

FOCUS AT FIRST

Summer/July 2020 Quarterly Newsletter

First Lutheran Church — Barron, WI www.firstlutheran-barron.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

July

Together Again—Starting July 12th

August

Golf Event “Fore” Luther Park—August 22-28

September

Rally Day—Early September—watch for more information

Vicar Lucy will start at Dallas and New Scandinavia—September 14

Looking Ahead

Affirmation Sunday—October 25th.

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FROM THE BALCONY

Greetings First Lutheran Friends.

I hope this message finds you well and are staying safe. The coronavirus is still with us and we have learned to deal with the challenges it presents. This pandemic will be with us for the foreseeable future and we will have to adapt as needed. I’m writing this in June for the July newsletter. My hope is that we will have returned to meeting in church for the Sunday service. We presently are looking into getting all the puzzle pieces together for safely opening up the church building for that Sunday service. I know many of us are looking forward to gathering together in fellowship for worship. We will soon communicate when, and how that will happen.

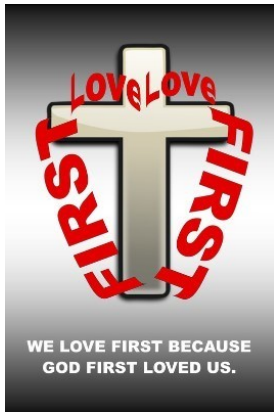
Civil unrest has caused much anxiety these last few weeks. This situation will not last forever. Meanwhile the only way to find peace between groups is to find something to unite us that is stronger than what divides us. Faith in Jesus is definitely a stronger bond along with the ideals of America – Justice, Equality, and Liberty.

Stay strong and live bravely.

Mike Otto

Council President

FROM THE PASTOR



The mission of First Lutheran Church is First Love, Love First; taken from 1 John 4:19: “We love because God first loved us.” But how do we live out our mission to love others first? In order to appropriately understand scriptural commands, it is important to look towards other parts of scripture.

Philippians 2:4: “do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Galatians 6:2: “Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”

By reflecting through the lens of Philippians and Galatians, we gain a fuller understanding of 1 John’s description of what it means to love. Bearing another's burdens and looking out for the best interests of others. This concept of caring for others, especially the vulnerable, is found throughout scripture in other passages like Romans 12:10 or Galatians 6:10. The idea of caring for those in need is also a foundational teaching point for Jesus; such as the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) or the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25).

How can we, as believers of God, love others first? How can we put the care of those around us before ourselves?

In today's current events one of the most significant and easiest ways we can do this is by wearing a face mask in public, not gathering in large crowds for extended periods of time (especially inside), keep a physical distance of six feet, not touch your eyes or mouth, wash your hands regularly, and stay home if you are sick. These are the guidelines that have been established by scientific experts (epidemiologists) on how to limit the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Some of these things are old news. Advice like wash your hands or cover your cough have been taught to children since the discovery of germs. But wearing a face mask or staying six feet physical distance away from others is something new, different, awkward, and at times impossibly inconvenient.

Wearing a face mask is anything but convenient. To be honest I really do not like wearing a face mask for long periods of time because they are hot, stuffy, and fog my glasses making it hard to see at times. While I am looking forward to gathering in person for worship, I am not looking forward to wearing a face mask for several hours. And yea, I’m not a huge fan of wearing them in stores either. However, doing what is best for others is never convenient. I choose to wear a mask because I know it is an important thing to do. It is an easy way to care for others and bear the burdens of those who need me to.

Here at First Lutheran Church, where we are called to Love First, First Love - we have accepted the difficulty of bearing the burden of others, especially those most vulnerable. For this reason, our worship services will utilize the guidelines outlined by the scientific experts. As you read the guidelines for our worship service I hope you will see how we have chosen intentionally to err on the side of health and safety and not convenience.

We Go, Loving others First
Pastor Ron

OUTREACH

Psalm 96:3 “Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

The coronavirus has handicapped our outreach in areas and in other ways opened doors to become more intimate with those in need. What a precious gift technology is.

