



First Lutheran Church
1100 East Superior St
Duluth, MN 55802

August/September 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 - July 2026

In July the Vision Council welcomed new members Jacob Brooks, Steve Cvek, and Shelly Smart to their first meeting. Expectations were reviewed as well as the plan for the year ahead. Pastor Dianne shared updates from the task force looking into purchasing the chiropractor building as well as an update on finding partners interested in renting space from First Lutheran. The council also voted to authorize the task force to pursue negotiations with Dr. Fischer to secure first right of refusal while he seeks alternate buyers.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Johnson

SUPPORT LIVESTREAM/RADIO MINISTRY

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

THE DEADLINE FOR THE OCTOBER/NOVEMBER
ISSUE OF *The Mustard Seed* IS **SEPTEMBER 16**

Please send all submissions to office@flcduluth.org

Meet the Vision Council !

President:

Beth Ann Johnson

Vice President:

Steve Cvek

Past President:

Diana Ream

Treasurer:

Bob Boman

Secretary:

Rachel Johnson

Councilors-at-large:

Tim Climis – Worship & Music

Jeff Karlgaard – Local & Global

Shelly Smart – Evangelism & Welcome

Jacob Brooks – Stewardship

Miranda Oliphant – Lifelong Learning

Church Office Hours

Friday — Monday
Church Office is Closed

Tuesday - Thursday
9am - 4pm

Bishop's installation at First Lutheran

You are cordially invited to the Rite of Installation For Pastor Taryn K. Montgomery elected to serve as the Bishop of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod **Saturday, September 12th at 2:00pm** Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry of the ELCA will preside and preach. A light reception will follow the service. Childcare will be provided. RSVPs are not required, but helpful for planning. Please use this QR Code.



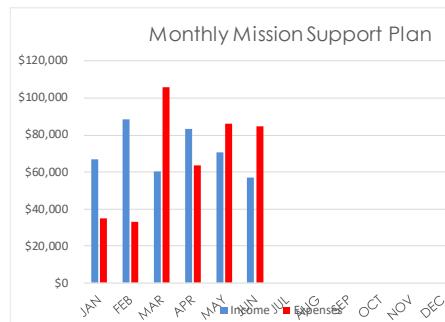
New member lunch – Sunday September 13th at 12:15 in the parish hall

If you are searching for a faith community and are interested in exploring if FLC is for you- Join us for lunch on September 13 following the second service. RSVP to the church Office, Pastor Dianne or Candy Madich.

Kelly's Corner

June offerings were roughly \$6,700 lower than anticipated. This typically happens during the summer months when people are at cabins or traveling, but it would be helpful to not fall too far behind. Easy ways to give while you're away: text to give, automatic giving directly from checking accounts, debit & credit cards. We also offer Venmo and paypal options.

You can also set up bill pay through your bank account and have checks mailed to the church. Please reach out to Kelly at finance@flcduluth.org if you have any questions.



Year to Date Mission Support Plan

Ministry & Mission Offerings	\$373,879.00
Holiday Offerings	\$9,934.00
Other Budgeted Income	\$17,802.00
Rental Income	\$16,800.00
Foundation Grants	\$8,348.00
Total Income	\$426,763.00

Total Expenses **\$430,845.00**

Total Surplus/Deficit **(\$4,082.00)**

Administration

First Lutheran Church Foundation News Third Annual Speaker Series Dialogue in Action

The third annual **Speaker Series Dialogue in Action** sponsored by the First Lutheran Church Foundation was held on Tuesday, May 12. The event commenced at 5 pm with music chosen and performed for this event by Parker McIver Hinnenkamp, Riley Hinnenkamp and Elisas Mokole.

At 5:30, Austin Hartke, founder and former Executive Director of Transmission Collective and author of "Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians" gave a talk in which he described his experience growing up in and out of church. He also addressed what it means to be transgender today; what struggles do trans people face; and how we as friends and family support the gender expansive people in our lives. He concluded the talk with a time of questions and answers. Following his presentation there was a reception during which people had an opportunity to buy Austin's book and talk with him.

We want to thank the Welcoming and Affirming Committee members: Brenda Schrader, Mark and Linnea Papke-Larson, and Ashlee Martz who brought this topic to the Foundation and were very instrumental in its implementation. Special thanks go to Joycelyn Ream Arnold who spearheaded Audience Development and Suzanne Rauvola who oversaw the Logistics Committee.

