



FOCUS AT FIRST

Fall 2023 - Quarter Three Newsletter

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

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

2023

October

23—1:30pm Afternoon Singalong

24—5:30-7pm Bible Study and Meal with Sally Ellison

November

4--9:00am - 2pm Fall Bazaar

5—All Saints Sunday

12—10:15am Thankful Hearts Social

December

3--10:00 Christmas Tree Trimming

24--9am & 4pm Christmas Eve Worship

25--10am Christmas Worship

January 2024

14--10:15am Breakfast Bites and Bunco



Don't forget to join us in person each Sunday at 9am or on the radio at WAQE 97.7 You can also view us online anytime via the website or [FB@FLCBarron](https://www.facebook.com/FLCBarron)

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PASTOR RON'S MESSAGE

Faith Family,

I was watching Carey Nieuwhof's Leadership Podcast where he interviewed Arthur Brooks – Harvard professor, PhD social scientist, author, speaker, and lover of Jesus. Brooks presents that happiness is a combination of enjoyment, satisfaction, and purpose. While there is a lot that goes into your happiness that you don't need to worry about like your mood, genetics, etc. as these things that you either cannot change or are able to change through your habits. Brooks argues that in order to get your habits right you can influence your happiness. He says there are four habits you need work on: *faith, family, friends, work.*

I believe that it is no small coincidence that we just finished a worship series on family, “the family we are born with and the family we choose.” Based on Brook's reflection I would argue that the Church is important, if not imperative, for true happiness. Church, our faith family, is where we combine three of the four items Brooks reflects on that are necessary for happiness – faith, family, and friends.

Let me draw for a moment on the faith aspect as I have said many things about family and friends over the past couple weeks. Faith is the act of placing our Trust into a higher authority. It is the process of recognizing that we are called to something greater than what society deems worthy. But more than all this, faith is transformative as it pulls us into a higher calling of living, it draws us into community with others, and shapes us to live, act, and think in better ways than society ever could be able. Scripture is filled with teachings on how believers are called to care for the poor and to help those society has deemed to be outcast. Luke 15:1-2 is just one of them: “By this time a lot of men and women of questionable reputation were hanging around Jesus, listening intently. The Pharisees and religion scholars were not pleased, not at all pleased. They growled, “He takes in sinners and eats meals with them, treating them like old friends.””

As we move into the fall season, a season notably marked by holidays, parties, and celebrations – a season of gathering with family and friends in homes as well as in churches. Take a moment in this season to survey your happiness. What role does faith play in your life? What role does being a part of a faith family (FLC) play in your faith? What transformations have you seen God working in your life and in your family and friends?

I have witnessed this transformative faith happening here at FLC over the past couple months as we have been challenged with such core Biblical values of caring for others. We

PASTOR RON'S MESSAGE (CONT'D)

host several community groups who meet here, many over which society deems unworthy. Alcoholics Anonymous and Adult Children of Alcoholics hold several meetings a week in our church building, and have for many years. We have held Women's Way, a program from Lutheran Social Services, until they lost Federal Funding, who serviced women who needed support as they struggled with homelessness, addiction, and abusive homelife. We currently hold the office/storage for Habitat for Humanity of Barron County who work to improve living conditions of the poor. And now, Council has agreed to be the pilot site for Barron County to host a Tiny Home project which will provide living conditions and services for individuals to gain self-sufficiency. Lastly, just a couple months ago Council has also agreed to welcome a LGBTQIA+ support group to meet here as well.

In Matthew 25 Jesus teaches "what you have done to the least of these, you have done also to me." What does it mean to help "the least?" Who are "the least?" They are those who invoke a kneejerk reaction, a reaction that has been taught to us by society. Jesus is calling us to do better than society, and it is hard because we are people who live in society! We live in community with other people who do not have the same value and beliefs as we do. And Jesus is calling us to do better, so that they can see your response, a better reason, a loving, grace filled response that will transform their hearts (and yours.) We put this response, based in 1 John 4, as:

"Loving Others First, Because God First Loved Us."

