

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

~ January 2014 ~

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Ponderings from the Parsonage...

Worship Schedule

January 2014

TIME CHANGE

Sunday, January 5

Elstad 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

Highland Prairie 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, January 12

Elstad 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

Highland Prairie 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, January 19

Elstad 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

Highland Prairie 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.

**Annual Meeting @ Elstad*

Sunday, January 26

Elstad 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

Highland Prairie 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.

**Annual Meeting @ HP*

LIVING ABUNDANTLY AND JOYFULLY

On January 12 our focus will be on the *Wedding at Cana*, a classic Epiphany story, found only in the Gospel of John, Chapter 2.

As the Gospel of John tells the story, this is Jesus' first miracle and with it "he revealed his glory and his disciples believed in him" (v.11). Does it surprise you that Jesus, the champion of the poor and the outcast, reveals his glory with such abundance? In this opening story there are no signs of the poor or the sick seeking a healing touch. Those stories will come later. With Jesus' first miracle the message is abundance and joy.

Weddings in ancient Israel were huge celebrations, most lasting nearly a week. What does it say about Jesus and his kingdom that he would first reveal himself with such abundance, turning about 150 gallons of water into an incredibly fine wine just when the guests would expect the cheap jug wine?

Joy and abundance are marks of discipleship, even in the midst of a suffering world. Does your life reflect that joy and abundance?

A few things to consider as you anticipate this gospel story: The passage begins, "On the third day there was a wedding..." (v.1) This is not an accidental reference. Already the John is pointing us to Easter and Jesus' resurrection on the third day. The early church often used the example of a wedding feast to talk about Jesus' relationship with the church. As the groom makes a promise with a bride, Jesus makes a promise with the church. He does this on the third day, inviting his people into the abundant kingdom of God, here and now. Think about Jesus' relationship with the church is like a marriage promise that includes living joyfully and abundantly as kingdom people here and now.

Consider the conversation between Jesus and his mother. (vs.3-5) Jesus is abrupt with his mother, and appears impatient. We will find that this conversation is pretty common between Jesus and his mother, Mary. It shows us that while Jesus is fully God, he is also fully human. In this wedding at Cana Mary is calling her son to get with it, to get on with his calling as the Son of God. Jesus at first acts like it is not yet time for that. Jesus reminds Mary that his time had not yet come. But in this first miracle, actions speak louder than words. In the end, mother gets her way! And Jesus' message of abundance and joy begins to play out in actions.

Pastor Dan



There will be no WELCA meeting in the month of January.

Elstad Prayer Partners:

Wasn't the WELCA meeting of December one to remember for a long time? Another round of thanks goes to the servers and those who decorated to make it look like a real Christmas Tea, which it was. And now, being real women of steel, decorated with colorful loveliness and purposes, we step boldly into the year of 2014. The new presiding bishop of the ELCA, the Reverend Elizabeth Eaton, claims to having found her "bold" and all WELCA members are encouraged to do so as well. It is unlikely that we will rise to her level of leadership but we all are able to rise to the callings we have been challenged by the Holy Spirit to do. With the help and guidance of this Spirit we can do marvelous things in our little corner of the world. Here is a quotation from the office of the WELCA. "Boldness comes in many forms. Some boldness is firm and quiet. Some is bright and loud. Find your bold, live it out and celebrate it with women of many generations." 2014 is a time to celebrate your bold as we encourage one another to live as disciples of Jesus.

There is still time to sign up for the 2014 prayer partnership. If you so desire to be a part of this worthy event let an officer know so you can be included.

Elstad Circle Meeting

*The Esther circle will meet on January 10, 9:30 a.m. at the home of Diane Haight.

Annual Meetings

Elstad: Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 19th

Highland Prairie: Annual Meeting Sunday, January 26th

Pot luck will be after church before the annual meeting.

Attention Confirmation Students & Mentors:

Beginning January 8, 2014 Confirmation Worship @ 7:00 p.m. at Highland Prairie

We are still in need of mentors for confirmation students also beginning on January 8th.

Widowed, Divorced or Permanently Separated can receive help
"Coping with Life Alone"

If you would like someone from Beginning Experience Rochester to speak with your congregation, please contact us by calling [507-261-8248](tel:507-261-8248) or emailing beminnnesota@gmail.com or visit www.beminnnesota.org

You can also contact Kay Wold for any further information @ (507) 467-2113 or (515) 320-3865

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES!

**All Birthdays & Anniversaries are listed according to the information I have. If you see an error please contact me. highlandprairie_elstad@ymail.com Thank You!*

Happy Birthday!!

1~ Darrellyn Barrett

2~ John Smith

4~ Michelle Rein

5~ Melissa Engelby

6~ Sandy Kiel

7~ Angel Bakke

8~ Mark Dahl

9~ Nathan Bakke

10~ Philip Dragvold

~ Nancy Rustad

~ Sawyer James

11~ Rebecca Lombard

12~ Kaye Dahl

13~ Steve Chiglo

~ Joshua Dahl

~ Daniel Sjarpe

~ Tyler Berg

~ Darren Stockton

14~ Michelle Ryan

~ Colton Horning

15~ Carolyn Smith

~ Kasten Klug

16~ Irving Abrahamson

~ David Bakke

~ Owen Dammen

17~ Jennifer Nepstad

~ Stacy Mensink

~ Shane Jacobson

~ Lucas Redalen

18~ Barb Lee

~ Brenda Chiglo

~ Peter Stensgard

~ Ann Hoiland

19~ Robert Lawstuen

21~ Courtney Nelson

23~ Merwood Storhoff

~ Katherine Chiglo

~ James Bearbower

~ August Mention

24~ Martha Stensgard

~ Deborah Mensink

25~ Ellen Feine

~ Sarah Freese

~ Paula Howe

27~ Eleanor Peterson

~ Michael Oian

~ Dave Lawstuen

29~ Freda Kiel

30~ Jason Dahl

31~ Richard Lombard

Happy Anniversary!!

