

Elstad ~ Highland Prairie Lutheran Parish
A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

~ December 2020~

Pastor, Rev. Luther Mathsen

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Lisa Chiglo, Parish Secretary/Administrator ~ Email: highlandprairie_elstad@ymail.com

December Worship Schedule

Worship Notes:

*Given the increase of Covid19 cases in our communities and throughout the state, our concern for our neighbors' well-being, and the increasing stress on our health care workers, and hospitals, the parish council has determined that we should continue with ONLINE ONLY WORSHIP through Sunday, December 6th. On December 7th leadership from both congregations will decide what worship plans will be going forward. Updates will be provided on the Elstad and Highland Prairie Facebook pages and their congregational websites. All previously stated Covid19 precautions are, and will remain, our practice. If you have questions or need more information, feel free to call Pr. Luther+

*Morning Prayer will be offered ONLINE, Monday-Friday, during the Advent season. Services will begin on Monday, November 30.

*If you haven't secured an Advent daily devotional resource, some may still be available. See Pr. Mathsen, if you are interested.

+Sunday, December 6

Advent 2

Online only

Isaiah 40.1-11

Psalm 85.12, 8-13

2 Peter 3.8-15

Mark 1.1-8

+Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve

Please see announcement on p. 3

Isaiah 9.2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 2.11-14

Luke 2.1-20

+Sunday, December 13

Advent 3

Online Only

Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

1 Thessalonians 5-16-24

John 1.6-8, 19-28

+Friday, December 25

Christmas Day

Please see announcement on p. 3

Isaiah 52.7-10

Psalm 98

Hebrews 1.1-12

John 1.1-14

+Sunday, December 20

Advent 4

Online Only

2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16

Psalm 89.1-4

Romans 16.25-27

Luke 1.26-38

+Sunday December 27

Online Only

Isaiah 61.10-62.3

Psalm 148

Galatians 4.4-7

Luke 2.22-40

December 2020

Pastor's Page

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

One of my favorite hymn writers is Christina Rossetti. Although less known as a hymn writer than as a poet, she penned two of the most sublime and beautiful hymn texts of the Christmas season. In "In the Bleak Midwinter" she describes the emptiness of a world without Christ as a world "in the bleak midwinter". But, lo and behold, the great interrupting event of God comes, "whom heaven cannot hold, nor earth sustain." The Lord God comes incarnate in a baby boy child. His name is Jesus.

In another Christmas hymn, "Love Came Down at Christmas", Rossetti identifies "the Lord God incarnate", Jesus, as Love.

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angel gave the sign.

Think on this. Love was born at Christmas. And mind you, this Love was not an idea among ideas. This Love was not a fleeting feeling or a passing fancy. This Love came in a world-shattering and life-transforming event ---the birth of the God-man--- "Love divine, all loves excelling"---who has arrived *in and for* this tired, old, sinful, and wintry world. And as the hymn text, true to Sacred Writ, tell us: "Star and angel gave the sign."

But you and I may well ask: "What sign do we have???" For we, unlike the unsuspecting shepherds" keeping watch over their flocks by night", have no angel host. We have no star like the one that lead curious wise men in their quest for the Savior of humankind. What sign comes to people, "like you and like I", caught up in the monotonous drone of the present day and its uncertainties and attending anxieties, doubts, fears, and griefs? Note Rossetti's second verse.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love Incarnate, Love Divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith for sacred sign?

"But wherewith for sacred sign?" That is the same sort of question that she asks in the carol, "In the Bleak Midwinter." "What can I give him?"

Our sign, born of the cheering news of that "Love came down", is the fellowship his coming to earth creates. It is the fellowship of men, women, and children who journey out into the darkness of "the bleak midwinter" to "the place of bread"--- that is, the Bethlehem of our locale---to adore and rejoice and be comforted by him. ..."Love Incarnate, Love Divine". That's our sign.

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and to all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Ah yes. The gift of Love, Jesus, gives us the new life of loving God and each other. In the Bethlehem of our locale, we come to love and to adore God in the Christ child. We come and bend our knees and bow our heads in love and be transformed into new people in a world made new by Love to love---a world wherein all people to us are our sisters and brothers shepherds and stargazers on a journey to Love. We plead for Love, and we give love. And that love is itself the mighty star in the night of this dark, cold world. And that love is the angelic good tidings of great joy to world that needs it so badly! It is "Love for plea and gift and sign."

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Opportunities for Mission Beyond Our Walls

ELCA Disaster Relief Fund or World Hunger Fund

You are encouraged to make a gift to the fund. Please make your check out to your congregation and put ELCA Disaster Relief or WLCA World Hunger Fund on the MEMO line.

