

'Snow Birds' by Lisa M.

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Believe it or not, the waiting is over and we're at the start of a new year! 2026. It's a year that I remember looking at when I was a child, thinking something like, "Wow! That's a long way away. Who knows what my life will be like? Where will I be living and who will I share my life with?" Well, that year has arrived, and I can say there are many things in my life that continue to surprise me, while others remain constant. As an

Owatonna, I never imagined I'd live in the rival town up the road, Faribault. As a son in a loving family, that love and care remains. And, as a Christian, I continue to journey in faith each day, trusting that God is there to guide me, pick me up when I mess up, and encourage me to keep on going. And, I also know and believe that this faith is something I don't do alone—faith demands a community, a fellowship, of believers. Of folks who show up for each other to wonder and discuss and discern how and where God is at work in the world and how we might be called to respond.

As 2026 gets underway, I continue to be grateful for our congregation at First Ev. Lutheran in Kenyon. I give thanks for the ways we show up for each other and for others in the Kenyon community. I rejoice in the relationships we continue to foster and the goals we have achieved together, such as completing the organ project! And I pray that we may continue to lean into God's love, to continue to wonder how and where we may be called to extend the ministry of welcome that was extended to Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus on that very first Christmas.

I invite you to take some time to read through this newsletter and to think about how you would like to extend such a ministry of welcome in your own life. Maybe it's by showing up to support our young people in their school events, games, and concerts. Maybe it's by checking in on your neighbors and even inviting them to worship with us, if not on a Sunday morning, then on a Wednesday night during Lent (which begins on February 18). Or maybe it's by joining the work of ISAIAH, the food shelf, or another area organization that seeks to improve the quality of life for all people, especially those who have been pushed down or forgotten.

2026 is a new opportunity. No matter what stage of life you are in, each day will bring something new, something unexpected, and some sort of challenge. Each day we have is a gift given to us from God. So, may we use the gift of each day to share and reflect God's care and love for the world, in ways as small as a smile and as big as giving our time, talents, and energy for the sake of fostering a welcoming, grace-filled, and loving community. And may we remember that we are not alone in living this way—that we have Jesus walking with us and we have each other to support and encourage along the way. Like iron sharpens iron, so too can we grow together in life and faith. One day at a time.

Merry Christmas!

Pastor D..J.

First Ev Lutheran Church Council Minutes – December 17, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

Welcome and Call to Order: President Erica Aronson @ 7:03 pm

Devotions: Advent service prior to meeting

Present: Candy Herrlich, Amy Lee, Luke Cordes, Chris Cordes, Tammy Fletcher, Eric Hoversten, Susan Hoversten, Erica Aronson, Pastor D.J. Chatelaine, Brad Nesseth, Carmen Nesseth

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda. Eric/Chris/pass

Consent Agenda Items:

Secretary's Report: Reviewed as printed in the November Church Newsletter.

Treasurer's Report: November giving was good, but we are not anticipating a December as good as past years, based on some of the larger one-time gifts from past years already given in November, or given many members who are no longer with us. We received a generous gift towards benevolence from one giving unit which allowed us to satisfy our pledge. Last year we needed to transfer funds out of our budget reserve to meet the pledge. November attendance was down an average of 10 people per Sunday.

