgiveness. It’s the community that supports and embraces the beautiful music that fills our sanctuary every Sunday. It’s our community and our Pastor who open the doors to everyone without prejudice.

The joy we get from this community is multiplied when our resources extend beyond our door and into the neighborhood and greater Duluth community. That’s the type of Faith, Love, and Community that not only do we want to be a part of, but we want to support as best we can financially.

As a close, I wanted to give a plug to giving electronically. We have decided the best way for us to give is electronically. It’s one less thing to remember on Sunday mornings and we also know the church can count on our offering even when we can’t make it to church in person.

May God bless this church and our community. — Josh Larson

Stewardship Ministry Team

Archives

In January we honored Alpea Iverson who had diligently worked as our head archivist for 35 years. Alpea began her work with the Archives Committee when it was initiated in 1987. Initially with the assistance of a small group, it meant sorting through 100 years of FLC history by going through boxes and boxes of papers that were scattered throughout the church and then organizing and filing them. These boxes contained membership records, meeting minutes, baptismal and confirmation records, financial records, pictures from the first church and construction of the new building. Some of these records are fascinating, such as the story of how First Lutheran was able to retain the title of First Lutheran when another church challenged that claim.

After the mammoth job of organizing the initial records, the Archives Committee faithfully kept them updated. During her 35 years of stewardship Alpea has supervised the transition from an entirely paper record to the use of computers to store much of our data. The Committee has made sure that the history of FLC is preserved and will continue to be so into the future. This stewardship of our history is a very valuable resource for which we can thank Alpea and the Archives Committee.

An example of how the archives are used was exemplified when a Canadian whose parents and grandparents had been members of FLC contacted the church. She wanted to apply for US citizenship but did not have a birth certificate and needed proof that her parents had been born in Duluth. She contacted the Archives and was provided with her baptismal record, which she was able to use to acquire citizenship papers. This is the type of inquiry that is often received which we are able to assist with.

Our church is constantly changing as it adapts to the challenges facing our society. An example would be the many changes that have been implemented as we weathered the COVID19 epidemic. People in the future looking at our archive will also find many other examples of how we have evolved to keep up with our changing society.

At age 91, Alpea has not so much decided to retire, but to move to an advisory capacity; and so we recognize her for her many, many years of dedicated service to FLC.

Stewardship Ministry Team

Mortgage Reduction



The Wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. Isaiah 35:1-2

One of the most fulfilling craft projects I've been a part of has been the FLC Giving Cactus. With a concept and great enthusiasm from Kelly Cossey, along with help from the Finance Committee, a giant paper mache saguaro cactus was constructed in record time (I think). The objective of the cactus was to generate additional giving to pay down the FLC loan debt. Building the 7+ foot cactus was a lot of fun (and maybe a little stressful); using chicken wire, air filters, pvc, paper mache, spray paint and a little blood, sweat and tears, we created a vessel for our paper scorpions. The scorpions represented different dollar amounts that were pinned to the cactus. People would remove a scorpion, pay that amount toward the loan and then replace the scorpion with a paper flower bloom. The request was to have the person adding the flower bloom write what they would like to see the money used for once the loan was paid off. The scorpions would then be thrown into the fire at the 2024 Easter Vigil service. The cactus was placed in the sanctuary and has generated significant giving. I'm incredibly grateful for the support of the project and the attention it has received.

God bless First Lutheran Church! — Mary Dontje

Worship and Music Ministry Team

Bless the Lord, O my soul.
Psalm 103

Our purpose is to support an inclusive, meaningful worship that feeds God's people and sends them forth to be Christ's presence in the world.

We fulfill this ministry through:

- Word and Sacrament
- participatory worship
- blessings

Action Teams include:

- Acolytes
- Altar Guild
- Assisting Ministers
- Blessings
- Communion Servers
- Jubilation Ringers
- Liturgical Arts
- Park Service Helpers
- Rising Sound Band
- Soli Deo Gloria Choir
- Ushers



faithlovecommunity
First Lutheran Church
Duluth, Minnesota

Worship and Music Ministry Team

Sarah Climis, Chair; Dianne Loufman, Lead Pastor; Karen Sande; Bob Boman, Liz Raduege, Dale Stahl



Olivia Papke-Larson
Baptism

Livestream

Thanks to Sam Weston and Shania Krause for our video livestream and Eric Gatten for managing our sound.

