

English Lutheran Church

2025 Annual Report

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.



English Lutheran Church
229 West Main Street
Ellsworth, WI 54011
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English Lutheran Church

Mission Statement

*To share Christ's unconditional love,
inspiring us all for service to others.*

2025 Staff

2025 CHURCH STAFF:

Pastor
Financial Administrator
Communications Coordinator
Custodian
Accompanist
Music Director

Pastor Peter Warren
Ava Maxwell
Julie Winger
Malerie Mathis
Ava Maxwell
Missy Kowalchyk

2025 Congregation Council

2025 CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Executive Committee:

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary

Mark Groen
Mike Harris
Paul Tonsager
Jill Hague

Cindy Baird
Danielle Chollett
Eric Van Nocker

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2026 Annual Meeting Agenda

English Lutheran Church Congregation Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 25, 2026
10:00 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

OPENING PRAYER

DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF 2024 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

ANNUAL REPORTS

- Pastor
- Ministry Teams & Committees
- Highlights from 2025
- Financial Reports

REVIEW AND VOTE ON 2026 BUDGET

ELECTIONS

- Congregation Council
- Congregation Officers
- Memorial & Gifts
- Mission Endowment Committee
- Synod Assembly Representatives
- Nominating Committee

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Minutes: Annual Meeting of the English Lutheran Church Congregation 1-26-25

SUNDAY JANUARY 26TH, 2025 @ 10:15 AM

Called to order by Greta Larson, President

Opening Prayer by Pastor Pete Warren

A quorum was reached with forty people in attendance.

Adoption of the 2025 Annual Meeting agenda. MSC. Curt and Eric

Approval of the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes. MSC. Curt and Joel

Annual Reports (presented in writing):

- Pastor Report
- Alter Guild
- Graduating Quilt Ministry
- Children, Youth and Family
- Community Missions
- Stewardship
- Finance Committee
- Women's Bible Study
- Malawi
- Memorial and Gifts
- Mission Endowment
- Music & Worship
- Property Committee
- Northwest Synod of Wisconsin ELCA

Pastor Pete Warren shared highlights of the year with changes in the office with our secretary staff and thanks to all who helped in the transition. We are pleased to have Julie Winger as our new secretary. Our janitorial staff have changed also, and we have Malerie Mathis, and she is working well with guidance from Dennis and Cindy Barid and Pastor Pete. Thanks to worship and music with Missy and Ava and the choir for the great Cantata again. VBS, Kids Kingdom, Recovery Group, Senior Center, Heart Program and the improvements in the church and it is always great to see more people sharing our space in the church. Thanks to all the volunteers.

Greta mentioned the Hot Beef Dinner that is for February 23rd will be an exciting time for our church. They had a pie making day and it went well.

Paul Tonsager discussed the 2025 budget. A discussion was held. Adoption of the 2025 budget. MSC. Peter Carr, Renee V.

Curt Dumermuth, from the property committee, shared the importance of the three especially important items that will need to be fixed or remodeled.

- New steps in front of the church. (They are ok for now.)

Minutes: Annual Meeting of the English Lutheran Church Congregation 1-26-25

- Kitchen remodel
- West wall where there is water coming in at various times by the kitchen.
- 2 air conditioner units will be installed with 1 in the Senior Center room and one in the dining room.

Elections by Unanimous Voice Vote

Congregational Council Members

Cindy Baird
Danielle Chollett
Mike Harris
Eric Van Nocker

Memorial & Gifts Committee

Jeanette Wright
Melanie Johnson

Mission Endowment Committee

Trina Groen
Warren Johnson

Synod Assembly

Kim Warren
Pastor Pete
Melba Smith will serve as ELC Delegate

Nominations Committee

Denise Hager
Greta Larson
Melba Smith

Thanks for a wonderful year.

Pastor Pete

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m. MSC (Renee, Joel)

Parish Records & Pastoral Acts - 2025

Membership

As of January 1, 2025: **424 (Baptized)** **285 (Confirmed)**

Members received during 2025

By Baptism: children	5	0
By Baptism: adults	0	0
By Affirmed faith	0	0
By other denomination	0	0
By transfer	2	2
Other & Stat. Adjustment	0	0
 Baptized Members Received	 7	
Baptized Members Confirmed		0
Confirmed Members Added		2

Members removed during 2025

By death	10	10
By transfer	2	2
Total members removed	-5	-10

As of December 31, 2025 **419 (Baptized)** **275 (Confirmed)**

2025 Pastoral Acts

Baptisms 5
Funerals 12
Weddings 1

Statistics

Average weekly worship attendance - in-person (includes special services -
Lent Wednesdays, Good Friday, Maundy Thursday, & Christmas Eve) - 61

Average weekly Sunday worship attendance includes in-person as reported to ELCA
(no special services) - 60

Parish Acts - 2025

Baptisms

Amira Kay Melstrom
Vincent Charles Figi
Madison Joy Dahl
Safira Elora Onan
Hank Liam Mattson

Myrna Larrabee
Eldon Huber
Jerome Matter
Lila Larson

*Steve Kjelstad (?)

Holy Communion Class

Confirmands (2025)

Weddings

Christina Kowalchyk & Emily
Brunschen

Death

Vern Ellefson

* Denotes Non-Member

Funerals

Gary Leonard
Dennis Matthews
Sherry York
Gerald Christiansen
Marianne Melstrom

New Members

Wilbert Maas
Kathy Maas

Transfers Out

Greg Place
Sara Place

Report from Pastor Pete Warren

One of the perks of being the pastor is that I get to proofread the annual report before it comes out. This means that I also get to read what everyone else is doing in our congregation and I have to say, "Holy Moly! We have a lot going on around here!"

I'm going to be honest with you, January is not my favorite month. It's cold and snowy without the joy of Christmas to look forward to. In fact, things look bleaker than normal because we take down all of the festive decorations that we have had up for the last 3 or 4 months. I mean, we started with Halloween, then Thanksgiving, and then Christmas! Things were so festive! Now, what do we have to look forward to? In the middle of February is Lent and things will look even more bleak then. All of the excitement from New Year's quickly fades once it is time to go back to our normal routines.

