

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

*~ December 2019~*

*Pastor, Rev. Luther Mathsen*

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*Lisa Chiglo, Parish Secretary/Administrator ~ Email: highlandprairie\_elstad@ymail.com*

**December Worship Schedule**

**+Sunday, December 1st**

**Advent I**

**9:00 a.m., Highland Prairie**

**10:30 a.m., Elstad**

**+Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Advent II**

**9:00 a.m., Highland Prairie**

**10:30 a.m., Elstad**

**+Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Advent III**

**9:00 a.m., Highland Prairie**

**10:30 a.m. Elstad**

**\*Sunday School Christmas programs will be given during worship at both congregations**

**+Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Advent IV**

**9:00 a.m., Highland Prairie**

**10:30 a.m., Elstad**

**+Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Christmas Eve**

**5:00 p.m., Elstad**

**7:00 p.m., Highland Prairie**

**+Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Christmas Day**

**9:00 a.m., Highland Prairie**

**+Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Christmas I**

**9:00 a.m., Highland Prairie**

**10:30 a.m., Elstad**

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As I am quite sure many of us are already feeling the pressure of holiday preparations (and, to date, the Advent season has yet to begin!), what follows is a Christian brother's meditation that puts us, literally, into the middle of the drama of Christmas.

***It is Christmas. Have you found the way to Bethlehem? It is important to make straight the pathway of the Lord into your hearts. That duty is now done. Now take your pilgrim-staff and your gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. You will not have to stop off at Jerusalem to inquire the way. The Altar is your Star. There you will find Bethlehem. Bethlehem means "house of bread." Indeed, "bread of life," "staff of life." You will come, then, as the shepherds came. You will kneel as they did in adoration. And if your vision of faith is but clear enough, you will see at the Altar not merely bread and wine, but the Christ-child, the Word made flesh. After Christmas? You will do the same as the Wise Men. They went home by another way, not by way of Jerusalem. You will go another way, the way of new life. And with the shepherds you will also make known abroad all that you have seen and realized. The confession---"Who for us and for our salvation came down from Heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man," will be more than a vague truth, more than a historical event. Christmas will be an experience. You will truly understand the truth of the angelic words: "They shall call His Name Immanuel, which is being interpreted, "God with us," aye, Immanuel----at the Altar.***

***Berthold Von Schenk (1895-1974)***

I encourage you to join me and our brothers and sisters at Bethlehem, the "house of bread," this Christmas. Be present with those who have arrived to adore our Christ. Bask in the sublime beauty of his truth and the wonder of his love, be it at Elstad, Highland Prairie, or wherever you are.

Finally, Bobbi and I wish all the blessings of Christ be to you and your family this Advent and Christmas season. We are blessed beyond words to be numbered in this steadfast community of believers.

Your brother in Christ,

Pr. Mathsen+.

+++

## **Parish Men's Breakfast**

There will be no men's breakfast in December. We'll resume our monthly breakfast on Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at Highland Prairie.

## **Advent**

Advent is a season of proclamation of the Lord's coming as the Son of Man, *the human being, and as Emmanuel, God-with-us*. It is a celebration of God's promise that the Lord will indeed come and a Christian commitment to make ready his way.

Its fundamental emphases are joyous hope, loving trust, and unwavering perseverance. You will find that many of Advent's scripture texts refer to events long past and persons associated with Jesus' first coming. Advent's focus, however, is not on the past but on the future. It looks forward to Jesus' second coming, when God's designs for humanity and our deepest hopes will be fulfilled.

## **Two Intergenerational Events During Advent**

Join a parish intergeneration group of Christmas carolers who will be Christmas joy to our members in the nursing home, and in assisted living and senior apartments (Preston, Lanesboro, and Rushford). When: Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 p.m. We'll meet at Elstad.

**We will need adults to provide transportation.** And then...Come see the wonder of our Parish Live Nativity Scene on Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, Highland Prairie, at 7:00 p.m.

We are asking for volunteers to read the Christmas story, play the parts of the Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, and Wise Men. There will be two half-hour shifts. A sign up will be circulated at both congregations. Hot beverages and goodies will be served in the church basement. Come enjoy the fellowship!

