



WE LOVE FIRST BECAUSE
GOD FIRST LOVED US.

FOCUS AT FIRST

Spring 2024 - Quarter One Newsletter

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

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

2024

April

- 14—Higher Vision in Worship
- 17—Senior Soup and Sandwich Luncheon
- 29—Afternoon Singalong

May

- 5—Affirmation Sunday
- 12— Mother’s Day
- 19—High School Graduate Recognition

June

- 5-6 WELCA Women’s Retreat at Luther Park
- 16 Father’s Day



Join Us for Worship - Sunday @ 9am

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

Inside This Issue

Message from Pastor Ron	2-3
Message From Pastor Tamra	4
Outreach - Malawi News	5
WELCA News	8-9
Congregational Life	10-11
Faith Formation & Outreach	12
Gifts & Memorials	13
Financials	14-15



MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RON



Throughout Lent, the season leading up to Easter, we reflected on the worship series *Altered by the Holy Spirit*. We saw how the Spirit Alters our lives and how the Spirit is alive in, with, and under our ordinary lives, always calling us forward into transformation, nudging us into wholeness, and beckoning us forth into an alternative way of living.

We were challenged to do a little critical thinking about our faith. And then to put that reflection in prayer and in action as we symbolically drew on Lego-style blocks, forming our *Altered Mosaic Cross*. I want to invite you to watch the services which are available on our website. Here is a brief synopsis of each service.

Altered through God's Creativity

God had a great imagination when creating us, creating us all uniquely different, with different gifts and things about us that make us special and different.

- * Take a brick and write one word or draw one thing on it that makes you unique, and reminds you of God's creativity when creating you!

Altered on the Edge of Belonging

Philip listened to the Spirit's urging to go to a road and then to go up to a man he never met riding in a chariot. Without Philip to explain what he was reading in the Isaiah scroll, the Ethiopian would never have understood it or learned about Jesus.

- * Take a brick and write the first name of someone who helps you.
- * Who is someone God might be calling you to help? Who is struggling with belonging? Put their initial on a brick, and place it on the cross, saying a prayer that you can help find ways to reach out and help them belong.

Altered alongside our enemies

Both Saul and Ananias are transformed or changed by the Spirit's work. God's action in this story transforms and changes who they are.

- * Color a brick, transforming or changing it from one color to another, to represent the way we can be transformed or "changed" through God's work in our lives.

Altered by disruption

Peter and Cornelius—and their respective communities of Jews and Gentiles—were separated by religion, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, economics, and politics. There was much that divided them and created a great cultural chasm between their two worlds. And yet they were brought together by their faith in the One true God. Cornelius and Peter each received a vision of what God was calling them to do.

- * What vision is emerging of what God is calling you to do? What is the vision that God is calling us to do as a congregation? Put that vision in a word or two, and write it on a brick.

Altered through stories We Don't Trust

When Peter knocked on the door, Rhoda was overjoyed—so overjoyed, that she forgot to open the door! But when she told others who was at the door they didn't believe her, they didn't believe that their prayers were answered. Think about the stories around us. The stories we trust and those we don't. Consider how the lack of trust constrains us from seeing the possibilities of God's grace because we have chosen to listen to some stories and not others.

- * Take a brick and write the initials of a person whose voice you trust, saying a prayer thanking God for their presence in your life and place it on our cross.

Victory Altered

We use two words to describe the events of Palm Sunday, Hosanna and Alleluia. Hosanna comes from Hebrew meaning "save, we pray." In Greek, the word means "appeal to God for deliverance, used in praise of God or Christ." Alleluia means "praise the Lord!" There are so many things that we need saving from in our world. What do you need Jesus to save you from? When we call on Jesus to save us, we know that we live in a world that is far from perfect, and we need Jesus and the Holy Spirit's help.

- * Draw a cross on your brick, to remind you of your ask. May these many crosses remind you to look towards Holy Week and what it means; that Christ conquered sin, death, and the devil.

Love Altered (Maundy Thursday)

On this night, we remember Jesus' servant-hearted love. We recall the life stories of how that kind of love has transformed hearts and lives. We pray that God's redeeming, radical love may alter our hearts for God's glory. Jesus loved those who hurt him. Jesus forgave them. Jesus loves you and forgives you.

