

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America



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Council

President's Report

Dear First Lutheran Church Congregational Members and Staff;

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your council president this past year. What a year it has been! An interim year is typically challenging but this past year has also been very exciting. God has blessed us with knowledge, patience, kindness and grace to get through some hard things and make way for what is to come!

Council members enjoyed a retreat early in the year to begin developing a calendar of what we needed to tackle to prepare us for the calling of a new pastor. We worked on developing a covenant to remind us of our relationships and promises to God, to our Congregation and to each other. We worked on updating our membership roster, spending months tracking down people who had once been associated with our congregation and then updating our membership roles to reflect current relationships. We listened to and met with committees and leaders to learn how our congregation has changed over the years and how our committees, groups, events and processes might need to update or restructure. We updated our constitution with the changes proposed by the committees and leaders and presented them to the congregation for vote. We spent time investigating our finances, discerning what our stewardship challenges are, and sharing our hopes for our shared financial future. Then out of a desire to be good stewards of the longtime generosity of our congregation and friends, we hired a company to help us clean up our finances. Wanting to change our experience of council to be transparent to the whole congregation, made some plans to improve our communication with the Congregation and tasked our ministry areas with doing the same.

Through your generous donations of time and money, we were able to put on a new roof, raise funds through the County Fair Parking Event, renew our relationship with Luther Point, support our hard working staff, welcome new people to worship, comfort our neighbors who grieved loved ones, and sent our wonderful youth on quite the adventure with YouthWorks. We were able to put together a calling committee who worked tirelessly to discern who we are, what God is calling us to be and what we need in a future pastor.

This coming year will be an exciting one as well. 150 years! What an amazing place to be! I am thrilled to hear from members of our congregation; the ideas, the possibilities, the excitement and the positive drive to grow our faith together. I can't wait to learn of our new vision and mission and what things God has in store for us this coming year. Here is to another 150 years!

God's blessings to you all,
Wendy Schmidt

Treasurer's Report

A financial summary for the period January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 is at the end of this annual report.

First Quarter: Pastor Manda asked questions about our finances as the new pastor. We had more accounts than we could explain. Our budget and chart of accounts was not transparent to us.

Second Quarter: Council asked finance for an investigation. We learned about our investments. We tried to learn the history of our funds and accounts and how they came to be the way they are. The council gave copies of our investigation to the congregation at the end of the summer.

Third Quarter: We contracted with Clergy Financial Resources to clean up our 2024 reports to have a better understanding of our finances. This means we now have comprehensive reports for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 (available at the end of this annual report). In response to the stage of our growth, the Finance Committee recommended simplifying our chart of accounts so it better reflects our congregation's current needs and values, with a renewed focus on transparency.

Fourth Quarter: The council led a budget process for the 2026 budget that involved all ministry leaders and based our budget on the ministry we plan to do in the coming year. Ministry leaders met twice to plan and dream before council reviewed the proposed budget, filled in some necessary things like insurance and supplies, and estimated income. This new budget simplifies accounts and shares ministry resources through General Fund.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to you, our congregation, for your generosity this past year. In a year of transition, your faithful and abundant giving stands as a powerful expression of hope and commitment to our shared mission for the future. Your regular and generous giving has made a profound difference and has strengthened our ability to live out our mission and serve our community with love, care, and compassion. May God's blessings be with each of you; thank you for walking faithfully with us.



Respectfully submitted,
Sue Griffin, Treasurer



Membership Report

In this interim year the council undertook the responsibility to update the membership rolls of First Lutheran Church beginning in July. The terms of membership of this congregation are outlined in the congregation's constitution in chapter 8. A form was emailed and mailed to all the people for whom the congregation had an email or postal address asking people to update their contact information and indicate what kind of relationship they would like to have with First Lutheran. The council called every person for whom the congregation had a phone number and who hadn't returned the form. In September, the council ratified the final rolls of the congregation with the results below. This was a massive effort on the part of the council and they are very grateful for the cooperation of everyone who participated. What a blessing it is that we can be a congregation who loves people whenever and however they're able to be involved.

There are 20 baptized members of the congregation (members who are minors; baptized but not confirmed).

There are 184 voting members of the congregation (people who have made an affirmation of their faith, receive communion at least once in the past year, and give a contribution of record at least once in the past year).

There are 47 people who consider themselves members or friends of the congregation (those who participate in the life of the church regardless of baptism, communion, or contribution).

People baptized this year: Logan Christensen and Wesley Lenss.

People who died this year: Barb Kirk, DeDe Swanson, Bronson Erickson, Rocky Bodell, Chuck Swanson and Norma Moses.

People who joined this year: Jeff and Pam Arth.

2025 Council



Pastor's Report

Luke 13:6-9

Then Jesus told this parable: A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the manager of the vineyard, “See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?” The manager replied, “Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.”

I remember it came up in the rotation of readings early in 2025 but was surprised when it resonated deeply with some in the church. Unlike the tree in the parable, First Lutheran has been producing good fruit in years past. I have come to know a long legacy of cooperative praise in worship, faithful service to the community, and generous support of the ministry of the congregation. And I haven't heard anyone who wants this church to be chopped down. But what I heard was that perhaps it was a good time to check under the hood, examine our foundations, or as the parable said, dig around the roots.

To be sure, 2025 has been a year of digging up around the roots and dealing with some manure. The council, scholarship committee, cemetery committee, worship committee, children & youth ministries, personnel ministry, finance ministry, call committee and more – they all took intentional time to ask, “what is at the root of this ministry?” and “how can we grow to bear good fruit in a changed world?” These were not always comfortable conversations. In fact, often they were quite uncomfortable. We unearthed some things that were painful, some things that reminded us of disappointments from the past and in the present, and some grief about how things have unfolded in our lives together.

In Galatians, Paul says that the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. He says that when you see these things in a congregation you know that the Spirit is working through them. By the grace of God working through this process of digging around our roots and tending to the living thing that is this church, the fruits of the Spirit have begun to bloom.

I have no doubt that in the years to come with a new pastor, you all have done the work to make any future growth built on a healthy and solid root system. I do not know for sure what the blooms will look like or what kind of fruit this congregation will become known for, but I have every confidence that the Spirit will flourish in this community of faith and you along with it. Thanks be to God.



In Peace,
Pastor Manda Truchinski

Call Committee Report

The call committee was elected by the congregation in April and began their work in May of 2025. The committee was called to work in two phases:

The Transition Time: During this time, the call committee works with Pr. Manda to:

- Review how the congregation has been shaped and formed
- Discover the current needs of the congregation and the community
- Discover the opportunities in the congregation and the community
- Define a sense of purpose and direction for the congregation
- Listen for the Holy Spirit's direction
- Interpret all these things and write them into the Ministry Site Profile

At all points in this work, the committee is discerning the answer to the questions:

Who are we? Who are our neighbors? Who is God calling us to be?

The Call Process: During this time, the call committee will work with the Bishop's office to:

- Train in the call process
- Meet pastoral candidates and discern a possible call
- Propose a candidate to council for negotiation of compensation
- Propose that candidate to congregation for vote
- Lead the congregation in welcoming the new pastor

Six persons were elected to the call committee in April: Bev Anderson, Riley Carlson, Claressa Gorman, Glen Holmstrom, Tiffany Moulton, and Annette Hanson-Sias. In June, Annette resigned from the committee because she needed to step away from the congregation for a while and Claressa resigned from the committee and the congregation after being hurt by Pastor Manda. The committee continued with their work in studying scripture, practicing spiritual discernment, learning what they needed to know in order to complete the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) and then gathering that information. Beginning in September, the committee sent surveys to all people of First Lutheran, held a history day to reveal the long-term trends of the congregation, did poster surveys and post-Sunday coffee talk, and met with Pr. Grimm to receive data and statistics about the surrounding community. In November, Glen resigned the committee because he did not agree with the process. The remaining members of the committee held small groups to gather more in-depth reflection and interviewed members of the greater community all to gather information for the MSP.

We know some members are feeling frustrated with the length of this process. You may feel scared that our church is declining, you may feel sad that at one point we were a big church and now we are small church, you may feel angry on how people have left and programs have stopped, and most of all you just want the church to feel stable again. Yet we know that God is working in our church right now. We currently see him bringing people together that have never spoken before in our church, new relationships growing, and conversations on how we want to feel and learn with God. We encourage you when you are at church to notice where you see God at work right now. The Holy Spirit is calling us to lean into her work, embrace Christ's work, and let's meet God where he is in our church right now.

As 2026 begins, the remaining members of the committee will take this data and discern with the council what the mission and goals of the congregation are. Then, the committee will write the MSP and share it with the congregation before moving on to the second phase of their work.

149th Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2025

Call to order: President Craig Moulton called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM. 49 members present.

Devotion & Prayer: Led by Pastor Manda Truchinski.

Approval of 2024 148th Annual Meeting Minutes: Motion made to approve the minutes; by Jaime Holmstrom, seconded by Brenda Taylor. Motion carried.

Elections:

- a. Council: 3 year term - Craig Moulton, Wendy Schmidt, and Cindy Hagen.
2 year term - Becky Winberg. 1 year term - Dennis Pedersen.
- b. Audit Committee: 3 year term - Deb Dahlberg
- c. Nominating Committee: 1 year term - Sandy Holmberg, Ilene Holmberg
- d. Gustavus Adolphus Association: 1 year term - Vern Koepp, Cindy Koepp
- e. Synod Assembly Voting Members: 2 open positions to be appointed by Council

No additional nominations from the floor. Motion to accept the ballot as presented; by Carolyn Holmstrom, seconded by Jaime Holmstrom. Motion carried. CONGRATULATIONS to all newly elected!

