

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

~ December 2021~

Pastor, Rev. Luther Mathsen

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Pastor's Page

December 2021

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

It is my joy to share the following reflections about the Nativity of Christ written by Martin Luther. It is my hope and prayer that you and your beloved will find comfort and strength in the news of our God who stooped from heaven to earth in the baby Jesus... for our sake and the sake of world.

"Behold Christ lying the lap of his young mother, still a virgin. What can be sweeter than the Babe, what more lovely than the mother! What fairer than her youth! What more gracious than her virginity! Look at the Child, knowing nothing. Yet all that is belongs to him, that your conscience should not fear but take comfort in him. Doubt nothing. Watch him springing in the lap of the maiden. Laugh with him. Look upon the Lord of Peace and your spirit will be at peace. See how God invites you in many ways. He places before you a Babe with whom you may take refuge. You cannot fear him, for nothing is more appealing to man than a babe. Are you affrighted? You will see how great is the divine goodness, which seeks above all else that you should not despair. Trust him! Trust him! Here is the Child in whom is salvation. To me there is no greater consolation given to mankind that this, that Christ became man, a child, a babe, playing in the lap and at the breasts of his most gracious mother. Who is there whom this sight would not comfort? Now is overcome the power of sin, death, hell, conscience, and guilt if you come to the gurgling Babe and believe that he is come, not to judge you, but to save."

Your brother in Christ,

Pr. Luther+

A Sermon: "In Advent, Wait for Rescue", by Richard R. Caemmerer, Sr. (1904-1987)

...Christmas is God at work with rescue. Joseph was told to name the baby "Jesus" because he would be the Savior, the one chosen by God to redeem his people. Dimly but surely in the faith of the earliest people was this ingredient: that God had rescue in need, help from death. Above all, this was the hope of that faith: that God whom men might cast aside would not cast them off, that he would return and forgive, that he would have mercy. This is why that forward look of God's Old Testament saints for salvation is so instructive.

But is it? How can that look forward of theirs have anything in common with our look backward, at something that has already happened?

Join me at O'Hare Field in Chicago on a murky evening. I want to fly to St. Louis; but the eastern half of the nation is engulfed in bad weather. I am tired and homesick and apprehensive about the whole thing; my plane is not only late but the machine in which I am to fly has not yet left Kennedy Airport in New York City, to say nothing of putting down in Chicago. I am looking forward to landing in St. Louis; I am waiting.

Waiting is what I have in common with every believer in God of every age. I am looking forward to a final rescue, God's ultimate answer. That is why in Advent we get the Last Judgment, the end of the world, Christ's return to take us home to our everlasting home, all tangled up with Christmas; for that is the salvation to end all salvations.

Suddenly the word goes up on the board in the airport: My jet has left New York. A great shout goes up from the fellow passengers. The operation has started! The final leg of my journey is still ahead; but the flight is under way! Zechariah (the prophet) looked forward to it, hardly knowing what it all was to be. But we look back to it with excitement; for it is the start of a journey that is going to pick us up. For that manger and that cross and that open tomb are stages in a journey that we join at our baptism. This sermon is part of the public address system that Jesus devised before his death to tell people of every generation that the first big act of God was over---he accepted the sacrifice of his dear Son. Now we keep telling each other: Look, the rescue is under way! Look, we say, and listen to a sermon like this; or eat and drink the very body and blood which Jesus gave on the cross to start the mighty act of our salvation and rescue. And we keep telling one another day by day and year by year: He actually is under way, our heavenly Intercessor has already plotted the course on which he will pick us up for the final leg of the journey.

That word about Christ's work, that Baptism into his death, that eating and drinking of his body and blood are all ways to keep us waiting, with interest and good cheer, for God's completing our deliverance, our rescue. The predicaments are new day by day, the soporifics and anodynes and escape mechanisms of the world are so cunning and strong, our fatigue and listlessness so massive. But look, he has done what he could, the Lord of heaven and earth, in order to rescue us: he has given his own Son! Now wait for the final installment.

