



SIOUX FALLS
LUTHERAN SCHOOL

SFLS Development Newsletter

Spring 2026

World Ready. Faith Secure.



Sharing the Work, the Joy, and the Journey

We are excited to launch this new Development Update as a way to keep our entire Sioux Falls Lutheran School community informed about what is happening in the world of development and fundraising. Our hope is that by sharing these updates openly, we can remain transparent and keep everyone aligned as we work together to support the mission of SFLS.

One of the most important things to understand about our fundraising efforts is this: **tuition alone does not cover the full cost of educating each student.** At SFLS, like most Christian schools, there is a meaningful gap between what it actually costs to provide a Christ-centered, high-quality education and what families are asked to pay. Each year, that gap is significant—and it is intentionally not passed on fully to families.

On average, tuition covers approximately 66% of the true cost of educating a student, leaving a gap of about \$4,300 per student each year.

Instead, that gap is filled through the generosity of our community—through the Eagle Fund, tuition

assistance support, the Celebrate His Gifts Gala, endowment distributions, and other giving initiatives. Quite simply, **fundraising is what helps keep SFLS accessible for more families while sustaining the excellence of our programs.**

At the same time, we want to acknowledge something we've heard through recent parent surveys: at times, fundraising requests can feel overwhelming. We understand that completely. **Our goal is never to create pressure, but rather to invite partnership in a mission we all share.** Please know you are always welcome to unsubscribe from these updates if they are not helpful to you.

And yet—what a gift it is to be part of a community where this kind of support exists!

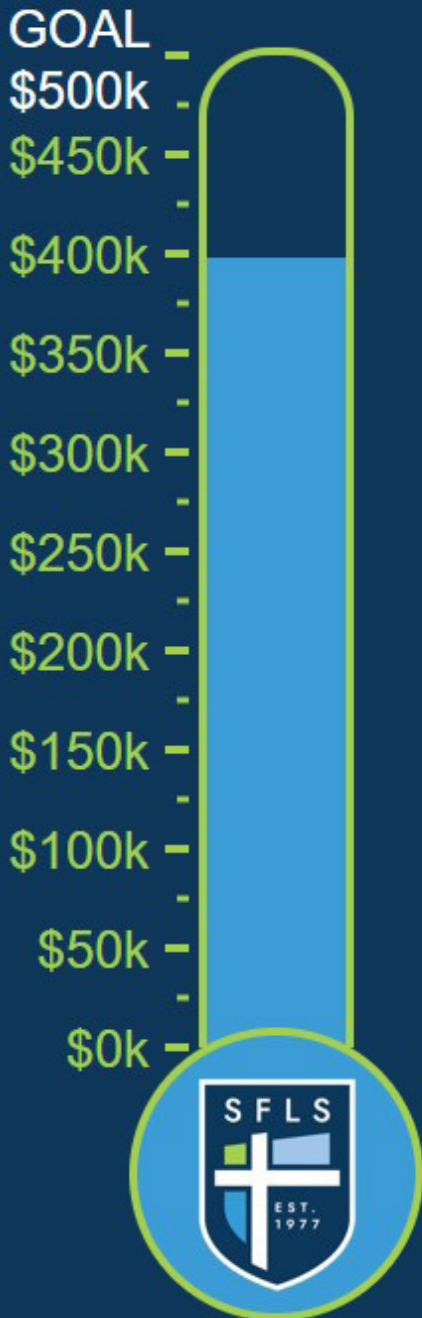
We are deeply grateful for each person who engages in this work—whether by reading these updates, praying for our school, encouraging others, or giving as they are able. Every role matters. Every gift matters.

Thank you for being part of the unimaginable things God is doing through Sioux Falls Lutheran School!

Finishing Strong

2025–26 Fundraising Update & Invitation

Total Raised:
\$397,537



In our Fall 2025 newsletter, Executive Director Tia Esser shared that Sioux Falls Lutheran School is entering a new season—one focused on deepening our roots by strengthening the financial foundation that will sustain this ministry through annual giving, endowment growth, planned gifts, and a vibrant alumni network.

A key part of this work is the **Annual Eagle Fund**, which directly supports our students, classrooms, and daily operations. This year, we set a goal of **\$261,000** for the Eagle Fund—a vital investment in sustaining the excellence and mission of SFLS.

By God's grace and the generosity of our community, we are making strong progress. Our record-setting **Celebrate His Gifts Gala**, along with gifts toward Tuition Assistance and other initiatives, has brought us to **\$397,537 raised—80% of our overall \$500,000 goal.**

We are deeply grateful. At the same time, we are not yet finished.

While we met our Gala goal and exceeded Tuition Assistance (with those funds designated for that purpose), we still have **\$102,563 remaining to fully fund the Eagle Fund.**

The exciting news is that, thanks to the generosity of John and Michele Sturdevant, we have a \$50,000 matching gift available. This means every dollar given to the Eagle Fund will be doubled—amplifying your impact and helping us more fully serve all 550 students and support our dedicated teachers.

This is where your support makes a meaningful difference.

Every gift to the Eagle Fund—of any size—goes to work immediately, strengthening programs, equipping classrooms, and ensuring we can continue to deliver on our promise to form students who are *World Ready, Faith Secure*.

As we look toward the close of this fiscal year, we invite you to prayerfully consider:

- Making a first-time gift
- Increasing your current support
- Helping us reach others who believe in this mission

Together, we can finish strong.

- Give today or learn more by visiting our **[Giving Page](#)**
- Connect directly with our Development Team—we would love to talk with you about how you can make an impact (see page 8 for contact information)

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Gratitude for a Record-Setting Celebrate His Gifts Gala

Although we have already shared updates, we would be remiss not to again express our sincere gratitude for this year's **record-setting gala**.

The evening was filled with joy, generosity, and a powerful reminder of what makes this community so special. We are incredibly thankful to every volunteer, sponsor, donor, and attendee who helped make the event such a success. The support shown that evening continues to bless the students and mission of Sioux Falls Lutheran School.



A New Partnership with FreeWill

We are excited to share Sioux Falls Lutheran School's **new partnership with FreeWill**.

Through this partnership, our employees, parents, and supporters have access to a simple and accessible way to create or update their wills and explore options for legacy giving. For those who feel called, it is a meaningful opportunity to leave a lasting impact on future generations of students.

More information about this opportunity has also been shared via email. If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please don't hesitate to reach out—we would be glad to connect with you. See page 8 for our development team's contact information.



Endowment Funds

Building a Legacy for Generations

*Every endowment tells a story.
Every story fuels the mission.*

Endowment funds are one of the most meaningful ways to support Sioux Falls Lutheran School. Designed to grow over time, they provide lasting, dependable support—ensuring future generations of students are formed to be **World Ready, Faith Secure**.

We are grateful to share our endowment funds now total **\$736,000**, reflecting the generosity and forward-thinking vision of those who have chosen to invest in the long-term impact of our school's ministry.

These funds are stewarded through two trusted partners: the **LCMS Foundation** and the **Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation**

Investments with the LCMS Foundation

Generation to Generation Endowment

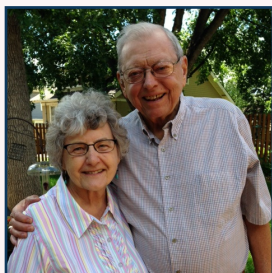


This foundational endowment was created to support the **full scope of SFLS's mission—both now and into the future**. It provides flexible, board-directed support for:

- Operations
- Tuition assistance
- Merit-based scholarships
- Faculty/Staff Salaries and Benefits
- Emergency facility needs
- Future ministry opportunities as they arise

It serves as a **legacy anchor**, allowing the school to faithfully respond to both current needs and those yet unseen.

Charles and Annette Jarratt Memorial Endowment



This endowment was established by the Jarratt children and their spouses—Patty & Scott Peters, Mary & Wes Smith, and David & Sheri Jarratt—in honor of **Charles and Annette Jarratt**, whose lives bore witness to faithful

Christian stewardship and servant leadership. Over 65 years of marriage, they faithfully modeled a life rooted

in daily devotion, generous giving, and joyful service to their family, their church, and this school—leaving a legacy that continues to bless others.

Charles, a banker known for his compassion and integrity, and Annette, a devoted educator and Lutheran Women's Missionary League leader, shared a deep commitment to raising up Christian leaders—including their own children and grandchildren. Their quiet, faithful presence at SFLS—serving meals, attending events, and supporting its mission—left a lasting imprint.

This endowment reflects both their legacy and their family's desire to carry it forward—**providing flexible support for the mission where it is needed most and advancing Christian education for generations to come**.

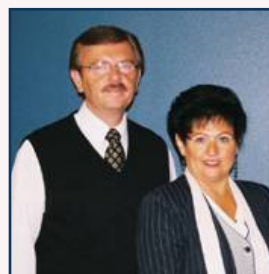
Jan C. Schultz Memorial Endowment



This endowment was established in memory of **Jan C. Schultz**, a woman of deep faith, kindness, and service to others. Jan lived her life grounded in Christ, with a quiet strength and a heart for people—especially her family, church, and community.

