

January, 2026

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From the Pastor's View:

Where would we be.... without....?

The New Year is a time to reflect on the many gifts God provides to our church, to our community, and to us as individuals. We look back with gratitude, and ahead with hope. For these reflections, I want to focus on just three extraordinary gifts upon which we depend, and for which we can be grateful: The River, Our Volunteers, and New Starts.

Where would we be without the river? Knife River has been flowing from the North ever since it was launched by the glaciers. Without the river, our church wouldn't be here. I sure wouldn't be here! Built upon the hill, KRLC has been here for 98 long years, a mere speck on the river's timeline. The river has brought food, employment, community, and a complex habitat for myriad plants, fish & animals. In our worship services through the next several weeks, we will be focusing on the "River Project". Through artwork, song, storytelling, geology lessons, and preaching, we will all stand at the river to consider - as a faith community - "Where We've Come From", "Who We Are", and "Where We are Going". Come as you are! No need for life jackets! The river has been part of us for 98 years, since our congregation's founding.

Where would we be without our volunteers? (I think of volunteers in the church as disciples of Christ. Men and women, boys and girls who have responded to the Call to Discipleship.) Through KRLC, the faithful gather for worship, learning, fellowship, and service. I am grateful for the volunteers who I've come to know here as Musicians, Artists, Teachers, Thermostat Controllers, Financial Contributors, Gardeners, Visitors of the Homebound, Note-writers, Committee Members, Newsletter Contributors, Governance Leaders, By-law Editors, Bill Payers, Julebyen Planners, Trolls, Sound Technicians, Lefse Makers, Lectors, Communion Assistants, Altar Guilders, Auditors, Creche Arrangers, Acolytes, Offering Counters, Photographers, Worship Assistants, Bar BQ Grillers, Rec Council Leaders, Table Talk Presenters, Quilt Makers, Property Managers, Members of the Hospitality Teams, and the list goes on and on. Whew! If it were not for ALL the faithful volunteers, much of what we enjoy about KRLC would simply not exist!

Where would we be without a new start? At the New Year, many of us make resolutions. (By this time, if you are like me, perhaps some of those good resolutions have already been tested or broken.) Of course, the first day of January is really not much different than the last day of December; but, with the turn of the calendar page, we welcome a new start. While we will not forget the struggles, losses, disappointments and regrets of the past year, we can realize the gift of a new start!

As we gaze back across the past, and peer out into the future, we need not fear, wondering, "Where would we be... without...". In fact, by the grace of God, we need not ponder "without." Creator God continues flowing life-giving water. Jesus continues to call his disciples as volunteers. And God's own Spirit moves through our prayers to grant forgiveness and a new start.

God bless you as we live and serve beside the river! And God bless all of us as we enter a new year of God's life-giving flow of grace.

Council Buzz – December 2025

What's Happening

- Draft and implement archiving process – ongoing
- Complete committee Structure processes – proposed changes will be on Congregation Annual meeting agenda
- Annual Review of Policies - ongoing
- Review Committees and identify committee liaisons – ongoing
- Annual review of Pastor, Custodian and Administrative Support

Administrative Support -- Volunteer Needed

- **We are still seeking a volunteer to help out in the administrative support area.**

If interested in volunteering in this capacity, please contact Helene at hhedlund.dl@gmail.com.

Plans to gather input from Congregation as we explore what's next for KRLC

- The Council has begun preliminary work for the 2026 budget.
- Stewardship Committee will meet to distribute undesignated contributions
- We will budget for a half-time Pastor (similar to Pastor Susan and our Interim budgets)
- As we continue to explore Table Talk Topics, we will want to expand how they are scheduled beyond Sunday mornings after church. We will be seeking input as to preferred times

Table Talks

- We have completed the table talk focused on survey results.
- Parts I & II of Living Wills etc. table talk is complete. Thank you to Dr. Anne Skadberg, Tara Caine and Pastor Mark for this presentation.
- In January, we will begin the River project.
- If anyone has suggestions for table talk topics, contact a council member.

Upcoming

- December 21 Council – Sit Down
- January 11 Council – Sit Down
- February 15 KRLC Annual Meeting

Thank you for your continued support of the 2025 Council.

