

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

 **Elk River**
LUTHERAN



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP YEHIEL CURRY

Dear friends in Christ,

As Lutherans, we are set free to love our neighbors and seek justice. In Colossians 2, we read: “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving” (6-7).

I am abounding in thankfulness for you, church. You are an integral part of this mission as we envision a world experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. The ministries of congregations including yours, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together today and every day so more people may know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love. From providing food to people experiencing hunger, to helping train the next generation of leaders that will lead this church, your support is at work here at home and around the world.

Your generosity to each of the three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has made it possible for us to do this work

together. Your financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices are so valued.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to continue to walk in Christ, remembering you are rooted and established in faith, and free to love and serve your neighbors. Thank you, church, for the ways you connect with and support our siblings across the ELCA and in our communities.

In Christ,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yehiel Curry'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

—Colossians 2:6-7

2025 Annual Report

“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.... Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many...If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:7, 14, 26)

This report to the worshipping communities of the Minneapolis Area Synod is an opportunity to look back on 2025, and to look ahead to the year to come. Most of all, it is an opportunity to name and celebrate some of the ways the Holy Spirit continues to enliven God’s church and our shared life as Church Together. We give thanks to you and your congregation for your partnership in this ministry we share, and for your Mission Support, financial commitments that fuel synod ministry as well as the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Together we accompany one another in times of challenge and joy, seeking the common good as we bear witness to the love of God that makes possible our love of neighbor. Below are a few highlights of 2025.

Our Shared Life

- In May 2025, we lived out the theme Church Together at the annual Synod Assembly
- We hosted two Tool Kit workshops in 2025, one in March and one in November
- We started a monthly virtual learning series called Learn Together Over Lunch
- We gathered rostered leaders for two Ministerium events and the Bishop’s Theological Conference
- The deans of the conferences hosted regular conference meetings and the Conference Assemblies in February
- Leaders grew in their work through Peer Groups and Power and Boundaries Workshops
- There were several other gatherings of Synod leaders: Children, Youth and Family leaders, Leaders of Color, Retired Pastors and Deacons, Communicators, and more
- Global partnerships were strengthened in 2025. Archbishop Musa Filibus from the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria visited in October and a few people from our Synod visited the Leipzig District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Saxony in September
- The new ELCA Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry was installed in October at Central Lutheran, Minneapolis
- Lay and rostered leaders have been exploring new partnerships, creative building use, and how best to steward resources.
- Our Executive Committee and Synod Council are restructuring how we fund ministry together, with a focus on more support for our New Start and Strategic communities.
- The Resurrection Fund began in 2017. Seeded by monies received at the Holy Closure of congregations, the fund makes possible a wide array of ministry across the synod, including a new round of Imagination Grants beginning in 2026.
- Following the adoption of a resolution on Immigration at Synod Assembly, an Immigration Task Force was formed to guide our action, and a Welcome Fund was created to channel support related to immigration.

Daily I see Jesus at work in and through you, dear Synod. Thank you for your dedication, for trusting me and our staff during the tender times, and for daring to boldly live into your faith and baptismal identity.

Transitions in our Synod Staff

In 2025, Karen Ohm and Peg Ihinger retired, and we adjusted the portfolios for many of the synod staff.

Early in the year we welcomed six new staff members: Sarah Maslowski (CYF Connector), Liz Farmer (Assistant to the Bishop for Administration), Karen Alexander (Administrator for Candidacy, Roster, and Call Process), Pastor Jen Collins (Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Vitality), Pastor Ryan Fletcher (Director for Evangelical Mission), and Juan Gonzalez (Director of Family Faith).



With these changes comes much learning and growth, and some intentional changes to our processes. I’m excited about our team and the gifts we bring individually and collectively. Thanks for your patience as we grow into this new season.

You are in our prayers. God bless us with grace for this day and courage for tomorrow.
In Christ, Bishop Jen Nagel

2025 Annual Report



137

worshipping communities, including 3 new starts and 8 strategic ministries



142,410

baptized members in MAS worshipping communities



11

languages spoken in worship

Leadership

5 ordinations of new pastors and deacons	215 pastors, deacons, and Synod-authorized ministers serving in faith communities
21 rostered ministers installed into new positions	67 pastors and deacons serving in specialized ministry
50 people in candidacy program	379 retired rostered ministers
22 call processes in 21 faith communities	18 rostered ministers on leave from call

Leadership

13 Conference Deans (serving 12 geographical conferences, and one for chaplains)
17 Synod Council members
78 serving on other Synod committees
30 voting members attended the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix in August

Initiatives

- To date, more than ¼ of our congregations are or have participated in Faith and Neighboring Practices, connecting deeply with neighbors in their community. We recently received another five-year grant from Lilly to continue scaling this program even more widely across the synod.
- Our second Lilly Funded grant, Family Faith, is taking root. It seeks to support parents and caregivers in sharing faith with their children in ethnic-specific and culturally-specific ways.
- 2025 launched the inaugural year of the Minneapolis Area Synod Youth Choir

Mission Support

\$2,643,049 Pledged by congregations in Mission Support, shared between MAS and ELCA - thank you!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Elk River Lutheran Church Annual Meeting Agenda.....	6
Elk River Lutheran Church Personnel Directory.....	7
2025 Annual Meeting Minutes.....	8
Special Congregational Meeting Minutes.....	9
Pastor Nathan’s Report.....	10
Pastor Anne’s Report.....	12
Team Reports and Highlights.....	15
- Adult Faith Formation.....	15
- Children, Youth and Family.....	16
- Generosity Team.....	22
- Love Inside Out – 2023-2025 Capital Campaign Report.....	23
- Hospitality Team.....	24
- Mission Endowment Fund.....	25
- Music Ministry.....	26
- Prayer Shawl Ministry.....	30
- Quilting Team.....	31
- Social Justice Action Team.....	33
- Worship Volunteer Coordinator Team.....	34
Statistical Report.....	35
Treasurer’s Report.....	36
2026 ERLC Ballot.....	38

ELK RIVER LUTHERAN ANNUAL MEETING

ERLC Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda
January 25, 2026 @ 9:30 am

Hybrid Meeting Options

A. Meet in Sanctuary

B. Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/733768254>

1. Call to order and quorum establishment
2. Devotion and Prayer
3. Old business:
 - a. Congregational Meeting Minutes review and action
 - January 26, 2025 Annual Meeting
 - April 27, 2025 Special Congregational Meeting
 - b. Review of finances from fiscal year 2025
4. New Business:
 - a. 2026 council, council officers, nominating committee and mission endowment fund committee elections
 - b. Review and action on 2026 Budget
5. Presentation of ERLC 2025 Annual Report
 - a. Report from Pastor Nathan
 - b. Update on Strategic Plan
 - c. Ministry Reports
6. Other Business
7. Adjourn

CHURCH STAFF

Lead Pastor: Nathan Mugaas

Online Broadcast Specialist: Tom Clements

Associate Pastor: Anne Schaefer

Staff Pianist: Lisa Griffin

Office Manager: Linda Nielsen

Custodian: Michelle Hagberg

Director of Music Ministry and Worship: Taylor Quinn

Bookkeeper: Lori Sundman

Nursery Attendants: Amy Brown, Katherine Horner, and Adrienne Rotz

CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS

President: Jeff Schrock

Vice President: Kent Larson

Secretary: Kelli Horner

Treasurer: Julie Marie Haugen

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Amy Anderson

Zoey Day

Sue Hales

Justin Howland

Conni Natwick

Dan Nelson

ELK RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH - ELCA ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Elk River Lutheran Church ELCA held an Annual Meeting on **Sunday, January 26, 2025.**

Call to Order

President Kent Larson called the meeting to order at 9:44 am. With 98 present and 2 online (100), a quorum was declared.

