

Rooted Together: Elstad-Highland Prairie Parish

TWO CHURCHES, ONE FAITH

ELSTADHIGHLANDPRAIRIEPARISH@GMAIL.COM

MAY 2026



Pastor: Rev. Jackie Short ~ (507) 517-0769 ~ pastor.highlandprairie.elstad@gmail.com

Parish Administrator: Courtney Lee

Parish Office: (507) 864-2731 ~ elstadhighlandprairieparish@gmail.com

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Highland Prairie Lutheran Church
Elstad Lutheran Church

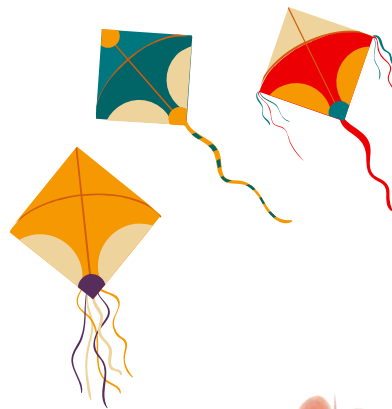
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Elstad ~ Highland Prairie Lutheran Parish

Visit our websites at...

elstadlutheranchurch.org

highlandprairielutheranchurch.org



Office Hours

Pr. Jackie

Wednesdays 8-4

& by appointment.

**Please Call or email to set up
a time that works for you.**

Courtney Lee

Sundays 12-2p

& by appointment.

**Please email to schedule
a time.**



There's something about this time of year. You can feel it in the air—as the sweet sign of spring start showing up. Caps and gowns are being ordered. Final concerts and games are wrapping up. Calendars are starting to fill up with open houses and celebrations. This is a time of ending ... and also a time of new beginnings. Joy... and a little uncertainty. Pride... and a quiet wondering about what comes next. Spring has a way of holding all of that at once. Which is why these words from Scripture feel especially right for right now:

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4)

Always. Not just when everything is clear. Not just when the future is neatly mapped out. Not just when we feel completely ready. **Always.** Because joy, in the life of faith, is about knowing who walks with us as we step into what we cannot yet see.

Our graduates are standing at that threshold. But in truth, so are all of us. Summer is coming. Routines will shift. Some things will slow down. Others will pick up. There will be travel, time with family, long evenings, maybe even a little rest (we hope). And woven through it all are countless small moments where we are invited to notice God's presence again. In the laughter around a backyard table. In the quiet of an early morning. In the courage it takes to try something new. In the faith it takes to let go of what has been.

This season reminds us that faith is not just about holding on—it's also about stepping forward. Trusting that the God who has been faithful in every chapter so far is not about to stop now.

So we celebrate. We bless. We send. And we hold onto this promise:

“Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength.” (Isaiah 40:31)

To our graduates, Cheyanne Dahle, Aubrey Daniels, Brianna Horning, Mylie Knutson, Gryffen Rein, Sari Rein, Zowie Short, & Jensyn Storhoff, may you go with confidence, curiosity, and deep assurance that you are never alone.

To all of us—may this season open our eyes to joy that doesn't depend on certainty, and faith that grows as we go. God is with us in each and every chapter of our lives, and that is very good news.

Grace and peace to each and everyone of you!

Pastor Jackie Short



A MESSAGE FROM THE EHP PARISH OFFICE

ADMINISTRATOR COURTNEY LEE

As we step into the month of May, we are greeted with signs of new life all around us—greener fields, blooming flowers, and longer, brighter days. It's a beautiful reminder of God's continued work of renewal, not only in creation, but in each of us.

As we move into May, we look forward to continuing that spirit of connection and celebration. One highlight this month will be Recognition Sunday at Elstad on May 17, where we will honor those who have reached important milestones in their faith journeys—baptisms, Cradle Roll graduates, confirmands, high school graduates, new members. It is always a special day as we celebrate the ways God is at work in our church family.

