



# FOCUS AT FIRST

Quarter 1 2020 — A quarterly publication of First Lutheran Church — Barron, WI



*We love first  
because God first loved us*



# Message from the Pastor



## Home + Church = Life

Church is the people, it is not a building. The job of the church has always been equipping believers to change the way they lived. That is, to repent from their sinfulness and start living for God. This new way of living was to allow our faith to permeate into all aspects of our lives. Today, more than ever, the church is at work doing just that. Like the altar on Maundy Thursday, we have stripped away all of the pretty things of gathering as a community and gone back to the basics of what it means to have faith in God.

As God's Church we continue to gather for worship to hear the Gospel message. We continue to gather to pray with and for one another. We continue to serve those in need. We continue to be God's Church, just in a different way. In these days, we have transitioned the Church from 4 W LaSalle Avenue to your home. And so as a congregation have transitioned our primary efforts from programs to people. For this point in time we worship, pray, study scripture, and serve others from our homes. We continue to be the Church by living out our faith with our children, spouses, and friends. We continue to Love Others First, Because God First Loved Us.

*Pastor Ron*

# Table of Contents

## Ministry Reports by Area

Congregational Life	4
Worship & Music	5
Outreach	6
WELCA	7
Faith Formation	8-9
Member Care	10
Property	11
Financials	12-13
Fun Facts	14

## Join us for worship

- **Sundays at 9:00am on the radio 97.7FM and streamed live on our website and Facebook Page.**
- **Wednesdays 6:15pm streamed live from our Facebook Page only.**





# Congregational Life

## From the Balcony

My friends,

We are truly experiencing a monumental change in our daily lives, and worship. Most of us are feeling overwhelmed. There is SO much COVID19 coverage, with disruption to life and so much fear. Psalm 46 reminds us – God is our refuge and strength... therefore we will not fear, even though the earth itself be moved. The author of that Psalm lived in a time of more famine, war, and plague than we can imagine, and he still found peace. We can too.

All of Paul's letters in the New Testament are an example of keeping in touch when we can't be together. Look at 2 Timothy 1:4, how he longs to see someone who is struggling, but he does the next best thing by writing a letter to stay connected. In today's electronic world we have much more ability to keep in touch. Please reach out to a friend or neighbor and keep our church family together even though we are apart. Pastor Ron and your Church Council is looking at ways to keep us united, and safe at the same time. The decision to close our church building was not taken lightly. It was the only choice we had to keep us all safe. Let's hope this pandemic will soon pass, and we can look back at how strong First Lutherans maintained their faith.

May God give you strength.

Mike Otto, Council President

*Starting this summer First Lutheran Church will be partnering in mission with Wartburg Seminary, Dallas Lutheran Church, and New Scandinavia Lutheran Church. Vicar Lucy will serve primarily at these two congregations with Pastor Ron serving as the off-site internship supervisor. We are excited for this opportunity to raise up a future Church leader and are looking forward to seeing how the Holy Spirit will move us into this new ministry partnership with our neighboring ELCA congregations. Meet Vicar Lucy:*

Hello, Members of First Lutheran, New Scandinavia, and Dallas Lutheran Churches!

My name is Lucy Hardie and I'm very excited to partner with you for my internship. I thank you for this opportunity to learn from you and with you as I journey toward becoming a pastor. I look forward to meeting you in September, until then, here is a bit about me.

I was born and raised in Tomah, WI in two blended households. I have several step-siblings, nieces, and nephews. Most of my family lives in Wisconsin or Minnesota. I have been married to my husband, Ross, for 5 years. We met and became friends while working at Sugar Creek Bible Camp during college. We welcomed our first child, Samuel, in July of 2019 (during the big summer storm). We live in Chetek where Ross works as the Program Director at Luther Park Bible Camp. I enjoy reading, crafting, watching the Packers and the Brewers, going on family walks (including our dog Dutch), and enjoying the outdoors.



I am looking forward to getting to know the Barron and Dallas communities but especially I am eager for the opportunity to get to know the families and friends of Dallas, New Scandinavia and First Lutheran churches. Thank you for inviting me into your communities and lives as we share life's ups and downs and experience God's amazing love. I know God is already doing amazing work through you, and I feel blessed to be joining you. Until then, may the peace of Christ be with you.

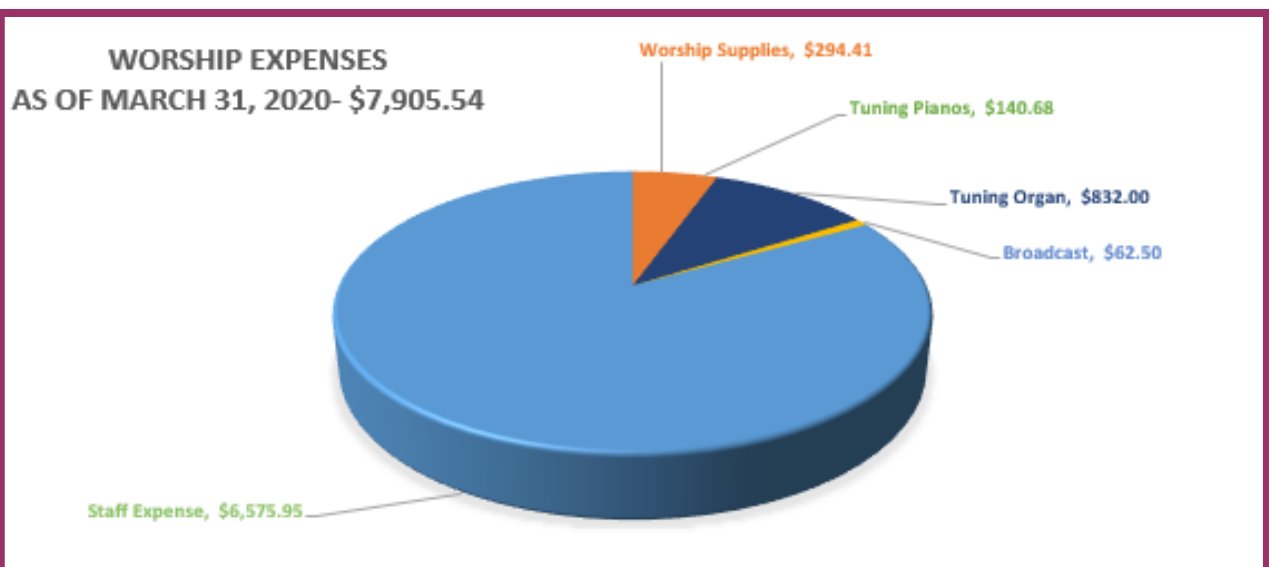
Vicar Lucy Hardie

# Worship & Music

Lenten services began with Ash Wed and is held each Wed eve at 6:15pm.

As of Monday, March 16, 2020 we suspended in person worship and continue our faith sharing through Radio and live streaming, this includes Sunday morning worship. Pastor Ron will continue to lead us during these services.

Ash Wednesday we experienced the imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion. We are encouraged to reflect on our personal faith journey and how we live our faith as we continue our Lenten Journeys.



This includes program expense as well as salaries for Choir Accompanist, Worship Musician, and Executive Assistant.

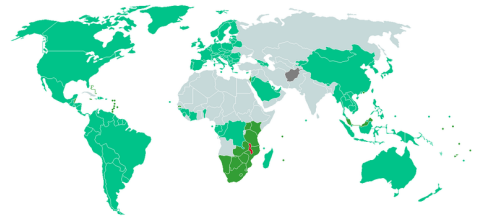
# OUTREACH

For several years, First Lutheran has reached out to Malawi, Africa during LENT as our globe mission project and this year is no different!

