



First Lutheran Church
1100 East Superior St
Duluth, MN 55802

December 2025/January 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 - November 2025

The Vision Council meet on September 7, The Vision Council, together with Pastor Dianne and Pastor Andrea, have identified ministry goals to focus the activities of FLC in the coming year. We are excited to share them out as they begin to take shape:

Community Meal (Evangelism): We will work to support broader congregational ownership of this important ministry.

Communication (Stewardship): We will work to improve and increase pathways of communication between Individuals and groups.

Adult Confirmation/Adulting 101 (Lifelong Learning): We will work to create an opportunity for adults to gather and build skills around faith and other specific topics.

Costa Rica (Global Mission): We will explore how to best support the Christian daycare/preschool for coffee farmers and laborers in this region.

We are excited to see where the Spirit will lead!

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

With A Thankful Heart

*I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;
I will tell of all your marvelous works. - Psalm 9:1*

My heart is overflowing with joy and gratitude to be called and invited into the ministry of First Lutheran Church. I give thanks to God for the Call Committee, for the Vision Council, for the Church Staff, and for each of you who have welcomed my family with such warmth and kindness. God's steadfast love and grace are abundant and alive in this community. I'm eager to join with you in ministry, sharing in both the joys and the challenges that lie ahead. On Call Sunday, we heard from the Gospel of Luke about how faith the size of a mustard seed can and will transform our lives and communities. I'm encouraged by how faith, love, and community are made known and lived out in this community. It fills me with hope. As we move forward together, I look forward to meeting each of you, listening to your stories, joining in sowing and scattering seeds of hope and love, and sharing in the work of the Gospel.

Peace, Pastor Andrea

Kelly's Corner

Monthly Mission Support Plan



Ministry & Mission Offerings	\$530,003.43
Holiday Offerings	\$9,711.37
Other Budgeted Income	\$30,489.29
Rental Income	\$37,000.00
Foundation Grants	\$2,720.00
Total Income	\$609,924.09

Total Expenses	\$610,198.00
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Total Surplus/Deficit	(\$273.91)
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Administration

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.

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.

Interested in Joining the Legacy Society?

The First Lutheran Church Foundation is grateful for the gifts it receives throughout the year. These gifts enable the Foundation to provide financial support for the mission of the Church. Did you know that there is an additional way of supporting the Foundation? By choosing this option, many of us have become members of the Foundation's Legacy Society. Legacy Society members have agreed to provide for the Foundation as part of their estate planning. "Estate planning" is simply an umbrella term that covers a number of actions any one of us can take to ensure that the Foundation remains strong for years to come. Many Legacy Society members have provided for the Foundation in their wills, specifying either a specific dollar amount or a percentage of estate assets for the benefit of the Foundation. Other members have opened payment-on-death bank accounts - a simple, one-step action to create an account whose funds (together with the accumulating interest) will benefit the Foundation upon the account-holder's death. Still others have named the Foundation as beneficiaries to their insurance policies or stock holdings. The beauty of this type of gift is that it costs nothing now, while many of us are otherwise saving to purchase a home, pay college tuition, or fund a retirement account. And by providing for the Foundation you will receive the not-insubstantial benefit of knowing that you will be preserving for future generations the vitality of the faith community that has been so important in our lives. Want more information? Contact the Foundation at foundation@flcduluth.org.

Stewardship

Earlier this fall the stewardship team invited you to become a member of the gift economy by becoming involved in three activities: Read *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer; celebrate Harvest Share Sunday on October 12; and bring your financial pledges to Pledge Sunday on November 9. Many of you have jumped on board – thank you.

Unlike market economies, gift economies emphasize community building and fostering relationships by focusing on the relationship between givers and receivers rather than the value of the goods. Jesus illustrated this so many times throughout scripture. Your financial gift to FLC enables us to carry out ministries that create caring relationships, help those in need, and spread the Gospel and God's love for all.

If you haven't already, please fill out a pledge card and mail it to the office or drop it in the offering plate. And, check out the Gift Economy Bulletin Board in the gathering space and read how members of FLC are participating in a gift economy here at church, in our neighborhoods and beyond. Then write your own example!

"Let us then pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding"

Romans 14:19

In gratitude, FLC stewardship team

Stewardship

Community Garden update

Can you believe it? The garden is fenced in; the concrete bags and pallet are gone; the gate is locked; garlic and daffodil bulbs are planted and covered with straw. What a journey! Massive amounts of gratitude to Kelly Cossey, Steve Dontje, Dawn and Bob Boman for hanging in there through rain, smoke, bleeding knuckles, and buried concrete. Thanks to Emil and Sally Goodman for planting the bulbs. And thanks to Steve Samuelson and all who came before.