PASTOR RON

All Saints

All Saints Day will be celebrated on Sunday, November 5th. Candle papers are available in the church office, on the website or in the emailed announcements for loved ones that have passed. You may also choose to cut out the form below and submit it to the office. Completed forms should be returned to the church office or the information emailed to office@firstlutheran-barron.org by Monday, Oct. 30th.



OUTREACH NEWS

Tiny Home

First Lutheran has been called to place one of two tiny homes in Barron County, in our parking lot next March. We are called to this ministry to be a caring and supportive community for these people seeking a better life for themselves and their families. The home will have a sleeping area, a private bathroom that has a chemical toilet, a kitchenette with a microwave and refrigerator. The goals of the individual or family that will be living here are:

- Financial stability-they will be gainfully employed and able to save money.
- Resources connections-be invited to FLC's Wednesday dinners and Sunday church services and get to know the FLC family through visiting with members.
- Permanent housing- these homes are meant to be short term and after living in the tiny home being able to move on to something permanent.

Please look for more information to be shared with you in the next several months along with listening sessions to answer questions/concerns you may have. Please consider being part of FLC's Tiny Home Team!!



Trunk or Treat

Trunk or Treat will be held in the Woodland School parking lot on October 30th at 5:00 p.m. FLC will have a car there with candy to hand out to kids! We would love to have anyone interested in dressing up and helping us! Please let Ron or Jan Barrett know if interested!

Gift From the Heart

Ready or not we are heading into the season of GFTH! This will be the 30th year for this wonderful organization and we couldn't be more excited for another year! We are thankful to the FLC congregation for all the support you've given to this project all these years and that it was here it began 30 years ago! We again, will be collecting bottles of dish soap for the household bags we give to the families and as always, we are looking for waterproof gloves and mittens!



We hope to have hearts available to pick up beginning December 3rd. Gifts will be due to the church by December 17th and Distribution Day will be Monday, December 18th.

OUTREACH NEWS (CONT'D)

MALAWI OUTREACH TO CONTROL CHOLERA AND BEYOND!

Gal. 6:2 “Bare one another’s burdens and thus fulfill the love of Christ.”

Cholera hits Malawi in 2022-2023 with a vengeance. Thousands were dying each day. CFGWE felt compelled to do everything in their power to assist those suffering with Cholera and educate women and girls about the health care needs. This was the worst breakout of Cholera since 2003 when there were no vaccines or medicine to prevent it. This year Covid-19 confused Malawi. Was it Cholera or was it Covid?

Then cyclone Freddy hit Malawi and turned back to hit it again. The death toll exceeded 1,200 directly from the cyclone. But the spreading of Cholera through contaminated well water, rivers, and lake Malawi became out of control. There was no clean drinking water, bathing water, nor clothes washing water. Cholera was on the rise affecting over 58,000 people.

Centre For Girls and Women Empowerment Organization is driven by LOVE FOR HUMANITY! Our Motto: ***Girls and Women Our Priority, Our Focus!***

Through the generosity of the First Lutheran Church, CFGWE was able to supply hospital matrons with medicine and hygiene kits to assist in control and healing. They went into small villages to educate women on water treatment, sanitation, and hygiene. Taking with them supplies furnished by your generosity.

Words cannot express the love and gratitude they have for your gifts of love. The lives you have saved cannot be counted. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Centre for Girls and Women Empowerment Organization has been a registered Non-Governmental Organization since January 1, 2020. We are proud to announce we are a certified member of the Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi (CONGOMA).

Through strict audit we were found worthy to become a member. This qualifies us to receive grants from large donors to assist us to empower girls and women for a better way of life.

I am so humbled by the achievement and success of the women who manage CFGWE. God bless them abundantly for their personal sacrifices to achieve OUR dream that God laid out.