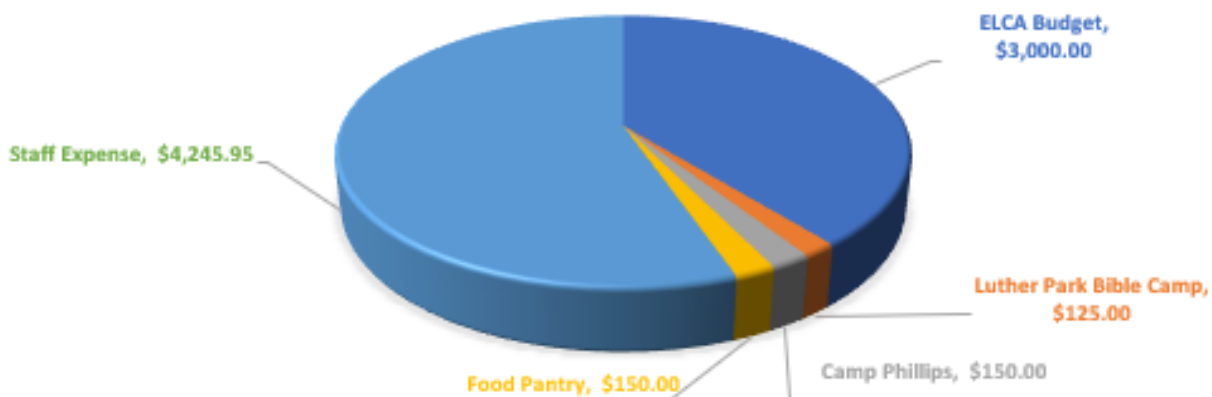
We extend our loving support through offerings given to uplift them in areas of their current needs. Gifts for feeding centers, bed nets for malaria prevention, medicine for clinics, treadle pumps for gardens along with seeds and fertilizers have been given in the past. This year we are reaching out to empower women and girls who live in an abusive life situation. Education materials in gardening will be the main focus. Supplies of seeds, fertilizer and basic tools will be furnished.

There was Lenten envelopes for this special offering. Due to the coronavirus our mission outreach was cut short in offering, but not in prayers for the dire needy girls and women in Malawi. A huge thank you for your generous support. God bless each of you!

Ann Knutson



**OUTREACH EXPENSES  
AS OF MARCH 31, 2020 - \$7,670.95**



# WELCA

Starting in January WELCA made donations to support Barron Area Community and Beyond.

- Barron Area Community: Meals on Wheels, Daybreak, BAY Account, Comfort Care Closet and Backpack Food 4Kids.
- Beyond: NW Synod-Missionary-Phillip Knutson, Malawi Fund, Women of the ELCA-Katie Fund, Equal Exchange-Coffee sales that supports coffee growers and Cherish All Children.
- New Blinds were purchased and installed in the Education Wing. All supplies for our Kitchen updated as needed.
- Donated all food supplies for the Youth Pancake Supper Fundraiser.
- February 5<sup>th</sup> had a program on Valentines, and everyone made a Valentine to take Home.
- Provided Service Projects for our Confirmation Youth, five Wednesdays during Lent. Youth with WELCA supervision rolled bandages, made fleece blankets and put together Personal Care Kits. Youth learned how and what these items are used for once they are donated to Lutheran World Relief and Global Ministries. March 4<sup>th</sup> and March 11<sup>th</sup> completed. Canceled until further notice. Mission Kits donations are appreciated. Watch for postings for needed items on our WELCA Bulletin Board and Church Website.
- Hosted World Day of Prayer on March 6<sup>th</sup> 1:30 p.m. at First Lutheran. Planned Program, advertised, did decorations and served lunch. Pictures from World Day of Prayer:



C



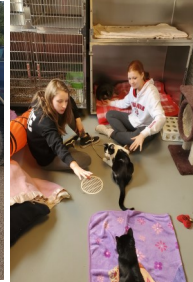
**Coming Up : All WELCA events canceled until further notice.**

All Women of our congregation are encouraged to join us. Watch for information on WELCA opportunities in the Weekly Bulletin, Church Website and our Church Facebook Page.



# Faith Formation

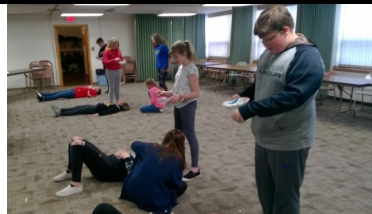
**Confirmation:** Our confirmation youth were busy during the first few weeks of our Lenten season serving our church and community. They visited residents at Monroe Manor, walked dogs at The Humane Society, helped Lynne Hanse with cleaning projects at Cupboard and Closet, helped Marian of WELCA roll bandages and prepared and helped to serve our evening Lenten meals. These activities were cut short by the COVID-19 public health emergency that closed schools for the last half of the season of Lent. Confirmation meetings are continuing to happen via Zoom weekly on Wednesdays at 3:30pm .