Submitted by Helene Hedlund, Council President

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation for Knife River Lutheran Church will be held on Sunday, February 15 following worship. As usual, this will be a brunch, so please watch for the sign-up sheet! We will celebrate the ministry of the year past and look forward to 2026. Please note – **Annual report submissions are due to Diane Lewandowski (office.krlc@gmail.com) by February 1** if they are to be included in the report packet.

2025 GIVING DEADLINES:

2025 giving must be received in the offering plate by Dec. 28 or mailed to the church postmarked by 12/31/25. All other giving will be credited to 2026, regardless of date on the check. Please contact Treasurer Ed Lee with questions.

JANUARY VOLUNTEERS

	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25
<u>Ushers</u>	M McMillion D Jackson	M von Goertz P Berger	B Berg R Alreck	T Anderson B Anderson
<u>Lector</u>	A Hubbart	D Jackson	R Alreck	C Whiting
<u>Communion Asst</u>	J Swanson	C Whiting	M McMillion	E Lee
<u>Altar Preparation</u>	D Jackson & J Swanson-----			
<u>Offering Counters</u>	K Struve J Lee	L Olson M von Goertz	T Northey L Anderson	M McMillion P Berger
<u>Coffee Fellowship</u>	Available	Available	Available	Available
<u>Live Streaming</u>	Tech Team	Tech Team	Tech Team	Tech Team
<u>Children's Church/ Kid's Connect</u>	A Jaspersen Gretta Ojard	R. Alreck A. Shaw	S. Socha Sadie Pollard	L Burkhard TBD

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS		JANUARY BIRTHDAYS		JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES	
4	Jim Bujold	24	Kyle Beardsley	2	Don & LeeAnn Olson
8	Peter Stoddard	26	Mike Garey		
8	Karin Harris	28	Courtney Anderson		
13	Charlotte Rigney	31	Rich Ojard		
16	Sydney Pollard				

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE submitted by Melanie McMillion

I can't believe 2026 is upon us! Time has passed quickly for the Call Committee (Deb Allert, Steve Carlson, Melanie McMillion, Scott Shelerud and Patti Stoddard)! We're ready to have our final "learning" meeting in mid-January and begin the work of composing the Ministry Site Profile with all we've learned since we began the process! Thanks for your input, personal as well as completion of the Council survey and call team index card surveys. Your thoughts have been invaluable in our work and are much appreciated.

One Sunday after Christmas, the Call Committee will put on display all of our work on charts and sticky notes we've completed along the way . . . they'll be placed on tables in the lower level for you to peruse during after-worship coffee. We'll be available to answer any questions you may have . . . we want you to have a peek at the process we've been following!

Once the Ministry Site Profile is completed (it's the document pastors seeking a call see online . . . it tells all about who we are and what we need) it will be shared with the Synod, our council and our congregation, and then signed by the Synod Bishop before it goes "live".

After that point, the Call Committee will (hopefully) be busy interviewing! Your prayers continue to be coveted by the Committee . . . prayers for fruition of Knife River Lutheran's quest – a Spirit-lead process resulting in the hire of a Pastor provided by God to lead us in the direction He wills. Thank you.

2025 Christmas Gifts

Poinsettias to decorate our Christmas Altar area:

- ❖ A poinsettia in memory of Bert & Audrey Carlson was given by Steve & Carol Carlson and Rocky & Julie Stewart.
- ❖ A poinsettia in memory of their parents was given by Michael & Nancy Dent.
- ❖ A poinsettia in honor of Chub Christensen, Karen's Dad, was given by the Karen & Noel Walter family.
- ❖ A poinsettia in honor of KRLC Confirmants was given by Helene Hedlund.
- ❖ A poinsettia in honor of their parents, Laetitia & Hendrik Basson and Beverly & Terry Hovis was given by Anne-Lu & Steve Hovis.
- ❖ A poinsettia in honor of Carol Carlson was given by Paul & Mary von Goertz.
- ❖ A poinsettia in memory of John Safstrom was given by Gail Safstrom and family.
- ❖ A poinsettia in memory of Marilyn Estrem was given by Randi Alreck & Lawrence Burkhard.
- ❖ A poinsettia in memory of Paul Struve, Jeanine Patterson and Ethel Wieme was given by Kay Struve.
- ❖ A poinsettia in memory of Noreen Jackson was given by Steve & Pat Berger.
- ❖ A poinsettia in memory of their parents, Pat & Jim Hanson and Marge & George Krog was given by Eric & Viola Hanson.
- ❖ A poinsettia in honor of her beautiful family was given by Trish Northey.
- ❖ A poinsettia in memory of Sarah Marie Friebe was given by Diane & Joe Friebe.