UPDATES:

Jail ministry has been put on hold with the jail restricting visits and programs. Bud Thorsen continues to keep us updated.

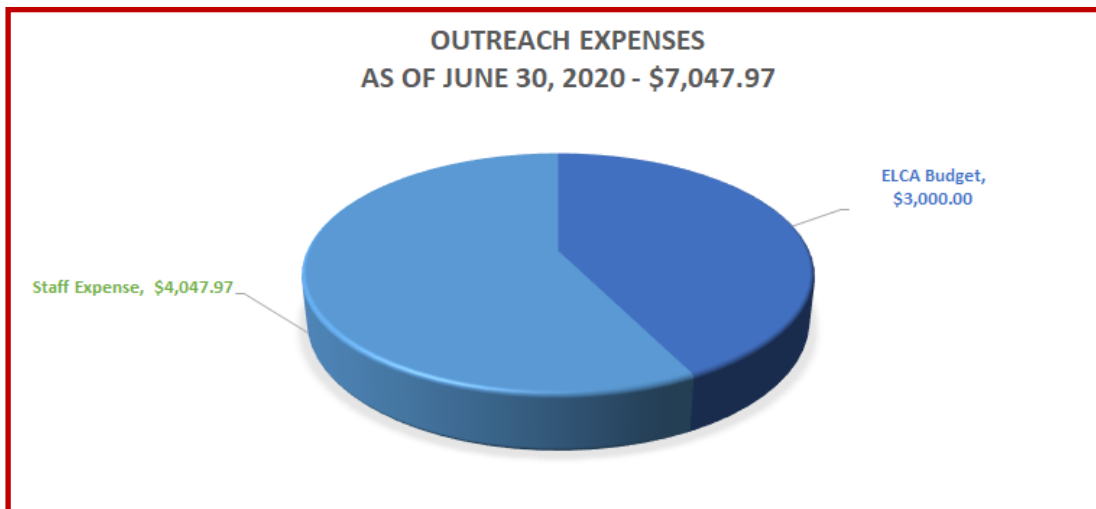
Kristi Pedersen is making plans on how Gift from the Heart will continue with all the beautiful aspects that the program has offered for so many-many years.

COVID-19 is impacting Malawi and it is feared it can be severe. Government unrest and a fragile health system adds to the problem. The dire poor in the rural villages are so often overlooked and ill informed. However, Centre for Girls and Women Empowerment, continues working to educate and microfinance women for a better way of life.

First Lutheran’s focus for others may have a different look with the “stay at home” order, but our love for others goes beyond our walls. Phone calls, virtual chats and distancing-visits with friends and shut-ins have become a priority. A drive by wave to neighbors or a sign chalked into a driveway have become a heart-warming touch. Thank you!

Yes indeed, **“FIRST LOVE, LOVE FIRST We love first because God first loved us”!**

Ann Knutson



FAITH FORMATION

While it seems like so much of 2020 has been “cancelled”, Children’s Ministry has remained busy and the tempo has picked up as we move into the heart of summer!

Since the last newsletter, Sunday School resources have wrapped up for the spring season, with weekly emails being sent home that included resources to hold a Sunday School alternative as a family, such as discussion questions, songs, and crafts. My hope is that these plans allowed families to grow in their faith learning together, truly living out their baptismal promises to teach their children the ways of our faith.