**Summer Mission Trip Fundraising:** Our youth have been busy raising funds for this coming summer's mission trips. Our middle school youth are planning to travel to Duluth July 26-31st where we will serve local Boys and Girls Clubs and nursing homes. Our high school students are planning a trip to Niagara Falls, New York June 12-21 where we will experience both the beauty of the area's natural wonders and the brokenness of the city that has been in economic decline since the 1960's. We have been preparing for these adventures by selling cinnamon rolls and serving coffee every month following Jubilee Worship. We ran a very successful Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper.

**High School Graduates:** We are in the process of planning to honor our High School Class of 2020 graduates on Sunday, May 17th.

**SWYG:** Once a month our Second Wednesday Youth Group gets together and celebrates as a group by performing a service project or playing games. In February we competed in Battle Of the Small Groups Minute to Win It Games.





# Faith Formation

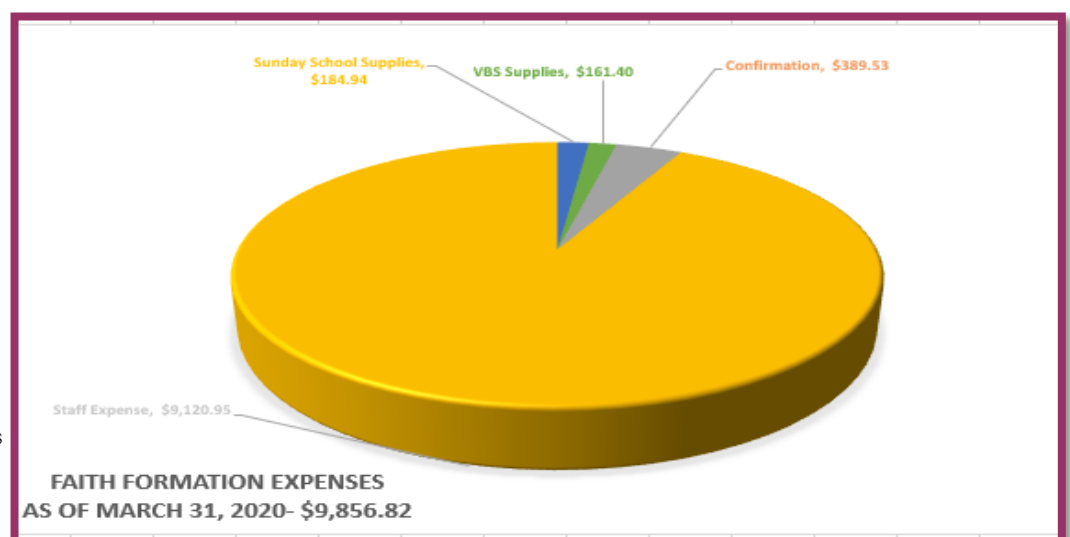
At each child's baptism, the parents, sponsors, and congregation are asked if they intend to bring their children up in the ways of the church – teaching them the important items of our faith and helping them to learn about God. When parents make that promise, they do it with the intention of having a faith community that will gather together to help the child learn, making use of ministries like Sunday School, and bringing the child into worship services where they meet other members of the family of God. This spring has brought so many of those things to an abrupt halt.

Like most things in our church, COVID-19 has majorly disrupted how we do Children's Ministry. Instead of songs, games, music, and relationship building in person, our ministry has moved to sharing faith in the home. Before we stopped meeting, our music team had decided to walk the students through stories about how great and mighty God is. That choice feels just perfect for this scary time we are going through, doesn't it? When life feels so uncertain, it is great to look back through the stories in the Bible to see all the ways God provided for His people over the ages. Instead of attending Sunday School, we're looking at these stories in the home setting, using a strategy that Pastor Ron often talks about: FAITH5. FAITH5 is a simple way for families to connect, and to continue to work towards their baptismal promise of sharing their faith with their children – through conversations at the dinner table, or before heading off to bed. Families are asked to share their highs and lows, look at scripture, and then see how the passage relates back to what's going on in our personal lives. Bible stories and conversation topics will be emailed weekly at least through the end of our scheduled Sunday School season. In order to remain good stewards of the gifts we have been given, we will set aside our remaining purchased curriculum from this spring, and plan to use it next year. The teaching materials are not dated so we can jump right back in when we meet again!

Worshiping at home is a new task for many of our families as well, so another area of support we are working to provide for families includes suggestions for creating a good worship environment at home. These tips are on our church's website, as they are good for viewers of all ages, and have been mailed home to all Sunday School families. Sunday School families also will be receiving items such as children's bulletins, sermon notes, prayer requests, and more in the mail each week. If other families would like to receive these mailings, please don't hesitate to contact me – I'd be happy to add you to my list!

