



January 2026

CO-CHAIRPERSONS: Amy Perleberg, Joan Shroyer, and Luann Thompson

USHERING:

Sunday, January 4 at 9:40 a.m.: Joan Shroyer and Amy Perleberg

Sunday, January 11 at 9:40 a.m.: Johnny & Theresa Carlson

Sunday, January 18 at 9:40 a.m.: Jim & Fern Schuster

Sunday, January 25 at 9:40 a.m.: Kenny & Luann Thompson

Usher duties are posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

GREETERS:

Sunday, January 4 at 9:15 a.m.: Jim & Fern Schuster

Sunday, January 11 at 9:15 a.m.: Joan Shroyer

Sunday, January 18 at 9:15 a.m.: Justin & Liza Ystaas family

Sunday, January 25 at 9:15 a.m.: Erik & Tammy Sorensen family

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:

Sunday, January 4 at 9:15 a.m.: Linda Lies

Sunday, January 11 at 9:15 a.m.: Sandy Koeplin & Gina Clifton

Sunday, January 18 at 9:15 a.m.: Ethan & Abby Shroyer family

Sunday, January 25 at 9:15 a.m.: Josh & Trista Langley family

ANNUAL MEETING POTLUCK (Jan 25th):

Helping Hands members are asked to bring main dishes to the potluck (as opposed to salads or desserts).

Co-chairs will also call to arrange for Helping Hands workers to set up, serve, and clean up. Please contact co-chairs in advance if you know you can work that day.

FUND: Capital Campaign Fund

If you are unavailable on your assigned day, please use the group list that was mailed to you to find a replacement. If you are unsuccessful at finding a replacement, please notify a chairperson.



Pastor's Ponderings

Light and Delight in the Season of Epiphany

Epiphany arrives quietly after the noise and sparkle of Christmas. Epiphany is the church liturgical season where we concentrate on light. Not the soft glow of candles in a manger, but the clear, guiding light of God made known to the world in Christ. This is a season of revelation, of holy *aha* moments.

This is a season of light AND this is also a season of deep delight.

The story that anchors Epiphany is the visit of the wise men. These travelers from afar are guided not by familiarity or tradition, but by curiosity and trust. They follow a star they do not fully understand, drawn forward by a promise they cannot yet name. And when they arrive—not in a palace, but at a humble stable—they kneel. They worship. They delight in this one, the Christ, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger.

The light of Epiphany, perhaps unlike Christmas, is not meant to dazzle. It is simply meant to guide. The star does not force the wise men's steps; it invites them forward. In the same way, the light of Christ does not coerce belief or obedience. Rather, it draws us, gently and persistently, toward life, toward truth, toward love. In a world that often feels shadowed by fear, division, and fatigue, Epiphany reminds us that God's light still shines—and it shines for *all*.

And then there is delight. The wise men rejoice with "exceedingly great joy," Scripture tells us. They open their treasure chests. They give gifts not because they must, but because they want to.

Epiphany invites us to rediscover that kind of joy, that kind of delight at meeting once again this baby king. Not the fleeting happiness of perfect circumstances, but the steady delight of knowing we are seen, known, and loved by God. The delight of discovering that Jesus meets us right where we are; that Jesus is God with us.

In this season of Epiphany, may we follow the light we have been so graciously given. May we pay attention to where Christ's light is being revealed in our lives and in our community. And may we allow ourselves—not just to believe—but to delight. For the light still shines in darkness. The light always shines. Thanks be to God.



ARE YOU A THRIVENT MEMBER?

The church office was recently made aware that we have over 70 members of our church who are Thrivent Financial members! If this is you, will you please let the church office know? We want to help ensure that you are utilizing your Thrivent Action Team and Choice dollars. Thank you!



A HUGE thank you on behalf of the Hunger

Free Food Pantry to this year's food basket packers! Thirty-two families received much needed food support this Christmas thanks to these wonderful volunteers and so many more!



