SPIRIT, OPEN OUR HEARTS

Southeastern Iowa
SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

2025 Annual Report

Spirit, Open My Heart

REFRAIN

Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving.
Spirit, open my heart.

1 God, replace my stony heart
with a heart that's kind and tender.
All my coldness and fear
to your grace I now surrender. REFRAIN

2 Write your love upon my heart
as my law, my goal, my story.
In each thought, word, and deed,
may my living bring you glory. REFRAIN

3 May I weep with those who weep;
share the joy of friend and neighbor.
As I live from day to day,
love will be my finest labor. REFRAIN

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947
Text © 1996 Pilgrim Press. All rights reserved.

Bishop's Message

On behalf of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, thank you!

I am deeply grateful to all our congregations, pastors, deacons, lay leaders, and ministry partners for the countless ways you continue to share the Good News of God through Jesus Christ: in worship, in service, in your communities, and across the globe. Every gift of time, prayer, leadership, and financial support is a tangible witness to God's grace at work among us. Lives are changed because of your generosity, and I give thanks to God for you.

Each year at the Synod Assembly, we adopt a spending plan for the mission support generously shared by our congregations. The 2025 Annual Report shares how those gifts are being faithfully stewarded by supporting ministries throughout Southeastern Iowa, across the ELCA, and around the world. It also highlights the unique ways congregations are living out their own gifts, including initiatives not directly funded by mission support, such as starting a Neighborhood Food Fridge or creating space for a high school youth choir. These stories reflect the creativity and generosity happening throughout our synod alongside the ministries sustained by mission support dollars.

This year, our theme is **Spirit, Open Our Hearts**. It is both a prayer and a posture of faith. We are asking the Spirit to open us up to where Jesus is leading: to one another, and to the needs of the world. As we live into this theme, we are also praying:

Spirit, Open Us to Your Call – to hear and respond when God nudges us into new directions of service and witness.

Spirit, Open Us to Your Word – to be rooted in Scripture, nourished by the promises of God, and guided by Christ's teaching.

Spirit, Open Us to Your Presence – to recognize God's nearness in worship, in our neighbors, and even in unexpected places.

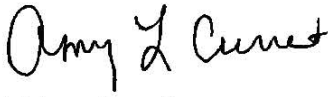
Spirit, Open Us to Your Love – to receive and to share the boundless love of God that transforms and heals.

As you reflect on these stories from across our synod, I invite you to consider how your mission support sustains our shared work when your congregation or ministry setting prepares its budget for 2026. The offerings you gather in your local setting are vital to the church's ministry. When a portion of those offerings is shared with the synod, that vitality grows. Your gifts multiply the ministry, extending generosity, hope, and witness far beyond what any one of us could go alone.

You are part of these stories. You are shaping these lives. Together in Jesus Christ, by God's grace, we are stewarding the community of faithful, loving, and thriving ministry that is the church today and the church for the future.

Thank you for the gift of serving together in this calling. It is an honor and a joy to witness the Spirit moving among us, opening hearts and lives to God's abundant love.

Peace,



Bishop Amy Current

Mission Support

Mission support is how we share in God's work together. More than financial giving, it is a tangible expression of our shared calling as the body of Christ. By increasing your congregation's mission support, you amplify the impact of ministry in your congregation, across the Southeastern Iowa Synod, throughout the ELCA, and beyond. This faithful and strategic commitment not only grows generosity, faith, and mission, but also strengthens congregations, equips leaders, builds partnerships, and proclaims the gospel more boldly—together, for the sake of the world God so loves. **Here's why increasing mission support matters more than ever:**

Support Ministry Partners

WITNESS & PARTNERSHIPS

Your mission support extends our gospel witness through partnerships with organizations that serve in Christ's name both locally and globally. From seminaries to anti-hunger to racial justice and more, these impactful ministries serve people in need and build compassionate communities in Christ's name.

Strengthen Congregations

CONGREGATION VITALITY

No congregation is alone. Mission support connects your church to a larger network of believers working together to build vibrant and faithful communities. Congregational Vitality supports new ministries, equips congregations with resources and coaching, strengthens faith formation, and provides practical training for healthy, thriving ministry.

Invest in Congregation Leaders

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Mission support helps to raise up faithful, healthy, and well-equipped leaders who can adapt to an ever-changing world through coaching, scholarships, training, resources, and support.

Fund the Synod Office

ADMINISTRATION

Your gift of mission support makes the work of the Synod possible. While only 6% of these funds are allocated to administration and general expenses, this portion is essential to providing the foundation that allows every other ministry and mission to thrive.

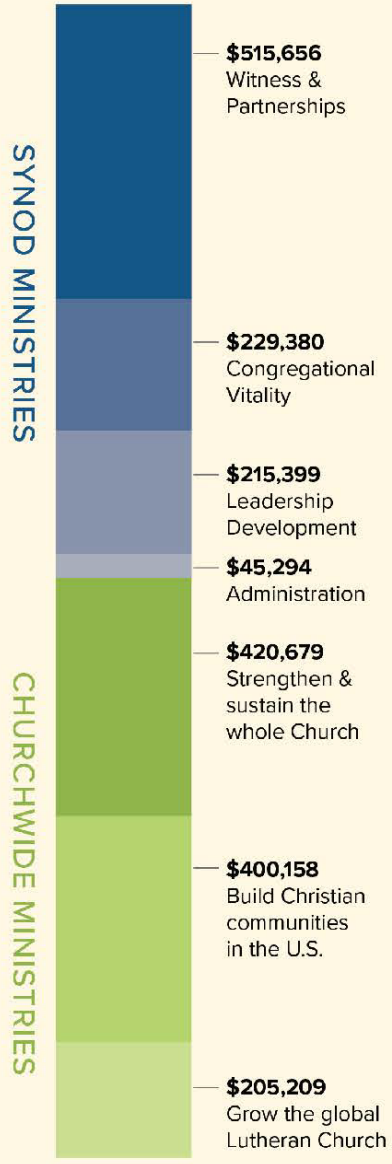
Fuel Global and Churchwide Ministry

ELCA CHURCHWIDE MINISTRIES

Mission support is a faithful expression of unity in the ELCA. Over half of the mission support received by the synod goes to Churchwide ministries that strengthen and sustain the whole Church, build Christian communities in the U.S., and grow the global Lutheran Church.

Distribution of 2025 Synod Mission Support Funds

Budgeted Mission Support—$2,031,775



St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
2025 Annual Report
Table of Contents

Annual Meeting Agenda (January 25, 2026) ..... Page 6

Annual Meeting Minutes (January 26, 2025) ..... Page 7

Congregational Meeting Minutes (May 18, 2025) ..... Page 9

Parochial Report ..... Page 10

St. Andrew's Statistical Data ..... Page 11

President's Report ..... Page 12

Visioning and Goals Update ..... Page 13

Pastor's Report ..... Page 16

Committee Reports ..... Page 17

- Audit Committee ..... Page 18
- Extended Ministries Fund Committee ..... Page 20
- Fellowship Committee ..... Page 21
- Outreach Committee ..... Page 22
- Personnel Committee ..... Page 23
- Property Committee ..... Page 24
- Service and Learning Committee ..... Page 26
- Social Concerns Committee ..... Page 28
- Stewardship and Finance Committee ..... Page 29
- Worship and Arts Committee ..... Page 30

2026 Standing Committees ..... Page 31

2026 Ministry Teams ..... Page 32

2026 Elected Committees ..... Page 33

2026 Church Council Members ..... Page 34

Ministry Team Reports ..... Page 35

- Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance ..... Page 36
- Edwards School/ Saving Suds Mission ..... Page 39
- Food at First Team ..... Page 40
- Pine Ridge Ministry Team ..... Page 41
- Reconciliation in Christ (RIC) Report ..... Page 42
- Tanzania Ministry Team ..... Page 43

Financials ..... Page 45

- Treasurer's Report ..... Page 46

2026 Proposed Budget ..... Page 57

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
January 25, 2026
Annual Meeting Agenda

We live and share God's love with ALL

Unconditional Love ~ Radical Hospitality ~ Selfless Generosity ~ Faithful Service ~ Compassionate Care ~ Meaningful Worship

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Determine Quorum

Approve/revise Agenda

Approve 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes

Approve May 2025 Congregational Meeting Minutes

President's Report

Visioning and Goals

Pastor's Report

EMF Report

Audit Report

Treasurer's Report

New Business:

- Approval of Audit Committee
- Approval of Nominating Committee
- Approval of EMF Committee
- Approval of 2026 Council
- Approval of 2026 Council officers
- Standing Committees
- Discussion and approval of 2026 budget

Closing Prayer

Adjourn meeting

MINUTES
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
January 26, 2025 Annual Meeting Agenda
We live in and share God's love with ALL
Unconditional Love ~ Radical Hospitality ~ Selfless Generosity ~
Faithful Service ~ Compassionate Care ~ Meaningful Worship

Call to order – 12:08 PM

Opening prayer – Pastor Sonja

Determine quorum – quorum present

Approve/revise agenda – Randy Sacco moved to approve the 2025 Annual Meeting Agenda as presented; Laura Frescoln seconded; motion passed.

