

*Elstad ~ Highland Prairie Lutheran Parish
A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
~ December 2014 ~*

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Worship Schedule

December 2014

Sunday, December 7

Elstad 8:30 a.m.

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Highland Prairie 10:30 a.m.

Sunday school Christmas program during worship

Sunday, December 14

Elstad 8:30 a.m.

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Highland Prairie 10:30 a.m.

Elstad Sunday school Christmas program 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 21

Elstad 8:30 a.m.

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

No Sunday school @ EL

Highland Prairie 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Service

Christmas Eve @

Elstad 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve @

Highland Prairie @ 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 30

Elstad 8:30 a.m.

No Sunday School EL & HP

Highland Prairie 10:30 a.m.

Ponderings from the Parsonage...

In the Christian faith, Jesus tells us that we should seek out those whom we have hurt before we ever try to be right with God. We are meant for love and not hate, for forgiveness and not the holding of grudges.

The problem is that through arrogance and ignorance, we hurt so many people that we don't even know we have touched, or we think that because we believe we are in the right, it doesn't matter whom we have hurt.

And that is just plain wrong. So from myself and for all Christians, I would like to apologize -

If I or any of my brothers and sisters in Christ have hurt you through speaking poorly about you, either specifically or in generalities and stereotypes, I am sorry.

If we have hurt you through being hypocrites, saying one thing while doing another, I am sorry.

If we have hurt you through making assumptions or speaking from a place of desired entitlement, I am sorry.

If we have hurt you through being slow to forgive and spreading rumors, I am sorry.

If we have made you feel unwelcome or unloved, I am sorry.

I am sorry for the hurt and the judgment and the intolerance.

Sometimes we forget that we are not perfect and we don't have all the answers and we are not always right.

Sometimes we forget that being "right" doesn't even matter when it means we are breaking relationships and causing pain. So for whatever we have done that has hurt you, I am sorry. Please forgive us. Please forgive me.

Pr. Dan

Elstad-Highland Prairie Lutheran Church Council Meeting

Sunday, November 9, 2014

The Meeting was held at Elstad Lutheran Church with Elstad President Larry Topness calling the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

Roll call was taken with Gordon Johnson, Deb Book, Karen Bakken, Kaye Eiken, Jerry Hallum, Dave Larson, Chuck Pederson, Lyle Meldahl, Larry Topness, Jerry Evenson, Jennifer Nepstad, Carol Overland, Vicky Topness, John Rein and Michelle Rein present. Steve Howe was absent. A quorum was called.

Others present: Lisa Chiglo, Kyle Chiglo, Darryl and Michele Thompson, Pr. Dan Watland, Pr. Linda Gunderson, SE MN Synod

Devotions were given by Pr Linda Gunderson, SE MN Synod.

Agenda was reviewed and motion by Gordon and second by Vicky to approve the agenda. With addition of discussion with Pr Linda Gunderson added to the agenda. Motion passed.

In order to promote the wellbeing of both our parish and the needs of himself, Pr. Dan is willing to submit his resignation. It has been determined that Pr. Dan's last Sunday will be Dec 14, 2014. This decision has been made with the support of the synod. Pr. Dan will receive severance compensation to include 4 weeks of reimbursement as discussed and agreed upon by the parish council and the synod. Words of appreciation of Pr. Dan's service and support of Pr. Dan's decision were shared. Vicky Topness made motion to accept termination package, Sarah Bearbower seconds. Motions carried. Motion to accept Pr. Dan's letter resignation made Dave Larson, by second by Jerry Evenson. Motion carried.

Secretary's report was given and approved as read. Jerry Evenson made motion to approve, Steve Howe second. Motion carried.

President's report was given. As presidents of our congregations, both Larry and Gordon support the decision made by Pr. Dan to resign. Both presidents have been heavily involved with discussions with Pr Dan and the Synod. Pr. Dan's letter of resignation, as well as a letter from the joint parish council will be mailed to congregation members to share Pr. Dan's decision.

Pastors Report was given (please see attached notes of accomplishments). He continues to remain busy with duties and meeting. He has also expressed some concerns regarding some maintenance of the parsonage.

Chapter three of "Rich Church, Poor Church was discussed.

There was no correspondence.

Old Business/Committee Reports:

The fenced in area for the dogs has been completed. The basement insulation has been completed, much improvement in draft and pests have been noted.

