



First Lutheran Church
1100 East Superior St
Duluth, MN 55802

February/March 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/Adulthood 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

2025 Foundation Gift Recognition (January 1–December 31, 2025)

Each gift to the First Lutheran Church Foundation—whether given in **honor, in memory, or in celebration** — strengthens the ministries of First Lutheran Church.

Because of your generosity in 2025, the Foundation continues to support FLC ministries that enrich **worship, learning, and service** across our congregation. Your giving helps ensure these ministries remain strong today while building for the future.

To view the 2025 Gift Recognition list, please use the provided QR code or web link. Thank you for your faithful stewardship and for the many thoughtful gifts you have given throughout the year. <https://bit.ly/2025foundationgifts>



What's Happening in Archives?

Frequently, the church office receives requests such as the following: "I am doing genealogy research about my mom's family and am wondering if you keep any records of church marriages from the 1800s. "

These requests are passed to the Archives Committee which searches the records. In reply to this particular request, we were able to locate this woman's ancestors and learned that they had been married at First Lutheran in 1886 however the wife died shortly after giving birth to a baby boy. The baby was taken back to Norway to be raised by grandparents. The husband remarried and he and his new wife raised a family of six children. The baby boy was eventually returned to Duluth and was confirmed at First Lutheran Church. It is events such as this that makes us realize the importance of maintaining church records and gives us a peek into the life of First Lutheran members from over 140 years ago.

Is Your Directory Listing Correct

Please check your listing if you have made any address, phone, or email changes. Also, is your photo up-to-date, or is it from MANY years ago? You can edit your information and update your photo by using the directory drop-down menu "Edit my Info" or emailing Candy Madich at candy.madich@gmail.com.



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.

In preparation for Austen Hartke's presentation in May, we are offering a series of Adult Forums:

A video of the Adult Forum presentation on Sunday, January 11 by Sean Hayes, Executive Director of Trans Northland, is available through the FLC website, under the Welcoming/Affirming Team tab. Sean offered a "Transgender 101" talk to help us better understand Gender Identity and Gender Expression, as well as what it means to be an aspiring ally (someone who seeks to be affirming of the LGBTQIA+community).

On Sunday, March 8, 2026 Dr. Kasturi, Pediatric Endocrinologist at Essentia Health, will be at our Adult Forum to to speak to us about Gender-Affirming Care. This will be an excellent follow-up to Sean's presentation in January, responding to many of the questions that arose about transgender youth. Dr. Kasturi will help us understand who comes seeking gender-affirming care and what the process looks like, including the social, legal and medical transitions. Come with your questions!

Anticipate one more educational opportunity in April when we will review the basic definitions of Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation and more!

Legacy Moment



Did you know?

Tax season is an ideal time to think about how your generosity fits into the year ahead. Recent updates have impacted charitable deductions, but careful planning can still lead to valuable tax benefits and vital support for our mission. Some gifts are especially effective under the new law. *Cash gifts. Deduct up to \$1,000 for cash gifts to qualified charities (not including donor-advised funds) without itemizing.

- Appreciated stock. The deduction for the stock's full value might be limited, but avoiding the capital gains tax can help offset that limit.
- Gifts from your IRA: If you are age 70½ or older, donating directly from your IRA to our organization reduces your taxable income and counts toward your required minimum distribution if one is due.
- Donor-advised funds (DAFs). Make a larger contribution to a DAF, receive an immediate tax deduction (subject to limitations), and recommend grants to charity over time. Consider naming the First Lutheran Church Foundation as the beneficiary to leave a legacy of gratitude that will help sustain future generations in ministry.

To learn more, email foundation@flcduluth.org or visit the Foundation's webpage at <https://bit.ly/FLCFoundation>. Thank you!

THE DEADLINE FOR THE APRIL/MAY ISSUE OF *The Mustard Seed* IS MARCH 16

Please send all submissions to office@flcduluth.org

Stewardship

Sunday February 15 at 9:45-10:45

You are invited to take this time to explore the opportunities to become more active in our church. Have you wondered about helping with meals but haven't made the phone call? Have you read about bearing the cross during the procession but haven't looked up from the hymn to see what that actually means? Want to know more about the foundation or the gardens?

This is a great chance for you to hear more about what piques your interest.

If you would like to participate in this fair to share information about your project or events, contact your councilor at large to get a table.

Kelsey and Conor Ronayne are expecting a baby girl in mid-February. They would love some help with meals once new baby joins brother Kason. This is the meal train link — look for updates in First News and Sunday announcements.



Many volunteers will be needed for us to make this happen with grace and hospitality. Please let Pastor Dianne, the office, or John Sippola know if you are able to help in any of these areas:
Set up: **Thursday/Friday April 16/17**- 2 people still needed;
organizing lunch- 4 people still needed;
hospitality- 7 people needed;
post-conference tear down and reset for Sunday morning-- 5 people needed
Volunteers attend the summit for free

Pledge Update: We received 153 pledges for 2026. We had 21 new pledges and 80 giving units that increased their pledges. We have increased our pledge total from last year by almost \$14,000 for a total of \$632,631. Thank you! It is not too late to pledge, call or email Kelly today. We hope everyone who pledged last year continues to give.