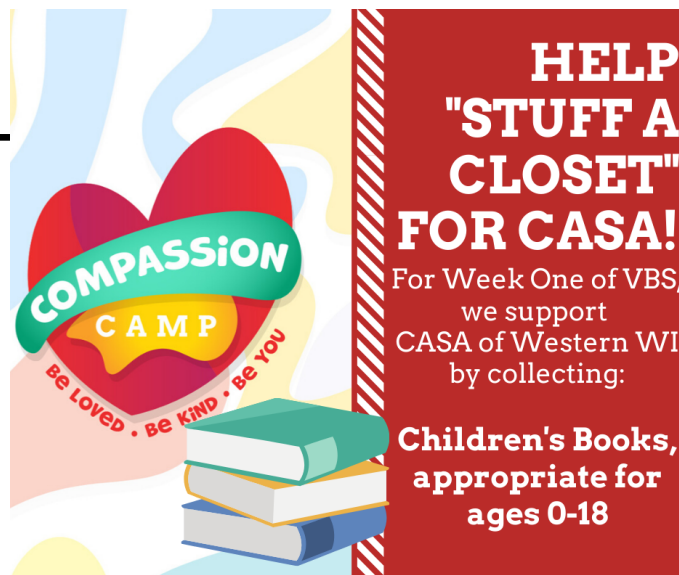
Compassion Camp VBS has officially launched out to the congregation, with 21 families and over 60 participants pre-registered to participate using a VBS supply kit. Weekly lessons will continue through mid-August. With plans to include the entire congregation in VBS this year, through worship, Bible study, social media options, and more, we hope that Compassion Camp VBS helps us all to grow in the areas of empathy and compassion as we interact with our communities, family – and even ourselves. After all – our church mission is “First Love, Love First”, which seems to really encompass the idea of compassion! I am eager to hear how your perspective on caring and compassion grows, so please take time to interact with us!



I have begun to brainstorm, research, and pray about our eventual return to in-person Children’s Ministry opportunities. I don’t exactly know what that will look like at this point, but I do promise to work hard to create the safest learning environment possible for our families, while attempting to maintain as much normalcy as possible. As the summer moves on, families should keep an eye out for surveys about their comfort level towards returning, as well as invites to virtual planning meetings to develop our plans further.

I hope that your summers continue to be happy and healthy. Keep our Compassion Camp mantra in the forefront of your family’s plans this summer: “Be Loved. Be Kind. Be You.”

Amity Mathews



FAITH FORMATION

Confirmation: Our confirmation youth ministry was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We finished our year with weekly meetings via Zoom. Our youth and adult leaders met for prayer and a devotion each Wednesday through the end of the school year. While the experience was not the same as being able to meet in person, we found it meaningful to stay in touch and keep reminding each other of the strength that God gives us in times of crisis.