Again, I thank each of you, your prayers and generous gifts of love are immeasurable.

Blessings and love,

Ann Knutson



W/ELCA News

Happy Fall Everyone!

Quilting has started up after our summer recess. The quilters meet every Thursday at 9 a.m. to noon. Come and join us! We have a fun group. If Thursday mornings do not work for you, but you like to sew you can pick up a quilt top kit from the basket in Luther Hall. Step by step instructions are included.



W/ELCA had their first Senior Souper of the season September 20th, and while it was well attended, there is always room for more. The next one will be on Wednesday, October 18th, featuring Hamburger Vegetable soup and serving from 11:30-1pm. This is for all Seniors, not just First Lutherans, so bring a friend or two or more.

The Annual Holiday Bazaar & Luncheon takes place on Saturday, November 4th. The committees are set, the posters are up and we are looking forward to all the crafts our people have been working on and all the recipes that are ready for baking. The menu is great, as always, so come out and support the causes that benefit from this event.

BAZAAR

Carolyn Verhulst,

W/ELCA

Attention: Lefse Rollers Needed!

No Experience Necessary!

Wednesday, November 1st 9am

Sign up on the WELCA bulleting board or call the church office!



~ Annual WELCA ~
**HOLIDAY
BAZAAR
&
LUNCHEON**

Saturday, November 4th

8:30 AM

**CINNAMON
ROLLS**

Homemade
Cinnamon Rolls,
Hot Cider & Coffee
(use West entrance)

9:00 - 2:00

**HOLIDAY
BAZAAR**

Homemade Crafts
and Holiday Items.
Plus so much more!

10:30 - 1:00

**SOCIAL
LUNCHEON**

Choice of Soups,
Chili, Sloppy Joes
and Dessert

Take Outs
Available

• HOMEMADE LEFSE • BAKE SALE

First Lutheran Church

4 W. LaSalle Avenue • Barron
(1 block south of Hwy. 8 on Hwy. 25)

#LIVEGENEROUSLY

– Proceeds to benefit local and global missions –

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship Challenge

Leviticus 27:30 says “a tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain or fruit, is the Lord’s, and is holy.” Similarly Proverbs 3:9 says “honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops.”

While most of us are not farmers, the teaching about how believers ought to tithe remains central to our faith practices. The rule of ten percent goes back to times older than Abraham where Jews brought 10% of their earnings (livestock, grain, money, etc.) to the temple. These funds support the priests’ work as well as the work of the Temple to feed the poor and clothe those in need. The Temple’s grain stores were especially important to help communities survive times of drought and famine.

While things have changed, the teaching and the work of God’s church has not. Outside of the Old Testament Jesus taught in Matthew 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” As we consider that the work of the church is dependent on the financial contributions of its members, let me take a moment to offer this faith challenging thought. If your heart is where your treasure is, and you should give 10% of treasure, then you should give 10% of your heart.

Giving a tithe of your money, that’s easy to write the check. But what do you truly value most in life? Where is your heart truly at home? My guess few of us would answer our checkbook but rather in our relationships with family and friends. The love we share with others is where our hearts are at. So what if I pose this challenge, give 10% of your love to God. Give 10% of your love to the Church. Would you be willing to do that? Would you be willing to give of your love to create value in those who society dislikes? Those who you may dislike?

What do you give to God that has true value? What part of your heart do you give to God? What part are you afraid to let go?

Name (individual/couple/family) _____

“FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO.” MATT 6:21

The impact of what we do for God’s Kingdom is made possible by your financial support.

TITHE CHALLENGE –STEP-UP YOUR GIVING BY 10% FOR 2024.

If you gave \$50 a month in 2023, commit to step-up to \$55.

If you gave \$100, step-up to \$110. If you gave \$500, step-up to \$550.