- * I would like to conclude this time by inviting you into a time of prayer:
- * To lift up to God thanks for His radical love shown to you.
- * To ask God to make His love for you known.
- * To give thanks for those who were brought into your life to show you what forgiveness looks like.
- * Then, you are invited to write the first name of those who have shown God's abiding love to you on a brick. And to place that brick on our mosaic cross.

Life Altered (Easter)

At our two Easter services, we completed our Altered Mosaic Cross in the promise of the resurrection.

- * Draw on one side the Jesus Fish. Write the first name of a person who shared the resurrection story with you. Prayerfully discern someone whom the Spirit has brought into your life who needs to hear the Easter promise from you and write their initials. Place the brick on the cross as you return to your seat.

How has your faith been *altered* lately? For almost two months, we as a community of faith have wrestled with where the Spirit is leading us and we continue to do so as we are led by the Spirit into new areas, meet new people, and engaged in new ministries.

I pray that you continue to witness the ways that the Holy Spirit is alive in, with, and under our ordinary lives. And may you see in new ways what the Spirit is already at work doing and the ways we are just trying to catch up.

Serving alongside you by Loving Others First,
Pastor Ron

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR TAMRA



Loving with Heart and Soul

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul. Acts 4:32a

We are in the season of Easter. Our first readings on the upcoming Sundays are from the Book of Acts. In the Book of Acts we get a good look at the community of Jesus' followers that is forming. They care for each and show it by sharing all that they have with each other.

First Lutheran is a community that cares for each other. too We see it in many of the ministries here. One of those ministries is called First Friends. "First Friends is a ministry team that utilizes the pastoral gifts of our members to provide a caring and supportive presence to those who are struggling. They offer a listening ear to those who want to talk and an intentional presence of God's love to those who just need someone to care. They also serve as sacramental ministers in bringing communion to those unable to attend worship services."

I am writing with two things for you to think and pray about. First, is there anyone that you know that could use a visit from me (Pastor Tamra) or one of the First Friends? We have cards that can be filled out with the information we need to get in contact with them to see if they would like a visit. You can also call or email the church or Pastor Tamra to pass along the information.

Second, we are also in need of First Friends to visit people. Do you have a gift for being with people? Are you a good listener? Perhaps God is calling you into this type of ministry. If you are feeling called to be a First Friend, please contact the church office or Pastor Tamra.

All God's Blessings to you all.

Pastor Tamra



OUTREACH - MALAWI MISSION



“A Simple Act of Love Can Change a Village”!

I am full of gratitude to God for my call to Malawi.

The new year has brought with it an office in the business district making it available to clients. We continue to reach out to villagers with Cholera products and hygiene education.

Education on permaculture gardening is encouraged through classes and financial assistance. A variety of fruit trees are of benefit in developing a permaculture garden. The cost of a fruit tree is about \$10.00. There are currently 52 families in urgent need of our assistance. Their situation is considered catastrophic. Our Lenten Outreach this year is to work toward eliminating malnutrition by growing nutritious produce. Thank you all who supported us to reach and surpass our goal. We were generously blessed by our friends and congregation with a total of over \$7,300.

Thank you again, for your many years of love, prayers and support. Our achievements are numerous! We give thanks to Eva Banda and the board of directors for your constant leadership in developing the Centre for Girls and Women Empowerment, an NGO registered also with Congoma as they move forward assisting the poorest of the poor.

Blessings & Peace,

Ann Knutson



*Ann presented information and inspiration
to our congregation!*

FIRST LUTHERAN NEWS

Afternoon Singalong

Afternoon singalong ***special date - on April 29th***

Normally meets 4th Monday of the month

1:30pm Monroe Manor

2:30pm Dove

All are welcome to join our group!



FLC Welcomes "Higher Vision" on Sunday, April 14th

First Lutheran invites all members, and their relatives, neighbors, and friends to join us at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 14th, when the music group "Higher Vision" will lead our worship service. Since 2013, Higher Vision has been entertaining audiences, bringing smiles to faces, and tugging at heartstrings with their music.

While the majority of their performances are in area churches, Higher Vision has also provided music for the summer concert series in area communities, the Hungry Hollow Gas & Steam Engine Show, and the Barron County Fairtime Chapel. In addition to their signature gospel, when performing in a secular venue the group adds doo-wop, Beach Boys tunes, Bob Dylan ballads, and crowd pleasers such as "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" and "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" to their repertoire.