But that is okay, routines and rhythms are good. They help us feel rooted and grounded. They give us a base to anchor ourselves. And it is even better when those routines are grounded in Jesus. They give us a sense of purpose to what we do.

So oftentimes, my yearly report focuses on what we have accomplished in the past year. I did a lot of the normal pastoral stuff. We had a number of baptisms and too many funerals. I kept my average of one wedding a year for the last 10 years going strong. Unfortunately, we did not have any confirmands this year and I never did a first communion class. I apologize for dropping the ball on that one. We'll get a class scheduled soon. But I want to look forward to this next year. What is God calling us to do and what is God calling us to be? And how can you be a part of it?

I want our theme for this year to be one of listening to God. How can we be part of the family of God? How can we better serve God? And by extension, how can we better serve our neighbors?

I am looking forward to another year of growth and transformation. Thank you for listening to God's call and being part of our family! I think that God has some great things in store for us and I can't wait to see what will happen! God Bless!!

Pastor Pete

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us," Hebrews 12:1

Report from Altar Guild

Members: Sharon Schulze, Judy Dumermuth, Tammy Brenner, Kriste Lewis, Nancy Johnson, Andrea Hinrichs, Diane Wiskerchen, Ava Maxwell, Vi Wilhelm, Tammy Rieck, Bev Greeley, Jeanette Wright, Sue Myers, Cindy Reuvers and Traci Maxwell.

The duties of the Altar Guild members are to arrange altar items necessary for Sunday services, communion, baptisms, weddings, and funerals. We have three or four members of our committee that serve each month of the year to help with the following tasks:

- Fill wine glasses
- Bake communion bread
- Fill oil candles
- Change the paraments and banners
- Re-fill the eternal flame
- Set up for baptisms
- Decorate the church for Advent, Christmas and Easter

If anyone is interested in joining our group, we gladly accept new members at any time. Each group of 3 or 4 serves for three months of the year. You may pick which group works best for you.

Submitted by Bev Greeley

Graduate Quilting Ministry

Leaders: Judy Erickson and Tammy Brenner

Team members: Tammy Rieck, Melanie Johnson, Bev Greeley, Joyann Johnson, and Sharon Schulze. And we appreciate others who help when needed. Thank you!

2025 Highlights: 5 quilts given in May to High School graduates, quilts given to Caring and Sharing Hands in the Spring. This December 5 quilts will be given to "Giving Tree" families. Quilts are available for emergency needs.

Our purpose and goal are to continue to fulfill the community needs.

Acknowledgements: we received a generous memorial gift through Vicki Nelson, a Thrivent card, and Endowment balance funds which all enabled us to purchase batting, material, and other items.

Thank you for the support of English Lutheran Church.

Submitted by Judy Erickson and Tammy Brenner

Report from Children, Youth, and Family

Team Member Roster: Trina Groen, Renee Van Nocker & Eric Van Nocker, Kayla Zimmer, Denise Hager, Pastor Pete, Kim Warren, and Phillip & Morgan Truax

Ministry Purpose: To promote shared growth for children, youth, and families. To facilitate shared events that extend the ministry of our church for children, youth and families.

Sunday School: Our Sunday School students worked on outreach projects for Easter for our shut-ins, and we recently had a Christmas party with the Sunday School students. Thank you to Katie Groen and Piper Van Nocker for volunteering to teach our students and for preparing fun activities for them for the 2024-2025 Sunday School year. We appreciate you!

Kingdom Kids: This is our 3rd year with Kingdom Kids. It is the first Wednesday of every month. We have had a great turnout, averaging 25 students each time. Pastor Pete has planned many fun activities and Missy and Ava have been leading music activities. We will continue this through the end of the school year.

Vacation Bible School: This year we partnered again with Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Eidsvold Lutheran Church, and Svea Lutheran Church and had a successful Vacation Bible School. We used an amazing program partnering with Luther Point Bible Camp. We had about 50 students participate. The program was 4 days a week after Summer School for 3 hours. It was such a fun program, and we look forward to next year!

Confirmation: This past Fall we did not confirm any students (it was one of our off years of having students in that particular grade level). Our Confirmation students collected food for our Thanksgiving meal baskets. We served over 50 families because of this project. Our students also went to Feed My Starving Children last February. At each class students are served a meal, we play games and worship together.

Goals: We will also continue to work to fund our Confirmation Program so it can be free for our youth. Anyone can join Sunday School, Kingdom Kids, and Confirmation at any time of year. We always encourage our students to bring a friend if they would like. We will continue to strive to make personal connections with our students/kids/youth, be there for them, have fun, and to keep things simple

Thank You: We would like to thank Pastor Pete for all your help with the youth programs, for your leadership, and for the yummy food you are always making for everyone! We would also like to thank our Sunday School leaders/teachers, Vacation Bible School Volunteers, drivers for the Thanksgiving project (Kim Warren, Renee Van Nocker, Chris Karlstad, Krissy Kinneman, & Tami Place), Confirmation Guides from 2024-2025 - Phillip and Morgan Truax, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Eidsvold Lutheran Church, and Svea Lutheran Church for your partnership in Vacation Bible School, Julie Baggenstoss for driving the Bunny Bus, Darren Place for driving the bus to Feed My Starving Children, and for any of you we may have forgotten to thank. Also, a big thank you to Missy Kowalchyk and Ava Maxwell for your musical talents. Lastly, a big thank you to those that pray for our youth and guide them in their faith journey. Thank you!

Submitted by Kayla Zimmer

Report from Community Missions

Members: Chris Karlstad, Nancy Johnson, and Cindy Baird

Souper Bowl Sunday we collected donations for Caring and Sharing Hands.