Jan held a deep desire for every child to have the opportunity to attend SFLS. This fund provides **needs-based tuition assistance for students in grades K-12**, ensuring children from every walk of life can access a Christ-centered education—an enduring reflection of Jan's spirit of care and generosity.

Deborah and Larry Raad Endowment



This endowment was created by longtime SFLS supporters and past school parents, **Deborah and Larry Raad**. Their connection to SFLS reflects both faithful service and enduring leadership—Deborah through her years as a preschool educational assistant alongside Mrs. Tams, and Larry through his early service on the school's Vision Committee and more recent work helping

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to expand and strengthen our endowment efforts. Drawing on his professional experience in estate planning, Larry has helped guide policy development and the formation of our endowment committee, while also actively advancing this work by engaging donors, hosting educational seminars, and helping families include SFLS in their estate plans. This endowment reflects a deep commitment to the long-term strength and sustainability of the school.

Aligned with the broad purpose of the Generation to Generation Endowment, **this fund provides flexible support across the school's core priorities**, equipping SFLS to respond faithfully to both present needs and those yet to come.

Faithful Educators Endowment (Established by Loren & Sheila Boyens)



Created in thanksgiving by **Loren and Sheila Boyens**, this endowment reflects a deep appreciation for the calling and impact of Christian educators. It began in a moment of conversation that was both lighthearted and deeply meaningful—established, as Loren once shared, “because we asked...” Yet what followed reflects something far more intentional: a tribute to family, faith, and a profound respect for Christian education.

At its heart, this endowment is a reflection of their granddaughter's choice to pursue a career in education at SFLS, even when it meant choosing a path that offers less financial reward than many public-school counterparts. Her commitment became a powerful witness to the value of calling over compensation, and a reminder of the significance of Christ-centered education.

Loren and Sheila's connection to SFLS deepened as they walked the halls, looked into classrooms, and observed students engaged in focused learning within a calm, purposeful environment. In those moments, they saw not only academic excellence, but a culture shaped by faith, discipline, and care—a quiet testimony to the seriousness with which education is taken here.

This endowment stands as both gratitude and response: honoring educators who are called to this work, and planting a seed that will continue to grow opportunities for others to support and invest

in this mission in meaningful, passionate ways for generations to come.

Distributions give priority to **faculty and staff compensation**, including salaries and benefits—recognizing that investing in exceptional, Christ-centered educators is essential to the mission of SFLS and to forming students who are **World Ready, Faith Secure**.

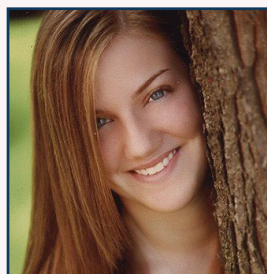
Investments with the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation

Sioux Falls Lutheran School Endowment



The SFLS endowment fund provides ongoing support for **needs-based tuition assistance** for students in grades K-12, helping make Christ-centered education accessible to more families.

Elizabeth Weathers Lias Memorial Scholarship Endowment



This endowment was established in memory of **Elizabeth Weathers Lias** (SFLS Class of 2002), whose life reflected a deep commitment to serving others. Her years at SFLS helped shape her love for learning and her desire to

serve through interests in Spanish, law, and healthcare system improvements. A lifelong Minneboji camper and Honors Camp Counselor, Elizabeth lived with joy, purpose, and faith.

Her confirmation verse, *Matthew 6:33*—“*Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness*”—was foundational in her life. In light of the promises that precede it, Elizabeth lived simply—trusting in the Lord's provision and embodying her belief to “live simply, so others can simply live.”

This fund supports **needs-based tuition assistance for middle school students**, extending her legacy by opening doors for others to grow and serve.

An Invitation to Build What Comes Next

Each of these funds tells a story—of faith, generosity, and a deep belief in the transformative power of Christian education.

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Together, they ensure Sioux Falls Lutheran School is not only sustained for today, but strengthened for generations to come.

As we reflect on these stories, we are also looking ahead.

The opportunity before us is both meaningful and bold: to grow our endowment by an additional **\$9.3 million over the next 8-10 years**, strengthening the long-term sustainability of Sioux Falls Lutheran School and expanding access to Christ-centered education for generations to come.

Whether through establishing a named endowment, contributing to an existing fund, or including SFLS in your estate plans, each gift becomes part of something far greater than any one moment in time.

Through our Generation to Generation Endowment, donors may give at any level, with each gift strengthening the foundation of our ministry for the future. For those who feel called to create a more personalized legacy, donors may also establish a separately named fund within the Endowment—either in support of existing priorities or in a new area of

passion that advances the mission of Sioux Falls Lutheran School. At this time, SFLS offers named fund opportunities beginning at \$10,000—an accessible way to create a lasting legacy shaped by faith and purpose.