Receipt of the 148th Annual Meeting Reports: Motion made to receive all the meeting reports as presented; by Marilyn Schoolmeisters, seconded by Sandy Holmberg. Motion carried.

2025 Budget: Reviewed by Craig Moulton, Dan Dahlberg and Pastor Manda Truchinski. Some discussion on the floor as the format for the budget has changed and it does include an estimated net loss of -\$43,007. Motion made to approve the budget as written; by Dan Dahlberg, seconded by Tiffany Moulton. Motion carried but not unanimously by show of hands.

Unfinished Business: None.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

- a. Constitution Update: Reviewed by Wendy Schmidt. Motion made to approve the updates to the Constitution and send it to a ratification vote; by Deb Dahlberg, seconded by Marilyn Schoolmeesters. Motion carried. Notice of ratification vote will be sent out according to the Constitution once a date has been set.
- b. Call Committee: Pastor Manda explained what the Call Committee will be doing and the expectations of people on the Call Committee. A handout was also given with the details. Those wanting to be a part of this Committee should contact Pastor Manda or indicate their interest on the "Count Me In" form. You can also nominate people to be on this committee. Suggestions should also be given to Pastor Manda or written on the "Count Me In" form. This Committee does have to be voted in by the Congregation and that vote will happen at the same time as the Constitution ratification vote. Again, notice for that meeting will be sent out according to the provisions in the Constitution.

Adjournment: Motion made to adjourn the meeting at 10:36am by Sandy Holmberg and seconded by Tiffany Moulton. Motion carried.

Closing Prayer and Pre-potluck blessing: Prayer given by Pastor Manda Truchinski, blessing sung by Congregation.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Church Council Secretary,
Wendy Schmidt, Council Vice President

Worship

Worship & Music Committee

The committee would like to thank everyone that has been involved in our worship services - Altar Guild, ushers, assisting ministers, lectors, readers, slide presenters and musicians. First Lutheran is blessed by the sharing of your time and talents.

Our traditional services were held on the first and third Sundays and contemporary services on the second and fourth Sundays with some variation due to schedule conflicts. There were Lenten and Advent Dinner Church, Ash Wednesday and Holy Week worship, and Christmas Eve services at 4:00 PM and 9:00 PM. We continue to live stream our Sunday services on Praise Band Sundays.

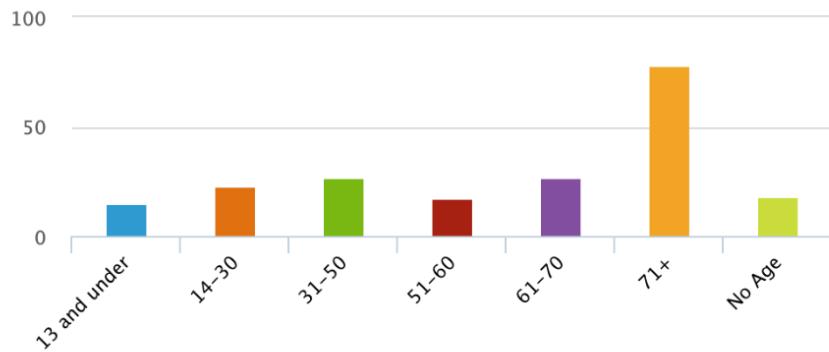
In March, we said goodbye to Malcolm Anderson who was on staff as our organist for 2 years. We are grateful for his employment with us and wished him many blessings in his new chaplain job. Malcolm continues to make himself available to us as a pianist or organist for our funerals. His music group CODA also put on a Christmas Concert for us in December, generously gifting a portion of the donations collected back to our church.



We have been blessed with the gifts of many guest musicians this year as we discern what we want to do for worship music leadership. Some of the guest musicians who have led music in worship this year are: Natalia Pederson, Barbara Brooks, Carolyn Holmstrom, The Neighborz Band, Troy Anderson, Jim Schoolmeesters, Conie Borchardt, David Langemo, Kaia Sand, Dianne Kirchberg, and Paul Damico Carper. With the gifts of these musicians, we've sung to the lead of organ, piano, guitar, and even singing without instrumental accompaniment.

Our Praise Band continued to provide music leadership for half of the Sundays in the year with a well-deserved long break in the month of August. In addition to the band's long-term and faithful members, new students and adults joined for a season or a special occasion. Directed by Jaime Holmstrom, the band not only leads music in worship but also other parts of the liturgy. We have been blessed by their willingness to lead and shape our worship.

Attendance by Age



The bell choir was directed by Wendy Schmidt who held rehearsals on a weekly basis until May and played in worship about 4 times including Easter. The choir was directed by Jaime Holmstrom who held rehearsals on a weekly basis until May and sang in worship about 4 times including Easter. In fall of 2025, the choir started trying something new with a more pop-up schedule that will hopefully allow people with busy lives to join choir sometimes even if it's not every time.

In the summer, we joined with the Tri-United churches on Memorial Day weekend for a shared worship service. It was fun to worship together with all 4 congregations at First Lutheran in Harris and then potluck afterwards. We partnered with Fish Lake Lutheran for 4th of July weekend worship. This worship was outdoors in perfect weather and we shared popsicles afterwards! We had our own outdoor worship service in August in the shade of our trees.

We heard the good news from our own (Malcolm, Gracie, and John), two students from Luther seminary (Nathan & Joyce), our partners Luther Point, and other visiting pastors (Greg) this year in addition to Pastor Manda. In worship we installed committees and leaders of our ministries as we usually do. We also blessed many things including but not limited to quilts, graduates, friends and neighbors, ministries, offerings and staff. This interim year was a year of experimentation. We tried many different kinds of liturgy, music, prayers, and worship practices this year as we experimented with new things and utilized the gifts of the people in our congregation. Some worked and some did not. Either way, we are very proud of our congregation who has tried these things with open hearts and open minds. This year we've

heard from many people that they are learning how the rituals of worship are meaningful in their daily lives. We're learning about what traditions we want to keep, what new things we'd like to try, and mostly, what helps us to worship God well in this congregation.

This year the Worship and Music Committee met with Pastor Manda three times. In our third meeting, we discussed the history and purpose of the committee. In that discussion we discerned that meeting as a group did not serve us well as we did not feel called to plan worship in that way. Therefore, we recommended to the council that the Worship and Music Committee be disbanded in 2026. Each of us who coordinates a portion of Sunday morning worship will continue to work with the pastor and staff to do that coordination.

Marilyn Schoolmeesters
Worship and Music Committee

Worship Coordinators

Assisting Ministers:
Marilyn Schoolmeester

Altar Guild
Shari Schlagel

Lectors:
Sandy Holmberg

Communion Assistants:
Colleen Larson

Ushers:
Gloria Oscarson

Projector & Livestream:
Brenda Taylor



Music Ministry

The Senior Choir has adjusted its schedule slightly. We no longer practice every Wednesday. We practice about 3 weeks prior to each performance. We perform 4 times throughout the year. Once in October, on Christmas Eve, on Palm Sunday, and on Easter. This has been working out, and we have had a couple of new members since the change.

Our Praise Band has been going strong and has had another successful year. We have a couple of new members who have joined the band. Praise Band performs approximately twice a month, and we rehearse prior to each Sunday we sing. We are blessed to have youth and adults in the Praise Band and are grateful for everyone's dedication.

Respectfully submitted,
Jaime Holmstrom



Weddings

There were no weddings held at First Lutheran Church in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Griffin and Shari Schlagel

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is a group of volunteers who assist in the preparation of the worship space for Sunday worship, special services, weddings and funerals. Some of the duties include: care of the altar linens and acolyte robes, dusting the sanctuary, filling the candles, placing and removing flowers, preparing communion and assisting the pastor in any other preparations.

The Altar Guild also accepts the donations for Christmas, Easter and weekly altar flowers. The flowers are ordered and paid for with these donations. Miscellaneous supplies and other items needed by the Altar Guild are also purchased with the donations given.

There were 11 members in the Altar Guild this past year and each member provides their services two months out of the year. The Altar Guild continues to look for additional members who would like to share in the duties of this group.

Respectfully submitted,
Shari Schlagel, Coordinator



Ministries

Graduation Quilts

This is the 21st year that we have made a twin-size quilt for each of the high school graduates from our congregation. Fabrics were selected to match each student's interests and were paid for with the help of Thrivent Action Team funds. Batting and backings were also purchased and donated.

At least 10 volunteers met on April 24th to construct 9 quilts for our graduating seniors. They were presented on Sunday, May 18th, 2025 at our Baccalaureate service to Lilly Currie, Matthew Kempf, Spencer May, Nia Patzoldt, Autumn Stream Brayden Zaske as well as Alayna Burton, Maya Iglesias and Kadence Wallenberg.

Respectfully submitted,
Ilene Olson Holmberg



Cradle Roll

There have been changes in the last year with Cradle Roll. The packets that we have provided to parents of infants and toddlers is no longer available. After prayerfully considering all the possibilities, it has been decided to merge Cradle Roll with the Altar Guild. The booties that Dorothy Siljendahl has lovingly created over many years, will still be displayed with name, birthdate and baptism date. Prayer shawls will continue to be gifted as well as a baptism candle.

As Cradle Roll transitions into the new position in our congregational organization, please keep our newest members in your thoughts and prayers.