Whom we're reaching on livestream by the numbers:

An estimated 116 watch the 8:30 Sunday service and another 130-140 watch during the week.

An estimated 30-50 watch the 11:00 Sunday service and 50-60 watch during the week. Our challenge is to welcome these people and discover who they are. That means that we are reaching a total of around 550 people weekly, which exceeds our pre-Covid numbers! And that doesn't even include our KDAL radio listeners!

WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY ACTION TEAMS

- Acolytes
- Altar Guild
- Assisting Ministers
- Blessings
- Communion Servers
- Jubilation Ringers
- Liturgical Arts
- Park Service Helpers
- Rising Sound Band
- Readers
- Soli Deo Gloria Choir
- Ushers

We have not been able to attend FLC in person since COVID has been with us and the passing years have made getting to church more difficult, but we truly look forward to the service on YouTube. It's been a true saving connection with a church life we have been a part of for over 50 years.

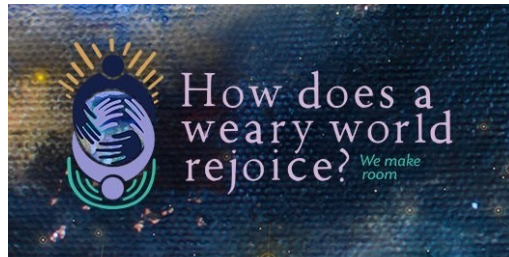
Thank you,
Ron McKinnon

Worship and Music Ministry Team

Worship Season: Advent

The Lenten theme for 2023: How Does a Weary World Rejoice?

- The First Week of Lent: We acknowledge our weariness
- The Second Week of Lent: We find joy in connection
- The Third Week of Lent: We allow ourselves to be amazed
- The Fourth Week of Lent: We sing stories of hope
- Christmas Eve: We make room
- Christmastide: We root ourselves in ritual
- Baptism of the Lord: We trust our belovedness



I would like to add a big **Thank You** to the entire staff for the worship services this Advent, especially all three services this past Sunday, wonderfully uplifting — great music, messages.... Advent has been especially meaningful for me this year (church services, lectionary discussions by the men’s group, reading, etc), perhaps partly a reflection of what is going on in the world. — Paul Anderson

Worship Season: Blue Christmas

Our Blue Christmas service was covered by a local news station. How can we reach out to more people beforehand?



We gather together as a community to make room for the emotions our wider culture doesn’t recognize at this time of year — weariness, grief, loneliness, the wish that the holidays would just be over. This night we gather together as a community to honor this reality. Marcia Holman brought us the word.

Worship and Music Ministry Team

Worship Season: Christmas

We have enjoyed bringing our two young children to the family service on Christmas Eve for the last two years. It is special for the kids to be able to be involved in the entirety of the service, and the interactive format really holds their attention. Prior to having kids we loved to attend the candlelight service, but the tea light candle lighting is a great way to make a meaningful tradition inclusive for all ages. — Erica Klingfus



Worship Season: Epiphany

Worshippers are welcome to light candles while the choir sings *For the Healing of the Nations*.
For the healing of the nations, we pray to you, O God.



Candlemas is a Christian festival commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the Temple. It is based upon the account of the presentation of Jesus in Luke 2:22–40. Traditionally, it is a day to bless the candles to be used in the

Worship and Music Ministry Team

Worship Season: Lent

Seeking: Honest Questions For Deeper Faith

Midweek Lenten Speakers:

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Week One: | <i>Who Will You Listen To?</i> | Kelly Cossey |
| Week Two: | <i>How Do We Begin Again?</i> | Wilmer Roballo |
| Week Three: | <i>Will You Give Me a Drink?</i> | Tim Thorson |
| Week Four: | <i>Who Sinned?</i> | Brenda Schrader |
| Week Five: | <i>Can These Bones Live?</i> | Jo Jones |