## **Church Council Candidates**

Both Elstad and Highland Prairie seek the names of persons willing to be candidates for 2020 Church council positions. Candidates should be active, worshipping members of either congregation.

## **New Member Sunday**

On Sunday, November 17, both Elstad and Highland Prairie welcome Morgan and Leighton Knutson, Marcia Randall, and Kristi Chiglo and daughters, Indy, Tenley, and Charlotte.

Highland Prairie welcomed Myrtle Otis. Please make it a point to introduce yourself to these new members. Welcome to our parish!!!

## **Parish Youth Sno-tubing at Ironwood Springs**

We are planning a Saturday, January 11, sno-tubing outing at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch, Stewartville. We are looking at the time frame, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. We, however, first need to gauge if there is interest enough for us to reserve the date. So, please sign up in the back of the church at both Highland Prairie and Elstad if you are interested. The sign up deadline is Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. The cost is \$12.00

*Prayer Corner*

*Scripture tells us to pray without ceasing. Let's be known as a praying congregation. Please keep Wendy Will, Michele Thompson, Judy Brand, Judy Martin, the family of Eleanor Peterson, the Cords Family, and all who are ill or in need of your prayers.*

All are invited to attend the

**30<sup>th</sup> Annual Advent Cantata**

**“Joy of Heaven and Earth Come Down”**

Presented by the Elstad Community Choir

Sunday, December 1st, 5:00 pm, at the Elstad Lutheran Church

(Musical prelude begins 4:30 pm)



The Elstad Christmas Tea will be Sunday, December 8th at 9:00 a.m. We look forward to everyone joining us for this special tea. If you have a special tea or coffee cup please bring it along.

**Sunday School Christmas Programs**



Both Elstad and Highland Prairie will be hosting their Sunday school programs on Sunday, December 15th during the regular worship service.

**Elstad Budget October 2019**

Budget	\$ 7241.75
Received September	\$ 5373.00
Under for September	\$ 1868.75
Elstad budget YTD	\$ 72,417.50
Received YTD	\$ 49,491.00
Under YTD	\$ 22926.50

**Highland Prairie Financials for October 2019**

YTD Income-----	\$ 68,735
YTD Expenses-----	\$ 74,948
Expenses exceed Income-----	\$ 6,213
YTD Budget-----	\$ 78,583
YTD Income-----	\$ 68,735
YTD Under-----	\$ 9,848

## Highland Prairie Council Meeting

November 17, 2019

5:30 p.m. at Elstad Lutheran Church

- 1) Call to Order at 5:30pm by Gordon Johnson
- 2) Roll Call – Absent Lyle Meldahl, Scott Bestul
- 3) Quorum - Yes
- 4) Devotions – Joint meeting
- 5) Approval of Agenda – Chris motioned, Tim Seconded, passed
- 6) Congregation members wishing to address Council - none
- 7) Treasurer’s Report – YTD under budget – \$9848, Sarah motioned, Nancy 2nd, passed subject to audit.
- 8) President’s Report - none
- 9) Pastor’s Report – All Saints worship was great. Pastor visited Good Shepard early this month. Thanksgiving Eve service will be at Elstad 7pm. Dec 1st is the first Sunday of Advent and the Elstad Cantata. Bible Study finishes up this week. 8-10 people have participated. Book study with 2 people will finish soon. Confirmation students finish up sm. catechism in a couple weeks. (11 students). Pastor will be leading a pre-advent study and will put it on FB. Men’s breakfast this weekend. Trunk or Treat when well and was well attended. 15th of December will be caroling meet at Elstad, finish at Highland Prairie. Live nativity at Highland Prairie on Dec 18th. Pre-marriage counseling with Kasey Nelson and Chase Anderson continues they are planning a summer wedding. Monthly pastoral calls of 22 completed.
- 10) Correspondence – Synod donation for the budget year notification.
- 11) Committee Reports:
  - A) Church – Gordy bought heat tape for the rain gutter and eaves. They will be put in soon. Tim will check the circuit load before they are installed.
  - B) Grounds – Logs that are down are in question. We will get in there once it’s called. Fiber connected at the church and the parish. Phone rings at the Pastor’s cell. Voice mail will go back to the church. Bill change by \$25. Chris, Karen, Sarah & Pastor are on the list at Acentek to make changes. Severson Gas replaced a regulator a tank for the church
- 12) Old Business:
- 13) Water – water has been treated twice. Pastor will call to get it re-tested.
- 14) New Business:
  - A) 2020 staff (council)
    - i) Joyce and Scott first 3 year of service for trustees are complete, but they can choose to re-up. Council President, Vice President and Secretary are available for post.
    - ii) Post to upcoming bulletin and December newsletter.
    - iii) Church custodian – We still need to find one. We should advertise.
- 15) Secretary’s Report: Nancy motioned, Joyce 2nd, Passed.
- 16) Adjournment (The Lord’s Prayer) – Sarah made, Karen 2nd, Passed at 6:11pm