May also brings opportunities to reflect on the rhythms of church life as we begin to wrap up another year of Sunday School and confirmation. Thank you to our dedicated teachers, mentors, and families who invest so much time and care into nurturing the faith of our youth. Your efforts truly make a lasting impact.

As always, I encourage you to stay connected—join us for worship, participate in upcoming events, and reach out if you have any questions or needs. We are stronger together, and it is a blessing to walk alongside each of you in faith.

Wishing you a month filled with joy, renewal, and the peace of Christ.

Blessings,

Courtney- Parish Administrator

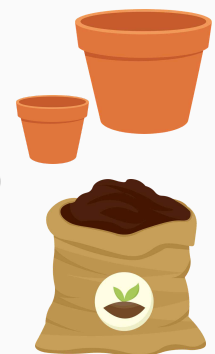
🌱 GARDENING MINISTRY COLLECTION 🌱

Help Us Grow Together!

Join us in supporting our community by donating items for our Monthly Gardening Ministry Collection!

We Are Collecting:

- Vegetable & flower seeds
- Seedlings & starter plants
- Gardening tools (new or gently used)
- Pots, planters, and trays
- Garden gloves & supplies
- Soil



Your donations will help provide resources for individuals and families to grow their own food, beautify their spaces, and connect with God's creation.

Parish Happenings



Birthdays

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1: Sawyer Wolfs | 22: Nicholas Bakke, |
| 3: Eric Storhoff | Jana Boyum, Kai Fox |
| 4: Hunter Lee | 23: Kyle Daniels |
| 6: Joanne Anderson | 24: Carson Johnson |
| 9: Pamela Johnson | 25: Tina Westby-Oloff |
| 10: Sean Pederson, | 26: Lisa Sievers, Jarad |
| Carl Anfinson | Olson |
| 12: Robert Dahl, Kiera | 27: Quentin Daniels |
| Pepin | 28: Gavin Pearce |
| 13: Morgan Nelson | 29: Diane Haight, |
| 15: Aaron Topness | Bereket Rebhahn |
| 16: Cashton Dahl, Jaxie | 30: Paula Brand |
| Dahl | 31: Kate Gellersen, |
| 18: Jennifer Stensgard, | Nicole Woxland, |
| Kimberly Lee | Brody Gellersen, |
| 19: Yvonne Freese | Kirsten Bakke |
| 20: Mike Chiglo, Clara | |
| Hoiland | |

Anniversaries



- 11. Peter & Shelly Stensgard
- 15. Wayne & Joan Finnegan
- 19. Robert & Sharon Knutson
- 22. John & Michelle Rein
- 31. Douglas & Rebecca Lind



We love to celebrate with you, if we have missed somebody's Birthday or Anniversary, please email the church office so we can add them to the list!

Council Meetings ...

May Council Meeting @ Highland Prairie


Sunday May 17th
 Elstad :4:30pm @ HP
 Parish: 5:30pm @ HP
 HP: 6:30pm



In our Prayers

Diane Haight, Glen Bakken, and Laura Dahl as well as for all who are ill, suffering or in need of prayers.





Elstad Worship
10:30 AM

What's Happening at Elstad...



Recognition Sunday

A CELEBRATION OF FAITH & MILESTONES

ELSTAD LUTHERAN CHURCH
SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026

 **RECEPTION AT 9:30 AM**

 **WORSHIP SERVICE AT 10:30 AM**

Join us as we gather with grateful hearts to celebrate the faith journeys growing within our church family.

DURING WORSHIP, WE WILL HONOR:

-  **BAPTISMS (MAY 2025 – MAY 2026)**
-  **CRADLE ROLL GRADUATES**
-  **CONFIRMATION STUDENTS**
-  **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**
-  **NEW MEMBERS**

“Let us rejoice in the work God is doing in each life and in our church family.”

ALL ARE WELCOME!
Come celebrate, support, and uplift those being recognized.

