



First Things ~ November 2024

WELCOME HOME!

Psalm 122:1 I rejoiced with those who said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD.” (EHV)

John 14:1 “In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you.” (EHV)

Dear members of First,

Some time ago, your congregation decided to designate November 17 as Welcome Home Sunday. What a way to welcome the Pilarski family to their new home in Pastor Pilarski’s first worship service here! But the emphasis is intended not only for your new pastor and family. It is meant for you and all the other members of First. Feel free to bring along non-member friends as well!

It seems easy sometimes to take for granted and forget about the tremendous blessing of being part of a family, and that very much includes our church family. We are here to rejoice with one another, to grieve with one another, to encourage one another. But we are not just a “church” family; through faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, we are members of the family of God! What a privilege and joy it is to gather to hear His Word, to sing His praises, and to make our requests of Him in prayer.

It is a truly splendid (should I say awesome?) experience to be in a church filled with like-minded people whose lives are centered in Jesus, the One who makes life worth living and who takes away the sting of death. He prepared the way by first going to the cross, but Easter morning showed that death and sin had been defeated. November 17 can be a remarkable day in more than one way. And remember that your Savior invites you to His Father’s house every week here on earth, until the time when He welcomes you home for eternity in the mansions of heaven.

As Jesus welcomes us, let us also welcome one another, and many others besides—home with Jesus now and forever!

In His peace and joy,
Vacancy Pastor J. Unnasch

Meet the Pilarski Family

Dear members of First Lutheran, greetings in Christ our Savior!

I'm Adam Pilarski and by the grace of God and his call, your new pastor. What an honor from our Lord to be called to this high and holy office.

I was born in Homer, Alaska, though only lived there for the first nine months of my life before my family moved back down to Portland, Oregon and that is primarily where I grew up. I attended Grace Lutheran School and we transferred to the church from an ELS church when I was six years old. For years I planned on being an architect and even attended two semesters at Portland State University to study architecture. However, I only made it to October of that first semester before deciding that architecture wasn't for me. Assessing the gifts God had given me and comparing my interests with my desire to use my gifts to serve God, I decided to start attending Martin Luther College to become a pastor.



The Pilarski Family
Pastor Adam, Carrie, Owen (4), and Josiah (2)

After graduation from MLC and going to the seminary for two years, my third year was my vicar year (like an internship) at Messiah Lutheran in South Windsor, CT with Tim Ehlers as the pastor over me (my "bishop"). At the end of that year, I attended my best friend's wedding in IL where I met my future bride Carrie. She and I dated during my final year at the seminary and were married on June 27th, 2015, shortly after my graduation.

Carrie grew up with her father, David Fleischmann, returning to the seminary to finish up his studies after taking a 10 year hiatus following his graduation from Northwestern College. She has lived in Reno NV, Kingman AZ, Milwaukee WI, Minocqua WI, West Bend WI, and then her dad received his first call to Morris, MN. When she was in high school he took a call to Austin, MN and she graduated from St Croix Lutheran after having attended Great Plains Lutheran for her first two year of high school. She attended MLC and graduated with a degree in Early Childhood Education.

My first call into ministry was to a "quad-parish" in Bison, Morristown, McIntosh, and Isabel South Dakota. Carrie was called to be the preschool teacher at a small preschool out of the church basement in Bison a year later. After four years, I received a call to serve in Glencoe, MN. I accepted the call and shortly afterwards Carrie received and accepted a call to serve as a teacher at Precious Little Blessings Daycare & Preschool run by our church in Glencoe. She continued to serve there until shortly before the birth of our second son. Since then she has been a happy stay-at-home mommy.

The Lord has blessed us with two sons: Owen (4) and Josiah (2). Owen loves reading books, playing games, playing outside, going to school, and people! Josiah loves many of the same things as his big brother, often gets frustrated when he can't do everything Owen can do, but is also very resilient and has a wonderful ability to focus for one his age. We are thankful to God for the blessings of our children every day.