We did Caring and Sharing Hands on March 31, 2025. We provided lunch for and served 125 people in Minneapolis. Volunteers included: Pastor Pete, Joel and Sharon Schulze, Chris Karlstad, Curt Dumermuth, Dan Klaustermeier, and Diane Wiskerchen.

Adopt-A-Highway was held on April 26. We cleaned up County Road C. We did the same in the Fall on September 27. We had six volunteers for the Spring clean-up and three volunteers for our Fall event.

Food was collected for the Pierce County Food Pantry all year.

The Thanksgiving Basket Initiative was a success again this year. We had 12 confirmation students hand out flyers to the homes around the community on November 12. On November 19th, we went to those homes and collected the donations for our baskets. We then went back to the church and sorted and organized the food donations. HEART was able to secure the donations of turkeys, mashed potatoes, and stuffing for these baskets. We are so grateful. The baskets were distributed on November 22, 2025, with 56 families served this year. It takes many hands/feet to make this project a success. Thank you.

Submitted by Chris Karlstad

More projects reported by Cindy Baird. Committee members who help with the following include Cindy Baird, Denise Hager, Diane Wiskerchen, and Melba Smith

We sponsored 5 Gift Box Program Families for Christmas. Gifts for 30 people delivered to Pierce Pepin on 12/15/25. The gifts included clothes, jackets, shoes, toys, and craft items. We want to thank the quilting group for donating very nice quilts that went to each family.

The Sharing Shed is kept stocked by our group. We attempt to have warm clothing and personal care items in the shed during the cooler months. We change the contents depending on the season(s).

Random Acts of Kindness is another initiative, and with that, we help with gas cards, along with food, for people with the help of HEART. We also provide bingo gifts and birthday treats at Ellsworth Health Services. We provide the same to the Sunny Project.

Report from the Stewardship Committee

Members: Melba Smith, Lynette Winger, Pastor Pete

I have to apologize to the congregation for dropping the ball on my responsibilities for heading up the Stewardship Committee this year. As you know I have health issues and the timing was not right for me. I discussed this issue with Pastor Pete, and he was in agreement with not picking it up again until next year. I will do my best to get back on track. Also, thank you for all your prayers and concern for me and your understanding.

Respectfully submitted by Melba Smith

Report from Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study group meets the second Wednesday of the month in the Fireside Room. We do not meet during the months of June, July, or August. Our winter theme was Faithfulness by Denise Rector. (We had four sessions-January through April.) Our first session in January was exploring Ruth and Naomi (Faith Where You Are). Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi even when Naomi returns to her own country. This intergenerational story of faithfulness during sorrow and emptiness helps us to learn to rely on God in bleak times. Our second session was in February, and we explored Psalm 22 (Faith in the Depths). This is a Psalm of David. It is a cry for help, and it is a prayer for deliverance from suffering and hostility. In our worst times this Psalm gives us a way to contemplate God's holiness. In March we held session three on Faith Adventures. We explored Peter and Cornelius. We do not always see eye to eye with our neighbors. And yet, we are called to love our neighbors. Peter's experience with different people gives the Holy Spirit an opportunity to teach the church and us to see others as God sees them. In April it was Faithfulness Faith Risks. We explored Jarius and the Faithful Woman. When Jarius and the bleeding woman reach out in their pain and disappointment Jesus shows compassion. Jesus is present in our actions as well, when our listening and grace make us stand out from the world around us.

In May we studied Receiving the Spiritual Flame. Spiritual gifts in the life of the church by Cara Strickland. These gifts are not earned and usually we do not think of asking for them. Yet it is a gift exactly right for us and our lives, our communities, and our world. You can explore spiritual gifts by taking a spiritual gifts assessment.

The fall of this year we focused on "Money, Stewardship, and Generosity" by the Rev. Christa von Zychlin. Our September session was on Money, what do we treasure? From Genesis through Revelation, gold, silver, and jewels serve as icons of God's goodness. Yet, the love of money is a powerful source of argument, lies, and literal enslavement. King Solomon famously chose wisdom over treasure. Jesus leaning on his mother's values, digs deep for real treasure. In October, Pastor Pete served brunch before the Bible Study. We discussed Stewardship-how do we tend to our treasure. God beautifully entrusts human beings with the care of all creation, including time, talent, and material wealth. Moses needed help with his time management. The practice of tithing could be considered a class in Material Management 101. Jesus confronts his disciples with disturbing words about God's high expectations in tending treasure. Another bible study in November (no brunch) was to learn about Generosity-A wideness in God's mercy. God loves a cheerful giver, because our cheer in giving reflects God's own cheerful mercies. In December we started with brunch. Following the brunch we helped our Heart Group. Sharon, Jeanette, Cindy, Denise, Diane, and Melba wrapped packages for the five families we had for the Christmas Gift Giving Program. We greatly appreciate all the help!

We continue to support the girls of Kenya, so they are able to go to school every day of the month. This year we were able to cheerfully donate \$228.00 to this ministry. We welcome you to join us in the Fireside Room for Brunch and Bible Study. You may choose to stay for the bible study, or you may leave after the brunch. It is open to all women of the church.

Respectfully submitted by Melba Smith

Report from Finance Committee

Committee Members: Paul Tonsager, Curt Dumermuth, Kris Flock, and Sue Gulbranson

Mission Purpose: Review the financial reports of the congregation monthly for accuracy and provide recommendations to the council for any changes needed.

2025 was another very busy year for English Lutheran Church. Pastor Pete worked together with the Finance Committee to prepare reports and recommendations to the Church Council.

1. Pastor Pete worked with the Senior Center, after they lost their ability to be in the old library building in town. Together they came up with a plan to be at English Lutheran Church. The Senior Center has enjoyed their move and would like to stay.
2. Pastor Pete is also moving his health insurance from ELCA sponsored to be on his wife's insurance through the Ellsworth Community Schools. It is better coverage for less money. It will also save the church from the expense of the other insurance. We will be giving him a stipend to cover the deductibles for them.
3. Air conditioning for the lower level was installed this summer to make it more comfortable in that part of the building.
4. CCF Bank contacted English Lutheran Church to renew the money market accounts. The interest for 7 months is 3.7%. The council approved of this.
5. The Pierce County Fair Stand was again successful in 2025. The profits were average this year because of lower attendance due to hot and wet weather. We installed a new cooling system for the walk-in cooler this summer. It worked great!