Ash Wednesday



Wednesday Night Lenten Service and Meal



Carol Prohaska,
Margaræt Broderius,
Char Juntunen



Dale Stahl, Greg Ojakangas,
Carol Anderson, Vince Magnuson



Greg Ojakangas

Worship and Music Ministry Team

Palm Sunday



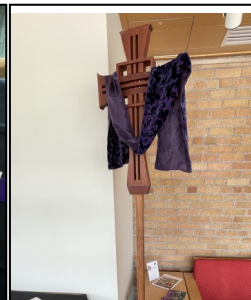
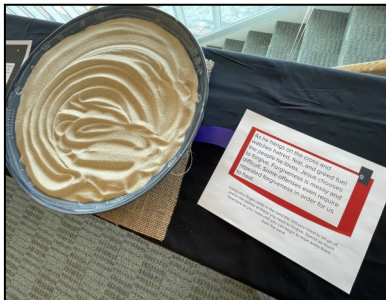
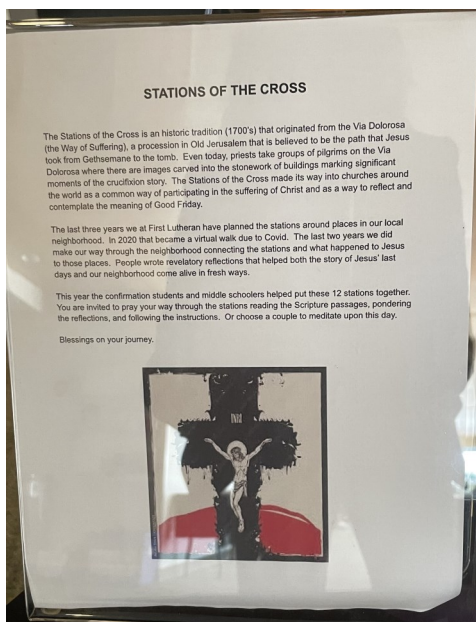
I've heard this story so many times. I just heard it in a way I hadn't before; I felt it moved me.

— Conrad Johannesson

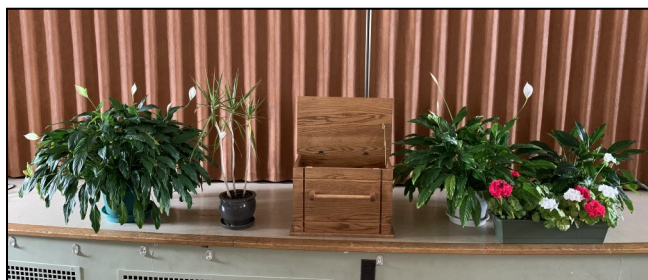
Maundy Thursday



Good Friday — Stations of the Cross



Worship Season Easter: Easter Vigil



Worship & Music Ministry

Worship Season: Easter Morning



Worship Season: Ascension

Ascension is the new festival for celebrating young people receiving communion for the first time.



Greg Climis reading at the youth service



Worship Season: Pentecost



Dennis Paulson



Worship Season: Sermons

In response to sermon entitled: What are you looking for?
Your sermon was a backdrop for good conversations with two people. First, Max and I answered your question to each other and had a good discussion. Then friend Donna (NYC) and I talked about the despair we feel at these violent times. Thank you for giving me inspiration and conversation starters for important sharing. -Diane Skomars

A visitor asked, "Do you have a sister church like this in the Cities?"

I want to thank you for your sermon this Sunday. I listened to it TWICE. I appreciate your relating one's faith to everyday life and that we need only to realize that we do not need to be something or do something grand to be worthy of God's love.

Worship & Music Ministry

Outdoor Worship



Blessings



May our fishing be
bountiful
and may we pause
in gratitude
for the
experience
and the gift
that has been given.



Blessing of Bicycles & Other Wheeled Things



God of play and transport,
we give you thanks for warm
weather and time to ride in
your delightful creation.
Help us to be mindful of
our surroundings, and keep
those who drive vehicles
aware of us. Bless our wheels
and helmets. May they keep
us safe as we move from
place to place. Be the wind
at our back and the strength
we need on the journey. In
Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Worship & Music Ministry



Worship & Music Ministry

Celebration of Land and Seasons



Spring



Summer



Fall



Winter

Earth Day



John Sippola



Jan Hille



Tim LaMaster
Sharing Children's
Sermon



Pastor Dianne

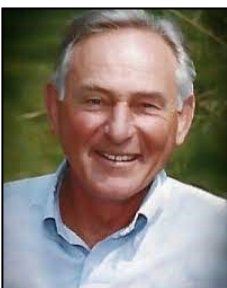


In Memoriam



Carol Esther Anderson passed away on May 14, 2023, peacefully on May 14, 2023 with family at her side.