The Jarratt Family Endowment is one meaningful example of this kind of legacy—an enduring reflection of faith, generosity, and a deep commitment to Christian education.

Much like those who have gone before us, you have the opportunity to:

- Honor a loved one or a calling placed on your heart
- Invest in students and families who will follow
- Strengthen the mission in ways that will outlive us all

An endowment is more than a gift—it is a lasting investment in lives yet to be touched, continuing to grow and give for generations.

Every endowment tells a story.
And perhaps, the next story is yours.

If you would like to explore how to begin—or grow—your legacy with Sioux Falls Lutheran School, we would be honored to walk alongside you.



Building a Legacy for Generations

Donor Recognition Signage

A Work in Progress

We are currently updating our donor recognition signage to better reflect the look and feel of our growing school community. While we are excited about this project, creating a signage system that is clean, cohesive, and timeless takes time and careful planning.

Our goal is to design a system that fits naturally within our spaces, can be easily expanded, and accommodates future rooms, recognition areas,

and donor opportunities without disrupting the overall aesthetic. This may involve replacing some existing signs, adding new ones, and implementing changes in phases to ensure a cohesive look throughout the school.

We appreciate your patience as we work diligently with our design partners to create a thoughtful, scalable signage plan that honors our donors while supporting the beauty and functionality of our campus.

Double Your Impact Matching Gifts

Did you know that many companies will **match charitable donations made by their employees?** At Sioux Falls Lutheran School, we are excited to partner with **Double the Donation** to make it easy for you to see if your employer participates.

Some companies will even **match gifts made up to 12 months ago**, so if you've donated in the past year and haven't submitted a match request yet, now is a great time to **maximize your gift.**



Simply visit our **Matching Gifts page** to check if your company matches gifts and learn how to double the impact of your generosity. Every matched gift helps our students, classrooms, and programs even more—and it costs you nothing extra!

We are actively working to make this process as simple as possible so that your generosity goes further in supporting the mission of SFLS.

Ark of Faith Project A Matching Opportunity

Step by step, two by two, we are continuing to build an **Ark of Faith**—a joyful new playground for our littlest disciples.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, each gift—big or small—is helping bring this vision to life. From our mighty Elephants to the diligent Ants, every member of our giving Ark is making a meaningful impact.



Soon, children will have a safe,

faith-filled place to laugh, explore, and grow for generations of tiny disciples.

During the **month of May**, gifts toward the Ark Project can go even further thanks to a **\$5,000 matching opportunity through Parent Teacher Fellowship (PTF)**, which will **double the impact of every donation.**

You can learn more about this opportunity in the PTF section below.

If you would like to climb aboard the Ark with your financial support, you can scan the QR code, email **bmakepeace@sflutherschool.org**, or stop by the **Early Childhood entrance** to see the progress firsthand.



Meet the Development Team

In case we haven't had the chance to meet yet, we'd love to introduce ourselves! Our Development Team is here to support the mission of Sioux Falls Lutheran School by building meaningful relationships with our families, donors, and community.

Our team includes:



Bree Makepeace
Development Coordinator
bmakepeace@sflutherschool.com
605-335-1923 ext. 3



Pastor Scott Sailer
Development Ambassador
devamb@sflutherschool.com



Tia Esser
Executive Director

We truly **love getting to know our supporters**—hearing your stories, learning what matters most to you, and sharing more about the impact of your generosity. Whether you have questions, ideas, or simply want to connect, we would be honored to visit with you.

Please don't hesitate to stop by, give us a call, or reach out anytime. We look forward to building relationships and walking alongside you in this important work. If there are others in your circle who might be interested in learning more about **Sioux Falls Lutheran School**, we would be grateful for any introductions. Building this community together is truly a joy!

Each of these opportunities—whether supporting a project like the Ark of Faith playground, contributing to the Eagle Fund, participating in matching gifts, or establishing a named endowment—is part of one unified effort: advancing the mission of Sioux Falls Lutheran School. While the ways of giving may look different, each plays a meaningful role in strengthening our school today and building a strong foundation for tomorrow. Our shared purpose is to develop capable Christian servant leaders for a complex world, and every gift helps move that mission forward. We invite you to engage in the way you feel called—whether through immediate support, creating spaces for students to learn and grow, or building a lasting legacy that will continue shaping lives long after we are gone. Together, these efforts are not separate paths, but one collective story of faith, generosity, and impact.

We are deeply grateful to walk alongside you in this shared work and to be part of what God is building through this community.

With deep gratitude,

The SFLS Development Team
Psalm 126:3