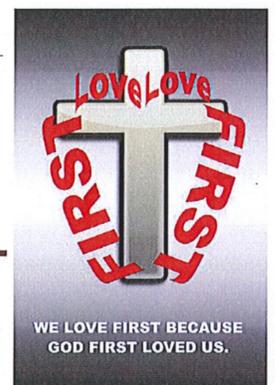
WAYS TO GIVE IN 2024

AUTOMATED GIVING - set up regular giving on FLC’s website

TEXT TO GIVE - text 715-496-6473 to set up regular giving

ELECTRONIC GIVING - set up regular giving through our financial institution
PDF forms available on FLC’s website

ENVELOPES - Circle this to let FLC Office know to send envelopes for 2024



2024 ESTIMATE OF GIVING:

\$_____ per week / month / year
(circle one)

To support God’s ministry to
First Love, Love First.

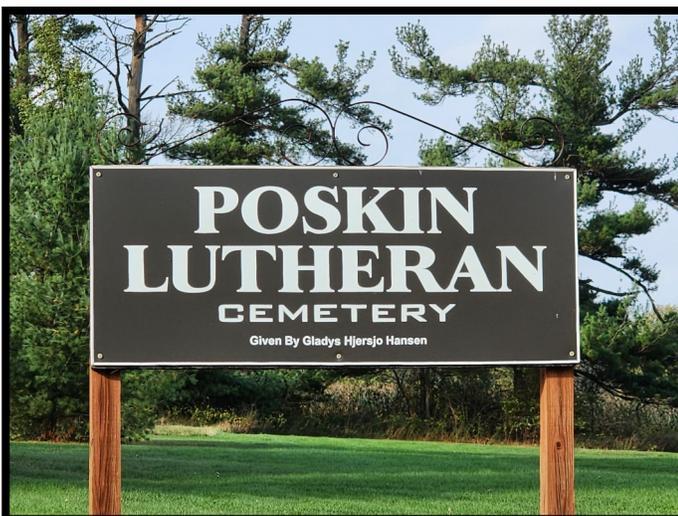
New Coffee Bar at FLC!



A new coffee bar has been installed in Luther Hall. This is a beautiful addition to our fellowship area and provides a sense of welcoming and hospitality to our building.

FLC appreciates the generosity of the Gladys Hansen estate for providing the memorial monies that made this a reality!

Cemetery Board News



New signs have been installed at both cemeteries. If you feel you would like to be involved in the work of the cemetery board, please contact the church office.

Polka Worship in the Park 2023



Centennial Celebration



WORSHIP NEWS

CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATING PARTY!

Join in the preparation for the birth of our Lord on Sunday December 3rd. We will gather after worship to decorate our large tree in Luther Hall. We'll end our time with the lighting and blessing of the tree. Snacks will be served in Luther Hall and carols sung as we join together in the church family event.



Sunday, December 24
CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
9am Traditional Worship
4pm Candle light Worship

Monday, December 25
CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP
10am Traditional Worship

Thankful Hearts Social!



Enjoy a piece of pumpkin pie while visiting with friends during FLC's "Thankful Hearts Social" in Luther Hall following the November 12th worship service---led by FLC's kids.

Time to Ring in the Season!

On Sunday, December 3rd, all members---young and old---are invited to stay after the 9:00 worship service to help decorate Luther Hall's always big and beautiful Christmas tree and get Luther Hall ready to welcome the birth of Baby Jesus! Snacks will be enjoyed when our decorating is complete! Join us!

**A Special Advent Activity in Luther Hall for FLCers OF ALL AGES
KIDS, YOUNGERS, OLDERS, AND INBETWEENERS...**

**Following the 9:00 worship service on Sunday, December 10th
Fun and Fellowship as we celebrate the Advent Season!
Plan to join us!**

Celebrating the New Year with Breakfast Bites and BUNCO!!!

FOR ALL AGES---KIDS THRU OLDS & OLDERS---JANUARY 14TH

**Following the 9:00 worship service in FLC's Celebration Room
15 minutes of breakfasting and socializing,
followed by 45 minutes of dice-rolling, bell-ringing,
prize-winning BUNCO fun!**

LOTS OF PRIZES! NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED!



FLC's K-WOW

Kids and the Word on Wednesdays

We're having fun while learning about God's love for all of us!

Currently, we have a group of twenty kindergarten thru fourth grade kiddos meeting together with our volunteers: Susan Babler, Bea Lundequam, Cathy Anderson and Lynn Kolpack.

Kids can either be transported by parents or ride BASD school buses to FLC, and then enjoy a snack and visiting time followed by a few minutes of music, a Biblical story, and a follow-up activity or craft.

At 4:55 p.m. parents pick up their children and go home or stay for the 5:00 p.m. worship service and 5:40 p.m. supper. Parents, please think about registering your kindergarten thru fourth-grade kiddos with Patrice in the church office---it's never too late to join K-WOW!

Remember, **K-WOW is for our entire community---not just FLC families!**



K-WOW Youth Learning and Playing



Confirmation Youth at County Fair Food Booth



Confirmation Youth at Luther Park



Greetings from the Fall Turkey Dinner Committee!

Committee members met recently to talk about the wonderful 29 Fall Turkey Dinners FLC has hosted over the years---with its great grilled-to-perfection turkey sit-down meals; its camaraderie among members working together; its importance as a time of community visiting and socializing; and the many dollars it raised for funding great projects and activities in the past. Wow! It's been quite a chapter in FLC's long life!



After quite a bit of discussion, the decision was made to not continue with the Annual Turkey Dinner but look at other, fundraising, and community-building options for our church family. The biggest factor in making this decision was finding the army of people it takes to make the turkey dinner happen---from planning and preparing for, serving, and cleaning up after the meal. It's a lot of work, and our crew of "you-can-count-on-me" workers is getting smaller and older.

So, we're asking for help from everyone in the congregation to come up with suggestions for new, simpler, and easier fund-raising and socializing options for the future. Think about the places you've traveled to; the church or community dinners or events you've attended; the events others have told you about---anything where you've thought "That's a good idea we could make happen at FLC." Share your ideas with any Turkey Dinner members listed below. It's time for all of us to think about different doable future options for our church family.

Many thanks go out to ALL the helpers who have made past turkey dinners so successful--without our loyal workers, there would never have been a first turkey dinner! You are all very much appreciated!

As we look to the future, let's all remember to do our part to help with, participate in, invite others to attend, and support the great activities planned for our First Lutheran family and our local community.

Thank you!

First Lutheran Turkey Dinner Committee:

Sue Hanson	Carolyn Miller
Lynn Haugen	Terry Miller
Sheila Erb	Lauretta Peterson
Lynn Kolpack	Judy Rassbach