Overall, the financial health of English Lutheran Church remains good, but the General Fund giving was down this past year. We will need to have continued support in 2026 as our church costs continue to increase.

Submitted by Paul Tonsager

Report from Malawi

Warm greetings on behalf of our partners and friends in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi. Here are a few updates for you. (For the full report: https://storage2.snappages.site/V3B7TF/assets/files/Malawi_Update_May_2025-3.pdf)

HEALTH

In 2023, USAID granted UNICEF \$2.1 million to strengthen the cholera Response in Malawi. This aid was important to expedite the resources needed to eliminate the epidemic worsened by cyclones and flooding.

In September of 2024, USAID (US Agency for International Development) announced new commitments to strengthen several health and wellness programs in Malawi. The \$8.725 million commitment included: collaborative problem-solving for health, education, natural resource and agriculture management, gender equity programs to help alleviate gender-based violence, and maternal health programs.

In November 2024, USAID also promised \$17 million to boost STEM education in Malawi. For more than 20 years, the US has also invested \$136 million in reading programs and secondary education, \$1.7 million for medical supply management, \$2.1 billion to fight HIV/Aids, Malaria, and Tuberculosis, and assisted with flood and drought resistance and disaster response.

In February 2025, the US government shut down USAID, and recipients of these commitments received notice that all funding would be terminated. This freeze has now caused a health care crisis in Malawi. Although HIV/Aids testing and treatment needs resources, the immediate withdrawal of funding has also eliminated food supplies for malnourished children in the hospital, treatment for tuberculosis, funding for doctors and surgeons who are sent to train others, and protective equipment for medical staff to prevent the spread of disease.

Additionally, Malawi faced one of the most difficult droughts that southern Africa has experienced in nearly 100 years. Combined with a nearly 30% inflation rate in the past two years, fuel shortages, increased food and fuel costs, and an annual income average of \$481 per person, there is concern about food insecurity, especially in the central and southern regions of the country.

WATER IS LIFE

In 2024, our synod engaged in a campaign to help build new solar powered wells in Malawi through the ELCM. Due to the higher cost of their construction, we had a goal of \$40,000 to assist with building two of them. I am so thrilled to share that, because of your incredible generosity and warm hearts for Malawi, we raised nearly \$120,000! Thank you for your gifts to this campaign. Because the ELCM is a permanent partner with us, there are ongoing needs and initiatives that we can support. If you feel called to share ongoing gifts for wells, feeding stations, the pastors academy, or motorbikes for pastors, please visit the synod website or contact the synod office.

ECONOMY

Malawi continues to experience severe economic strain - the reduction of exports, especially tobacco, the largest of their agricultural exports, drought, and consistent struggles with import has caused shortages in both goods and fuel. And with the abrupt loss of funding, there will likely be a "reversal in the aid-funded progress" that has happened in Malawi. [6] With a high inflation rate and a devaluation of currency that has no immediate signs of recovery, the population feeling frustrated and angry with government leadership. Protests have significantly increased, especially in large cities, as people continue to lose jobs and feel powerless to change things.

CLIMATE CHANGE

When funding and program contracts were broken earlier this year, a number of environmental policies and initiatives were also blocked from taking any necessary action. Certain programs in place were working to assist communities with the creation of non-charcoal stoves (in an effort to reduce the deforestation that happens when people cut trees to create charcoal for heat and cooking throughout Malawi). There were also efforts to learn how to grow and harvest things like fruit trees and honey as a means of income and food security for households. Sustainability projects like these are introduced all over Malawi and often rely on foreign aid for assistance. Additionally, Malawi experiences climate related weather patterns that compound already difficult circumstances. During one of the worst droughts that the country has seen in nearly 100 years, thousands of cattle died in 2024 due to lack of water and grass around the country. And they regularly experience cyclones and floods at a scale that hasn't existed in this landlocked country before.

Report from Memorial & Gifts Committee

Members: Melanie Johnson, Diane Wiskerchen, Dan Klaustermeier, Sue Myers, Kriste Lewis, Jeanette Wright

Memorials are donations given to honor a loved one following his/her death. Gifts are also given upon a significant occasion such as a birth, baptism, wedding, birthday, anniversary, or any other important event. Some memorials or gifts are intended to be used for a specific purpose stated by the donor. An undesignated memorial or gift is not given for a specific purpose. When a need arises within the church for funds, this committee authorizes expenditures for the given need. A request for funds can be made at any time during the year.

In 2025, gifts (memorials) were given in memory of Vicki Nelson, Jerry Christiansen, Marlin and Til Peterson, Jerry Matter, Myrna Larabee Lila Larson, and Gary Leonard. In addition to the total below, \$5,000.00 has been transferred to the Endowment Fund.

Submitted by Jeanette Wright

Memorial & Gifts 2024				
Fund Name	Beginning Balance	Funds Received	Funds Used	Ending Balance
Altar Guild	\$1,123.33	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,123.33
Banners	\$323.75	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$323.75
Children's Ministry	\$82.74	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$82.74
Church Furnishings	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
Kitchen	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Landscaping	\$693.04	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$693.04
Mission Support	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Music Ministry	\$225.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$225.00
PC Fair	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Quilters	\$158.01	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$558.01
Sunday School	\$384.16	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$384.16
Undesignated	\$4,315.28	\$1,743.89	\$0.00	\$6,059.17
Youth Ministry	\$2,151.65	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,151.65
Total	*\$10,706.96	\$2,143.89	\$0.00	\$12,850.85

*Difference from Ending Balance on 2024 Annual Report, due to Undesignated Funds being received at the end of 2024 that were not yet recorded at the time of the numbers submitted for the Annual Meeting Report.