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.

February study - *Praying with the Body of the Earth*

March Study - I AM - Bread, Vine, and Light: Abiding with Us (John 6,8,15)

Ruth Gathering - 1st Monday of the month (**February 2 and March 2**) 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 (**February 10 and March 10**) at 9:30 AM in the First Lutheran Gathering space.

Contact Lois Janson (ljanson54@gmail.com)

Mary & Martha Gathering - 2nd Thursday of the month (**February 12 and March 12**) at 7:00 PM in the First Lutheran Gathering space. Zoom is available upon request.

Contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com)

Women of the ELCA Spring Gathering

The WELCA Spring Gathering is planned for March 21 at Elim Lutheran Church (6101 Cody St). This is one of two events held at different churches around our region that brings women together in worship, fellowship, learning. More details will follow in the bulletin and First News.

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).



Lifelong Learning

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.

Local & Global

News from the El Salvador Team

Scholarship Students: FLC will continue to sponsor 4 college students this year: Yasmin, who is studying agronomical engineering; Juan, who is majoring in digital business and English; Estrella, who is majoring in graphic design; and Wilbur, who is studying nutrition.

Special events: On November 23rd, First Lutheran Church members wrote on 105 cards which were sent via World Refugee Partner Hubs to families at Child and Family Services programs in three cities in the US and to families who are in detention centers in the US. The El Salvador and Migrant Justice teams coordinated this project which will brighten the lives of these families.

The El Salvador Team hosted three women from the Sister Parish organization on the afternoon of November 23rd at FLC. They showed us a video on Sister Parish, talked about the impact of Sister Parish on communities in both the North (US) and South (Guatemala and El Salvador), and changes made recently by the Board. Those attending also shared their connections to other global communities. Those who were there found the information valuable and asked questions of the three women.

Future plans with Los Ranchos are to have a virtual event involving Duluth, Los Ranchos, and a community in Los Ranchos on recent changes in our countries.

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.

RUSSIA

FLC was instrumental in establishing this relationship, especially one of its two major initiatives, i.e., Vision Petrozavodsk, and continues to provide some financial support. Due to the war, the only active connection at this time is with Nadia and Pastor Alex Krongolm from the Petrozavodsk Lutheran Congregation; please see September-October issue and previous issues of the Mustard Seed for context. Updates from a 3-hour meeting of the Advisory Committee with Nadia and Alex in January, 2026: 1) Alex continues his ministry as Sr. Pastor of the congregation and Dean of the Karelian Deanery by regular communication (cell phone, Email, texting, and ZOOM) as well as trips every 6-8 weeks to Petrozavodsk from Finland for working/planning with the congregation, most recently for Christmas; 2) Despite severe the financial hardships, the congregation has maintained basic ministries programs, conducted outreach and discipleship retreats, and offered concerts; 3) Finnish doctors have tentatively identified that Nadia's serious health problem is a result of having Covid-19 in 2021 and a subsequent parasitic infection not diagnosed for over a year, now being treated with some success; 3) finding a job to support his family as a Russian refugee in Finland is almost impossible; Alex has some part-time work with the window company he interned with in a special program when the war broke out – this is not sufficient to support his family but is needed in order to maintain his visa; 4) life in Russia is VERY difficult for the average citizen. If you would like more detailed information, contact Paul Anderson (218-728-5853).

Local & Global

Migrant Justice Team News for February/March 2026

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

Update: Despite threats to safety, our asylum seeker continues to work two jobs and learns English with a tutor. 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 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 (lezieoachs@gmail.com), Dory Sjoblom (dstinkrain@aol.com), or Nancy Rova (nanole@boreal.org) for more information.

When you are afraid, because this world is cruel and harsh,
or because humans are deported and shot without reason,
or because we cannot remember how to talk to each other civilly,
I will be your pack. I will stay by your side. I will run with you
until we reach the sun.

—from the poem “Until We Reach the Sun” by Rev. Sarah Speed | @sanctifiedart

2026 Chum Extravaganza - Mardi Gras

This exciting event will feature delicious food, lively entertainment, and opportunities to connect with others who share a passion for helping our community's most vulnerable. Come and learn first-hand from Chum staff and their stories why your support is so crucial in this time. If you would like to sit with the FLC group Suzanne Rauvola at 218.393.8229 or suzanne@hbrstudios.com for registration details.

Thursday, February 12 from 5:30-8:30 at DECC Ballroom Harborside Ballroom Tickets: \$55 in advance
<https://tinyurl.com/2026Extravaganza>

Chum Extravaganza Silent Auction

Chum is collecting items for high-value themed packages to raise \$12,000 for Chum programs at the February 12 Chum Extravaganza - Mardi Gras event. Ideas include Adventure & Lodging (overnight stays, private boat trips), Food & Culinary, Arts & Culture, Sports & Recreation, Self-Care & Wellness, and Local & Duluth Favorites. If you have ideas, questions, or donations please contact Bud Trnka, Event Coordinator, at btrnka@chumduluth.org or (218) 438-5381.