Stewardship

Springs of Water moments

At our last Financial Stewardship meeting Pastor Dianne brought in an essay for our team to use as a devotion that perfectly fits our stewardship theme this year – "How can we be springs of water to each other and the world?" The essay, An Oasis of Beauty, Hope, and Healing, by Janet O. Hagberg defines an oasis as a place of respite, calm, self-care, peace, safety, and hope. There are many examples of an oasis - a simple smile or hug, a phone call, time with a friend, a comforting smell, music, solitude, nature, being in God's presence. The list goes on.

The author asks two important questions: What and where are your oases? and Would you consider being an oasis for others? Both are important. We need to find our own oases to take care of ourselves so we in turn can provide an oasis for others. I invite you to contemplate these two questions because we are called as stewards to provide springs of water (oases) for ourselves and each other.

This fall we plan to distribute the essay to everyone. Pastor Dianne will preach several sermons on the topic and we will host an adult forum where we will be able to discuss and share our insights about the oases in our lives and how we are an oasis for each other and the world.



"Passing through the dry valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs . . . "
Psalm 84:6

EcoFaith Leadership Retreat

The 2026 Ecofaith Leadership retreat at Camp Onomia is August 30th-September 1st check-in is from 4 to 5pm on Sunday and departure is after lunch on Tuesday.

Cost of full retreat is \$200 per person; partial retreat is \$145 per person Single occupancy is \$30.00 additional

Retreat goals:

- Celebrate where we have come
- Create a mission statement for the Ecofaith Summit
- Choose the theme and season of next year's Summit
- Draft a framework for our inter-synodical collaboration

Registration closes August 15th. To register use this QR Code



Come and be part of this important and meaningful work and discover partners for the journey.

Worship Leaders

We are hoping to expand our pool of worship leaders. Everyone is welcome to read, to serve communion, to be an assisting minister. Are you interested? Sign-up on the board outside the sanctuary or use the QR code.



Lifelong Learning

Friday Bible Study

Starting Friday, September 11 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.

FLC Kids Welcome Sunday & Backpack Blessings

FLC Kids looks forward to welcoming all 2 year olds through 5th graders for an open-house style scavenger hunt on **Sunday, September 13th at 9:45 am!** Backpack blessings will also be held during the services on **September 13th.**

FLC Kids 2026-27 Schedule

FLC Kids Sunday School will formally begin the 2026-2027 school year on **Sunday, September 20th** from **9:45 - 10:45 am**, with classes scheduled for the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month through May. Please reach out to families@flcduluth.org for more information.

CONFIRMATION

High School Juniors who are being confirmed in October on Reformation Sunday will gather **Sunday, September 13th from 6:00pm to 7:30pm** for their last session with Pastor Dianne.

Confirmation for those continuing for their second year, for incoming 9th graders and those who missed last year, we will start up on **Sunday, October 4th.** Look for an email when September comes around

Middle School

Plans for Middle School this fall are in progress, and more information will be available in September. If you are interested in participating or are an adult interested in supporting this ministry, please connect with Pastor Andrea this August.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

Pastor Dianne is planning adult confirmation sessions for the fall. We will start with the history of Jesus' time, the Bible, Lutheran liturgy and the Creeds. Let her know what else you are hoping to revisit from your confirmation and what times might work.

Gathering Circles: Growing in Faith Together

The Gathering Bible Study groups are at the heart of FLCW (First Lutheran Church Women). All who identify as women who are seeking a spiritual connection through monthly Bible study and fellowship are welcome to join any Gathering Group. Groups meet at various times each month and use the Bible study in the *Gather Magazine*. Nearly 50 women participate in this Bible study opportunity over the year. The Fall study centers around *Bold Faith*.

Ruth Gathering - 1st Monday of the month (**September 14**) 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 (**September 8**) at 9:30 AM in the First Lutheran Gathering space. Contact Lois Janson (ljanson54@gmail.com)

Mary & Martha Gathering - 2nd Thursday of the month (**September 9**) 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 * 218.393.8229).