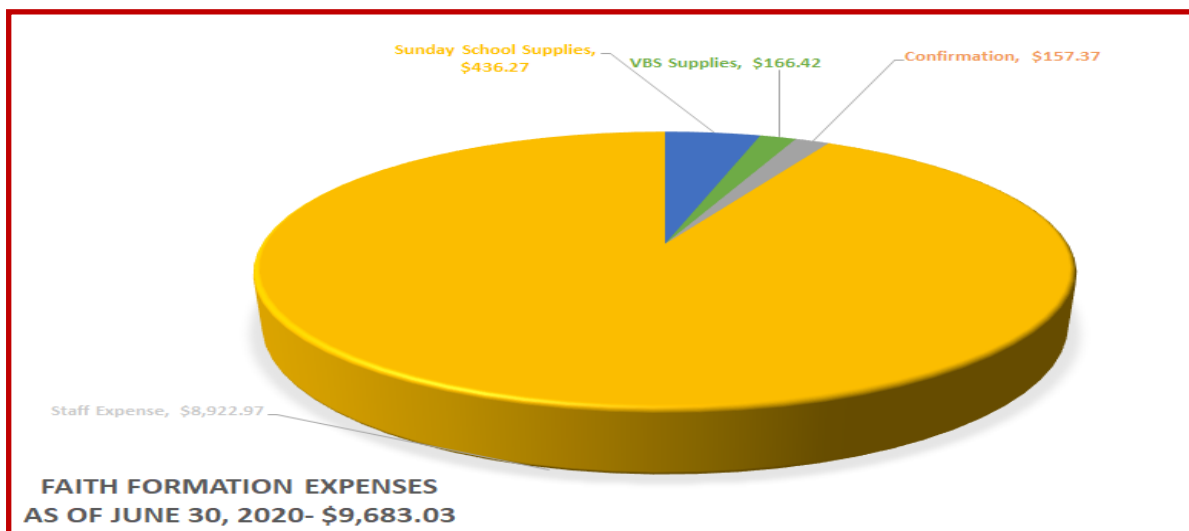


Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. — Philippians 4:6



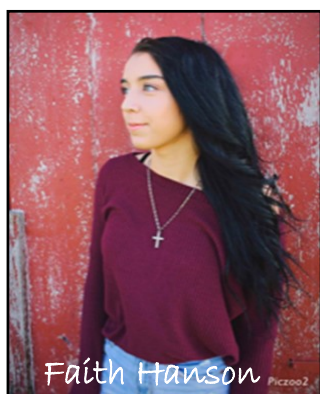
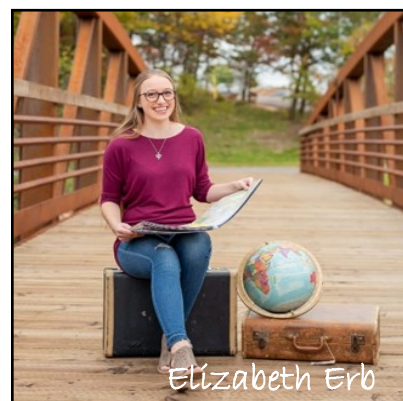
Summer Mission Trips Canceled: Our plans for mission trips were canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although we were all disappointed, the safety of our youth and adult leaders was our most important concern. We are hopeful that we will be able to make plans for the summer of 2021 which could include our ELCA National Youth Gathering planned to take place in Minneapolis June 29-July 3rd, 2021.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH 2020: Affirmation Sunday, which was originally scheduled in the spring, was postponed until the fall. The new date for **Affirmation Sunday is October 25th**. Please mark this date on your calendar and pray that we will be able to worship together in celebration of our youth affirming their faith in Christ.



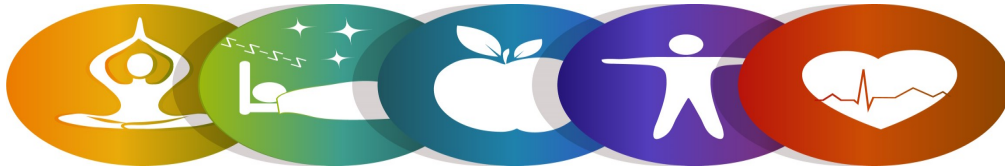
FAITH FORMATION

Class of 2020: We honored our High School Class of 2020 graduates on Sunday, May 17th with special music, prayer and shared memories of their time spent here at First Lutheran. We will keep them in our prayers as they navigate their future and maintain their faith in a God that will give them all the strength and courage necessary in these uncertain times.



MEMBER CARE

Greetings! My usual entry in the monthly newsletter has focused on an aspect of wellness and disease prevention. The health topic selected was based on a national prevention message such as breast cancer awareness, men's health, diabetes prevention/care, to name a few.



However, over the past few months we have had a change in focus. The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) has encompassed our lives. We live with daily news regarding the disease and its impact on the nation, our state and our local community. Feelings of uncertainty create fear and anxiety for individuals and their families. We seek to find answers as to how to live and work safely. We rely on the experts in the science and health communities to analyze the facts and give appropriate recommendations.

Amidst all of this however, we must take pause and remember to take care of ourselves and to consider not only our physical health but also our psychosocial and spiritual well-being. These aspects of wellness remain important within our 'new normal'.

Therefore, consider the following:

Physical health:

If you have ongoing health issues, continue to see your provider on a regular basis.

Additionally, schedule per usual, for annual health screenings.