Prayerfully Submitted,
Cindy Hagen, Cradle Roll Coordinator



First Communion

This year, some of the children of our congregation prepared to receive communion for the first time. They learned about the story of the last supper and all the things we do when we celebrate Holy Eucharist in the Wednesday night Family Dinner Church of Lent. Then, on Maundy Thursday they received communion for the first time with other members of the congregation. The people whose milestone we celebrated were Gavin Moulton, Castle Baylor, and Chloe Nelson.

Wednesday After School Program

This year the congregation provided after-school care for children in elementary school through the Wednesday After School Program (WASP). This effort was led by our Children & Youth minister Amanda Martin until March. March – May WASP was tended to by April Klar. Amanda and April would provide children with snacks, a craft, a story, and free time to play outside or inside depending on weather. On one occasion April walked with all the kids over to Rusheba to bring crafted gifts and friendship to the residents of the memory care center. On multiple Wednesdays in the year Nia Patzoldt and her friends would come and lead the kids in games. Each Wednesday it was possible for the kids to get to WASP because Troy Heling would drive the church bus and pick them up.

In the fall of 2025, our congregation was no longer able to provide after-school childcare for elementary aged kids due to lack of available volunteers. As a congregation we are extremely grateful to the staff and volunteers who have made it possible in the past. We know this was an appreciated service to the parents of the community.



Confirmation

In 2025 there were 10 youth who signed up for and participated in mid-week catechism classes. Using a curriculum, they discussed Martin Luther and the reformation, the 10 commandments, the Apostle's creed, the Lord's prayer, holy baptism, holy communion, confession, and prayer. In October, 6 of these students affirmed their baptism on Reformation Sunday and became voting members of the congregation. One student opted to be baptized for the first time in January of 2026.



Youth Mission Trip

The 2025 Youth Mission Trip, through Youthworks, was to Indianapolis, Indiana the week of June 15th. The youth did all kinds of fundraisers to make their trip possible: a Palm Sunday pancake breakfast, pizza and flower sales, county fair parking lot sales, and cookie sales.

The trip got off to a rocky start when it was discovered after departure that not all the adult background checks that Youthworks required had been completed. Those checks were required to let the group on site and allow youth from other groups to be under the care and supervision of our adults. Pastor Manda was able to contact an ELCA church in Indianapolis that could host the group for one night while the background checks were done. The group stayed at Messiah Lutheran church their first night in Indianapolis. While there they weeded the church's labyrinth as a thank you for the hospitality. The next day they were able to join the Youthworks group as planned.

When the group arrived at the Indianapolis YouthWorks site they joined other churches from around the Midwest; Calvary Reformed Church - Mattawan, MI, Faith Church - Woodruff, WI, Door Creek - Madison, WI, Messiah Episcopal - St. Paul, MN, and a Lutheran church from a suburb of Des Moines. Our youth split up into groups that would travel around to service sites each day. Annette and Kyle's group were called 500 and were paired with a group from Madison WI. Amanda and Dawn's group were called Hoosiers and were paired with a group from St Paul.

The service sites for the week were Hope Center, The Sharing Place, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center, Holy Family Shelter, and Faith Community Church. They performed a variety of activities at each of these sites to assist the community and its service leaders.

In the evenings and free time the youth were busy with lots of activities. The group went to Eagle Creek Park and got ice cream at The Ice Cream Scoop. They had sing offs with other churches, played cards while storms passed over, ate a community dinner at a local church, and had more ice cream! The youth also had significant and meaningful worship with all the groups that were present. They were especially moved by the foot washing during worship on their last night together, just as Jesus did with his disciples on the night of the last supper.

Thank you to all the adults who made the trip possible for our youth and to all those who donated to financially support them.



Family Dinner Church

During Lent, the people of First Lutheran tested a new way of worship and fellowship. Instead of a separate soup dinner and worship service we combined meal and worship to be Family Dinner Church. On Wednesdays in Lent, we gathered around the dinner table. Before we ate supper, we opened with prayer, lighting the candles, and reading a story from the Bible. Then while we shared a bowl of soup and bread we discussed the story we had just read and how it intersected with our daily lives. After dinner we learned about Holy Communion and then shared holy communion and prayed to end our time together. Family Dinner church had all the elements of Sunday morning worship but with more discussion and eating.

We repeated Family Dinner Church again in December for the season of Advent. Again, we gathered around a meal but this time the candles we lit were the Advent Wreaths we had made before Thanksgiving. Our Advent wreaths and the themes of Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love helped us to dive into the story of the Nativity and Jesus' birth together. We prayed, ate food, discussed our faith, learned about the Nativity story, and shared holy communion with one another.

Women of the ELCA

From January to May and September to December, the Ruth Circle met on the first Thursday of the month in the Fellowship Hall. All women of the church are welcome for Bible Study and fellowship.

Throughout the year, WELCA served several families with funeral luncheons.

June	Served the Annual WELCA Salad Luncheon.
September	A couple of women attended the WELCA Fall Cluster Meeting at First Lutheran in Harris. The speaker was from Options for Women in North Branch. Donations of diapers were donated to them.
December	Served cookies after worship services on Christmas Eve.

Thank you for all the work done this past year and may God's blessing continue to the work of WELCA.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sue Mold, WELCA President



Cemetery Board

2025 was another busy year for our cemetery. We had 14 burials. We had 2 meetings. Some of the gravestones were also washed. Our cemetery currently has 1,735 graves.

Duane Nessel & the Cemetery Board



Personnel Committee

In 2025, the Personnel Committee met more than their usual monthly meetings to undertake updates that had not been done for years. The committee has mostly been working behind the scenes. This year they conducted exit interviews with Amanda and Malcolm when they resigned staff. The committee then updated the employee handbook and updated the processes by which staff are hired, supported, supervised, and evaluated at First Lutheran. This was all presented to the congregation during coffee hour in late September. The committee then reviewed and updated the job descriptions for current employees and began researching and drafting job descriptions for new staff positions in music and children, youth, and family ministry. The committee also kept up with changing employment laws and needs including Earned Sick and Safe Time and Paid Family Medical Leave. The personnel committee oversaw a change in payroll systems.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Flaten, Craig Moulton, Kristin Papke

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawl Ministry meets every other month on the 2nd Thursday of the month. There are eight very active members, though it is open for anyone who is interested.

The ministry crochet and knit shawls, wraps and lap robes for anyone needing the love and comfort of God and this congregation. They are displayed in the Narthex for anyone to take to give to anyone in need.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will now fall under the umbrella of WELCA starting in 2026. It will continue to meet and provide as before in its new place in the structure of the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Hagen

Decorating Committee

The purpose of the Decorating Committee is to improve the appearance of our worship space, Narthex and the entrance to our church. This includes changes according to what would be appropriate for each season. In the past few years, we have purchased artificial birch trees and updated other items as needed.

Our appreciation extends to our men who have helped in so many ways including their help assembling the tree in the Narthex, garland, wreaths; the mums from Bruce and Ilene Holmberg; the seasonal decorated pots donated by Pat Knutson, and the monetary donations from our congregation.

The committee consists of 6 members, though we welcome anyone interested to contact Sue Griffin, Kathy McDonald or Marilyn Schoolmeesters for more updates.

Respectfully,
Sue Griffin, Kathy McDonald, Marilyn Schoolmeesters



Bible Study

In 2025 Bible Study met one week each month; the second Wednesday of the month at 1:00pm. Each time we met we read and studied the scriptures chosen for the coming Sunday morning. There is an average of 4 people who attend Bible Study each time.

Property Committee Report



We are so grateful for all our volunteers! A special thank you to our lawn mowing crew for their dedication. If anyone is interested in helping the crew, please contact Mike Griffin.

Volunteers were very busy on our 2025 clean-up day trimming back the flower beds, shrubs, trees and washing windows. The roof was stripped; new valleys, water and ice and then new shingles were put on. A church tree that fell on a neighbor's property was removed by a tree service. During the winter months, the Property Committee keeps the walkways shoveled and salted as this cost is not included in the snow removal of the parking lot.

If you see any issues that need to be addressed, please contact Mike Griffin or the church office.

Again, thank you to everyone who has helped throughout the year. Together, we continue to accomplish many tasks.

Mike Griffin
Property Committee Chair

Quilters

The quilters (8-12 women) met regularly on Wednesday mornings to enjoy a time for finishing quilts and coffee fellowship. All quilt tops are sewn at home by volunteers.

This year 150 quilts were completed and donated. The beneficiaries were Pine City fire family (3), WELCA Convention (1), Eagles Nest (6), Global Health Ministries (43), The Estates at Rush City (18) and Lutheran World Relief (79). Lutheran World relief also received receiving blankets (45), baby caps (14) and sewing kits (18) which includes fabric and thread used for sewing classes.



Again this year, the quilters from the Community of Grace Lutheran Church in White Bear Lake contributed quilt tops which we layered, finished and included with our donations. We wish to thank all who have donated fabric and supplies for our quilt ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Bev Anderson & Janice Munt

Kitowo Committee

A small group within our congregation continues to nurture the relationship we have with our companion congregation in Kitowo Tanzania. We were fortunate to have Pastor Joyce Ngandango join us in worship on October 19th. She is from Tanzania and is currently in her second year of study at Luther Seminary. She provided the sermon during worship and shared information about her faith journey during coffee fellowship after the service.



You may recall that toward the end of 2024 we received information that the Kitowo congregation needed help to put a metal roof on their new church. Due to generous donations within our congregation we were able to contribute \$6,000 toward their roof and we have received pictures of their church with the completed roof!