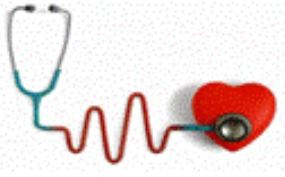
Finally, I would like to touch on Vacation Bible School. Planning for this program has hit the pause button for now. I want to make sure we are keeping everyone as safe as possible, and at this time I am not sure we can do that during the month of June. We will continue to monitor what is happening and make decisions about dates as it is appropriate. Whenever we do schedule VBS, we will use the Rainforest Explorers theme, as I am still very excited to go on that journey with all of you!

Thank you to everyone for their flexibility with our programming! I cannot wait to see all our families together back in our church building!



This includes program expense as well as salaries for Children's Ministry Director and Youth Ministry Director.

# Member Care



First Lutheran's Caring/Health Ministry continues with activity that reflects the church's mission: First Love, Love First. Weekly visits to area nursing homes and assisted living facilities allow resident members to remain connected to First Lutheran.

Conversation regarding upcoming church activities, on-site services as well as spiritual periodicals, help create a meaningful spiritual experience for our member residents.

Additionally, the ministry, in coordination with Pastor Ron, make hospital visits to those members experiencing change in health status and desiring ministerial care. For those discharged home, a follow up phone call or home visit is appreciated and valued by members affected. Communion is offered as part of the members' spiritual care.

The ministry also provides monthly health information regarding relevant health topics. For example, March is Colon Cancer Awareness month, April is Distracted Driver Awareness and May is Stroke Awareness month.

Finally, during the influenza season, monthly updates are provided. More recently, the Coronavirus has been at the forefront of national and international news, as it poses a significant health risk. The latest information is as follows:

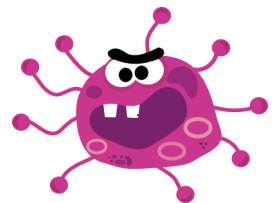
## INFLUENZA

The H3N2 virus is widespread and currently, at high level in the Midwest, including Wisconsin. The virus may continue to spread from person to person this year possibly, into May.

Therefore, take precaution to prevent getting the flu by getting a flu shot. If you have not already done so, speak with your health care provider. If you get sick, stay home, rest, drink plenty of fluids and always use good handwashing.

## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

This virus was first detected in China however, has since been detected in over 70 locations including the US. The virus appears to be more contagious and causes more severe illness than the influenza virus. Please go to [CDC.GOV](https://www.cdc.gov) for updated information on this rapidly evolving situation that will include updated guidance.