Men's Bible study/discussion small groups

You are invited to join one of our men's Sojourner men's groups, which are starting up in September after a summer break. Enjoy good fellowship and have some fun as we reflect on God's Word and how to carry that into our everyday lives. This is also a great opportunity to get to know each other and deepen our faith understanding. Leadership and discussion facilitation comes from within the group; selection of material is by group consensus, providing opportunity to come in and out as schedules permit; meet for ≈ 90 minutes. Current groups and meeting times:

- Sojourners I: Fridays, meet weekly at 8:00 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)
- For information, contact Paul Anderson (218-728-5853; panderso@d.umn.edu).

Lifelong Learning

Women's Summer Bible Study

We welcome all who identify as women to come together for a Bible study. Our final summer session is **Thursday, August 6 at 6:30** in the education space on the London Rd level. Our study from the *Gather Magazine* is "I am Worthy" by Rev. Sara Olson Smith. You are welcome whether you feel you are a biblical scholar or haven't opened a Bible in quite some time. This is open to all ages as we study and learn from each other. Pass the word . . . bring a friend. For more information contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com * 218.393.8229).

Local & Global

TEEN CLOSET NEWS

**THE TEEN CLOSET IS ACCEPTING
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 lezlieoachs@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
August 30 and September 27**

Thank you FLC for helping make Rhubarb Fest a Success

The 2026 Rhubarb Festival was a success! Chum welcomed 3,400 attendees and raised \$79,000 with \$46,000 of that amount coming from the bake sale. Many hands chopped 5,000 pounds of rhubarb to be turned into good food for our tummies and freezers. Besides pies, jams, relish, and salsa, FLC donated 2 of the 63 raffle baskets. If you attended the festival, you may have seen stickers on the food products that listed the impact of your purchase. The funds from a rhubarb crisp, for instance, provided a person with hygiene supplies for two weeks, and a jar of jelly provided a week's worth of first aid and wound care for someone staying in the shelter. You can imagine, then, the impact of \$79,000. The Rhubarb Fest cannot happen without many volunteers in the weeks prior to the event and at the event. Thank you!

A thank you from Bud Trnka, Chum volunteer and event coordinator

On June 27th, our community came together for the 21st Annual Chum Rhubarb Festival — and once again, it was remarkable. I can say with complete honesty: none of it happens without the people who show up, year after year, to make it happen.



The numbers tell the story too. We brought in **over \$79,000 in gross sales** — up more than 10% over last year and above our 2026 budget goal. Our bake sale alone topped \$46,000, with crisps, pies, and jellies flying off the tables. Our Café served hundreds of brat meals and glasses of lemonade all day, and our raffle raised \$6,500 for the mission. This year, we also went through **5,000 pounds of rhubarb** — safe to say, we are the largest rhubarb festival in Minnesota. Also this year, the City of Duluth honored the festival with an official proclamation!

None of it happens without volunteers. Bakers at thirteen locations turned out crisps, pies, and treats all week. Our Coffee Shop and Café teams kept festivalgoers fed. Our Rhubarb Wrangler kept us stocked. Our Green Team kept the grounds beautiful. Check-In, Entrances, Games, Merchandise, and Entertainment teams welcomed guests and kept the day running smoothly. Transportation got people safely to and from the Chalet. Our Raffle team turned 63 baskets of generosity into real support. And on stage, our entertainment kept the energy high through music, raffle calls, and the Rhubarb Blessing that grounds this whole day in why we do it.

Behind the scenes, staff and community leaders poured in countless hours: coordinating vendors, building schedules, managing sponsor relationships, and handling the details that make the day feel effortless. That's not an accident — it's thousands of hours of care.

To every volunteer who baked, served, wrangled, welcomed, or simply showed up — thank you. To our clergy and congregational partners who host and bless this event — thank you. To our Board and Chum Delegates who champion this work all year — thank you. Duluth shows up for its neighbors, and this year proved it again.

Thank you, from all of us at Chum, and on behalf of the people this work serves.

Save the Date - Thursday August 13 August Community Meeting - Depolarization Within

Duluth Indivisible is partnering with Braver Angels for this evening. Braver Angels is leading the nation's largest cross-partisan, volunteer-led movement to bridge the partisan divide and strengthen our democratic republic.

WHEN: Thursday, August 13

TIME: 6:00 to 8:00 pm

WHERE: First Lutheran Church Parish Hall

During our time together, Braver Angels will provide us ways to look at our own attitudes towards the people with politically different perspectives. It assists us to develop strategies for engaging in politics without demonizing and for constructively intervening in conversations with like-minded peers when those conversations demonize people.