Approve 2024 minutes – Randy Sacco moved to approve the minutes of the 2024 annual meeting as presented. Seconded by Margaret Sherve; motion passed.

President's report – see report page 12; celebrating staff additions, ongoing ministries (especially the new school bus in Tanzania!), visioning efforts, Reconciling in Christ initiative, growth in our membership, and the latest church directory
Outgoing council members – Randy and Lori have reached the end of their terms

Reconciling in Christ – see report – page 15

Visioning and Goals – see report – page 16

Pastor's report – see report – page 18

EMF report – see report – page 22

Audit report – all materials complete and accurate – see report page 21

Treasurer's report – Janet Dixon – see report page 44

New Business:

- Discussion and approval of recommended change to CH11.01.01.b by-law – changed to remove the requirement that the council vice president serve as chair of the Mutual Ministry Committee. Instead, the chair will be selected by the committee. Motion to approve made by Randy Sacco, seconded by John Kovar. Votes were collected on written ballots – motion passed 52-0.
- Update on Continuing Resolution C13.04.A24 – changed to clarify responsibilities of the Mutual Ministry Committee. Updates to continuing resolutions do not need a congregational vote; council approval is sufficient and was obtained.
- Approval of Audit Committee: approved by council, Randy Sacco moved to approve the 2025 Audit Committee as presented and proposed; seconded by Janet Dixon, motion passed.
- Approval of EMF Committee: Randy Sacco moved to approve the 2025 EMF Committee as presented and proposed; seconded by Sharon Mott; motion passed.

- Approval of Nominating Committee: Randy Sacco moved to approve the 2025 Nominating Committee as presented and proposed; Laura Frescoln seconded; motion passed.
- Approval of council: Randy Sacco moved to approve the 2025 council membership as presented and proposed; Dave Krumm seconded; motion passed.
- Approval of council officers: Randy Sacco moved to approve the 2025 council officers; Janet Dixon seconded; motion passed.
    - Mike Van Vertloo – president
    - Shelley Ackermann – vice president
    - Laura Frescoln – secretary
    - MaryJune Cain – treasurer (non-council member)
- Standing Committees – see individual committee reports; Service N Learning and Stewardship & Finance committees need additional members
- Acceptance of revised budget for consideration: Since the final December budget proposal and presentation to the congregation, council revised the budget further (January 23, 2025 version). Randy Sacco moved to accept the revised January 23, 2025 budget as the one to be considered by the congregation for 2025; Mary Johnson seconded; motion passed.
- Discussion and approval of 2025 budget - Randy Sacco made the motion to approve the 2025 Budget:
    - *Whereas the St Andrew's Lutheran Church Treasurer has presented and Church Council has reviewed and approved this church's budget and*
    - *Whereas this assembly today is the Annual Meeting of this congregation, legally called, with a quorum of voting members present, I move that the congregation of St. Andrew's adopt, in its entirety and without revision, the 2025 version of the St. Andrew's Church budget*
    - Seconded by Joel Paulson, motion passed by written ballot 49-1.

Closing Prayer: Pastor Sonja
Adjourn meeting adjourned 1:50 PM

Submitted by Mike Van Vertloo, Secretary
Approved mm/dd/yyyy

MINUTES
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
May 18, 2025 Congregational Meeting Agenda
We live in and share God's love with ALL
Unconditional Love ~ Radical Hospitality ~ Selfless Generosity ~
Faithful Service ~ Compassionate Care ~ Meaningful Worship

Call to order – 12:06
Opening prayer – Mike Van Vertloo

Determine quorum – quorum present

Agenda –

1. Reconciling In Christ: RIC
   Laura Frescoln motioned to adopt the following Reconciliation Statement and affiliate with Reconciling Ministries Network:
   "We are a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In keeping with the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, we are a progressive Ames Church joyfully and unconditionally welcoming all people of any age, gender, race, culture, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression into our community of faith. We affirm the worth of all people as unique individuals made in God's image. We are committed to racial equity and anti-racism. We are open to the special gifts that each person brings and invite each to participate in the life of our church."

   Margaret Shreve seconded the motion.

   Discussion was opened. No discussion was brought forward.

   Motion approved: Approval 42 yes, 1 no

2. Roof Repair Budget
   Laura Frescoln motioned to approve the spending of $29,861.82 from the Colorado Junction property sale proceeds to pay the balance of roof repair work completed in April 2025.

   Linda Severson seconded the motion.

   Discussion opened

   Motion approved: Approval 45 yes, 0 no

Adjourn meeting: 12:31 pm

Submitted by Laura Frescoln, Secretary
Approved _____

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Parochial Report 2025

Baptisms (4)

Robin Crisler
Tracy Jones
Cooper Miller
Lettie Leighkay Mitchell

Funerals (6)

*Sharon Anderson
*Kathryn Baker
Daniel Betts
Susan Frank
Charlotte Kemp
*Gene Pollmann

Confirmands (0)

Weddings (0)

New Members (7)

Katie Booton and Lucy Bennett (*child*)
Grayson Deardorff (*child*)
Becky and Kendall Lamkey
Sarah Parsons
Mary Ann Shao

Received Associate Members (4)

Josie Gustafson (associate)
Lindsey Orzehoskie (associate)
Kiersten Steensen (associate)
Sondra Wilson (associate)

Members Transferred out (7)

Landon, Sarah, Evelyn, Daniel and Thomas Auld
Carol and Barry Orness

**Active member at time of death.*

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Statistical Data 2019 -2025

Baptized Membership	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Baptisms	1	2	2	2	3	2	**4**
New Members	6	2	9	10	13	9	**7**
Transfers Out	3	1	3	0	3	6	**7**
Deaths	7	3	3	5	3	2	**3**
Statistical Adjustment	0	0	0	242	0	-6	**+1**
Baptized Membership	369	370	374	139	149	146	**148**

Confirmed Membership	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
New Members	6	2	8	7	15	**9**	**7**
Transfers Out	3	1	3	0	2	**6**	**4**
Deaths	7	3	3	5	3	**2**	**3**
Statistical Adjustment	0	0	0	217	0	**5**	**5**
Confirmed Membership	336	334	338	122	127	**133**	**138**

Attendance	2019	2020 Online	2021 Hybrid	2022 Hybrid In-Person	2022 Hybrid Online	2023 Hybrid In-Person	2023 Hybrid Online	2024 Hybrid In-Person	2024 Hybrid Online	2025 Hybrid In-Person	2025 Hybrid Online
Programming Schedule	71	118	155	60	208	67	1585	75	63	**87**	**74**
Summer Schedule	70	n/a	105	49	68	65	6553	74	88	**63**	**45**
Easter	146	208	137	133	108	125	355	136	88	**121**	**74**
Christmas Eve	144	151	218	91	457	156	58	142	114	**126**	**100**
Christmas Day	n/a	n/a	n/a	29	811	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	**n/a**	**n/a**

Budget	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Budgeted Expenditures	234,507	252,203	264,979	270,908	323,126	370,118	**325,472**
Actual Benevolence	9,251	12,276	11,877	10,400	15,500	21,201	**28,962**
Actual Programs	8,459	5,517	11,269	18,537	15,361	14,934	**9,754**
Actual Personnel	135,772	160,315	141,826	139,343	172,242	198,231	**198,988**
Actual Debt Retirement	0	1,145	0	0	0	0	**0**
Actual Facilities/ Administrative Support	61,256	54,335	70,814	77,695	96,126	93,409	**98,152**
Actual Total Expenditures	214,738	235,025	235,786	245,974	304,317	327,775	**333,756**

Percentage of Expenditures	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
Benevolence	4.3	5.3	5.0	4.2	5.1	6.47	8.9
Programs	3.9	2.4	4.8	7.5	5.7	4.56	3
Personnel	63.2	68.6	60.2	56.6	57.2	60.48	61.14
Debt Retirement	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	0
Facilities/ Admin Support	28.5	23.3	30	31.6	31.9	28.5	30.16

*Percent of budgeted expenditures

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
President's Report 2025

When my family and I were looking for a church post-COVID, one of my non-negotiable items was that I wanted a church that lives the love of God through action. What we found at St. Andrew's is exactly that: a church that truly welcomes everyone, a church that celebrates and mourns together, and a church that brings that love of God into the world through service to others.