Sparkly blue poinsettias placed on the altar each Sunday in December were given by Delores, Jill & Leigh in memory of Ron Jackson & Helen Olson.

Gifts to God's Barnyard (through Dec. 21):

- ❖ An undesignated gift to God's Barnyard in honor of the dedicated folks who make our church so great was given by Dick & Sue Sigel.
- ❖ A gift of a goat, a pig, a chick and school supplies was given by Kay Struve in memory of Paul Struve.
- ❖ A gift of a Water Filter was given by Paul & Mary von Goertz in honor of those who have so little.
- ❖ A gift of 4 goats was given by Ed & Joanie Lee.

Ministerium Elder Gifts:

A special thank you to the following who donated gifts for the Two Harbors Ministerium's efforts to provide a Christmas gift for local elderly residing in assisted living or nursing homes! Hannah Weishaar, Trish Northey, Nancy Dent, Lee Bujold, Randi Alreck, Pastor Mark and Marcia Holman, Anne-Lu Hovis, Karen & Noel Walter, Sharon Shelerud, Delores Jackson, Sandra Bjorum, Kay Struve, Vicky Gorman, Viola Hanson, Lisa Anderson, Anne Jaspersen, Janet Emery, Linda Grong, Carmen Smith, Kay Bloom, Pat Meyer, Beth Alexander & LeAllan Estrem, Don & LeeAnn Olson, Sue Hubbartt and Pat Berger.

Salvation Army Red Kettle Ringers:

Thank you to those who rang bells on December 16 at Super One to cover our church's shift! Pat & Steve Berger, Noel & Karen Walter, Pat & Bill Meyer, Trish Northey & Kay Struve, Mike & Kris Garey, Pastor Mark Holman, Mary & Paul von Goertz, Jan & Dennis Swanson and Lawrence Burkhard & Randi Alreck. What a wonderful cause! All donations received are used LOCALLY!

Other Gifts (through Dec. 21):

- ❖ A gift to the memorial fund in memory of Terry Berg was given by Bill Berg.
- ❖ A gift to the general fund in honor of Carol Carlson was given by Kay Bloom.
- ❖ A gift to the memorial fund in memory of Vicky Ojard was given by Scott & Anne Jaspersen.
- ❖ A gift to the music program in honor of Carol Carlson was given by Doug & Becky Pruitt.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF CHURCHTRAC?

During 2026 you will be hearing more about ChurchTrac and Church Connect.

ChurchTrac is an all-in-one Church software package which integrates many of the activities going on in the church. Everything will be in one place for our staff and members to use once you receive an invitation and training during the first quarter of 2026. What will it include at that time?

- People Database- Everything that is in the church photo directory will be in the People tab only for approved users. Do you need someone's phone #, address or email. This is where you can find it. Do you need to send an email or text to a small group of members? This is where you can choose from an existing group or set up a new one. A good example would be coordination of volunteers.
- Events Calendar-This is an interactive church calendar that everyone can use, and it will be updated daily rather than getting it once a month.
- Worship/scheduling-Our staff can use this to create bulletins, sermons and other worship materials. You will be able to see them once they are completed.
- Your giving-You can track your donations here, print out your giving statements or set up on-line giving to automate your donations.
- Accounting software-you will not have much to do with this section, but the financial people will keep track of all the details of our various financial accounts in this tab. We have been evaluating this web-based program since September and feel it works well. It is not perfect, but it is easy to use.
- Church Connect- This will be the place that you will connect with everything that is available.

I am sure you have lots of questions about how it affects you. Some of you will be excited to see this program become part of our church and others may say it is not for me. Either way is OK. You will not be forced to be a part of this program if you do not want to.

For those who are interested we will start some training in the first quarter of 2026. If you want to see more now, just go to **YouTube** and type in **ChurchTrac** and there are a number of videos. Start with the video "Getting started with ChurchTrac."