All of the members of Higher Vision are from the local area and all have been part of musical endeavors in their churches and communities for many years. The quartet is comprised of Mike Jenkinson singing lead, tenor Albin Peterson, baritone Dick Sampson, and bass John Westin. The group's accompanist is Elaine Molls. Please help get the word out! Let's fill the pews on April 14th!



What is a Tiny Home of Barron County?

Tiny Homes are built for unsheltered individuals or families who are in need of temporary housing. They provide a safe place to live while the individual/family gain financial stability, make connections to resources and look for permanent housing. These Tiny Homes are equipped with a sleeping area, a chemical toilet, and kitchenette that includes a microwave and mini refrigerator.

As a church, we would provide the space and electricity for the Tiny Home and provide support to the individual/family living there by inviting them to worship, to our Wednesday community meals and by periodically checking in with them!

The Barron County Tiny Homes are not for anyone that is found to be homeless right off the street, but for those that have been vetted by the county and that are gainfully employed already. These people have worked hard to qualify for this type of housing!

The Tiny Home committee is working to finalize plans with Barron County for delivery of the Tiny Home sometime in the spring. Please feel free to contact the church office with any questions you may have.



Newly Elected Leaders:



Andrew Harrington
Lynn Haugen
Kelly Hover
Dani Felber
Ruth Anderson
Arlyn Colby
Vern Hanson

Dave Hanson
Amanda Olson
Rod Nordby
Dallas Sloan
Sally Ellison
Judy Rassbach
Jean Wick

Happy Spring Everyone!

Thank you all for the great support we had for our bazaar in November. Because we did so well we were able to give \$500 to each of the following charities:



- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Missionary, Katie's Fund | Youth Sports |
| National W/ELCA | Hockey Association |
| Benjamin's House | Comfort Care Closet |
| Day Development | Fair Time Chapel |
| Daybreak | Post Prom |
| Meals on Wheels | Barron Public Library |
| Backpack Program | VFW, Fire Department |
| Food Pantry | Spotlighters |
| Federated Music Club | Clothes for Kids |
| Boys and Girls Club | |

In addition we also gave the college kids in our congregation a \$50 gift card from Kwik Trip.

Lynn Haugen is working on updating the W/ELCA Booklet which lists all the serving groups as well as other information about First Lutheran's W/ELCA. It is hoped to have it finished and distributed to everyone by the end of April. There is also a committee that will be reviewing our W/ELCA Constitution to see if any changes need to be made.

In September sometime we are planning on having a meeting of all the women in our church. At that time there will be an election of officers and board members. So if any of you would like to be an officer or a member of the board contact Jan Kienbaum (715-296-0658).

WELCA NEWS (CONT.)

There will be two more Senior Lunches. One is Wednesday, April 17 and the last one is Wednesday, May 15th. Watch for the sign-up sheets on the church bulletin board by the door.

If anyone has time on those days help is always needed to set up, serve and cook.

Update on the Quilting

Thanks to all of you who have sewed quilt tops for us and have donated material and sheets. Because of everyone's help there were 136 quilts all finished as of the end of March!

W/ELCA Retreat at Luther Park

The W/WELCA Retreat at Luther Park will be June 5th and 6th. Pastor Lori Peper will be the speaker. So I hope many of you will plan to go. I am sure Pastor Lori would love to see you. Watch for the registration information. It will be coming soon.

I hope everyone had a wonderful Easter!

May God bless you and be with you all.

Jan Kienbaum

President of First Lutheran WELCA



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

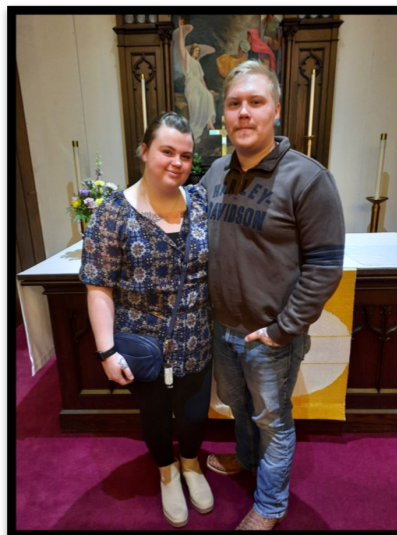


Bunco
Fun!!!