March is MN Foodshare Drive

FLC is one of sixteen “staple congregations” supplying canned tomato products throughout the year through an ongoing food drive for items the Chum Food Shelf can't keep in stock. And yet the need for hunger relief is still there. Please be generous with canned tomatoes and financial donations all year, but particularly through the month of March. Financial gifts may be directed to the FLC office or directly to Chum. Scott at the Food Shelf can make a dollar stretch a long way.



Isaiah Palm Sunday Pathway On Palm Sunday, March 29th

Local faith communities are planning to bring together 5,000 people of faith to have a parade/march/gathering to remind the world who Jesus was and what it means to follow him. If you are interested in participating, there are several different planning groups: communication, arts, logistics, event planning, etc. Let Mark Papke-Larson, Pastor Andrea or Pastor Dianne know if you are interested in helping.



Evangelism

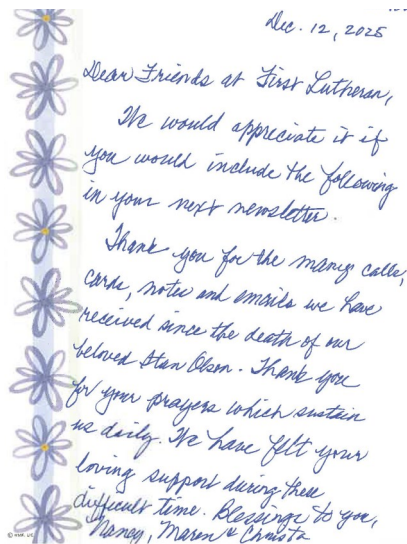
TEEN CLOSET NEWS

**Teen Closet Spring Workday Saturday, March 14
10:00-11:30 AM**

Help bring SPRING to the Teen Closet...
New volunteers are always welcome!
Very Important: The Teen Closet Accepts New and
Lightly-Used Seasonal Clothing For Children and
Teens Only.

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

After the death of their husband and father,
Stan Olson



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 February 22 and March 29

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.

Jubilation Ringers: practice Wednesdays 5:45 - 7:00 p.m. , switch to Thursdays at the same time during Lent.

Soli Deo Gloria & Chamber Choirs: practice Wednesdays 7:15 - 8:15 p.m. (full choir) and 8:20 - 9:00 p.m. (chamber choir). During Lent, rehearsals move their start time to 15 minutes later because of Holden Evening Prayer and meal following.

Instrumentalists needed for Holden Prayer services: contact Karen (karen@flcduluth.org) if you would like to participate. We usually have prelude music, and descants on the liturgy and hymns.

First Lutheran Ukuleles (FLUKES)

Join the First Lutheran Ukuleles (FLUKES) Strum on **February 1 & 15 and March 1 & 15 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.

TOTT Olympic-Style Social Event

Join us on **Friday, February 27** in the Parish Hall for an Olympic Potluck starting at 5:30. Enjoy good food, test your knowledge with Olympic trivia, and connect with other adults. Beverages, plates, and utensils will be provided. TOTT is a social evening for any and all FLC adults whether you are a visitor, a newer member, been attending for years, or anywhere in between. With two services and lots of new faces, connecting on Sunday morning can be left up to chance. RSVP and indicate the category of food you plan to bring at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2026-02Potluck>. Questions contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com or 218.393.8229).

Spread Love, Warmth, and Friendship

The FLC Quilters continue to meet the first Thursday of each month September - June from 9 - noon for fellowship as we assemble & tie quilts for the "Sleep in Heavenly Peace" project. Quilt tops have been created by members of our congregation and are completed at the Thursday morning quilting session. All are invited....come when you can & leave when you must.

TWIN sized MATTRESSES are also needed for "Sleep in Heavenly Peace".....if you would like to purchase one or more **or have questions** please speak to Yvonne Anderson RYA6419@gmail.com for information.



Worship and Music

8:30am Traditional Service

In the sanctuary, 610 KDAL, and YouTube



11:00 am Contemporary Service

In the sanctuary, and YouTube



February 1	4th Sunday after Epiphany Presentation of our Lord/Candlemas
February 8	5th Sunday after Epiphany Healing Service FLC Annual Meeting
February 15	Transfiguration of Our Lord Blessing of quilts—Jazz Sunday
February 18	Ash Wednesday Noon & 7pm
February 22	1st Sunday in Lent The good news is... so good it catches us by surprise
February 25	Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer 6:00pm Worship; 6:40pm meal
March 1	2nd Sunday in Lent The good news is... great love for God and Neighbor
March 4	Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer 6:00pm Worship; 6:40pm meal
March 8	3rd Sunday in Lent The good news is... together, the impossible is possible
March 11	Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer 6:00pm Worship; 6:40pm meal
March 15	4th Sunday in Lent The good news is... protection and care for the vulnerable
March 18	Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer 6:00pm Worship; 6:40pm meal
March 22	5th Sunday in Lent The good news is... rooted in justice, mercy, and faithfulness
March 25	Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer 6:00pm Worship; 6:40pm meal

March 15 - Parents Night
Out 5:30-7:30pm

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 11:00pm