New Business:

Salary for parish secretary will need to be addressed. This will be tabled until and updated job description can be completed. This will be done by Deb and Vicky and will be reviewed at the next joint parish council meeting.

Worship Schedule for 2015 has been presented, reviewed, and tentatively approved. This will be discussed with our congregations and will be readdressed at the next joint parish council meeting. It will be voted upon during the Annual meeting. There has been interest in increasing the number of joint worship services during the summer. There is also a proposed schedule for the vintage baseball league, and it has been proposed that outdoor services and luncheon be scheduled to coincide with the games at Highland Prairie.

Review of worship time was discussed. It has been expressed that a consistent Sunday school time, and a 2 hour block between services is very much appreciated. However, there has been consistent feedback that 8:30 service is too early. A motion was made to hold services at 9am and 11am, with Sunday School at 10am. During summer (Memorial Day to Labor Day), one service will be held at 10am alternating between Highland Prairie and Elstad. Motion made by Sarah to accept tentative schedule, second by Michelle. Motion carried.

The council meeting schedule was reviewed. Motion by Deb, David to accept council meeting schedule.

Next joint parish meeting to be held January 10, 2015 at Highland Prairie.

Motion to adjourn made by Jerry Evenson, second by Jerry Hallum. Meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Submitted by Michelle Rein, Elstad Council Secretary

Elstad News

Elstad Prayer Partners

Just a friendly reminder that our prayer partners for the year of 2014 is coming to a rapid close. Sunday, December 7th after the worship service we will have our annual Christmas Tea.

At this time, with background music of the clinking of tea cups and rustling of gift wrap papers and happy chattering we always have an inspirational ending of our year together.

Everyone who is a member or friend of this parish, not just prayer partners, is invited to this happy tea time. Surely our prayers for one another have sustained us through many experiences this year.

Signup sheets for 2015 will be available on this day to continue this long standing tradition of the Elstad women. We look forward to another celebration with this successful happening in our parish.

Elstad WELCA

The November 9th WELCA meeting was held just after the worship service. Coffee hour was a real treat hosted by servers Elaine Holm and Carolyn Freese, with a little help from their friends.

Business of the day was not according to the "rules of order" but we did manage to review the activities of the year and the current financial status. Additional discussion will be held at our December meeting when we will disperse funds and talk of any changes to be made in the 2015 program.

Several have asked for personal changes or additions in their serving so we will do our best to honor them. The 2015 program will be put to press the last part of December so there is still time for any requests or ideas that you might like to be included.

An ongoing request has been made by the Sunshine committee to let them know who is in a position that needs to be addressed by cards or visitation. The LWR items were sent on the first leg of their final destination late in November. Thank you for all who participated in this gifting to those in need.

A full report will be made at the December meeting. Our new officers have been voted on and will be ready for their work soon. If you liked the names on the 2014 listing of officers you will love the names of the 2015 officers!!! You may need to set two alarms to awaken early for our December 7th annual Christmas Tea time. We hope to see everyone who possibly can be there, there to share the ending of another busy and successful year of WELCA at Elstad.

If you missed the November meeting you will have to imagine just what a toothpick, rubber band, band-aid, eraser, candy kiss, mint, bubble gum, pencil and tea bag have in common as a recipe for a daily survival kit. Just how do these things make life worth living every minute of every day?

The Elstad Leah had the answer to that question. This one is worth checking out. Thank you dear sisters for making 2014 such a delightful experience together. Despite our few meetings 2014 has been a very busy, busy time. We are truly working out our statement of purpose in a meaningful manner.

Together we will find ourselves linking arms as we march into the assignments of another season of service. Won't it be exciting to discover what the Good Lord has in mind for us next.

Elstad Lutheran Church Council Meeting

Thursday, October 9, 2014

The Meeting was held Elstad Lutheran Church with President Larry Topness calling the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Roll call was taken with Larry Topness, Jerry Evenson, Michelle Rein, Jennifer Nepstad, Carol Overland, John Rein and Vicky Topness present. A quorum was called.

The Agenda was reviewed, with the addition of "Fire Extinguishers" added to "Old Business". Motion by Vicky, seconded by Jerry to approve

Secretary's report was given, reviewed, and corrections made. Motion was made by John, second by Jerry, to approve.

Treasurer's report was given and reviewed. Motion made by Vicky, second by Jerry to accept report as presented. Report will be placed on file for audit at a later date.