7~ Dan & Erika Lind

15~ Jerry & Julie
Dragvold

28~ David & Sue
Larson



African leaders gather for theological study

Minnesota is known for Ole and Lena. We're a frozen land of tough, fair-skinned, Scandinavian Lutherans. But if you step into one of the congregations in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, you'll see beyond the stereotype. And not just because there are some Germans.

Several of our congregations now have communities of African immigrants, primarily from what is now South Sudan, worshipping in their midst. Because these communities worship in their own language - three different tribal languages in our synod - they have their own worship services and their own lay leaders. But these lay leaders have no theological training. This is where AGORA comes in.

Agora is a Greek word that means "marketplace." It's the place where people gather. The AGORA program serves as a place for the growing populations of new Americans to come to learn about leading their faith communities.

AGORA began as an independent program in 2003. In 2012, it became part of Luther Seminary's Global Mission Institute. During the 2012-2013 academic year, approximately 30 students from ethnic-specific and immigrant Lutheran congregations in the Twin Cities took part in the program. Leaders from four African-national communities in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod take part in programming offered right here in our area.

The participants in our synod's component of the program are lay evangelists, leaders identified by their communities, and others who preach. Once a month, the group gathers for an hour-and-a-half-long conversation about preaching on a selected Biblical text. These conversations have been led by Professor Richard Nysse, Luther Seminary, and Professor Emeritus Bradley Holt, Augsburg College, and others may contribute in the future. Through discussing preaching during these conversations, participants also learn about theology, Biblical studies, and even pastoral care.

Yang Tut is the lay evangelist for the Nuer community at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Owatonna. He has been participating in the AGORA program for almost a year. "It helps when you do worship," he says of this intentional time studying the texts. "It helps me understand what the Bible is talking about and tell the congregation about what it says."

In addition to the monthly conversations, participants meet with mentors about twice a month.

"I love being an AGORA mentor because of the relationships that are being created with our Sudanese lay evangelists as we work on pastoral skills and leadership," says Rev. Katie Fick, Hayward and Trondhjem Lutheran Churches, Hayward. "We learn together about what it means to be leaders and preachers in our different contexts, as well as how we all are united in the body of Christ."

The structure of the AGORA program remains in flux, ready to adapt to the needs of the church and the participants.

More about the program at www.luthersm.org/gmi/agora



Simon Bol Choat, lay evangelist, leads worship at St. Olaf Lutheran Church, Austin.

About Our Synod

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod is a faith community of 124,000 baptized people in 176 congregations as well as related institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Its geographic area includes 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Minnesota.

The Bridge is a monthly publication of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA. For more information, contact the synod office:

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 1001 14th St. NW, Suite 300
 Rochester, MN 55901-2551
 507-280-9457
semnsynod.org

JANUARY 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Bulletin Deadline	2	3	4
5 <i>Elstad Worship</i> 9:00 a.m. SS @ 10:00 a.m. <i>HP Worship @</i> 10:30 a.m. SS @ 9:30 a.m.	6	7	8 Bulletin Deadline Confirmation Worship @ 7:00 p.m.	9	10 <i>Esther Circle</i> 9:30 a.m. @ <i>Diane Haight's</i> <i>home</i>	11
12 <i>Elstad Wor-</i> <i>ship</i> 9:00 a.m. SS @ 10:00 a.m. <i>HP Worship @</i> 10:30 a.m. SS @ 9:30 a.m.	13	14	15 Bulletin Deadline Confirmation Worship @ 7:00 p.m.	16	17 Newsletter Deadline	18
19 <i>Elstad Wor-</i> <i>ship</i> 9:00 a.m. SS @ 10:00 a.m. <i>HP Worship @</i> 10:30 a.m. SS @ 9:30 a.m.	20	21	22 Bulletin Deadline Confirmation Worship @ 7:00 p.m.	23	24	25
26 <i>Elstad Wor-</i> <i>ship</i> 9:00 a.m. SS @ 10:00 a.m. <i>HP Worship @</i> 10:30 a.m. SS @ 9:30 a.m.	27	28	29 Bulletin Deadline Confirmation Worship @ 7:00 p.m.	30	31	

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

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January Newsletter

HP Acolytes/Readers/Greeters

Sunday, January 5, 2014

Acolytes: Paula Howe, Avalon Jacobson
Readers: Paula Howe, Norma Halverson
Greeters: Gordon & Arlene Johnson

Sunday, January 12, 2014

Acolytes: Avalon Jacobson, Collen Dahle
Readers: Avalon Jacobson, Glen Kopperud
Greeters: Sharon & Paul Ehler

Sunday, January 19, 2014

Acolytes: Collen Dahle, Peyton Hoiness
Readers: Collen Dahle, Sharon Ehler
Greeters: Jerry & Shannon Kopperud

Sunday, January 26, 2014

Acolytes: Peyton Hoiness, Chealsy Eide
Readers: Peyton Hoiness, Arlene Johnson
Greeters: Glen & Karen Bakken

Elstad Acolyte/Reader

Sunday, January 5, 2014

Acolyte: Kody Bearbower
Reader: Peter Holm

Sunday, January 12, 2014

Reader: John Overland

Sunday, January 19, 2014

Acolyte: Caleb Gravos
Reader: Gene Topness

Sunday, January 26, 2014

Reader: Lori Bakke

Ushers: