



First News

February 2024

The Monthly Publication of First Lutheran Church, Portland, ME

Semiannual Congregational Meeting Sunday, February 4th

Our first Congregational Meeting of the year will take place following the worship service on February 4th. We will be discussing the 2024 budget as well as our financial picture in general and how it impacts the call process. All members of FLC are encouraged to attend this very important meeting.



Shrove
Tuesday



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Tuesday, February 13th

5:00 to 6:30 pm — Fellowship Hall

Join us for pancakes & sausage—this year we are also offering pancake flipping races at 5:15 and 6:00. All ages are welcome! Watch your email for more information.

Ash Wednesday Service Wednesday, February 14 at 7:00pm

Lent begins with our traditional worship service at 7:00pm, including the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion.



Midweek Lenten Services
Wednesdays beginning February 21
6:00 pm — Soup & Bread supper
7:00 pm — Holden Evening Service
(See page 3 for more details)

From the Council

Please plan on attending the semiannual meeting on February 4th. Our stewardship, financial team and Council have been working VERY hard to come up with a budget and ideas that will make it possible for us to call a full-time pastor. As of right now our figures don't add up to us being able to do so. We understand that times are tough for many of us, so if you aren't able to make a larger financial commitment, we ask for prayers that God will lead and guide us to a solution to our financial problems.

We now have a system in place to report weather cancellations on TV. If we have to cancel services due to bad weather, you can go to Channel 8 (WMTW), Channel 13 (WGME) or Channel 6 (WCSH) and it will be listed there.

In 2017, First Lutheran made the commitment to support Greater Portland Family Promise and every year since then, we have supported them financially and with many volunteer hours. Since February is considered the month of LOVE, we have decided to once again give everyone the opportunity to support this wonderful organization. There will be a basket on the credenza in the front of the church throughout the month of February for anyone who wishes to donate.

And last, but certainly not least, we are so grateful for Lauren Cormier. She has volunteered to make our presence known on Facebook once again and what a great job she has been doing! Please check it out if you haven't already done so.

As always, if anyone has any questions, concerns or suggestions, please speak to any Council member and we will be happy to address them at our next meeting. If you would personally like to address the Council on any issues, please contact me and we will welcome you at our next scheduled meeting.

In Christian Fellowship,
Coleen Walther

Financial Update

FLC had a net operating deficit in 2023 of \$75,108. We had expected a deficit of \$87,859 so the result was favorable to our budget. Our 2024 projected budget calls for a deficit of \$65,271, a slight improvement in our actual results. Our operating account maintains a balance adequate to fund this deficit through the end of the year.

If you have questions, please contact me by e-mail or on my cell phone, 207-939-0820.

--Ed Daggett, Treasurer

ed.daggett@flcme.org

	Actual December 2023	Actual YTD 2023
Operating Income	\$26,144	\$316,381
Operating Expenses	\$44,157	\$391,489
Net Operating Income (Loss)	(\$18,013)	(\$75,108)

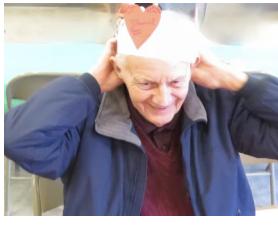
Midweek Lenten Services

First, Emmaus and Trinity Lutheran Churches will once again offer Midweek Lenten services, starting on February 21st and continuing every Wednesday through March 20th. First Lutheran will be hosting the services this year. The theme for this season will be “God is Calling”.

The Soup & Bread supper will start at 6:00pm. This year, the three churches will take turns providing supper. **February 28 and March 20 are the dates for First Lutheran.** Look for a sign up sheet in the Fellowship Hall if you can bring a soup and/or a dessert.

The Holden Evening service will start at 7:00pm. This is a favorite service of many, and you are invited to join us and make it part of your Lenten journey this year.

The Baptism of our LORD and Growing Faith at First Lutheran



Thank you to the 20 folks who participated in the Cross Generational Event celebrating baptism on January 14th. This event was a fun time as we discussed the meaning of our names and the meaning of baptism and as we prepared individual crowns acknowledging the coronation of our Lord by recognizing the positive qualities each of us embody. Special thanks to Lorna for the materials and Pastor Mark for the leadership in the activity.

The Educational team met on January 17th and reviewed the particulars of the event on the 14th. We discussed the positive aspects of the event and things we might adjust for the future. A brief survey will be sent to each household that participated in the event. This will help us continue to plan events moving forward. We also agreed to design an activity to accompany the Shrove Tuesday supper (Tuesday, February 13th) and provide some devotions for sharing for families to take with them. We will support the Shrove supper as part of a Cross Generational time of Faith Formation through activity and devotion. Save the date — our next Cross Generational Sunday event will be on Sunday, March 10th. This will be held immediately following coffee hour. It will involve Palms and Psalms, and everyone is welcome.

One or more adult Bible Studies are in the planning stages. Look for an announcement of this coming in the next few weeks.

On January 30th, a second training opportunity regarding Faith Formation and Family Ministry was held, led once again by Dave Lynn. This follow up training offered some specific tools and concrete ideas for developing this aspect of the ministry of First Lutheran.

Many thanks to the youth volunteering to help out during worship and also during the Cross Generational Events. We are planning on developing a youth calendar for acolytes, readers and greeters. If your son or daughter or grandchild are willing and interested, please reach out to Pastor Mark.

Our next Educational Team meetings will be held on Sunday, February 11th (11:30 am—12:30 pm) and Monday, February 12th (6:30—7:30 pm).

Finally, if you have an idea for a Cross Generational event that you'd like to see, please let us know. There is a sign up located on the wall in the Fellowship Hall.

Gene Kucinkas

Our Community Involvement

Quilting Ministry

MISSION POSSIBLE! The quilters are on a mission to create 30 quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Here's how you can help make this possible:

1. Pick up a bundle of precut quilt squares and take them home to sew together to make a quilt top. The bundles are available on the table in the Fellowship Hall. We ask they be returned by March 3.
2. Attend one or more of the quilting Saturdays on the first and third Saturdays of the month from 9:30 am to Noon to help assemble quilts. February 3, 17, and March 3. No experience is necessary.
3. Donate gently used all cotton sheets for quilt backs.
4. Join us on National Quilting Day, March 16, 2024, from 9:30-1:00. Our goal is to complete 12-15 quilts that day. It is POSSIBLE with the help of many willing hands. Lunch will be served.
5. Pray for this Mission project! From the LWR 2023 report: *When you make quilts and kits for Lutheran World Relief, you are God's hands of work in the world. Stitch by stitch, bundle by bundle, you create tangible gifts of love. And when disaster strikes, you wrap that love around your neighbor's shoulders to show them they are not alone. You restore hope and dignity in the face of crisis. Then you tie it all together with prayers of blessing for people you will never meet, but whose lives you've touched in profound ways. Thank you!*



A couple of the LWR quilts ready to go!

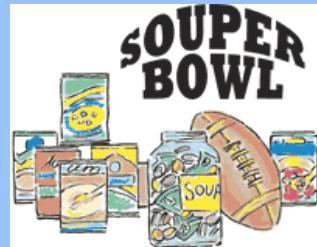
Souper Bowl Sunday

February 11

The Outreach Committee will be collecting canned soups for Project Feed—the emergency food pantry located at Woodfords Congregational Church in Portland.

The pantry reports that chicken noodle is the most requested, along with Progresso soups in general. Clam chowder and broths are also good choices. Really, any canned soup is welcome (although chicken and rice, tomato, vegetarian vegetable, and cream of mushroom are the least popular).

Please bring your donations by Super Bowl Sunday, February 11th.



GPFP had 5 moves in the month of December and 3 moves already in the month of January. Families are thrilled to move into an apartment that they can call their own. Some of the families are moving from the static shelter at Williston Immanuel while others are moving out of hotel rooms. GPFP provides the families with basic furniture, household goods and move-in kits that provide basic essentials. Family Promise is always in need of small dressers, lamps, small microwaves, end tables and all sizes of mattresses and box springs. If you would like to donate any of these items, please let me know and I can come and pick them up from you. If you are interested in helping with moves, please let me know. Thank you.

Wendy Barmore

wjbarmore@gmail.com

GREATER PORTLAND FAMILY PROMISE

We are in our 7th year of supporting this great organization. Wendy's reports are always heartwarming and amazing. What a blessing GPFP has been to so many people and the success stories bring a smile to our faces or happy tears to our eyes.

Since February is a month associated with LOVE, we have decided to make it our "giving month" to GPFP. First Lutheran makes an annual financial contribution to GPFP. If Greater Portland Family Promise is a charity that you choose to support, you will have the opportunity to do so this month.

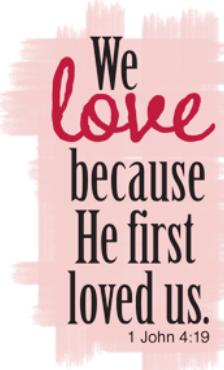
There will be an offering basket on the credenza at the front of the sanctuary or you can just put your envelope in the offering plate. If you are writing a check, please put GPFP in the memo or if you are including cash, please make a notation that it is for GPFP. At the end of the month, we will include all your donations with our contribution and the check will be presented to them.

THANK YOU!

Fuel Assistance Fund

Winter and the cold weather is still with us, and the Fuel Assistance Fund is available for our members and friends who may need a little help paying for heating costs.

If you need some assistance, or you know of someone needing help, please contact Pastor Mark or the church office with a name, address and the name of the heating fuel company. All requests are kept confidential.



**Valentine's Day
February 14th**

"The Bible and RIC"

Sunday, February 25

On January 21st, Knute Ogren, Director of Development and Communications at Camp Calumet, led a discussion that explored the importance of the Reconciling in Christ process. Over 40 members of the congregation attended and engaged in dialogue.

Several topics were raised and the RIC task force will be providing opportunities for all of them to be discussed as well as any new topics that may arise during this process. The first topic to be addressed will be the specific verses in the Bible that have commonly been used against LGBTQ+ people.

A presentation and discussion of these few verses will be held on Sunday, February 25th in the Fellowship Hall following the worship service. The discussion will be led by Rev. Amanda Gerken-Nelson, Priest-in-Charge at St. Bartholomew Episcopal Church in Yarmouth, along with Pastor Perry. All are welcome and encouraged to attend, participate, and ask any questions or share any concerns.

The RIC Task Force is always interested in hearing from you. Please feel free to share any questions or concerns with Pastor Perry or any RIC Team Member: Steve Barmore, Emily Cole, Trena Durloo, or Lisa Nelson.





As our Give a Child a Chance ministry enters its 10th year, here is our story

(Continued from the January FLC Newsletter)

In 2017, we joined Scrip Gift Cards (now called RaiseRight), a fundraising program for nonprofit organizations like schools and churches. When you purchase RaiseRight gift cards through our FLC account, we receive rebates on those gift cards. Since 2017, FLC members and friends have purchased a total of \$143,675 RaiseRight gift cards. In turn, Give a Child a Chance ministry has earned \$6,161 in rebates which has been used towards FLC Children's Program tuition support for families in need. We have continued offering RaiseRight Gift physical cards for sale the first and second Sundays of each month. For those interested, electronic gift cards are also available.

So, what have we accomplished in these 9+ years? We have supported sixteen students, including two brothers and a brother and sister in our preschool programs, and have contributed \$72,000.00 towards tuition support. We have been able to support several children for more than one year. Our current account balance is \$5,857 so we will be able to contribute to tuition support again this fall.

Since our inception in 2014, we have enjoyed the benefits of having sustaining donors, individual donors, and donations made in memory of or in honor of loved ones. We have been fortunate to have had Thrivent monies to defray some of the expenses of operating the ministry, so that we take advantage of every dollar to which we have access. Every contribution is appreciated as we continue to provide support to neighborhood children in need to attend our FLC Children's Programs. This year, we have responded to the request from the Children's Programs to extend our support to children younger than just preschool age due to staffing and enrollment issues. The outcome is the same; these children are helped to move forward with their education and their contributions to their communities.

We have taken full advantage of social media to keep our Give a Child a Chance ministry effort in people's minds. Through our monthly Newsletter columns, Constant Contact Email "bursts", Bulletin inserts, Church announcements, and Posters. The talents and skills of Joleen Knowles, Bill Mills, Ed Daggett, and Deb Curry have facilitated these efforts.

A question we must address at this time is how we ensure that Give a Child a Chance will continue for as long as the help is necessary for our neighborhood children in need to grow and develop to their fullest potential through a preschool experience in our FLC Children's Program. Your prayers and support continue to be our most important strength and motivator to keep this effort going. Thank you and may our God continue to bless you and our efforts.

Give a Child a Chance Team

Susan Bollman, Ann Brown, Wendy Carey, Karen Johnson, Lynn Macken Colleen Taylor

ec-fund@flcme.org

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.

2 Corinthians 1: 3-4



Wayne & Sally Heath
Ethan Olson & family
Abbott Knowles
Ned Long
Wendy Carey
Lauretta Nielsen
Bob Mitchell
Jeff, Trena & Andy
Durloo
Lynne Fishburn
Dorrine Loveland
Margarite Arienti
Doris Kilfoil
Linda Clarke

Jen & Brian Hazelwood
Paul & Sharon Aube
Peter Rovnak
Jennifer Tarr
Victims of racism and hate, especially those in the LGTBQIA+ community
All victims of violence
The people of Israel and the innocent civilians of Palestine



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|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| February 1 | Wayne Heath |
| February 12 | Jason Hanley |
| February 14 | Anna Louise Englund |
| February 16 | Mickie Kuckinkas
Henry Cease |
| February 22 | Steve Santiago
Pastor Mark Perry |
| February 25 | Dave Selleck |
| February 26 | Judy Horn |

Thank you to our amazing Church Family. So many of you supported me in my recent illness and hospitalization with prayers, thoughts, cards and personal contact. I was amazed at the love and support from so many friends and family here at First Lutheran. I knew it was here but had not experienced it until now. Also, in the midst of the crisis, I had a birthday that many of you remembered with cards and best wishes. Thank you all for all you do.

Returning Christ's love,
Abbott Knowles

Prayer is such an important part of our daily Christian lives, and sometimes extra prayers are needed. If you have any special prayer requests and you would like to have our "Prayer Warriors" praying as well, please send an email.

prayer-request@flcme.org



**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
132 AUBURN STREET
PORTLAND, MAINE 04103-2145**

February 2024



He was transfigured before them ...
and his clothes became dazzling white ...
Mark 9:2-3, NRSV

**Transfiguration Sunday
February 11**

First News is a monthly publication of First Lutheran Church. Articles can be submitted to the church office, or by email to news@flcme.org.

Worship Service is at 10:00 am

Church Office Hours are Monday thru Friday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm (797-2525)

www.FLCME.org

STAFF

Transition Pastor.....Rev. Mark Perry (mark.perry@flcme.org)
Church SecretaryJoleen Knowles (joleen.knowles@flcme.org)
Church Organist.....Brenda Morneau (brenda.morneau@flcme.org)
Director—FLC Children's Community Ministry.....Sherryl Eastman (flcpinfo@flcme.org)

OFFICERS

President	Coleen Walther
Vice-President	Ann Brown
Secretary	Ken Conant
Treasurer	Ed Daggett
Financial Secretary	Cheryl Cyr