Psychosocial health:

Social distancing can result in feelings of isolation. Going outdoors or going for a walk can help to improve mood. Staying connected with friends and family through a phone call, texting, emailing or other social media outlets may help to alleviate feeling of loneliness. Remember to seek help from a health care professional if you continue to feel sad, depressed or anxious.

Spiritual health:

Slowing down and taking pause may help to refocus and prioritize your life. Take time to focus on the 'good' in the world and our community. Prayer, whether through artistic expression, a favorite hymn or in personal talk with God may assist in finding answers to our daily concerns and long-term health.

The ultimate hope for all is to find internal peace.

Blessings,
Carol A Matthys
Parish Nurse



TOGETHER AGAIN



Dear church,

Woody Allen once said, “If you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans.” The last couple weeks our Leadership Team worked to create a good Together Again plan. We implemented it last Sunday July 12th. Barron County Public Health has issued new guidelines that restrict gatherings so we are changing our plan.

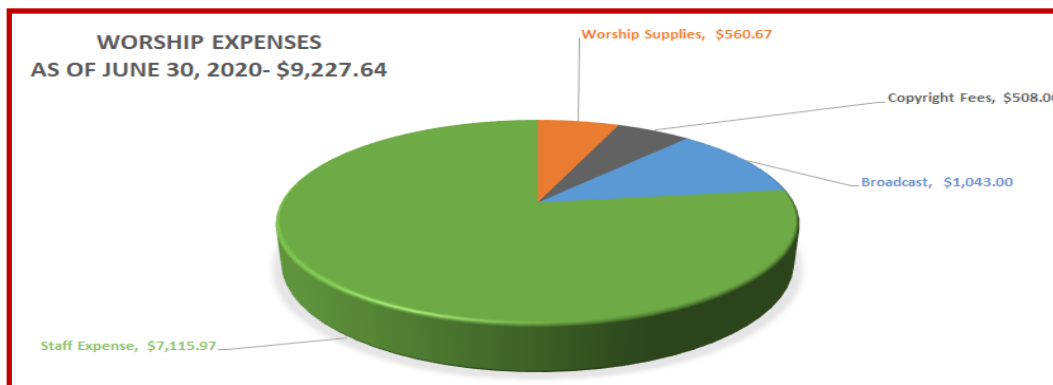
Beginning this Sunday (July 19th) worship will be held as follows:

- **9:00am Livestream and radio broadcast – building will be closed for this service**
- **10:15am Outdoor Worship** – masks and 6 foot physical distance to be kept as we gather for prayer, hear God’s word, and receive Holy Communion. Please bring your own chair to sit on, or you might be able to remain in your car as well depending on where you park as Pastor Ron will use an amplified microphone.

We Go, Loving Others First!

FLC Council, Worship and Music Committee, and Pastor Ron Mathews

Please note this plan is contingent on the events as of “today”. First Lutheran Leadership is closing monitoring Barron County and CDC guidelines and recommendations. Watch the announcements, website, and Facebook for up to date information. If you have any questions about this plan or what is expected, please feel free to contact Pastor Ron, Andrea in the church office, or any member of the leadership teams.