We pledged \$2,500 toward scholarships during 2025 and we were able to fulfill that pledge. Jerry Mollberg donated a bird carving for a raffle during the fall, the raffle raised \$500, and that money will be sent to Kitowo to support scholarships; allowing youth to continue their education beyond sixth grade level.

Respectfully submitted,
Vern Koepp

Christmas Caring Tree



This program provides Christmas gifts for children ages infant to 18 years. These families need help in providing gifts for their children. Applications are sent out through the Rush City School District. The applications provide the children's Christmas gift wishes. Tags are filled out and placed on a Christmas Tree in the Rush City Public Library. Community residents and friends take a tag and purchase (gifts) for the child. The unwrapped (gifts) are returned to the library. A group of volunteers from First Lutheran pick up the gifts and distribute them to the families. Donations to this program are used to purchase gifts for tags not taken. This year 93 children received gifts through this community program.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy McDonald
Marilyn Schoolmeesters
Shari Schlagel, Coordinators

Rush City Schools Backpack Program

This program was started through the North Branch Family Pathways Food Shelf and C.E. Jacobson Elementary School in November 2022. Rush City First Lutheran Church was contacted to help coordinate this community program. The purpose of this program is to help students whose families need extra help with food for their children. The food for this program is ordered through Family Pathways and delivered by Second Harvest. This program was started with a one-time grant from Family Pathways to purchase food. The Rush City Food Backpack Program at this time is funded through donations from organizations and individuals. All donations dollar for dollar, will directly benefit the Rush City Backpack account at Family Pathways. Once a week a group of volunteer's pack bags of food that are delivered to the school and placed in the student's backpack by the teacher when the students are out of the classroom. The food is given out at the end of the week so there are items available for the students on the weekend. This past year 50-60 bags have been packed each week that school is in session. 140 bags were packed for 3 weeks and given out during Summer School this past year.

Respectfully submitted,
Shari Schlagel, Coordinator

Scholarship Committee

The 2024 scholarship committee met with members, Dan Larson, Kristen Papke, Dennis Pedersen and Shari Schlagel present.

Applications for two - \$300 scholarships were sent out to all eligible high school seniors in our congregation. We received 0 applicants. It was decided to carry over the eligible funds not used for 2024 and try to increase the amounts of the awards for 2025 in the spring of 2026.

Respectfully submitted
Dan Larson

Our Online Presence

FELC continues to have an online presence as a means of outreach to those who don't know about this congregation and resource for those who are a part of its ongoing ministries. We livestream our praise band worship services on YouTube.

Check out FELC in these online spaces:

rushcityfirstlutheran.org

On Facebook: First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rush City

[youtube.com/@rushcityfirstlutheran8536](https://www.youtube.com/@rushcityfirstlutheran8536)



The Greater Church

St. Paul Area Synod Assembly

The St. Paul Area Synod Assembly was held May 16th – 19th, 2025 at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi, MN. The theme was “Called to Invite”. We explored what it means to be a witness to life in Christ. Our featured speakers were Dr. Lois Malcolm and Rev. Migel Comez-Acosta.

The Assembly approved three memorials to send on for consideration at the churchwide level and two resolutions for our synod. For more information in detail go to St. Paul Area Synod, Events, Synod Assembly. (I need to add – the music was amazing and inspiring!)

Respectfully submitted
Muriel Bungert



Our Ministry Partners



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP YEHIEL CURRY

Dear friends in Christ,

As Lutherans, we are set free to love our neighbors and seek justice. In Colossians 2, we read: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (6-7).

I am abounding in thankfulness for you, church. You are an integral part of this mission as we envision a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. The ministries of congregations including yours, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together today and every day so more people may know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love. From providing food to people experiencing hunger, to helping train the next generation of leaders that will lead this church, your support is at work here at home and around the world.

Your generosity to each of the three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has made it possible for us to do this work

together. Your financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices are so valued.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to continue to walk in Christ, remembering you are rooted and established in faith, and free to love and serve your neighbors. Thank you, church, for the ways you connect with and support our siblings across the ELCA and in our communities.

In Christ,



The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

—Colossians 2:6-7



ANNUAL 2025 REPORT

of the saint paul area synod

But go, tell his disciples and Peter that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you. Mark 16:7

At Easter, when the three women come to the empty tomb in Mark's Gospel, an angel gives them a surprising assignment. They are instructed to tell the others that the Risen Christ has gone before them into Galilee. I continue to ponder what the message of a God "who goes before us" means for us as a synod in this first quarter of the 21st century. Like those first disciples, we have been entrusted with a message of surprising, good news to share with others in our day.

We have found a variety of ways to join the congregations and baptized members of this synod in doing just that, being especially mindful of our mission statement and care values:

**As followers of Jesus, we are called to accompany faith communities
and equip leaders for God's mission in the world.**

Our core values are – authenticity, connection, compassion, and curiosity.

Through The Planting Hope Campaign in 2025, we were able to address the seminary debt load of 16 pastors and deacons, fully retiring the debt of six and greatly reducing the debt of 10 others. We invested an additional \$100,000 in congregational vitality, complementing the funding already in our budget. We hosted 11 summer interns at a variety of work sites, offering young adults an opportunity to explore their own vocation while being immersed in a ministry site. We offered financial assistance to enable 16 youth and young adults to travel with their congregations to our global mission partners in Guatemala and Tanzania. Thank you for contributing to this common work.

As a synod, we equip leaders through training events for lay leaders, a theological conference and gatherings of the ministerium for rostered ministers, and through Zoom events on timely topics like Minnesota's new Paid Family & Medical Leave and the ELCA's Social Statement on Faith and Civic Life. This included six day-long workshops, sponsored by the Congregational Vitality team and two cohorts of pastors and lay leaders, working on increased skills for stewardship and congregational renewal. The synod also received an ELCA grant for worship renewal and hosted a day-long seminar on "Worship in an Inviting Church" in April. We know that we are all stronger when we work together on matters that impact all 106 congregations and mission starts in the synod. Not every congregation was in transition in 2025, but the synod staff worked with 17 call processes for pastors and deacons and supplied interim pastors during those times of transition. We also supported the discernment and candidacy process for 22 individuals. We received two of those candidates back into our synod for their first call. Ordained in 2025 were Pastor Katie Hendrikson (called to Abiding Savior, Mounds View) and Pastor Lauren Mildahl (called to St. Mark in Circle Pines).

As always, I am particularly grateful for those who serve on synod committees and on Synod Council. They are the key guarantors of continuity and stability in our work. In 2025 we welcomed Matt Smith as our new synod treasurer and sent 21 voting members to the Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix.

Throughout these months, God continued to bless us financially with \$1.675 million received as mission support from congregations in 2025 toward our goal of \$1.95 million by the end of January. Your contributions funded the work noted above and a portion was shared with the Churchwide Organization for global mission, ecumenical and inter-religious endeavors, advocacy, and preparation of a new generation of leaders. In addition, many of you contributed generously to the work of our global companions through our Bega Kwa Bega partnership with the Iringa Diocese in Tanzania and our work with the Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala (ILAG).

Finally, as I begin my last months as the bishop of this synod and help prepare for a new bishop to lead you starting in August 2026, I am keenly aware of the many relationships that make us a healthy, growing and thriving synod. Many of you see those signs of new life in your own congregation and neighborhood. Like me, I know you also appreciate the work of the whole synod staff, who serve alongside me. They include Rachel Holsten, Mary Smith, David Roinas, Kirsten Levorson, Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer (through July), Justin Grimm, Krista Lind, Leslie Ortiz, Dawn Alitz (beginning September), Joe Lees (beginning September), and Terri Endres (beginning December).

Like the very first disciples, God continues to call us to go forward into the places where God awaits our coming. This includes all the messy places of mistrust and division in our world today. It is a privilege for me – as it is for each of you – to bear the good news of Christ to our many neighbors, who feel especially discouraged and beat down these days, and it is an added joy to share that news alongside all the ministry that happens in and through our lives.

Yours in God's service,



Bishop Patricia Lull



Finance

Financial Secretary Report

A few statistics:

People make contributions to First Lutheran Church by various methods: Designated Envelopes, Online, Loose Checks and Loose Cash.

As I see contributions coming in, I notice that the givers of First Lutheran Church are very generous and I am very grateful for that. We couldn't continue to survive if this did not happen. Again, thank you!!

Counters

Gather contributions given weekly in church and any other contributions given during the week. They sort the contributions into categories such as envelopes, cash and checks identified with name and loose cash. The amounts in the categories are totaled and that information is recorded on the counting sheet and the deposit record. That information is also filled onto the bank deposit slip and the monies are deposited into our Unity Bank Accounts. The envelopes, counting sheet, deposit record and any other paperwork is given to the Financial Secretary.