Pollinator Garden update

Thanks to all those who cleaned up the garden this fall and for those who planted 300 new plants, especially Janet Ward and Katie Kaufman. Thanks also to those who cleaned the planters for winter.

Lifelong Learning

Gathering Circles: Growing in Faith Together

Gathering Circles welcome all who identify as women who are seeking a spiritual connection through monthly Bible study and fellowship. Groups meet at various times each month.

Ruth Gathering - 1st Monday of the month (**December 1 and January 5**) 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 (**December 9 and January 13**) at 9:30 AM in the First Lutheran Gathering space. Contact Lois Janson (ljanson54@gmail.com)

Mary & Martha Gathering - 2nd Thursday of the month (**December 11 and January 8**) 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. If you are interested in helping to administer the page, please contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com).



Men's Bible study/discussion small groups

The thread that weaves each group together is the opportunity to get to know each other & not only deepen our faith understanding, but to also reflect on God's Word and how to carry that into our everyday lives – and have some fun. If interested, you'd be very welcome. 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.

Middle School-Confirmation schedule December 7, 14, 21

We will be making Christmas cookies on December 21st Please let Pastor Dianne know if you can help with this
No sessions December 28th-January 4th Reconvene January 11th.



Report of the 2025 Fall CHUM Assembly Meeting 11-6-25

Chum programs serve more than 8,000 low-income, homeless, hungry, isolated, or otherwise marginalized community members in Duluth, MN each year. It was started in 1973 by 10 churches in the Central Hillside area. Chum is now governed by a Delegate Assembly composed of members from each of its 43 member congregations as well as up to 43 community at-large representatives. Several members represented FLC at the 2025 Fall CHUM Assembly meeting, which was well organized and very informative. The program included excellent reports of highlights from several programs provided by CHUM (www.chumduluth.org). It was really impressive to learn how CHUM, Damiano, and Union Gospel Mission are partnering together, especially in the areas of housing, homelessness, and hunger, and how the vision for caring for the disadvantaged seems to also be recognized in the City of Duluth's long range planning. The CHUM staff expressed genuine and deep thanks for the financial support and all the volunteering by churches and their members. This "partnership" ministry is truly remarkable! The ministries available through this partnership of 43 churches would be very difficult to duplicate by churches working alone. Check out the website for volunteer opportunities.

There was one announcement you will hear more about soon: A group of CHUM Quilters are making a unique designer-quilt for a queen sized bed to be sold by raffle, 2,000 tickets at \$5.00 each, as a \$10,000 fund raiser for CHUM and to raise awareness of the CHUM ministry.

—Yvonne Anderson, Catherine Anderson, Paul and Carol Anderson, Pat Ekker, Lois Jansen, Marcia Lothner, Janet Ward

Migrant Justice Team News for December 2025/January 2026

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

Update: Our asylum seeker continues to work two jobs and attend English classes. Our FLC team meets regularly with the Gloria Dei team (with whom we have cosponsored our asylum seeker for the past 3.5 years) which gives us all hope and support.

What You Can Do:

*Continue to pray for peace, safety, and justice for all immigrants in our community and country as they face unknown threats, such as being held in detention facilities without due process.

*Read articles about asylum seekers and other migrants.

*Obtain a poster to welcome immigrants to a community business or organization, contact Stephanie at srandby1@gmail.com.

*Attend the pro-immigrant rallies from 12-1 pm on Wednesdays at 60 th Ave. E. and Superior St.

*Learn more about immigrants on a trip to the border in El Paso TX from February 7-13, 2026 (Register by December 5, 2025) with the organization, *Abriendo Fronteras – Opening Borders, led by Vicki Schmidt (veschmidt45@msn.com).

*Watch the documentary, Running To Stand Still - Migrants Search For Hope In The Promised Land on January 25, 2026 from 3-5 pm at Zeitgeist theater, sponsored by ICMJ (Interfaith Committee for Migrant Justice). (Trailer: Watch Running To Stand Still - Educational/Community Screening Use Online | Vimeo On Demand on Vimeo.

*Call or write your legislators about immigration matters (the 5 Calls app can be used).