Carol was born in Duluth, MN on September 28, 1932. She was a recent resident of Twig (Caribou Lake), MN. Carol was a graduate of Central High School in Duluth and a life long member of First Lutheran Church. She was a dedicated volunteer for many organizations and was a wonderful host to all who visited her at her home. Hebrews 13:2 was a Biblical passage Carol liked: *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels unawares.* It is a good description of how she lived her life.



Philip Linner Eckman, age 90, of Duluth, MN died exactly as he hoped, with his wife Julie, children Phil and Brita by his side at the place he loved most, his home known dearly as “the Cabin in the Woods” on October 29, 2023. Phil lived life to the fullest and touched the lives of many through his caring and friendly presence. Although he held many impressive titles like Surgeon, President and CEO, the roles he valued most were: being Julie’s husband of 59 years; Phil, Brita, and Inger’s father; and Ellie, Lexie, and Julianne’s grandfather, known lovingly as their “Bugga.”

Phil was born in Duluth on June 20, 1933, at St. Mary’s Hospital to loving parents Phil and Hildur Eckman, who inspired his admiration for the outdoors, music, and travel. He grew up on the shore of Lake Superior.

Phil and Julie settled in Duluth to begin their lives together. He joined the Duluth Clinic as a General Surgeon where he would go on to positively touch the lives of many families in the region. He particularly enjoyed taking care of children through his pediatric surgery practice. His teamwork and congenial manner buoyed his leadership within the Clinic. Phil was elected as the President of the Duluth Clinic where he led the organization for many years through its successful merger with St. Mary’s Hospital and the eventual creation of Essentia Health.

Throughout his life, Phil loved being involved in the community, always a reliable volunteer and leader. He made an impact everywhere he went. Highlights here include: playing French Horn in the Twin Ports Wind Orchestra, serving as President at First Lutheran Church, reading to the blind at the Lighthouse for the Blind.

Phil is survived by his beloved wife Julie, children Brita, Phil and his wife Vera, and grandchildren Ellie, Lexie, and Julianne.

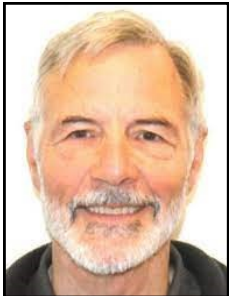


Tara Anne (LaVoy) Lien passed away unexpectedly in her sleep on September 17, 2023. She was born on October 18, 1972, to Jack and Nancy (Luoma) LaVoy and was a life-long resident of Duluth.

Tara attended cosmetology school and found her passion in helping others look and feel their best. She loved the arts and was a talented artist who enjoyed painting portraits. She married the love of her life, Brad Lien on September 20, 2003, and together they had three beautiful children. She was a loving wife and mother whose first priority in life was the care and well-being of her family. Tara was humble and kind and believed everyone should be treated equally. She had a remarkable sense of compassion and always found the good in someone. She will be remembered for her incredible warmth, captivating smile, and great sense of humor.

She is survived by her husband of 20 years, Brad; her children, Rex, Amara, and Cullin.

In Memoriam



Kris T. Liljebblad passed away on June 2, 2023. He was born in Green Bay, WI, August 22, 1950, to Patsy and Guy Liljebblad. He grew up in a loving family with an appreciation for the outdoors; camping, fishing, hunting, and he developed interests in biking and running marathons.

He served his community by volunteering on commissions, homeowners associations, and working on Grandma's Marathon to cheer on the participants. He was especially happy to help serve lutefisk at his church to all the lucky ones who had the taste for it, including him.

He was a loving soul to his wife, Lana, of 53 years; their two daughters, Tara (Tracy) Shearer, Natasha (Matt) Kim; granddaughters, Gabriella Quijano, Rachel Shearer, Ansley Kim and Ava Kim. His life was full and family was of utmost importance to him.

He was always looking to help someone or some group. He was diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor right after Mother's Day. He was set to fight it with all he had, but was called home to our Lord on June 2nd, 2023.



Max Edward Morath died June 19, 2023, in Duluth, Minnesota. Max was born in Colorado Springs, CO, on October 1, 1926. He was a legendary entertainer, broadcaster, and ragtime scholar.