Report from Mission Endowment Committee

Endowment Committee Members: Gary Brown, Chair, Trina Groen, Treasurer, Traci Maxwell, Secretary, Dixie Basch, Diane Wiskerchen, Kip Gore, Warren Johnson

The length of term for each member is 3 years for a maximum of 3 terms. After a lapse of 1 year a former member may be re-elected.

Endowment Mission Statement: Transforming lives by spreading God's love through Christ-centered generosity.

Following Church guidelines and protocol, the Endowment Committee met on four occasions: 2/5/2025, 5/7/2025, 8/20/2025, and 11/19/2025.

For 2025 distribution requests from various church committees were approved by this committee, so our goal of supporting our youth and outreach ministry was fulfilled in total.

We continued addressing ministry needs as they arose. An area of importance to clarify is just how Endowment funding works for you and all the church, both inside and outside its walls. Some view personal money gifts at work only if there are some visual, tangible brick and mortar objects to be seen. Endowment is typically so much better. Through your Estate Planning or Will, or other monetary gift, you can designate where your ongoing gift to the church is to go, a gift which has no end. All monetary gifts given to the Endowment Fund take the interest accrued on your capital given, so your gift of money never gets exhausted.

There are 3 different categories to offer your gifts. The Children's Education Fund, The Women's Fund, and the General Fund. The General Fund continues to need the most help with additional funding as many outward ministries need our support. Your monetary gifts given are not used to pay ongoing bills of the church, such as utilities, but rather are used to provide further ministries within our community and surrounding areas, as well as to provide resources needed by individuals needing our help. Examples of ministries and programs supported by the Endowment Fund in 2025 include: Sunday School Easter baskets, Sunday School program and activities, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation program, Kingdom Kids, Luther Point scholarships, Elsie's Barnyard and Thanksgiving Baskets.

Goals for 2026: For the coming year, we intend to continue dispersing gifts where needed, and prayerfully, increase outreach to those areas in need. Another goal is to continue showing unchurched members of our society that we are here to love, support, and pray for them in good times and in bad times. Your financial gifts help our church to extend "our stewardship," accomplishing what Christ has set us out to do. We pray you can and will become part of our 2026 goals.

Report submitted by Gary Brown, Endowment Chair

Report from Mission Endowment Committee (continued)

Mission Endowment funds are maintained in two separate accounts. The first is an investment account managed by the ELCA. Within that account there are separate accounts for a Children's Fund, a Women of ELCA Fund, and a General Fund. The second account is a checking account referred to as the Mission Investment Fund checking account. Investment earnings from the investment account are automatically deposited into the checking account quarterly. Funds deposited in the checking account are used to support Mission Endowment distribution requests. Summaries of both accounts are provided below.

Submitted by Trina Groen

ELCA Endowment Investment Account 2025 Fiscal Summary			
	November 30, 2024	November 30, 2025	Distributions to Endowment Checking
Children's Fund	\$96,731.39	\$105,908.02	\$3,593.90
Women's Fund	\$49,154.23	\$53,817.35	\$1,826.30
General Fund	\$28,697.62	\$31,420.09	\$1,066.20
Total	\$174,583.24	\$191,145.46	\$6,486.40

Mission Investment Fund Checking Account 2025 Fiscal Summary			
	2024 Year End	2025 Year End	Ministry Requests Funded in 2025
Children's Fund	\$3,292.08	\$4,172.66	\$2,735.42
Women's Fund	\$3,488.16	\$4,185.28	\$1,140.48
General Fund	\$1,652.10	\$1,347.65	\$1,377.25
Total	\$8,432.34	\$9,705.59	\$5,253.15

Report from Music & Worship Ministry

Committee Members: Bev Greeley, Tammy Brenner, Ava Maxwell, Joel Schulze, Sharon Schulze, Danielle Chollett, Missy Kowalchyk, Pastor Warren

~Our committee met two times this year, with communication occurring outside of meetings when needed.
~This year's Lenten season focused around messages of Lament by Pastor.
~Summer went well with arrangements for the month of June so that Missy could spend time in NC. Music was planned and prepared in advance for the worship leaders.
~The baby grand piano continues to be a positive addition to worship.
~The baby grand piano created a wonderful opportunity for Joyann Johnson and her piano students' recital.
~The members of music worship continue to be generous with their time and talent contributing to prayerful services for regular Sunday worship as well as extra Wednesday services in Advent and Lent.
~The choir continues to be dedicated to their music, agreeing to learn a new cantata with practices beginning right away at the beginning of September and multiple weekly practices beginning in November.
~The Christmas Cantata was held during the December 21st worship service. Rather than opening our cantata to the public, we decided our outreach would be more needed and appreciated at the Ellsworth Care Center and Preferred Living. We sang for ECC on Saturday, December 20th and PSL on Sunday, December 21st. The joy and gifts of the season were shared by residents and choir members alike!
~Throughout the year special music was provided by many members of music worship. Additionally, Danielle Chollett provided joyful music with her trumpet. We look forward to more gifts of musical time and talent.

~Thank you to all who are partners on our team!

Submitted by Danielle Chollett, Ava Maxwell, and Missy Kowalchyk

Report from Property Committee

Committee Members: Curt Dumermuth, Dave Greeley, Mark Groen

Major projects:

- 1) A/C for lower area
- 2) re-routing gas line through the building due to an underground leak.

Minor work completed:

- 1) Repairing water drinking fountains in lower unit including a new compressor valve for unit by restrooms and re-routing electricity to the unit near the kitchen.
- 2) Dave G crafted a railing for the sanctuary by the pulpit, and it was installed.
- 3) Small water heated was donated and installed under the west kitchen sink to provide better hot water access
- 4) Removal of foundation for the outside stage in the south property
- 5) Other minor repairs as they were brought to the attention of the committee

Future Projects still include the kitchen remodel and replacing the steps and railing at front entrance to main street.

We continue to need and appreciate communication from members to help identify areas needing attention.