New Members:

We were blessed to welcome new members to our Church Family in the first quarter of 2024. Pictured are Machalia and Kenny Erickson. Not pictured are Ariel Runge, Angela Foster and Mike Smith.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



Easter Egg Hunt!!!



Fleece Tie Blankets
Middle School Youth help Outreach
Committee tie blankets for needy families.



GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

For Building Repairs

\$25.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Terry & Carolyn Miller

For Building Fund

\$100.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Pamela Arons
\$25.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Dorothy Anderson
\$50.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Chet Prashad
\$50.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Patricia Stanley

For South Steps

\$25.00 In memory of Gale Wells by LuVerne & Sherri Hanson
\$10.00 In memory of Charles Kirkwood by Agnes Prine

For Digital Ministries

\$465.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Elaine Wells
\$20.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Harold & Reda Thorson
\$10.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Wayne & Val Gieseke
\$50.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Billie Jerome
\$25.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Roger & Jill Hatch
\$100.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Theresa Seeger
\$20.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Kay Westlund
\$100.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Lennard & Jan Carlson
\$20.00 In memory of Gale Wells by JoAnn Akenson
\$20.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Deanna Smith
\$100.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Sally Jacobsen
\$20.00 In memory of Gale Wells by Dave & Linda Martinson

For Gift From the Heart

\$50.00 In memory of Gail Larson by Roger Jones

For Organ Ranks and Chimes

\$50.00 In memory of June Edson by Melvin Bjugstad

For Youth Fund

\$200.00 In memory of Loren Huset by Anonymous
\$140.00 In memory of Loren Huset by Roxy Kahl

For Undesignated

\$20.00 In memory of Charles Kirkwood by Jim Williams
\$20.00 In memory of Charles Kirkwood by Betty Lambert
\$10.00 In memory of Charles Kirkwood by Anonymous
\$545.00 In memory of Loren Huset by Anonymous

For World Missions

\$25.00 In memory of Loren Huset by Dave & Sue Hanson
\$10.00 In memory of Loren Huset by Wayne & Val Gieseke
\$100.00 In memory of Loren Huset by Anonymous

For Livestream

\$25.00 In memory of Gail Larson by Keith & Lynn Kolpack

Additional Gifts Received

\$2,489.00 *Thrivent Choice Dollars:*

by Ruth Anderson, Janice Barrett, Ronald Barrett, Carolyn Beckwith, Kristine Beckwith, Betty Blihovde, Barbara Goff, Steven Haugen, Barbara Kirk, John Kirk, Keith Kolpack, Curtis Marten, David Martinson, Linda Martinson, Pamela Mathews, Roger Mathews, Larry McDonald, Mary Ann McDonough, Wendell McDonough, Terry Miller, Daniel Mullikin, Agnes Prine, Carol Romsos, Bruce Severude, Tamy Severude, Dean Springer, Nancy Thompson, Norman Thompson, Lori Wiegrefe