Pastor Nathan welcomed everyone with an opening liturgy and the opening hymn was, “Now Thank We All Our God”.

Old Business:

Action Items in Bold:

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2024, ERLC Annual meeting made by Chuck Cazett and seconded by Lorie Schulstad-Werk. Approved. Motion carried.

Motion to approve 2024 Treasurer’s report as presented made by Julie Parks and seconded by Dale Ziner. Approved. Motion carried.

New Business:

Ballots were handed out and voting began for church council and committees.

Motion to approve the 2025 proposed budget as printed in the 2024 Annual Report made by Conni Natwick and seconded by Amy Anderson. Approved. Motion carried.

Election results

Congregation Council:

Julie Marie Haugen, Conni Natwick, Justin Howland, Dan Nelson

Council Officers:

Jeff Schrock – President, Kent Larson – Vice President, Julie Marie Haugen – Treasurer, Kelli Horner – Secretary

Nominating Committee: Tom Werk, Matt Glasoe

Mission Endowment Fund Committee: Steve Bucholz

Pastor Nathan Mugaas presented the ERLC 2024 Annual Report.

- Many new and firsts in the report, lots of great work by the congregation
- Thanks to everyone who made this possible!
- LOVE inside out Capital Appeal– Exterior Stucco this Spring and Streetside Patio Planning this Summer 2025, construction 2026.

Motion to adjourn the 2025 annual meeting made by Dale Ziner and seconded by Julie Marie Haugen. Approved. Motion carried.

President Kent Larson adjourned the meeting at 10:28am.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Glasoe, Secretary, Addendums – None.

ELK RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

Elk River Lutheran Church ELCA held a Special Congregational Meeting on **Sunday, April 27, 2025.**

Call to Order

President Jeff Schrock called the meeting to order at 9:50 am. With 77 present and 2 online (79), a quorum was declared.

Meeting Business:

Review work plans for the building and vote to officially move forward with the work. The two proposed projects include:

1. Re-dashing the stucco on the outside of the building, which was planned as a part of our LOVE Inside Out capital appeal to be paid for with money in the Building Fund.
2. Install exterior covering over the upper East facing windows in Sanctuary to stop water leaking, to be paid for with remaining Employee Retention Credit grant funds received during the pandemic.

The ERLC council has approved these projects, but per our constitution, any contracts over \$25,000 must also be approved by a meeting of the congregation.

Motion to approve the work to re-dash the stucco on the outside of the building using money in the Building Fund made by Jared Stevens and seconded by Mary Barthel. Approved. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the work to install exterior covering over the upper East facing Sanctuary windows using Employee Retention Credit grant funds made by Dale Ziner and seconded by Julie Parks. Approved. Motion carried.

Meeting Closure:

President Jeff Schrock adjourned the meeting at 10:02 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Marie Haugen and Kelli Horner, Secretary, Addendums – None.

Dear Members and Friends of Elk River Lutheran Church,

*The Apostle Paul writes, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."
1 Corinthians 3:6*

I grew up on a farm watching my dad do a little bit of everything. On any given day, he might be a mechanic keeping old equipment running, a truck driver hauling grain to market, a broker deciding when to buy or sell, and a farmer planting seed in dry dirt—trusting the rain would come. At the same time, he was a husband and a dad, raising a family and living out his faith in quiet, steady ways—*sometimes even over lunch in the middle of a field.*



Mugaas family lunch in the field during planting season.
(I am the lower-left child, already living up to my "Here Comes Trouble" t-shirt.)

Many Roles, One Calling

While my tasks look different, one of the things I love about ministry at Elk River Lutheran is the wide variety of roles I'm called to play. In the same week, that might include preaching, leading Tuesday Morning Text Study, walking with families through grief, leading worship at Guardian Angels Riverview Landing, attending meetings, overseeing budgets and facilities, shoveling snow before worship, helping set up a bounce house at the farmers market, or—on occasion—*putting on a Star Wars stormtrooper costume for Downtown Trick-or-Treating.* All of this happens alongside my most important roles: being a husband and a dad.

I am deeply grateful for the way my gifts are engaged here and for the chance to do ministry alongside such a generous, creative, and faithful congregation.

Listening and Discernment as a Congregation

This past year, we intentionally stepped back from day-to-day tasks to engage in strategic planning as a congregation. Through a series of micro-surveys, many of you helped tell the story of who Elk River Lutheran is and who we are becoming. Again and again, your responses named our greatest strengths: a welcoming and inclusive community, meaningful worship, thoughtful preaching, strong music, and deep relationships. Many shared that this is a place where people can be themselves, heal from past church experiences, ask honest questions, and grow in faith together.



Downtown Trick-or-Treating with my boys, Teddy and Stanley.
(Turns out ministry sometimes requires armor.)

The surveys also revealed something encouraging and important: most people here know many others well enough to call on for support. Relationships are not accidental at ERLC—they are formed through worship, Life Groups, Bible studies, service, coffee conversations, choir, and shared work. At the same time, you named a hope for continued growth—welcoming new people, especially families and younger adults, while maintaining the relational depth that already exists.

You also reminded us that Elk River Lutheran is known beyond our walls as a welcoming, inclusive church—one that shows up in the community, values diversity, and seeks to serve neighbors with compassion. Many of you are already deeply involved in addressing hunger, supporting youth, caring for seniors, and strengthening our community in countless ways. Your passion for service and justice is a gift to this congregation and to the wider world.

Ministry Beyond Our Walls

This year, some of you may also be aware that I began doing a small amount of professional speaking beyond the congregation, focused on stress, burnout, and resilience. I see this not as a departure from my calling here, but as an extension of it. In my ordination vows, I promised to “give faithful witness in the world, that God’s love may be known in all that you do.” I am grateful for your encouragement and support as I seek to live into that promise—always rooted at Elk River Lutheran, and always shaped by the ministry we share together.

Looking Ahead with Gratitude and Hope

In many ways, the pages of this annual report tell that same story. They reflect the faithful work that has taken place here over the past year—through worship, learning, service, care, and community life. Thank you to everyone who took the time to submit reports and share their part of this story, and thank you for reading and reflecting on the ministry we are living out together.

As we look ahead, I am filled with gratitude and hope. Like planting seed in dry ground, much of what we do in ministry requires trust—trust that God is at work even when growth is slow or unseen. And yet, time and again, God gives the growth.

Thank you for your faithfulness, your generosity, your honesty, and your willingness to walk together. It is a joy to serve as your pastor.