Local Food Shelves

The addresses of our local SEMCAC food shelves are: Rushford (113 E. Jessie St. Rushford), or Preston (515 Washington St. NW, Preston). The need is great at this time.

Confirmation Instruction, 2020-2021

The last 2020, Wednesday evening confirmation class, will be Wednesday, December 16th. At the time of this writing, we are meeting online (Zoom). Youth and parents will be notified each week if we will meet on-site or online (by Zoom). 2021 class will resume on Wednesday, January 13th, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. Keep in mind that the 2021 location for classes will be Elstad. The updated 2020-2021 class list is: 8th graders: Kenna Gudmundson, Lindsey Hoiness, Caden Johnson, Larissa Ryan, Michael Evenson, and Laci Sievers; 6th graders: Thea Arends & Sawyer Wolfs; 7th graders: Cheyanne Dahle, Aubrey Daniels, Damon Hubbard, Miley Knutson, Sari Rein and Jensyn Storhoff.

Christian Education

**A 3-week adult Bible study on Advent scripture texts and hymnody will be held the following Thursdays, 10:00 a.m., at Highland Prairie: December 3rd, 10th, and 17th. Please let Pr. Luther know if you plan to participate. **Parents: Be on the lookout for news related to Sunday school in 2021 in the January 2021 newsletter.

Provisional Concerns of Congregational Life

Your continuing consideration of your offerings that help the church meet its financial commitments is most appreciated. If you do not attend communal worship, you are encouraged to mail your offering to: Jennifer Nepstad (Elstad Treasurer), 20707 Co. 21, Lanesboro, MN 55949, or Karen Bakken (Highland Prairie, Treasurer), 713 Johnson Court, Rushford, MN. 55971 or Highland Prairie Church, 43267 Bowl Drive, Peterson, MN 55962.

Pastoral Care

Pr. Mathsen will make in-person home visits, if desired. He expects any visits will be under Covid19 precautions. If you, or anyone you know, is in need of pastoral care or conversation, please let Pr. Luther know. He wants the parish to know he is available for pastoral visits whether by telephone or other health safety means.

Christmas Eve & Day Services

Christmas Eve, December 24th at 4:30 p.m. and Christmas Day, December 25th at 10:00 a.m. worship services will be outdoors from the Highland Prairie lower parking lot. Worshipers will remain in their vehicles.

Elstad/Highland Prairie Joint Council Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2020

The joint council meeting was held at Elstad with Elstad president Larry Topness calling the meeting to order at 6:29pm.

Roll Call was taken with Michelle Rein, Tim Stensgard and Steve Howe absent. A Quorum was called.

Others present: Pastor Luther

The agenda was reviewed. Motion to approve the agenda was made by Lyal and seconded by Kay.

Devotions were given by Krissy Overland.

Congregation members present to address the council include: none

President's report: none

Pastor's report: The majority of the report was given at individual council meetings.

- It is important for all of us to check in on one another.

Youth: none

Correspondence: none

Old Business:

A. none

New Business:

A. 2021 Calendar

- Motion to approve the calendar made by Krissy second made by Amber. Worship Calendar accepted.

B. 2021 Pastor Salary

- Pastor recommends no raise for himself this year due to worship attendance being down, along with a decrease in giving.
- Gordy noted that last year there was no increase in salary and this may cause a jump in salary in the future to catch up if we continue to forego an increase. Cost of living is typically around 3%.
- Mary made the motion to increase Pastor's salary by 3%, seconded by Nancy. Motion passes.

C. 2021 Secretary Salary

- There was an increase to the secretary's salary last year.
- Chris made a motion to increase the secretary's salary by 3%, seconded by Joyce. Motion passes.

Secretary's report was given. Motion to approve made by Nancy and seconded by Krissy.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Joyce, seconded by Amber. Meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:07

Submitted by Jodie Daniels, Elstad Council Member

Elstad Council Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2020

Elstad Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order by President Larry Topness at 7:14 pm.

Roll Call was taken with all members present, Michelle Rein joined via phone. A Quorum was called.

Devotions were given by Krissy at the joint council meeting.

The agenda was reviewed with a few additions. A motion to approve the revised agenda was made by Krissy and seconded by Amber.

