



First Lutheran Church
1100 East Superior St
Duluth, MN 55802

April/May 2026

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Duluth, Minnesota

The Mustard Seed

Welcome Statement

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, or where they might be on their faith journey. We acknowledge the indigenous culture of this land. We are committed to the work of racial justice. We extend a special welcome in Christ's love.



Administration

Vision Council Corner - March 2026

The Vision Council's March meeting was the first since the Congregational meeting in February. As such, one of the main topics was continuing the work on congregational goals begun at the end of that meeting. Please be on the look out for next steps as we continue to work on these goals. Work continues on several other on-going projects as well: Sleep in Heavenly Peace beds in April, developing safety protocols for the church, the Palm Sunday Path activism, and our collaboration with Juneberry Table.

NEMN Synod assembly and election of Bishop is April 24-26

Check out the four nominees and their views on ministry on the NEMN Synod website

THE DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE/JULY ISSUE OF

The Mustard Seed IS MAY 16

Please send all submissions to office@flcduluth.org

SUPPORT LIVESTREAM/RADIO MINISTRY

When you donate \$100 to these ministries, the Foundation matches your donation. Your generosity is what makes these ministries thrive.

Meet the Vision Council !

President:

Diana Ream

Vice President:

Beth Ann Johnson

Past President:

Susanna Ojakangas

Treasurer:

Bob Boman

Secretary:

Rachel Johnson

Councilors-at-large:

Tim Climis – Worship & Music

Jeff Karlgaard – Local & Global

Stephanie Lundorff – Evangelism & Welcome

Amy Merchant – Stewardship

Miranda Oliphant – Lifelong Learning

Church Office Hours

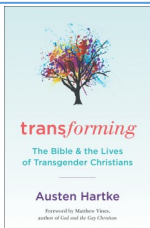
Friday — Monday
Church Office is Closed

Tuesday - Thursday
9am - 4pm

First Lutheran Foundation Dialogue in Action Speaker Series 2026.

Join Austen Hartke, author of "Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians," for an evening of education and storytelling.

Tuesday, May 12, 2026 5:00 p.m.



Austen will describe his experience growing up in and out of church, touching on a few of the Bible stories that helped him feel seen along the way, before moving focus to our current context.

What does it mean to be transgender today?

What struggles do trans people face, and what unique joys do they bring to the world?

How can we, as friends, family, and neighbors, support the gender-expansive people in our lives?



A Q&A and book signing will follow the lecture.

**You may use the following QR code to register for this event.
OR, You may register on the FLC Foundation website!**

Austen Hartke is also the founder and former Executive Director of Transmission Ministry Collective, an online community dedicated to the spiritual care, faith formation and leadership potential of transgender and gender expansive Christians. Austen is a graduate of Luther Seminary's Master of Arts program in Old Testament/Hebrew Bible Studies and is the winner of the 2014 John Milton Prize in Old Testament Writing from the same institution

Mark your calendars now for an introductory book study on Mr. Hartke's book,
"Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians"

Sunday, May 17 between services

Wednesday, May 20 at 6:15 pm

Friday, May 22 at 11:00 am

Administration

Legacy Moment

"But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." Luke 8:15

First Lutheran Church has been our spiritual home. It has been mine for over 50 years. It's a place where we dream of a better world, where our children are baptized, where youth come to know Christ, where couples, young and old, begin their lives together, and where we serve those in need. How can we ensure this Faith Community continues to thrive? The answer is simple: you can bless the church, its ministries, and future generations with a Legacy Gift to the First Lutheran Church Foundation in your estate.

The process is very easy. Some of the ways include:

- 1) a bequest in your will
- 2) a retirement plan beneficiary
- 3) a life insurance beneficiary,
- 4) stock and appreciated securities
- 5) Any other options that fit your situation

Many people believe only the elderly and wealthy can make a planned gift. Well, age doesn't matter, and in reality, large gifts are rare; all gifts, regardless of size, help support our future.

To learn more, please send an email message to foundation@flcduluth.org or visit the Foundation's webpage at <https://bit.ly/FLCFoundation>. If you have a Legacy Gift already in place, please let us know so we can include you in the Legacy Society.

Steve Samuelson
President, FLC Foundation

Stewardship

Our theme for this year comes from Psalm 84:6:

"As they pass through the dry valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs . . ."

How can we leave refreshing pools of water in our wake?

How do we water the dry places in our lives and in the lives of others?

How do we serve as an oasis in the midst of desert places?

How has this faith community been an oasis for you?

How has this faith community helped you be a spring of water for others?



Write your responses on the water drops found on the Springs of Water Moments board in the gathering space.



Eco Faith Summit 2026

The 2026 EcoFaith Summit of the Upper Midwest From Fear to Fire: Igniting Community for a Planet in Peril. April 18, 2026, 9:30am to 5pm. Check-in, tables and coffee beginning at 8:30am, reception beginning at 4pm.

For more information and to register for the summit please scan the QR code.



Thank you to all who have signed up to help or attend the Eco-faith Summit. We are in such better shape than we were the last two years thanks to your willingness to help. We still need the following:

Friday, April 17th

1 person: Evening Meal Team 5:00-8:00 PM to help run the dishwasher

Saturday, April 18th

1 person: Morning Coffee and Snacks Team 7:45-9:30 AM

1 person: Afternoon reception: 4:00-6:00 PM

1 person: Hospitality Greet and Guide 8:30 AM-4:00 PM

All volunteers need to register but can attend the event for free (unless you wish to help support this essential work on behalf of creation). Ask Pastor Dianne for the volunteer code!

Stewardship

Summit Young Adults Gathering

Young Adults (18-35 years old) are invited to spend **Friday night, April 15** in community with a sleep-over at Gloria Dei Lutheran, Duluth before attending the EcoFaith Summit together on Saturday.

Summit Registration is free for those under 30. Register for the overnight with your Summit registration.

Friday Night Youth Group Lock-in Friday, April 15 at FLC

Bring your youth group for a pre-Summit overnight! The lock-in is geared towards 9-12th graders but youth leaders have the discretion to bring youth as young as 7th grade if they feel they will benefit from the Summit experience.

Flexible arrival time for whatever your group needs are: you are welcome to arrive as early as 5pm, free pizza dinner at 6pm, programming will begin at 7pm, or arrive as late as you need.

We will provide the programming. Your youth group adults are in charge of the direct supervision, safety, and well-being of your own youth, please bring as many adults as you need. There will be an enforced bedtime so that everyone can enjoy the Summit on Saturday.

Lifelong Learning

April 5th: Easter Photo Booth

There will be no FLC Kids Sunday classes between services on Easter Sunday. Instead, FLC Kids is excited to offer a free photo booth for families of all shapes and sizes! Stop by the photo booth between services on **Sunday, April 5th** to strike a formal or silly pose.



May 17: First Communion + April/May Class

This year's First Communion will be on Sunday, May 17th. If you have a 3rd grader or above who is interested in participating, FLC will be hosting a three-part Communion Class on April 29th, May 6th, and May 13th. Please email families@flcduluth.org if your child is interested in attending the class!

Remaining OWL Dates



April 5 – NO OWL - Easter Sunday and Spring break ends - ISD 709, Marshall

April 12 – Contraception and Safer Sex

May 3 - Communicating with a Sexual Partner

April 19 - Sexual Decision Making

May 10 – NO OWL – Mother's Day

WEDNESDAY April 29 – Field Trip to Planned Parenthood May 17 - Self-Care, Celebration, and Closure

Middle School and Confirmation

will meet April 12th-26th May 3rd, and May 17th (not May 10th)

Gathering Circles: Growing in Faith Together

Ruth Gathering - 1st Monday of the month (**April 6 and May 4**) at 7:00 PM in the First Lutheran Gathering Space. Zoom is available upon request.

Contact Margaret Broderius (mabroderius@gmail.com) or Carol Prohaska (carolprohaska@gmail.com)

Leah Gathering - 2nd Tuesday of the month (**April 14 and May 12**) at 9:30 AM in the First Lutheran Gathering space. Contact Lois Janson (ljanson54@gmail.com)

Mary & Martha Gathering - 2nd Thursday of the month (**April 9 and May 14**) at 7:00 PM in the First Lutheran Gathering space. Zoom is available upon request. Contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com)

Women of FLC Duluth Facebook Page

Please join the Women of FLC Duluth Facebook Group and invite your friends. This uplifting group offers faith conversations, rejoices together in triumphs, and upholds each other in trials. This page is where you can find info on Gathering Circles and other events.



Lifelong Learning

Men's Bible study/discussion small groups

Just come, or give Paul Anderson a call for information 218-728-5853.