Some highlights from the past year:

- St. Andrew's completed the journey in becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation. This is just the beginning of our continued work in welcoming all of God's children in discovering the joy of his love. Many thanks to the RIC team for their efforts!
- In February, we said goodbye to our organist, Sawyer Shiffler, as he moved to Des Moines and began a full-time position at a church there. At the end of the year, we welcomed back Isaiah Walsh, who is wonderful on the piano and is expanding his musical talents to include the organ.
- St. Andrew's continues to open its doors for outreach. We had successful Easter and Christmas celebrations, and Ren Faire is always popular in the community.
- A committed group of members laid the foundations for a capital campaign to improve our church facilities, and this campaign was launched in December. The generosity of our congregation amazes me, and I thank everyone for their support.
- St. Andrew's continues to support our many missions locally, nationally, and internationally. Close to home, our missions include Saving Suds, Food at First, a partnership with Edwards School, and our Blessings Box. Further afield, we continue our partnership with the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and we serve as a partner congregation to an ELC church in Hedaru, Tanzania.
- Service and Learning provides opportunities for a deeper exploration of faith and connection to community through Sunday morning learning sessions for both adults and children, Vacation Bible School in the summer, Christmas and Easter celebrations, a movie night, and a bike ride.
- Council has explored ways to get St. Andrew's more present in the neighborhood surrounding the church. Council members were seen around the neighborhood over the spring and summer observing: Who is out and about? What are people doing? What do we notice about the houses? An experiment in connecting with the community was devised: sit out in front of the church and hand out school supplies (and often other treats!) to anyone who wanted to stop by. Through your generosity, backpacks, notebooks, pencils, pens, crayons, and markers were distributed to those living in or passing through our neighborhood. Some connections were made, including giving a short tour of the church to a young family who had never been inside a church before.

  A huge thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers and staff whose dedication to St. Andrew's is behind every good thing that we do in our community and around the world.

  Respectfully submitted,
  Mike Van Vertloo
  January 25, 2026

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Visioning and Goals Update

St. Andrew's continues to carry out its vision and goals, which were introduced to the members in 2023. In May 2025, a Visioning and Goals check-in was held for committee chairs and ministry leads. The leadership at St. Andrews continues to be engaged in the Vision and Goals work and I am happy to report that progress continues. A copy of the Visioning and Goals is available for anyone interested in seeing more detail.

Highlights of 2025 Goal Work

- Goal 1: Share within the congregation and to the surrounding community about the ministries, goals, and ongoing efforts.
    - Task 1 D: Conduct an annual review to examine how well identified goals were met and how well service efforts aligned with SALC goals/values.
      December 2025: This task has been assigned to the Mutual Ministry team for their 2026 work.
    - Task 1 F: Share within the congregation and to the surrounding community about the ministries, goals, and ongoing efforts.
      May 2025: Vision team meeting with committee chairs and ministry leads
    - All other tasks are complete
- Goal 2: Encourage increased involvement in and transparency of Stewardship and Finance of the congregation.
    - Task 2 A: Form a team to explore, inform, and apply for grants that align with church goals/values.
      June 2025: A team was formed to explore alternative funding.
    - Task 2 D: Faithfully study and evaluate our Stewardship practices and align them with our objectives.
      October 2025: Working Group collated information about guidelines for restricted budget lines, suggested additional practices to ensure good financial health including dedicated Reserve and Insurance Deductible restricted lines. Council adopted identified recommendations and will continue be advised by the guidelines.
    - All other tasks are complete
- Goal 3: Develop new ministry opportunities to serve the local community.
    - Task 3 A: Assess needs of the community/neighborhoods surrounding St. Andrew's, inventory our existing assets, and partner with effective local Non-Profit Organizations to extend St. Andrew's ministries, to identify how St. Andrew's can partner to meet local needs.
      August 2025: Council conducted a Porch Sitting experiment to connect with neighbors. Collected observations and analyzed trends. Next Step - consider another avenue to connect with neighbors, utilize community gatherings (Christmas Event; RenFaire; Easter Event) to gather feedback on needs/longings/losses of those who attend and place flyers in Blessing Box to collect feedback.
    - Task 3 B: Educate members of the various opportunities to serve; change time and talent sheet to better represent needs and abilities.
      Time and Talent Sheet for 2025 included decision tree to help individuals identify ways they may be feeling called to serve in new ways.

- Task 3 C: Strengthen programs to serve the community of Ames/Story County including Saving Suds, Giving Garden, and the Edwards partnership. Provide informative presentations of the positive results from these programs.
  This work is ongoing. What opportunities might exist to enhance our Saving Suds, Food at First, and Edwards partnerships? Are there individuals with energy/passion to engage in this work?
- All other tasks complete

- Goal 4: Equip members to assess their spiritual health. Provide tools to enhance and grow in spiritual health. Communicate that St. Andrew's is a safe space for spiritual seekers and faith questions. Include this in our messaging.
  - Task 4 C: Utilize Building a Discipling Culture by Mike Breen to equip members to share the Good News and message of grace with each other.
    May - First Discipleship Group started meeting monthly to connect, share life together, and explore what it looks like to live a life of discipleship. Shifted to using Practicing The Way of Jesus by Mark Scrandette. Next steps - When the group concludes in early 2026, collect feedback from participants to determine if the model is sustainable moving forward or if something more like Faith Lutheran's Grace Groups might be more successful.
  - Task 4 D: Start Questions and Wonderings (like a beer and theology group) group as a safe place to come with questions and wonderings and talk about them together.
    July- Q&W suspended due to low participation
  - All other tasks complete

- Goal 5. Evaluate property use and develop a plan for property improvements.
  - Task 5 A: Develop long-term storage/processing arrangements for church ministries and projects.
    Spring 2025: Mary and Deb cleaned out storage areas in the church and provided a report to Council on 4/2025 for ongoing use. The next step is to determine a long-term location for Pine Ridge Donation collections.
  - Task 5 C: Create a plan for updates to the facility including offices, bathrooms, the education wing, and needed maintenance to the interior and exterior property in cooperation with a Building Campaign Fundraiser to support the improvements.
    Capital Campaign will launch in December 2025. Work is anticipated to begin in early 2026.
  - All other tasks are complete

- Goal 6: Build on the strength of current ministries.
  - Task 6 C: Develop regular care visits and activities in accessible locations to ensure that members with mobility impairments remain connected to the congregational life and encourage members to visit/contact homebound members using an organized approach.
    2025: Outreach delivers flowers/care packages to homebound members several times a year. Two SNL projects this year have resulted in decorations/items to take to homebound members.

- Task 6 D: Increase the number of individuals involved in missions/service through awareness and invitation.
  Additional trip to Tanzania this year. A visit from Israel Mockray from Tanzania raised awareness of this important companionship.
- Task 6 E: Provide opportunities for learning and challenge, including in-depth study of the Bible and speakers on programs that address our chaotic world, challenging topics, what we can do to make a difference, combating homelessness, food insecurity, understanding mental health issues, and how to deal with anxiety and other disorders.
  Service and Learning is working to incorporate these kinds of learning sessions on service days.

- Goal 7: Equip the congregation with the skills to reach out to all so that hospitality efforts become the role of every member at St. Andrew's.
  - Task 7 B: Create habits of radical hospitality: invite visitors right away to dinner or ask if it is ok to call, invite for coffee, etc.
    All In Relational Ministry training will be offered in 2026 to equip members with skills to reach out and connect with others and offer hospitality and welcome.
  - Task 7 F: Explore ways to invite or welcome those who might not otherwise worship with SALC by contacting community or university Groups.
    This year a number of ISU undergrads have found their way to St. Andrew's. Our RIC designation and recommendation on LCM website have driven this interest. Is there someone with energy/passion who might lead an organized effort to do this type of outreach?
  - Task 7 I: Reconciling In Christ
    May 2025: congregational vote to become RIC passed
  - All other tasks complete

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Pastor's Report 2025

Dear Siblings in Christ,

In Matthew 18, Jesus proclaimed: [20] For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." Jesus is with us. Jesus, who came in flesh and bone at Christmas, God with us, Immanuel, is with you.

As we gather to go about the work of Annual Meeting business, Jesus is with us. In our discernment and our decisions, God has made God's presence and love known in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In all our ministries and activities, Jesus is with us. And, we are called to share the story of God's great love in Jesus with the world.

We have done that in myriad ways in 2025. I am reminded, in particular, of a story from the Council's "Porch Sitting" experiment this summer. Members of Council invited one other person to join them as they sat in pairs in the front yard of the church in camp chairs for an hour each week in the late summer – like you would on your front porch. The idea was to see who was out and about in the neighborhood and get to know and learn about our neighbors.

One of our visitors was a young girl in a neighboring household. She came by to check out the school supplies the volunteers were giving out. After chatting for a bit, she asked about the building, "What is this place?" The volunteer shared that it was a church. "What is a church?" came the girl's reply. The volunteer gave her a tour of the building and told her about worship, ministries, and what we do here. The child visited multiple times over the course of the weeks of porch sitting, chatting with the volunteers and growing comfortable.

This story reminds me that not all of our ministry looks like worship and service projects or results in increased attendance. And yet, Jesus' love was shared that day. A young person felt a warm welcome, had her questions answered, and learned about the church. A relationship began and seeds were planted, and we do not know how they will grow. Relationship is as much a part of sharing the good news as big events or reverent worship.