Max had a lifelong career as an entertainer/spokesman for ragtime and American popular song. As a child he studied piano and harmony, while mastering the rudiments of ragtime piano from his mother. He graduated from Colorado College in 1948 with a B.A. in English, and from the Stanford-NBC Radio and Television Institute in 1951.

At age 70 Max earned a Master's degree in American Studies from Columbia University. Max's last performance as an entertainer was his role in a four-day tribute to composer Irving Berlin in New York, 2006. At age 91 he concluded his second career as a lecturer at the Sacramento Ragtime Festival in November 2017.

Survivors include daughters Kathryn Annette Morath (Robert Wagner) and Christine Lee Mainthow (Michael Mainthow); son Frederic Loyd Morath and daughter-in-law Paula Sue Morath; Diane Fay Skomars, his wife of 30 years, and her daughter Monette Fay Magrath Macdonald (David Macdonald); grandchildren Jordan Claire Wagner, David Lee and Eric Robert Mainthow, Malia Lynn Morath, Finley Fay Margaret Macdonald; and great-grandson Edward Ke'luohilohanakahi Kehaoha.



Robert A. Prusak passed away on May 7, 2023, after a short illness with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. Bob grew up in Eveleth, MN.

Rob loved his family and the outdoors. He enjoyed shooting sporting clays, hunting, spending time at the deer shack, hiking with his dogs, and welcoming friends and family to the cabin on Big Sturgeon Lake at Side Lake, MN.

Rob enjoyed working with youth sports and spent many years volunteering as a soccer coach and board member for the Howard Hurricanes. He also enjoyed using his engineering background to contribute to civic committees, serving as a trustee on the Village Board in Howard, Wisconsin, the Board Chair for WLSSD, and the Board Chair of the City of Duluth's Public Utilities Commission.

Rob is survived by his wife, Sue, whom he married on July 16, 1977. He is also survived by his children: Kelly (Michael) Pufall; Ryan (Anna) Prusak; and Kari (Per) Batdorf; and grandchildren: Jonathan, and Nicholas Pufall; Cora, Odin, and Ingrid Batdorf.

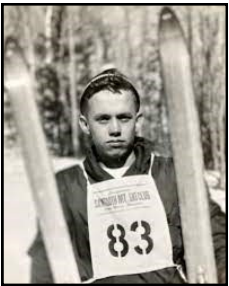
In Memoriam



Anna Louise Roettger of Duluth, MN, age 89, died peacefully with her daughters by her side on March 8, 2023, at the family cabin in Moose Lake, MN.

Anna was born on All Saints Day, November 1, 1933, in Duluth, MN to Victor and Edith (Ekstrom) Johnson. Anna will be remembered for so many things including her adventurous spirit and love of travel. Anna was the consummate sports fan. Most importantly, Anna will be remembered as a kind and loving wife, mother and grandmother.

Anna is survived by her two beloved daughters Jane Taffe, Amy Roettger, and son-in-law Gerald Taffe; three grandchildren Matthew (Dyani Taffe), Michael (Teagan Mohs) and Sara (Winston Schromm) Taffe; as well as two great-grandchildren, Brayden Dozier and Anniston Taffe. She was preceded in death by her husband of 60 years, Jerome.



Gordon Oliver Slotness of Duluth, MN passed away peacefully on July 21, 2023, at the age of 90.

Gordy was born in Duluth, Minnesota to Bernard and Inga Slotness and graduated from Central High School. He attended college at the University of Minnesota Duluth, where Darlene Melander noticed him while he was quietly minding his own business at his locker. Dar and Gordy were married on August 18, 1956, raised three children, and would remain married for 64 years. They were members of First Lutheran Church.

Simultaneously quiet and gregarious, he had a large, yet close-knit group of friends, many of whom he met in grade school. Gordy started skiing at a young age and excelled at it, sometimes competing in jumping, slalom, giant slalom, and downhill all in the same day. He later served for many years on the ski patrol at Mont du Lac. Dar and Gordy were fond of traveling and shared many happy memories of their yearly group ski trips to Montana and sailing on Lake Superior. He was also a highly creative and accomplished artist, painting in watercolor and acrylic, and a dedicated woodworker, creating beautiful and functional furniture for his home and family.