- Sojourners I: Fridays, weekly at 7:30 AM via Zoom
- Sojourners II: Mondays, bi-monthly at 7:00 PM, at church (2nd floor, Educational Room) and on Zoom
- Sojourners III: Mondays, weekly at 7:00 PM at church (3rd floor Conference Room, across from elevator)

Friday Bible Study

Every Friday, Our Pastors will lead Bible Study from 9:30 to 11:00am in the Learning Space. Join us in discussing the coming Sunday's lessons.

Sunday Bible Study

Join us the 1st and 3rd Sundays between services in the Lower Commons for Bible Study. We ponder the lessons for the day. All are welcome; no expertise needed; all questioned welcomed.

Local & Global

Migrant Justice Team News for Mustard Seed for April/May 2026

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

Update: Despite threats to safety and trying to stay invisible, our asylum seeker, A, continues to work two jobs and learn English with a tutor and with one of our team members. He also likes attending the Islamic Center with a friend. Our FLC team meets regularly with the Gloria Dei team (with whom we have cosponsored our asylum seeker for over 3 years) to provide hope and support for him and for each other.

What You Can Do:

- *Continue to pray for peace, safety, and justice for A and for all immigrants in our community and country.
- *Contact the Twin Ports Rapid Response team for information on supporting our community members who are under attack: <https://twinportsrapidresponse.org/>
- *Attend the pro-immigrant rallies from 12-1 pm on Wednesdays at 60th Ave. E. and Superior St.
- *Call or write your legislators about immigration matters (the 5 Calls app can be used).
- *Join the Migrant Justice Team at our next meeting - Contact Beth Holst (bethie.holst@gmail.com), Lezlie Oachs (lezlieoachs@gmail.com), Dory Sjoblom (dstinkrain@aol.com), or Nancy Rova (nanole@boreal.org) for more information.

2026 Lutheran Social Service (LSS) Benefit

Save the Date! You are invited! The 2026 Lutheran Social Service (LSS) Benefit for Youth is on May 12 at Clyde Iron Works. It will be a fun and inspiring event with social hour beginning at 5:30 PM and dinner with program at 6:30 PM. Register by April 28 at 651-432-4731 or online at lssmn.org/event/duluth-benefit-youth. If you would like to join my table (Betty Preus), you can indicate that on the registration form. Or if you want to host your own table, let me know and I can facilitate arrangements.

This event is the same night as FLC's speaker series. If you are planning to attend the speaker event at FLC, you can still support the Benefit for Youth by sending a check with "In honor of Benefit for Youth Duluth" in the memo line to *Lutheran Social Service of MN, ATTN: Development*

2485 Como Avenue St. Paul, MN 55108. Or donate online at [LSS of MN Donate Now](https://lssmn.org/donate) and select Other under the gift designation and write in "Benefit for Youth Duluth."

Please contact me if you have questions. Betty Preus 218-349-1939 or bettypreus@gmail.com



Spread Love, Warmth, and Friendship

Several FLC quilters have designed & sewed quilt tops for the Sleep in Heavenly Peace project. Others gather the 1st Thursday each month from 9-noon to assemble the quilts. All are welcome to join in for coffee & conversation as we help to warm children's beds.



Sleep in Heavenly Peace Bed Build Event

RSVP Saturday, April 25th We will build 20 beds for children in our community who do not have a proper bed. No building experience is needed! Sleep in Heavenly Peace brings all the materials and guides us through the entire process. Sign up at the You Are Loved table. Contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com or 218-393-8229) if you have any questions. For a complete description of the project please visit <https://tinyurl.com/2026-04Build>.

Local & Global

TEEN CLOSET NEWS

Teen Closet Workday Saturday Morning, April 25
10:00 – 11:30

New volunteers are always welcome!

**VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: THE TEEN CLOSET ACCEPTS
NEW HYGIENE PRODUCTS AS WELL AS
NEW AND LIGHTLY USED CLOTHING
FOR TEENS AND CHILDREN.**

If you have questions about volunteering, donations, or anything else relating to the Teen Closet, please call or email Brad & Lezlie Oachs at 218-310-2226 or lezieoachs@gmail.com.

We'd LOVE to have you volunteer with us to keep this important community ministry going strong! If you have any questions, please

contact FLC Community Meal Lead Planner & Coordinator Susanna Ojakangas by cell: 651-983-9100 or email: skmojak@gmail.com

The Next Community Meals will be on April 26 and May 31



2026 CHUM's RHUBARB FESTIVAL Saturday, June 27, 2026

Just imagine those green shoots starting to break ground! The CHUM Rhubarb Festival will be here before we know it. The festival is always the last Saturday in June: June 27, 2026. First Lutheran Church (FLC) will be preparing goods and baking for the festival the two weeks prior to the festival: June 15-19 and June 22-26. If you like to make pies, jams, salsa, please come and help. It's all for a good cause supporting Chum and their ministry for those who are unsheltered or in need of food. If you have any questions, please contact Marcia Holman; mlrikhol@gmail.com or 612-388-4590. THANK YOU! STAY TUNED!

Paws & People Community Care Clinic May 30 - May 31 First Lutheran Church

Students from the University of Minnesota Veterinary School and the University of Minnesota Duluth Medical School will host a two-day clinic for pets and people at First Lutheran. This clinic is one of many hosted across the state of Minnesota. If you are interested in learning more about this clinic and about volunteer opportunities, please connect with Candy Madich, Emilie Bowman, or Pastor Andrea.



News from the El Salvador Team

Meeting updates: The FLC El Salvador team (Joanne & Dory) met on February 16th with Sister Parish coordinator, Jorge, San Antonio los Ranchos community member, Consuelo, and two of the scholarship students: Wilbur who is studying nutrition and Estrella who is majoring in graphic design. Consuelo reported that two ladies had died recently which has been hard on their families and asked for prayers for their families. She also said that families from Los Ranchos are doing okay and have been checking in with relatives in the US. She also said that a celebration was held on Valentine's Day for families in the community which is a good time to share with family and friends.

Scholarship Students: Wilbur said that he had just come back from a clinic where he will be till July and Estrella said that her classes started in January and go until June and that she especially likes animation. They reported that the next session with new classes will start in late July and go until mid- December. Not able to attend the meeting were Yasmin, who is studying agronomical engineering and Juan, who is majoring in digital business and English.

Special event being planned: We are planning to have a virtual event with our communities to discuss human rights in our countries. We chose the theme: **Hope in Challenging Times** to be held on Monday, April 13th from 7-9 pm (CDT).

Prayers: Please pray for a successful school year for the students and for good health for the families of Los Ranchos.

For more information on joining the team's virtual meetings with students and community members, please contact Joanne Jokela, Brenda Schrader, or Dory Sjoblom.

Local & Global

FOOD GROWS IN THE DESERT OF AFRICA

South Sudanese refugee women are hard at work to bring down the level of food insufficiency in their settlement in Uganda. The population is composed of 25,000 women and children, with hunger yet at 55%. This means that many households are eating one meal a day. It means that children drop out of school so the money used for school fees can instead purchase food. And it means some borrow money to feed their families.

Using fast growing seeds for things like cabbage, tomatoes, okra, and beans, the women are right now planting their first growing season of the year. Together they tend 126 acres of crops. In addition, they have helped the most vulnerable among them - the widows, orphans, those traumatized by war, those missing limbs, and those who are sick, plant 1,000 kitchen gardens. The fields and kitchen gardens together provide food for the households and create disposable income when surplus is sold in the markets. This disposable income pays for the school fees.

RUSSIA

For reasons noted previously, Nadia and Pastor Alex Krongolm from the Petrozavodsk Lutheran Congregation, and their 2 children, live in Finland and Alex continues ministry as Sr. Pastor and Dean of the Karelian Deanery by cell phone, Email, texting, and ZOOM, as well as trips every 4-6 weeks to Petrozavodsk, while also seeking work opportunities in Finland. **Unfortunately**, Finland is experiencing a severe economic downturn and many benefits for refugees have been terminated. The Company Alex has had some employment opportunity with is closing. They have no source of funding to augment the support *Vision Petrozavodsk* has been able to provide to continue living in Finland, so they will be returning to Petrozavodsk for Easter, and be there at least several months. Unfortunately, there is little chance for work in Petrozavodsk as well, and they are very concerned about finding housing accommodations. Nadia will need to return to Finland every 2 or 3 months for medicine not available in Russia. The church building has need of major upkeep, including the small flat that could be available for Alex and family, but no funds are available for repair. This is the reality of war for Russians. Despite these financial hardships, the congregation continues basic ministries, with special efforts to provide youth ministry programs. If you would like more detailed information, contact Paul Anderson (218-728-5853).