I am grateful to serve in a congregation that understands the importance of relationships and works to establish and deepen relationships with one another, with the community, and with our partners both near and far. The God who came with flesh on, as a baby, has shown us God's deep commitment to relationship in Jesus. May we continue to nurture and develop relationships in which we can share that love in and through St. Andrew's Lutheran in 2026. Thank you for all the ways you share your time, your talents, and your financial support so that we can continue to Live in and Share God's Love with All!

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Sonja Gerstenberger

Committee Reports

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Audit Committee Report 2025

Committee Members: Carla Sacco, Kristina Miles, Don Behning

The committee met on December 2, 2025, to review St. Andrew's 2025 financial records. The purpose of an audit is to provide reasonable assurance that there is no material misstatement in the financial records. While financial practices are reviewed during the audit process, this is not intended to be an internal controls audit, suggestions/recommendations will be made where weaknesses are found.

We appreciate the cooperation and timely preparation of the records.

The following, 2025 information was reviewed:
Income/Counting records and instructions
- Review instructions
- Trace counter statement deposit to general ledger and bank statements
- Check number of counters on statements

Expenses documentation: Checks, credit card, automatic payments
- Trace payments to general ledger and bank statements
- Review documentation
- Review signatures/authorization

Balance sheets
- Check general ledger cash balances to bank statements

Payroll records, including payroll tax payments
- Trace payments to general ledger and bank statements

Financial policies and procedures
- Review policies and procedures

Loan & line of credit records
- Review amount
- Review authorization

Insurance records
- Review insured amounts to prior year

2025 Audit Conclusion and Recommendations:
We found the 2025 St. Andrews financial records to be complete, well organized, and accurate. No material deficiencies were noted. St. Andrew's finances are being managed by individuals who are accurate and thorough.

The Audit Committee also reviewed the questions/recommendations made by the 2023 and 2024 Audit Committees.

2023 Audit Committee Questions/Suggestion:
Questions and suggestions for the Council

The committee last considered the church's insurance policies in 2020. We recommend including a review of insurance for 2024.

- What process is in place to ensure that St Andrew's has proper insurance coverage?

  2025 discussion with Business Manager:
  A review of insurance coverage started several years ago. In 2025, a review/cost analysis of GuideOne policies was done. Prices were going up significantly from 2024. On Synod

advice, other insurance carriers were compared. They settled on Brotherhood Mutual to be the new carrier. Unless something specific warrants a review (i.e. price, availability), a 5-year review may be reasonable.

- Which committee or church employee is responsible for our insurance policies?

  2025 discussion with Business Manager:
  C12.05 f of the Constitution & Bylaws states that Council is responsible, however; C13.07.E23 b states that Property is responsible in consultation with the Business Manager. Basically, the Property Committee and the Business Manager do the main work and make a recommendation to Council for review and approval.

- Does the 2024 Audit Committee need to include a licensed insurance agent to complete this review?

  2025 discussion with Business Manager:
  In the past we have had congregation members that were knowledgeable about insurance assist with insurance review on the audit committee.

  2025 Audit Committee Recommendation:
  Based on the Constitution and Bylaws sections, we believe the insurance renewal process described appears to be adequate.

  The church's insurance was reviewed and updated.

  The Audit Committee does not recommend discussing insurance coverage with a licensed insurance agent during the audit. Review of the renewal process during the audit should be adequate.

2024 Audit Committee Recommendation:

- The Audit Committee recommends the SALC Council and Business Manager work together to provide Audit Guidelines and specific checklist(s) and instructions for future Audit Committees. We believe this is needed to help ensure future audits by volunteer members of St. Andrews Lutheran Church meet the needs and expectations of SALC Members and to meet the minimal requirements of an internal audit.

  2025 discussion with Business Manager:
  The church has the Synod's Congregational Audit Guide.
  We understand that this topic was discussed but no formal action has yet been taken.

  2025 Audit Committee Recommendation:
  The Audit Committee also has the synod's Audit Committee Charter and Internal Control Best Practices, for reference.

  The Synod's Congregational Audit Guide is lengthy and detailed. It will be beneficial to condense the Guide into a process that is manageable for staff and volunteers, yet adequate for auditing finances.

Submitted by,

The 2025 St. Andrews Audit Committee

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Extended Ministries Fund (EMF) Committee Report 2025

GENERAL

The focus of the EMF Committee in 2025 was to manage and approve the spending of designated and undesignated memorial funds, columbarium funds, earnings, and to inform the congregation about the St. Andrew's Endowment. The use of these funds is intended for non-budgeted items (outside the regular operating budget) which promote and extend the ministries of St. Andrew's.

The Committee's goals for 2025 included:

1. Award College Scholarships (accomplished).
2. Explore how to manage EMF funds to ultimately best use available funds to extend the ministries of St. Andrew's beyond what is planned and funded through the budget process (on-going).

GIFTS/MEMORIALS

Undesignated memorials received through November 30, 2025, totaled $555.00. Designated memorials received through November 30, 2025, totaled $1,055; $500 for the Columbarium and $555 for Fellowship.

INVESTMENTS

We invested $40,000 of our 1st National Bank account balances in 3-month CDs. Three CDs in the amounts of $20,000, $10,000, and $10,000 mature on a three-month maturing/reinvesting cycle. Earnings from CDs totaled $1,171.29 through November 2025. We also earned $2,244.47 from our Story County Community Foundation Endowment funds.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The EMF Committee put out requests for college scholarship applications again this year. Two scholarships in the amount of $1,500.00 each were awarded. These awards were made using Endowment earnings.

COLUMBARIUM

The EMF Committee funded $1,200.00 for architectural design work intended to solve existing brick paver problems and to provide handicap access to the columbarium area. Thank you to the Property Committee, who determined, what work needs to be done, and for securing an architect to provide plans.

Extended Ministries

The EMF Committee funded $1,941.97 for our various community outreach ministries, including Pride Fest. The amount includes support for Igelsia Camino de Emaus in Davenport in response to a SEIA Synod request, and the purchase of a replacement laptop computer for the fellowship hall.

MEMBERSHIP

2025 Committee members included:

Janeen Christy, Pastor Sonja Gerstenberger, Pauline Miller, Dave Sprau, Miriam Takle, Shelley Ackerman (Council representative), and Lynn Miller (Chair).

Respectfully submitted,
Members of EMF Committee

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Fellowship & Funeral Committee Report 2025

The Fellowship Committee is committed to coordinating fellowship events to support SALC's value of **Radical Hospitality** - Going the extra mile to welcome and include all people into our lives as a congregation and individuals. We offer hospitality to the congregation, guests, and the community to share God's love with all.

Our committee serves several meals to the congregation during the year, assists other committees who need help with food preparation, stocks the kitchen and Fellowship Hall with paper goods, cleaning supplies, drinks (coffee, tea and lemonade), and basic food supplies, while using appropriate food safety practices. We also prepare schedules for committees to serve fellowship and soup suppers. In addition, we prepare and host funeral lunches and receptions for grieving families and friends on request.

Thank you to members of our church committees who are on our fellowship rotation to provide treats, serve, and clean up after church services. Committees, who assisted, with fellowship in 2025 were: Fellowship/Social Concerns, Pine Ridge and Tanzania, Outreach, Worship and Arts, Property, Food at First, and Extended Ministries Fund /Service and Learning. Also, we would not be able to accomplish our goals without the help of individual members of the congregation. Many, many thanks to those who bake cakes, bars, and cookies, wash dishes, serve coffee, or otherwise help, and say "Yes, I can do that!" We look forward to our combined work with all of you!

Some of the important occasions when the Fellowship Committee provided and served food this year.

- Our committee served after the services on 4/13, 6/8, 7/27, 9/14 and 12/21.
- Our committee provided food and served brunch at the Annual Meeting on 1/26.
- Our committee served a soup supper on 3/12.
- Our committee served funeral receptions
    - o Susan Frank, 5/23
    - o Sharon Anderson, 6/20
    - o Charlotte Kemp, 7/18
    - o Don Betts, 10/10
    - o Katherine Baker, 11/7
    - o Gene Pollman, 12/12
- Our committee helped prepare food and clean up at the Renaissance Faire 10/5.
- Our committee served a meal for Consecration Sunday on 11/9.

We thank those who prepare coffee on Sundays for Service and Learning, for both the event and for fellowship. We appreciate everyone who helps with funeral luncheons and receptions, calls for donations, contributes food, serves food, sets tables, provides flowers, helps in the dining room, and with cleanup. We want to do all we can to express our love and sympathy at a difficult time for family members. We are grateful for the congregation's help in offering them a place to celebrate and grieve.

Committee members in 2025 were Lori Paulson, Jo Ann Kovar, Gayle Osterberg, Lynnette Jensen, Almira Uemura and Miriam Takle. Anna Radke is our Council liaison. Thanks to all for your hard work and dedication!

Submitted by Chair Lori Paulson

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Outreach Committee Report 2025

Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged by the size of the task, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. I Chronicles 28:20

Many of the projects we take on here at St. Andrews seem to be monumental tasks. I am always in awe of the way our members just take things in hand and make them happen. The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone in the congregation for all their efforts and for making our job much easier. Greeters are stationed at the entrance to meet all who enter.