With gratitude and hope,

Pastor Nathan

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”
Galatians 6:2

A Year Guided by Community

This verse has been a guiding reminder for me throughout **2025**. Serving as a pastor at **Elk River Lutheran** is a privilege because it is never about the building we gather in, but about the **people who bring God’s love to life every day**. I see this in countless ways - through acts of kindness, laughter shared in fellowship, and the quiet moments when someone simply shows up for another.

The church is alive in its people, and it is a joy to witness this life unfolding.

Family Ministry & Faith Formation

Family ministry has been a vibrant source of energy this year.

- **Vacation Bible School** allowed children, youth, and families to dive into God’s story in playful and meaningful ways.
- **Palm Sunday and Christmas programs** showcased the creativity, humor, and heart of our young people.

These events are joyful celebrations of **faith in action**, and they remind me how powerful it is when generations worship and learn together.



Pastoral Care

Pastoral care remains a highlight of my work. There is no greater honor than walking alongside people during times of **joy, grief, or uncertainty**. Listening, praying, and reflecting together reminds me of the **sacred trust inherent in ministry**.

These encounters are humbling and life-giving, offering perspective and deepening my gratitude for the ways God works through the daily lives of our community.

Kids Connect

Kids Connect continues to be a true joy. Growing alongside our youngest students as they explore faith is inspiring. Their curiosity, laughter, and bold questions are contagious.

This program would not thrive without the dedication of our **volunteers**, and I am endlessly grateful for those who guide, encourage, and invest in these children - creating a space where they know they matter to **God and to us**.



Youth Mission Trip

The **2025 Youth Mission Trip** was another highlight. Witnessing our high school students engage in meaningful service and build deep, supportive relationships with one another was inspiring.

Their energy, commitment, and compassion were tangible expressions of **God's love in the world**, and I am grateful to have been part of their journey.



Growth, Learning & Leadership Development

This year has also been a time of growth and learning for me.

- Attending a preaching workshop with Pastor Nathan
- Participating in the Progressive Youth Ministry Conference

These experiences provided opportunities to reflect, gain new perspectives, and connect with peers who are passionate about innovative and collaborative ministry.

I am especially thankful for being chosen for the **Age to Age grant initiative through Capital University**. The training, coaching, and grant support - along with the guidance of the **Age to Age Leadership Team** - are helping us strengthen and expand our **Children and Family Ministries**. I am excited to see how God will lead us to new ways of serving in the months ahead.



Quality of Call Initiative Summit



I am also honored to have been chosen to participate in the **Quality of Call Initiative Summit**. This regional gathering brings together women in leadership from **eight synods** from Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

I will represent the **Minneapolis Area Synod** alongside seven other incredible women. The vision of this initiative is inspiring: *a church equitably served by people empowered to serve with their gifts, regardless of the barriers that systems or individuals have historically created.*

I am eager to learn, share, and grow alongside this remarkable group, and to bring new insights back to our ministries at Elk River Lutheran as we continue to nurture **leadership, collaboration, and equity** in our community.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Looking forward to **2026**, I am hopeful for **balance, growth, and innovation**. I trust that together, we will continue finding new ways to do ministry, nurture one another, and live out **God's love** in this community.

I am grateful for the privilege of walking this journey with all of you.

It is a joy to witness God at work through the people of Elk River Lutheran.



With Love, Grace and Peace to each of you!

Pastor Anne Schaefer

Regular Studies, Gatherings, and Learning Opportunities

At Elk River Lutheran, gathering together is central to how faith is formed and community is strengthened. Whether for fellowship, Scripture, service, or learning, we are grateful to be a church that values showing up and engaging life and faith together.

Throughout the year, a wide range of ongoing groups provided steady rhythms of connection. These included:

- Two **monthly women's Bible studies**
- A **monthly women's book club**
- **Weekly men's and women's coffee or breakfast gatherings**
- A **weekly men's Bible study** on Zoom

At nearly any point in the week, there is an opportunity to gather—an enduring strength of our congregation.

Tuesday Morning Text Study continues to be a welcoming and accessible space for engaging Scripture. Each week, participants explore the Scripture reading for the coming Sunday, guided by whichever pastor will be preaching. No preparation is required, and people are invited to participate at their own pace through listening, reflection, and conversation. The group meets Tuesday mornings, with coffee at 9:30 and conversation beginning at 10.

LiFE Groups (Living In Faith Everyday) experienced strong growth in 2025, welcoming nearly 100 participants across a dozen different small groups. These sermon based small groups invite people to engage in conversation around the scripture and themes of the previous weeks sermon, and provide a great opportunity to grow in faith and form and strengthen great relationships.

Sunday Mornings: In addition to ongoing groups, ERLC hosted several forums and workshops between services, offering opportunities for deeper learning and conversation. Guest preacher Daniel Goldschmidt led a workshop titled What Is Whiteness? Pastor Nathan facilitated a series of conversations based on his REACT framework—exploring resilience, community, purpose, and whole-self care—and Pastors Anne and Nathan led a workshop focused on funeral and memorial planning. These gatherings created space for thoughtful dialogue around faith, life, and the realities people are navigating today.

Together, these studies, gatherings, and workshops reflect a congregation committed to learning, relationship, and faithful engagement—living out our faith not in isolation, but together.



CYF: Children and Family Ministry

At Elk River Lutheran, families are at the heart of everything we do. From the youngest children discovering God's love for the first time to teens exploring faith in new and bold ways, our congregation buzzes with **energy, laughter, and curiosity**. Sundays, special events, and service projects alike are full of joy, creativity, and connection as families worship, learn, and grow together. The faith of our families brings life to every corner of our ministries, reminding us that church is not just a place we go - it's **who we are**. Our ministries help celebrate and grow together in our faith.

CYF Nights

CYF Nights are the party of the month at Elk River Lutheran! Each month, kids, teens, and families gather for:

- a shared meal
- Lively **large-group activities** with songs, icebreakers, and a faith-filled message,
- **Small-group discussions** that bring God's Word to life.

Every gathering is full of laughter, creativity, and connection—a time to have fun, grow together, and experience church as **joyful, messy, and meaningful** all at once.

Highlights from CYF Nights this year include:

- **May – Created to Create:** Families collaborated on a giant paper quilt, exploring how God calls us to be co-creators in the world.
- **October – Storytelling with Pastor Andrea Roske-Metcalf:** Kids and families explored the power of sharing their own stories and why sacred stories matter in our faith community.
- **November Service Project:** 90 people came together to make 1,000 sandwiches! Generous donations from the ERLC community helped these meals reach three organizations serving neighbors experiencing hunger and homelessness in Minneapolis.
- Other fun themes included **“Who is My Neighbor?”**, where we learned about friendship through the Good Samaritan story, and a festive **“Christmas Party for Jesus.”**

CYF Nights are always a highlight of the month, a place where families celebrate faith, serve together, and make memories that stretch beyond Sunday morning.