Parking Lot: Shelter roof

December Agenda: New Business: Mowing contract, Old Business: 2020 Council meeting dates

Next regular meeting, Sunday, December 8, 2019, 5:30 p.m. at Highland Prairie Lutheran Church.

Elstad-Highland Prairie Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

Sunday, November 17, 2019

The Meeting was held at Elstad Lutheran Church with Elstad president, Larry Topness calling the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Roll call was taken with Lyle Meldahl, Scott Bestul, and Krissy Overland absent. A Quorum was called.

Others present: Pastor Luther.

Agenda was reviewed. Motion to approve agenda made by Sarah and second by Chris. Motion carried.

Devotions were given by Rita Kelly.

Congregation members present to address the council include Kyle Chiglo and Jerry Hallum.

Sealed bids for land rent received, reviewed, and discussed. There were 3 bids received. A vote was held to accept highest bid, accepting Doug Lind's bid for the 40 acres owned by the church. Motion passed.

No communication received.

President's report was given. There is no additional President's report from Elstad or Highland Prairie council meetings.

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

Pastor Luther received information regarding ELCA membership and future survivability. There is data projecting church-wide membership and attendance in 2040 and 2050. Baptisms and average weekly worship attendance are expected to continue to decline. This leads to a discussion on how to address the issues at hand and determined ways to continue to be relevant in a changing and challenging environment. How can we be intentional in our goal setting and future plans. We need to remain Christ focused and give glory to God.

~ELCA may be losing members to Non-denominational churches.

~How do we best define our mission and identity and communicate that to those in our communities? We can't be everything to everyone.

~Ministry assessment is offered to help identify our goals and ways to intentionally perform relevant ministry. This may be done in cooperation with other local parishes.

~How much of membership loss is related to ELCA decisions, and the church's relationship with culture.

~Church should be forming culture, not modified by culture.

~What are the non-negotiable items that foster a relationship with God. What values make us who we are.

How do we engage without compromising our core values?

~How do other denominations maintain in this environment?

~Challenges will help us grow and define our non-negotiables.

~Are there lessons we can learn from other churches to maintain relevance in our culture, and be more appealing to the younger population.

~How do limitations in finances affect ability to make changes? Are there programs in the ELCA to revitalize parishes?

~The church is much bigger than our 4 walls.

~Add Parish Growth and Relevance as a standing council item.

Joint Parish Youth:

~Nothing in addition to Pastors report. Youth will be addressed with each council. Live Nativity will be December 18 and Caroling will be December 15. There will be a small group meeting addressing Joint Parish Youth activities November 24 at 6:30 at Elstad to plan future activities.

Old Business/Committee Reports:

There is no old business to review

Continue...

New Business:

A. Church Calendar

- a. May council meeting is not scheduled. Will Plan for May 17, 2020.
- b. Will plan second Sunday of each odd month for Parish council meeting, except May to avoid Mother's Day.
- c. Vintage baseball schedule has been reviewed.
- d. Worship service times and alternation schedule were discussed. Further discussion needs to be held. Will review at our Annual meeting.
- e. Outdoor services were challenging at 10:00, will change back to 10:30 to be consistent with other worship times.
- f. A motion was made to approve updated worship schedule by Sarah, second by Michelle. Motion passed..

B. Pastor's salary was reviewed. Motion made by Sarah to maintain current financial package as is and allow 2 additional Sunday's off, as suggested and requested by Pastor Luther. Second by Rita. Motion passed.