Pastor's Report: It is the third week of Advent, and I am Joyful that we share in ministry together here at First Lutheran Church. Thank you to council and committee members for your leadership through another year and thank you to the congregation for being attentive and curious, and for showing up to figure out life together as disciples of Christ. Here are my updates since the last Council meeting: Home visits are ongoing. People appreciate staying connected through online worship, church communications, cards, phone calls, and visits. Kenyon Community Connections: Kenyon area Thanksgiving service was on Tuesday, November 25 at 6 pm at Dale: lots of good pie to go around! Community Meal happened on December 3: thank you to the Worship Committee and volunteers for your leadership and coordination. Will discuss what future opportunities like this could look like. Thanks to all involved with Beau Chant on December 13. I missed this concert due to a fundraiser concert, I was playing bass in, that day in Owatonna. Confirmation/High School: Wednesday Night Confirmation is ongoing. Students have helped and participated in Advent meals and services this month. I'm making lesson plans for when I am on leave next month and will coordinate with families on that. Thanks to all who helped with Simmer Pot packing and Sunday School Christmas shopping. Attended the High School Band and Choir Christmas Concert. Thank you to the high schoolers involved: you brought Joy this season through your musical gifts and talents! Synod/Churchwide events: Attended Conference meeting on December 11 in Faribault—we had an Advent hymn sing service and did a team-building activity of gingerbread house making. Experienced mounted TVs in worship service, too, and connected with Pr. Joe re: process. Sat in on webinar re: MN paid leave and I'm in the process of getting approved for that. Thanks to Julie D., Tammy, and Erica for your time and support on this. Met with the new pastor at Grace (Nerstrand) and began conversation about potential areas of collaboration. Other: LeRoy Ashland's Celebration of Life was on November 26. Grief Support group met on Monday, December 1 at 2 pm: everyone is welcome, no matter the type of grief you carry. Next meeting: Monday, February 23 at 2 pm. Men's Ministry Bible is ongoing, previewing the lectionary. Plan to begin Bible study open to the congregation during Lent. Advent Wednesday Night services are/were at 6:30 pm/following congregational meals Theme: The Season of waiting. I will use about seven more weeks of parental leave as follows: December 28-January 20 (Back for Annual Meeting); January 26-February 17. Caring Fund money: checks ready to go and plan to split between Kenyon Market and gas station gift cards. Weber/St. John piano/violin concert scheduled for Thursday, September 10 at 7 pm. November 20-December 17 Mileage (\$37.80) + other expenses (\$68.18) Total: \$105.98.

President's Report: Continue to assist with communion set-up and serving; assisted with the community meal; have pastoral supply covered during Pastor D.J.'s leave; we will have 2 lay-led services during that time. Working on filling the ballot for 2026 positions, we have many needs, and I am not having a lot of luck.

Approve Consent Agenda: Motion to approve the consent agenda: Tammy/Carmen/pass

Ongoing Items:

1. Sanctuary Screen & Projector Research: The intent of the screens would not be to incorporate into worship or interface on-line, but to use as a supplement to begin with. The thought would be having one TV, 96" possibly, on each side of the church. One family unit recently donated \$2200 to the technology fund. Motion to approve \$5,000 to purchase 2 TVs for the sanctuary in January. Tammy/Eric/Pass.

New Items:

1. Kenyon Area Foundation Grant: Kenyon area foundation was awarded a grant from the McKnight Foundation and in turn gifted \$2500 to First Lutheran Caring Fund to be used locally to help families in need. The grant check will be mailed out to us sometime before the end of the year and will be reflected in FLC financial statements beginning January 2026. Other Kenyon recipients of this fund were the Kenyon police department and the Kenyon Area Food Shelf.
2. 2026 Budget: The council made a motion to present the budget as presented in the annual report for vote at the annual meeting. Eric/Amy/pass
3. Pastor D.J. added to bank accounts: Motion was made to add Pastor D.J. Chatelaine to both the First Lutheran Church Credit Card and the First Lutheran Youth Account at Security State Bank, Kenyon. Eric/Chris/Pass

Youth Rep. Report: Winter sports continue. Boys and girls basketball both had a very close loss to Randolph this week and also have a double header in Triton on Friday. Wrestling had a recent tournament and several KW wrestlers placed. November 30th Luke Cordes became the latest Kenyon Eagle Scout. Congrats, Luke! The high school band and choir concert was held on Friday 12/12. Go online and re-watch it. The band messed up on the 2nd song, see if you can see catch it! Christmas break begins 12/24.

Committee Reports:

FLCW- FLCW meeting was held December 14 with 9 ladies present, discussed: Gifts for staff set and approved. Homebound cards are being sent out. The mitten tree is in the back of the church, **waterproof mittens and gloves are in great need**. Reviewed the 2026 FLCW booklet draft. Will be sending it out by email to save on paper. More information to come. Year-end distribution of funds discussed. \$2,800.00 is being dispersed. The full report will be in the annual report. Next meeting January 11, 2026. A flyer with information and registration forms are available in the fellowship hall for the 2026 Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention in Des Moines, Iowa on 7/16-7/19 2026. Upcoming Love Day Dates: 1/8; 1/22 - looking for new helpers!

Worship/Evangelism- Short meeting while preparing for Community meal. Looking for meals for Advent Wednesday service but will wait determine need once Community meal is done (leftovers). Christmas Eve service is planned. Looking for volunteers for 12/28 lay-led Sunday. Community meal free will donations of \$343 were donated to the food shelf.