Kids Connect:

Each Sunday, children begin worship alongside their families before heading out during the scripture reading and sermon for **Kids Connect** - a space designed just for them. This time is centered on one simple but powerful message: **our children matter deeply to God and to this congregation.**

Through Bible stories brought to life with games, crafts, conversation, and hands-on activities, kids are invited to wonder, and learn about the character of God. Kids Connect continues to be a joyful and welcoming part of our Sunday rhythm, and the kids genuinely look forward to being there.

Pastor Anne writes the curriculum, and lessons are led by either Pastor Anne or dedicated volunteers. This past year saw encouraging growth in our volunteer team, and we remain grateful for those - especially **older teens and adults** - who share their faith by building relationships with our youngest members.

Sign up to lead
Kids Connect
here!



Palm Sunday and Christmas Programs

Elk River Lutheran is blessed with wonderful storytellers. Our **PreK through 5th grade students** participated in two cherished programs that are cornerstones of our children and family ministry and continue to draw strong participation from kids and families.

- In **December**, *19 students* joyfully shared the story of Jesus' birth, captivating the congregation.
- In **April**, *17 students* helped tell the story of Jesus' life, especially the events leading to his crucifixion and death.

Using a creative mix of live performance and video, these stories were told with **humor, heart, and honesty**. A big thank you to the high school student and adult directors whose energy and care make these meaningful moments possible!



Special Milestones:

This year brought joyful markers along our children's faith journeys.

- **Four students** came to the table for their *First Holy Communion*
- **Five third graders** were welcomed into deeper engagement with Scripture as they *received their own Bibles* and learned how to use them.

Moments like these reflect the care, teaching, and community that help our young people grow in faith at Elk River Lutheran.

CYF: Vacation Bible School: SCUBA!

This summer, our congregation dove deep into Vacation Bible School with **SCUBA: Dive into a Friendship with God!** For one joy-filled week, *35 children* explored an undersea adventure centered on the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God.

Through stories, worship, and hands-on activities, kids discovered that no matter how deep the waters, **God's love is always present.**

This week would not have been possible without our outstanding team of **34 volunteers.** From leading small groups and games to creating imaginative crafts and serving fun snacks, volunteers helped make each day welcoming, engaging, and meaningful, reflecting Jesus' love in every detail.

A new highlight this year was **Spotlight**, where children helped tell the Bible story through photos and then saw themselves featured on the big screen during closing worship. These moments reminded kids that they are not just learning God's story - they are **part of it.**

We are deeply thankful to everyone who supported VBS through volunteering, prayer, and encouragement. Together, we helped children dive deep into a lasting friendship with God!



Confirmation

On most Wednesday nights throughout the school year, **Pastor Nathan** can be found teaching a lively group of **sixth–eighth grade Confirmation students**, alongside dedicated adult small group leaders, in the **Community Room**.

Last spring, special Confirmation nights included a **service project at Feed My Starving Children** and a **trip to Luther Seminary**, where our students joined other middle and high school youth in exploring questions of faith. This fall, students toured **CAER** (our local foodshelf) and supported its work by donating **diapers and packs of wipes**.

The **2025–2026 Confirmation year** is our “Lutheran Year,” with a focus on **Martin Luther’s Small Catechism, core faith practices**, and—toward the end of the year—an introduction to **world religions**. And yes, we make plenty of room for fun along the way.

Confirmation at Elk River Lutheran is a place where students are encouraged to ask honest questions, serve their neighbors, and grow in faith together.



CYF: Confirmation Service

On **October 26th**, *eleven 9th graders* boldly stepped forward to publicly confirm their Christian faith during worship. It was a moment of joy, reflection, and celebration for our whole congregation.

In the weeks leading up to Confirmation, these students:

- Wrote personal faith statements
- Selected guiding Bible verses
- Put their faith into action by creating a lively *Moana-* and *Hawaiian-themed trunk* for **Trunk or Treat**
- They even planned and led the **Confirmation worship service** where they shared their commitments with the church



It was inspiring to see them step into leadership and live out their faith. We look forward to seeing where God will lead them next.

CYF: High School

Our high school ministry is a dynamic space where students encounter God, deepen their faith, and put their beliefs into action. Through weekly gatherings, service projects, and faith-filled adventures, teens grow closer to each other and to God.

High school ministry at Elk River Lutheran is thriving as a place for students to **grow in faith, build lasting relationships, and make a real difference in the world.**

Weekly Youth Group

Youth Group remains the heartbeat of this ministry. On Wednesday evenings, students meet to:

- Dive into **Scripture**
- Build **relationships** with each other
- Wrestling with faith questions like, *“What does this mean for my life?”* and *“How can I live out my faith today?”*

Some weeks, they join middle schoolers for field trips and service projects, creating a fun mix of learning, laughter, and action.

Highlights this year included:

Exploring **Luther Seminary** during Youth Night

Packing meals at **Feed My Starving Children** - an activity we're excited to repeat soon!

Once a month, students also join **CYF Night**, connecting with the wider church family for worship and fellowship.

Bible Camp

Eight of our high school students took their faith to new depths this summer at **Summer Festival Camp** at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN.

Between dorm life and dining hall adventures, students participated in worship, workshops, small group discussions, and all-camp games. Days were full of laughter, learning, and connection, and students returned home energized, inspired, and more connected to one another and to God.

Youth Mission Trip

A standout moment this year was the **Youth Mission Trip to Colorado Springs, Colorado**, where *12 students* partnered with local churches to serve the community.

Students:

- Prepped and cleaned, painted and scraped homes for families recovering from or at risk of homelessness



- Reflected each night during worship on how God was at work through their efforts
- Built community through white water rafting, hiking at **Garden of the Gods**, and shared experiences

This transformative trip has everyone eagerly anticipating **June 2026**, when our Youth Mission Trip will take us to **Jamaica!**

Service Opportunities

Our high schoolers also contributed to global outreach closer to home, teaming up with quilters and Women’s Bible Study to pack **school kits for Lutheran World Relief**. These kits, filled with essentials, will support students around the world, helping them access education and opportunity.



Graduating Seniors

A heartfelt tradition continued as we honored **six graduating seniors** with quilts made by the Elk River Lutheran Quilting Ministry.

These quilts are more than gifts - they are symbols of love, care, and connection to our church family, serving as a reminder that no matter where life takes them, they carry the support of their community with them. Many students have shared how their quilts provide comfort in dorm rooms or new homes, bringing a sense of belonging far from home.

We look forward to all the adventures God has in store for these adults in the coming years!

<u>FUTURE 2026 DATES</u>	
3rd Grade Bibles	February 15
First Communion Instruction	March 1
First Communion Worship	March 8
Fundraiser for Youth Mission Trip	March 13
Palm Sunday Program	March 29
End of CYF programming for grades 6-12	May 6
End of Kids Connect for the program year	May 10
Youth Mission Trip	June 13-20
Summer Festival High School week	July 12-16
Vacation Bible School	August 2-6

GENEROSITY TEAM

The primary goal of the **Generosity Team** in **2025** was to plan and implement a transition from the last two three-year Capital Campaigns to a one-year campaign for 2026. Early on it was decided that the focus for 2026 would be our legacy as a congregation, focusing first on those early members who planted the seeds and built the foundation for Elk River Lutheran Church, and then on what is continuing to unfold today as we build upon that foundation and move forward into a bright future.