PROPERTY



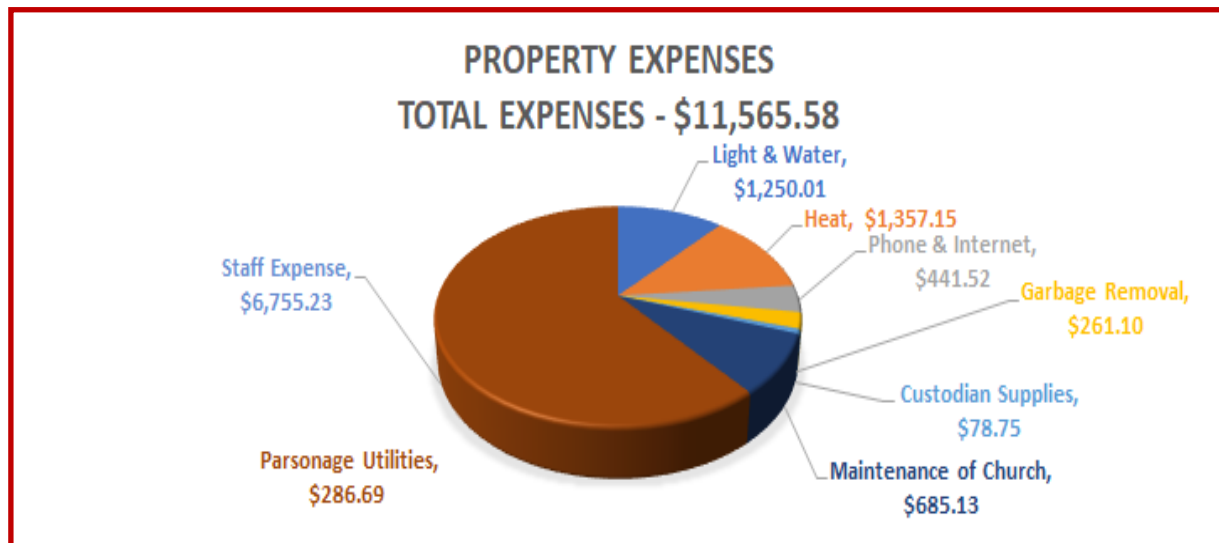
We want to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers that work tirelessly helping to keep our beautiful church building operational and looking good. From the work to make many talents shared on streaming to all the paperwork and time spent selling the parsonage. From the lawn mowing and flower gardens to making calls to check shut ins or others in need. We are blessed with many members willing to share their time and gifts.



Jan Kienbaum and the flower garden she cleaned up.

FACILITIES AND FUTURE

The committee has been continuing to meet with Miron Corporation and gather information such as the condition and efficiency of the current building. The information is being reviewed and will hopefully be available in late August or early September. Watch the announcements and website for more information.



GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

For Befrienders in Memory of Cheryl Johnson

\$10.00 by Rod & Linda Wieneri \$165.00 by Anonymous donors \$25.00 by John & Barb Kirk
\$75.00 by Gerald Johnson \$50.00 by Steve & Lynn Haugen \$25.00 by Marcia Fall
\$20.00 by Wayne & Val Gieseke \$25.00 by Terry & Carolyn Miller

For Camperships in Memory of LaVern Strop

\$400 by Marilyn Strop

For General Fund

\$10.00 In Memory of Marv Anderson by Rod and Linda Weimeri
\$25.00 In Memory of Howard Ness by Steve and Kim Ness

For Gift from the Heart in Memory of Cheryl Johnson

\$50.00 by Carol Romsos \$700.00 by Anonymous donors \$1,600.00 by Gerald Johnson
\$25.00 by David & Debbie Olsen \$20.00 by Pam Jacoby \$25.00 by Boyd & Ann McEwen

For Undesignated

\$25.00 In Honor of Boyd McEwen's birthday by Dan Alexander
\$15.00 In Memory of Charles and Gladys Alexander by Dan Alexander
\$25.00 In Memory of Cheryl Johnson by Sharon Nelsen
\$385.00 In Memory of Effie Beckwith Hegna by the family of Effie
\$120.00 In Memory of Joe Fall by Anonymous donors
\$50.00 In Memory of Joe Fall by Lil Nevin
\$25.00 In Memory of Lucille Ness by Steve and Kim Ness
\$10.00 In Memory of Marv Amundson by June Edson
\$50.00 In Memory of Marv Amundson by Steve & Lynn Haugen
\$135.00 In Memory of Marv Amundson by Anonymous donors
\$20.00 In Memory of Marv Amundson by Terry & Carolyn Miller
\$500.00 In Memory of Marv Amundson by Bill Koser
\$10.00 In Memory of Marv Amundson by Roger Jones
\$50.00 In Memory of Marv Amundson by Anonymous donor
\$20.00 In Memory of Marv Amundson by Anonymous donor
\$150.00 In Memory of Nina Ellefson by Anonymous donor
\$10.00 In Memory of Nina Ellefson by Roger and Donna Jones
\$100.00 In Honor of Julie Malone by Roger and Donna Jones