President's report was given by Larry. Larry, Michelle, Gordon Johnson, and Deb Book met last evening for a "Pastoral Review". It was a positive experience and Deb will be in further communication with Pastor Dan.

Pastor's Report was given by Pastor Dan. The confirmation class recently participated in "Feed Your Starving Children". Trunk or Treat is planned for Sunday Oct 12. HP is also hosting the "Old Time Baseball World Series". Pastor Dan continues to be active in many upcoming synod based activities. Elstad WELCA Thankoffering will be Oct 19. We welcomed a new member to Elstad.

There was continued correspondence with Minnesota Department of Health regarding the drinking water an issue. Further discussion under "Old Business"

Robert Knutson was present to observe the council meeting.

Pr. Linda Gunderson, SE MN ELCA Synod and Pr. Dan Watland were also present.

Jerry gave a report/update regarding the options available for addressing water supply. Current options include 1) New well being drilled 2) Reverse Osmosis system and 3) tapping into existing well from David and Deb Lawsteun farm. Jerry and Michelle will formulate a letter to be distributed to the congregation with further information about options, including potential cost estimate.

Chapter 2 of Rich Church Poor Church was discussed.

Old Business:

High Nitrates in the Water

High nitrates in the water continue to make drinking water an issue. We continue consider options available to address the issue. Jerry and Michelle will work together to formulate communication to the congregation prior to the Annual meeting.

A compliance agreement from MDH was sent to Larry with a request to submit a signed letter stating our plan to vote on water options at the Annual meeting and move forward with required actions. Motion made by Jennifer, second by Carol, to sign and return letter to MDH.

Church Repairs

Bell tower and eaves trough repairs are still necessary to prevent further water damage. The east wall near the organ also needs repair. This could be addressed when sealing of the steeple occurs. Jerry will again attempt to contact Dan Gingrich.

Aaron Topness is willing to repair the floor, he will address as time permits.

John and Michelle will talk to Andy Arends about the fire extinguishers that may need to be recharged.

Consider separation of "Building committee meeting" from "Council Meeting" to refocus on mission

Electronic Offering

An electronic transfer from a personal account to the church account can be set up with Merchants Bank in Lanesboro. We invite members to set up electronic bill pay in order to make giving more convenient. Many council members plan to participate.

New Business

Pastor Linda Gunderson, SE MN ELCA Synod was present to assist in the discussion regarding the future of our church and financial planning. This partnered well with the chapter reviewed in Rich Church Poor Church. Thoughts to consider include: focusing more on our mission and less on our building; how can we better meet needs within our community/tourism community; how can we utilize our gifts to enhance our mission; what is a realistic estimation of our longevity, how can we use this time to create a legacy

Cemetery Review

The Cemetery is separate from the church. The Cemetery fund is less than previous, the cemetery fees may need to be readdressed. Memorials given to the Cemetery are now less common. Further discussion will be transitioned the Cemetery board.

Timing of Council meeting

It is difficult for Pastor Dan to attend both Highland Prairie and Elstad Council meetings when both occur following a Joint Council meeting. Further discussion regarding timing will ensue.

Motion made to adjourn the meeting by Carol, second by John, meeting was adjourned at 9:25pm.

Submitted by Michelle Rein, Elstad Council Secretary

Reviewed and approved November 9, 2014.

Elstad ~ Highland Prairie News

Elstad budget for October		Highland Prairie Financials For October	
	7772.50	YTD Income	\$ 72,940
Received	5911.00	YTD Expenses	\$ 82,914
Under for October	1861.50	Expenses exc. Income	\$ 9,974
Budget YTD for October	77,725.00	Ym Budget	\$ 81,475
Received YTD	56879.50	YTD Income	\$ 72,940
Under YTD	20,845.00	YTD Under	\$ 8,535

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS

HIGHLAND PRAIRIE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH DURING THE 10:30 WORSHIP TIME

ELSTAD SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14TH AT 7:00 P.M.

ALL ARE WELCOME TO BOTH!

Farwell to Pastor Dan and Gayle

Sunday, December 14, 2014

After worship at Elstad there will be a coffee hour for Pastor Dan and Gayle.

After worship at Highland Prairie there will be a "potluck" for Pastor Dan and Gayle. We would like to personally invite our sister parishioners to come and meet with us, Pastor Dan & Gayle.

All are Welcome!