Advent means coming: God coming to finish his plan---for us. The other side of the coin is waiting: our waiting for him to do it---in Christ. Happy waiting!

Worship Notes

The Sunday school Christmas program will take place during worship at each congregation, respectively, on Sunday, December 12th. We are grateful for the adults who will shepherd our children in this annual event.

Children of each congregation are welcome to join in the Procession to the Creche during the opening hymn on Christmas Eve. We'll gather at the back of the sanctuary five minutes before worship begins. Each child is encouraged to bring one canned item of food to present at the creche. The proceeds will be delivered to the local food shelf.

A Service of Lessons and Carols will be our worship service on Christmas Day, December 25. It is the only service that day. It will take place at Highland Prairie at 9:00 a.m.

December Worship Schedule

Advent 2, December 5th

Highland Prairie-9:00 a.m.

Elstad-10:30 a.m.

Malachi 3.1-4

Luke 1.68-79

Philippians 1.3-11

Luke 3.1-6

Advent 3, December 12th

Sunday School Christmas Program Sunday

Highland Prairie-9:00 a.m.

Elstad-10:30 a.m.

Zephaniah 3.14-20

Isaiah 12.2-6

Philippians 4.4-7

Luke 3.7-18

Advent 4, December 19th

Highland Prairie-9:00 a.m.

Elstad-10:30 a.m.

Micah 5.2-5a

Psalm 80.1-7

Hebrews 10.5-10

Luke 1.39-55

Christmas Eve, December 24th

Elstad 5:00 p.m.

Highland Prairie-7:00 p.m.

Isaiah 9.2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 2.11-14

Luke 2.1-14

Christmas Day, December 25th

Highland Prairie-9:00 a.m.

Service of Lessons & Carols

Christmas 1, December 26th

Highland Prairie-9:00 a.m.

Elstad-10:30 a.m.

1 Samuel 2.18-20, 26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3.12-17

Luke 2.41-52

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Mission Table

The winter months are especially difficult for those who are in need. You continue to be encouraged to help those who have suffered nature's wrath through the ELCA's Disaster Relief Fund. Also, the ELCA World Hunger Appeal continues to provide much needed support to those of meager means. Through our financial support, we can help make a difference in the lives of those in need. Designated donations to these causes can be placed in the offering plate of your congregation. Make your checks out to your congregation and write either ELCA Disaster Relief Fund or ELCA World Hunger Appeal on the MEMO line.

Mission Table cont.

Members of both congregations are encouraged to continue supporting the local food shelves. Our area SEMCAC food shelves' addresses are: Rushford (113 East Jessie St.) and Preston (515 Washington Street, NW).

Christian Eduction

First Communion Instruction for 5th graders and others

Pr. Mathsen will be holding the second instruction session to prepare all 5th graders and others who desire to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion on Saturday, December 4th at 10:30 a.m. Anyone who did not make it to the 1st session is encouraged to come to this session as Pr. Mathsen will help you "catch up."

Adult Book Study and Bible Study

On the Thursdays of December 2nd, 9th, and 16th, 10:00 a.m., a Bible study on the worship texts of Advent will take place at Highland Prairie.

Join with us as we study how they lend themselves to the season of preparation for Christ's coming. Please let Pr. Luther know you plan to participate.

Parish Life

All congregational officers and committee chairpersons are encouraged to submit their 2021 annual reports to Lisa Chiglo, church secretary, by Wednesday, January 5th. The annual meeting of Elstad Lutheran Church is Sunday, January 16th, 2022. The annual meeting of Highland Prairie Lutheran Church is January 23rd, 2022.

