

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

~ May 2019 ~

*Pastor, Rev. Luther Mathsen*

*Email: lmmathsen@gmail.com*

*Church Phone: (507) 864-2731*

*Lisa Chiglo, Parish Secretary/Administrator*

*Email: highlandprairie\_elstad@ymail.com*

*Prayer Corner*

*Scripture tells us to pray without ceasing. Let's me known as a praying congregation. Please keep Marion Dahl, Wendy Will, Michele Thompson, Lucile Ask, Steve Lee, Judy Martin, Kay Howe, Gabby Brown and all who are ill or in need of your prayers.*

**May Council Meetings at Highland Prairie**

Sunday, May 19, 2019

Elstad 5:30 p.m.

Parish 6:30 p.m.

Highland Prairie 7:30 p.m.

Recognition Sunday at Elstad will be May 19th during the 9:00 a.m. worship service. There will be a waffle brunch served after service. Please join us and celebrate with those recognized!

Elstad members please remember the Rhubarb Fest bake sale held in the Park on June 1st. Please try to have your baking there by 8:30-8:45 a.m. We usually do well with this event so we hope you can all contribute. The Ways and Means committee also need help with set-up and sales.

**Elstad Budget for March 2019**

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Budget for March  | \$ 7241.75 |
| Received in March | \$ 6519.00 |
| Under for March   | \$ 1622.75 |
| Budget YTD        | \$21725.25 |
| Received YTD      | \$17396.00 |
| Under YTD         | \$ 4329.25 |

**Highland Prairie Financials for March 2019**

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| YTD Income             | \$17343.00 |
| YTD Expenses           | \$20151.00 |
| Expenses Exceed Income | \$ 2808.00 |
| YTD Budget             | \$23575.00 |
| YTD Income             | \$17343.00 |
| YTD Under              | \$ 6232.00 |

This months Bridge page is only included in the e-version of the newsletter. There will be copies left at both churches.

"To whom shall we go?"

You may have noticed that we have returned to the "alleluia verse" as the Gospel Acclamation in our worship service. Prior to the reading of the gospel, we sing:

*"Alleluia! Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!"*

The question within that verse is Peter's. You see, the Lord on many occasions displeased--confused, scandalized, rebuked, and burdened—his disciples with words and actions. As a result, many departed from him. The attitude of the ones who stayed with him was represented in the gospel by Peter's question and confession of faith "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

We have entered the season of Easter. The days of Holy Week were full of the agonizing events of our Lord's passion. With the other seasons of the church year, we receive the whole gospel: the sometimes hard, offensive, and forthrightly delivered words of the Lord and his apostles, along with the positive, comforting, and joyful ones....that resound definitively in the Easter proclamation.

Yet, there is something profound about Peter's question. It reflects something of the depth and tenacity and challenge of Easter faith. It tells us something about what is required to follow Jesus. It seems he did almost everything he could not to please his followers, but to challenge them. He tested them, by applying his truth, to find and bring to light something deep within that sought the very One who had called them, persevered with him when he met the hostility of a world against him, and felt remorse when their sin and fear separated them from him. He did this to open their eyes to the gravity of the mission to which he was calling them and stiffen their spines for the storms and stress of Kingdom work in his name.

Regarding their Kingdom work in Jesus' name, as is the case for us, the world offers no incentive or help. What is needed is the conviction born of the power of our Christ's life of love and mercy. He not only has the words of eternal life. He is the Word of life, lavishly and eternally offered for us on our pilgrim way. This conviction is anchored and supremely validated in the events which we have celebrated and now live in the light of anew.

As the writer of the book of Hebrews proclaims: "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

So...onward we go! And with full-throated praise, let us do so, singing:

Rise, shine, you people! Christ the Lord has entered  
Our human story; God in him is centered.  
He comes to us, death and sin surrounded, with grace unbounded.

Continued>

See how he sends the powers of evil reeling;  
He brings us freedom, light and life and healing.  
All men and women who by guilt are driven, now are forgiven.

Come, celebrate; your banners high unfurling,  
Your songs and prayers against the darkness hurling.  
To all the world go out and tell the story of Jesus' glory.

Tell how the Father sent his Son to save us.  
Tell of the Son, who life and freedom gave us.  
Tell how the Spirit calls from every nation his new creation.

ELW-#665

A happy and blessed Eastertide to you.