Pastor and the Assisting Minister are outside the sanctuary doors every Sunday to greet all and be available to members and visitors alike. Our ushers are friendly and helpful. From my observation, visitors and new members are greeted by outgoing members of our congregation after the service.

Our members are Betty Beard, Elizabeth Huffman, Laura Frescoln, Tom Prochnow, Jan Schmidt, Pat Thompson, Vi Tweed and Bill Vogel and Linda Hansen, Chair. Pastor Sonja has attended all of our meetings, which is much appreciated. She is always ready with ideas and help.

The purpose of our committee is to encourage evangelism of the unchurched, call on the sick, bereaved and homebound and others needing a visit. A goal is to reach out to prospective and inactive members as well. This year we studied Radical Hospitality, One result was a "secret shopper" survey for first-time visitors. We would like to use more of these surveys, so when you invite a someone who has not visited before, we encourage you to give them a Guest Experience Scorecard to fill out for us. It helps us improve in our welcoming efforts. Scorecards are available in the church office or from Tom Prochnow.

Members of our committee assign greeters for Sunday mornings and send cards to the sick and bereaved members, along with thank you notes to members. We provide remembrance cards for difficult anniversary dates. Visits were made to homebound members before Easter, and an Easter Lily was given to each recipient at that time.

As part of God's Work Our Hands (thanks to Kris and Dan Andersen for organizing the entire project), greeting cards were written to our homebound members. There were several for each person. These were delivered with a visit by Outreach members.

New member Sundays were held in February and November. The Outreach Committee hosted luncheons after these services.

Our committee members participated in our church wide community events at Easter, Christmas and RenFaire. Thanks to Elizabeth Huffman for taking pictures for our webpage at these events. This year a basket was placed for people to request prayers and/or visits. Each of these people were contacted, and we were able to assist one mother in taking her child to Iowa City for medical help.

We welcome any who would be willing to help us in our outreach efforts. We would particularly be grateful for a person with computer and technical skills.

Submitted by Linda Hansen

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Personnel Committee Report 2025

2025 Committee Members: Mike Van Vertloo (Chair), Lori Paulson, Laurie Hoifeldt, Mary Johnson, and Pastor Sonja Gerstenberger

Sawyer Shiffler, our organist, resigned his position at the end of February. After a great deal of searching, some promising leads that didn't pan out, and a lot of hope, Isaiah Walsh agreed to return in December. In addition to his skillful piano playing, Isaiah is also developing organ skills, so we will soon be blessed with his wonderful organ music as well. I'm sure Isaiah will be a wonderful re-addition to our music staff.

No other staff vacancies needed to be filled in 2025, which is a marked difference from 2024. I am extremely thankful that St. Andrew's has the stability and continuity of its current staff heading into 2026. Staff reviews were completed in March.

Many thanks to those who served this year, along with Pastor Sonja.

Mike Van Vertloo, Committee Chair
Lori Paulson
Laurie Hoifeldt
Mary Johnson

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Property Committee Report 2025

The 2025 members were Don Boyle, John Kovar, Lynnette Jensen, Nora Nelson, Joel Paulson, Margaret Sherve, Randy Sacco (co-chair), Linda Seaverson (co-chair), and Pastor Sonja Gerstenberger. Dean Janssen is a friend of the committee.

Ongoing tasks

Lawn mowing, weed control, seeding and more - Dean Janssen
Yard clean-up, weeds, hedge trimming, leaves, and flower beds- Dean Janssen, Lynnette Jensen, Nora Nelson, Joel Paulson, Margaret Sherve
Rentals Liaison to First Property Management-Joel Paulson
Interior repairs- Don Boyle
Fellowship time organizer- John Kovar
Financial oversight, reporting, insurance, inspections, service contracts, repairs, furnace/boiler temperature settings-Linda Seaverson
Church interior cleaning- Mike; Mike's Cleaning Service

2025 MAJOR CHURCH REPAIRS

NE corner Roof Replacement

The membrane roof over the kitchen, youth room and east offices was replaced in April, 2025, due to its deteriorated condition. Central States Roofing did the work, which included new gutters and downspouts for that area. The cost was $43,625, using $11,763.18 of unused hail insurance money, $2,500 of donations, and $27,362.82 of the Colorado Junction sale funds. The latter amount was approved by the Council and the Congregation as required when the sale of Colorado Junction was approved.

New wall A/Cs for Office Administrator and Pastor offices.

These new units also heat, have remote control, and cell phone apps. The previous units did not cool adequately.

New Sunday School hallway water fountain.

A new water fountain was needed after the previous one had a leak, which could not be repaired.

Columbarium ADA sidewalk and paving design

Randy Sacco worked with Tom Neppl, Neppl Landscape Architecture and Planning LLC, for a Design, which includes, an ADA sidewalk to the columbarium area, replacement of the brick pavers, and improvements to the retaining walls. Funding for the design stage was provided by the Extended Ministry Fund's "Columbarium" line. A final design was selected by the Property Committee and quotes were obtained. Fundraising is the next stage for this project.

Miscellaneous

The paint cabinet in the sacristy was cleared of old paint cans, etc. and organized. A new ceiling light fixture was installed in the men's restroom. Signage was posted to direct visitors of the family/ADA/all-gender restroom off the fellowship hall. A decorative painted pole for the new west entrance flower bed was installed which was donated by Nora Nelson in memory of her husband, Marvin. Stained ceiling tiles in room 4 were replaced. The air handler for the Sunday School rooms had several repairs by Mechanical Comfort. A new seat was purchased for the lawnmower.

Property/Liability Insurance Change

Brotherhood Mutual Insurance was selected to replace GuideOne Insurance as the provider for both the church building/grounds and the rental properties. The coverages include property, liability, business auto, workers comp, and umbrella insurances.

Options for a new provider were explored by Linda Seaverson and Dave Krumm, Business Manager, due to the increased costs for GuideOne coverages and a huge increase in the deductible. The latter requires the need of an expensive buydown for the deductible to make it affordable. Brotherhood Mutual was found to provide comparable coverages to GuideOne at a lower overall price, plus several additional advantages. Linda and Dave presented their findings to the Council in August, which approved the change. Brotherhood Mutual coverage started in late August, 2025.

2025 RENTALS

General Information: The rental properties owned by St. Andrew's include three houses to the north of the church on West Street (3404, 3410, 3414), and the two-story house (triplex rental) on Story Street (3320) east of the church's gravel parking lot. First Property Management (FPM) continued to manage these rental properties. The rental properties' finances are separate from the church's finances.

The rental properties were profitable in 2025. On a quarterly basis, if there is excess money over what is needed to operate the properties (~$10,000), FPM sends the excess to St. Andrew's. This money is then deposited into the St. Andrew's Rentals Bank Account. A total of $11,000 was transferred in 2025. In addition, FPM notifies the committee for approval before setting new lease prices.

Hope Lutheran pays $100/month to use the gravel parking lot east of the church building.

Rentals repairs and updates in 2025:

a) A new A/C and furnace were installed for 3414 West Street.
b) The electrical panels for 3320 Story St. (Triplex), and 3404 West Street were updated from fuse-type to circuit-breaker type as required by Brotherhood Mutual Insurance.
c) The driveway entrance for 3404 West Street was repaired.
d) Items a-c were paid for by the FPM operating funds.
e) FPM provided a list of recommended repairs covering all the rental properties for the next five years. The estimate of the remaining work is $65,000.
e) All rental properties passed their inspections by the City of Ames in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Seaverson
seaverson.linda@gmail.com

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Service and Learning Committee Report 2025

Fellow Members of St. Andrews,

Another year of joy-filled service and learning has come and passed. This past spring, during the educational hour, (9 -10:00 am Sunday), we continued our learning and exploration on our path to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation. Additionally, we explored the Ministries at work in St. Andrews by inviting committees to come and share their work and impacts with all. In the fall, we were beautifully guided through *Making Sense of the Parables* and the *Gospel of Luke* by Pastor Sonja and Rev. Matthew Martens. We rounded out the education hour in 2025 with an Advent Devotional.

A heartfelt thank you to every person who volunteered to make coffee, put their hands to work on a service day, sing a song, lead an hour (or 10), supply a meal, or wrangle our littles.

I am grateful to our committee and Pastor Sonja for putting forth the time and effort to invest in the next generation of St. Andrews in 2025. In addition to Sunday morning learning activities, the Service and Learning Committee also planned and executed:

- Easter Event—Activities included a visit from the Easter Bunny, cake walk, various crafts, games, and a telling of the Easter story by Mathew Martens, with more than 100 in attendance.

- Family Fun Events, including—Family Movie Night in May, where we offered popcorn and Moana 2; in June, we offered a family bike ride in Daley Park; in August, we offered bubbles and Freezy Pops on the front yard where we interacted with several neighborhood children.