Provisional Concerns of Congregational Life

Both congregations hope to finish fiscal year 2021 in healthy financial condition. Your continuing consideration of your offerings that help the church meet that goal is most appreciated. If you do not attend communal worship, you are encouraged to mail your offering to: Jennifer Nepstad (Elstad Treasurer), 20707 Co. 21, Lanesboro, MN 55949, or Karen Bakken (Highland Prairie, Treasurer), 713 Johnson Court, Rushford, MN. 55971 or Highland Prairie Church, 43267 Bowl Drive, Peterson, MN 55962,

Pastoral Care

Pr. Mathsen is making in-person home and nursing home visits. If you, or anyone you know, is in need of pastoral care or a pastoral visit, please let him know.

Prayer Corner

Scripture tells us to pray without ceasing. Let's be known as a praying congregation. Please keep Wendy Will, Lyle Storlie, Carolyn Storlie, Virginia Arnold, the families of Rodney Dybing, Paul Ryan, Thora Lombard, Ruth Wangen, and all others who are ill or in need of our prayers.



Sunday School Christmas Programs

Both Elstad and Highland Prairie will be hosting their Sunday school programs on Sunday, December 12th during the regular worship service.

Elstad Christmas Tea & Prayer Partner Reveal



The past several months have been challenging for all. Plans had to be changed, events were cancelled, and well-loved traditions were temporarily set aside. THANKFULLY, at the heart of being a Prayer Partner, we have been able to continue to hold our sister(s) in prayer, and at times throughout the year, possibly remind her that such is taking place. As we approach December, in light of the fact that at this time, there is again an increase in occurrences of Covid cases for our

area, and after discussing with some of our WELCA officers and members at Circle meetings, etc., it was decided the annual Christmas Tea should not be held. We do ask that all of you take it upon yourselves to connect with your Prayer Partner this Christmas Season. If anyone needs help with this, please contact one of us. Hoping 2022 can be filled with traditions again!

MERRY CHRISTMAS from Kathy and Vicky.

Elstad Budget October 2021

Budget	\$ 7033.58
Received October	\$ 4987.00
Under for October	\$ 2046.58
Elstad budget YTD	\$ 70335.80
Received YTD	\$ 57387.00
Under YTD	\$ 12938.80

Highland Prairie Financials for October 2021

YTD Income-----	\$ 69,007
YTD Expenses-----	\$ 73,109
Expenses exceed Income-----	\$ 4,102
YTD Budget-----	\$ 79,750
YTD Income-----	\$ 69,007
YTD Under-----	\$ 10,743

Elstad Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

Sunday, November 14 2021

Elstad Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order by President Dick Haight at 7:46.

Roll call: all members were present. A Quorum was called.

The agenda was reviewed. A motion to approve the revised agenda was made by Krissy Overland second by Amber Arends. Motion passed.

There are no congressional members present to address the council..

No additional Pastor's report at this time.

The treasurer's report was reviewed and placed on file for audit at a later date. A motion to place the report on file was made by Amber Arends and Second by Krissy Overland. Motion approved.

No additional President's report at this time.

Correspondence received: Thank yous from Pastor Marie Anderson's and the Lutheran Campus Center

Old Business:

Directory: Motion was made by Jennifer Nepstad to cover the cost of \$15 to insert anyone's photo into the directory that is unable to make it to the scheduled photography days. Motion second by Krissy Overland. Motion passed.

A reminder that there are still unfinished church projects that members can sign up for.

New Business

Salaries 2022

Custodian - current salary is \$4,300

Organist - current salary is \$1,900

Mowing - \$240

Motion was made by Krissy Overland to increase the Custodian's salary to \$4,500 a year and the Organist's salary to \$2,000 a year. Motion Second by Kathy Abrahamson. Motion passed.

Staff 2022 - Kathy Abrahamson, Krissy Overland, and Amber Arends will find replacements for staff members.

Annual Meeting will take place January 16th 2022 and the annual reports are due no later than January 9th 2022.

Secretary's report was given. Motion was given by Amber Arends and second by Jennifer Nepstad to approve the report. Motion passed.

Motion was made by Krissy Overland to adjourn, second by Amber Arends. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48.