A big thank you to all my family and friends for making my 80th birthday so special; for the beautiful cards, gifts and gifts of money and your presence at my party. It made my day even more special. To my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren I thank you for the awesome Open House you had for me, the family book, and always being there for me. I love you all very much. May God bless all of you.

Catherine Bakke

Highland Prairie News

HIGHLAND PRAIRIE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Council Meeting
November 9, 2014

The meeting was **called to order** by President Gordon Johnson at 8:50 pm following the parish council meeting at Elstad Lutheran Church.

Roll Call was done at the parish council meeting.

Devotions were given at the parish council meeting.

The **agenda** was approved.

Congregation **members present:** Kyle Chiglo

Pastor's Report was given at the parish council meeting.

Secretary's Report was given and approved.

Treasurer's Report was given by Karen reviewing October and year to date income and expenses. The report was accepted, is available for review, and subject to audit.

President's Report was given at the parish council meeting. Gordon and Larry have been in contact with the synod over the last few weeks.

Committee Reports/Old Business

Church – The window project had been placed on hold pending a decision on a design. La Crosse Glass has constructed the frame and the window and it is ready to install. They understood that we were ready to proceed with the project when they were contacted this summer, even though we had called them and told them we had not made a decision on the design. *Motion by Sarah, second by Lyle to proceed with the installation of the window. Motion passed.*

Grounds – Maintenance has been done. Trash service for the dumpster by the church will be every month, and the dumpster by the parsonage every other month. Fenced area by parsonage has not been mowed. Leaves have been mowed. David has contacted a logger about the tree removal. *Motion by Deb, second by Steve to harvest the trees. Motion passed.* David, Chuck, and Jerry will make arrangements for the tree removal and will also address cleanup and stump removal. Replacement trees will be planted in the spring. This should be added to the meeting agenda in March.

Worship – There are only two students in confirmation now so Lisa will need assistance with scheduling readers and acolytes.

New Business

A review of council member's terms that are ending indicated we will have some vacancies to be filled.

No further business.

Motion by Deb, second by Steve to adjourn. Meeting was **adjourned** at 9:35pm.

Next Meeting: Sunday, December 14th

Submitted by Deb Book, Council Secretary

New Tools to Stay Connected

By Emily Carson, Director of Communications

carson@semnsynod.org

The Holy Spirit is at work through our synod and denomination in fruitful, life-giving ways. As the staff of the Office of the Bishop, we strive to empower all congregations to feel connected to the work of our synod and denomination. We are all on the same team working toward the same goals, and we can do far more together than we can on our own. All three expressions of our church – congregational, synodical, and denominational – are important ways we live out our shared calling to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

One of the ways we link southeastern Minnesota congregations to the work of our synodical and denominational ministries is through the work of Mission Interpreters. These are lay, volunteer leaders from each congregation around the synod with an integral role in building a sense of connectedness and unity. Their primary task is to express the love of Christ by sharing stories. Mission Interpreters empower congregational members to feel connected to God's activity in and outside the walls of the sanctuary. Mission Interpreters also have the opportunity to keep the staff of the Office of the Bishop aware of exciting ministries happening at the local level.

Signs you would make a great Mission Interpreter:

You like to listen to stories.

You like to tell stories.

You enjoy making connections with others.

When you think about your church, you feel joyful!

When you think about our synod and ELCA, you feel excited!

You enjoy reading the weekly e-news Bright Spot.

It is our goal that all congregations have at least one Mission Interpreter and more than that will be a wonderful bonus! As a synod, we provide all the training and resources you'll need to serve as an effective Mission Interpreter. Our next training for all existing and prospective Mission Interpreters will be held on December 4 at Assisi Heights in Rochester. We invite pastors and lay leaders to attend. Please register at <http://bitly.com/midec4>. You can still serve as a Mission Interpreter, even if you are unable to attend.

The resources we provide for Mission Interpreters are also available for use by anyone in the synod. This means that even if your congregation does not have an identified Mission Interpreter, there are still many ways for you to uplift the ministries of our synod and denomination. The new set of resources we are launching as of December 1 includes our Mission Interpreter Calendar for 2015. Each month uplifts a unique ministry of our synod and denomination. Related links to those ministries will also be provided including a related issue of *The Bridge*. The goal of this calendar is to make it as easy as possible to continue building a sense of connectedness between all three expressions of the ELCA.