Elstad WELCA Monthly Serving Commitee

May
Gene & Vicky
Jerry & Julie
Nicole & Cory
Tanya & Mike

June
Glee & Gordy
Becky & Tim
Jodie & Adam
Chelsey & Cody

Elstad Bible Studies

Esther Circle will meet on May 14th 2026 at Diane Haight's

The Leah Circle will meet on the second or third Tuesday of the month in the afternoon. They use “The Gather” magazine to guide their discussions. All are welcomed to join. They enjoy coffee and fellowship and have a good time. Reach out to Carol Dixon for more information if interested in joining.

The Elizabeth Circle usually meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 8:45am. Reach out to Lori Bakke for more information if interested in joining.

What's Happening at Highland Prairie ...



May 6th 3-8pm
All Church & Grounds Clean up

Join us when you can!
Sign up to help where you can.

Inside & Outside Jobs

We will share a potluck dinner and work together to get our church and grounds ready for summer!

Grab your gloves and rake and join the fun!



WELCA Bible Study

May 6 @
1:30pm



QUILTING & POTLUCK

MAY 14 AT 9:30



Senior Recognition Sunday

May 17th at Highland Prairie

Join us on Sunday, May 17th as we celebrate and honor the graduating seniors of our congregation! This special day is an opportunity for our church family to recognize these young people for their accomplishments, growth, and the important milestone they are reaching.

We give thanks for the ways they have been part of our church community and lift them up in prayer as they begin the next chapter of their journeys. Whether they are heading to college, entering the workforce, or exploring new opportunities, we send them with our love and encouragement.

Chair Aerobics



Wednesdays @ 11 am

“The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land.”

— Song of Solomon
2:12



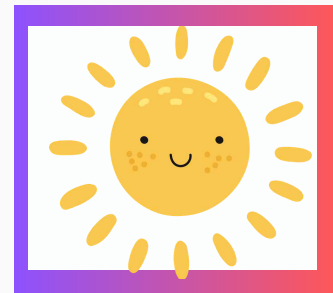


A special thanks to Steve Howe for all his hard work cleaning up the grounds. We truly appreciate all your hard work make the area look beautiful!

Thank you Krissy Overland and all her helpers for organizing Another Awesome Easter Egg Hunt Event!!



Thank you to all the Youth that were able to help with the Highway Clean-up! You all did a fantastic Job! We can't wait to til next year to find out what weird things you might find!!!!



Thank you to all the little fairies seen and unseen. Everything you do around the church does not go unnoticed.

MID WEEK CONNECTION & CAMPFIRE

YOU'RE INVITED: MIDWEEK CONNECTION + TRAVELING CAMPFIRE
STEP AWAY FROM THE BUSY WEEK AND JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF CONNECTION, REFLECTION, AND SIMPLE JOY AROUND THE FIRE.

WHAT TO EXPECT: A WELCOMING SPACE TO GATHER AND UNWIND
MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION AND CONNECTION

A COZY CAMPFIRE ATMOSPHERE (BRING A CHAIR OR BLANKET!)

OPTIONAL SHARING, LISTENING, AND BEING PRESENT TOGETHER

THIS IS PART OF OUR TRAVELING CAMPFIRE SERIES—BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER IN DIFFERENT SPACES TO BUILD COMMUNITY AND SPARK CONNECTION.

WHEN: 1ST & 3RD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

WHERE: YOUR HOME OR CHURCH

SIGN UP TO HOST: EMAIL PASTOR JACKIE OR COURTNEY

COME AS YOU ARE. BRING A FRIEND IF YOU'D LIKE. STAY FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN.

LET'S SLOW DOWN, GATHER, AND RECONNECT THIS SUMMER!



Parish-Wide Potluck – June 28th

Join us for a Parish-Wide Potluck following our Bowl Service on Sunday, June 28th!

Please bring a dish to share—salads, sides, main dishes, or desserts are all appreciated!

We look forward to gathering as one parish, celebrating community, and sharing in the joy of good food and great company.



