

April Newsletter

ELSTADHIGHLANDPRAIRIEPARISH@GMAIL.COM

Pastor: Rev. Jackie Short ~ (507) 517-0769
~pastor.highlandprairie.elstad@gmail.com
Parish Administrator: Courtney Lee
Parish Office: (507) 864-2731 ~
elstadhighlandprairieparish@gmail.com

Pr. Jackie is regularly in the office
Wednesdays 8-4
as well as by appointment. Please Call or email to
set up a time that works for you.
Courtney is in the office
Sundays 12-2p
as well as by appointment please email to
schedule a time

<p>Maundy Thursday</p>  <p>April 2nd 7 pm SERVICE @ Elstad</p>	<p>Good Friday</p>  <p>April 3rd 7pm SERVICE @ Highland Prairie</p>	<p>Elstad Easter Egg Hunt April 4th Starts at 9AM</p>  <p>~ Story ~ ~ Craft ~ ~ Egg Hunt ~ Coffee ~ Juice ~ Rolls Bring your friends & family Fun for ALL ages!</p>  <p>Easter Sunday April 5th at 9am</p> 	<p>Highland Prairie Easter Sunday th April 5</p>  <p>Easter Egg Hunt & Easter Breakfast 8-10 French Toast Sausage Juice & Coffee Worship @ 10:30</p> 	<p>Elstad</p>  <p>Easter Egg Hunt April 4th Starts at 9AM ~ Story ~ ~ Craft ~ ~ Egg Hunt ~ Coffee ~ Juice ~ Rolls Bring your friends & family Fun for ALL ages!</p> <p>Elstad Easter Sunday Worship 9 am</p>	<p>Highland Prairie</p>  <p>Easter Egg Hunt & Easter Breakfast Bring a Basket or Bag and join the Easter Egg hunt at 8:30 French Toast Sausage Juice & Coffee 8-10 Highland Prairie Easter Worship 10:30 am</p> <p>April 5 Easter</p> 
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Stay informed...

Check us out on Facebook

Highland Prairie Lutheran Church
Elstad Lutheran Church

Elstad ~ Highland Prairie Lutheran Parish

Visit our websites at...

elstadlutheranchurch.org

highlandprairielutheranchurch.org





A MESSAGE FROM THE EHP PARISH OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR COURTNEY LEE

Parish Administrator Update – April

As we enter the month of April, we find ourselves moving closer to the joy and celebration of Easter. There were many meaningful activities happening across our parish this month. From Lenten services and soup suppers to preparations for Holy Week, we are grateful for all who gave their time and energy to make these gatherings possible. Your willingness to serve—whether through volunteering, attending, or supporting behind the scenes—helps keep our church vibrant and connected.

Looking ahead, please keep an eye out for upcoming opportunities to get involved, including youth activities, meatball supper, silent auction for the mission trip.

As always, communication is key, so don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions, updates, or scheduling needs.

Thank you for your continued support, flexibility, and dedication to our shared ministry. It is truly a blessing to serve this parish community.

Wishing you a meaningful Lenten season and a joyful start to spring.

Blessings,

Courtney Lee, Parish Administrator



There is something about April that feels like standing on holy ground.

We begin this month at the table. On **Maundy Thursday**, we gather as Jesus gathered—with friends, with bread, with a love that knows what is coming and chooses to stay anyway. It is a night of tenderness and command: love one another. Not just when it's easy. Not only when we agree. But in the messy, beautiful human reality of life together. **And then... the story turns.**

Good Friday meets us in the hard places. It reminds us that God does not look away from suffering. God steps into it. Fully. Completely. There is no grief you carry, no weariness you feel, no heartbreak you endure that Christ has not already entered into. The cross tells the truth: this world can be painful.

But it also whispers another truth—we are never alone in it.

And just when it feels like the story has ended...

April brings us to the garden.

Easter morning doesn't arrive with loud explanations or neat answers. It comes quietly. In the dim light of dawn. In a tomb that is suddenly, shockingly empty. In a name spoken—"Mary"—and everything changes.

Resurrection rarely looks the way we expect.

It shows up in small things: in hope that returns when we thought it was gone, in strength we didn't know we had, in love that refuses to give up on us.

This season reminds us that God is always at work bringing life out of what feels like endings.

So wherever you find yourself this April—
at the table, in the shadow of the cross,
or standing in the uncertainty of the garden—
know this: **The story is not over.**

God is still writing resurrection into our lives.