Financial Secretary

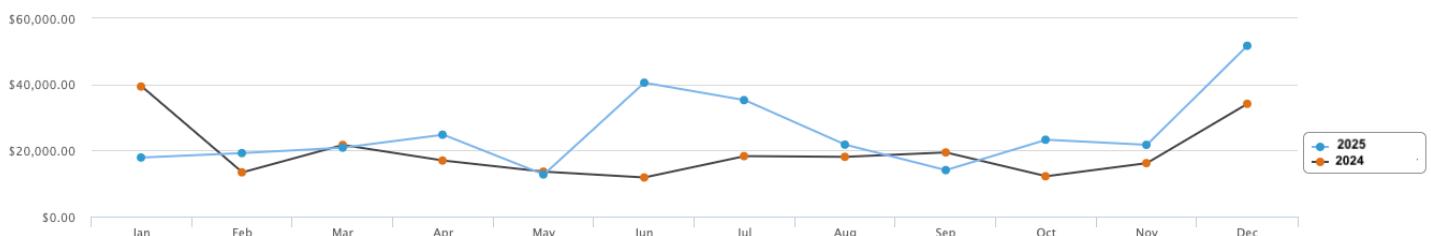
Ensures all monies are counted weekly and the information is recorded on the counting sheet and deposit record. Each week all of this information is then entered into each individual's giving account in Realm. In January, the individual giving statements are generated and distributed. The financial secretary also orders the giving envelope books; assigns giving numbers and distributes the books. Giving envelopes from two years ago are shredded and counting sheets, deposits records and gift lists are filed and saved for 7 years. Other help is provided regarding statements, envelopes, online giving and anything else as needed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Muriel Bungert
Financial Secretary

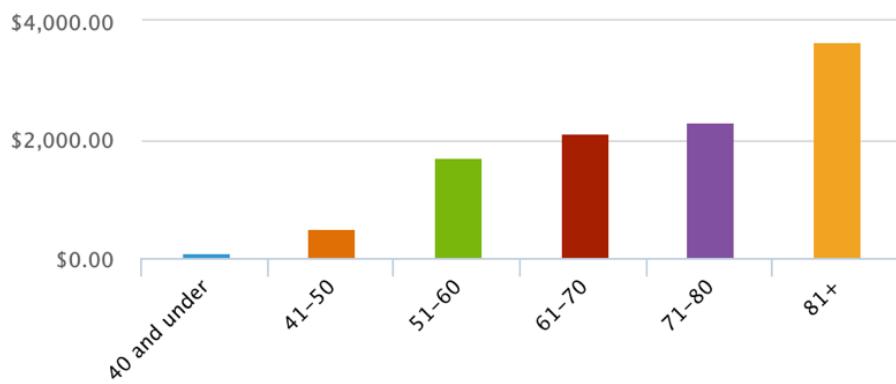


Giving Data for 2025

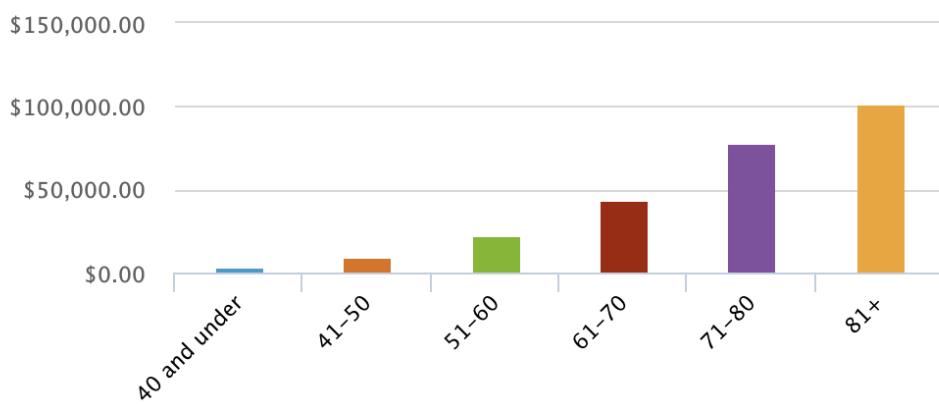
2025 giving by month compared to 2024 giving by month



Average Gift by Age



Total Giving by Age



Payment Type Summary

Check	\$230,581.51
Cash	\$8,021.00
Credit	\$1,650.00
Non-cash Gift	\$40.00
Loose Cash	\$23,918.33
Other Online	\$100.00
Realm Online	\$39,330.54
Total	\$303,641.38

2025 Financial Report

In the pages that follow you'll find the year-end financial report of our congregation. You will notice that this report also includes a column of our 2024 financial dealings. We are able to include this in our year-end report as a result of the work we contracted with Clergy Financial Resources to clean up our chart of accounts and help us make our financial records more transparent and easier to understand.

The Profit and Loss report will show you where donations were attributed when they came into our organization and where expenses were deducted when money went out of our organization. There are many duplicates between General Fund and Other Income. The Balance sheet will show you the current standing of all the assets and liabilities of our congregation at the end of the fiscal year.

Profit and Loss
First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City
January-December,2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL	
	JAN 1 - DEC 31 2025	JAN 1 - DEC 31 2024 (PY)
Income		
INC. - GEN FUND	\$0.00	
Dividends - General	21.59	25.16
Envelopes-General	227,640.78	169,536.14
Facility Use	1,400.00	2,790.00
Holiday Offering	6,440.00	5,850.00
Initial Offering	88.00	103.00
Loose Offering	1,992.41	6,418.66
Unrealized Gain (Loss) General (deleted)	0.00	0.00
Total for INC. - GEN FUND	\$237,582.78	\$184,722.96
Unapplied Cash Payment Income		-204.93
Total for Income	\$237,582.78	\$184,518.03
Gross Profit	\$237,582.78	\$184,518.03
Expenses		
BENEVOLENCE		
Synod	3,750.00	1,875.00
Total for BENEVOLENCE	\$3,750.00	\$1,875.00
CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMMING		
Children	170.53	
Other	174.94	
Youth	-5,052.00	
Total for CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMMING	-\$4,706.53	
EDUCATION		
Cradle Roll	33.99	209.38
Presentation Bibles	190.21	
Sunday School	169.64	546.68
Adult/Christian Education		159.11
Confirmation/1st Comm		582.08
VBS		557.37
Total for EDUCATION	\$393.84	\$2,054.62
OFFICE		
Accountant	11,133.94	5,212.18
Accounting Supp	1,293.62	820.54
Bank / ACH fees	30.00	
Computer Mtc & Supplies	1,619.04	3,315.88
Copy Mtc & Supplies	3,793.09	2,873.79

Profit and Loss
First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City
January-December,2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL	
	JAN 1 - DEC 31 2025	JAN 1 - DEC 31 2024 (PY)
SALARIES	\$0.00	
Accounts Payable Clerk	2,347.47	3,129.96
Children & Family Ministry	1,182.06	6,405.96
Choir Director	2,169.64	1,533.96
Contemporary Service	4,266.00	5,688.00
Contractors	420.00	
Custodian	13,410.00	10,568.36
Facility Use Custodial	300.00	2,530.00
Office Assistant	16,647.16	16,887.00
Organists	6,272.00	5,838.00
Payroll Tax	2,269.37	4,395.72
Youth Ministry Coordinator	1,780.67	9,650.04
Total for SALARIES	\$51,064.37	\$66,627.00
SOCIAL MINISTRY		
Kitowo-Companion Congregation	2,733.82	
Mileage Reimbursement	1,731.50	71.69
Vehicle Gas/Maintenance	306.00	-75.00
Advertising		225.00
Member Outreach		968.03
Total for SOCIAL MINISTRY	\$4,771.32	\$1,189.72
STEWARDSHIP		
Stewardship/Supplies	979.82	442.26
Total for STEWARDSHIP	\$979.82	\$442.26
WORSHIP & MUSIC		
Bulletins	515.22	509.74
Communion/Altar Supply	1,402.82	1,500.10
Copyright Permission Fees	1,296.00	290.00
Instrument & Equip. Mtc.	58.52	185.50
Music	150.00	
Total for WORSHIP & MUSIC	\$3,422.56	\$2,485.34
Reconciliation Discrepancies		0.00
Unapplied Cash Bill Payment Expense		-991.64
Total for Expenses	\$231,071.54	\$195,974.78
Net Operating Income	\$6,511.24	-\$11,456.75
PROPERTY		
Vehicle Gas & Maintenance	455.06	173.81
Water-Sewer	536.53	558.26
Total for PROPERTY	\$27,522.04	\$25,573.57

Profit and Loss
First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City
January-December,2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL	
	JAN 1 - DEC 31 2025	JAN 1 - DEC 31 2024 (PY)
Other Income		
Building Fund Donor Restsricted (Inc)		
Building Fund Expense		
Bldg Capital Expenses	0.00	0.00
Building & Grounds Maintenance	0.00	0.00
Total for Building Fund Expense	\$0.00	\$0.00
Building Fund Income		
Dividends - Building	448.46	525.90
Fund Envelopes	37,141.80	62,251.03
Other Donations	54.40	0.00
Unrealized Gain (Loss) Building (deleted)	0.00	0.00
Realized Gain (Loss)	13,757.19	
Total for Building Fund Income	\$37,644.66	\$76,534.12
Total for Building Fund Donor Restsricted (Inc)	\$37,644.66	\$76,534.12
General & Memorial Funds		
General Fund Donor Restricted (inc)		
Altar Guild (inc) Bell Choir (inc) Coffee	4,245.84	3,752.61
Fellowship Fund (inc) Decorating	40.00	863.34
Committee (inc) Endowment	411.46	410.00
Earnings/Stewardship (inc) Kitovo Roof	68.30	58.00
(inc) Kitovo Scholarship (inc) Misc	0.00	3,391.52
Special Donations (inc) Music Fund -	1,000.00	4,565.00
General (inc) Thrivent Choice Fund (inc)	2,798.90	3,825.25
Van Purchase Fund (General) (inc)	3,415.00	2,929.97
Youth Mission Trip (inc) Youth	107.50	69.00
Programming (inc) EJRJ Campership	1,580.06	2,236.78
Fund (inc) Food Shelf (inc) Missions	64.50	
Committee - General (inc) VBS Fund	11,310.84	
(inc)	203.50	
	540.00	
	0.00	
	195.00	
	0.00	
	121.00	
Total for General Fund Donor Restricted (inc)	\$25,245.90	\$22,957.47