*Join the Migrant Justice Team at our next meeting (1.12.26 at 6 pm via zoom). 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.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE DECEMBER - JANUARY ISSUE OF *The Mustard Seed* IS JANUARY 16

Please send all submissions to office@fcduluth.org

Dear First Lutheran Church and Members, On behalf of the South Sudanese refugees in our two camps of Olua and Mungala in northern Uganda, I want to express our deepest appreciation for gratitude for you and your accompaniment with us. Your kindness and generosity have impacted our lives in some powerful ways- physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Because of you, we were able to plant an additional 450 kitchen gardens so the most vulnerable among us can eat - orphan, widows, those sick, and those traumatized from the war. Hunger plagues them especially. These households can now provide food for themselves. You have made it possible for us to transform desert land into lush vegetation that now springs from the ground.

You have helped to bring comfort, hope, and joy, when they have felt forgotten by the world. You show that people beyond our borders care about our situation and our future. Your and your church are a powerful reminder that we are part of one human family.

We are truly blessed by your accompaniment. You are helping us rebuild our lives, and I thank you for your belief in us. We thank God for you and your compassion and commitment to reach siblings in Christ across the world. Faith needs a heart. Because you have heart, you have reached out and touched our lives deeply. You remain in our prayers every Sunday when we gather together.

With Deep Gratitude and Love,

Pr. Mark Garang (On behalf of Our Refugee Communities and SSLCD)

News from the El Salvador Team

Scholarship Students This year, FLC members are sponsoring 4 college students this year: Yasmin, who is in her 3rd year of agronomical engineering; Juan, who is in his 2nd year, of majoring in digital business and also studying English; Estrella, who is majoring in graphic design; and Wilbur, who is studying nutrition.

Updates from Los Ranchos: In our last meeting in September, the El Salvador Sister Parish coordinator, Jorge, said that it was Independence Day today (9.15) and that there was a parade with planes flying over. Juan, who is part of 2 sports teams, said that he brought a torch from his university in Chalatenango to another location for the independence celebration.

Discussion: A highlight of our online meeting was having Kerri Sjoblom – a former member of FLC, share highlights of delegations she had been on to San Antonio los Ranchos from 1998 - 2016. She also showed us pictures while the rest of us asked questions or gave comments. She said that her experiences helped her learn about foreign policies and in her later work on human rights. One of the students, Juan, recalled that he knew some of the families she stayed with. Juan also told about his theater experiences in El Salvador and in Europe and said that they did plays for kids.

Other events: Two women (who represent Sister Parish) and are from Guatemala, shared information on the connections and solidarity formed between US and Central American communities on the afternoon of November 23rd at First Lutheran Church.

First Lutheran folks worked on holiday cards on November 23rd between services (Hope for the Holidays through the Global Refuge organization) to send to families around the US who are in detention. The El Salvador and Migrant Justice teams are sponsoring this event.

[The Interfaith Committee for Migrant Justice \(ICMJ\) is sponsoring the showing of the documentary, *Running To Stand Still - Migrants Search For Hope In The Promised Land*. Plans now are to show it \(free\) at the Zeitgeist theater on January 25-2026 from 3-5 pm.](#)

Prayers: Please pray for a successful school year for the students and for good health for all in the community, and for their families around the world.

Annual Report of Stories 2025

Just a reminder that we are collecting pictures and stories throughout the year for the 2025 Annual Report of Stories. If you have any pictures or a few lines of something from this year where God was present, please send them to flcannualstories@flcduluth.org.

FLC is a Chum Tomato Church



The Chum Food Shelf is busier than ever and the need is growing. Our goal at First Lutheran is to collect a minimum of 48 cans of crushed, diced, stewed, or whole tomatoes for the Food Shelf or any other nonperishable foods. Please place them in the collection box near the east sanctuary entrance. Financial donations are also welcome.

Worship and Music

Youth Ringers (for grades 5-12) : practice 2nd & 4th Sundays 9:45 - 10:45 a.m. in the 1st floor music room. We hope to play for the Sunday School program on December 21 at the 11:00 a.m. service. Remaining practices are November 23 and December 14. We will resume on January 11, 2026!

Jubilation Ringers: practice Wednesdays 5:45 - 7:00 p.m. We play for Lessons & Carols (Dec. 14 at 3:00 p.m.) and Christmas Eve (Dec. 24th at 10 p.m. service). No practice on Dec. 31; resume on Jan. 7.

Soli Deo Gloria & Chamber Choirs: practice Wednesdays 7:15 - 8:15 p.m. (full choir) and 8:20 - 9:00 p.m. (chamber choir). We sing for Lessons & Carols (Dec. 14 at 3:00 p.m.) Christmas Eve (5:00 & 10:00 pm. services) and Epiphany (Jan. 4 - 1 service at 10 a.m.). No practice on Dec. 31; resume on Jan. 7.

Instrumentalists needed for Lessons & Carols (Dec. 14 at 3:00 p.m. service) and Christmas Eve services: contact Karen (karen@flcduluth.org) if you play a string, wind or brass instrument and would like to participate.

Young pianists and instrumentalists needed for Sunday School program on Sunday Dec. 21, 11:00 a.m. service. Please contact Karen (karen@flcduluth.org) if you'd like to play during the prelude music.

Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 14th at 3:00 pm "The Refugee King." Centered on Matthew's telling of Jesus' early life, the service highlights the Holy Family's flight into Egypt and the suffering caused by Herod's violence. Through Scripture and song, we remember that Christ himself began life as a refugee and hear the call to honor and care for the refugees and immigrants in our midst today.

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Wednesday, December 17 - 6pm
soup following 7pm

Advent is a season of hope.
Christmas is a season of joy.

And yet this time of year can also be one of the most melancholy times of year.

Memories of former times can loom large. The distance between what is projected out in the world and how we feel can weigh heavy on our souls. We just might not feel like celebrating or being hopeful.

Grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, unemployment, missing loved ones gone— all these losses are magnified. Even those who are not struggling with losses may be overwhelmed by the preparations and expectations around Christmas time. On **Wednesday, December 17th** we make room for these feelings with our Blue Christmas

worship. Come and spend a quiet hour together remembering that you are not alone in your sadness. Come and be reminded that as we in the Northern Hemisphere enter the longest night of the year knowing that the earth then turns back to the sun, we too in entering our losses trust we will be turned back towards Christ's promise of light.

EPIPHANY CELEBRATION

Sunday January 4th - 10am.

Come and travel to the creche with the magi. Participate in the prayer for the nations remembering that the magi came from foreign lands to worship the newborn king.

Come and pick up a star word for your prayer life during this season when we unwrap the gift of Christmas – a savior born for us.

First Lutheran Ukuleles (FLUKES)

Join the First Lutheran Ukuleles (FLUKES) Strum on **December 7 & 21 (tentative) and January 4 & 18 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.

Worship and Music

8:30am Traditional Service

In the sanctuary, 610 KDAL, and YouTube



11:00 am Contemporary Service

In the sanctuary, and YouTube

November 30

1st Sunday of Advent

In time of Herod, We long for God to break in.

December 7

2nd Sunday of Advent

When we're Running out of Hope, God is at work.

Blessing of Communion Kits

December 14

3rd Sunday of Advent

Even in our fear, We are called forward.

Lessons & Carols at 3:00 pm

December 21

4th Sunday of Advent

When you're afraid, give me your hand.

FLC Kids Program at 11 am Service

December 24

Christmas Eve: Wednesday, December 24

Good news is louder than fear.

3:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service

5:00 pm & 10:00 pm Candlelight Service

December 25

Christmas Day: Thursday, December 25

The word became flesh and dwelt among us.

One Service at 10:00 am

December 28

1st Sunday of Christmas

Let fear fuel a fire for justice.

One Service at 10:00 am

January 4

Epiphany Sunday

Prayer for the Healing of the Nations

Fear doesn't stop us.

One Service at 10 am - Come get your Star Word!

January 11

Baptism of Our Lord

Return of two Services 8:30 am & 11 am

January 18

2nd Sunday of Epiphany

Martin Luther King Weekend

January 25

3rd Sunday of Epiphany

Celebration of Winter; blessing of skis.

February 1

Presentation of Our Lord/Candlemas

Norma Hoffbauer turns 100!!!

Come celebrate this momentous milestone

On Sunday, December 14th
between services

Blue Christmas

Wednesday, Dec. 17th, Worship 6pm
Soup Supper 7pm

Poinsettias to adorn the altar

Help beautify the sanctuary with poinsettias for the Advent and Christmas seasons. Please fill out the form on the back of the bulletins or in First News.

Checks (made out to FLC)
\$15 per plant.

Return the form to church office by
Wednesday, December 17

**January 7: Don't forget to wish
Pastor Dianne a Happy Birthday!!**



Advent and Christmastide theme: What do you fear? Insisting on Hope this Advent

We will discover this theme in our daily online devotions, devotional booklet that will be available for \$5.00, FB posts, a colorable take-home Lantern calendar for children, and a daily breath prayers calendar for adults at the You are Loved table.