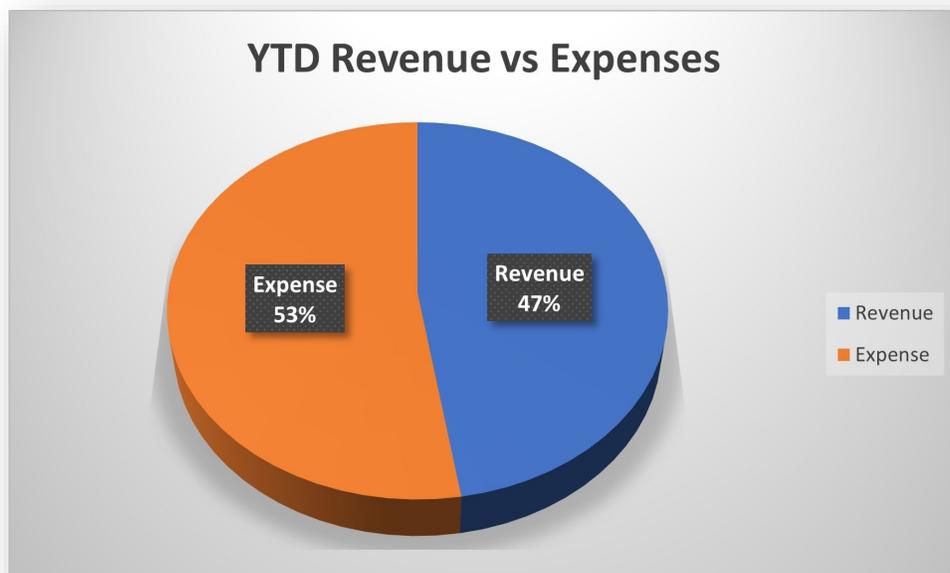
FINANCIALS

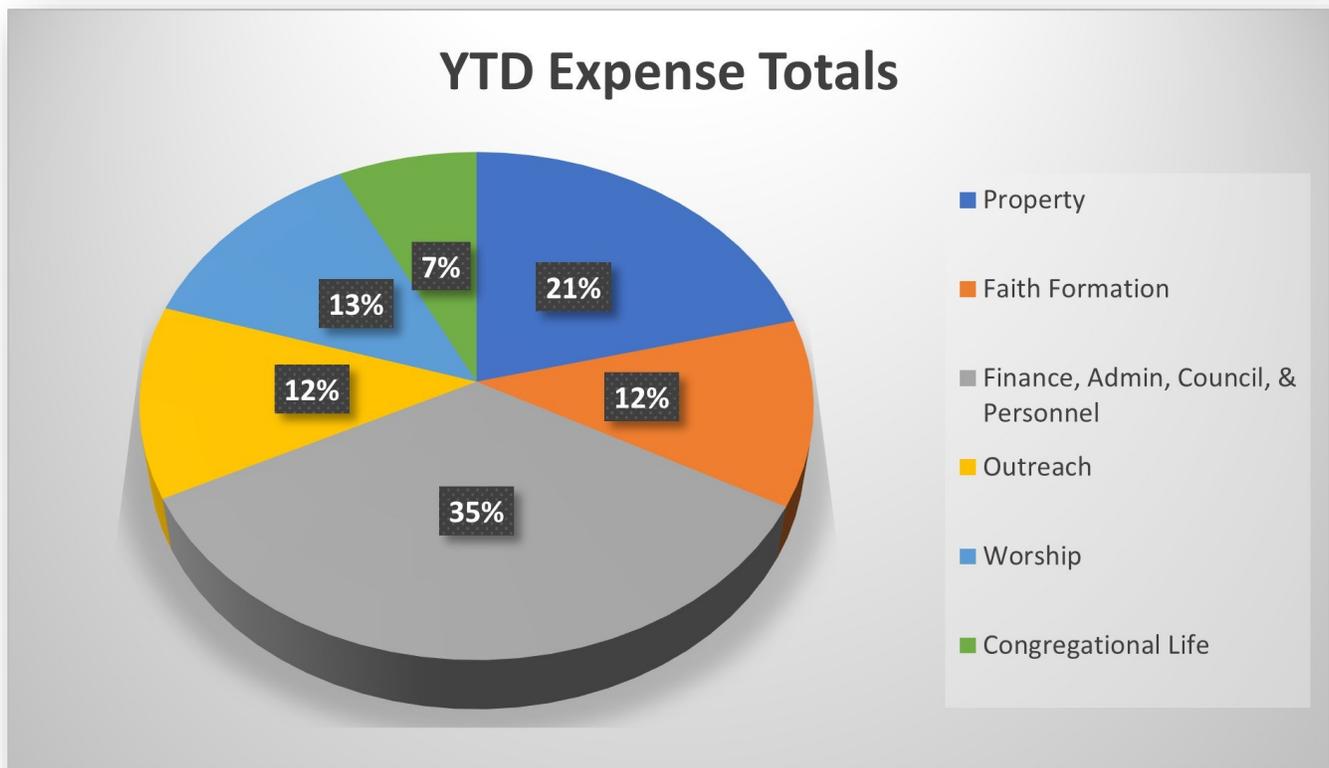
Accounts	Actual Qtr 3	Actual YTD	Annual Budget 2023
Revenues			
Total General Fund Offerings	\$ 52,023.99	\$ 169,102.67	\$ 252,100.00
Total General Fund Other Offerings	\$ 1,806.60	\$ 11,289.20	\$ 31,450.00
Total Revenues	\$ 53,830.59	\$ 180,391.87	\$ 283,550.00
Expenses			
Total Pastoral Expenses	\$ 29,179.68	\$ 81,553.32	\$ 105,920.00
Total All Other Staff	\$ 14,709.62	\$ 44,602.53	\$ 64,559.00
Total Property Committee Expenses	\$ 5,769.05	\$ 23,665.80	\$ 28,500.00
Total Finance - 5400	\$ 393.04	\$ 12,651.48	\$ 13,277.00
Total Faith Formation Expenses -5500	\$ 2,834.72	\$ 5,656.09	\$ 29,700.00
Total Administration - 5900	\$ 3,191.14	\$ 13,675.08	\$ 12,950.00
Total Council Expenses	\$ -	\$ 124.45	\$ 1,500.00
Total Congregational Life - 5800	\$ 628.22	\$ 972.74	\$ -
Total Outreach Expenses - 5700	\$ 3,477.50	\$ 10,527.50	\$ 14,300.00
Total Personnel Expenses - 5300	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Total Member Care Expenses - 5600	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ 700.00
Total Worship Expenses	\$ 2,082.49	\$ 6,095.29	\$ 10,650.00
Total Expenses	\$ 62,265.46	\$ 199,724.48	\$ 284,256.00
Net Total	\$ (8,434.87)	\$ (19,332.61)	\$ (706.00)