Thank you to Janine Anderson, Jodi Hirchert, and Gail Weisenberger for creating our new "Funeral Food Planning" binder! It contains all of the funeral food options, recipes and detailed instructions for Helping Hands workers! What a blessing this will be going forward!



Thank you to Sydney Carr & Amy Perleberg, members of the Worship & Arts Committee, for the BIG and beautiful Advent sign!

Each week the letters were changed to match the name of the Advent candle. We started with hope, then changed to peace, then joy, and then love.

For Christmas Eve (and the 12 days of Christmas) the word is of course "JESUS" in kingly gold!



Christmas Program



On December 21st, our LAUNCH students, under the direction of Tammy Sorensen, presented a Christmas Play/Program called "The Power of the King". A play about a children's choir that landed at a radio station during a snowstorm that shut down interstate. The staff and choir created their own program for the radio with the story of Jesus's birth and catchy tunes that went along with it. Following the program was a free-will soup and sandwich supper provided by the Board of Education.

LAUNCH teachers and Board of Education members want to thank everyone who took time out of their schedules to come and support the students and our children's education programs from the free-will supper.

Thank you to all of our LAUNCH families as this could not have been possible without your support. The extra LAUNCH time for practice was definitely appreciated and knowing your commitment to the program with all of the Sunday morning chaos means the world to the volunteers that give their time for this program.



AUTOMATED GIVING

Vanco faith is our online giving platform. By scanning the QR code, you can give a one time gift or set up your regular weekly or monthly offering. Online giving is a great way to stay current in your financial support of our church. You can also download the Vanco Faith app from your app store.

You can also simply contact your local bank to set up an autopay option for your offering to the church.



Sunday, January 4th
Miles Peterson & Auggie Meier
Sunday, January 11th
Adison Bullinger & Leah Bullinger
Sunday, January 18th
Ell Radke & Makaya Heskin
Tuesday, January 25th
William Jorgensen & Noah Sorensen

Capital Campaign
IMO Colleen Dockter
by Stan & Deb Stafford

Music Fund
IMO Betty Georgeson
by Betty Georgeson Estate



By the Numbers

ATTENDANCE

December 3	13
December 7	14
December 10	130
December 14	184
December 17	2
December 21	97
December 28	40

GENERAL FUND OFFERING

December 3	\$70.00
December 7	\$6,436.53
December 10	\$65.00
December 14	\$5,635.81
December 17	\$0.00
December 21	\$1,780.00
December 24 (4pm)	\$2,271.00
December 24 (7pm)	\$ 565.00
December 28	\$ 530.00
Automated Gifts (MTD)	\$550.98

GENERAL FUND YEAR-TO-DATE

BUDGET:	\$ 172,285.00
EXPENSES:	\$ 159,900.69
OFFERING:	\$ 157,288.04

DESIGNATED FUNDS

(as of November 30, 2025)

Property Fund:	\$16,012.94
Banner/Altar Fund:	\$796.64
Music Fund:	\$3,062.91
Budget Reserve:	\$18,507.36
Thrivent Choice:	\$1,093.00
Noisy Offering:	\$1,653.34
FLC Men's Group:	\$1,136.16
Capital Campaign:	\$88,107.70
<i>(Includes Carpet Fund \$11,771.09 & Hopes & Dreams \$1,224.35)</i>	



Our church family will have its annual meeting on January 25th following worship.

On the agenda will be the capital campaign, new leaders, and our 2026 budget.

Potluck to follow- family, fellowship, and food are all gifts from God!



January (Group 4)

Richard Anderson
Johnny & Theresa Carlson
Gina Clifton
Bob & Sandi Hoffman
Amy Kippen
Terry & Sandy Koepplin
Josh & Trista Langley family
Larry & Debbie Larson
Linda Lies
Mary Nokleby
Tim & Amy Perleberg
Jim & Fern Schuster
Scott & Jerri Severs
Ethan & Abby Shroyer family
Joan Shroyer
Erik & Tammy Sorensen family
Kenny & Luann Thompson
Glenn & Mary Walz
Aaron & Kim Weber family
Curt & Marydean Weinmann
Justin & Liza Ystaas family



Thanks to all the sponsors of our radio broadcasts!