Summer Bowl Worship Schedule

(June–September 2026)

Please join us for worship in the Bowl this summer:

June

6/7: Highland Prairie ONLY at 9:00 a.m.

6/28: Combined worship service at 10:30 a.m.

- Parish Potluck following service

July

7/5: Highland Prairie ONLY at 9:00 a.m.

7/26: Combined worship service at 10:30 a.m.

- Meal following service

August

8/2: Highland Prairie ONLY at 9:00 a.m.

8/23: Combined worship service at 10:30 a.m.

- Meal following service

September

9/6: Highland Prairie ONLY at 9:00 a.m.

End of School Year Campfire

**Pastor Jackie's Backyard
Wednesday June 3rd**

S'mores ~ Hotdogs ~ Campfire ~ Games ~ out door Movie

Grab your friends and head on over at 5pm

Bring a lawnchair, your favorite outdoor game & a smore stick.



Senior Spotlight

Graduate: Aubrey Ruth Daniels

Parents: Adam and Jodie Daniels

High school you are graduating from:
Fillmore Central

Future plans (college, work, military, etc.):

I'm attending the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse for Elementary Education

Any activities, honors, or achievements you would like to share:

In high school, I participated in volleyball, basketball, and track. I am in Scholar Club and Nation Honor Society. I will graduate with highest honors on May 24th.

A favorite memory from Sunday School, VBS, or a church program:

My favorite church memories are helping with all the little kids during the Christmas programs and Sunday School. I also really enjoy the Lenten services. They were always fun serving with everyone. I also liked when we ate and then sang the service in the basements.



Graduate: Zowie Short

Parents: Reverend Jackie Short and Jeff Short

High school you are graduating from:
Rushford-Peterson High School

Future plans (college, work, military, etc.):

Taking a year to work before continuing my education at University of Minnesota Duluth

Any activities, honors, or achievements you would like to share:

One Act State Festival Participant,
Cheerleading, Flag Football

A short reflection on how your faith has helped prepare you for this next chapter:

My faith has given me a foundation to stand on as I prepare to adventure into unknown territories. It gives me a tether to reality in a world that is scary to navigate and reminds me I do not have to do it alone.

A favorite memory from Sunday School, VBS, or a church program:

My favorite memory from church was going on the mission trip to South Dakota. It showed me a perspective I had never seen the world through and opened my eyes and heart to the situations of those around me.



Senior Spotlight Continued

Graduate: Sari Evelyn Rein

Parents: John and Michelle Rein

High school you are graduating from:

Rushford-Peterson High School

Future plans (college, work, military, etc.):

Study nursing at South Dakota State University. Plan to become a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner

Any activities, honors, or achievements you would like to share:

Will graduate with Honors. She is also a member of the National Honor Society. She was recognized on the President's List for her academic achievements at South East Minnesota Technical College, where she has completed Post Secondary Online Education throughout her Senior year. I was involved in many extracurricular activities during high school, including FFA, Cheerleading, Track, Basketball and Volleyball. A member of the Lanesboro High School Band and Choir. Active with Driftless Volleyball Academy and recently competed in the Junior National Volleyball Championship Tournament in Reno, NV. Recognized as All Conference in Track, All-Conference Honorable Mention in Volleyball, and Academic All-State in Track and Volleyball. Competed in the Minnesota State True Team Track Meet, and participated in the Minnesota State FFA Convention in Companion Animals

A short reflection on how your faith has helped prepare you for this next chapter:

My faith has helped me prepare for this next chapter by knowing that whatever happens, I can trust in God's plan and His timing. There will be times where things won't go the way I think they will, but I will find peace and reassurance in the knowledge that my life is in God's hands. Through Him, anything is possible and whatever comes, I can trust in Him to help me be the person he intends me to be and fulfill His plans for me.