Congregation members present to address the council include: none

Pastor's report:

- In person worship continues
- Online worship continues along with two prayer services being recorded a week.
- Thanksgiving Eve service to be held at Highland Prairie on Nov. 25th at 7:00 pending Covid precautions.
- Confirmation continues and has been in person for the past few weeks
 - Lessons focus on connecting the call of Abraham to our call at baptism.
 - Pastor has been discussing the challenges of living by promises with our youth.
 - Weekly assignments for students are given to be completed with parents.
- Adult bible study has completed
- A book study is happening currently
- A new Advent bible study to come on Thursdays: Dec. 3rd, 10th, 17th at 10am at Highland Prairie
- Pastor participated in a Synod interactive podcast
- He is participating in the Pastor's Theological Conference this week.
- Dec. 26-New Year, Pastor is using as his vacation time
- Pastoral Care-Park Lane and Good Shepherd sent a note that they will be allowing in house visits
 - Phone calls continue to be made for Pastoral Care

Motion made by Krissy seconded by Pastor Kay for the treasurer's report was given and has been placed on file for future audit.

President's report: none

Correspondence: none

Old Business:

A. Church Repairs Update

- Repairs have been completed by Tyler Johnson
- Ridge caps, vents installed, shingle repairs, and tuck pointing of the bell tower have been completed

B. New Sign Update:

- Kyle Chiglo will be putting in the new Elstad signs in at the ends of Dogwood Road. The goal is to have them in yet this fall.

C. Youth Update:

- Sunday School is not meeting in person at this time. They are using the same curriculum as Highland Prairie with at home activities for students and families to do until January at this time.

New Business:

A. 2021 Staff

- Working on staffing for the 2021 year.
- Anyone who is interested in any of the open positions, please see a council member: Secretary, Trustee, Head Usher, Board of Education

B. 2021 Salaries

- Salaries discussed
- Motion made by Kay, seconded by Krissy to accept the salary adjustments as discussed. Motion passed.

C. Night/Yard Light:

- Larry is going to contact MI Energy to have it repaired.

D. Worship Update:

- Recommendation is to stay in person as long as we deem it is safe to continue.
- Confirmation will be virtual for the next two weeks.

Secretary's report was given. Motion to approve made by Amber and seconded by Krissy. Motion passed.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Amber, seconded by Krissy. Motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:14pm.

Elstad Budget October 2020

Budget	\$ 6718.42
Received October	\$ 4660.00
Under for October	\$ 2058.42
Elstad budget YTD	\$ 67,184.20
Received YTD	\$ 50,806.00
Under YTD	\$ 16,378.20

Highland Prairie Lutheran Church Council

November 8, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by President Gordon Johnson.

Council Members were all present except Steve Howe and Tim Stensgard.

Prayer was given by Pastor Luther.

A quorum was determined and a motion to approve the agenda with the additions was made by Karen Bakken, Lyle Meldahl seconded. Motion carried.

There were no congregation members present.

The Treasurer's Report was given by Karen Bakken and a motion to approve as presented was made by Joyce Dahl, Nancy Rustad seconded. Motion carried.

The President's Report given by Gordon Johnson included cleaning of eaves.

The Pastor's Report – In person worship continues, online continues as well. Attendance has been at about 30 percent, Thanksgiving Eve worship will be held the 25th, the 29th the new church year begins. Confirmation focuses on Living According to God's Promises. Three week Bible study now concluded, book study has begun, and another Bible study for December on Advent season is planned. Synod pod cast recently on stewardship as we move into a new calendar year and the COVID 19 challenges. This week Pastor's Theological Conference will be online. Continued to prepare bulletin drafts and upload prayers and worship services. Visits have mostly been stopped due to the increase of COVID 19 cases.

Correspondence received: None

Committee Reports: Grounds – parking lot is spider webbing considerably and recommendation is to take care of it based on the estimate from B and D Seal Coating after inspection is \$12,000.00 for repairs on upper and lower lots as per Chris Hoiland and to seal coat after that at approximately \$6,000.00.

Worship – Discussion on whether to switch to virtual worship services or to continue in-person with a plan based on rise in local cases. Motion to do virtual only for the next two weeks, Sunday, November 15th and November 22 and to re-evaluate by Thanksgiving date was made by Lyle Meldahl, second by David Markegard, motion carried.

New Business: 2021 Staff wages for Custodian were discussed and will be changed to \$13.00/hour beginning January 2021. Motion Joyce Dahl, Lyle Meldahl seconded, motion carried. Organist wages to remain the same. Mission Funds budgeted \$1000.00 for 2020, \$500.00 available. Joyce Dahl moved that we donate to SEMCAC Christmas in Fillmore County, Nancy Rustad seconded, motion carried.

The Secretary's report was read and a motion to approve was made by Nancy Rustad, seconded by Chris Hoiland, motion carried.

A motion to adjourn was made by Nancy Rustad, seconded by Chris Hoiland, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Gudmundson

Next meeting will be December 13th 5:30 pm at Highland Prairie.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES!

