

Narrative Mission Support Plan For 2020

The mission of First Lutheran is “Loving others in Christ for outreach to all; while providing for God’s diversity. When we open our doors and when we go beyond our doors, we are proving outreach mission. We can only do this effectively, when we are healthy in our relationships. When we are healthy, we can truly together, encounter the vast diversity of our God, and have the opportunity to love all of God’s people. Opening the doors both for those who call First Lutheran home and opening the doors to the mission field, is what disciples are called to be and be part of. In Acts, through preaching and mission, many came to believe.

The early church, in Acts, as the believers reached out and cared for all they encountered, problems arose internally. There was suffering within the body of the church (Acts 6), it was addressed to keep the church healthy enough to care for the outside. Mission we know is more than inside the four walls of any congregation. It is outside where the Holy Spirit is also. It is the Holy Spirit that imparts faith upon all. We trust that God is active in our missions both inside and outside the four walls of First Lutheran. Over the next 12-18 months, we will work on becoming healthy as the body of Christ, so we can carry out mission in the name of Christ Jesus.

Volunteering is what is done by those outside of Christian mission. When disciples use the gifts that God has given them, God is present and God through the Holy Spirit impacts us all. It is through our time, talents and financial resources that God goes with us in mission, not just helps us pay the bills. Your giving to First Lutheran Church is the way God’s mission gets done among us as we share the mission together. Your time, talents and financial giving help to bring hope to the world and make a difference in so many other people’s lives.

Our Plan on Carrying out God’s Mission

A. To provide meaningful, life-changing, life-giving worship every week of the year.

Last year we held **104** Sunday worship services, where on an average week, **119** people gathered in different styles of worship (traditional and praise) to worship God: to hear God’s Word and share in the sacraments. Although our average on Sunday went down our total attendance went **down** to **6,209** from **6,556**. We had **18** midweek and special services, including sharing services with St. Paul United Methodist Church. We continued Advent worship that was brought back in 2018. We received **9** people through Holy Baptism. We had **4** young adults confirm their baptism and faith by being confirmed. **9** people were committed to our Lord’s eternal care through the Burial of the Dead. **8** new families for a total of **20** new discipling members joined this community through transfer

of membership from other congregations. We had a total of **6** members transfer out and we removed **68** members due to inactivity. We do have a few people waiting to become members this year and we expect more to join. We have had many first-time worshipers join us in 2019 and some joined as members. Music is a special part of ministry at First Lutheran. Our Choir, Hand Bells and Spirit Connection band offer great opportunities for God's people to share their gifts and for others to enjoy these gifts. We can be prayerful that we can once again have a Choir and Hand Bell Choir in 2020.

Budget Total--\$158,629.86

(This total includes a percentage of the pastor's salary; expenses, insurance and continuing education; parsonage mortgage payments/improvements/utilities; the secretary, choir director, keyboardist, Spirit Connection director and custodial salaries; adult's music ministries; janitorial supplies; office expenses; insurance, building maintenance; and utilities.)

B. To nurture people in their faith journey.

This congregation has made a commitment in calling their pastor, to see that education does not stop once someone is confirmed, but instead they have said, "this is only the beginning of a life-long learning through God's Word." This is why we are very intentional in expending energy and prayer to determine how to help all persons, no matter their age or economic background, grow in their relationship with the Lord. First provides an education program for all ages, to nurture the faith that the Holy Spirit has imparted. With **21** enrolled in Sunday School, **8** in confirmation and a variety of adult classes that are offered throughout the year. **5** confirmands attended confirmation camp. New member classes are steeped into Gifts of the Spirit, to provide the new members with insight of who God made them to be and what God intends them to do. We offer a four-week course preparing the youth for first communion. We have an active Vacation Bible School with Adults through multiple congregations, using their gifts to lead over **22** children in the process of discovering God in their midst. Confirmation youth are encouraged to attend church camp, to explore their faith through guided exercises and fun activities. We encourage the confirmed youth to attend a week-long, *Leadership Lab*, to nurture their Christian leadership skills for use in the mission field both inside and outside of the congregation. In 2019, we had **3** youth and **1** adult attend.

(This total includes a percentage of the pastor's salary; expenses, insurance and continuing education; parsonage mortgage payments/improvements/utilities; the secretary and custodial services; the children, youth and adult ministry; janitorial supplies, office expenses; insurance, building maintenance; Church Consultants, and utilities)

C. For the Caring of all of God's people.

First Lutheran Church is conscious and has become even more aware that Jesus has commanded us to "Go into all the world." We carry out our mission statement when we say and live out, "Obeying Christ and Opening Doors to faith." We live as disciples of Christ being Christians who embody; "Being a disciple of Christ, a follower of Jesus, is a free-willed loving and gracious response to a loving and gracious God!"

1. We care for one another as a part of the family of faith. Visitations and communion visits are made regularly by the pastor and sacramental visitors to those who are homebound, in assisted living, and nursing homes. The pastor greets and visits with members and first-time worshipers every Sunday before and after each worship service. Hospital calls are made on members who are hospitalized, and phone calls are made on those with special needs. At the time of deaths both inside and outside the congregation, we reach out to those who are grieving a loss. They are also followed-up with by the pastor through books that help with the grieving process over the next year. The pastor also responds to many personal and counseling needs as they come up with our members and others who walk through the doors of the congregation.
2. First has a tremendous outreach to the community. Our beautiful building is located in a community that has gone through a significant change in its population make-up. The members of First respond to those needs through donating their time at the soup kitchen, hosting a food pantry (where about **15** people per week are served), hosting and volunteers at the Food Bank (where about **90** people twice a month are served), giving towards Haven

House, Gospel Mission, Cardinal Food baskets, adopt a family (giving tree), home communion and nursing home communion, Quilts for Lutheran World Relief, ELCA World Hunger, etc. First hosts the following organizations and more, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, TOPS, Heartland Counseling Training, South Sioux City School District, R.E.A.C.T., Heartland Counseling Governance Board, Leadership Dakota County and the Dakota County Amateur Radio Club. Pastor works within the community with agencies that reach out to the poor in the neighborhood: Dakota County Connections, Heartland Counseling Board, Dakota County Ministerial Alliance, Soup Kitchen, Voices for Food and reaching out through chaplaincy to all those in need in the community.

Budget Total--\$107,689.74

(This total includes a percentage of the pastor's salary; expenses, insurance and continuing education; parsonage mortgage payments/improvements/utilities; the secretary and custodial services; janitorial supplies, office expenses; insurance, building maintenance; utilities; Church Consultants, benevolence to Nebraska Synod; and ELCA World hunger.)

Total need to fulfill God's mission among us, *Loving others in Christ for outreach to all; while providing for God's diversity*: \$339,562.00. May we all be blessed as we share in supporting these ministries in 2020 and beyond.