Blessings,

Carol A. Matthys

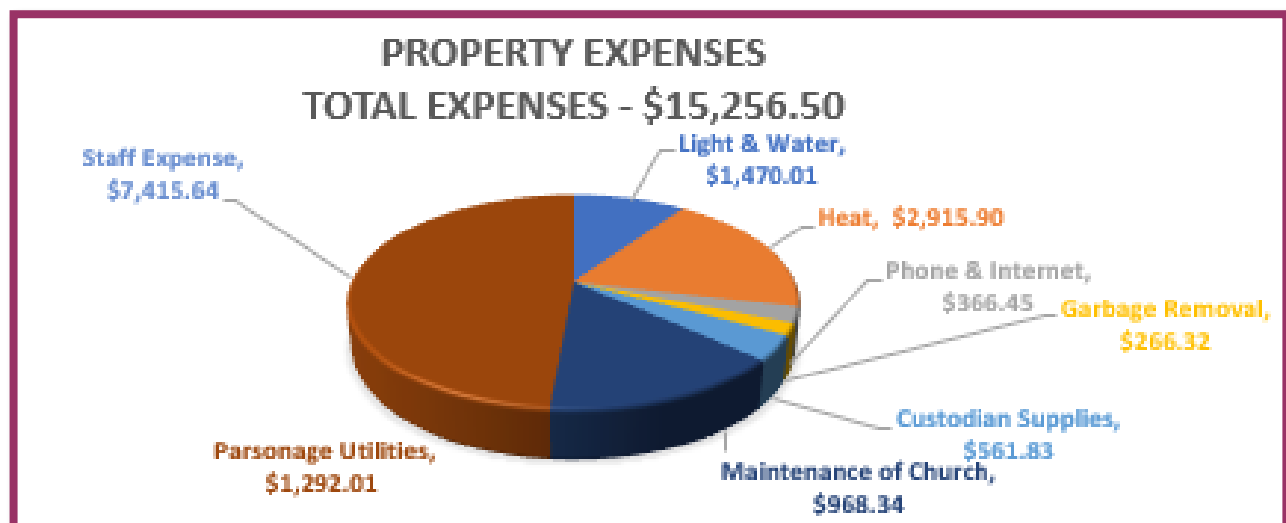
# Property

We have always said that the Church is the people, not a building. While buildings have their uses, it is the community of believers that is most important. As we put this quarterly newsletter together over the last month, a lot has changed. Some of these articles are a good reminder of the community we have here at First Lutheran. And other articles are directing us to how that community has shifted in the past month.

While the news headlines read "churches closed, worship services cancelled." I just want to say that worship is happening, our church is NOT CLOSED! Yesterday was Palm Sunday worship where we had over 150 computers logged into our Livestream and another 55 computers watching on Facebook. That is over 200 computers. Multiply that by the number of people watching and you are reminded just how big of a faith community we really are. Last week we had a team of 20 members of our church making phone calls to reach out to every member of our congregation. Usually we make call list when there is a financial appeal or a need for volunteers. But when was the last time every member of FLC was given a call with the only agenda being to make sure they were doing alright?

The church is the people. Calling, checking-in, serving the needs of others, and worshiping from our living rooms. That is how First Lutheran Church is continuing to "Loving Others First Because God First Loved Us."

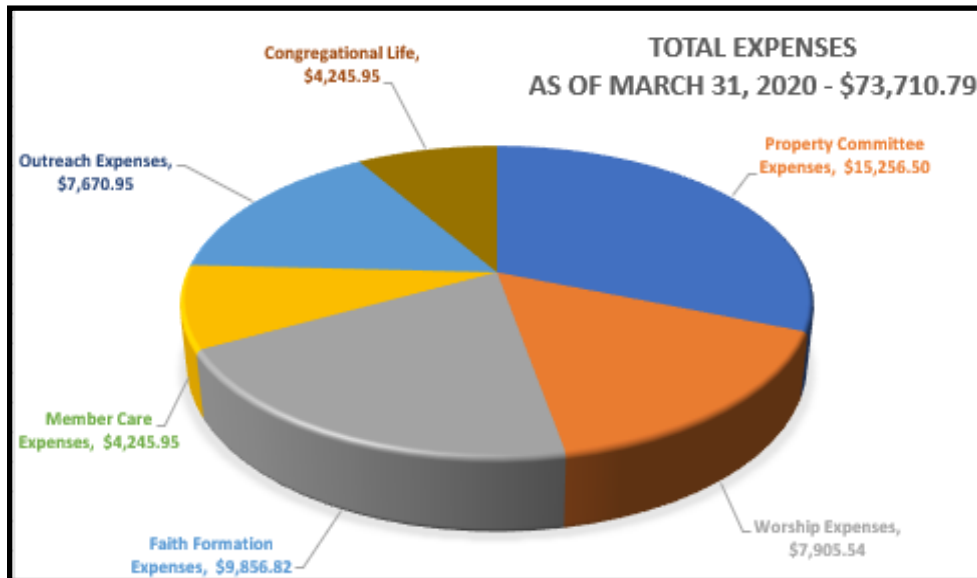
*Pastor Ron*



This includes program expense as well as the salary for the Facilities Maintenance Coordinator.



# Financials



We are able to provide the ministries we have at FLC in large part thanks to the efforts of our amazing staff team. Because staff enable programming to happen by equipping volunteers, here is a pie chart of our total ministry expenses to help us understand the true cost of what it takes for our ministries to happen. For simplicity in calculations, Pastor Ron's salary is distributed evenly over all the ministry areas. Some expenses are paid in lump sums but allocated quarterly for reporting purposes.

Thank you for your financial support in God's mission here at First Lutheran Church. Your financial gifts enable us to fulfill our mission to reach out to others with the love of Christ. If you've been thinking about signing up for automated electronic giving, now is a great time to do so. Just go to our website at [www.firstlutheran-barron.org](http://www.firstlutheran-barron.org). And click on the "Give" button at the top right. If you have any questions about the process or need help please don't hesitate to call the church office.