Stay tuned. There will be more coming during 2026. You can ask Ed Lee, Treasurer or Melanie McMillion, Volunteer Coordinator about any questions you might have.

CHURCH MOUSE

Christmas Celebration of Music 2025:

2019 saw the last Christmas Celebration of Music that was spearheaded by "Benchy" a.k.a. Carol Carlson and the emcee-our own Lyle Northey. Covid happened and too many activities early in December the following years lead to the pause of the wonderful celebration. This December 14th we rejoiced in the return of the Christmas Celebration of Music. So many wonderful different pieces were performed; choirs, various duets, handbells, trumpet duet, trombone solo, organ, dancers with candle lights and even jolly accordion music. And don't forget the "It's Christmas in Knife River" that required audience participation!! 🥰 A heart felt thank you to every one who shared their gifts in music and dance with us. This evening could only take place because of you. A big thanks to Paul von Goertz for being emcee and Pete Stoddard for the Tech Support. A special thanks to Trish Northey and Kay Struve who arranged the cake social after the celebration and to every baker, the cakes were delicious. I am very certain I am missing saying thanks to specifics organizers but be sure it is not intentional.

My heart is full; full of joy, full of thanks and full of love for this wonderful community that made this evening possible. A SINCERE THANK YOU FROM MY VERY FULL HEART.

Love in Jesus, Anne-Lù

CHURCH MOUSE (continued from page 5)

RETIREMENT RECEPTION THANK YOU!

"I am thankful each day for growing up in this community and church where we are known and loved. Knife River Lutheran Church has been my church home since I was born. At age eight my musical career began playing simple songs for the "younger" children in Knife River Sunday School.

When my mother, Evelyn Ojard and Lillian Eskola retired from their shared organist position in 1978, I along with 3 others agreed to share the position after retirement however, after several months I was the last one remaining on the bench.

Our church has always been a church with community impact and thinking small is not who we are. I personally found this to be true when we needed a new organ after our old Hammond organ wouldn't play another note. The congregation approved the purchase of a Jaekel organ specifically designed for KRLC and Lyle Northey spearheaded the fundraisers, including members buying parts of the organ.

It has been a joy being part of KRLC Music for 47 years. Thank you to our choirs, instrumentalists and bells for your love of music. A special thank you to Lawrence Burkhard for our piano' clarinet duets throughout the years. It was always fun planning our music.

Finally, thank you for the wonderful Retirement Reception and gift of money from the congregation including the Quilters' beautiful quilt that reminds me of piano keys designed into the fabric. The framed photo taken while Lawrence and I were playing during a church service is now on the wall next to my piano. Thank you for capturing some wonderful memories.

Now after 47 years, I'm looking forward to sitting in a pew next to Steve and learning how to share a hymnal. Thank you to each and every one of you! Carol (Benchy)"

The Julebyen Planning Group thanks all who volunteered to help make Julebyen 2025 a success. KRLC contributes to this community fundraiser in so many ways . . .

- Use of the church lower level for volunteer warming and food preparations
- The incredible presentation of the birth of Jesus through the Live Nativity. This activity is always an attendee favorite.
- KRLC singers who under the direction of Lawrence Burkhardt meet the trains and entertain Troll Village Attendees
- JOYFUL, under the direction of Patti Stoddard, who participate in the Live Nativity
- KRLC planners, crafters, bakers, grounds keepers, weekend warriors and other supporters and volunteers of Julebyen. KRLC is indeed the Heart of the Community and during Julebyen the church's presence and support is greatly appreciated. Helene Hedlund, KRRC Julebyen Chair

KRLC Christmas Angels Appreciation!

Melanie McMillion coordinated the "Elder Gift" giving for KRLC! **LeeAnn Olson and Patti Stoddard** organized a **JOYFUL** outing to Waterview Shores Assisted Living! Hats were made, bells were rung and singing left everyone JOY-FULL! **KRLC Bellringers** were at Super One on December 11 to raise money for the Salvation Army! **Julie Stewart** is keeping the Altar beautiful for every December service and Christmas event and **Pastor Mark** had the great idea of asking members to bring in their family creche to grace our church during the Christmas season. Thank you one and all for sharing your merry and bright cheer!