Pr. Mathsen+

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**May Worship Schedule**

**+++PLEASE NOTE: WORSHIP TIMES HAVE CHANGED.**

**+Sunday, May 5th**

**Easter 3 & the Rite of Confirmation**

**9:00 a.m., Elstad**

**10:30 a.m., Highland Prairie**

**+Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Easter 4**

**9:00 a.m., Elstad**

**10:30 a.m., Highland Prairie**

**+Sunday, May 19th**

**Easter 5 & HS Senior Recognition**

**9:00 a.m., Elstad**

**10:30 a.m., Highland Prairie**

**+Sunday, May 26th**

**Easter 6**

**9:00 a.m., Elstad**

**10:30 a.m., Highland Prairie**

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### **Confirmation Class and Mentor Notes**

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, Andrew Hoiness will be confirmed at Highland Prairie. Andrew is the son of Brad and Betsy Hoiness. Parker Storhoff and Makenzie Knutson will be confirmed at Elstad. Parker is the son of Steve and Beth Storhoff. Makenzie is the daughter of Mike and Jaime Knutson. You are encouraged to pray for these youth as they affirm the faith into which they have been baptized.

### **High School Graduates' Recognition**

We will be recognizing high school graduates during worship on Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. All graduates planning to participate are asked to inform Pr. Luther by Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Parish Men's Breakfast**

The men's prayer breakfasts will be on hiatus until the fall. My gratitude is extended to all who donated food and helped in the kitchen. plm+

### **Mid-school/High-school Milwaukee Mission Trip**

The June 9-14, 2019 parish youth Milwaukee mission trip is fast approaching. Six youth are committed to participate. They are Paula Howe, JT Rein, Michael Rein, Alison Freese, Ashlyn Guenther, and Dakota Guenther. We are in desperate need of a female adult who can accompany the group. We thank everyone who has donated money to defray the cost of the mission trip. We continue to seek financial help. If you would like to make a personal donation to the balance that we still owe, please see Pr. Mathsen.

### **Lutheran Disaster Relief Fund**

We still request you consider support those dealing with the devastating effects of the flood waters and tornadoes that have hit parts of the U.S. The Lutheran Disaster Relief Fund assists those who are on the ground bringing much needed help. You are encouraged to consider a gift to the fund. Make your check out to your congregation and write "Lutheran Disaster Relief Fund" on the MEMO line of your check.

### **Summer Outdoor Mid-Week Campfire Worship**

Worship around the parsonage campfire will begin on Wednesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m. Bring your own lawn chair. We'll enjoy s'mores following worship.

### **Coming in June: 4 Parables of Grace**

You are invited to participate in a study of 4 parables of grace in the New Testament. They are: The Lost Sheep, The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, and The Ten Lepers. If you are interested, sign up in entrance of the church. In addition, please list the day of the week that suits your schedule best next to your name. Men and youth are encouraged to sign up, too.

Highland Prairie Council  
April 14, 2019 5:30 p.m  
Highland Prairie Lutheran Church

1. Call to Order -- 5:33pm called to order by President Gordon Johnson
2. Roll Call - Mary was absent.
3. Quorum - Yes
4. Devotions - given by Sarah
5. Approval of Agenda - Tim made a motion, Chris 2nd - motion passed
6. Congregation members wishing to address Council - None
7. Treasurer's Report - March 2019 YTD Income Expenses exceed income \$2808 Budgeted Under \$6232. Scott motioned to approve, subject to audit, Joyce 2nd, Motion passed
8. President's Report - Note that Steve has been cleaning up on the grounds in his free time. Clean up date needs to be set following easter weekend.
9. Pastor's Report - Lenten services were well attended and great fellowship in the joint worship. Holy week services are planned and all is ready. Plans are being made for May 5th confirmation Sunday. HP - Andrew Hoiness. May 1st there will be a supper and review of final project work. Summer schedule is being worked on currently, additional campfire outdoor service once a month on Wednesday evening at the parsonage. 1st bowl service is June 30th. Christian Education - Confirmation instruction completes for the year on April 24th. Weather cancellation has made it difficult to get through the material. VBS planning has not had any volunteers come forward to help so we are not currently planning a VBS program for this summer. Bishop candidates will be introduced as part of the Synod meeting at Zion Church in Stewartville on May 16th. Pastoral care pre-holy week visits are nearly completed.
10. Correspondence - Letter from R-P Prom committee asking for funds.
11. Committee Reports:
  - A. Church - Questions related to north furnace not starting last week but nothing since.
  - B. Grounds - Steve Howe has been busy with cleaning.
  - C. Worship - Nothing new
  - D. Youth & Education - Looking for female adult to go on mission trip to Milwaukee. We have a \$1400 balance for fundraising for this event. Looking for individual donations as well as planning a fundraising event.
12. Old Business:

None
13. New Business:
  - A. Endowment Committee - Edward Jones Representative and Endowment committee presented plan for endowment funds re-investment. Principal funds to be invested in CD's. Interest funds & Stock to be invested in High-Yield Municipal Bonds. \$1000 will be left at Merchants Bank to facilitate fund transfers. Advantage is that they funds would be actively managed through Edward Jones. Simplify transitions of officers for the endowment committee funds account authorizations. Nancy made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Endowment committee, Chris 2nd. Motion passed.
  - B. Funding for Mission Trip student - Sarah motioned made to allow 75% of Paula's mission trip registration to be covered through the Maggleson youth fund. Scott 2nd, Motion passed. Bake Sale and Car wash are planned for future fund raising events.
  - C. Grounds Clean-Up - Saturday after Easter, April 27th 8am start. Bring chainsaws, rakes, wheel barrel.
  - D. Good Earth Village funding approval - Tim motioned 75% of early bird registration costs to be cover by the Maggleson youth fund Lyle 2nd, Motion carried
  - E. Confirmand approval - Andrew Hoiness Nancy motioned to approve Pastor's recommendation of Andrew Hoiness, Joyce 2nd, Motion passed.
14. Secretary's Report - submitted by Sarah Bearbower - Scott motioned to accept report as presented, Nancy 2nd, Motion passed.
15. Adjournment (The Lord's Prayer) - Tim, Lyle, motion passed

Parking Lot: Shelter roof

Next regular meeting, May 19th 2019, Sarah not be at next meeting, I'll need someone else to take meeting minutes..

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# THE BRIDGE

*A Monthly Resource from the Southeastern Minnesota Synod*



## **“What is God Up To?” by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton**

What is to be done? Our congregations are growing older and smaller. At least 40 percent of our congregations have an average weekly worship attendance of 50 or less. ELCA membership decreases by 70,000 people a year, or roughly the loss of a synod per year. Clergy retirements outnumber new candidates for ministry. Financial pressures and building maintenance create stress. There is a dearth of people in their 20s and 30s in our pews. How do we change this? How do we reverse the trends?

These are anxious questions that come from anxious people across this church. We aren't the only ones asking them—just about every mainline denomination, including the non-Latino population of the Roman Catholic Church, is in the same boat. Even some megachurches are showing signs of plateau or decline. And this is not exclusive to the Christian community. I once attended a national conference of Muslims where one workshop was titled “Un-Mosqued to Mosqued: How to Get the Young Muslim Back to the Masjid.” Some now see the decline of the church in general, and the ELCA in particular, as inevitable. The response can be to turn our churches into bunkers with our congregations sheltering within the walls or to try every new program that breathlessly promises to attract people to our congregations. Neither is an effective or faithful long-term strategy.

I think we are asking the wrong questions. The questions we are asking have to do about us: “What can we do?” They express loss and grief and fear—loss and grief for what we were and fear about what we will become. Not only do these questions not lead to productive answers, they also don't point to hope. It's as if the church's one foundation rests on us and our efforts.

I think we need to ask: “What is God up to?” It's clear to me that we are living in a time of transition, especially for the Western church. I don't know how long this transition will last nor do I have a clear vision of what the church is becoming.

I think we are asking the wrong questions. ... I think we need to ask: “What is God up to?” The good news is that you and I don't have to have a clear vision because God does. “Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:18-19). These words of hope were spoken to the Jews who were stuck in exile. They had lost their land, their temple and their king—the pillars of their identity. Likewise, the church has lost social status and relevance in 21st-century American culture.

For Israel and the church this would be a hopeless situation, except that God is faithful. When the Lord admonished, “Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old,” this wasn't a command to forget God's past saving work, but to believe that God was still acting. This is true for us today. When we stop asking what we can do to fix the church and start asking what God is up to, we open ourselves up to the life-giving promise of God's future.