He is preceded in death by his parents Bernard and Inga Slotness, brother Arvid Slotness, and his beloved wife Darlene Slotness and son Mike Slotness. He is survived by his children Suzan (Mark) Johnson and Mark Slotness; grandchildren Steph (Zac Bentz) Slotness-Johnson-Bentz, Neil Slotness, Nichole Hagadorn, Shane (Asmaa Elkeurti) Johnson, Stephanie (Casey) Dearhamer, Pauline (Brandon) Forsythe, and Eirik Slotness; and great-grandchildren Addison, Kaden, Maddyson, Jack, Josephine, Nickoli, and James.



Annelie G. (Rosenberg) Sober, Age 81, of Eagan, MN (formerly of Duluth), passed away March 28, 2023. Annelie was born in Estonia. She and Toivo were members at First Lutheran Church when they lived in Duluth. She was very active as the Chairperson of the FLC library.

She was preceded in death by her parents and is survived by her husband of 50 years, Toivo Sober; stepdaughter; Valerie Volk-Sober, brothers; Gerhard (Kathie), Helmut (Linda) and Einar (Dolly) Rosenberg, brother and sister-in-law; Taavi (Gale) Sober, and many nieces, nephews and friends.

In Memoriam



L. Cecile Swenson, 90, of Duluth, died May 30, 2023, at home. She was born on March 10, 1933, at St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth to Inez Marie (Melander) Hilding and Dr. Anderson C. Hilding.

Before her children were born, Cec was a public-school teacher of Home Economics and English. Later and for some years she managed Swen Products. Cecile volunteered generously, including hospice and hospital visitation and served on the St. Luke's Foundation board. When Duluth Public Schools cut music from the early grades, she and friends filled in the gap, sharing their love of music with elementary school children throughout the city.

Music was a big part of Cecile's life. She became an accomplished flutist and was a member of the Cecilian Society. Cec and Dick enjoyed and supported the arts in Duluth, including Matinee Musical, Duluth Playhouse, Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra, and the Lyric Opera of the North.

Most important to Cecile were relationships with family and friends. With her gentle, steadfast, loving and bubbly personality, she cultivated love and friendship wherever she went. We will remember Cecile for her radiant smile, bright energy, and delightful sense of humor.

Cecile is survived by her husband of 61 years, Richard E. Swenson; daughters Linnea (Jon) Swenson Tellekson, Deborah Swenson, Kristin Swenson (Craig Slingluff); and grandchildren Leland Johnson and Tallulah Cecile Hilding.



Annette Ruth (Buckland) Ulrich, 97, of Duluth, died Saturday, May 13, 2023, in daughter Kathryn's home, with family by her side. Annette was born September 17, 1925, at home in Carey, Ohio to Graham and Mildred (Houghtel) Buckland.

After graduating from Maumee Valley Hospital in 1946, Annette worked as a psychiatric nurse at the Institute of Living in Hartford, Connecticut; as a surgical nurse in Findlay, Ohio; and as a staff nurse at Ohio State University. She paused her career in 1953 to focus on caring for her expanding family. The family relocated to Duluth, MN in 1965. She gained lifelong friendships along the way. She returned to nursing in 1986 at the Benedictine Health Center until her retirement in 1995.

Annette spent many hours adventuring with her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, including skiing, canoeing in the Boundary Waters, hiking in the desert and mountains, and travelling around the world. She was a member of First Lutheran Church, its Dorcas Circle, and the Needle Art Guild. Wanting to maintain a continuous connection with her entire family, Annette would always ask, "when are you coming back?" She was well-known for her generous hospitality, including a strong cup of coffee and her joyous, adventurous, and loving spirit.

She spent her lifetime volunteering through church and within the greater community.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH FOUNDATION

*We will tell to the coming generation the glorious
deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders
that he has done. Pslam 78:4*

Our purpose is to shepherd the church into
the future by investing gifts to build a solid
foundation for God's work.

We fulfill this ministry by:

- ensuring that the church's ministries
continue well into the future.
- enabling you to multiply your God-given
resources for future generations.
- holding the principal permanently.
- gifting the income earned for ministry and
capital improvements or to supplement
current operating funds as necessary.

Participate in this ministry by:

- donating cash or securities to the
Endowment Fund.
- making a bequest in your will or trust .
- naming FLC Foundation as a beneficiary of
an IRA/401K account or life insurance
policy.
- making a gift in honor or memory of a
loved one or to celebrate an occasion.