A favorite memory from Sunday School, VBS, or a church program:

All the activities with her class. She especially enjoyed the Egg Hunt at Easter and the Fall wagon rides



April 12, 2026

Highland Prairie Lutheran Church Council Meeting

April 12, 2026

President Val Howe called the meeting to order at 5:05.

Council Members present were Robert Anfinson, Josh Dahl, Kristi Gudmundson, Mary Gudmundson, Val Howe, Courtney Lee,

Chellsey Lind, and Mike Pepin. Amy Jacobson and Mitch Paulson were absent.

Devotions were given by Kristi Gudmundson. A quorum was determined, and a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of

old business – lawn mowing; new business, tractor or ATV/UTV ride, was made by Chellsey Lind, Kristi Gudmundson seconded.

Motion carried.

Congregation members wishing to address the council. None

Treasurer's Report was given by Courtney Lee for March. The Month-to-date information provided was income of \$5,911.70,

expenses of \$9,223.40; Expenses exceeded income by \$3,311.70. A motion to approve the report was made by Mike Pepin, Chellsey

Lind seconded. Motion carried.

President's Report – None

Pastor's Report – None

Correspondence – None

Committee Reports: Church Committee – Discussion on carillon use, will find someone to learn system.

Grounds Committee – Grounds and indoor clean up scheduled for Wednesday, May 6 th 3-8.

Worship Committee – Lectern microphone repairs and protection of connection will be completed.

Youth & Education Committee – Senior Recognition on May 17th for three students, student Bibles to be disbursed, Confirmation

camp this summer, Youth Conference attendance is next year, instead of a mission trip for this year.

WELCA –Spring Bake Sale was very successful with items sold out by 11:30; Meatball Dinner attendance today was less than

expected, but volunteers were in abundance; Spring Quilt Frolic in fellowship hall is Friday, April 17 th & 18 th 9:00.

Endowment Committee – None

Old Business – Council meeting dates/time discussed– decision to meet at 12:30 when Highland Prairie only and prior to or following

Parish meeting depending on site.

Review of repair list with addition of staining the three crosses at entrance. The hope is spring weather will allow completion of most

of these by volunteers and donation of materials.

Appoint vacant Board of Education position to run April 2026 to January 2027 tabled until Board of Education meeting.

Mowing bids, two received, tabled pending another bid submission.

New Business – Fundraiser ATV/UTV ride discussion, will contact a few possible organizers to see if it a possibility.

The Secretary's report was read and a motion to approve as read was made by Mike Pepin, Val Howe seconded. Motion carried.

A motion to adjourn with the Lord's Prayer at 6:40 was made by Chellsey Lind, Kristi Gudmundson seconded.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted.

Mary Gudmundson

Next Meeting May 17 th 6:30 at Highland Prairie Fellowship Hall; Joint Parish Council 5:30 at Highland Prairie.

MAY 2026

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1	2
3	Highland Prairie W: 9 Elstad W: 10:30	4 Bible Study @ Bethlehem 9:30am	5 Worship Committee Meeting 6:30pm	6 Pr. Jackie Office 8-4pm HP Bible Study 1:30pm	7 Bulletin Items Duel	8	9
10	Highland Prairie W: 9 Elstad W: 10:30	11 Bible Study @ Bethlehem 9:30am	12 HP WELCA Quilting @ 9:30am Education Committee Meeting 5:30pm	13 Pr. Jackie Office 8-4pm	14 Bulletin Items Duel	15	16
17	Recognition Sunday Highland Prairie W: 9 Elstad W: 10:30 Parish council Meeting Elstad: 4:30pm Parish: 5:30pm HP: 6:30pm	18 Bible Study @ Bethlehem 9:30am	19 Newsletter Items Duel	20 Pr. Jackie Office 8-4pm	21 Bulletin Items Duel	22	23
24	Highland Prairie W: 9 Elstad W: 10:30	25 Bible Study @ Bethlehem 9:30am	26	27 Pr. Jackie Office 8-4pm	28 Bulletin Items Duel	29	30
31							