Then we are also open to more questions: How is the Spirit reshaping the church? How will Christ use us as Christ's living body in the world? If we want to attract people to our congregations to rebuild a memory, God will not bless our efforts. But if we—grabbed by the Spirit in baptism, changed by the word, intimately and lovingly connected to Jesus and each other in communion, and set free by grace to serve the neighbor—invite all people into true life, then we shall become part of the answer. This takes attention and devotion. Worship, prayer, Scripture study, generosity and service—not in order to save the church, but in response to the new life God has given us in Christ.

And one more thing: in God's inscrutable wisdom, God has chosen human hands and voices to tell and welcome. Let's adopt the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod's mission to get more people to know more about Jesus.

*Bishop Eaton's email address is [bishop@elca.org](mailto:bishop@elca.org). This article originally appeared in the February 2019 edition of Living Lutheran.*

# MAY 2019

**Elstad ~ Highland Prairie Lutheran Parish**  
 Visit our websites at...  
[elstadlutheranchurch.org](http://elstadlutheranchurch.org)  
[highlandprairielutheranchurch.org](http://highlandprairielutheranchurch.org)

| Sun   | Mon | Tue | Wed  | Thu | Fri                                       | Sat |
|---|-----|-----|--|-----|---|-----|
|   |     |     | 1<br>Confirmation<br>review supper<br>6:00 pm. | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| 5<br>EL—9:00 a.m.<br>SS— 10:00 a.m.<br>HP— 10:30 a.m.<br>SS— 9:30 a.m.<br><br><i>Confirmation<br/>Sunday at HP<br/>&amp; EL</i>       | 6   | 7   | 8<br><br>Bulletin Deadline                     | 9   | 10  | 11  |
| 12<br>EL—9:00 a.m.<br>SS— 10:00 a.m.<br>HP— 10:30 a.m.<br>SS— 9:30 a.m.   | 13  | 14  | 15<br><br>Bulletin Deadline                    | 16  | 17<br><br><b>Newsletter<br/>Deadline!</b> | 18  |
| 19<br>EL—9:00 a.m.<br>HP— 10:30 a.m.<br>SS— 9:30 a.m.<br>Recognition<br>Sunday<br><br>HP & EL coun-<br>cil meetings @<br>HP 5:30 p.m. | 20  | 21  | 22<br><br>Bulletin Deadline                    | 23  | 24  | 25  |
| 26<br>EL—9:00 a.m.<br>HP— 10:30 a.m.  | 27  | 28  | 29<br><br>Bulletin Deadline                    | 30  | 31  |     |



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

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**HIGHLAND PRAIRIE**  
**ACOLYTES/READERS/GREETERS**

**SUNDAY, MAY 5, 2019**

ACOLYTES: CADEN JOHNSON, LARISSA RYAN  
READERS: KRISTINA STENSGARD, ARLENE JOHNSON  
GREETERS: GORDON & ARLENE JOHNSON

**SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2019**

ACOLYTES: KENNA GUDMUNDSON, LINDSEY HOINESS  
READERS: NIKKI DAHLE, BECKY LIND  
GREETERS: SHARON & PAUL EHLER

**SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2019**

ACOLYTES: ANDREW HOINESS, KRISTINA STENSGARD  
READERS: HALE STENSGARD, SHARON EHLER  
GREETERS: ROGER & SARAH BEARBOWER

**SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2019**

ACOLYTES: DANA DEGEORGE, LACI SIEVERS  
READERS: ANDREW HOINESS, SCOTT BESTUL  
GREETERS: DOUG LIND FAMILY

**ELSTAD**  
**ACOLYTE/READER/USHERS**

**SUNDAY, MAY 5, 2019**

ACOLYTE: LIZ HAGEMAN  
READERS: MICHAEL REIN, CAROL OVERLAND

**SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2019**

ACOLYTE: PARKER STORHOFF  
READERS: KYLE DANIELS, CAROLYN SMITH

**SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2019**

ACOLYTE: MAKENZIE KNUTSON  
READERS: LIZ HAGEMAN, TOM DYBING

**SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2019**

ACOLYTE: MICHAEL REIN  
READERS: PARKER STORHOFF, GENE TOPNESS

**USHERS:** LARRY TOPNESS, GENE TOPNESS,  
PHILIP ABRAHAMSON, JOHN REIN