

# LIFETIMES

August 2025

From the Pastor



Kai Nilsen  
Senior Pastor

Good news. The roof project is about 50% completed, and to date, they have found the underlying structural components in good shape. The solar installation will begin the first week of August. The HVAC project will move forward after the completion of the roof. And... we hired a .5 time Senior Ministry Leader,

Patty Nilsen, who began her work this week!

For all of you who have led the way with ***Building for Our Future*** gifts, look what we are doing this summer. All of these initiatives will be gifts that endure for our community. Thank you.

To date, \$2,389,709 has been given toward the BFOF initiatives. We will need about \$100,000 more (by the middle of fall) to complete all the initiatives for 2025 and then just over \$300,000 in 2026 to fulfill our three-year BFOF appeal. Well done! So,

- If you made a commitment to BFOF and have already fulfilled it. Thank you. Your early gifts gave us great confidence as we moved forward this summer.
- If you have made a commitment and are waiting to fulfill that commitment, now is the time. This summer and fall will be a key season for us to complete a few significant facility updates.

- If you haven't made a commitment to BFOF, you still can.

I'd like you to think about and be grateful for this generosity for a moment. The first gift we received for BFOF came in March 2024. In sixteen months, we have given almost \$2.4 million over and above our giving to our Operating Budget and our Mortgage Giving.

That's the good news.

I also need to share that, for all of the abundance we have experienced in our BFOF giving, our income vs. expense in the operating budget (Ongoing ministry, staffing, facility, outreach) is behind by \$136,404 through the middle of the year.

It's obvious from the BFOF giving that the financial resources are present in this community for us to meet and exceed our operating budget goals for 2025. We wanted you to be aware that these two things are true at the same time: 1) We have a generous community. 2) We need to be mindful to also direct our resources toward the operating budget as the year continues.

We can do it!

Summer will end soon (boo!) and the fall ministries for all ages will commence (yeah!). We have so much to be thankful for at Incarnation in this season of our ministry.

Peace, Kai



Joy McDonald Coltvet  
Pastor for Faith Formation

Dear Incarnation,

It's hard to believe that we are past the midpoint of summer now and about to enter August this week! Here's something to look forward to together in this last part of summer. During the last three Sundays of August and the first Sunday in September, we will move through a Season of Creation together.

The designers of this theme for worship — **GROUNDING IN CREATION** — at Church Anew say this:

This is a disorienting season in our world and in our churches, in our communities, and in our families. But the created world has much to teach us about cycles, systems, ebbs and flows, and how to remain grounded despite the external circumstances that surround us. We are all connected in and to this great web of life, and this feels like the right time to lean into that nature net together.

During this green season of ordinary time, we invite you to step out of the regular rhythm of the lectionary and into the flow of creation. Using the elements from above, below, and around us, we will explore Biblical stories of creation, connectedness, and care. We will get outside, put our hands into the dirt, and our feet in the water. We'll engage all five senses, all while we wonder and play together.

This end-of-summer, we invite you to root down, look up, and learn what it might mean for you and your community of faith to be grounded in creation.

Here are the themes that we'll be focusing on each week, and a special intergenerational invitation for each week:



#### August 17 — Grounded in Creation — Water

We'll celebrate baptisms at each worship service, and we invite God's children from birth to 102+ to bring something that represents your relationship with water. Maybe it's an ocean animal (photo or stuffie) or a shell necklace. Maybe you'll dress in the colors of the sea. We'll remember together how God's love is deep and wide like the waters that surround and fill us.



#### August 24 — Grounded in Creation — Earth

This Sunday, we will notice together the grounding of our faith and life. In the gospels, we move from the sowing of seeds to bird watching, from soil to harvest. There is an invitation to practice reconnecting, realizing, and restoring the relationship with Creation right where we live today. The music today will be provided by a ukulele orchestra, and we will celebrate a baptism.



### August 31 — Grounded in Creation — Air

We will have one worship service on this Sunday at 10 am and recognize God's life-giving breath of life in the air all around and within us.

Special invitation: If you (K-12 + adults of all ages) will be here that holiday weekend and would be willing to be a part of a movement/dance that helps tell the story of the valley of the dry bones, please tell Pastor Joy at [jcoltvvet@incarnationmn.org](mailto:jcoltvvet@incarnationmn.org)



### September 7 — Grounded in Creation — Flora & Fauna

*A Family Fun Day Sunday!* At the 9 AM worship, we will express gratitude for the flora & fauna that inhabit the creation with us, giving us life. If you're coming to this first service, bring a photo/emblem/stuffie of the plants and/or animals that you love.

We will have an outdoor **Blessing of the Animals at 10:30 AM that day**. You are welcome to bring your pets (if they will enjoy this kind of outdoor experience) or a photo/

item that represents your pets for a shared blessing time that day.

Doesn't this sound like so much goodness? Join in this **Grounded in Creation** season—I look forward to seeing you there.

Blessings,

Pastor Joy

### Fresh Produce for Neighbors in Need

As gardening season is about to begin, we want to make you aware of a new donation opportunity to benefit the **Ralph Reeder Food Shelf**. Beginning in June and running through "harvest season" this fall, please consider donating excess garden produce to RRFS. Two options:

1. Bring it to Incarnation on Sunday and place it in the **RRFS Perishable Goods** bin. Volunteers will deliver it to Ralph Reeder Food Shelf on Monday.
2. Bring it directly to the back door of RRFS Mon–Fri between 9 AM & NOON. Do not leave it in the bins outside. Rather, ring the bell to get assistance with the drop-off.

Thanks for sharing your gifts!

## Financial Report

### Finance Report June 2025

Actual June Operating & Mortgage Revenue	\$176,650	YTD Operating & Mortgage Revenue	\$1,237,368	YTD Operating & Mortgage Revenue Budget	\$1,310,908
Actual June Operating & Mortgage Expense	\$ 225,745.00	YTD Operating & Mortgage Expense	\$1,373,773	YTD Operating & Mortgage Expense Budget	\$1,359,771
<b>OPERATING TOTALS</b>	<b>-\$49,095</b>		<b>-\$136,405</b>		<b>-\$48,863</b>

BFOF Giving has been tremendous and key projects are in process. Thank you!

But, our Operating funds that pay for staff and all the day to day expenses & functions is falling short. Please consider giving electronically to keep daily Operations on track.





*Tracy Strantz*  
*Council President*

replacement project that is already halfway completed, there are several other projects gaining momentum this summer.

In our June Council meeting, we spent some time with Heather Hoecke, the new Director of Operations. She shared updates on her first few months in her new role and outlined exciting improvements that are underway.

Prior to taking on the Director of Operations role, Heather previously worked as the Formation Leader for our Middle School Ministry and as the Faith Formation Coordinator. Before working at Incarnation, Heather was an attorney with a Minneapolis law firm. Her legal practice included representing large companies with employment law, business law and litigation, products liability, and other complex cases. Heather's background is a great fit in her new role. She brings strong analytical and problem-solving skills and the ability to quickly assess process details and potential improvements.

Heather shared that one of her immediate priorities is innovating our financial management processes and systems. "One of the biggest things I've been working on is adapting our systems. Our systems are very manual and time-consuming. We are far behind in how we work with technology. I have a vision on how we can move forward with digital capabilities and away from so much dependency on paper."

One exciting change that was recently completed is the outsourcing of the Incarnation payroll process to an electronic payroll system. This will save significant time currently spent processing payroll manually and will be a much more user-friendly system.

For many of us, the summer months bring family vacations, picnics and BBQs, fun at the lake, gardening, or reading a good book while soaking up the sun outside. We don't always associate summer as the time for big projects. Summer is the season for big projects at Incarnation this year.

In addition to the roof

Heather and the Leadership Team also recognize that our current financial and donation management systems don't provide adequate reporting tools. Heather appreciates the Congregation's feedback, which has been very helpful. She recognizes that people want to see more than just numbers. Updating our systems would provide more detailed updates, easy-to-understand graphics with insightful trends, etc. Congregation members would also have improved access to their activities. For example, it would be great to use a Mobile App connection to see your list of upcoming volunteer activities and pertinent details (meeting room, times, etc.). The church calendar would be easily accessible for broader awareness of upcoming events.

Heather is currently researching options and hopes to have updates for Leadership, Council, and the Congregation in the coming weeks. She believes improvements could start yet this year. She shares, "We're doing our due diligence, but you're going to see changes soon. Everything will be much more streamlined, and I think the congregation will love it."

Heather has also enjoyed getting to know everyone on the staff to a deeper extent. "Stepping into this role, it was important to connect with everyone, learn more about how the church works, and how everybody works together. I've also enjoyed hearing the comments and ideas from people in the Congregation. I'm enjoying meeting more people and hearing about concerns, questions, interests, and what they want to see happening."

On behalf of the Council, we appreciate the great work Heather has done so far. More updates will be shared on the projects Heather is working on during our upcoming Discussion Forum, on Sunday, August 17, from 10:15 to 11:15 AM in the Fireside Room. We look forward to sharing updates and engaging in interactive discussion.

We welcome any comments, feedback, or questions you may have for the Council. You may connect with us through email at [council@incarnationmn.org](mailto:council@incarnationmn.org) or come visit us in person at the Welcome Kiosk after Sunday worship services.



*Sean Turner  
Minister of Worship,  
Music & the Arts*

I hope everyone is enjoying summer!

I would like to thank Stephanie Sinclair, Karen Gladen, Lou Ann Reese, and Michael Galeski for contributing their considerable musical gifts during worship services in July. It is wonderful to see the diverse offerings that each person brings! August will also bring many of our own congregation musicians to lead us in worship!

On August 24 we will welcome the North Metro Ukulele Club to lead us in worship at both services. Many of you enjoyed their playing at Prime Timers last spring. This promises to be a joy filled experience with some familiar hymns as well as a few new musical offerings. The group will likely be made up of about 20 players led by director Carol Locke who has served as a worship musicians for many years. Our own Kay Leerssen is a member of this group and will be joining them for this special Sunday.

Our Senior Choir will be singing for worship on August 3rd. If you would be interested in joining us, just come to the sanctuary at 8:10 and we will run through our anthem before the service begins. Links and music are available ahead of time. This is a great opportunity to get involved in our community's "largest small group". If you are unable to join us for this date but are interested in taking part in choir, please contact Sean Turner ([sturner@incarnationmn.org](mailto:sturner@incarnationmn.org)) for more information.

For those of you planning Fall schedules, our adult ensembles (Senior Choir and Alleluia Ringers) start regular rehearsals on Wednesday, September 10, and music groups for the kids and youth (Joyful Noise, Grace Notes and Bells of Praise) start rehearsals on Wednesday, September 17. Look for a full schedule with all the important details in the September Lifetimes.

See you in worship!

—Sean



*North Metro Ukulele Club at Incarnation last fall (2024)*





Beginning in August 2025, Luther Seminary will host the Smithsonian's traveling exhibit "Exploring Human Origins: What Does It Mean To Be Human?"

### August 15–November 16, 2025

Luther Seminary, Olson Campus Center, 1490 Fulham Street, St. Paul, MN

Free and open to the public

### Hours

Monday–Thursday: 12–6 PM

Friday: 12–8 PM

Saturday and Sunday: Closed

The question of what it means to be human has never been more important. Christian leaders are increasingly called to engage communities of faith in deep, meaningful conversations around science and religious belief, care for creation, and how being human matters in today's world. Through panels, interactive kiosks, hands-on displays, and videos, "Exploring Human Origins" invites viewers of all ages and faith traditions to explore and learn about milestones in the evolutionary journey of becoming human. The exhibit encourages a public conversation that focuses on multiple perspectives of what it means to be human—one that embraces the ideas and beliefs of non-scientists and fosters greater appreciation of the complexity of the science of human evolution.

For more information, visit [luthersem.edu/origins](http://luthersem.edu/origins).

## Gather Twin Cities Summer Event for ILC Young Adults (Ages 18-30)



Gather Twin Cities is a Lutheran (ELCA) ministry for young adults seeking community and connection with others in the metro area. Come and see! Contact [Mike Sell](#) for details.



**Gather Lakeside — Sunday, Aug. 10 at 6:30 PM  
at Diamond Lake Lutheran, Minneapolis**

We gather to celebrate the end of summer. Join us for a lakeside gathering featuring tie-dye, outdoor games, a bonfire, snacks, and worship. Bring your favorite outdoor activities. [Order a Gather t-shirt for tie-dye here.](#)

Follow Gather on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).

Winter Coat Drive | August 31–October 12



Winter is a challenging time for many families. Your generosity can provide warmth and comfort to our neighbors at Solid Ground. Please consider donating new or gently-used coats, hats, boots, weatherproof gloves, snow pants and scarves. All sizes are needed. The families at Solid Ground will appreciate the warm gear for cold walks to bus stops, and for children playing in the snow. Monetary donations are especially helpful to purchase coats or boots when sizes are not available to meet families' needs. Feel free to invite family, friends, and neighbors to participate. We believe that by coming together as a community, we can make a significant impact and bring joy to the lives of our Solid Ground neighbors. Any winter wear donations not used by Solid Ground families are brought to the Alley Shoppe in Arlington Hills Lutheran Church. They are also very appreciative of our generous donations.