- VBS—We had a blast working through the ELCA's "River of Life" curriculum. The kids who participated in VBS made many crafts, including a handprint fish on which they wrote their names on them and displayed them on a river in the Fellowship Hall—a beautiful reminder of their presence in our space. Thanks to all who volunteered and made VBS possible! We had more than 7 children and over 20 volunteers participating.

- God's Work, Our Hands—this year's service project included writing cards to our homebound members, putting together hygiene kits for Pine Ridge, creating crafts for Tanzania, puppy treats to put in the blessing box, and 45 birthday kits for MICA. It was an uplifting time for those who participated.

- October Service Day—assisted with preparations for Ren Faire, made crafts for homebound members, and packaged 25 personal hygiene kits for Pine Ridge.

- Operation Gratitude—in November during our SNL time, we packaged 6 boxes of goodies to show our love and appreciation to service members who are serving overseas. In addition, we made some crafts to share with the community and organized our children's bins in the Narthex to ensure an inviting environment to all guests.

- Christmas Event–While we experienced some heavy snowfall the day of our Christmas Event, thanks to our wonderful congregational volunteers and committee members, a joyful gathering was created, filled with games, crafts, music, and food to celebrate our Lord's birth. We welcomed approximately 50 guests, with several new families joining us for a welcoming time.

I am continually astounded by the amount of community service and outreach St. Andrews achieves each year, through this committee and others. It is a privilege to serve alongside you all and shape the youth (and community) for the future.

Blessings,

The Service and Learning Committee (Kris & Dan Andersen, and Matthew Martens)

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Social Concerns Committee Report 2024

Members of the committee during 2025 include: Monica Behning, Al Jergens, Kris Miles, Joan Dubberke. Thank you to all for your time this past year. Thanks also to Lori Hoifeldt, our council liaison.

The Social Concerns Committee used the benevolence money for 2025 to support local ministries with a primary focus on housing and food insecurity. Benevolence money was donated to the following:

- 1st quarter MICA
- 2nd quarter Good Neighbor
- 3rd quarter Bridge Home
- 4th quarter Food at First

We started something a little different with benevolence. Each quarter we announced the designation of that quarter's budgeted benevolence. Members were invited to contribute an offering to the designated organization for the quarter.

The Lenton offering was designated to the AIRA (Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance). The Christmas offering was designated to Heartland of Story County Meals on Wheels.

Thank you to everyone for helping to support these local ministries.

In October we promoted the Crop Walk and assisted with the collection of donations.

The committee promotes and involves the congregation/volunteers for the continuation of the Blessings Box. A new box was constructed by Service and Learning. The box is located along the sidewalk at the entrance driveway. The volunteers help with stocking and monitoring the supplies. Many thanks to those helping with this neighborhood community service.

The Social Concerns committee promotes and encourages donations for the food bank at Mid-Iowa Community Action/MICA. Groceries were delivered to MICA Food Bank throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Behning
Social Concerns Committee Chair

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Stewardship and Finance Committee Report 2025

We are a committee of five: Janet Dixon, Carla Sacco, Pastor Sonja Gerstenberger, Dave Krumm (Business Manager), and MaryJune Cain (Treasurer). Technically, Dave and MaryJune are advisory members. In practice, they contributed much more than advice to our work as a committee! We would welcome more people on this committee.

Abundant Life Stewardship Drive

The theme of this year's stewardship drive was "Abundant Life." Various members of the congregation offered reflections on how God's abundant life manifests itself at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church. The congregation responded with abundant generosity! A total of $282,982 was pledged by 59 households, an increase of $9,396 (3.45%) over the 2025 pledges from 62 households. Thirty-two households increased the size of their pledge this year.

Opening the Doors to St. Andrew's Future: Capital Campaign 2025-2028

In 2024 and 2025 the Property Use Task Force put together an ambitious list of much needed renovation to the church building and grounds. High on the list are some essentials for building integrity and safety: roof replacement, parking lot repair, and new doors that we can actually open! Planning for a capital campaign began in the summer and the campaign itself began in the fall. The outpouring of support has been tremendous! The campaign was announced in church on December 7. As of January 5, 2026, financial commitments totaling $331,830 have been received, including more than $100,000 already in hand. We are in a financial position to begin soliciting bids and scheduling work.

Thank you to all who contributed to the work of the Stewardship Committee: Heidi LoRash, Mike Van Vertloo, Sarah Buck, Linda Seaverson, Dan Andersen, Lynn Miller, Lori Paulson, Peter and Kyra Meyer, and Kris Parsons, as well as committee members Carla Sacco, Dave Krumm, Pastor Sonja Gerstenberger, and MaryJune Cain. Thank you to the Fellowship Committee for providing the Commitment Sunday lunch.

Thank you, members of St. Andrew's, for your generous support of our church through your gifts of time and talent, and your commitments to the Annual Stewardship Drive and the Capital Campaign! Your support and involvement make it possible for us, the people of St. Andrew's, to **Live in and Share God's love with ALL**!

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Dixon

1/5/2026

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Worship and Arts Committee Report 2024

This past year, the Worship and Arts Committee focused on living out our values of **unconditional love, radical hospitality, selfless generosity, faithful service, compassionate care and meaningful worship**.

Our heartfelt thanks go to our talented music staff, Steve Hoifeldt, Connie Sweeney, and to the Ensemble and choir, who faithfully lead us in worship every week. Their dedication and skill make St, Andrews known for its exceptional music ministry.

Every Sunday requires many helping hands: Scripture readers, sound operators, ushers, communion preparers and servers, and assisting ministers. We are deeply grateful to all who volunteer and always welcome new folks to join us.

Throughout the year, the worship space reflected the beauty of the seasons, thanks to the creativity of Carol Putz and Laurie Hoifeldt. Their thoughtful designs for Lent, Easter, Advent, and Christmas enhanced our worship and brought each season to life. We also oversee the sale and arrangement of flowers at Easter and Christmas.

With the help of Steve and Connie, the organ and pianos are tuned and maintained. This committee also oversees communion supplies, music purchases, and other materials needed for worship. We wish to thank Denise Link for her donation of Communion wine. She has been providing wine for several years.

In August, we hosted our annual Worship in the Park event. Approximately 70 people gathered at Daley Park for worship and fellowship. We shared a delicious brunch catered by Hy-Vee.

We would like to thank Bonnie Corron Strong, who has filled in over the past year on our organ. After a long search, we have finally hired an organist, Isaiah Walsh.

None of this would be possible without the leadership of Pastor Sonja Gerstenberger and the dedication of the committee members **Almira Uemura, Cheryl White, Sharon Mott, Sharon Prochnow, Carol Putz, Laurie Hoifeldt, Sarah Buck, Steve Hoifeldt, and Connie Sweeney**. Each person's contributions have made a difference.

Submitted by Mary Johnson, Chair

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
2026 Standing Committees
Updated 1/2026
(at least 4 members each)

Education/ Service and Learning
Kris Andersen, Chair
Dan Andersen, Council Liaison
Matthew Martens
Becky Lambkey (2026)

Fellowship
Lori Paulson, Chair
Anna Radke, Council Liaison
Lynnette Jensen
JoAnn Kovar
Gayle Osteberg
Miriam Takle
Almira Uemura

Outreach
Linda Hansen, Chair
Laura Frescoln, Council Liaison
Betty Beard
Elizabeth Hoffman
Tom Prochnow
Janet Schmidt
Pat Thompson
Violet Tweed
Bill Vogel

Personnel
President - Chair, Council Liaison
Mary Johnson
Lori Paulson
_____

Property
Linda Seaverson, co-chair
Randy Sacco, co-chair
_____, Council Liaison
Don Boyle
Dean Janssen (friend of the committee)
Lynnette Jensen
John Kovar
Nora Nelson
Joel Paulson
Margaret Sherve

Social Concerns
_____, Chair
Laurie Hoifeldt, Council Liaison
Monica Behning
Joan Dubberke
Al Jergens
Kris Miles

Stewardship and Finance
Janet Dixon, Chair
Treasurer, Council Liaison
Carla Sacco
_____
_____
Dave Krumm, Business Manager

Worship and Arts
_____, Chair
Mary Johnson, Council Liaison
Sarah Buck
Laurie Hoifeldt
Steve Hoifeldt
Sharon Mott
Sharon Prochnow
Carol Putz
Connie Sweeney
Almira Uemura
Cheryl White

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
2026 Ministry Teams and their Members

Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance
Janeen Christy
Pauline Miller
Mike Van Vertloo

Edwards Elementary & Saving Suds
Mary Johnson, Chair
Dean Janssen
Lynette Jensen
Donna Nelson
Nora Nelson
Carla Sacco

Food at First
Matthew Marten, Chair
Janeen Christy
Janet Dixon
Phil Dixon
Laurie Evans
Lynnette Jensen
Les Miller
Pauline Miller
Tom Prochnow
Carla Sacco
Deb Schlieman

Pine Ridge
Kris Parsons, Chair
Alycia Carlsberg
Janet Dixon
Laurie Evans
Al Jergens
Dave Krumm
Kris Miles
Lori Paulson
Carol Putz
Randy Sacco
Almira Uemura
Anna Wolc