*Any contribution amount is welcome. Gifts to the
Foundation's Endowment are tax deductible.
Consult your tax-advisor for guidance.*

For more information about the Foundation:

Jim Zastrow

jimzastrow5056@gmail.com | 218-390-5065



Consider completing the contribution form
on the reverse of this card and return it to the
church office or place it in the offering plate.

faithlovecommunity

First Lutheran Church
flcduluth.org | 218-728-3668

First Lutheran Church Foundation

Steve Samuelson, President; Steve Broderius, Vice President; Tom Crook, Treasurer; Brenda Sproat, Secretary; Jim Zastrow, Past President; Pr. Dianne Loufman, Lead Pastor; Mark Boyce, Rosyln Brandt, Paul Kilgore, Suzanne Rauvola. Joycelyn ReamArnold

The First Lutheran Church Foundation was organized in 1986 to support the church's mission through its ministries beyond those provided in the church budget. The Foundation offers members and friends an opportunity to continue long-term support of First Lutheran Church through estate planning, memorials, or other gifts. Contributions to the Foundation are preserved and invested. As special needs arise, the Foundation addresses those needs through grant support.

In 2023, many significant events occurred, making it challenging to decide which ones to highlight. In May 2023, the Foundation Board of Directors updated its five-year Strategic Plan, which included launching a speaker series called Faith, Love, Community — Dialogue in Action. This series aims to raise awareness, inspire action, and encourage community engagement. The inaugural speaker, Dr. Robert P. Jones, will speak at First Lutheran on Wednesday, May 15, 2024. This free, public event aims to promote community engagement and understanding through open dialogue on pressing social justice issues. The first topic of discussion will be examining the historical and contemporary racial injustices in our area. The Foundation also hosted a Legacy Society luncheon October 11, 2023. The Board of Directors gathered with the Foundation's Legacy Society members at the Duluth Women's Club. The purpose of the luncheon was to recognize and show our appreciation to those donors who have made planned gifts in support of FLC. These donors have created a legacy in support of First Lutheran and will assist in furthering the church's mission and ministries. The luncheon began with music from Karen Sande and the FLC Bell Choir, followed by Steve Samuelson, giving an update on the FLC Community Garden. The garden, located on the corner of 12th Avenue East and Superior Street, broke ground in July, and the groundwork was completed in September. The next three phases of the project will start in the spring of 2024. This project would not have been possible without the funding of the Foundation.

In 2023, we had three Legacy Society Letters of Intent signed.

Mark & Marcia Holman
Steve & Julie Samuelson
Chris & Teresa Zupancich

Please call Steve Samuelson at 218/393-8546 or email at foundation@flcduluth.org if you have any questions regarding the Legacy Society or are considering making a planned gift supporting the FLC Foundation. If you have already made this important decision, please let us know so we may recognize your generous support.

In 2023, the Foundation provided the following grants of \$16,100 to the church:

FLC Community Garden
Inclusive Bathroom Signage
Radio & Streaming Match

Yours in Christ,

Steve Samuelson
Foundation President

First Lutheran Church Foundation

First Lutheran Church of Duluth Foundation

Statement of Activities YTD Comparison

January - December 2023

	TOTAL	
	JAN - DEC 2023	JAN - DEC 2022 (PY)
Income		
4000 Memorials	3,975	1,320
4020 Interest - Investments	24,805	23,975
4030 Interest - Loans	2,031	2,406
4040 Gifts	14,825	17,690
4050 ELCA Endowment Fund Market Unrealized Gain (Loss)	55,885	(117,155)
Total Income	\$101,522	\$ (71,764)
GROSS PROFIT	\$101,522	\$ (71,764)
Expenses		
6010 Radio & Streaming Outreach	1,800	3,600
6020 Administrative	4,237	3,600
6025 Fundraising	2,968	3,637
6030 Grants	15,000	5,930
6040 Speaker Series - Speaker Fee Expense	6,000	
Total Expenses	\$30,006	\$16,767
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$71,516	\$ (88,532)
NET INCOME	\$71,516	\$ (88,532)