Jan. 4th: IMO Doris Thompson, by Mike & Jill Thompson

Jan. 11th: IMO Steve & Myrtle Halling

Jan. 18th: IMO Loved ones who have passed away,
by Metta McDowell & family

Jan. 25th: IMO Mike and Kim Seiler, by Tina Hermanson family



- ◆ BAPTISMS:
- ◆ WEDDINGS:
- ◆ FUNERALS:
- ◆ TRANSFERS:



**January
2026**

Melony Allmaras,
Gina Clifton, &
Sandy Koeplin

Holy Experiment: Quarterly council review of the Governance Holy Experiment noted improved efficiency, stronger staff support, and better discussion. A brief report will be prepared for the annual meeting.

2026 Budget: Jon presented the proposed 2026 budget of \$182,365 (excluding salary adjustments pending staff evaluations). Increases include worship planning licensing and supplies, property insurance, utilities, furnace repair, and staff salaries (pending yearly staff evaluations). Jon noted our continued effort to remain financially disciplined while still supporting ministry, the increase in offerings over last year, and our income outpacing expenses. Motion by Christina to approve the proposed budget framework. Second by Colleen. All in favor, motion carries.

Staff Evaluations Forms: Each board provided input, and their feedback was included in the final evaluation scoring to ensure a comprehensive and balanced review. Evaluations will be reviewed with staff, and payroll adjustments will be discussed on December 30.

Motion by Jon to adjourn. Second by Colleen. Motion carries.

Submitted by:
Christina Anderson, Secretary



Ivy Johnson and
Fern Schuster



Pastor Amy and
Hannah Wobbema

***Twining
is
Winning***



Pastor Amy and
Richard Carlson



Marilyn Gedrose
and Pastor Amy



Ivy Johnson and
Millie Carr

Property / Stewardship Report: Corey reported a heater failure in a basement classroom. A replacement heater was provided by a member through their business. The Board is installing additional smoke detectors, addressing lighting and minor electrical issues, and repairing a desk. The list of urgent needs is smaller than in previous years, reflecting the progress made on prior maintenance projects.

Secretary's Report: No November meeting minutes because the meeting was cancelled due to illness. Council reviewed October meeting minutes. Motion by Colleen to approve the minutes as printed. Second by Jon. All in favor, motion carries.

Treasurer's Report: Jon reported that October offerings were nearly \$21,000, with expenses of about \$15,000. Year-to-date offerings through November are approximately \$157,000, which is about \$8,000 higher than last year at this time. Expenses are slightly higher than last year but remain under budget, with roughly 89.7 percent of the annual budget spent compared to 91.23 percent last year. Motion by Christina to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Second by Colleen. All in favor, motion carries.

Office Admin Report: Katie reported Cards of Care activity, including recognitions for students, sympathy and encouragement cards, and thank yous received. She also noted annual report reminders and routine office duties.

Old Business:

Youth Reps on Boards: Council briefly revisited youth representation on boards. Youth participation continues to be encouraged, but council did not recommend adding a constitutional requirement for youth members on every board. No action was taken.

New Business:

Extra Benevolence: Motion by Pastor Amy to designate Nov and Dec benevolence to Harry Jorgensen to assist with medical expenses. Second by Jon. All in favor, motion carries.

Council Christmas Gathering: Pastor Amy offered to host a council holiday gathering at the parsonage; due to busy December schedules, council agreed to plan this in January.

Fall Supper Recap: Income of \$5,745, expenses of \$1,968, and net proceeds of about \$3,781 designated for the Capital Campaign.

Model Constitution: Pastor Amy presented recommended ELCA model constitution changes. Motion by Christina to bring the recommended changes to the congregation at the annual meeting. Second by Colleen. All in favor, motion carries.

Worship Attendance Review: Pastor Amy presented the annual worship attendance review; average weekly worship attendance for 2025 is 95. Historical averages were 94 in 2021, 88 in 2022, 94 in 2023, and 90 in 2024.