Closed in prayer by Pastor Luther.

Secretary's report submitted by Aimee Rodger

Elstad-Highland Prairie Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

Sunday, November 14th 2021

The Meeting was held at Elstad Lutheran Church with Elstad president, Dick Haight calling the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Roll call was taken. A Quorum was called. Chris Hoiland, Lyle Meldahl, Joyce Dahl, Dave Markgard, Steve Howe, and Mary Gudmundson were not present.

Others present: Pastor Luther.

Agenda was reviewed. Motion to approve agenda made by Tim Stensgard and second by Krissy Overland. Motion carried.

Devotions were given by Pastor Luther.

Congregation members present to address the council include: none.

Communication received none.

There is no additional President's report in addition to Elstad or Highland Prairie council meetings.

Pastor's Report: Attendance at church is increasing. Next Sunday we will observe Christ the King. On November 28th we will begin advent. Thanksgiving Eve services will be held at Elstad starting at 7:00pm. Pastor Luther visited Park Lane as well as Good Shepherd for bible study. Emily Carlsen is scheduled to come on February 6th. Pastoral Care Continues. No Neutral Ground brochure describing the 2021 Touchstone Conference was passed around for review.

Joint Parish Youth:

Confirmation continues with 14 youth. The apostles' creed, 1st and 2nd articles of the creed, and the 10 commandments and their meanings are being studied by the confirmation students. Pastor Luther would like to recognize and thank Krissy Overland, Michelle Rein, Morgan Knutson, Chellsy Olson, Sharon Ehler, and Stephanie Dahl for their hard work with the Sunday School. The Confirmation kids completed their first project, which included putting together 14 care packages for the homeless. We met on October 31st and played 9 Square in the Air. Next Sunday we will view the movie, "Hidden Life."

Old Business/Committee Reports:

Parsonage Repairs- 2 doors still need to be replaced. President Dick Haight will be bringing David Gingerich to the parsonage tomorrow at 11:00 to look at repairs. Eaves troughs need to be cleaned and Leaf Guards need to be inserted. President Gordon Johnson will complete the eaves trough projects.

B) Church Computer and or Software: Still needs to be addressed and will be discussed at the next meeting. Chris Hoiland will look into this issue before the next meeting.

New Business:

- A. 2022 Calendar - The schedule was reviewed and errors were corrected. Pastor Luther will discuss changes with church secretary Lisa. The schedule will be reviewed again in January.
- B. Pastor's Salary 2022 - Pastor Luther's current salary is \$45,423 a year. President Gordon Johnson made a motion to increase Pastor Luther's salary and Social security by 3%. Pastor Luther's salary will be \$46,785 in 2022. Motion Second by Kathy Abrahamson. Motion passed.
- C. Secretary Salary 2022 - Church Secretary Lisa's current salary is \$731 a month.
- D. Motion was made by Robert Anfinson to give a 3% cost of living raise to Lisa Chiglo. Lisa's salary will be \$753 a month in 2022. Motion second by Kay Wold. Motion Passed.

Secretary's report was given. Motion to approve by Gordon Johnson, and second by Tim Stensgard. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Tim Stensgard and second by Krissy Overland. Meeting was closed with the Lord's prayer.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:47.

Submitted by Aimee Rodger, Elstad Council Secretary

Next Meeting is Sunday January 9, 2022 at Highland Prairie.