Submitted by Curt Dumermuth

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Thrivent Action Team Support

Thrivent Action Team Support

As many congregational members may not be aware, Thrivent Fraternal Insurance provides generous financial support to worthwhile projects initiated by individual policy holders. Several of our members are clients of Thrivent and eligible to "lead" a Thrivent Action Team. Up to \$250 is available for each approved project and through the past several years Thrivent has directed literally thousands of dollars to and through English Lutheran Church to support fundraising, education, and service projects. Some of the most recent action team projects receiving Thrivent support are the Advent Brunch supporting the Pierce County Food Pantry, Piper's Bake Sale supporting Gillette Children's and M Health Fairview Masonic Children's Cancer Hospital, the Christmas gift box collection, our ELC fair stand meal for the carnival workers, the meal ELC members serve at Sharing and Caring Hands, and our community Vacation Bible School.

Thank you to all of you who have offered your Thrivent Action Team support to any project in 2025 and over these past several years- either as a team leader or as a donor or volunteer for the event. If you are a Thrivent Insurance policy holder and have an available action team card to use in 2026, please make the ELC office aware so that we can make a plan to use your card! Thank you!!

Submitted by Sharon Schulze

Report(s) from the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin ELCA

Campus Ministry annual report for congregations, December 2025



Contact us:

UW-Eau Claire
Rev. Lori Ruge-Jones
University Lutheran Church
110 Garfield Ave.
Eau Claire, WI 54701
pastor@universitylutheran.org

UW-River Falls
Rev. Ben McWhorter-Rush
143 E. Cascade Ave.
River Falls, WI 54022
ben@journeyhousecampusministry.org

UW-Stout
Sara McCullough, director
710 2nd St. E.
Menomonie, WI 54751
kcmstoutdirector@gmail.com

Dear friends of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

Campus ministry is an extension of your ministry, where students find a “church home away from home” while they are apart from the faith communities that raised them. Like congregations, we have worship, Bible studies, service projects, and fellowship activities. We gather for meals (very important for college students, among whom food insecurity is higher than the national average). We pray together. We celebrate things like getting into an academic program, studying abroad, starting an internship, and graduation, together. We offer comfort and support through roommate conflicts, family struggles, identity crises, and the death of pets or grandparents. As the body of Christ, coming from a variety of ecumenical traditions, we share our faith in Jesus as we learn together what it means to be baptized and sent out into the world to embody God’s love for one another.

So much is new when a student moves to college. Campus ministry is one thing that can be consistent between home and school. The people and activities will be different, sure, but the solid theology and home church traditions will feel familiar. Please help the students in your life find Campus Ministry when they go to university, and support them as they continue to grow in their relationship with Jesus and sense of call as a child of God.

Campus ministries depend on congregational support in prayer, attendance, connecting us with students, and financial donations. THANK YOU for all the ways your congregation has been present for campus ministry this year!

Peace++

Ben McWhorter-Rush,
Sara McCullough,
and Lori Ruge-Jones,
NWSWI campus ministry staff

Report(s) from the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin ELCA

A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP MARTIN

To the amazing disciples of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

As I reflect on this past year, one of the most significant moments came at the fall Conference of Bishops, which was held immediately following the installation of our ELCA Presiding Bishop, Yehiel Curry. In his first address to the conference, he talked about a one word focus for his first year, *connection*. As soon as he said it, I was already engaged, especially since that has been one of my goals in my first year!

As I tour this great synod of ours, I've already been to over 50 churches representing over 60 congregations. It helps a lot when I can experience a worship opportunity where multiple churches come together, as was the case Menomonie and Eau Claire! Needless to say, I enjoy learning about the history and more importantly, the people that each congregation has to offer. So distinctive, yet at the same time, we are all still a part of the same team, connected by our common faith and common mission to love our neighbors.

Speaking of our neighbors, I have made it a priority to lift up the important ministry of Neighbor to Neighbor, staffed by Deacon Lidixe Montoya and supported by a newly appointed board at last year's synod assembly. It was at that same assembly where we adopted a resolution to raise \$175,000 over three years to support this ministry that is already making great strides in supporting the Latino community throughout our synod. I would invite you personally to contribute toward this goal and/or increase what your church contributes to this ministry on an ongoing basis. Neighbor to Neighbor is a ministry that is so critical right now as so many of our Latino friends live in constant fear of deportation, which can inhibit their ability to even worship in public! We have a tremendous opportunity to show them that they are loved and valued, so let's come together for this important purpose.

Another highlight of 2025 was attending my first ever Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix. In addition to electing the first black Churchwide Secretary (CeeCee Mills) and Presiding Bishop (Yehiel Curry), we also passed yet another social statement, *Faith and Civic Life*. The rostered leaders of the synod will be spending some time digesting it at our upcoming Winter Theological Event in hopes to equip them to lead a study in your church. I would strongly encourage you to participate in this study as it addresses many of our current realities, including the issue of Christian Nationalism. This is a strong movement that is sweeping the country, but remains largely in conflict with our Lutheran beliefs. *Faith and Civic Life* conversations can help us all remain rooted in our faith and help us understand how to be engaged in life beyond worship.

To close, I'd like to thank you for your relationship to the synod. We truly can do more together, staying *connected*. We cannot reach out to the many different groups throughout the synod without your generosity. May we continue to innovate in 2026 as we work collaboratively together and share the love of God throughout our communities!

