First Lutheran Council Meeting – May 17th, 2026   DRAFT

The meeting was called to order by President Joy at 11:06 am. Council members present included: President Joy Patten, Vice-President Kevin Sullivan, Secretary Ardyce Alveshere, Lorri Honstein, Sue Jorgenson, Robin Schwartz, Cara Transtrom, Steve Williams. Council member absent: Donna Slais. Staff present: Minister Matthew Rolfson, Benjamin Bradley. Guests present: Glen Beard, Douglas Rolfson.

Glen gave a status update on several maintenance projects. Currently, the roof above the choir area in the Sanctuary needs repairs. Glen has made arrangements with Tecta Roofing Co. to repair that area in the near future. This project is expected to cost between $5,000-10,000. Another project is making the communion kneelers higher. Glen asked that we try the 4 foot kneeler as it is higher to see if that is the height we would like the other kneelers to be. He will get the materials to do any adjustments needed. Glen reported that the balcony project of adding tempered glass to the front of the balcony area for safety measures will cost approximately $17,000-18,000. Steve will check to see if we need a building permit for the balcony project. Sue made a motion to approve the roofing project; Kevin seconded. Motion carried. Ardyce made a motion to approve the balcony project; Steve seconded. Motion carried.

Douglas Rolfson, a financial planner with Edward Jones, talked about a good opportunity that is available for any non-profit institution. Their company is able to open a brokerage account for any non-profit where anyone would be able to contribute to through their long-term assets, such as mutual funds, certificates of deposit, stocks, minerals, land, etc. This gives people an opportunity to give to the church in other ways than donating cash. Any gift given in this manner would also be tax-free for the giving individual. The church could then hold these assets in this brokerage account until funds are needed at which time item(s) could be sold.

Joy continued the meeting with a word of prayer.

Adoption of Agenda: Joy made a couple of additions to the agenda – 1)Drum set, 2)May 31st church service to Unfinished Business and 1)Blessings in Bloom to New Business. Sue made a motion to adopt the amended agenda; Ardyce seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of the May 17th, 2026 minutes: Robin made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Lorri seconded. Motion carried.

STAFF REPORTS:

Minister Matthew gave a word of gratitude to Cara, Ben & Ardyce for helping in the office after Lindsay tendered her resignation. In the months of April & May Matthew had three funerals (Vonne Tarnavsky, Grace Allex and Dorothy Bergem), one baptism (Milana Thalia Johnson), one blessing (Runa Elizabeth Gretel Noll) and Affirmation of Baptism, confirming three students (Eldon Beard, Marrah Langford and Wyatt Ledahl-Berger). Matthew is currently working on some protocols grounded in our denomination for different sacraments and coordination. Joy will meet with Fulkerson Funeral Home to discuss these protocols and ensure that all parties understand and honor the established boundaries. Matthew is currently providing Holy Communion to a few homebound individuals and ask that anyone who knows of others who would like to receive Communion in their homes to please let him know. Other items in Matthew's report were that he has finished his 2nd modular for Seminary and has 7 more to go, hoping to be completed in 2028. He also brought the good news that the Ministerial Association is starting to form again.

The Council has been working for some time to review and refine job descriptions to improve efficiency and clarify responsibilities. As part of this process, Joy met with Lindsay to do her annual work evaluation and discuss changes to her position. Following that conversation, Lindsay decided to resign from her role as Administrative Assistant. Cara Transtrom has since then been hired as the Church Coordinator (previously the administrative assistant position) and began her duties on May 6th. Cara encourages all council members and congregants to reach out and share with her any unmet needs and other ideas they may have to help effectively serve the congregants of First Lutheran Church.

Benjamin Bradley has recently been hired to lead the implementation of a new audio system designed to provide greater reliability, consistency, and seamless integration among all components. Serving as Audio/Visual Technology Coordinator Ben will oversee the project's development and implementation while also managing the ongoing technical responsibilities associated with the church's audio and visual systems. Three companies have been contacted to submit a bid to update our current sound system. Tricorne Audio (company that currently handles our sound system equipment) has provided a bid and Caves in Dickinson will be doing a physical evaluation of our current system and will be submitting their bid in the near future. RPM Soundesign (Randy McGinnity & Mike Ninneman) in Watford City has done their walkthrough evaluation and are in the process of submitting their bid. Ben has inventoried 70% of the church's technology and has been working on improving operating procedures for FLC's technology (sound systems, printer & computer usage, internet protocols, social media, digital sign and more) which will be presented for ratification in future council meetings.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

FINANCE: Reviewed all financial statements and reports for the month of April. Cara submitted two forms to the Trust Fund Committee for reimbursement from the Rothie Trust Fund for the following expenses: 1)$400 for Benjamin Bradley and Cara Transtrom to attend Lay Ministry Training through the SW Minnesota Synod and 2)$1,750 for seven people to attend the WND Synod Gathering at the end of the month. Kevin presented the forms that will be given to the Trust Committee for reimbursement from the Iverson Trust for the remaining balance to pay for the church pews and for April capital improvements: 1) Pew balance = $3,738.02; 2) Triangle Electric, Inc. (light fixtures, electric heater & thermostat) - $5,073.60, Alex Moe (organ repair work) - $1,425.00 and RTC (cameras, doorbell camera, new printer jacks) - $3,491.00 bringing the total for April improvements to $9,989.60. If any more donations come in for the pew fund, that money will be reserved for any further expenses such as additional chairs, changes made to the kneelers, etc. Robin made a motion to approve the Financial Report; Sue seconded. Motion carried. Robin made a motion to approve the Reimbursement Form for the Trust Committee; Lorri seconded. Motion carried. Steve made a motion that Cara Transtrom be added to and Lindsay Thall be removed from all First Lutheran Church accounts at First International Bank; Robin seconded. Motion carried. The Finance Committee suggested that FLC update compensation for pulpit supply and substitute pianist/organist to $200 per service. It is requested that anyone fulfilling these obligations fill out a form and submit to the office to receive payment. FLC has been receiving bank statements from First International Bank for the Ministerial Association and upon looking into it, Matthew discovered that the Association currently has an account with a balance of $1,500. Matthew will reach out to Rob Favorite as he is the person listed on the account so this can be updated. Next Finance Committee meeting will be June 8th at 1:00 pm.

PROPERTY: It has been decided that there is to be no extra planters and pots outside. Other items discussed at the Property Committee meeting were: The new Communion kneelers need some modifications done and leftover fabric from the pews is in the basement storeroom; New copier for the office has been installed; Ari Johnson has written a formal letter to the elevator company and no further payments will be made to them until they inspect the elevator in the church and provide documentation of inspection; The fire extinguishers will be checked and tagged and Nova will come to inspect the fire alarm and suppression system; The solenoid valve has been replaced on the automatic dishwasher; Will be having a custodial checklist and whiteboard available to mark off tasks completed; Anne Holman has tuned pianos in the Sanctuary and conference room and will be asked to tune the Sunday School piano in the basement; Will be meeting with Jesse Lawrence to discuss his recommendations for ADA access for altar area. Cara reported that she has been working on getting more information put together regarding the basement and ways to make it more functional. Cara also reported that there has been a pause put on the installation of a through window speaker in the secretary's office as it is not currently needed. Ben reported that he has hooked up the camera at the outside entry by the offices so that a person can see and talk to anyone outside and then can buzz them in if the door is locked. The door can also be opened remotely through Matthew's phone so if someone needs to get into the church after hours he has the capability to let them in. Discussed how cold it gets in the choir area, as well as hot by the Altar and the Property Committee will look at the vents behind the screens to see if they can face up rather than down. Next Property Committee meeting will be June 14th at 10:45 am.

WORSHIP: Items discussed at Worship Committee meeting: Transportation options for bringing Horizon residents to church; Will hold a brunch following church on May 31st as the counselors from Springbrook Camp will be here; Will be going back to spoken liturgy on May 24th as Pentecost season begins; Cara shared ideas that she & Ben had heard about through a ministry course they had recently taken including ways in which we could minister and help other area churches who may be struggling; Cara brought up a fun idea of an auction or game for people to request their favorite hymn to sing or least favorite not to sing and proceeds from that would go to a designated ministry; It was also suggested to revisit making health care kits again; Need to monitor songs for funerals and weddings and Joy will speak with Kayla at Fulkerson Funeral Home to revisit guidelines; Suggestion was made to offer video or audio recordings of anyone who wishes to read but either does not like standing in front at the lectern or is homebound and the recording could be played during the worship service; A suggestion to serve the "Senior Saints" would be to create a designated coffee hour, possibly weekly or monthly, to gather & enjoy coffee and possibly games; Cara presented the idea of having a welcoming committee of designated people with name tags that would visit and answer any questions for new people attending worship; Anne will provide pulpit supply on May 31st as Matthew will be attending the Synod Assembly; July 5th will be a "no tech" Sunday meaning there will be no worship slides. Next Worship Committee meeting is June 3rd at 9:30 am.

STEWARDSHIP AND EVANGELISM: Sue reported that the official bid for transportation to Medora on July 22nd is $1,020. Sue will submit this to Cara to pay for with the credit card. Gretchen Stenehjem has generously offered to pay for anyone's ticket for a 2-hour tour to the new presidential library. 50 tickets have been reserved to attend the Gospel Brunch. Sue had also spoke to one of the brothers at Assumption Abby and said this would be a wonderful outing to do sometime. The tour is free and takes 1-1½ hours. Discussed when to schedule Rally Sunday. It was decided to have a community service Sunday on September 13th with "God's Work Our Hands" followed by Rally Wednesday on September 16th with food, games, etc. Other items discussed at the S & E Committee meeting were: Picking Up the Patch was May 7th with 10 people helping and when finished, the group met at Stonehome to eat and enjoy fellowship together; Discussed having a Scavenger Hunt with a church theme and picnic at the North Unit sometime in June or July; Will be meeting with church staff to continue working on a church directory; Would like to revive Sharing & Caring by calling people to assist on Sundays as the same people tend to always be helping and the hope is to encourage others to help as well. Next Stewardship & Evangelism Committee meeting will be held June 4th at 5:30 pm at Teddy's.

CARE TEAM REPORT: The Stewardship & Evangelism Committee reviewed the Care Team Log and scheduled upcoming visits.

YOUTH & EDUCATION: Wednesday night education classes concluded April 22nd. Graduating seniors were recognized and presented with quilts May 3rd. Affirmation of Baptism for three youth was today, May 17th. VBS will be held June 1st from 5:00 – 8:30 pm with the Woman at the Well being the theme. The youth will be selling baked goods as a fundraiser for the 2027 National LYO Gathering during the fair June 18th-20th at the hospitality booth that First Lutheran Church will.

WELCA: The FLC Quilters gave 6 graduating seniors quilts on May 3rd and WELCA provided cake and other goodies for fellowship that day. On Mother's Day, WELCA gave carnations to all the moms. The Quilters gave quilts to the babies that were baptized (1) and blessed (1). WELCA provided boutonnieres to the three confirmands and served cake following worship. There was no meeting in April due to a funeral that day and the May meeting will be the last one until August. Val reported on the Cluster meeting in Westby, MT which was a great day. She also reported that the fall gathering would be hosted by Watford City at Springbrook Bible Camp October 3rd. Other items discussed were: How many quilts should be given away; The thought of having two families vs. one family providing for fellowship following church; VBS meal provided by WELCA; Picnic in the park.

Unfinished Business:

Staffing Changes, Positions, Wages: Benjamin Bradley was hired as the Audio/Visual Technology Coordinator for the rate of $40/hour and Cara Transtrom is filling the Church Coordinator for the time being for the rate of $21/hour. Anything that Ben does that is considered as part of the Church Coordinator position will be paid at the rate of $21/hour. Joy expressed deep appreciation to both Ben & Cara for all of their efforts to help us to move forward in a positive way with the rest of the council concurring and sharing their gratitude.

Drum Set: The Trust Committee was approached with a request to approve funding for an electronic drum set from the Rothie Trust Account; however, the request was not approved. Cara made a motion to pay for the drum set out of First Lutheran Church's general fund; Robin seconded. Motion carried. Discussed where the drum set will go and how it will fit in with any ADA adjustments being made. Cara explained that the set that is going to be purchased is lightweight and easily portable and does not foresee any issues with accommodating these adjustments. The Executive Committee will meet with the Property Committee on June 3rd at 5:30 to review Jessie Lawrence's suggestions for these possible adjustments.

NEW BUSINESS:

Bible Translators as a mission of the church: Joy had handouts for all the Council members to take home and review regarding increasing our mission outreach. We will discuss more at the next council meeting. Matthew added that FLC used to fund missionaries and this would be something we could do again.

Blessings in Bloom: Jennifer Sorenson has looked into an outreach where leftover funeral flowers can be made into smaller arrangements and delivered to anyone that needs a pick-me-up. Upon council approval FLC will begin to offer this ministry in conjunction with Fulkerson Funeral Home. This has been implemented in Stanley and is going very well. Cara made the motion to approve the Blessings in Bloom project; Ardyce seconded. Motion carried.

Other New Business: Discussed whether or not we should act on what Douglas Rolfson presented at the beginning of the meeting and open a brokerage account and all agreed to do it. Ardyce made a motion to establish a brokerage account with Douglas Rolfson through Edward Jones; Lorri seconded. Motion carried. Matthew will reach out to Douglas to make arrangements with him to present information explaining the brokerage account and how one can contribute to congregants during fellowship.

Matthew stressed to the council how important it is to have ADA accessibility at the front of the Sanctuary and that it would be great to have 12 additional chairs to move as needed.

Matthew requested that a table be purchased for the hallway by the office to hold brochures and other important information and that items be purchased for the basement to utilize that area more efficiently.

Discussed hiring a photographer when doing our church directory. S & E Committee will look into different options for church directories and photographers that would be available.

Lorri volunteered to lead devotion at the June Council meeting.

The Council concluded the meeting by reciting the Lord's Prayer.

Next Council meeting will be June 16th at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ardyce Alveshere, FLC Council Secretary