Explanation for the above chart:

- Column 1 is the actual quarter 3 donations and expenses.
- Column 2 is the year to date donations and expenses.
- Column 3 is the total 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.





We are able to provide the ministries we have at FLC in large part thanks to the efforts of our amazing staff and team of dedicated volunteers. 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. 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.

GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

For Undesignated

\$50.00 In memory of Jim Humphrey by Steve and Lynn Haugen

\$20.00 In memory of Jim Humphrey by Peter Olson

\$25.00 In memory of Bill Koser by Steve and Lynn Haugen

For Choir Music

\$25.00 In memory of Bill Koser by Roger and Donna Jones

For Building Repair

\$25.00 In memory of Bill Koser by Terry and Carolyn Miller

For Streaming

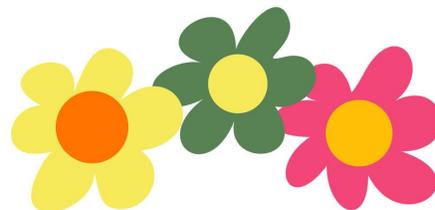
\$25.00 In memory of Bill Koser by Keith and Lynn Kolpack

\$25.00 In memory of Dan Morris by Keith and Lynn Kolpack

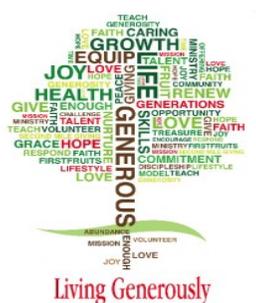
Additional Gifts Received

\$129.00 Thrivent Choice Dollars given by Ron and Jan Barrett
Mary McDonough, Harold Thorson

Thank You



for your Kindness



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!



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

www.firstlutheran-barron.org

Sunday Worship @ 9am on Facebook @FLCBarron

Church Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 8:00am - 4:00pm

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

Office Administrator - Patrice Akenson - Office@firstlutheran-barron.org

Bookkeeper - Andrea Cox - Andrea@firstlutheran-barron.org

Cleaner—Sharon Mullikin

Financial Secretary - Shirley Hakari

Choir Director - John Krull