For Poskin Cemetery in Memory of Cheryl Johnson

\$20.00 by DeAnn Anderson

For WELCA in Memory of Cheryl Johnson

\$20.00 by Jim and Bev Wichart

For Library in Memory of Nina Ellefson

\$20.00 by Gale Wells



FINANCIALS

GIFTS & MEMORIALS CONTINUED....

For Live Streaming

\$20.00 In Memory of Cheryl Johnson by Keith and Lynn Kolpack

\$20.00 In Memory of Marv Amundson by Keith and Lynn Kolpack

\$20.00 In Memory of Nyles Ellefson by Kolleen Forsman

\$200.00 In Memory of Joe Fall by Anonymous Donors

\$205.50 by Craig and Ruth Anderson

For Technology Fund

\$200.00 by Monroe Manor

For Helping FLC Members fund

\$500.00 by Bill and Bev Bates

Thank you to all who have donated to these designated (and undesignated) funds, we appreciate your love and support of the ministries of First Lutheran Church!

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. 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.

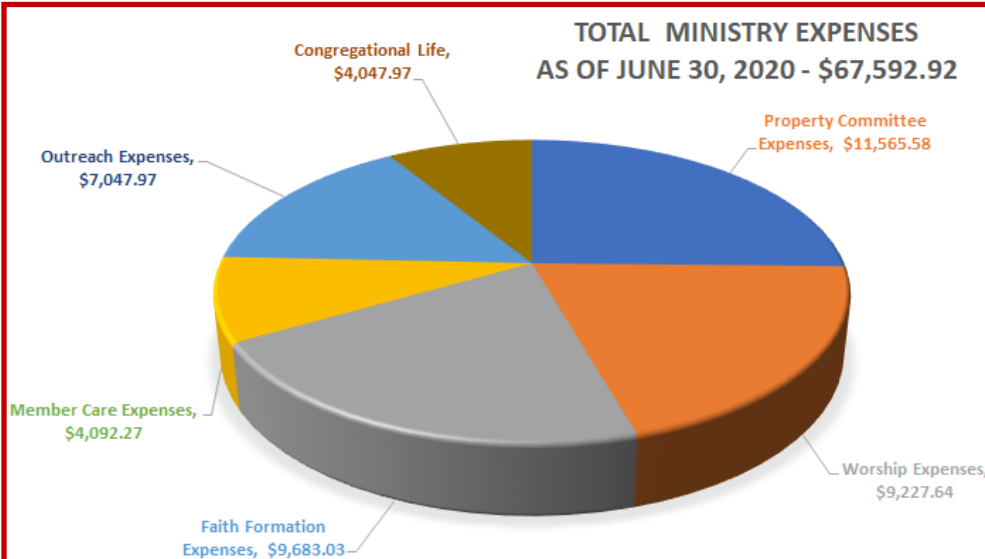
Ways to Give Electronically

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 to set up and manage your one-time and recurring gifts.



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.