All Birthdays & Anniversaries are listed according to the information on file. If you see an error please contact...
Lisa Chiglo ~ Email: highlandprairie_elstad@ymail.com



1~ Ruth Abrahamson
~ Sara Pedersen
2~ Kathleen Wold
~ Christopher Drinkall
3~ Lorraine Anfinson
~ Maragaret Zack
4~ Ellen Lawstuen ~
Kathy Kendhammer
5~ Carol Overland
6~ Kristi Gudmundson
7~ Ann Fretland
8~ Hannah Pearce
11~ Peter Peterson
13~ Boe Rein
15~ Madison Smith
~ Isaac Ask
~ Renee Ritter
~ Chase Humble
16~ Christopher Freese
17~ Mavis Dragvold
~ Sue Larson
~ Tom Feine
~ Sandra Johnson

18~ Kaia Drinkall
~ Lynn Ryan
19~ John Abrahamson
~ Rachel Bearbower
~ Lynn Ryan
20~ Noelle Graham
21~ Clair Olson
~ Steven Ryan
~ Josh Rein
~ Maddie James
~ Ethan Grimsrud
22~ Matthew Halverson
23~ Nikol Rislov
24~ Gustav Hoiland
25~ Mary Lawstuen
~ Tristen Chiglo
26~ Julie Paulson
27~ Matthew Halverson
28~ Sarah Stensgard
~ Elin Rein
29~ Daryl Thompson
~ Jamie Wangen
30~ Ashley Johnson
~ Parker Storhoff
31~ Jesse nelson
~ Jarod Dybing



13~ Charles & Lynette
Pederson
18~ Gordon & Arlene
Johnson
19~ Tom & Carolyn Smith
27~ Philip & Ruth
Abrahamson

DECEMBER

2020

Elstad ~ Highland Prairie Lutheran Parish
 Visit our websites at...
elstادلutheranchurch.org
highlandprairielutheranchurch.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Advent Bible study 10:00 a.m. @ HP	4	5
			Confirmation 6:30 p.m.			
6 Worship Online Only	7	8	9	10 Advent Bible study 10:00 a.m. @ HP	11	12
			Confirmation 6:30 p.m.			
13 Worship Online Only	14	15	16	17 Advent Bible study 10:00 a.m. @ HP	18	19
HP council 5:30 p.m.			Confirmation 6:30 p.m.		Newsletter Deadline	
20 Worship Online Only	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 4:30 p.m. Outdoors in the lower HP parking lot	25 Merry Christmas! Christmas Day Service 10:00 a.m. Outdoors in the lower HP parking lot	26
27 Worship Online Only	28	29	30	31		

*Elstad ~ Highland Prairie Lutheran Parish
43267 Bowl Drive
Peterson, MN 55962*

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Permit No. #6



December 2020 Newsletter

HIGHLAND PRAIRIE

ACOLYTES/READERS/GREETERS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2020

ACOLYTES: CHEYANNE DAHLE, KENNA GUDMUNDSON

READERS: CHEYANNE DAHLE, ARLENE JOHNSON

GREETERS: DOUG LIND FAMILY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020

ACOLYTES: KENNA GUDMUNDSON, LINDSEY HOINESS

READERS: KENNA GUDMUNDSON, BECKY LIND

GREETERS: LYLE & ANN MELDAHL

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2020

ACOLYTES: LINDSEY HOINESS, DANA DEGEORGE

READERS: LINDSEY HOINESS, SHARON EHLE

GREETERS: GORDON & ARLENE JOHNSON

CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24, 2020

ACOLYTES: DANA DEGEORGE, LACI SIEVERS

READERS: DANA DEGEORGE, SCOTT BESTUL

GREETERS: SHARON & PAUL EHLE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2020

ACOLYTES: LACI SIEVERS, CADEN JOHNSON

READERS: LACI SIEVERS, SYLVIA PASSOW

GREETERS: ROGER & SARAH BEARBOWER

ELSTAD

ACOLYTES/READERS/USHERS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2020

ACOLYTE: SARI REIN

READERS: PARKER STORHOFF, LORI BAKKE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020

ACOLYTE: JENSYN STORHOFF

READERS: J.T. REIN, VICKY TOPNESS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2020

ACOLYTE: MILEY KNUTSON

READERS: ALISON FREESE, CAROL OVERLAND

CHRISTMAS DAY, DECEMBER 25, 2020

ACOLYTE: AUBREY DANIELS

READERS: WILSON STORHOFF, CAROLYN SMITH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2020

ACOLYTE: SAWYER WOLFS

READERS: MAKENZIE KNUTSON, TOM DYBING

USHERS: LARRY TOPNESS, JOHN OVERLAND,
TOM SMITH, DAVID BAKKE,
RICHARD GULLICKSON