We are thrilled to use the new gathering space at Solid Ground to set up a “shopping experience” for the families to choose and try on their items. For those not able to come in person, we will take orders and gather items according to their list, to the best of our abilities.

Volunteers are needed to work in a group setting at Incarnation to sort and package the donations. We need help on the following dates:

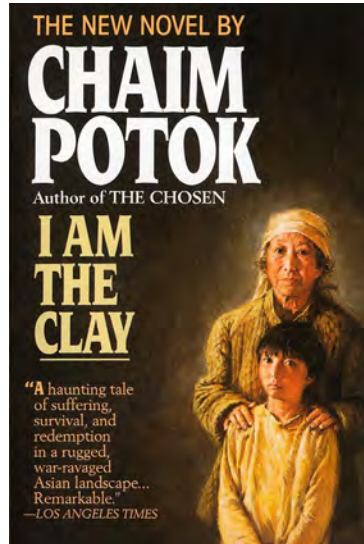
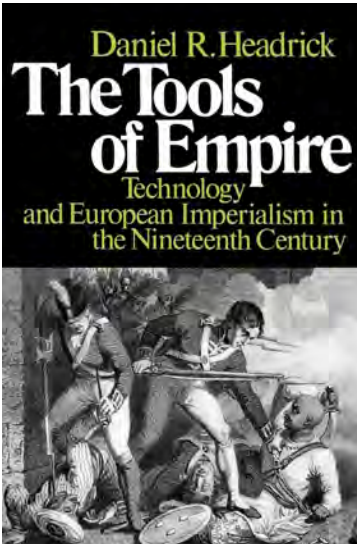
**Work at Incarnation:** September 15, 29, and October 6.

**Bring things to Solid Ground, and set up a shopping experience:** October 13.

**Help families choose items, bag items for families not able to attend, and bag items to take to the Alley Shoppe:** October 14.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Claire Gilbert at [claireg11@msn.com](mailto:claireg11@msn.com). We need many helpers!





The Men's History Group meets on the first and third Tuesday at 9 AM in Bethany Lounge to discuss a non-fiction history book selected by one of the members. Anyone interested in the subject is invited to attend any session, even if you have not read the book of that month. Here are the next books:

**AUGUST** — “The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century” by Daniel Headrick. The story of how advances in technology helped countries in Europe acquire colonies in Africa and Asia in the late 1800s.

**SEPTEMBER** — “I Am the Clay” by Chaim Potok is the story of one man's family during the Korean War.

For more information, contact Jerry Gilbert at [dacta49@msn.com](mailto:dacta49@msn.com).

## Among the Congregation

**PUBLIC PRAYER CONCERNS:** George Aram; Judy Nelson; Cathy Nelson; Karen Stauder; Anna Thorstad; Guy Ahlstrom; Kari Hauck; Pastor Joy McDonald Coltvett; Kara, Jackson, Michael & Kaitlyn Genia; Jon Nelson; Kate Tollefson & family; Kirsten Blaseck; Carol Beckerleg; Marian Ness; Lowell Odland, Linda Hudepohl, Nicole & Troy Heller's brother-in-law; Kay Leerssen's daughter, Angie Herr; Tom Henk's brother; Deb Rykken's brother; Sue Bernlohr's mother; Lana Bergin's brother; Mike Wielenberg's mother; Al and Carolyn Ek's son; Nathan Swanson's friend, Tyler; Kara Johnson's friends Ken & Trish; Nancy Haugen's friends David, Michelle & family and Colette & family; Kim Wielenberg's friend, Cindy; Dede Mattison's friends, Allan and Yvonne; Caregivers

**SYMPATHY TO:** the family of Jan Kuhrmeyer on her death

**RECENTLY BAPTIZED:** Zoey Mae Stekel, daughter of Ellen & Zachary Stekel

## ELCA Churchwide Assembly



ELCA Churchwide Assembly

July 28-August 2, 2025

This assembly, in Phoenix, is the main decision-making body of our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The 845 voting members, including those from our Saint

Paul Area Synod, will be electing a new churchwide bishop and secretary. There will be plenary sessions, discussions, and inspiring worship, as well as a powwow featuring the Native American communities in the Phoenix area.

There will be votes on ELCA Social Statements, proposed amendments to the ELCA constitution, adoption of a budget, and election of members to the Church Council, churchwide boards, and committees.

Worship and assembly proceedings will be available via the assembly's livestream. Living Lutheran magazine will post daily assembly reports at [livinglutheran.org](http://livinglutheran.org)

Please keep this important assembly of our Lutheran church in your prayers.

<https://www.livinglutheran.org/>





Welcome to the Creation Care Corner, information from the Creation Care Action Group. Our hope is to keep you informed about Creation Care projects at Incarnation as well as provide ideas and resources for your own journey in creating a more sustainable world. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact Nancy Stutzman at [nancystutzman@comcast.net](mailto:nancystutzman@comcast.net) or Mike Vant at [mjvant@gmail.com](mailto:mjvant@gmail.com)

## Today's Topic: New Solar Panels Being Installed

Installation of Incarnations' 99 kW solar array is scheduled to begin Thursday, July 31. It will be located in the back corner of the East parking lot, and completion is expected by the end of August. The cost of the system has been fully funded by individual donors, along with a federal rebate.

Once construction is completed, Xcel Energy will perform a final check, known as a "witness test." This test verifies the system's safety and proper functioning in conjunction with the electrical grid, and they will then grant Permission to Operate (PTO). Once granted, the system is expected to provide 91% of the church's annual electrical energy usage and save Incarnation over \$600,000 over the 25-year life of the panels.

Thank you to the Solar Committee for three long years of planning that made this possible. What a great opportunity for us to take care of God's Creation by reducing the burning of fossil fuels!

## Summer Choir—August 3



The Senior "Summer" Choir will be singing this Sunday, August 3. This is a great opportunity to see what it's like to be part of Incarnation's "largest small group". Please join us at 8:10 in the Sanctuary for a brief rehearsal before the service. Links and music are available ahead of time — if interested, contact Sean Turner ([sturner@incarnationmn.org](mailto:sturner@incarnationmn.org))

## Help Save Lives This Summer!



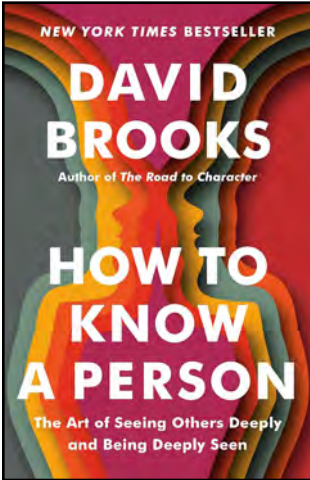
## **Blood Drive** **Incarnation Lutheran Church** **Incarnation Hall**

Gym  
4880 Hodgson Rd  
Shoreview, MN 55126  
**Tuesday, August 12, 2025**  
**10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

PEANUTS ×  American Red Cross

You can make your appointment now at:

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=IncarnationLutheran>



## How To Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen By David Brooks

David Brooks is an op-ed columnist for the New York Times, writes for The Atlantic, and appears often on PBS NewsHour. You may not have read any of his previous bestselling books, but you have heard about him. Pastor Kai referenced him often during Lent 2024, talking about diminishers and illuminators.

We live in a society and at a time when there is much division, fragmentation, hostility, misunderstanding, and misperception. Each one of us and the people around us often feel misunderstood, unheard, undervalued, and even invisible. Brooks' new bestselling book, *How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply*

*Seen*, helps us all make those human connections which are so vital to life. It helps us become more understanding and considerate toward others, as well as to find the joy that comes from being seen.

The act of seeing another person, Brooks argues, is profoundly creative: How can we look somebody in the eye and see something large in them, and in turn, see something larger in ourselves? *How to Know a Person* is for anyone searching for connection and yearning to be understood. And isn't that each one of us?



## Remember the LIVING LUTHERAN Magazine? By Vernita Kennen

If you've been part of the ELCA or Incarnation Lutheran Church for some time, you perhaps remember the magazine of the ELCA called *Living Lutheran*. Sadly, for many readers, it became an online-only magazine a few years ago, which meant that many longtime readers were no longer able to access the news of our churchwide organization.

There is good news! The ELCA and the editors heard the grumbling and heeded the calls for the magazine to return to its original print format. It is now being published quarterly; the second issue is Summer 2025. Our Incarnation church library will have at least one copy available for you to browse while you are in the library — or even take home if you promise to return it promptly the following week.

The Summer issue has information about the triennial Churchwide Assembly, which will be held in Phoenix from July 28 – August 2. The voting members there will be electing a new churchwide bishop and a secretary, as well as conducting much other important business of our church.

There are informative articles about the call for “renewal” of the ELCA; a good article on an organ renaissance; an article acknowledging the 500th anniversary of the marriage of Martin and Katharina Luther; and another on how we can become a more welcoming, accessible church.

There are the familiar departments, too, like “I Am A Lutheran”, hymn of the month, deaths, and the article from the presiding bishop. Look for the Summer issue in the magazine rack in the library. A copy of the Spring 2025 issue is also available there. You will learn much about what is happening in our church, the ELCA.

(Individual subscriptions are available for \$19.95.95/year at: <https://www.livinglutheran.org/subscribe/>)



*We honor the memory of loved ones in the memorial gifts given below:*

Date Range: 6/8/25 to 7/19/25

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Fund Name</b>	<b>In Memory of:</b>
Dick & Merida Abraham	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Gary & Mary Ann Anderson	Memorial - Endowment	Ken Grosch
Larry & Diane Betterley	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Vicki & Mike Engelen	Memorial - Global Health Ministries	Ken Grosch
Jim & Carol Fruehling	Memorial - Habitat For Humanity (Holy Hammers)	Ken Grosch
Bill & Kathy Kalsow	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Dale & Vernita Kennen	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Sue Krabbenhoft	Memorial - Global Health Ministries	Ken Grosch
Will & Carolyn Liebenow	Memorial - Ralph Reeder Food Shelf	Ken Grosch
Todd & Shelly Maesse	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Jim & Julie Meinen	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Jon & Jill Nelson	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Marlys M. Nelson	Memorial - Global Health Ministries	Ken Grosch
Kris & Cindy Nielsen	Memorial - Global Health Ministries	Ken Grosch
Bette Olson	Memorial - Ralph Reeder Food Shelf	Ken Grosch
Jeff & Leann Paulson	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Andy & Donna Rauch	Memorial - Music Series	Ken Grosch
Ruth Rolfs	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Beverly Seabloom	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Murt Seltz	Memorial - Mortgage	Ken Grosch
Christopher Stordalen	Memorial - Global Health Ministries	Ken Grosch
Ove & Kari Sundberg	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Terry & Elizabeth Swanson	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Anna Thorstad	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Cal & Sharon Wilson	Memorial - Endowment	Ken Grosch
 Gary & Mary Lunstad	 Memorial - Undesignated	 Udo Holdorf
Jackie Best Holmstrom	Memorial - Undesignated	Ziggy Kauls
Jeff & Carol Klein	Memorial - Undesignated	Ziggy Kauls
 James Afdahl	 Memorial - Operating	 Jan Kuhrmeyer
Margaret Hooley	Memorial - Ralph Reeder Food Shelf	Jan Kuhrmeyer
MaryAnn Sullivan	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
 Bruce Lohn	 Memorial - Undesignated	 Nancy Lohn
  Gary & Mary Ann Anderson	  Memorial - Endowment	  Mike Miller
Jim & Carol Fruehling	Memorial - Mortgage	Mike Miller

Bruce & Connie Husby	Memorial - Undesignated	Mike Miller
Harry Johnson	Memorial - Endowment	Mike Miller
Gary & Mary Lunstad	Memorial - Undesignated	Mike Miller
Marlys J. Nelson	Memorial - Undesignated	Mike Miller
Jack & Karen Ruff	Memorial - Undesignated	Mike Miller
Mike & Vicki Engelen	Memorial - Endowment	Wayne Quehl
Luther Dale	Memorial - Endowment	LeAnn Sullivan

*The list above reflects the donations that were made payable (or endorsed/transferred) to Incarnation Lutheran Church in memory of someone. Memorials are applied to whatever fund the donor designates.*

*If not designated, sometimes the family requests what fund they would like the memorials designated to.*

*Note: If a memorial gift is received and the check isn't written out to Incarnation Lutheran Church, it will be forwarded directly to the organization that the check was made payable to. Those memorials are typically acknowledged by the organization that receives the donation.*