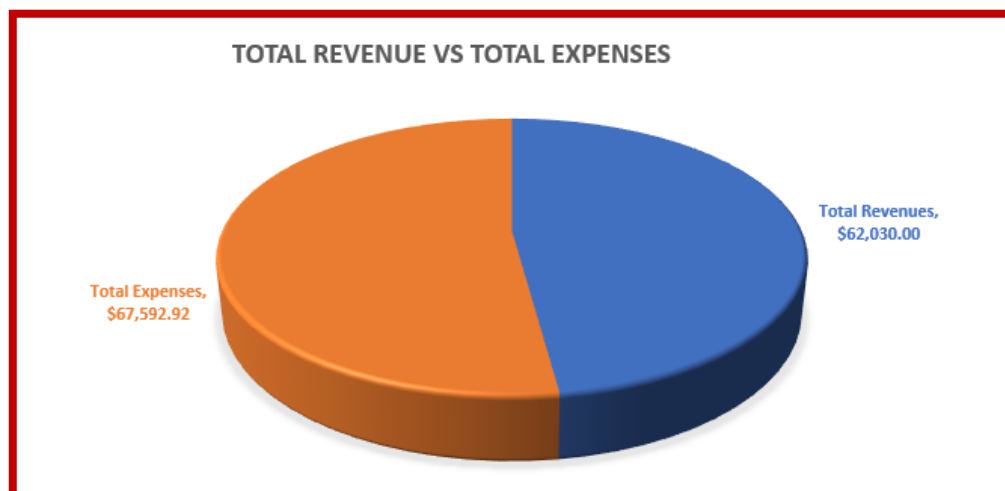
FINANCIALS

Accounts	Actual - Quarter 1	Budget - Quarter 1	Annual Actual	Annual Budget
Revenues				
Total General Fund Offerings	\$ 61,503.78	\$ 68,129.03	\$ 139,187.49	\$ 309,600.00
Total Non-General Fund Offerings	\$ 526.22	\$ 500.01	\$ 1,052.32	\$ 2,000.00
Total Revenues	\$ 62,030.00	\$ 68,629.04	\$ 140,239.81	\$ 311,600.00
Expenses				
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
Total Expenses	\$ 67,592.92	\$ 77,720.70	\$ 143,777.38	\$ 314,462.77
Net Total	\$ (5,562.92)	\$ (9,091.66)	\$ (3,537.57)	\$ (2,862.77)

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.



VBS COMPASSION CAMP



Compassion to the Neighbor— Beginning July 19
Mark 2:1-12

What do you think it means to be brave?
Who was brave to you in this story?
What do you think the friend who was paralyzed felt when he was healed?
How do you think he felt when he was able to be in his community again?



Compassion for Myself — Beginning July 26
Mark 12:28-31

What does it mean to love ourselves?
Why is this important?
How does having love for ourselves help us love others?
To love God?



Compassion Along the Way — Beginning August 2
Ruth 1:1-22

How does compassion help us be present?
What do you think it means to be with people in their hurt?
How can you be with someone while they are hurting?
How can you let someone be with you when you hurt?



Compassion With the World — Beginning August 9
Leviticus 25

What were some of the things God wanted the Israelites to do? Why?
What does it feel like to rest?
Why do you think it's important to have a fresh start?
Why do you think it's important for the land to rest?



Our VBS mission is supporting CASA's activity closet. When CASA's make their weekly visit to their child, it is very helpful to have an activity. Not only does this lead to great conversation but it also brings much needed smiles to these children.

Your donations will be used over and over and will impact the lives of many children. We request that donations be: multi-use and less than one hour activities, new or gently used, and kept to an easy to transport size. Suggested items will be collected throughout the five week program: books, arts/crafts, games, cards, puzzles, STEM, building, sports / balls / outdoor activities



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

www.firstlutheran-barron.org

Sunday Worship @ 9am

Wednesday Worship @ 6:15pm on Facebook @FLCBarron

Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Pastor - Ron Mathews - PastorRon@firstlutheran-barron.org

Dir. Church Business - Andrea Cox - Andrea@firstlutheran-barron.org

Executive Assistant - Sheila Erb - Sheila@firstlutheran-barron.org

Financial Secretary - Shirley Hakari

Parish Nurse - Carol Matthys - Carol@firstlutheran-barron.org

Children's Ministry - Amity Mathews - Amity@firstlutheran-barron.org

Youth Ministry - Patrice Akenson - Patrice@firstlutheran-barron.org

Maintenance - Brett Gevens - Brett@firstlutheran-barron.org