To access all of our Mission Interpreter resources and the full 2015 calendar, please visit: <http://semnsynod.org/ministries/mission-interpreters/>

Please contact our synod's Mission Interpreter Coordinator, Shirley Gangstad, at sgangstad@hotmail.com to learn more about this wonderful program.

Synod Online Connections:

Website: <http://www.semnsynod.org>

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES!

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

Happy Birthday!!

1~ Ruth Abrahamson

~ Sara Pederson

~ Isabella Eide

2~ Kathleen Wold

~ Christopher Drinkall

3~ Lorraine Anfinson

~ Margaret Zack

4~ Ellen Lawstuen

~ Kathy Kendhammer

5~ Carol Overland

~ Benjamin Johnson

6~ Kristi Gudmundson

7~ Ann Fretland

8~ Hannah Pearce

11~ Peter Peterson

~ Dawn Decker

13~ Heidi Evenson

15~ Dan Watland

~ Renee Ryan

~ Madison Smith

~ Isaac Ask

~ Chase Humble

16~ Christopher Freese



17~ Mavis Dragvold

~ Sue Larson

~ Tom Feine

~ Sandra Johnson

18~ Kaia Drinkall

19~ John Abrahamson

~ Rachel Bearbower

~ Lynn Ryan

~ Christopher Eide

20~ Noelle Graham

21~ Clair Olson

~ Steve Ryan

~ Maddie James

~ Ethan Grimsrud

22~ Matthew Halverosn

23~ Nikol Rislov

24~ Gustav Hoiland

25~ Mary Lawstuen

~ Tristen Chiglo

26~ Allan Dahl

~ Julie Paulson

27~ Matthew Halverson

27~ Stephanie Evenson

28~ Sarah Omodt

29~ Jimmie Wangen

30~ Ashley Johnson

~ Parker Storhoff

31~ Jesse Nelson

~ Jana Dybing

31~ Tracy Lind



13~ Charles & Lynnette
Pederson

18~ Gordon & Arlene
Johnson

19~ Tom & Carolyn Smith

27~ Philip & Ruth Abra-
hamson

DECEMBER 2014

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1	2	3 Bulletin Deadline Tabitha Circle 1:00 p.m.	4	5	6
7 EL 8:30 Worship SS 9:00 HP 10:30 Sunday school Christmas program	8	9	10 Bulletin Deadline	11	12 Rehearsal	13 Lee Wedding 3:00
14 EL-8:30Worship SS 9:00 10:30 Worship HP HP Council mtg. after "potluck" EL- Sunday school Christmas program	15	16	17 Bulletin Deadline	18 Newsletter Deadline	19	20
21 EL- 8:30 Worship SS 9:00 HP- 10:30 Wor- ship Lind recital	22	23	24 Bulletin Deadline Christmas Eve Services HP- 4:40 p.m. EL- 6:30 p.m.	25 Merry Christmas	26	27
28 EL 8:30 Worship HP 10:30 Worship No SS @ HP	29	30	31 Bulletin Deadline			

*Elstad ~ Highland Prairie Lutheran Parish
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December Newsletter

Highland Prairie Acolytes/Readers/Greeters

Sunday, December 7, 2014

Sunday School Christmas program

Sunday, December 14, 2014

Acolyte: Paula Howe
Readers: Paula Howe, Norma Halverson
Greeters: Lyle & Ann Meldahl

Sunday, December 21, 2014

Acolyte: Brady Stensgard
Readers: Brady Stensgard, David Larson
Greeters: Gordon & Arlene Johnson

Christmas Eve Service 4:30 p.m.

Acolyte: Paula Howe
Reader: Paula Howe, Arlene Johnson
Greeters: Sharon & Paul Ehler

Sunday, December 28, 2014

Acolyte: Brady Stensgard
Readers: Brady Stensgard, Sylvia Markegard
Greeters: Charles & Lynnette Pederson

Elstad Acolyte/Reader/Ushers

Sunday, December 7, 2014

Acolyte:
Reader: Carolyn Smith

Sunday, December 14, 2014

Reader: Peter Holm

Sunday, December 21, 2014

Acolyte:
Reader: Carol Overland

Christmas Eve Service 6:30 p.m.

Acolyte:
Reader: Gene Topness

Sunday, December 30, 2014

Reader: Tom Dybing

Ushers: Mike Chiglo, John Abrahamson, Duane Bakke, Richard Gullickson, Philip Abrahamson, Erik Nelson