C. Parish Secretary's salary was reviewed. Motion made by Sarah to increase Parish Secretary monthly salary by 3%, Seconded by Kay. Motion carried.

D. Copier was not replaced, it was more financially beneficial to repair current copy machine. It may be beneficial to consider annual service check. More discussion needs to be had regarding cost.

Secretary's report was given. Motion to approve by Sarah and second by Joyce.

Motion to adjourn the meeting and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm.

Submitted by Michelle Rein, Elstad Council Secretary

Next Meeting is Sunday January 12, 2020 at Highland Prairie.

Elstad Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

Sunday November 17, 2019

Elstad Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order by President Larry Topness at 8:10 p.m.

Roll call: Present members were Larry Topness, Rita Kelly, Jodie Daniels, Kay Wold, Michelle Rein and Pastor Luther Mathsen. Krissy Overland was absent. A Quorum was called.

The agenda was reviewed a motion to approve was made by Michelle second by Kay. Motion passed.

No congregational members were present to address the council.

Continue...

The Pastor's report was given.

- Pastor has performed about 6 services at Good Shepherd Lutheran Home in Rushford.
- Wednesday, November 27 is Thanksgiving Eve service at Elstad at 7:00pm.
- December 1 is the Annual Elstad Community Cantata. This is a gift to the community.
- Christian Education: The study on the 4 Parables will conclude this week. The book study will also be concluding in the next weeks.
- Confirmation continues. The students will be completing their study of the Catechism. They continue to meet with their mentors.
- This coming Tuesday begins a study on the Advent season. This will be placed on the Facebook page. It will take place over 2 weeks. 10:00am on Tuesday November 19 and 26 at Highland Prairie.
- They men's breakfast is this Saturday at Highland Prairie at 7:30 am.
- Caroling will be December 15. It begins at Elstad at 3:30 and ends at Highland Prairie
- The Live Nativity will be December 18 at Highland Prairie.
- Pastor completed 22 Pastoral calls.
- We recognized 3 new members/families today at Elstad.

The treasurer's report was given and has been placed on file for future audit. Bob Olson's estate left a memorial to the cemetery fund to be used for mowing. Giving continues to be decreased, and gifts are approximately \$20,000 below budget. Motion made by Rita to accept treasurer's report Second by Jodie. Motion passed.

President's Report:

Items to be discussed at the joint council meeting

Correspondence received: Note of support and prayer from the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

Old Business:

- LinkMeLanesboro is a program to link supports and needs within the greater Lanesboro community. The Elstad Lutheran Sunday school would like to support this initiative and will reach out to the chairperson.
- Tree removal has been addressed to remove dead trees and protect the power line. MiEnergy will remove trees that may contact the power line. Other removal may be needed after MiEnergy.
- Updated church signage will be reviewed again this spring. Consider adding to agenda in March.

New Business

- Discussed video recording the sermon to be posted on Facebook. Confirmation students will be asked to assist with this.
- Discussed 2020 staff. Will contact those whose terms are up to determine further interest and replacements if needed.
- Discussed 2020 Salaries. Motion made by Michelle to hold salaries at our current level given our financial limitations. Second by Rita. Motion carried.

Secretary's report was given. Motion was given by Jodie second by Kay. Motion passed.

Motion was made by Michelle to adjourn, second by Rita. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Secretary's report submitted by Michelle Rein..

Next meeting to be held at Highland Prairie Lutheran Church, Sunday January 12, 2020.



# 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 Pederson  
2 ~ Kathleen Wold  
~ Christopher Drinkall  
3 ~ Lorraine Anfinson  
~ Margret Zack  
4 ~ Ellen Lawstuen  
~ Kathy Kendhammer  
5 ~ Carol Overland  
6 ~ Kristi Gudmundson  
7 ~ Ann Fretland  
8 ~ Hannah Pearce  
11 ~ Peter Peterson  
13 ~ Heidi Evenson  
~ Nikki Dahle  
~ Bo Rein  
15 ~ Renee Ritter  
~ 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  
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 ~ Allan Dahl  
27 ~ Matthew Halverson  
~ Stephanie Erickson  
28 ~ Sarah Stensgard  
~ Indy Qualy  
29 ~ Daryl Thompson  
30 ~ Ashley Johnson  
~ Parker Storhoff  
31 ~ Jesse Nelson  
~ Jarod Dybing  
~ Tracy Lind