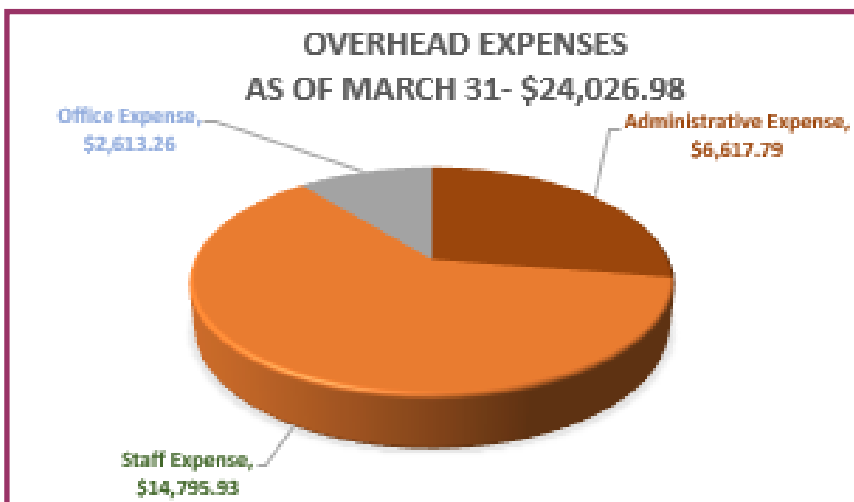
## Ways to Give Electronically

Your financial gifts make all that we do here at FLC possible.

**Give+ Text:** Set up a one time or recurring donation by texting the amount you wish to give to 715-496-6473

**Give+ Mobile App:** Download the 'GivePlus Church' app to set one-time or recurring donations. You can also manage and view your giving from the convenience of your smartphone.

**Give+ Online:** Visit [firstlutheran-barron.org/give](http://firstlutheran-barron.org/give) to set up and manage your one-time and recurring gifts.