Profit and Loss
First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City
 January-December,2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL	
	JAN 1 - DEC 31 2025	JAN 1 - DEC 31 2024 (PY)
Memorial		
Dividends - Memorial	3,598.27	4,638.34
Frances Sherman Scholarship	300.09	300.22
Memorial Fund (Inc)	770.00	780.00
Naadi Scholarship	307.25	307.39
Unrealized Gain (Loss) Memorial (deleted)	0.00	0.00
Memorial Fund Donor Restricted		
Backpack Program		0.00
Library/Education		0.00
Total for MemorialFundDonorRestricted		\$0.00
Total for Memorial	\$4,975.61	\$6,025.95
Total for General & Memorial Funds	\$30,221.51	\$28,983.42
Total for Other Income	\$67,866.17	\$105,517.54
Other Expenses		
Building Fund Donor Restricted (Exp)		
Building Fund Expense		
Bldg Capital Expenses	5,195.00	
Building & Grounds Maintenance	122,094.00	24,497.36
Total for Building Fund Expense	\$127,289.00	\$24,497.36
Total for Building Fund Donor Restricted (Exp)	\$127,289.00	\$24,497.36
General Fund Donor Restricted (Exp)		
Altar Guild (exp)	2,295.43	3,518.60
Coffee Fellowship Fund (exp)	163.40	336.49
Decorating Committee (exp)	94.17	404.46
EJRJ Campership (exp)	100.00	215.00
Endowment Earnings / Stewardship (exp)	425.00	2,975.00
Kitowo Roof (exp)	3,565.00	2,000.00
Thrivent Choice Fund (exp)	1,492.72	1,967.78
Youth Missions Trip (exp)	12,503.60	
Youth Programming (exp)	1,200.00	956.34
Bell Choir (exp)		539.36
Food Shelf (exp)		195.00
Kittowo Scholarship (exp)		1,174.00
Misc Special Donations (exp)		1,431.01
Missions Committee (exp)		500.00
Music Fund (exp)		21.08
Total for GeneralFundDonorRestricted(Exp)	\$21,839.32	\$16,234.12

Profit and Loss
First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City
January-December,2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL	
	JAN 1 - DEC 31 2025	JAN 1 - DEC 31 2024 (PY)
Memorial Fund Donor Restricted (Exp)		
Memorial Fund Expense		\$702.79
Naadi Scholarship (exp)	400.00	
Total for Memorial Fund Expense	\$400.00	\$702.79
Total for Memorial Fund Donor Restricted (Exp)	\$400.00	\$702.79
Total for Other Expenses	\$149,528.32	\$41,434.27
Net Other Income	-\$81,662.15	\$64,083.27
Net Income	-\$75,150.91	\$52,626.52

Balance Sheet Comparison
First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City

As of December 31, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL	
	AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2025	AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2024 (PY)
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
Checking - Building	131,346.49	26,089.24
Checking - General Fund	\$36,910.41	\$34,039.51
Altar Guild	4,779.02	2,828.61
Bell Choir	363.98	323.98
Coffee Fellowship Fund	495.24	247.18
Decorating Committee	457.14	483.01
EJRJ Campership	-315.00	-215.00
Endowment Earnings / Stewardship	0.00	425.00
Kittwo Roof	0.00	2,565.00
Kittwo Scholarship	6,000.15	3,201.25
Misc Special Donations	4,958.96	1,543.96
Missions Committee	-7,550.16	-7,550.16
Music Fund	107.50	
Thrivent Choice Fund	661.84	
Van Purchase Fund	151.50	574.50
VBS Fund	121.00	87.00
Youth Mission Trip	-1,192.76	121.00
Youth Programming	-1,412.84	
	\$44,535.98	-416.34
Total for Checking - General Fund		\$38,258.50
Checking - Memorial	\$0.00	
EJRJ Seminary/Campership	0.00	0.00
Restricted Memorials	1,605.64	1,605.64
Scholarships	1,335.73	1,128.39
Unrestricted Memorials	6,249.17	5,479.17
Total for Checking - Memorial	\$9,190.54	\$8,213.20
General Fund Investments		
Thrivent - Council Designated	706.04	673.46
Total for General Fund Investments	\$706.04	\$673.46
Investments - Building		
Thrivent - Donor Restricted	14,688.67	14,010.99

Balance Sheet Comparison
First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City

As of December 31, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL	
	AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2025	AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2024 (PY)
Total for Investments - Building	\$14,688.67	\$14,010.99
Investments - Memorial		
EJR Johnson Cert of Deposit	0.00	0.00
Thrivent-EJRJ (48622.87 Restr)	66,252.98	61,447.60
Thrivent - EJRJ Scholarship	12,150.61	11,590.00
Thrivent - Endow (\$27369 Desig)	33,280.41	30,866.55
Thrivent - Reserve Unrestricted	11,243.66	10,428.17
UnityUndesignated CD	0.00	0.00
Total for Investments - Memorial	\$122,927.66	\$114,332.32
Other Investment - Building Funds	0.00	199,013.05
Petty Cash	22.28	22.28
Total for Bank Accounts	\$323,417.66	\$400,613.04
Accounts Receivable		
*Accounts Receivable	0.00	0.00
Total for Accounts Receivable	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Current Assets		
ANF Frances Sherman Scholarship	10,146.86	
ANF Glenda Naadi Scholarship	10,387.12	
Due To/From		
General Fund	0.00	0.00
Memorial Fund	0.00	0.00
Total for Due To/From	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total for Other Current Assets	\$20,533.98	\$0.00
Total for Current Assets	\$343,951.64	\$400,613.04
Fixed Assets		
Church Building	2,315,586.58	2,315,586.58
Equipment	129,934.75	129,934.75
Landand LandImprovements	317,933.07	317,933.07
Total for Fixed Assets	\$2,763,454.40	\$2,763,454.40
Other Assets		
Total for Assets	\$3,107,406.04	\$3,164,067.44

Balance Sheet Comparison
First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rush City

As of December 31, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL	
	AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2025	AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2024 (PY)
Liabilities and Equity		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable		
Accounts Payable	0.00	0.00
Total for Accounts Payable	\$0.00	\$0.00
Credit Cards		
Other Current Liabilities		
Current Portion of LT Debt	0.00	0.00
Kitowo	0.00	0.00
Payroll Liabilities	\$0.00	\$0.00
Federal Payable	0.00	1,089.88
MN WH Payable	0.00	250.00
Total for Payroll Liabilities	\$0.00	\$1,339.88
Portico Payable	224.72	726.59
Total for Other Current Liabilities	\$224.72	\$2,066.47
Total for Current Liabilities	\$224.72	\$2,066.47
Long-term Liabilities		
Less Current Portion of LT Debt	0.00	0.00
Mortgage Payable Building	0.00	0.00
Paycheck Protection Program	0.00	0.00
Unity Bank Van Loan	0.00	0.00
Total for Long-term Liabilities	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total for Liabilities	\$224.72	\$2,066.47
Equity		
Unrestricted Net Assets	2,867,061.30	2,739,808.50
Net Income	-75,150.91	52,626.52
Current Year Capital Improve	0.00	0.00
Opening Bal Equity	0.00	0.00
Restricted Net Assets		
Building	146,035.16	239,113.28
General Fund	8,331.61	4,892.45
Memorial	152,652.18	122,545.52
Total for Restricted Net Assets	\$307,018.95	\$366,551.25
Unrealized Gain (Loss)	8,251.98	3,014.70
Total for Equity	\$3,107,181.32	\$3,162,000.97
Total for Liabilities and Equity	\$3,107,406.04	\$3,164,067.44

Cemetery Financial Report

Date	Check Number	Written to	Amount	Deposit	Balance
Balance 2024					\$2,481.10
01/06/2025	Ogren Fund 2024			\$367.78	\$2,848.88
01/28/2025	Auto	ECE	\$56.39		\$2,792.49
01/29/2025	Thrivent			\$10,000.00	\$12,792.49
01/31/2025	Interest	Balance		\$0.88	\$12,793.37
02/19/2025		Larry Armit/Lot		\$700.00	\$13,493.37
02/28/2025	Auto	ECE	\$56.85		\$13,436.52
02/28/2025	Interest	Balance		\$2.40	\$13,438.92
03/25/2025	1097	Olson Equipment	\$813.39		\$12,625.53
03/28/2025	Auto	ECE	\$55.33		\$12,570.20
03/31/2025	Interest	Balance		\$2.73	\$12,572.93
04/28/2025	Auto	ECE	\$55.33		\$12,517.60
04/30/2025	Interest	Balance		\$2.48	\$12,520.08
05/09/2025	1098	Rise Tree Service	\$3,800.00		\$8,720.08
5/27/2025		Mike Twite/Lot		\$550.00	\$9,270.08
05/28/2025	Auto	ECE	\$54.04		\$9,216.04
05/28/2024	1099	Mission Creek	\$200.00		\$9,016.04
05/28/2025	Interest	Dec-24		\$0.62	\$9,016.66
05/31/2025	Interest	Balance		\$2.24	\$9,018.90
06/07/2025	1100	Federated Co-Op	\$82.14		\$8,936.76
06/29/2025	Auto	ECE	\$53.54		\$8,883.22
06/30/2025	Interest	Balance		\$1.78	\$8,885.00
06/30/2025	1101	Gary Wendorf	\$1,193.21		\$7,691.79
06/15/2025	1102	Federated Co-Op	\$74.84		\$7,616.95
07/03/2025		Lot/B. Moulton		\$1,400.00	\$9,016.95
07/28/2025	auto	ECE	\$52.91		\$8,964.04
07/31/2025	Interest	Balance		\$1.85	\$8,965.89
08/13/2025	1103	Federated Co-Op	\$61.59		\$8,904.30
08/28/2025	Auto	ECE	\$53.29		\$8,851.01
08/31/2025	Interest	Balance		\$1.82	\$8,852.83
09/09/2025		Ogren/Thrivent		\$385.89	\$9,238.72
09/10/2025	1104	Marlin Homberg/Lot Ref.	\$150.00		\$9,088.72
09/15/2025	1105	Federated Co-Op	\$55.07		\$9,033.65
09/26/2025		Echo K. Yerke/Lot		\$360.00	\$9,393.65
09/28/2025	Auto	ECE	\$54.04		\$9,339.61
09/30/2025	Interest	Balance		\$1.79	\$9,341.40
10/10/2025	1106	Federated Co-Op	\$21.58		\$9,319.82
10/28/2025	Auto	ECE	\$54.82		\$9,263.82
10/24/2025	1107	Gary Wendorf	\$1,780.00		\$7,485.00
10/31/2025	Interest	Balance		\$1.84	\$7,486.84
11/28/2025	Auto	ECE	\$55.95		\$7,430.89
11/30/2025	Interest	Balance		\$1.48	\$7,432.37
12/8/2025	1108	Bill Cort	\$165.54		\$7,266.83
12/28/2025	Auto	ECE	\$56.47		\$7,210.36
12/31/2025	Interest	Balance		\$1.51	\$7,211.87

WELCA Financial Report

Prepared by: Sue Griffin, WELCA Treasurer

First Lutheran WELCA

2025 Financial Report

December 31, 2025

Fund Balance January 1, 2025	\$5,984.71
Receipts/Offerings	
Offerings/Circles	\$191.00
Funerals/Anniversaries	\$1,367.70
Quilters	\$743.00
Salad Luncheon	\$1,381.0
Rada Knives	<u>\$133.00</u>
Total Receipts	\$3,815.70
Disbursements	
Kitchen Supplies	\$373.83
Quilters	\$759.70
Funerals	\$417.70
St. Paul Area Synod	\$200.00
1517 Media (Augsburg Fortress / Christ in Our Home)	\$800.00
Checks	\$19.14
Call Committee Donation	\$500.00
Kitowo Roof Donation	\$1,000.00
Kitowo Scholarship	\$500.00
Youth Mission Trip	\$500.00
Van Gas	\$300.00
Nadine Omans (Cluster Meeting)	\$45.0
Durable Goods	<u>\$78.60</u>
Total Disbursements	\$5,493.97
Quilters Total	\$2,797.37
General Fund WELCA - Checking Balance 12/31/25	\$1,509.07
Checking Balance 12/31/2025	\$4,306.44

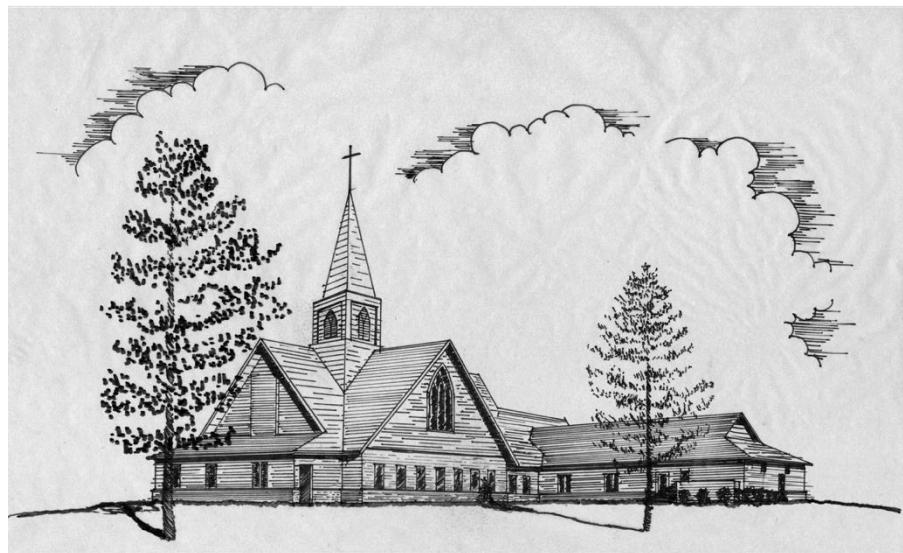
150th Annual Congregation Meeting

2026 Annual Meeting Agenda

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

January 25, 2026

1. Call to order
2. Opening Prayer
3. Approval of 2025 149th Annual Meeting Minutes
4. Receipt of the 150th Annual Meeting Reports
5. Ratify Constitution Update
6. Elections
 - a. Council
 - b. Cemetery Board Chair
 - c. Synod Assembly Voting Members
7. Plans for 150th Anniversary
 - a. How shall we celebrate?
 - b. Who will help to plan and organize?
 - c. A discussion and call for volunteers.
8. 2026 Budget
 - a. Presentation of Proposed 2026 budget
 - b. Motion to approve the 2026 budget
9. Closing Prayer
10. Adjournment



Proposed First Lutheran Budget for 2026

Summary

	<u>2026 Budget</u>	Notes
Income		
Total Income	\$210,160.00	
Expenses		
Benevolence	\$9,707.75	
Worship	\$7,661.00	
Administration	\$7,428.00	
Property	\$29,670.00	
Faith Formation	\$11,800.00	
Personnel	\$176,580.00	
Total Expenses	\$242,846.75	
Restricted Funds		
Building Fund		
Income	\$0.00	
Expense	\$0.00	
Cemetery Fund		
Income		
Expense		
Endowment Fund		
Income		
Expense		
Memorial Fund		
Income		
Expense		
Scholarship Fund		
Income	\$540.00	
Expense	\$600.00	
WELCA Fund		
Income	\$10,500.00	
Expense	\$8,270.00	

<u>2026 Budget</u>		<u>Notes</u>
Income		
Offerings & Donations	\$200,000.00	This is envelopes, loose offering, loose checks, online giving, and any other giving that is not specified for a certain purpose
Interest / Dividends	\$460.00	this is any income earned from investments (ours or other people's)
Facility Use	\$2,000.00	This is any income for a facility rental or use
Flowers	\$2,500.00	this is money people pay for flowers and goes into our general fund
Participation fees	\$1,300.00	This is fees that individuals may pay for participating in events such as retreats, camp, etc.
Special Offering	\$3,900.00	This is an estimate of what we will receive across all special offerings in the year.
Total Income	\$210,160.00	

Benevolence

Kitowo

Companion Congregation Support	\$2,638.00	This amount covers scholarships for students in Kitowo parish & exchange rate differences.
Administrative Fees	\$319.75	This covers the admin fees of Bega Kwa Bega who administers the scholarships
Total Kitowo	\$2,957.75	

St. Paul Area Synod

Mission Support	\$5,500.00	
Synod Assembly	\$250.00	This pays for registration & one meal for pastor + 2 voting members
Conference Assembly	\$50.00	This pays registration fee for 2 people
Assembly offering	\$100.00	When offering is gathered in worship at synod assembly this could be the congregation's contribution. This will be offset with a special offering
Total SPAS	\$5,900.00	

Luther Point

Backpack Ministry	\$100.00	This supports our local camp of which we are a member congregation. This expense will be offset by a special offering.
Discretionary Assistance	\$250.00	This is a donation to support our local food pantry run by Family Pathways. This is offset by a special offering and is above and beyond our packing of lunch bags.

Total Benevolence \$9,707.75

	<u>2026 Budget</u>	Notes
Worship & Music		
Music		
Memorial Day & Labor Day w/ Tri-United	\$150.00	If we worship with the TriUnited again this would cover 50% of the cost of musicians.
4th of July with Fish Lake	\$150.00	This covers 50% of the cost of musicians for shared worship services
CCLI licensing	\$489.00	this is our music license for much of the praise band sundays
One License	\$300.00	this is our music license for most music
choir music	\$150.00	this is new music purchases for the choir in 2026
drum tuning	\$200.00	this is to get the drum set tuned up
cords for praise band monitor	\$200.00	these are electrical/sound chords that are needing to be replaced
	\$250.00	AV monitors for musicians need to be repolaced in 2026
Organ & Piano tuning		This pays for our organ and piano tuning throughout the year
Bells music	\$150.00	This pays for new music for the handbell choir
Total Music	\$1,889.00	
Communion Supply		
Altar flowers	\$3,300.00	this includes sunday flowers as well as Easter, Christmas, and Confirmation
Communion wine	\$190.00	this is all the wine we use for holy communion
Communion wafers & cups	\$365.00	This is the communion wafers and the small plastic cups we use for holy communion
Total Communion Supply	\$3,855.00	
Worship Supplies		
Sundays & Seasons	\$450.00	This covers the subscription to all our lectionary and bulletin content as well as our liturgy license from Augsburg Fortress
Lectern book	\$45.00	This covers the cost of a new lecturn book to match our NRSVUE Bible. We will need to purchase a new book in 2027 and 2028 as well unless we prefer to print the readings each week.
Ashes & Palms	\$90.00	ashes for ash wednesday and palms for palm sunday are purchased with these funds
candle oil	\$1,150.00	this is oil to refill the candles in the sanctuary
Guild supplies	\$150.00	This covers the cost of grape juice and cleaning supplies ordered from St. Patrick's Guild
Church year calendars	\$14.00	These are planning calendars for office, altar guild, & music
Miscellaneous	\$18.00	This is for fidget toys in the pew that may make worship more accessible for some
Total Worship Supplies	\$1,917.00	
Total Worship & Music	\$7,661.00	A suggestion was made about members wearing nametags each Sunday. Also mentioned that we should have greeters at the door to welcome people in - possibly assign a family each week? Need a volunteer to organize and contact families.

