

PASTOR'S PEN

Dear friends in Christ,

Thank you for gifting me the opportunity to learn, serve, and love here at First Lutheran as your pastoral intern. Investing in the future of ministry is vital for the long-term sustainability of not just this church, but all churches and the ELCA. Every pastor called here was an intern somewhere at some point!

I've been blessed beyond measure to walk alongside this incredible clergy and staff team, lay leadership, and all of you as we strive to live out our mission of being a church that equips disciples to not just go to church, but to be the church in all areas of life. We are a place where "faith and life meet" far beyond the walls of this building as we navigate a complicated world in which the needs are great.



Our families need us to integrate the teachings of Jesus with how we engage in relationships.

Our businesses and community entities need us to emulate Jesus in how we treat others with fairness, justice, and kindness.

Our future generations need us to set the tone for what the world can be if we truly love our neighbors in the ways prescribed in scripture.

Our earth and all of creation need us to honor God and all God has made.

I've learned many things in this internship, but perhaps the most powerful revelation has been how essential the church is now and forever. When our neighbors are in need, when folks are grieving, when the lonely need fellowship, and when the distraught need comfort and hope, it is the church and our fellowship of disciples that have stood the test of time and been a steady, trusted source of what souls truly need most. This commitment to contributing to the flourishing of others does not rest solely on church staff or programming, but is the divine call on all our lives. We are all ministers. We are all called to be shepherds of God's flock in our own contexts, every day, in all places. You don't need a seminary degree to minister to others; you simply need to respond to the Spirit's call on your life.

May your life intersect with faith in ways that draw you closer to God's love, Jesus' grace, and the mission of the Holy Spirit so that you may go out into your daily lives and share that love, grace, and mission with the world. This fall you will have multiple opportunities to do this through prayer, getting involved, telling and listening to stories, and sharing generously as we "Dive Deeper" into our faith - together.

**With gratitude and joy,
Pastoral Intern Jessica Paulsen**