Dear God, thank you for new beginnings.
What an incredible day this is with a fresh year's potential stretched out before me.
I want to be found faithful this year in each and every opportunity You bring to me.
Thank you, Lord, for new beginnings.
I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Upcoming Sun. Feb.15 th 10:15 am Annual Meeting of the Congregation				1 New Year's Day OFFICE CLOSED	2	3
4 9 am Worship Children's Church & Kid's Connect 10 am Coffee fellowship	5 9 am Bone Building 2pm Handbell rehearsals	6 9 am Lectio	7 10 – 1 Quilters	8 8:30 Men Meet 8:30 Dulcimers 5 pm Pop-Up Dinner	9	10
11 9 am Worship Children's Church & Kid's Connect 10 am Coffee fellowship 10:15am Sit Down Council River Project	12 9 am Bone Building 2pm Handbell rehearsals	13 9 am Lectio 10:00am Worship Committee 6 pm W/ELCA White Elephant Potluck @ Safstroms	14 10 – 1 Quilters	15 8:30 Men Meet 8:30 Dulcimers 5 pm Pop-Up Dinner	16	17
18 9 am Worship Children's Church & Kid's Connect 10 am Coffee fellowship River Project	19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day OFFICE CLOSED	20 9 am Lectio 10 am Planning Team 6:30 pm JOYFUL Practice	21 10 – 1 Quilters 5 pm Church/ Community Taco Feed by Council 6:30pm Confirmation	22 8:30 Men Meet 8:30 Dulcimers 5 pm Pop-Up Dinner	23	24
25 9 am Worship Children's Church & Kid's Connect 10 am Coffee fellowship NEWSLETTER DEADLINE – Tonight! River Project	26 9 am Bone Building 2pm Handbell rehearsals	27 9 am Lectio 6:30 pm JOYFUL Practice	28 10 – 1 Quilters	29 8:30 Men Meet 8:30 Dulcimers 5 pm Pop-Up Dinner	30	31

January 2026

KRLC Treasurer's Report**11/30/2025**

General Operations Summary	2025	2024
Income from donations	\$ 126,921.21	\$ 121,399.72
Expenses	\$ 121,618.10	\$ 128,382.73
Donations vs expenses	\$ 5,303.11	\$ (6,983.01)



Designated Account Summary	2025	2024
Designated Donations or revenue	\$ 42,564.20	\$ 43,554.83
Expenses from designated areas	\$ 46,108.32	\$ 34,004.75
Donations vs expenses	\$ (3,544.12)	\$ 9,550.08

The Bottom Line	2025	2024
Total Income	\$ 169,485.41	\$ 164,954.55
Total expenses	\$ 167,726.42	\$ 162,387.48
Fund Balance change	\$ 1,758.99	\$ 2,567.07



Fund Balances	Balance
General Operations fund	\$ 15,303.11
Outreach	\$ 12,470.87
Building and property fund	\$ 2,429.14
Building and property fund- Money Market	\$ 70,173.66
Memorial	\$ 9,742.58
Passthru	\$ (4,772.80)
Reserve	\$ 5,000.00
Primary account total	\$ 110,346.56
Decrease from last year	\$ 4,712.29

Total of all cash assets	\$ 212,886.11
Total of all debt/NO DEBT!	\$ -
Increase over last year	\$ 9,449.95



Other Fund Balances	Amount
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Columbarium fund	\$ 22,472.20
Reserve required by State Law	\$ 4,500.00
Available after required reserve	\$ 17,972.20
Columbarium debt is fully paid	\$ -

Endowment fund	\$ 80,067.35
Principal amount	\$ 50,000.00

Color Key

Income	Green
Expense/Debt	Red
Total	Blue
Change	Yellow
Balance	Lt Blue

November

Nov was the best month of the year with donations exceeding expenses by a large margin. Thank you to everyone who helped make this exceptional month a reality! Our new on-demand combination boiler has been installed and is running successfully. The final cost was \$10,688.24 which is well under the \$12,000 authorized by your votes. Many of you stepped up with donations made to our various Outreach programs. We are well ahead of last year and many people will benefit from your generosity! Thank you for your kind hearts!