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 Pedersen
2~ Kathleen Wold
~ Christopher Drinkall
4~ Ellen Lawstuen
~ Kathy Kendhammer
5~ Carol Overland
6~ Kristi Gudmundson
7~ Ann Fretland
8~ Hannah Pearce
11~ Peter Peterson
13~ Boe Rein
15~ Madison Smith
~ Isaac Ask
~ Renee Ritter
~ 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
~ Brode Vickerman
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~ Julie Paulson
~ Hew Johnson
27~ Matthew Halverson
28~ Sarah Stensgard
~ Elin Rein
29~ Daryl Thompson
~ Jamie Wangen
30~ Ashley Johnson
~ Parker Storhoff
31~ Jesse Nelson
~ Jarod Dybing



13~ Charles & Lynette
Pederson
18~ Gordon & Arlene
Johnson
19~ Tom & Carolyn Smith
27~ Philip & Ruth
Abrahamson

DECEMBER

2021

Elstad ~ Highland Prairie Lutheran Parish
 Visit our websites at...
elstadlutheranchurch.org
highlandprairielutheranchurch.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Confirmation 6:30 p.m. Bulletin Deadline	2 Adult text study 10:00 a.m. @ HP	3	4 1st Communion instruction 10:30 a.m.—HP
5 9:00 a.m.—HP 10:00 a.m.—SS 10:30 a.m.—EL 9:30 a.m.—SS	6	7	8 Confirmation 6:30 p.m. Bulletin	9 Adult text study 10:00 a.m. @ HP	10	11
12 9:00 a.m.—HP 10:00 a.m.—SS 10:30 a.m.—EL 9:30 a.m.—SS HP Council meeting 5:30	13	14	15 Confirmation 6:30 p.m. Bulletin Deadline	16 Adult text study 10:00 a.m. @ HP	17 Newsletter Deadline	18
19 9:00 a.m.—HP 10:00 a.m.—SS 10:30 a.m.—EL 9:30 a.m.—SS	20	21	22 Bulletin Deadline	23	24 Christmas Eve 5:00 p.m.—EL 7:00 p.m.—HP	25 Christmas Day 9:00 a.m.—HP
26 9:00 a.m.—HP 10:30 a.m.—EL	27	28	29	30	31	

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

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December 2021 Newsletter

ELSTAD

ACOLYTES/READERS/USHERS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2021

ACOLYTE: SARI REIN

READERS: PARKER STORHOFF, GENE TOPNESS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021

ACOLYTE: JENSYN STORHOFF

READERS: J.T. REIN, JOHN ABRAHAMSON

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021

ACOLYTE: MILEY KNUTSON

READERS: ALISON FREESE, LORI BAKKE

CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24, 2021

ACOLYTE: AUBREY DANIELS

READERS: WILSON STORHOFF, VICKY TOPNESS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2021

ACOLYTE: SAWYER WOLFS

READERS: MAKENZIE KNUTSON, CAROL OVERLAND

USHERS: CAROL OVERLAND, JOHN OVERLAND,
TOM SMITH, DAVID BAKKE, RICHARD GULLICKSON,
ERIK NELSON, PARKER STORHOFF

HIGHLAND PRAIRIE

ACOLYTES/READERS/GREETERS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2021

ACOLYTES: LUCAS REDALEN, GUS HOILAND

READERS: LACI SIEVERS, LYNNETTE PEDERSON

GREETERS: GORDON & ARLENE JOHNSON

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021

ACOLYTES: GUS HOILAND, GRANT DEGEORGE

READERS: CADEN JOHNSON, SYLVIA PASSOW

GREETERS: SHARON & PAUL EHLER

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021

ACOLYTES: GRANT DEGEORGE, CHASE HUMBLE

READERS: LARISSA RYAN, ARLENE JOHNSON

GREETERS: ROGER & SARAH BEARBOWER

CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24, 2021

ACOLYTES: CHASE HUMBLE, CHEYANNE DAHLE

READERS: MICHAEL EVENSON, SHARON EHLER

GREETERS: DOUG LIND FAMILY

CHRISTMAS DAY, DECEMBER 25, 2021

ACOLYTES: CADEN JOHNSON

READERS: DANA DEGEORGE, SCOTT BESTUL

GREETERS: LYLE & ANN MELDAHL

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2021

ACOLYTES: CARSON JOHNSON, LUCAS REDALEN

READERS: GUS HOILAND, LYNNETTE PEDERSON

GREETERS: ALLAN SKALET & KAY EIKEN