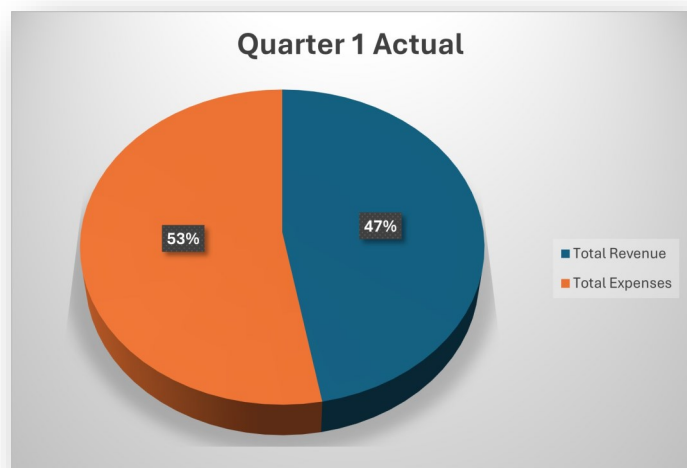
FINANCIALS

Accounts	Q1 2024	Annual Budget
Revenues		
Total General Fund Offerings	\$ 60,158.36	\$ 288,500.00
Total General Fund Other Offerings	\$ 5,112.79	\$ 18,350.00
Total Revenues	\$ 65,271.15	\$ 306,850.00
Expenses		
Total Pastoral Expenses	\$ 31,904.39	\$ 130,841.00
Total All Other Staff	\$ 18,968.55	\$ 76,725.00
Total Staff	\$ 50,872.94	\$ 207,566.00
Total Property Committee Expenses	\$ 5,015.36	\$ 28,000.00
Total Finance	\$ 8,606.86	\$ 17,100.00
Total Faith Formation Expenses	\$ 469.98	\$ 9,800.00
Total Administration	\$ 2,290.26	\$ 13,600.00
Total Council Expenses	\$ 65.00	\$ 1,500.00
Total Congregational Life	\$ 506.32	\$ 2,500.00
Total Outreach Expenses	\$ 3,736.68	\$ 15,000.00
Total Personnel Expenses	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Total Member Care Expenses	\$ -	\$ 700.00
Total Worship & Music Expenses	\$ 1,690.29	\$ 10,250.00
Total Expenses	\$ 73,253.69	\$ 306,516.00
Net Total	\$ (7,982.54)	\$ 334.00

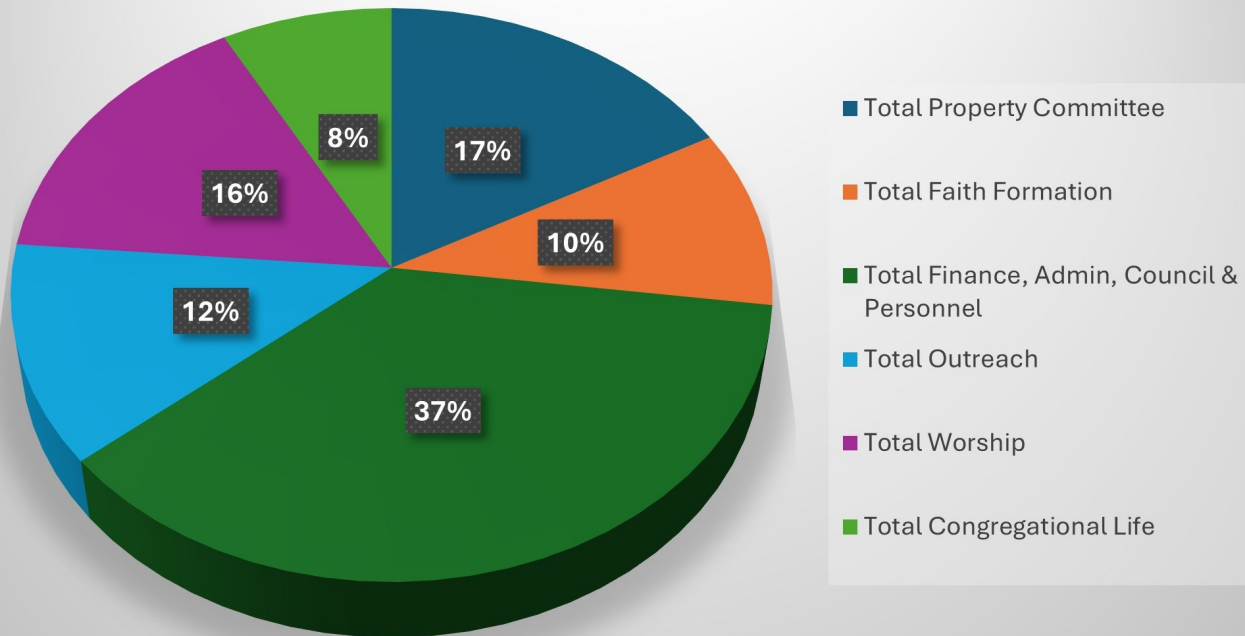
Explanation for the above chart:

- Column 1 is the actual quarter 1 donations and expenses. Several large annual expenses are paid in the first quarter, leading to a large negative net total.
- Column 2 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.



Quarter 1 2024 Expenses



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.

FIRST LUTHERAN—FAITH FORMATION

First Communion:

Congratulations to our youth on celebrating their First Communion during Maundy Thursday worship. Pictured are: Pastor Ron, Ella Weiten, Cami Kisting and Jackson Harrington.



Baking Bread & Painting Communion Cups



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

Visitation Pastor - Tamra Harder - PastorTamra@firstlutheran-barron.org

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

Treasurer- Jason Erb

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

Financial Secretary - Shirley Hakari

Choir Director - John Krull

Cleaner - Sharon Mullikin