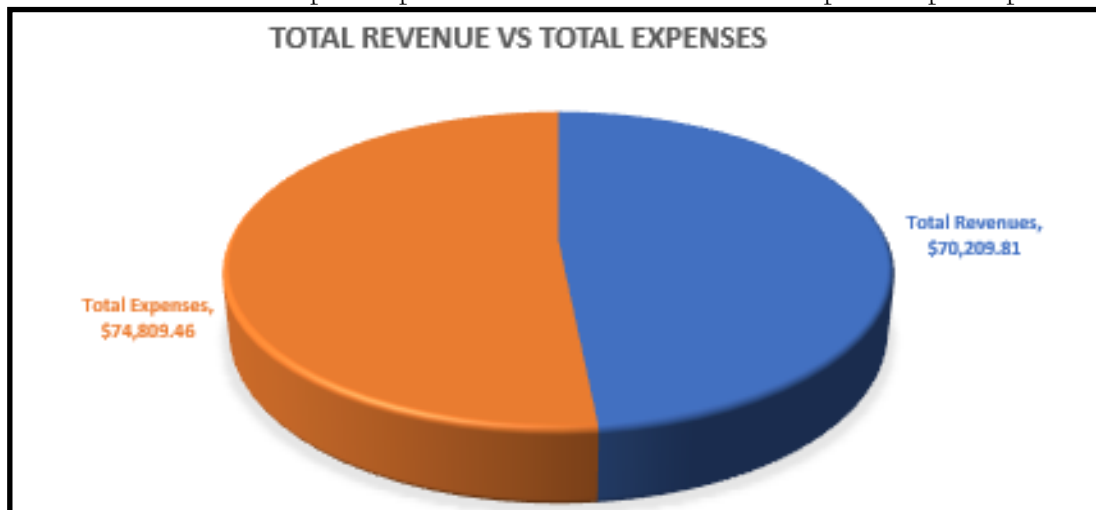
# Financials

Accounts	Actual - Quarter 1	Budget - Quarter 1	Annual Actual	Annual Budget
<b>Revenues</b>				
Total General Fund Offerings	\$ 69,683.71	\$ 70,163.03	\$ 91,283.70	\$ 309,600.00
Total Non-General Fund Offerings	\$ 526.10	\$ 500.01	\$ -	\$ 2,000.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 70,209.81</b>	<b>\$ 70,663.04</b>	<b>\$ 91,809.81</b>	<b>\$ 311,600.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Total Pastoral Expense	\$ 29,721.65	\$ 30,192.91	\$ 29,721.65	\$ 117,771.77
Total All Other Staff Expense	\$ 22,525.44	\$ 25,605.28	\$ 22,525.44	\$ 102,521.00
Total Staff Expense	\$ 53,847.86	\$ 58,455.95	\$ 52,247.09	\$ 230,923.77
Total Property Committee Expense	\$ 7,840.86	\$ 8,649.99	\$ 7,840.86	\$ 34,600.00
Total Worship Expense	\$ 1,329.59	\$ 1,762.50	\$ 1,329.59	\$ 7,050.00
Total Personnel Expense	\$ -	\$ 125.01	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Total Council Expense	\$ 265.00	\$ 375.00	\$ 265.00	\$ 1,500.00
Total Finance Expense	\$ 5,807.99	\$ 3,977.49	\$ 5,807.99	\$ 14,710.00
Total Faith Formation Expense	\$ 735.87	\$ 1,420.00	\$ 735.87	\$ 10,100.00
Total Member Care Expense	\$ -	\$ 75.00	\$ -	\$ 300.00
Total Outreach Expense	\$ 3,425.00	\$ 4,925.01	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 14,300.00
Total Congregational Life Expense	\$ -	\$ 50.01	\$ -	\$ 400.00
Total Administration Expense	\$ 3,158.06	\$ 2,627.49	\$ 3,158.06	\$ 10,510.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 76,410.23</b>	<b>\$ 82,443.45</b>	<b>\$ 76,309.49</b>	<b>\$ 324,893.77</b>
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$ (6,200.42)</b>	<b>\$ (11,780.41)</b>	<b>\$ 15,500.32</b>	<b>\$ (13,293.77)</b>

Explanation for the above chart:

- Column 1 is the actual quarter donations and expenses. This averages out the annual contributions over four quarters.
- Column 2 is the quarterly budget.
- Column 3 is the year to date donations and expenses.
- Column 4 is the annual budget.

For questions or clarification of the above expense report or to receive a detailed financial report of expenses please contact the church office.



# Fun Facts

Checkout our new Facebook Page for worship service videos and church news. [www.facebook.com/FLCBarron](http://www.facebook.com/FLCBarron).

## Did you know....

- **FLC Worship members in 2020 as of March 31 was 1638**
- **FLC church welcomes four groups who routinely use our facilities to meet their mission and vision that are not ministries within FLC.**
- **Lutherans believe in “Salvation by grace through faith”. Ephesians 2:8-9 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.**
- **The first Lutheran pastor to be ordained in the United States was German-born Justus Falckner on Nov. 24, 1703.**
- **As of December 31, 2018, there were 3,363,281 baptized members in the ELCA. There were 9,091 congregations organized in 65 synods in nine geographic regions.**

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

*Matthew 28:18-20*



4 W LaSalle Ave., Barron, WI 54812  
715-537-3575

[www.firstlutheran-barron.org](http://www.firstlutheran-barron.org)

Sunday Worship @ 9am

Wednesday Worship @ 6:15pm on  
Facebook only



### Church Office Hours

**Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM**

**Pastor - Ron Mathews**

[PastorRon@firstlutheran-barron.org](mailto:PastorRon@firstlutheran-barron.org)

**Dir. Church Business - Andrea Cox**

[Andrea@firstlutheran-barron.org](mailto:Andrea@firstlutheran-barron.org)

**Executive Assistant - Sheila Erb**

[Sheila@firstlutheran-barron.org](mailto:Sheila@firstlutheran-barron.org)

**Financial Secretary - Shirley Hakari**

**Parish Nurse - Carol Matthys**

[Carol@firstlutheran-barron.org](mailto:Carol@firstlutheran-barron.org)

**Children's Ministry - Amity Mathews**

[Amity@firstlutheran-barron.org](mailto:Amity@firstlutheran-barron.org)

**Youth Ministry - Patrice Akenson**

[Patrice@firstlutheran-barron.org](mailto:Patrice@firstlutheran-barron.org)

**Maintenance - Brett Gevens**

[Brett@firstlutheran-barron.org](mailto:Brett@firstlutheran-barron.org)