From this focus came the theme for the 2026 campaign, *“Love That Lasts.”* We decided that this campaign would be in-house, carried out without the assistance of an outside consultant, using valuable lessons we have learned from previous campaigns, but also implementing new ideas. Among those ideas were two forums, the first an Estate Planning Event and the second a Funeral and Memorial Planning Workshop.

We also created, with the expert help of **Nick Campbell**, three videos highlighting the past, present and future of Elk River Lutheran Church. Our sincere thanks to Nick and to all our members who agreed to participate in these videos.

We also decided that one of the things we would emphasize this year is the increased opportunities for ministry if we could pay off our current building debts, thereby eliminating thousands of dollars in interest. A sincere thank you to everyone who has made a financial pledge! And, as reminder, it's never too late to make a commitment to **the 2026 General Fund and Building Fund**.

One of the continuing projects of our team is a series of temple talks called *“God’s Work, Our Hands.”* This project, which has been spearheaded by **Julie Marie Haugen**, was designed to inform the congregation about the valuable work of our various teams, committees and other groups. Without the many hours of time and talent that our members contribute every day to this church, we would not be able to carry out our many ministries. We will continue to highlight this work in 2026.

Another continuing project of our team is the production of the screens that appear every Sunday during the Offering period of the service. Okay, full disclosure, **Linda Nielsen**, our Office Manager, is primarily responsible for creating these beautiful screens. Thank you, Linda, for this and for everything else you do for our team!

If you look at the screens, and we hope you do, you will often see pictures of the many activities being carried out by members of this congregation. And if you look closely, you may also see something more. You may see connections being made. You may see relationships being built.

As our team talked about the legacy of this church, it became clear to us how the generous contributions of our members, both today and yesterday, have created a uniquely welcoming congregation that is *“Powered By Love”* every day. This is our legacy. **THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!**



Team Members: Milo Christianson, Chuck Anderson, Linda Campbell, Kari Christianson, Julie Marie Haugen, Pastor Nathan Mugaas

LOVE INSIDE OUT – 2023-2025 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN REPORT

This year, our **LOVE Inside Out Capital Campaign** came to a close, and a heartfelt thank you is in order for everyone who participated and gave so generously.

When the campaign was launched in the fall of 2022, **117 households pledged a total of \$708,277.99**. By the end of 2025, we've received **\$700,131.56**, with gifts coming from **160 households** over the life of the campaign. Your generosity made a significant impact on both our financial stability and the ongoing care of our church home.



Thank you for supporting payments on our mortgage and construction loan, and for helping fund projects designed to *make the outside of our building as welcoming as the people inside*. This year, we completed the **re-dashing of the stucco**, breathing new life into the exterior of our building and giving it a fresh, clean, and inviting appearance.



This fall, a new **Building Team** was formed to address the final goal of the LOVE Inside Out Appeal: **Outdoor Beautification & Signage to Improve Our Visibility**

- Install updated streetside signage and a large cross to communicate to the entire Elk River community “WE ARE A CHURCH!”
- Reconfiguring the drive-thru to provide better traffic flow and pickup/dropoff space.
- Create our envisioned patio space on Main Street for congregational and community use.

Building Team members include **Jeff Schrock, Sarah Carlson, Greg Pouliot, John Natwick, and Pastor Nathan Mugaas**.

Very rough plans for outdoor space and signage were first created in 2019. The team’s initial work has focused on reviewing those early concepts, evaluating ERLC’s current needs for outdoor space and visibility, and beginning to reimagine what this area could become. The next step is to present initial ideas to the city for review and input later this month, followed by an opportunity for the congregation to provide feedback on the proposed plans.

Once again, **thank you** for your incredible generosity and commitment to the LOVE Inside Out Campaign. Your support continues to shape both the ministry we share and the witness we offer to the wider community.

HOSPITALITY TEAM

The Hospitality Team shares the love of Jesus with all who attend Elk River Lutheran Church events—especially first-time guests—by creating a warm and welcoming environment through food, drink, and fellowship. This team helps live out the mission of ERLC with joy and care.

The team operates under the guidance of the pastors and church staff.

Primary Responsibilities

- **Sunday Fellowship Hour**
 - Set up, serve, and clean up food and beverages during the Fellowship Hour.
- **Sunday Special Events**
 - Coordinated **Pie Sunday** in November, **Heritage Treats** in December, and **Confirmation and Senior Recognition Sunday**.
 - Assist with serving at additional Sunday events, including **New Member Luncheon, Block Party, and Third Grade Bible Sunday**.
- **Funeral Receptions**
 - In 2025, the committee served **13 member funeral lunches** and **nine funeral lunches for Dare's Funeral Home**.

The Hospitality Team was also invited to assist with food and drinks at events hosted by other ministries. This year we assisted with **CYF, Dinner Church during Lent, VBS, Endowment-sponsored events, and Blue Christmas**.

The Hospitality Team monitors and manages hospitality supplies to ensure items are stocked and available for all hospitality-related events. We work as a team to ensure the church kitchens and hospitality areas are maintained in a clean, organized, and safe condition.

Meetings

Meetings are held on the **second Monday of each month at 10:30 a.m.** If you are interested in becoming a team member or would like to occasionally help serve coffee on Sunday, please contact any team member.

Team Members

Karen Acers, Barb Burandt, Jane Cazett, Peg Davies, Sue Hecker, Gwen Krizek, Sandy Krumweide, Kari Lorenz, Barb Overbye, and Dixie Rud



MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND

Committee Background

After the generous gift from the Patten Family in 2016, the Mission Endowment Committee became active in 2018. The committee has been discussing ways to let people know how to support the mission of ERLC through the Endowment Fund. We are always open to hearing about new and different groups in our community to contribute to.

2025 Disbursements

We were able to award six disbursements for the year:

- **Church Anew - \$500**
(pastoral resource materials)
- **Lutheran Disaster Response - \$2,500**
o Congregational match: \$5,041.66
- **Lutheran Disaster Response - \$2,500**
- **Lutheran Social Services - Refugee Services - \$4,000**
o Congregational match: \$4,600
- **Youth Mission Trip - \$1,710**
- **CAER - \$5,000**

Year	Contribution/Disbursement
2017	Establishment of Endowment Fund - \$172,273.31
2018	\$250 to CAER \$500 to ERLC for Financial Peace University \$250 to ISD #728 for school lunches
2020	\$1,000 to Thumbs Up \$3,000 to Open Doors for Youth \$1,000 to CAER
2021	\$1,000 to CAER
2022	Gift of \$3,839 from a member's estate
2023	\$1,000 to Lutheran University in Nigeria \$1,500 for Financial Peace University
2024	\$2,000 for CYF Night: JUSTmove \$2,000 to Lutheran Disaster Response \$200 Estate Planner Elder Law Event \$1,500 Financial Peace University

Financial History

See monthly financial reports from Edward Jones for account balances, available from the church office.

Financial Overview

Year End	2023	2024	2025
Endowment Fund Total Account Value	\$222,325	\$236,645	\$253,856
Total Grant Disbursements	\$2,500	\$5,700	\$16,210

Grant Application Information

Grants will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis at regular meetings of the Mission Endowment Committee. Grants will be limited to, and by, both the availability of earnings in the trust fund and the discretion of the Mission Endowment Committee. The application form is available in the church office or can be downloaded from the ERLC Mission Endowment Fund page on the ERLC website.

Direct website link: elkriverlutheran.org/mission-endowment-fund.html

Leaving a Legacy of Faith

Information regarding "Leaving a Legacy of Faith" by donating to the ERLC Mission Endowment Fund is also available in the ERLC Office.

Mission Endowment Committee Members:

- Hans DuBois - Chair
- Steve Bucholz - Financial Secretary
- Sue Sass - Recording Secretary
- Linda Campbell
- Paula Donnelly
- Pastor Nathan Mugaas - Advisory Member
- Kent Larson - Advisory Member

Trusting in God's Grace Through Music

The music ministry at Elk River Lutheran Church had a strong and vibrant year in 2025. At its heart, this ministry is about making music together—building relationships through rehearsal, sharing gifts generously, and offering meaningful music in worship services and the wider community. Throughout the year, musicians of all ages and backgrounds participated in ways that reflected our mission: *Trusting in God's grace, an accepting, joyful community, serving God and neighbor.*

Music shaped weekly worship services, festival days, concerts, and community events. Whether singing, ringing, or playing instruments, our musicians brought care, commitment, and joy to their service.

A Project-Based Music Ministry

All ensembles at ERLC operate on a **project-based model**. This means musicians are free to sign up for individual projects throughout the year rather than committing to every offering. Each project typically includes two to four rehearsals and a culminating event date. Most projects support worship services, while others serve community events or special congregational celebrations.

This structure allows flexibility for busy schedules and changing seasons of life while still fostering strong musical and relational commitment. It also creates multiple entry points for participation, making music-making accessible and sustainable.

Ensembles & Programs

Choir

The choir continues to be one of the pillars of the music ministry, enriching worship services through special music and leadership in congregational singing. A meaningful outcome of this work is stronger congregational participation, particularly when familiar hymns are well-supported. Just as importantly, the choir functions as a close-knit community—a “LIFE” group formed around shared music-making.

Participation remained consistent throughout the year, averaging 15–20 singers per project, with a current roster of 22. While tenors and basses remain an area of need, singers demonstrated strong commitment and enthusiasm. New members joined for both single projects and longer-term participation.

Highlights included the Hallelujah Chorus Sing-Along on Easter, the January Choral Tune-Up, the December Christmas Concert, and the unforgettable Carnegie Hall performance in June.



Powered By Love Collective (Worship Band)

This year marked an important milestone for the worship band with the adoption of its new name: **Powered By Love Collective**. The name reflects who this group truly is—a collective of musicians united by relationships, creativity, and a shared love of making music together. They welcome musicians into their fold and delight in creating music using a wide variety of instrumentation.



PBLC leads contemporary worship regularly and has become an essential part of the 10:30 worship services. They have enthusiastically continued the role as a “pit orchestra” for children’s programs, particularly at Christmas. Typical instrumentation includes acoustic guitar, bass, keyboard, percussion (a new and energizing addition this year), and multiple vocalists.

This ensemble stands out for its leadership. Members are skilled, self-directed, and deeply invested in the ministry, making PBLC the most self-led group within the music program. Their growth in identity, trust, and leadership has had a visible impact on worship and congregational energy.

Notable moments included the May Block Party, Kids Christmas Program, Play Music on Your Porch Day, and leading worship services when I was away.

Riverside Ringers

The Riverside Ringers add beauty and texture to worship services through handbell music and have increasingly shared this gift beyond the walls of ERLC. Their presence at community events such as the Downtown Tree Lighting and Bells & Carols has strengthened both visibility and connection within Elk River.

This is a deeply relational ensemble that values community and hospitality. Participation typically sits around 11 ringers per project, with a current roster of 14. This year, the Ringers welcomed a new member and introduced ensemble t-shirts for festivals and community events.

A major highlight was participation in BellFest for the first time. Five ringers attended, embraced the musical challenge, and returned eager to expand participation in 2026.



Mississippi Sound

Mississippi Sound offers instrumental color and depth to worship and special services through a small, flexible ensemble model. With a roster of 10 musicians and typical participation of 6–7 players per presentation, the ensemble includes flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, oboe, trombone, cello, and bass clarinet.

Because Mississippi Sound performs only four to five times per year, each appearance feels special. Their music is always a gift to the congregation. This year, collaboration increased as members of the Riverside Ringers joined Mississippi Sound for Christmas Eve, further strengthening inter-ensemble relationships.



Special Events & Collaborations

The breadth of music ministry in 2025 was especially visible through special events and collaborations, including:

- Brooklyn Big Band concerts and worship services in March and December
- RingOut! for RIC Celebration Sunday
- Music Sunday featuring all musicians
- Blue Christmas with strings and guitar
- Community choir concert in December
- Carnegie Hall trip and performance
- BellFest and Choral Tune-Up
- Caroling events in July, November, and December
- Play Music on Your Porch Day
- Kids Christmas Program with PBLC
- Lessons & Carols and all major holy days

These moments showcased the versatility of our musicians and strengthened ERLC's relationships with the wider community.

Growth, Highlights, & Wins

One of the most significant strengths of the music ministry this year was its overall flow. The project-based structure created frequent, meaningful opportunities for participation while respecting musicians' time and commitments.

Leadership development was a major success, particularly within Powered By Love Collective. As leadership expanded across the ministry, the program became more sustainable and collaborative, allowing for deeper growth and long-term visioning.

A significant highlight was celebrating **Lisa Griffin's five-year anniversary** as staff pianist. Lisa is truly invaluable to this ministry. Her musicianship, leadership, and experience elevate every ensemble she

supports. Just as importantly, her welcoming spirit and musical expertise shape the personality and culture of the entire music program.



Hiring Tom Clements as Online Broadcast Specialist and Will Lee as part-time worship leader further strengthened worship life. Tom's communication and broadcasting skills enhanced both online and in-person services, while Will's musicianship and presence brought additional energy and depth to worship during his time with us.

The congregation experienced thoughtful, meaningful worship shaped by musicians who practice faithfully, rehearse with care, and serve generously. Affirmation of the music heard in worship belongs to the many musicians who dedicate their time and talents in service to God and neighbor.

Momentum across the ministry is strong. Musicians are engaged, energized, and eager to participate. The addition of percussion to PBLC, increased leadership capacity, and strengthened ensemble identities point to a healthy and growing ministry.

Looking Ahead

As we move forward, I am excited to continue nurturing leadership within the music ministry by inviting professional musicians, encouraging emerging leaders, and strengthening ensemble ownership.

I also look forward to involving more solo musicians in worship services, creating additional entry points for musical participation beyond ensemble membership.

Finally, I am eager to focus more intentionally on young musicians—inviting current leaders to mentor and welcome youth into the music ministry. With a strong foundation in place, the future of music at Elk River Lutheran Church is full of promise.