*Happy  
Anniversary*

13 ~ Charles & Lynnette  
Pederson  
~ Kevin & Allyson Christian  
18 ~ Gordon & Arlene  
Johnson  
19 ~ Tom & Carolyn Smith  
27 ~ Philip & Ruth  
Abrahamson

# DECEMBER 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 EL—9:00 a.m. SS—10:00 a.m. HP—10:30 a.m. SS—9:30 a.m.	2	3	4 Confirmation 6:30	5	6	7
8 EL—9:00 a.m. SS—10:00 a.m. HP—10:30 a.m. SS—9:30 a.m. EL-Christmas Tea 9:00 a.m. HP Council meeting	9	10	11 Confirmation 6:30 Bulletin Deadline	12	13	14
15 HP—9:00 a.m. SS—10:00 a.m. EL—10:30 a.m. SS—9:30 a.m. EL & HP Sunday school Christmas programs ~Christmas Caroling 3:30	16	17	18 Live Nativity Scene @ HP 7:00 p.m. Confirmation 6:30 Bulletin Deadline	19 Newsletter Deadline	20	21
22 HP—9:00 a.m. SS—10:00 a.m. EL—10:30 a.m. SS—9:30 a.m.	23	24 Christmas Eve Service EL—5:00 p.m. HP—7:00 p.m.	25 Christmas Day service—9:00 a.m. at Highland Prairie <i>Merry Christmas</i>	26	27	28
29 HP—9:00 a.m. SS—10:00 a.m. EL—10:30 a.m. SS—9:30 a.m.	30	31				

HIGHLAND PRAIRIE  
ACOLYTES/READERS/GREETERS

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2019**

ACOLYTES: KRISTINA STENSGARD, DANA DEGEORGE  
READERS: KENNA GUDMUNDSON, SYLVIA PASSOW  
GREETERS: ALLAN SKALET & KAY EIKEN

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2019**

ACOLYTES: LACI SIEVERS, CADEN JOHNSON  
READERS: LACI SIEVERS, ARLENE JOHNSON  
GREETERS: GORDON & ARLENE JOHNSON

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019**

ACOLYTES: LARISSA RYAN, KENNA GUDMUNDSON  
READERS: LARISSA RYAN, BECKY LIND  
GREETERS: SHARON & PAUL EHLER

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2019**

ACOLYTES: LINDSEY HOINESS, KRISTINA STENSGARD  
READERS: DANA DEGEORGE, SHARON EHLER  
GREETERS: ROGER & SARAH BEARBOWER

**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP**

ACOLYTES: DANA DEGEORGE, LACI SIEVERS  
READERS: KRISTINA STENSGARD, SCOTT BESTUL  
GREETERS: DOUG LIND FAMILY

**CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP**

ACOLYTES: CADEN JOHNSON, LARISSA RYAN  
READERS: LINDSEY HOINESS, MICHELE THOMPSON  
GREETERS: LYLE & ANN MELDAHL

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2019**

ACOLYTES: KENNA GUDMUNDSON, LINDSEY HOINESS  
READERS: CADEN JOHNSON, SYLVIA PASSOW  
GREETERS: ALLAN SKALET & KAY EIKEN

ELSTAD  
ACOLYTES/READERS/USHERS

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2019**

ACOLYTE: MICHAEL REIN ~ READERS: LIZ HAGEMAN, GENE TOPNESS

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2019**

ACOLYTE: KYLE DANIELS ~ READERS: PARKER STORHOFF, JOHN ABRAHAMSON

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019**

ACOLYTE: MAKENZIE KNUTSON ~ READERS: J.T. REIN, LORI BAKKE

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2019**

ACOLYTE: MICHAEL REIN ~ READERS: ALISON FREESE, VICKY TOPNESS

**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP**

ACOLYTE: KYLE DANIELS ~ READERS: WILSON STORHOFF, CAROLYN SMITH

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2019**

ACOLYTE: INDY QUALY ~ READERS: MAKENZIE KNUTSON, CAROL OVERLAND

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

*Elstad ~ Highland Prairie Lutheran Parish  
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