2026 Budget		Notes
Office		
Finance		
Vanco Fees	\$800.00	these are the fees for accepting and processing online donations & transfers
Safe Deposit Box	\$50.00	This pays for our safe deposit box at Unity
Giving Envelopes	\$600.00	This is the purchase of giving envelopes for the whole year
Deposit Slips	\$0.00	Deposit slips are purchased approximately every other year
Audit	\$5,000.00	This is an estimated cost of an external audit. The first needed will be January 2027
Quickbooks	\$330.00	This is the cost of our accounting and bookkeeping software.
Total Finance	\$6,780.00	
Supplies		
Software	\$758.00	This is our subscription fees for our database, website, and all necessary software we use (Realm & Microsoft)
Telephone & Internet	\$1,620.00	Annual fees for telephone and internet service through Midco
Office Supplies	\$250.00	What we spend on miscellaneous office supplies in one year
Postage	\$900.00	This is the cost of postage needed for a couple of all-church mailings plus regular business mailings each year.
Copier	\$3,300.00	Pays for our copier lease, ink, and copies
Paper	\$600.00	This is the cost of all paper we use for printing
Total Supplies	\$7,428.00	
Total Office	\$14,208.00	

	2026 Budget	Notes
Property		
Electric	\$6,000.00	all electricity for the property
Heat/Gas	\$2,500.00	all heating for the property
Water & Sewer	\$600.00	all water and sewer for the property
		this is testing & maintenance of our smoke
Smoke detector	\$600.00	detection system
		this includes cleaning supplies, small
		replacement parts, and miscellaneous
Janitor supply	\$5,000.00	needs
Property Insurance	\$10,000.00	this is insurance for the property & building
		this pays for gas, regular maintenance, and
Van	\$500.00	registration
Van Insurance	\$845.00	this is insurance for the church van
		this is gas for the people who mow the
Lawn mower gas	\$255.00	church lawn
		this is maintenance costs for the lawn
Mower Maintenance	\$150.00	mowers
Weed spraying	\$350.00	this is weed maintenance on the property
Waste Management	\$650.00	dumpster & recycling
		the floor mats in the narthex to catch dirt
Cintas	\$1,500.00	and water
Pest Control	\$720.00	annual spring pest control
		This is to replace the burnt out bulbs in the
scissor lift	\$500.00	sanctuary
AED check	\$0.00	
Fire Extinguisher	\$100.00	
Total Property	\$29,670.00	

	<i>2026 Budget</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Faith Formation		
Winter Tubing	\$400.00	a winter tubing trip for families
Family Dinner Church	\$1,000.00	This covers the potential costs for Family Dinner Church curriculum, liturgy, and materials.
Summer Camp	\$1,500.00	summer camp trip - maybe 2 different weeks for 2 age groups
Bible Study Retreat	\$1,000.00	young adult & adult retreat
Leadership	\$1,000.00	This projects costs for a council & call committee visioning retreat and any educational or supportive materials to develop leaders in our congregation. Includes possible curriculum/book for bible study, curriculum for adult education, and possible dues for leadership development through "Small Church Ministry"
Adult Faith Formation	\$500.00	Starting a fellowship & bible study group for moms in the congregation and community. Costs are for potential learning and hospitality materials.
Fearless Moms	\$100.00	Quilts made by members for graduating seniors. The budget covers cost of materials (fabric, batting, etc) and will be offset by a special offering.
Graduation Quilts	\$200.00	
Men's Group	\$100.00	
Anniversary Celebratio	\$6,000.00	
Total Faith Formation	\$11,800.00	

	<i>2026 Budget</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Personnel		
Employees		
Pastor		
Salary	\$53,500.00	Pastor's take-home pay
Housing Allowance	\$30,000.00	Pastor's take-home compensation that is not subject to income tax
Social Security Offset	\$6,387.00	Pastor's income to help offset their self-employment tax burden
Administrator	\$26,696.00	Administrator's take home salary based on 20hours per week
Praise Band & Choir director	\$6,000.00	Praise Band & choir directors take home salary based on 120 hours per year
Total Employees	\$122,583.00	
Contractors		
guest musicians	\$8,500.00	This is how we pay for the musicians when the praise band doesn't play
pulpit supply	\$1,680.00	guest preachers for when pastor is on vacation or at continuing education
Housekeeping	\$13,404.00	This is what we pay H&H Cleaning for our indoor cleaning and custodial services.
Snow removal	\$1,200.00	This is what we pay M&M for our outdoor snow removal and salting the parking lot & driveways.
Ministry Tech Solutions	\$100.00	Ministry Tech Solutions to help us with IT
Bookkeeping	\$7,200.00	This is what we pay Clergy Financial Resources (CFR) for bookeeping services.
Payroll Administration	\$972.00	This is what we pay CFR for payroll services.
Total Contractors	\$33,056.00	
Personnel Support		
Continuing Education	\$500.00	This is the amount we will reimburse our pastor for their continuing education expenses.
Portico Benefits	\$20,441.00	This is the amount we will pay to Portico to provide health care & retirement benefits for our pastor.
Background Checks	\$500.00	This is the amount we will pay to run background checks on our staff and volunteers.
Total Support	\$20,941.00	
Total Personnel	\$176,580.00	

Restricted Funds		2026 Budget	Notes
Cemetery			
Income			Income will be from donations to the cemetery or sales of plots in 2026.
Expenses			Expenses of the maintenance & upkeep of the grounds
Scholarships			
Income			
	Frances Sherman ANF Interest	\$220.00	Annual dividends from Frances Sherman's life insurance policy
	Glenda Naadi ANF Interest	\$220.00	Annual dividends from Glenda Naadi's life insurance policy
	EJRJ scholarship interest		Annual dividends from Elmer Johnson's memorial gift invested in Thrivent
	Special Offering	\$100.00	A special offering will be collected in January for the High School scholarships.
Total Income		\$540.00	this income is included in the summary in "interest/dividends"
Expenses			
	HS Senior Scholarships	\$600.00	
Total Expenses		\$600.00	
WELCA			
Income			
	Quilters	\$2,000.00	This income is from the participants of the quilting group.
	Funerals	\$1,500.00	WELCA receives a donation from the family of the deceased each time they host a funeral luncheon.
	Salad Luncheon	\$1,000.00	WELCA will hold a salad luncheon in June with a suggested offering.
	Decorating Committee Income	\$1,000.00	There will be a special offering for the Decorating Committee in September.
	Prayer Shawl Ministry		
	Coffee Hour	\$5,000.00	All coffee hour income will come to (be designated for) WELCA beginning in 2026.
Total Income		\$10,500.00	
Expenses			
Quilters			
	batting	\$1,000.00	This pays for batting for quilts
	sewing machine repair	\$120.00	This is the cost of occasional repair of sewing machines
	miscellaneous	\$100.00	these are miscellaneous expenses in the making of quilts
	fabric backing	\$2,900.00	this is the fabric to make one side of each quilt produced

	Kitchen Supplies	\$500.00	This is the amount of money WELCA will spend on kitchen supplies.
	Synod Women's org.	\$100.00	This is the offering our WELCA group makes to the national organization.
	Funerals	\$600.00	This is the expense of food for funeral luncheons throughout the year.
	Devotionals, etc	\$450.00	WELCA supplies the 'Christ in our Home' devotionals on a quarterly basis.
	Year End disbursements	\$2,000.00	At the end of the year, WELCA will gift charitable organizations with a year-end donation.
	Decorating Committee		The decorating committee provides seasonal decor for our sanctuary, narthex, fellowship hall, and front entryway.
	Christmas tree lights	\$100.00	These are lights for the Christmas tree that stays up Advent - Christmas.
	Birch trees	\$150.00	These are the decorative birch trees that adorn our spaces.
	wreath	\$100.00	These are the wreaths that hang in the sanctuary and change with the seasons
	miscellaneous	\$150.00	this pays for miscellaneous expenses as needed
	Total Expenses	\$8,270.00	

Building Fund

Income		There is no planned giving to this fund in 2026. Income will come from any earned interest of invested funds.
Expense		

Memorial Fund

Income		All donations given in memory of someone will go into this fund.
Expenses		Special projects <u>may</u> be paid for out of this fund should the need arise. Expenses under \$5,000 will be at council's discretion and expenses over 5,000 will be by congregation vote.

Endowment Fund

Income	\$100.00	A special offering is planned to benefit the endowment fund in 2026. Additionally, there is anticipated income from invested funds.
Expenses		There are no anticipated disbursements of the fund in 2026

Through your generosity, God is at work.

If you are interested in joining us in this shared ministry you can make a regular offering to the congregation on your own timeline and according to your own ability. This is what a church is: a community where we each give according to our ability and then use what we have to serve according to the world's needs.

You can set up a recurring electronic debit on our website at rushcityfirstlutheran.org/donate. You may also contact our finance secretary, Muriel Bungert (call the church office) and she can set you up with an annual supply of offering envelopes. If you do most things through your phone you can also text RUSHFLC to 73256.



First Evangelical
Lutheran Church
Rush City, MN