Taylor Quinn
Director of Music Ministry and Worship

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The **Prayer Shawl Ministry** is a group of knitters and crocheters that create items for anyone in need of a “*hug*”. Our main goal is to have **Prayer Shawls, Pocket Prayers and Chemo Caps** available and easily accessible for anyone to take and give to someone who would be comforted by receiving it.

This talented group also creates the **Baptismal Blankets** that are given to infants baptized here at **Elk River Lutheran Church**.

Highlights from the Past Year

- Visiting several **homebound members of ERLC** delivering Prayer Shawls to offer comfort and connection
- Donating **Pocket Prayers** to the **Hospitality Team** which then included them in the gift bags for a birthday party they hosted at **Guardian Angels**
- Expanding our **ministry beyond our walls and into our community**
 - Donated *preemie caps and baby blankets* to **Global Healthcare Ministries**
 - Donated *hats, neck warmers & fingerless gloves* to **Guardian Angels**
 - Donating *warm hats* to **CAER** and **Open Doors for Youth**
- Creating a **new display in the Gathering Area**, providing a much more visible and welcoming exhibit of the Prayer Shawls, Pocket Prayers and Chemo Caps

Gratitude and Generosity

Our group has been blessed with the generosity of people who have donated **yarn** to us. We rely completely on donations to create our items.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed – your support makes this ministry possible.

Join the Prayer Shawl Ministry

New members are always welcome! You do not have to be an expert in “*Fiber Arts*”. Our skilled knitters and crocheters are happy to help beginners learn and grow.

- Most work is done **at home**, so it’s on your own time and at your own pace.
- We meet **every other month** to turn in items and to connect.
- Attendance at meetings is **optional**.
- You do **not** need to have an item completed to attend a meeting.

If you are interested in **joining our group or donating yarn**, please contact:

Jane Domeier

domej06@aol.com



QUILTING MINISTRY

2025 was a year of expanded outreach for our quilting ministry. Our quilters served neighbors both close to home and across the country—reaching **12 states**, from **California to North Carolina** - responding to:

- **Wildfires** (California)
- **Floods** (Texas)
- **Tornadoes and severe weather** (South & Midwest)
- **Hurricanes Helene and Milton** (Southeast)



As we comforted those at home, our hands also stretched across oceans, reaching people impacted by conflict and crisis around the world.

Lutheran World Relief Distribution

Quilts shipped from the Lutheran World Relief Warehouse to:

- Djibouti
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Tanzania
- United States

School Kits sent to:

- Djibouti
- Honduras
- Sierra Leone
- United States



Quilt Ministry Highlights

- **50 quilts** were blessed for Lutheran World Relief in May
- **72 quilts** are ready to be blessed and sent to LWR
- **10 quilts** were given to our seniors as a symbol of love and support as they continue their life journeys
- **1 quilt** donated to Youth Mission Trip fundraising
- **12 quilts** donated to Guardian Angel's Memory Care
- **24 quilts** donated to Lutheran Social Service (LSS)
Every three months, six quilts are donated to LSS
- **1 quilt** given to an LSS child
- **10 children's quilts** donated to River of Hope, supporting families affected by domestic violence
- **180 total quilts** made in 2025



School Bag Ministry

- **90 School Bags** were blessed in September
- Supplies and fabric were donated by the congregation
- The **Evening Bible Study group** filled some bags
- The remaining bags were filled by our **youth**



Stewardship of Donations

All donated fabric is used:

- Most fabric is used for **Lutheran World Relief quilts**
- Fabric not suitable for LWR is used for **school bags** and **Christmas items**
- Christmas items help fund the purchase of quilting supplies

We thank everyone for your generous donations and truly appreciate the support of our congregation.



Why This Ministry Matters

- **Quilts** bring comfort to those who have lost everything and help restore hope
- **School Kits** provide children the opportunity to continue their education



Join the Quilting Team

All are welcome!

- Tuesdays | 9:00–11:00 AM
- Lower level of the church

Team Leaders: *Linda Felska and Sue Hecker*

SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION TEAM

The second year for this group was a growing and learning one! The team was full of energy and passion for the causes and doing meaningful work on behalf of Elk River Lutheran.

Continuing Commitments

We continued to work on commitments previously involved with, including:

- **Pride Fest Booth:**
 - On July 26, 2025, ERLC attended and hosted a booth at the Pride Fest
 - The support from our congregation was amazing! It was our second year of this event, and it has grown significantly.
 - We found the experience valuable and beneficial, with lessons learned to improve future participation
 - We met many people and organizations and we were able to share our mission at ERLC with those attending
- **Open Doors for Youth:**
 - Team visited Open Doors for Youth February 3, 2025
 - Amy Anderson is our contact person with Open Doors for Youth. She stays connected with them to share their needs with our group
 - Team organized a supply drive for Open Doors for Youth This past fall of 2025



Looking Forward

This group plans to continue focusing on these two initiatives while exploring additional opportunities that allow and encourage our congregation to take an active role.

The learning opportunities our group explored include:

- *Christian Nationalism* and its impacts with Colombia Heights Lutheran presented by Angela Denker
- A group also attended the *Terebrinth Refuge* speaker and fundraiser addressing the needs of women experiencing sexual exploitation and human trafficking

Our group is interested in

- Helping to educate our congregation in both of these issues
- Exploring other issues and opportunities brought to our team on an ongoing basis

Get Involved

If you have interest in becoming a member of this group, please reach out. We are always looking for people with a passion for this and willingness to chip in!

Team Members: Kevin Jenkins, Chair; Amy Anderson, Paula Donnelly, Pauline Kuhn, Debby Pouliot, Pastor Anne Schaefer, Diana Schansberg, Lorie Schulstad-Werk, Dale Ziner

WORSHIP VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR TEAM

The purpose of the **Worship Volunteer Coordinator Team** at Elk River Lutheran Church (ERLC) is to **recruit, train, assign, and support** church members who assist with worship services.

Worship Volunteer Roles:

- Greeters
- Ushers
- Scripture Reader
- Communion Servers
- Communion Steward
- Mid-week Communion Filler
- Soundboard Operator
- PowerPoint Operator
- Switcher Operator (as needed)

Team Leadership

In 2025, we recruited **three new coordinators** to our team:

Vicki Simpson

Kerry Livingston

Sue Sass

Along with **Jenny Pruchnik** and **Chris Hansen**, they make up our current team. **Taylor Quinn** serves as an advisor to the team.

Gratitude & Volunteer Support

We are blessed with a congregation of members who willingly volunteer their **time and talents** to various worship volunteer roles. We are deeply grateful for their service in helping worship services run smoothly - especially when last-minute changes arise.

New volunteers are always welcome and **training is provided** for all roles.

Volunteer Resources

We maintain **three binders** containing job descriptions for each worship role. These binders are updated as needed and can be found:

- On the **ushers table**
- In the **sacristy**
- Upstairs **by Linda's desk**

Get Involved

The **Worship Volunteer Coordinator Team** invites anyone who is interested in learning more about our Worship Volunteer roles to contact **any of the team members listed below**.