RUSSIA

When Nadia and Pastor Alex Krongolm and their 2 children had to move back to Petrozavodsk in May, they were able to find a flat to rent and Ingrid and Levy finished their school year in Petrozavodsk. He did find temporary work in a factory for 2 weeks, but the salary was very low, less than \$200 total, insufficient to support the family. The Window factory in Finland contacted Alex about coming back to work ~ July 5; they jumped at the opportunity, even though it was certain for only 2 weeks. At this writing, Alex is working up to 13 hours a day to maximize earnings (except Thursday evenings when he conducts a ZOOM Bible study for members of the Petrozavodsk congregation). Good news: the used car purchased with funds contributed to *Vision Petrozavodsk* (including \$5,000 from a FLC Foundation grant) for them to travel to and from Petrozavodsk is still running, with > 250,000 km on the odometer. Not so good news: job uncertainty beyond July 18, no prospects in Petrozavodsk. Despite these very difficult times, they don't complain, trusting in God's provision. Paul Anderson, 218-728-5853; panderso@d.umn.edu.

CREATIVE FAMILY PLANNING BEGINS IN UGANDA

South Sudanese refugee women have been plagued with problems with fertility for many years now. Some women want to expand their families. But because of malnutrition in the settlement where they live, or because of the trauma they experienced in their country before fleeing, pregnancy is often a challenge. At the same time, there are many women who desire to forgo having children in the present in order to work in a cooperative or to study. The women on the whole are at a low literacy level and have not had the knowledge or means with which to plan for their families.

A nursing doctoral student at the University of Ann Arbor devised a method of working with the women on family planning with the use of colored beads. This beading training with the women began in February 2026. It has been received with wide acclaim by them and the two settlements where it was launched.

Between now and December, an additional 600 women will be trained by one another in this creative use of beading.

Mary Kuir, a refugee woman who was trained in February exclaims, "All of the women and our husbands are very excited by this bead system of planning. We have had no control over the size of our families in the past. But now we feel empowered to plan for our futures. God bless you for walking with us."

Family Freedom Center

The Racial Justice Team is partnering with the Family Freedom Center as it seeks to improve Black students' reading and other academic abilities. The students' ages are 6-14. We seek commitments from FLC members in the following ways:

- 1) One hour a week (3:30-4:30) to read 1-on-1 with a student
- 2) Donations of scrubbed laptops or ipads
- 3) Donations of money to purchase books that reflect Black characters and life.

If you would like to help in one of these ways, there are sign-up sheets in the gathering space.

The Family Freedom Center is an organization dedicated to empowering Black community members. It is located at 310 N 1st Ave W (the back side of the Washington School building at 4th St. and Lake Avenue).

For those who wish to meet with students, there will be an orientation at the Family Freedom Center on **Tuesday, September 15 at 3:30.**

Local & Global

FLC is a Chum Tomato Church

The Chum Food Shelf offers support to people in our community who are facing food insecurity. The need is great and financial donations are always welcome. Our goal at First Lutheran is to collect a minimum of 48 cans of crushed, diced, stewed, or whole tomatoes for the Food Shelf. When you do your regular grocery shopping add a can or two to your cart and bring them to church. There is a collection box near the sanctuary entrance.



Evangelism

Join the Fun! Support our LGBTQIAS2 siblings.

Duluth/Superior Pride Weekend Sept. 3rd -Sept 6th

Schedule:

September 5th - Pride Festival at BayFront Park from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm

Stop by the Welcoming and Affirming spiritual communities table.

September 6th- Pride Sunday at First Lutheran

Time: 10:00 am, one service

Guest Preacher, Mikah Meyer from Outside Safe Space

Pride Parade in Superior on Tower Ave at 12:00 pm

Join other welcoming and affirming churches in marching in the parade.or just watch and enjoy.



Sunday Hospitality and Birthdays

If you have a August or September Birthday, sign-up to bring treats in September. We will celebrate both months on September 20th!