Privileged to serve,

Bishop Martin

2025 Dedicated Funds

12-31-25 Cash Balances

	2024 Year End	2025 Year End
General Fund	\$124,306.75	\$94,726.34
Dedicated Funds	\$101,386.04	\$103,447.83
Thrivent Fund	\$110,263.90	\$119,232.70
Total:	\$335,956.69	\$317,406.87

Dedicated Accounts

December 31, 2025

Account Shortcut and Description	Beginning Balance	Month Credits	Month Debits	YTD Credits	YTD Debits	Ending Balance
Church Operations						
Dedicated Funds						
801 Adult Education Fund	165.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	165.61	0.00
822 Community Missions Fund	1,226.34	200.00	410.00	1,064.05	410.00	1,880.39
811 Confirmation Funds	0.00	0.00	0.00	203.47	203.47	0.00
845 Dollar Club	131.84	0.00	0.00	40.00	171.84	0.00
843 Evelyn Young Estate	20,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20,000.00	0.00
810 Fairstand Fund	33,704.31	150.00	0.00	55,843.17	56,646.74	32,900.74
812 Funeral Fund	3,784.86	0.00	0.00	950.00	4,734.86	0.00
816 Hospitality Fund	968.86	0.00	0.00	5,331.37	818.25	5,481.98
840 Kitchen Renovation	0.00	0.00	0.00	14,193.50	1,378.02	12,815.48
826 Medical Supply Fund (prev Parish Nurse)	1,135.58	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,135.58	0.00
819 Memorial & Gifts Fund	10,706.96	25.00	0.00	2,143.89	0.00	12,850.85
820 Misc Dedicated	843.74	0.00	0.00	1,996.25	606.50	2,233.49
842 Mission Trip	2,916.45	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,916.45	0.00
824 Music Misc	(2,929.22)	0.00	0.00	2,929.22	0.00	0.00
827 Property Fund	5,068.03	520.00	290.67	9,991.62	6,217.63	8,842.02
830 Soup Suppers	377.96	0.00	0.00	1,018.00	1,395.96	0.00
832 Special Music Fund	541.30	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	741.30
846 Summer Trip Fundraisers	447.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	447.00	0.00
834 Sunday School	2,896.78	0.00	0.00	1,349.35	4,246.13	0.00
836 Thrivent Choice Dollars	159.88	0.00	0.00	875.00	1,034.88	0.00
837 Turkey Baskets	(750.55)	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	249.45	0.00
838 Vacation Bible School	190.79	0.00	0.00	26.91	217.70	0.00
847 Women's Group	4,841.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,841.76
848 Youth Leader	4,252.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,252.32	0.00
839 Youth Ministry	10,705.44	441.07	401.85	13,923.48	3,769.10	20,859.82
Dedicated Funds Totals:	101,386.04	1,536.07	1,102.52	113,079.28	111,017.49	103,447.83
Church Operations Totals:	101,386.04	1,536.07	1,102.52	113,079.28	111,017.49	103,447.83
Total for selected dedicated accounts:	101,386.04	1,536.07	1,102.52	113,079.28	111,017.49	103,447.83

2025 General Fund & 2026 Proposed Budget

2025 General Fund & 2026 Proposed Budget

Line No.	Description	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Proposed Budget
101	Envelope Offering	125,464.00	120,000.00	85,537.00	110,000.00
102	Loose Offering	3,495.83	2,500.00	1,981.00	2,000.00
107	E-Giving	75,693.24	80,000.00	73,573.72	75,000.00
120	Church Rental	1,907.00	4,000.00	4,352.00	4,000.00
121	Church Fair Stand	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
123	Interest Income	1,804.38	3,500.00	10,877.03	5,000.00
	Income Total:	228,364.45	230,000.00	196,320.75	216,000.00
400	ELCA Benevolence	7,052.85	6,733.50	4,602.01	6,011.00
401	LSS	1,457.83	1,450.00	1,320.00	1,320.00
402	Luther Point Bible Camp	1,516.13	1,654.00	1,653.96	1,654.00
403	Malawi	1,299.96	1,300.00	1,299.96	1,300.00
	Total:	11,326.77	11,137.50	8,875.93	10,285.00
410	Salary-Pastor	49,421.01	52,633.38	52,633.44	59,720.00
409	Health Insurance Buyout	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
411	Housing	14,826.24	15,790.01	15,790.08	17,916.00
412	SS Allowance	4,914.93	5,234.39	5,234.39	6,704.15
413	Health Allowance	34,301.40	37,380.00	37,410.69	0.00
414	Pension/Disability/Group Life	7,284.12	7,600.00	7,703.31	8,357.00
415	Reimbursable Mileage	1,864.95	1,200.00	1,461.81	1,800.00
416	Continuing Education	599.00	800.00	395.50	800.00
417	Pastoral Books/Publications	204.45	300.00	0.00	300.00
418	Official Meetings	747.57	500.00	265.00	500.00
	Mobile phone reimbursement	500.00	600.00	700.00	600.00
	Total:	114,663.67	122,037.78	121,594.22	106,697.15
420	Staff Mileage	0.00	100.00	200.90	100.00
	Total:	0.00	100.00	200.90	100.00
422	Salary-Communications Coordinator	18,654.50	16,000.00	14,650.00	17,160.00
423	SS Allowance--C Coord.	1,430.88	1,224.00	1,120.74	1,312.74
424	Continuing Education--C Coord.	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00
	Total:	20,085.38	17,424.00	15,770.74	18,672.74
426	Salary-Finance	3,745.00	4,160.00	2,410.00	3,432.00
428	SS Allowance-Finance	286.52	318.24	184.42	262.55
427	Continuing Education--Fin. Admin.	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00
	Total:	4,031.52	4,678.24	2,594.42	3,894.55
429	Salary--Music Director	11,183.25	10,712.00	10,336.92	11,247.00
430	SS Allowance--Music Director	855.58	819.47	790.68	860.40
431	Continuing Education--Music Director	0.00	250.00	0.00	250.00
	Total:	12,038.83	11,781.47	11,127.60	12,357.40
432	Salary--Accompanist	8,200.00	8,035.00	8,034.96	8,436.00
433	SS Allowance--Accompanist	673.18	614.68	614.65	645.35
434	Continuing Education--Accompanist	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00