Chris Hansen, Kerry Livingston, Jenny Pruchnik, Sue Sass, & Vicki Simpson

Email: erlcvolunteers@gmail.com



STATISTICAL REPORT 2025

	2024	2025
TOTAL MEMBERS (AS OF DECEMBER 31)	730	735
BAPTIZED	647	648
CONFIRMED	524	526

ACCESSIONS	2024	2025
Received by Baptism	7	4
Confirmed	11	11
Received by Transfer	21	18
Total	39	33

LOSSES	2024	2025
By Death	10	12
By Transfer	0	6
Inactive	5	1
Total	15	19

NET GAIN/LOSS		
	39/15	33/19

AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE	2024	2025
In Person	212	202
Online Average**	264	328

EDUCATION ENROLLMENT	2024	2025
Sunday School	47	50
Confirmation	34	27

PASTORAL ACTS	2024	2025
Baptisms	7	4
Confirmations	11	11
Funerals	10	12
Weddings	3	5

**Per ELCA "Tracking Online Worship Attendance"

TREASURER'S REPORT

I would like to begin with an update to the news Kent Larson and I shared with you in November and the bulletin insert in December that our budget was **-\$29,938.07**. Our congregation did step forward and exceeded our expectations by giving the largest amount received since before 2021! However, we will end the year in a deficit of **-\$2,842**.

We replaced 2 furnaces this past month, leaving the Employee Retention Credit (ERC) at **\$28,762.05**.

2023-2025 LOVE INSIDE AND OUT CAMPAIGN		
Total Pledges	\$708,277.99	
12/31/25 Received	\$700,131.56	99% goal

2026 LOVE THAT LAST BUILDING FUND		
Total Pledges	\$161,634.00	

Mortgage balance as of 12/31/25	\$1,020,621.54
Construction MIF Loan as of 12/31/25	\$ 192,203.33

The Council Officers met on January 10, 2026 to discuss the 2026 Budget.

Our basic philosophy for budgeting around 2026 is as follows:

- A modest increase in giving.
We feel this represents reality.
- Support for our key ministries and their growth.
Shown an increase in budgets and activities. All in support of our strategic plan.
- Leveraging a small amount of the Employee Retention Credit to balance the budget.
These dollars will only be used if needed.

This is my final year being your Treasurer. I will remain on the Council and onboard the treasurer that is elected in January. It has been my pleasure serving in this role. I sure have learned a lot! The biggest lesson is the realization of how much our congregation cares for our Church and each other.

Always willing to lend a hand and a friendly “Hello, how are you doing? It is so good to see you!”

Wishing you a blessed, healthy, happy New Year!
Julie Marie Haugen



Financial Report and Budget

	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
General Income	\$568,975.00	\$ 568,490.18	\$576,255.00
Employee Retention Credit	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,000.00
Total Income	\$568,975.00	\$ 568,490.18	\$584,255.00
General Expenses:			
Office/Admin	\$ 33,039.89	\$ 34,768.33	\$ 34,346.00
Worship	\$ 8,550.00	\$ 5,726.22	\$ 8,100.00
Hospitality	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 7,258.79	\$ 7,300.00
Music	\$ 6,483.00	\$ 6,229.79	\$ 6,700.00
CYF	\$ 10,665.00	\$ 6,449.00	\$ 11,865.00
Adult Faith	\$ 1,950.00	\$ 784.32	\$ 2,130.00
Facilities/Building	\$ 44,800.00	\$ 50,251.60	\$ 46,700.00
Staff	\$411,719.05	\$ 401,943.20	\$419,905.80
Benevolence	\$ 46,800.00	\$ 57,921.12	\$ 46,800.00
Total Expense	\$569,006.94	\$ 571,332.37	\$583,846.80
Profit/Loss	\$ (31.94)	\$ (2,842.19)	\$ 408.20

Balance Sheet

Account Balances	2024 Year End	2025 Year End
General Checking	\$ 83,358.22	\$ 78,402.81
Building Fund	\$ 272,971.66	\$ 247,430.35
Operating Reserve Fund	\$ 45,439.96	\$ 47,580.36
MIF Account	\$ 5,632.26	\$ 100.16
ERLC Endowment	\$ 236,681.38	\$ 253,856.39
Employee Retention Credit	\$ 81,024.78	\$ 28,762.05
Dedicated Accounts:		
Deferred Maintenance Rsv Fund (prev. Capital Improv.)	\$ 6,745.01	\$ 12,272.51
Youth Ministries	\$ 6,108.06	\$ 17,768.68
Memorial	\$ 18,647.59	\$ 21,769.40
Hospitality	\$ 3,575.76	\$ 3,575.76
Program Fees Received	\$ 879.31	\$ 1,273.32
Comm Outreach	\$ 6,919.01	\$ 5,717.80
Good Samaritan	\$ 3,452.43	\$ 4,557.49
Quilting	\$ 1,260.25	\$ 2,113.57
Continuing Education	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,400.00
Total Dedicated Accounts	\$ 48,087.42	\$ 70,448.53
Total Account Balances	\$ 773,195.68	\$ 726,580.65
Liabilities		
MIF Mortgage Loan	\$ 1,064,400.98	\$ 1,020,621.54
MIF Construction Loan	\$214,098.17	\$ 192,203.33

COUNCIL BALLOT 2026

Terms for Current Council Members:

Kelli Horner (2027)
Amy Anderson (2027)
Zoey Day (2027)
Julie Marie Haugen (2028)
Conni Natwick (2028)
Justin Howland (2028)
Dan Nelson (2028)

Outgoing Council Members

Jeff Schrock (2026)
Sue Hales (2026)
Kent Larson (2026)

Congregation Council: (Three Needed, three 3-yr terms) **(Vote for 3)**

- Jeff Schrock (seeking 2nd term)
- Kent Larson (seeking 2nd term)
- Renee Thurmer
- Tyler Carlson

Council Officers candidates – 1-yr term: **(Vote for 4)**

- President – Jeff Schrock
- VP – Kent Larson
- Treasurer – Amy Anderson
- Secretary – Kelli Horner

NOMINATING COMMITTEE BALLOT 2026

Current Nominating Committee Members

Tom Werk (2027)

Matt Glasoe (2027)

Outgoing Nominating Committee Members

Jennifer Stanley (2026)

Mark Johnson (2026)

Kara Hennig (2026)

Nominating Committee: (2-yr. term)

(Vote for 3)

- Sue Hales
- Emily Rotz
- Hans DuBois

MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE BALLOT 2026

Current Mission Endowment Fund Committee Members

Sue Sass (2027)

Linda Campbell (2027)

Outgoing Mission Endowment Fund Committee Members

Paula Donnelly (2026)

Hans DuBois (2026)

Steve Bucholz (2026)

Mission Endowment Fund Committee: (3-yr. term)

(Vote for 3)

- Paula Donnelly (seeking 2nd term)
- Jim Ayres
- John Barthel
- Barb Burandt
- Julie Parks



729 Main St NW, Elk River, MN 55330

www.elkriverlutheran.org