Reconciling-in-Christ
Janeen Christy
Laurie Hoifeldt
Pauline Miller
Anna Radke

Tanzania
Carol Putz, Chair
Laurie Evans, Council Liaison
Sarah Buck
Lori Paulson
Kris Parsons
Carla Sacco
Deb Schlieman

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
2026 Elected Committees

Audit (should probably stagger these terms so only one new member each year)
(3 members, 3-year terms, *elected by Council, eligible for re-election*)

1. Carla Sacco
2. Don Behning
3. _____
   Treasurer, Council Liaison

Extended Ministry Fund
(7 members, 3-year terms, elected by congregation, may serve up to three consecutive terms)

1. Lynn Miller, Chair (2022)
2. Janeen Christy (2022)
3. Pauline Miller (2022)
4. Shelley Ackermann (2024), Council Liaison
5. Dave Sprau (2023)
6. Miriam Takle (pre 2022)
7. John Kovar (2025)

Nominating Committee ***(6 members, elected by congregation, 1-year term, not eligible for re-election)***

1. President, Chair
2. Mike Van Vertloo
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

2026 APPOINTED COMMITTEE

Mutual Ministry
(6 members, Pastor/President appoint, 2-year terms)

1. Al Jergens, chair (2026)
2. Jennie LeGates (2026)
3. Lori Paulson (2027)
4. Randy Sacco (2027)
5. Laura Frescoln (2028)
6. Anita Kocke (2028)

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
2026 Church Council Members
Executive (1 Year-Term)

Shelley Ackermann, president

Dan Andersen, vice president

Anna Radke, secretary

Mike Van Vertloo, treasurer

1. Deb Schlieman, (2029) – dschlieman@gmail.com / 515-230-3351
2. _____
3. Shelley Ackermann (2027) – shelleyack@msn.com / 515-240-5966
4. Dan Andersen (2027) – danielandersen_78@hotmail.com / 563-880-7111
5. Janet Dixon (2027 – 2nd term) – janet.a.dixon@gmail.com / 515-203-5108
6. Mike Van Vertloo (2029 – 2nd term) – mike@vanvertloo.com – 317-414-8072
7. Laurie Evans (2028) – laurie.lab.rat@gmail.com – (515) 708-0449
8. Anna Radke (2028) – anna.g.radke@gmail.com – 608-487-6163
9. Mary Johnson (2028) – jsmjohnson36@msn.com / 515-231-0716
10. Pastor Sonja Gerstenberger – pastorsonja@standrewsames.org/515-554-4348

Deb Schlieman is nominated to begin serving in 2026.
The end date for council terms is January of the year listed, after elections at the annual meeting.

Ministry Reports

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance
2025 REPORT TO AXIOM

Operating under the funding umbrella of AXIOM, the Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance (AIRA) navigated a year of difficult political changes by offering stability, support, and advocacy for refugees, parolees, and asylum seekers in Ames in 2025.

AIRA Executive Committee Members

The election of 2025 officers took place on December 18, 2024.

- **President**: Susan Cramer
- **Vice President**: Lew Klinge
- **Treasurer**: Diane Birt
- **Secretary**: Julianne Primmer
- **Fundraising** Chair: George Belitsos
- **Welcome Chairs**: Nancy Heideman (stepped down in 2025) and Sondra Eddings
- **At Large**: Janeen Christy

Serving as appointees to the AXIOM Board during 2025 were Susan Cramer, Jennie Greimann, and Taylor Carlson.

Welcoming Newcomers to Ames

Ukrainian Parolees—

There are currently 51 U4U Ukrainians living in Ames who are connected with AIRA. Despite anxiety from the chaos of war and the current uncertainties of US policies, Ukrainians are adapting well to life in Ames. Businesses like Northcrest Community, Nelson Electric, AGI, AgCertain, and Walmart value hard-working Ukrainians. Children are flourishing in school—making friends, advancing beyond ELL classes, and excelling in music. Ukrainians are now regulars at local worship services. And AIRA volunteers who were once hosts, drivers, or English tutors have become like family to newcomers from Ukraine.

- No additional U4U Ukrainians arrived in 2025.
- Two Ukrainians moved to Europe and several Ukrainians moved to other cities in the United States.
- All Ukrainian parolees were self-sufficient at the beginning of 2025, having obtained jobs and independent housing.
- Housing assistance was provided for four Ukrainian families.
- Two $1000 grants were provided to purchase vehicles.

Haitian Refugees—

An extended Haitian family is doing well in Ames. Two adults continue to work nights at Walmart. One adult working at Sam's Club lost her work permit and therefore her job. She has recently regained the work permit and is searching for employment. They attend St. Thomas church. The older child is enrolled at Meeker Elementary School and is learning English very well.

- Financial assistance for asylum legal fees, health care expenses, and summer camp was provided for Haitians.

South Sudanese Former Refugees—
Assimilation has been difficult for South Sudanese, many of whom arrived in Ames more than 20 years ago. Dedicated AIRA volunteers have been committed to assisting these newcomers since our inception in 2016. In 2025, AIRA helped with housing, medical bills, job searches, children's activities, and advocating for a man with medical disabilities.

- Multiple South Sudanese families in Central Iowa continue to receive support and assistance from committed AIRA volunteers. This includes encouragement and advice, as well as financial support for housing, transportation, health care, and summer camp experiences.

Welcome Corps--

The family has experienced many successes during their first year in Ames. The father is employed at Mary Greeley Medical Center, which also supports medical insurance for the family. In June, the children attended a week-long day camp and a Bible School program. One child is currently enrolled at Edwards Elementary and the second at Northwood Preschool. The family moved to a larger apartment and purchased a vehicle in 2025.

- A five-person Welcome Corp team of volunteers has assisted the family with all aspects of adjusting to life in Ames.
- Financial assistance was provided for initial housing expenses.

Support for Students

In August, $100 gift cards were given to each child associated with AIRA for Back-to-School expenses. Twelve gift cards and personal notes were delivered by volunteers before the first day of school.

Student Assistance "scholarships" were made available in November for any student of a family connected with AIRA. Up to $250 could be used for school necessities or for pursuing a dream like sports, dance, or music. Two applications were funded in 2025.

Financial Mangement

AIRA began 2025 with $33,157.74 and ended with a balance of $28,718.38. During 2025, AIRA received $ 25,784.78 in donations and had $30,224.14 in expenses.

During the year, 37 individuals, 4 faith communities contributed financially to AIRA's work. In addition, Overflow shared a portion of their profits each quarter.

100% of donated money was used to serve the needs of newcomers in our community.

Communication

Members receive monthly agendas and minutes for AIRA Membership Meetings, as well as informational sheets and monthly financial information showing total expenses, income, and balance.

AIRA also has a limited presence on Facebook, announcing meetings each month.

AIRA strives to keep Ukrainians informed by email as federal policies change.

Two gatherings of Ukrainians were held at the Ames Public Library to share information about changing immigration policies. LSI and IMMJ lawyers gave a presentation on March 10, 2025 about possible Ukrainian immigration pathways. IMMJ also did a presentation on May 19, 2025 focused on "Know Your Rights".

Advocacy

Susan Cramer has given 7 presentations about the work of AIRA and the needs of immigrants to two faith groups, two civic groups, two political groups, and as a part of an immigration panel presentation in Hardin County.

Collaboration

AIRA works closely with other humanitarian organizations to try to meet the needs of newcomers. These groups include IMMJ, Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance Immigrant Fund, County Coordination Committee, Ames Area Immigration Network, VITA, United Way, LSI.

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Edwards Elementary/ Saving Suds on Lincoln Way
2025 Ministry Team Report

This year we have continued to provide classroom snacks to Edwards Elementary. Please continue to bring your donations to the Fellowship Hall and they will be delivered to the school. In addition, we collected school supplies, many of which have been delivered to the school. Typically, kids start running out of supplies as they start back in January, and so we have saved some to deliver in January. Also, you were very generous this fall when winter hit early. We received a call from the school stating that they had 80 families who were in need of winter gear. They asked SALC to provide hats and mittens, and you responded with amazing generosity.

Saving Suds continues to be an important service to our neighbors in the Ames community.Many families struggle to meet the basic needs of their families, and this project allows them to have clean clothes and bedding. Our clients have become friends, and we enjoy meeting them each month. We are always grateful for the Detergent Pods that are left in the office. If you area member of a service group in Ames, please consider making a donation to Saving Suds. We are always available to speak to local groups about this important mission.

Bethesda continues to partner with us and holds an event on the 1st Thursday of the month, and St. Andrews is at Squeaky Clean on the 3rd Thursday of each month. We are there from 4-7 pm. Please stop by or volunteer. I wish to thank Nora Nelson, Carla Sacco, Lynnette Jensen, Donna Nelson and Dean Janssen for their continued help each month.

Please note the following numbers.