2025 General Fund & 2026 Proposed Budget

2025 General Fund & 2026 Proposed Budget

Line No.	Description	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Proposed Budget
435	Musician Substitutes	300.00	500.00	100.00	500.00
439	Guest Musicians	0.00	400.00	0.00	400.00
	Total:	9,173.18	9,549.68	8,749.61	10,081.35
440	Youth Director	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
441	SS Allowance--Youth Director	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total:	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
450	Salary--Custodian	3,168.75	3,500.00	3,781.25	7,800.00
451	SS Allowance--Custodian	242.39	267.75	289.23	596.70
	Total:	3,411.14	3,767.75	4,070.48	8,396.70
460	Electricity--Church	4,372.67	5,500.00	5,686.98	6,000.00
461	Gas--Church	3,156.52	4,500.00	3,978.91	4,500.00
462	Water & Sewer--Church	487.79	1,000.00	630.54	1,000.00
463	Telephone--Church	2,386.89	2,400.00	2,544.05	2,400.00
464	Garbage	1,216.60	1,200.00	1,115.45	1,300.00
467	Piety St Curb & Gutter	0.00	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
	Total:	11,620.47	16,100.00	13,955.93	16,700.00
471	Custodial Supplies	516.58	500.00	582.30	500.00
472	Snow Removal/Sanding	2,020.00	4,000.00	5,070.00	5,000.00
473	Building Maintenance	1,531.00	2,000.00	1,630.00	2,000.00
474	Elevator Maintenance	2,385.70	2,500.00	2,325.03	2,500.00
475	Grounds Maintenance	1,803.00	2,000.00	2,281.50	2,500.00
478	Fire Alarm	0.00	125.00	0.00	125.00
479	Property & Liability Insurance	9,627.22	10,500.00	11,718.10	12,500.00
	Total:	17,883.50	21,625.00	23,606.93	25,125.00
480	Workman's Compensation	1,000.92	1,000.00	743.84	1,000.00
481	Data Base/Accounting	2,021.17	2,000.00	1,898.00	2,000.00
482	Office Supplies	2,154.44	2,200.00	1,410.09	2,200.00
483	Office Equipment Maintenance/Repair	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00
484	Postage	543.08	550.00	448.00	550.00
485	Copier Lease & Usage	2,883.38	3,000.00	3,218.72	3,200.00
	Total:	8,602.99	8,950.00	7,718.65	9,150.00
419	Pulpit Supply	875.00	1,000.00	700.00	1,000.00
486	Sundays and Seasons	419.00	450.00	439.00	450.00
487	Sheet Music, Music Supplies, & Piano Tuning	581.67	750.00	697.09	750.00
488	Copyright Lease	1,808.92	1,800.00	1,565.63	1,800.00
489	Altar Guild Supplies	937.51	1,000.00	622.71	1,000.00
490	Banners	92.88	200.00	0.00	200.00
491	Seasonal Worship Supplies	107.74	300.00	265.50	300.00
	Total:	4,822.72	5,500.00	4,289.93	5,500.00
492	Local Outreach	363.38	700.00	129.01	700.00
494	New Members	0.00	400.00	0.00	400.00

2025 General Fund & 2026 Proposed Budget

2025 General Fund & 2026 Proposed Budget					
Line No.	Description	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Proposed Budget
495	Portals of Prayer	419.25	250.00	444.00	350.00
496	Advertising & Website & Ext. Ad. Banners	1,862.03	800.00	792.00	800.00
498	E-Giving Fees/Envelopes	977.84	1,300.00	874.49	1,200.00
499	Stewardship Committee	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00
	Total:	3,622.50	3,650.00	2,239.50	3,650.00
503	Confirmation Curriculum/Supplies	491.16	500.00	421.86	500.00
504	Youth Activities/Events	136.03	200.00	0.00	200.00
505	Senior High Ministry	67.43	200.00	0.00	200.00
507	Adult Education	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
509	Milestone Ministry	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00
511	Summer Youth Trip (form. Christikon)	0.00	250.00	0.00	250.00
512	Children/Youth Event Scholarships	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
	Total:	694.62	1,550.00	421.86	1,550.00
513	Miscellaneous Expense	428.00	500.00	0.00	500.00
514	Synod Assembly	326.24	350.00	240.00	350.00
515	Council/Leadership Education	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00
516	Synod/Conference Dues	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
	Total:	754.24	1,100.00	240.00	1,100.00
	Total Income:	228,364.45	230,000.00	196,320.75	216,000.00
	Total Expenses:	222,731.53	238,951.42	225,456.70	233,259.89
	Difference:	5,632.92	-8,951.42	-29,135.95	-17,259.89

Terms of Office: Preliminary Nominees for Election

Notes: Names of nominees are in **bold print**.

Nominees up for reelection are indicated with an *.

Congregation Council (2 year term)

Members whose terms expire January 31, 2026

Members whose term will expire January 31, 2027

Nominees who, if elected, will serve until January 31, 2028

Jill Hague, Paul Tonsager, ***Mark Groen**

Cindy Baird, Danielle Chollett, Mike Harris, Eric Van Nocker

Miranda Mewes

Memorial and Gifts Committee (2 year term)

Members whose term will expire January 31, 2026

Members whose term will expire January 31, 2027

Nominees who, if elected, will serve until January 31, 2028

Kristi Lewis, Sue Myer, Dan Klaustermeier,

Diane Wiskerchen

Jeannette Wright, Melanie Johnson

Mission Endowment Committee (3 year term)

Members whose term will expire January 31, 2026

Members whose term will expire January 31, 2027

Members whose term will expire January 31, 2028

Nominees who, if elected, will serve until January 31, 2029

Traci Maxwell, Diane Wiskerchen

Dixie Basch, Kipling Gore

Trina Groen, Warren Johnson, Gary Brown

Synod Assembly: Nominees to be voting members (1 year term) April 25, 2026

Nominees who, if elected, will serve as ELC delegates

Melba Smith, Diane Wiskerchen

Nominations Committee (1 year term) NO LIMIT ON TERMS

Members whose term will expire January 31, 2026

Nominees who, if elected, will serve until January 31, 2027

Denise Hager, Greta Larson, Melba Smith

Jill Hague, Paul Tonsager, Mark Groen