Hunger Free Food Pantry: Council discussed a request to formally serve Foster County through our food pantry. Motion by Christina that First Lutheran continues only as an Eddy County food pantry while allowing compassionate exceptions in special circumstances. Second by Colleen. All in favor, motion carries.

SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS



January 4: Kenny Thompson, sound; Luann Thompson, lay reader; Deb Stafford, communion coordinator

January 11: Gail Weisenburger, sound; Fern Schuster, lay reader;

January 18: Cherry Heinz, sound; Mitch Bjerke, lay reader; Michelle Pfeiffer, communion coordinator

January 25: Mitch Bjerke, sound; Colleen Semmens, lay reader,

From Katie and Pastor Amy:

Thank you church family for the generous Christmas gift card! We feel so loved and appreciated, and want to say that it is our honor and privilege to serve you! !



LADIES' BINGO Bash

January 18th, 2026

2:00 PM

FLC Women's ministry is hosting a Ladies' Bingo Bash! Open to all women, bring a friend! Refreshments will be served. Fun prizes!

Cost: Free-will offering that will go to a local women's shelter.

First Lutheran Church
436 1st Ave N, New Rockford



1st - Tina Hermanson
Nancy Ludwig
Kenny Sharbono
Marlys Throlson
3rd - Larry Larson
Ken Throlson
5th - Arlene Weber
6th - Tommy Munson
7th - Jim Belquist
Jake Clelland
8th - Robert Ludwig
Matt Pfeiffer
9th - Katie Jorgensen
10th - Luca Schumacher
Mathew Schuster

11th - Addie Allmaras
Dylan Cudworth
12th - John Schuster
14th - Richard Anderson
16th - Evan Guler
17th - Nicholas Berglund
18th - Tom Anderson
Jackson Schumacher
21st - Allison Pfeiffer
Luann Rimmereid
24th - Metta McDowell
Vicky Richter
Jaida Schumacher
26th - Amy Perleberg
28th - Glenda Collier
31st - Anne Erickson
Jace Pfeiffer

If you find your birthday is not listed, or is incorrect, let us know!



DECEMBER 2025 CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES (UNAPPROVED BY COUNCIL)

Quorum was established and the meeting was called to order by President Bruce Hirschert.

Present Council: Bruce Hirschert – President, Colleen Semmens – Vice President, Jon Johnson – Treasurer, Christina Anderson – Secretary, Pastor Amy Kippen – Pastor, Katie Jorgensen – Office Administrator and Board of Education, Property & Stewardship – Corey Longnecker, Lay Ministry & Evangelism– Fern Schuster.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Colleen to approve the preliminary agenda. Second by Christina. All in favor, motion carries.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Amy reported on worship and ministry activities. Nursing home worship participation has increased, especially from Heritage House residents, which has strengthened engagement and relationships. Luther League continues to be strong under the leadership of Lauren and Chase Pederson; students attend regularly, enjoy being together, and notice when others are absent. The four-week Advent Bible study is underway with two groups, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, with a total of approximately 17 participants. Mission Partner Sunday was held with a special offering and free will meal, with combined gifts (from the congregation and FLC Foundation) expected to total around \$1,500.

Board of Education Report: Katie reported that the Board is preparing for the Christmas program titled “The Power of the King,” to be presented on December 21 at 6:00 p.m. Supper will follow the program. The evening format is intended to allow more extended family to attend.

Lay Ministry / Evangelism Report: Fern reported that the Board decided to have one Easter Sunday service at 10:00 a.m. this year so that the congregation can gather for a single unified celebration. Maundy Thurs and Good Fri services will move from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to make it easier for people to attend after work. Christmas cards to shut-in will be mailed. Christmas gifts for key volunteers and staff were discussed. Glenda Collier will continue coordinating Communion Home Delivery, communion coordinators, and lay readers. Fern also reported that the Board has received several positive comments regarding our “Cards of Care” ministry.