Property and Management- Thank you to the members who provide snow removal to FLC! Discussion on the front stairs and snow: continue to rope off but add a sign that welcomes and directs guests to the side doors.

Stewardship- Thank you for all benevolence giving that helped us to meet our pledge.

Youth and Education- Christmas Simmer kits were a hit again; we made plenty of extras and still have some on hand to sell. We are now selling them 2 for \$10. Our annual youth Christmas shopping day was so much fun; the kids were able to get some pretty fantastic gifts for their family members. Thank you to all the volunteers that came to help out! Upcoming events: Live Nativity & Noisy Offering Sunday Dec. 21st As we head into the New year, EdYou would greatly appreciate THRIVENT dollars again. We have a few events/activities in mind that would benefit from funding. Please contact Bryana at flcyouth45@gmail.com for more details.

KAIC- Met on 12/16. There were only 3 churches represented. Grace Lutheran is likely out, which means we are down to 6 congregations. Feedback from the survey (only FLC and Trinity in West Concord had results) was positive, showing that we want to continue to work together in some form. Requests for an intern have been sent to 3 additional seminaries, but it remains unlikely we will get an intern. KAIC has a challenging reputation due to the coverage of multiple sites.

Long Range Planning/Personnel/Endowment/Committees- Endowment will meet next on 1/7/26. Personnel completed Pastor D.J.'s annual review.

Committees: Please send Tammy your reports for the annual meeting, preferably in word format.
tammymfletcher@hotmail.com

Next Meeting: January 21st **Time:** 7 pm **Devotions:** Brad

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn Tammy/Chris/pass **Time:** 8:18 pm

Closing with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted, Amy Lee, Secretary



At this writing we are in The Twelve Days of Christmas which began December 25 and end January 5. That makes Tuesday January 6 the day called, Epiphany of Our Lord. Because we do not have services on that weekday, we will celebrate EPIPHANY on SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, two days early. We welcome Reverend Nancy L. Dreier as our presider & preacher.

Epiphany begins with Isaiah's call "Arise...your light has come" (Isaiah 60:1) and we are urged to Get up! Go! As with the wise ones who came to shower the Christ child with gifts, we are changed. We have seen God's salvation.

MORE JANUARY SUNDAYS:

January 11 – Rescheduled LAY-LED Lessons & Carols from 12-28 – *We'll sing Christmas Carols!*

January 18 -- LAY-LED Service of the Word – Reflects on the Baptism of Jesus – the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World.

January 25 – Holy Communion Worship w/Pastor D.J. Followed by ANNUAL MEETING.

IN FEBRUARY:

'AFTER-EPIPHANY' Sundays will end on February 15 -- Transfiguration Sunday

Lent begins – Ash Wednesday, February 18.

(Wow! Can Spring be far behind?)



- F L C W -

Thank You to Candy Herrlich for her dedication in leading the Women of First Lutheran over the past many years. Her mentorship this past year and trust in me to step into the role means a lot. I look forward to serving alongside everyone as we support First Lutheran with our time and talents.

Please come to our next FLCW meeting on January 11th in the Joy room after the service. Susan Hoversten

BIBLE TRIVIA QUESTIONS

What three gifts did the Wise Men bring to the baby Jesus?

Who recognized Jesus as the Messiah when Jesus was presented at the Temple?

Who were John the Baptists parents?

Where did Jesus grow up?



SEASON: *Epiphany*

				1	2	3
4 2nd Sun aftr Chr Epiphany Worship 9 Worship w/Rev. Nancy L. Dreier 10 Coffee NO SUN SCHOOL	5	6	7 Endowment Committee	8 1 pm LOVE DAY	9	10
11 9 Worship LAY-LED 10 Coffee 10 Sun Sch - Class 10 FLCW Meeting	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 2nd Sun aftr Epiph 9 Worship LAY-LED 10 Coffee 10 Sun Sch - Class	19	20	21 7 pm COUNCIL	22 1 pm LOVE DAY	23	24
25 3rd Sun aftr Epiph 9 Worship w/ Pr. D.J. 10 Coffee 10 Sun Sch - Class 10 + <i>Annual Meeting</i>	26	27	28	29	30	31

Next Grief Support: February 23 @ 2 pm

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JANUARY
Newsletter



And God Bless You

and Send You A