January	34 Families	$791.75
February	24 Families	$593.50
March	25 Families	$676.50
April	28 Families	$730.00
May	29 Families	$663.00
June	27 Families	$650.00
July	34 Families	$748.75
August	25 Families	$618.50
September	25 Families	$665.00
October	25 Families	$757.75
November	18 Families	$562.75
December	19 Families	$560.00
TOTAL	**313 Families**	**$8017.00**

This comes to $23.16 per Family

WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Johnson, Chair

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Food at First Ministry Team Report 2025

Matthew Martens, Chair
Carla Sacco, Photos

On the evening of November 6, our St. Andrew's Food at First team arrived at the meal site to find the largest crowd ever gathered for the free food market and evening meal. Every corner was filled with extra chairs and many stood around the edges. Patty, the Director, said it was the largest crowd she'd ever seen in 22 years of service. The federal government was shut down and SNAP (food stamps) were running out. Over 300 attended market that evening and 120 ate a hot meal. Our team was exhausted, but went home happy to have been some help to local folks who are hungry.

One out of five children in Iowa are food insecure or going hungry. Every time we serve at Food at First, kids are present. Sometimes we help carry their trays through the food line. Their smiles are evident as their plates and tummies are filled. What a blessing to share the joy!

At 2:00 every afternoon of the year, the assigned cook arrives at Food at First kitchen (basement of First Christian Church). A team of meal prep folks arrive to help the cook. Shortly after 5:00, a serving team arrives to help complete meal preparation, set the food out, and dish plates. When all the leftovers have been given out, we clean the entire dining room, kitchen and restrooms, completing our task about 7:30 pm—unless our cook, Joselyn, can think of one more thing for us to do!!!!

Please consider joining our team when we serve Food at First on the first Thursday of the month, 5:20-7:30 pm, in the First Christian Church basement, right across from the police station. Currently serving on our team are: Dan Andersen, Janeen Christy, Janet & Philip Dixon, Laurie Evans, Lynette Jensen, Matthew Martens, Peter & Kyra Meyer, Les & Pauline Miller, Tom Prochnow, Carla Sacco, Deb Schlieman.

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Pine Ridge Ministry Team Report 2025

Kris Parsons- Chair , Anna Wolc, Almira Uemura, Randy Sacco, Carol Putz,
Alycia Carlsberg, Lori Paulson, Kris Miles, Dave Krumm, Al Jergens, Laurie Evans
Janet Dixon Non-members: Phil Meraz, Chrissey Meraz, Kelly Riggans

We had another blessed year. We were able to take 2 trips out to Pine Ridge. We took a lot of clothing, houseware goods, a couple beds, dressers, 100 homeless kits, and much more.

This is one of the distribution places.

We visited with our friends and met some new ones. We also learned more about the history and enjoyed the scenery.

With all your help, we were able to help some people with heat, a dinner for veterans, and help send some kids on a school trip.

This is not just a committee ministry; it is a whole church and beyond ministry. We could not doany of this without YOU!! Thank you for your support.

Submitted by Kris Parsons

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Reconciliation in Christ (RIC) Task Force Report 2025

In May 2025, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church voted overwhelmingly in favor of becoming a Reconciling-in-Christ (RIC) congregation within the ELCA. With this vote, we affirmed our congregation's explicit commitment to welcoming all to participate in the life of the church, as follows:

We are a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran church in America. In keeping with the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, we are a progressive Ames Church joyfully and unconditionally welcoming all people of any age, gender, race, culture, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression into our community of faith. We affirm the worth of all people as unique individuals made in God's image. We are committed to racial equity and anti-racism. We are open to the special gifts that each person brings and invite each to participate in the life of our church.

We embodied our RIC commitment in some specific ways in 2025:

- Celebrated our RIC status with a special fellowship hour (September)
- Participated in Ames PrideFest (October)
- Participated in Ames' Ecumenical Pride Worship Service on the campus of ISU (October)
- Made a meaningful financial contribution to Reconciling Works, the RIC parent organization
- Added our welcome statement and the RIC logo to our signage, website, social media platforms, and internal communications
- Continued book studies and conversations around what it means to be an RIC congregation and how we can live out radical hospitality

Attaining RIC status is undoubtedly cause for much joy and celebration. However, as we often said throughout the two-year study and discernment period, attaining this status isn't the end-point. We will continue to discuss and to educate ourselves on how we can continue to embody this commitment as a congregation. Anyone is welcome to participate in this dialogue. Further announcements about how you may do so are coming soon.

The Reconciling-in-Christ Task Force

Laurie Hoifeldt

Anna Radke

Janeen Christy

Pauline Miller

Pastor Sonja Gerstenberger

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Tanzania Ministry Team Report 2025

TMT Mission Statement – To support the spiritual growth of the communities of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church with Hedaru Lutheran Parish and Agape Lutheran Parish of Tanzania, we will build relationships through prayer, communication, and communal support that seek to understand each other's unique roles within the Body of Christ.

Tanzania Ministry Team's goals are to work with Hedaru and Agape Lutheran Parishes to 1) oversee the companionships, 2) engage in activities that build relationships, 3) encourage faith-sharing between the churches, and 4) work on projects together.

Your TMT did some wonderful things this year, with your support.

- **Plant sale!** Thank you so much for purchasing our plants for the Mother's Day and Memorial Day sale. We greatly appreciate your generosity for the plant sale, and hope you loved your plants.
- We had a **joint ministry meeting** (Tanzanians and Americans) via Zoom so we all could all talk to each other. It was delightful to see old friends and meet new ones. We had some discussion about their progress on the school, and discussed the difficulties with drought affecting their crops and gardens. Their pastor has moved to the pastor's college to teach, so they are in the process of working for a new pastor.
- **Trip to Tanzania (TZ) in October**. A delegation of 5 people went to visit our companions, including 3 members of our church, a member of a church in Des Moines, and our own Bishop Amy Current. The Pare Diocese of TZ was having it's Jubilee Celebration (50 years as a diocese), and we attended the festivities. We were told there were about 2,000 people at the celebration! There were celebrations held across the diocese for the year, but the grand celebration lasted for much of 2 days. Check out the pictures on the back page.
- After the Jubilee days, we went to visit our companions in Hedaru. Hedaru Lutheran Church is continuing to build an English-speaking elementary school named St. Andrew Pre and Primary School. (What an honor to share our name!) They have continued to add classrooms so that there is space for the children as they advance to the next grade. We took some school supplies for the school, and gave the kids toothbrushes and pinwheels. They officially opened the school this year, so there was another big celebration. Many people have donated money for the school, and it is growing. The children have done well compared to the national test averages.
- Agape Lutheran Church is building a Kindergarten also, and we have helped raise money for that project. We also visited that church and kindergarten during our trip in October. We took them decorations, to hang in their classroom, and gave them some school supplies for the kids.
- Of course, as a committee, we also served the church by hosting fellowship time.

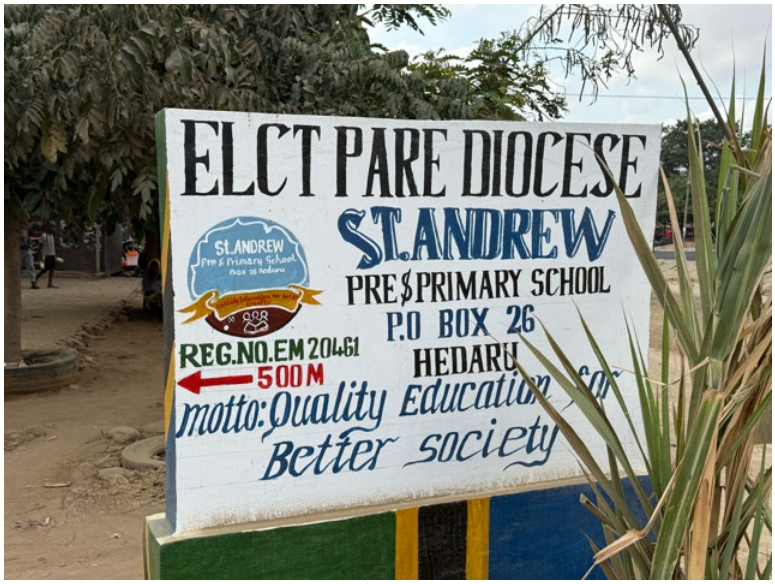
Throughout the challenges of 2025, wonderful things continued to happen in our ministry, and we feel confident God will lead us to more exciting things in the year to come. As always, we wish to thank you, the people of St. Andrew's, for your continuing support of your time, your gifts, and most of all, your never-ending prayers. We look forward to doing God's work with our hands in 2026.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Putz, TMT chair
https://www.facebook.com/TanzaniaMinistryTeam

The opening ceremony of the elementary school

Sitting on the steps of the church with the kids, playing games.

Bishop Amy Current, SouthEast Iowa Synod, Bishop Mjema, Pare Diocese and the church/diocese staff at the opening of the St. Andrew school in Hedaru



The elementary school's new sign by the road.

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at **LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA**.