And now our family comes to La Crescent at the Lord's calling and we are excited to share in the gospel ministry with you. There are so many more things for us to learn about each other and I'm looking forward to those experiences and conversations. May the Lord bless our work together and may his will be done among us.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Pastor Pilarski

Board for Lay Ministry Openings for 2025

Vice-President, ELC Liaison, and Encouragement Elder

Voting for these positions will take place at the
January 2025 Annual Voters' Meeting

Please contact a current Board Member if you have any interest in serving the congregation through one of these positions. Thank you!

Fellowship Opportunities

- Sat, November 9** Fall Clean-Up Day! Begins at 9:00 AM with leaf removal.
- Sun, November 10** Installation Service of Pastor Pilarski at 3:30 PM with meal to follow. We are looking for members to help assist with serving and clean-up and you are always welcome to assist by sign-up to bring your favorite side dish, dessert, buns, or beverage. Sign-up available in the entry! Thank you.
- November 12 - 14** Pre-Holiday Season Men & Women's Bible Study- Tuesday, November 12 – Thursday, November 14, 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM. Working through a *Time of Grace* study “Give Satan the Credit He is Due”. As you explore the Word and what's behind Satan's name, you'll expose him; though he wants you to stay blinded. Potluck style meal to follow the study with the main dish provided. You're welcome to bring your favorite side or dessert!
- Sun, November 17** Welcome Home! Sunday- You have seen information in the worship folder about upcoming *Welcome Home! Sunday* on November 17th. Our goal is to have 100% of the membership together on this special day. Please do everything possible to set that date aside so that we can pack the house that day. Fellowship time to follow.
- Mon, November 18** First Steps Thanksgiving Worship- The preschooler and toddler classes will celebrate Thanksgiving with their parents on Monday, November 18 in our 6:30 PM worship service. (There will not be communion that evening). Come this evening to watch those children let their light shine and take this great opportunity to meet your First Steps families.
- Wed, November 27** 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 29 –
December 1** 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 2024

Financial Summary				
	YTD		YTD Difference	Comments
	Actual	Budget		
Net Income (Loss) Church	\$25,054	(\$32,381)	\$57,435	
Net Income (Loss) ELC	\$33,405	\$12,833	\$20,572	
Total	\$58,459	(\$19,548)	\$78,007	
Grants (net)	(\$18,549)	(\$8,872)	(\$9,677)	
Without Grants	\$39,910	(\$28,420)	\$68,330	
Mortgage Balance	\$273,681			

Total Deficit of ELC	
2018	(\$17,051)
2019	(\$23,087)
2020	(\$2,544)
2021	\$39,832
2022	(\$10,484)
2023	(\$8,202)
2024	\$33,405
	<u>\$11,869</u>

Giving Summary				
	YTD		YTD Difference	Comments
	Actual	Budget		
Offerings	\$155,192	\$141,910	\$13,282	109.4%
Debt Reduction	\$16,760	\$0	\$16,760	
Total	\$171,952	\$141,910	\$30,042	

Assets					
	2023		2024		Comments
	December	September	September	Change	
Checking Account	\$78,454	\$81,520	\$81,520	\$3,066	
Money Market	\$0	\$50,918	\$50,918	\$50,918	
Total	\$78,454	\$132,438	\$132,438	\$53,984	Net increase in cash balance

Liabilities & Equity					
	2023		2024		Comments
	December	September	September	Change	
Dedicated Funds Total	\$90,965	\$90,003	\$90,003	(\$962)	
Other Liabilities	\$5,799	\$2,286	\$2,286	(\$3,513)	
Assets less Liabilities	(\$18,310)	\$40,150	\$40,150	\$58,459	Net increase in equity

Care Fund Update

In October our congregation collected funds to assist those affected by Hurricane Helene through the WELS Christian Aid & Relief, and funds for the residents of Traditions Assisted Living Center who were displaced by the fire. Thank you for your help!

WELS Christian Aid & Relief: \$569.00 ♥♥♥ Traditions Assisted Living Center: \$205.00