First Lutheran Church Foundation

First Lutheran Church of Duluth Foundation

Statement of Financial Position Comparison

As of December 31, 2023

	TOTAL	
	AS OF DEC 31, 2023	AS OF DEC 31, 2022 (PY)
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
1010 NBC Checking	44,584	41,285
Total Bank Accounts	\$44,584	\$41,285
Other Current Assets		
1040 ELCA Endowment Fund	656,300	570,415
1070 Accrued Interest - Loan to FLC	1,094	1,313
1090 Other Current Assets	7,100	1,050
Total Other Current Assets	\$664,494	\$572,777
Total Current Assets	\$709,078	\$614,062
Other Assets		
1100 Long-term Loan Receivable from FLC	250,000	250,000
1103 Principal Payment of Loan Receivable from FLC	(37,500)	(25,000)
1105 FLC Loan Receivable Match Grant (Loan Forgiveness)	(150,000)	(150,000)
Total 1100 Long-term Loan Receivable from FLC	62,500	75,000
Total Other Assets	\$62,500	\$75,000
TOTAL ASSETS	\$771,578	\$689,062
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable		
2000 Accounts Payable (A/P)	6,000	0
Total Accounts Payable	\$6,000	\$0
Other Current Liabilities		
2100 Grants Payable	5,000	0
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$5,000	\$0
Total Current Liabilities	\$11,000	\$0
Total Liabilities	\$11,000	\$0
Equity		
3001 Foundation Receipts - Unrestricted	732,411	729,242
3010 Interest Fund Available for Grants - Unrestricted	19,037	26,206
3015 Interest Fund Available for Speaker Series - Unrestricted	4,000	
Retained Earnings	(66,386)	22,146
Net Income	71,516	(88,532)
Total Equity	\$760,578	\$689,062
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$771,578	\$689,062

First Lutheran Church Women

Margaret Broderius and Carol Prohaska, Co-chairs; Mary Dontje, Treasurer

The Gathering Bible Study groups are the heart of FLCW and some have been reorganized to provide the best access for all. There is a new Facebook page open to all interested.

GATHERING GROUPS

- | | |
|--|--|
| Ruth Gathering | 1st Monday of the month at 7:00pm in the FLC Gathering Space
Contact Margaret Broderius (mabroderius@gmail.com) or Carol Prohaska (carolprohaska@gmail.com) |
| Leah Gathering | 2nd Tuesday of the month at 9:30am in the FLC Gathering Space
Contact Norma Hoffbauer (724-6350) |
| Mary & Martha Gathering
(in person) | 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:00pm in the FLC Gathering Space.
Contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzaanne@hbrstudios.com or Dawn Boman (eos608@aol.com) |
| Mary & Martha Gathering
(Zoom) | 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:00pm
Contact Laura Stahl (laura.morganstahl@gmail.com) |



FLCW members assembling care packages for Lutheran World Relief care kits.

First Lutheran Church Women

First Lutheran Church Women
Dec-23

Balance on hand \$7,393.87

Receipts

Offerings and Dona- \$676.65
Quilt Sales \$0.00

Total \$676.65

Disbursements

Miscellaneous Ex- \$301.34

Meeting Entertain- \$0.00
Offerings – WELCA \$675.00

WELCA annual Least \$0.00

WELCA Quilt Ship- \$0.00

Immigration Kit Sup- \$221.93

Gathering Mag Re- \$0.00

FLCW Annual Gath- \$350.00

Deposit Adjustment \$0.06

Total \$1,548.33

**Balance on hand
checking acct \$6,522.19**

Balance on savings \$3,276.76

Balance on Mission
Investment account \$3,755.36

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Son of God, Eternal Savior

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,
 2 As you, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, so may we for oth - ers live.
 3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and Prince of peace;
 4 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,

Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race,
 Free - ly have your gifts been grant - ed; free - ly may your ser - vants give,
 hush the storm of strife and pas - sion, bid its cru - el dis - cords cease.
 Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race:

you our head, who, throned in glo - ry, for your own will ev - er plead:
 Yours the gold and yours the sil - ver, yours the wealth of land and sea;
 By your pa - tient years of toil - ing, by your si - lent hours of pain,
 by your pray - ing, by your will - ing that your peo - ple should be one,

fill us with your love and pit - y, heal our wrong, and help our need.
 we but stew - ards of your boun - ty held in sol - emn trust will be.
 quench our fe - vered thirst of plea - sure, stem our self - ish greed of gain.
 grant, oh, grant our hope's fru - i - tion: here on earth your will be done.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 655
 Text: Somerset C. Lowry
 Music: IN BABILONE, Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse Boerenlities en Contradansen, 1710;
 arr. Julius Röntgen
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