Evangelism

RED DRESSES AND SHIRTS NEEDED FOR VIGIL

The racial justice is seeking FLC participation to collect red dresses and shirts in advance of our upcoming candlelight vigil for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). The vigil is scheduled for **May 5th** in our sanctuary. Red dresses have become an important symbol for this national movement. They will become part of a display at FLC to show solidarity with the families of the missing and murdered in our Twin Ports area, and to express the need for justice for victims. Purchases of red dresses and shirts can be made from thrift stores throughout the community. There will be a box to place them in near the mini-library in the gathering area beginning on **Sunday, April 12th**.



Nature Walk & BioBlitz

Have you ever been curious about the name of a plant or animal? Here is an opportunity to indulge your curiosity and further connect with this wonderful place where we live. Join FLC adults for an early spring afternoon nature walk (date and time TBD). We will use the iNaturalist or iSeek app (<https://www.inaturalist.org/> or your App Store) to identify spring plants and animals and share what we find with others around the world. Every observation contributes to understanding where animals and plants naturally live. Join us, explore, identify, and become a citizen scientist. We suggest you download either (or both apps) and practice at home on house plants or pets or outside if the snow melts. Contact Dick Anderson (rya6419@gmail.com) or Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com) to make sure you are notified of the date and time and watch the Bulletin and First News.

Sunday Hospitality and Birthdays

Sign up to bring treats on your birthday month. Each 3rd Sunday we will sing Happy Birthday and provide a cake!
Join us April 19th and May 17th

Worship and Music

8:30 am Organ/Choir Worship

In the sanctuary, 610 KDAL, and YouTube



11:00 am The Rising Sound Band

In the sanctuary, and YouTube

Holy Week

March 29 **Passion/Palm Sunday**

The good news is... inspiring us to act

April 2 **Maundy Thursday**

The good news is... even Judas gets his feet washed

7:00pm Worship

April 3 **Good Friday**

The good news is... revealed through nonviolence

Noon prayer service

Simon Bore the Cross 7:00pm

April 4 **Easter Vigil**

The good news is... worth waiting for

Saturday 7:00pm

April 5 **Easter Sunday**

The good news is... alive in the world

8:30am and 11:00am



April 12 **Second Sunday of Easter**

Blessing of Communion Kits

April 19 **Third Sunday of Easter**

Earth Day - Celebration of Spring

April 26 **Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Good Shepherd Sunday

May 3 **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

Blessing of Anglers

May 10 **Sixth Easter**

Mother's Day

May 17 **Ascension**

FLC Kids lead Worship

First Communion Celebration



One Service at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary, 610 KDAL, and YouTube

May 24

Day of Pentecost One Service

Blessing of the Trails

May 31

The Holy Trinity

June 7

Second Sunday after Pentecost

Graduate Blessing



Community Garden - Calling all Gardeners!!

Gather on **Sunday, April 12** in the Upper Common to discuss the garden

Simon Bore the Cross

On **Good Friday, April 3, at 7:00 PM**, the FLC Music Ministry will present *Simon Bore the Cross*, Margaret Bonds's deeply moving passion cantata, performed by the Soli Deo Gloria Choir of FLC, guest choristers from across the Twin Ports, and instrumentalists from the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra. This work tells the Passion story through the eyes of Simon of Cyrene, the man who was compelled to carry the cross for Jesus (Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26); as Cyrene was a city in North Africa, many traditions hold that Simon was Black. With a libretto by Langston Hughes and music by Bonds—both of whom believed in the sacred power of art to affirm African American identity, heritage, and community—the cantata places Simon at the heart of the Passion and weaves throughout the spiritual *He Never Said a Mumblin' Word*. Through this music, we are invited not only to contemplate Christ's suffering, but also to deepen our empathy, humility, and love, meeting the Passion as a call to shared compassion and faithful witness.

Youth Ringers (for grades 5-12) : practice 2nd & 4th Sundays 9:45 - 10:45 a.m. in the 1st floor music room.

Jubilation Ringers: practice Wednesdays 5:45 - 7:00 p.m.

Soli Deo Gloria & Chamber Choirs: practice Wednesdays 7:15 - 8:15 p.m. (full choir) and 8:20 - 9:00 p.m. (chamber choir).

Rehearsals will resume on April 15

First Lutheran Ukuleles (FLUKES)

Join the First Lutheran Ukuleles (FLUKES) Strum on **April 5 & 19 and May 3 & 17 from 3:30-4:45**. We have ukuleles available so you can join the strum whether or not you have a ukulele. One chord (one finger/one string) and you are ready to go. We meet in the Parish Hall on the London Rd level of the church and welcome new and returning members. Contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com) for more information or to get on the email list.