Fall into Fair/Ministry of Booths

The information fair is being renamed the Ministry of Booths and will be held on **October 18th** between services. Stay tuned for more details

Prayer Shawl

As we move further into summer and look forward to September, I hope you have been enjoying the summer. We will resume meeting for Shawl Ministry on **Thursday, September 9th** at 1pm in the 3rd floor conference room. We welcome anyone who is interested in knitting or crocheting. Patterns are available for all who wish. If you have any questions, contact Pat Ekker at (218)724-2712, (218)340-5413 or dlhloafer@mac.com.

TOTS - Adult Social Time

Watch weekly *First News* and the bulletin for adult social activities this fall and winter. Recent activities included an evening at Ursa Minor Brewing, a potluck dinner with Olympic trivia at church, and a Nature Walk/Bio Blitz at Bagley Nature Center. If you have any ideas for activities that bring people together in community or for more information contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com * 218.393.8229).

Laundry Love

Laundry Love, a program under Stepping On Up and Chum, provides free laundry services for people who are experiencing homelessness or financial strain. Currently, Laundry Love is looking for donations of: single ride DTA bus passes, dryer sheets – unscented/hypoallergenic preferred, ground coffee, and disposable coffee cups – paper preferred. If you are able to donate any of these goods, please drop them off at the Chum Admin Office (21 W 1st Street Duluth) or contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com | 218.393.8229). Thank you for your help in creating a more compassionate Duluth!

Please remember to send your photos and stories to flcannualstories@flcduluth.org

We hope you have enjoyed looking through the collection of stories and photographs in the 2025 Annual Report. Your submissions for next year's report are so important to this publication! Anything as simple as: If you take a photograph at an event, or have an experience to share, a witnessing of God's work through FLC, send it in. —Thank you!

Worship and Music

AUGUST WORSHIP

8:30 am service In the sanctuary, 610 KDAL, and YouTube
10:00 am Service is in Leif Erikson Park



August 2 **Tenth Sunday after Pentecost**
Pet Blessing
August 9 **Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost**
August 16 **Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost**
August 23 **Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost**
August 30 **Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost**



September Worship

8:30 am service In the sanctuary, 610 KDAL, and YouTube
11:00 am Service is the Peace Garden

September 6 **Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**
Pride Sunday
ONE Service inside at 10am
September 13 **Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**
FLC Kids Open House
Teacher and Backpack Blessing
11am service in the Peace Garden
September 20 **Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**
FLC Kids (Sunday School)
September 27 **Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**
Last Sunday of worship outside in the Peace Garden



This August and September, the second service will worship in the Parish Hall if the weather does not allow us to be outside. Join us at 10am in August and 11am in September to experience this new communal space, and let us know how you like it.

MUSIC ENSEMBLE REHEARSALS BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER

New members are welcome to all of our groups! Please contact Karen Sande (karen@flcduluth.org) for handbells and instrumental groups, and Michael Fuchs (michael@flcduluth.org) for choral groups.

Music Program Potluck Gathering Wednesday Sept. 2, 6:00 p.m. at Karen's house. More details later.

Jubilation Ringers handbell choir Wednesdays beginning Sept 9, 5:45 - 6:45 pm

Youth Ringers handbell choir Karen would love to have this group get going again! Last fall, a few middle schoolers/ high schoolers met on 1st & 3rd Sundays when Sunday school did not meet. With enough youth, we could meet on the 1st & 3rd, 2nd & 4th, or as fits our schedules. Let me know if you're interested!

Soli Deo Gloria vocal choir Wednesdays beginning Sept 9, 7:15 - 8:15 pm

Chamber Choir vocal choir Wednesdays beginning Sept 9, 8:20 - 9:00 pm

Instrumental solos and ensembles solo and ensemble music always welcomed! Karen can assist with choosing music. We have brass groups for festive Sundays, young musicians for Sunday School programs, all-comers orchestra (strings, winds) for Lessons & Carols, Christmas, other times TBD.

Please let Mike and/or Karen know of your interest!

First Lutheran Ukuleles (FLUKES)

Inside all of us is a yearning to play the ukulele. It may be small, but give it a chance. You don't have to travel to Hawaii to play, you can swing by the FLUKES Strum on the **1st and 3rd Sundays of each month from 3:30-4:45 (August 2 & 16 and September 6 & 20)**. Ukuleles and music are available so you can join the strum anytime. 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 everyone. Contact Suzanne Rauvola (suzanne@hbrstudios.com * 218.393.8229) for more information or to get on the email list.