



# First Things ~ November 2025

My dear friends in Christ,

You have probably seen the bulletin inserts about a new program we are implementing at First called *The Peter Plan*. I want to provide a brief summary of how the plan works and what its three goals are.

## **How *The Peter Plan* works**

*The Peter Plan* is simply an expansion of what many WELS congregations, including our own have done—having church attendees register their attendance and for communicant members to register their reception of the Lord's Supper.

Really, *The Peter Plan* really isn't anything new. Rather, it's an opportunity for our congregation to systematically put the information we are recording to use for the benefit and care of our members.

## **The three goals of *The Peter Plan***

The first goal of *The Peter Plan* is to make sure that people are fed with God's Word and sacrament regularly, even if the circumstances of their life prevent them from being able to attend worship. Saint Peter encourages us to "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care" (1 Peter 5:2). Shepherds find ways to feed the sheep under any circumstances.

With *The Peter Plan*, we will have an accurate record of someone who has missed worship for a month straight. People can miss church for legitimate reasons. These individuals will not always contact the church to let us know they are going to be absent. They don't want to be a burden. These are the people we want to reach, to assure them it is no burden to bring them a devotion and the Lord's Supper. Maybe their work schedule has prevented them from attending worship. Maybe they've been recovering from knee surgery. We want to continue to serve them with the means of grace. But to do that, we need to have an accurate record of who was able to make it to worship and who wasn't.

The second goal of *The Peter Plan* is illustrated by an event in Peter's life. Peter drifted away from his Savior, even denying him three times. Afterwards, he wondered if Jesus would want to have anything to do with him again. In John chapter 21, Jesus pulls Peter aside, assures Peter that he's forgiven, and tells Peter he still wants him to serve in the Church. Peter had forsaken Jesus. Jesus could have gotten very angry. But Jesus restored Peter lovingly and gently.

Sometimes, when people drift away from the church, it's *not* for legitimate reasons. They lose interest in hearing God's Word. Or they have an issue with someone at church and don't want to deal with them. So

they stop coming to church. This isn't healthy. "Faith comes from hearing the message," (Romans 10:17). *The Peter Plan* also lets us follow up on members who have been absent from worship for longer periods of time. We want to gently encourage them to return to faithful use of Word and sacrament. And if they refuse, the loving thing to do is let them know they are sinning, and that God is calling them to repent. To *not* warn people that way would be unloving.

*The Peter Plan* lets us do this consistently. There is no guesswork. For example, "Has Frank missed for eight weeks or eighteen weeks?" Because we keep records, we know how long "Frank" has been gone. And we can attempt to restore him gently, just like Jesus did for Peter.

The third goal of *The Peter Plan* has nothing to do with members and everything to do with worship visitors. When we have worship visitors, we want to do a better job of collecting their contact information. With visitor contact information in hand, it allows us to follow up on those visitors.

### **Open forum about *The Peter Plan***

Because this is a new ministry and a fairly big undertaking, we will be having an open forum on November 23<sup>rd</sup> after worship where members can ask any questions they want about *The Peter Plan*.

This program pleases our Savior greatly and serves him well. For all the goals of *The Peter Plan*—1) feeding our members who are absent for legitimate reasons, 2) trying to gently restore straying members, and 3) better collecting contact information of guests so we might continue to share the gospel with them—are things that Jesus has said in his Word are functions of *his* Church. They fulfill *his* mission.

To him be the glory!

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Pilarski

### **Church Council Openings**

The Church Council is looking for two men to serve as members of Council. If you would be interested in serving in these roles please reach out to the office or Tony Breaser, 507-894-4054

### **First Steps News**

**Support Needed:** We are still looking for staff, specifically qualified assistant teachers. *Please pray* that these wonderful staff members join our team soon, and if you find people that would be a great addition to the First Steps team please direct them to Carol Schroeder for more information. We would love to welcome more families but first we need those positions filled. Carol can be reached via email: [director@keepchristfirst.com](mailto:director@keepchristfirst.com), or call: 507 – 895 – 5704.

Members are always welcome to assist with pick-up at Logan Middle School for First Steps' lunch program. A current calendar can be found in the church entry for easy sign-up. For any questions you can reach out to Carol, as noted above, or speak with Diana Holub, Church Secretary, for more information.

## Fellowship Opportunities and Events

**Every Saturday**

Live Nativity Set-Up- at Riverside Park will be November 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd. 9am-5pm. Rotary provides lunch. Many hands make light work! Please come for any amount of time you can spare on any of those Saturdays. Questions? Call George Italiano (608-317-0271)

**Monday, Nov. 3**

Women of First Meeting- Hope to see you there!

**Monday, Nov. 10**

1-Year Anniversary Prayer- Heavenly Father, we come before You today with grateful hearts to celebrate the one-year anniversary of our pastor, Pastor Adam Pilarski. We thank You for the gift of their leadership and for all the ways You have worked through them to build up our church and guide us closer to You. We pray for continued wisdom, discernment, and clarity as they lead our congregation. Please give them the strength to be faithful to Your Word, to serve with integrity, and to always seek Your will above all else. Protect their heart and mind, Lord. Continue to fill them with Your Holy Spirit, keeping them humble, joyful, and dependent on You. We also pray for their family and their personal well-being, asking that You provide them with rest, refreshment, and Your peace. We are so thankful for the past year, and we look forward to many more years of ministry with them. Continue to bless them, Father, and use them for Your glory. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.



**Sat, November 15**

Fall Clean-Up Day! Begins at 8:00 AM with leaf removal.

**Monday, Nov. 17**

First Steps Thanksgiving Worship- The preschooler and toddler classes will celebrate Thanksgiving with their parents on Monday, November 17 in our 6:30 PM worship service. (There will not be communion that evening). Come this evening to watch the children let their light shine and take this great opportunity to meet your First Steps families.

**Tuesday, Nov. 18**

Church Council- 6:30 PM

**Tuesday, Nov. 20**

Early Learning Center Business Meeting- 6:30 PM

**Sunday, Nov. 23**

Peter Plan Open Forum- We will be holding an open forum regarding The Peter Plan after worship in the sanctuary. The forum will explain the steps of The Peter Plan, answer questions, and invite congregational feedback. Everyone is encouraged to attend. If you have questions before the forum, please contact Pastor Pilarski or Elder of Encouragement Kyle Schroeder (507-450-4160).

**Wednesday, Nov. 26**

Thanksgiving Eve Worship at 6:30 PM with Pie Social to follow. Sign-up will be found in the church entry. Looking forward to sharing a slice with you all!



**November 27 & 28** Church Office & First Steps Closed

**November 28 - 30** Live Nativity: Minnesota Churches Weekend- The Minnesota churches are leading the way this weekend with volunteers for bringing in food and people for characters at Riverside Park for the Live Nativity. *Friday Evening:* Our church oversees the main hot meat, with additional donations of sides, and desserts. Members are welcome to serve in a character roll any day that weekend, but *we are working to really show up on that Friday.* More Live Nativity/Diorama information to come!

# September

## Summary of Financial Information 2025

Financial Summary				
	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Difference	Comments
Net Income (Loss) Church	(\$7,739)	\$0	(\$7,739)	
Net Income (Loss) ELC	\$29,328	\$13,101	\$16,227	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21,588</b>	<b>\$13,101</b>	<b>\$8,487</b>	
Grants (net)	(\$17,292)	(\$11,891)	(\$5,401)	
<b>Without Grants</b>	<b>\$4,296</b>	<b>\$1,210</b>	<b>\$3,086</b>	

Total Deficit of ELC	
2018	(\$17,051)
2019	(\$23,087)
2020	(\$2,544)
2021	\$39,832
2022	(\$10,484)
2023	(\$8,202)
2024	\$10,716
2025	\$29,328
	<u>\$18,508</u>

Giving Summary				
	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Difference	Comments
Offerings	\$163,349	\$177,889	(\$14,540)	91.8%
Debt Reduction	\$0	\$0	\$0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$163,349</b>	<b>\$177,889</b>	<b>(\$14,540)</b>	

Assets				
	2024 December	2025 September	Change	Comments
Checking Account	\$61,664	\$78,780	\$17,115	
Money Market	\$51,540	\$63,380	\$11,841	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$113,204</b>	<b>\$142,160</b>	<b>\$28,956</b>	Net increase in cash balance

Liabilities & Equity				
	2024 December	2025 September	Change	Comments
Dedicated Funds Total	\$87,041	\$94,168	\$7,127	
Other Liabilities	\$1,830	\$2,070	\$240	
<b>Assets less Liabilities</b>	<b>\$24,334</b>	<b>\$45,922</b>	<b>\$21,588</b>	Net increase in equity
Mortgage Balance	\$257,037		Interest Rate	6.34%
Balloon Payment Due	11/1/2027		Monthly Payment	\$2,587.01
			Extra Principle	\$510.00

Basement Windows Project	
<b>Total</b>	
Est Cost*	\$14,000
Donations to Date	\$8,811
<b>Amount Needed</b>	<u>\$5,189</u>
As of September 30	

Required Offerings				
		Budget	Catch up	Total
September Offerings Needed	\$22,580			
September Offerings Received	\$17,408			
October Offerings Needed		\$22,216	\$14,540	\$36,756

\* West side \$6,000  
East side \$8,000

## First Lutheran Church

Pastor Adam Pilarski  
Church Office  
First Steps Early Learning Center

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phone: 507 – 895 – 4775,  
phone: 507 – 895 – 5704,

email: [pastorapilarski@gmail.com](mailto:pastorapilarski@gmail.com)  
email: [ChurchOffice@KeepChristFirst.com](mailto:ChurchOffice@KeepChristFirst.com)  
email: [Director@KeepChristFirst.com](mailto:Director@KeepChristFirst.com)

Church Website: [keepchristfirst.com](http://keepchristfirst.com)

Facebook: First Lutheran, La Crescent

Virtual Worship: [vimeo.com/keepchristfirst](https://vimeo.com/keepchristfirst)