And we are invited to be part of it.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jackie

Parish Happenings



Birthdays

Anniversaries

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Sharon Rustad, Zoey Rein,
Cora Olson, Grayden Knutson | 15. Kody Bearbower |
| 2. Matthew Soppa, J.T Rein | 16. Cindy Johnson, Dawn
Steffes, Elinor Schleper |
| 3. Kristi Rein | 18. Leah Jacobson |
| 4. Janet Todd | 20. Casey Howe, Hudson
Keller |
| 5. Taylor Thompson, Kylie
Woxland | 21. Sharon Boyum,
Jennifer Klug, Jenna Root |
| 6. Erick Berland, Shelby Nelson,
Chloe Peterson | 22. Tyler Chiglo |
| 7. Rodney Humble | 23. Erik Sievers |
| 8. Timothy Knutson | 24. Jeffery Passow |
| 9. Vicky Topness, Sarah Bacon,
Melissa Hallum, Chase Bakke,
Colin Bakke, Adeline Hungerholt | 25. Mason Yonts |
| 10. Jill Halverson, Hudson
Stensgard,
Clayton Hungerholt | 26. Christopher Nelson |
| 11. Gary Rustad, Barbara
Onomija, Hans Lind, Makenna
Peterson | 27. Robert Nelson |
| 3. Tim Stensgard | 28. Paul Halverson, Nicole
Woxland, Jessica Woxland |
| 14. Richard Howe | 29. Jerry Dragvold, Kassie
Woxland |
| | 30. Steven Howe,
Elizabeth Larson |



1. Larry & Deb Topness
7. John & Carol Overland
8. Mark & Cindy Johnson
24. Glen & Sandy Thomas



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 ...

April Council Meeting @ Elstad

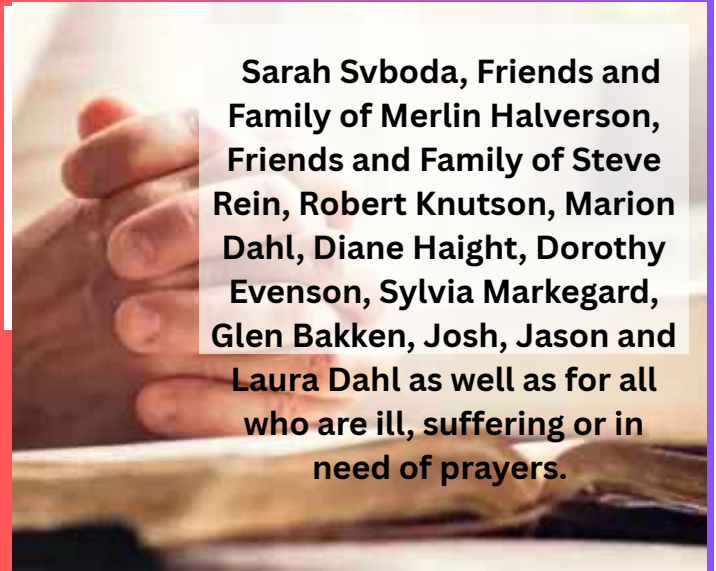
Sunday April 12th

Highland Prairie Council Meeting 5pm



In our Prayers

Sarah Svboda, Friends and Family of Merlin Halverson, Friends and Family of Steve Rein, Robert Knutson, Marion Dahl, Diane Haight, Dorothy Evenson, Sylvia Markegard, Glen Bakken, Josh, Jason and Laura Dahl as well as for all who are ill, suffering or in need of prayers.



Congregational Life Updates

Baptisms

Celebrating new life in Christ:

“No baptisms this month, but we continue to celebrate God’s work among us.”

Welcome New Members

We joyfully welcome the following into our church family:

“No new members this month, but we continue to celebrate God’s work among us.”

Transfers Out

We send these members with our prayers as they continue their faith journey

- Lillian Gravos

In Loving Memory

We remember and give thanks for the lives of:

- Merlin Halverson March 17, 2026



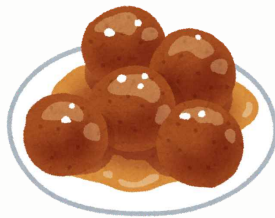
WELCA



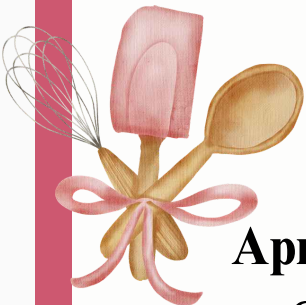
**APRIL 1ST-
BIBLE STUDY**

@

1:30PM



April 26th- Meatball Supper;
workers needed to prepare
meatballs, set-up and serving
sign-up sheet in the kitchen



April 3-Bake sale
Sterling Drug
10am-1pm

April 7th-
Quilting and
Potluck starting
at 9:30a



Highland Prairie

Community News



**BRIDGES HEALTH
PRESTON CLINIC**
04/24/2026
9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

Services Offered

- Health screening, education & promotion
- Chronic illness self-care guidance
- Blood pressure, vital sign checks
- Neck & shoulder massage
- Ear check & cleaning, hearing screening
- Foot soak, nail trimming, foot rub
- Dementia screening & information
- Long COVID screening & health promotion
- Help with community resources

Address
Fillmore County Office Building --
Lower Level Room 108,
902 Houston St. NW, Preston, MN 55965

- Appointments are necessary.
- Services are delivered by health profession students under the supervision of licensed volunteers/faculty.
- If interpretation services are needed, please indicate when making appointment.
- Need Transportation? Call SEMCAC Transportation at 1-800-528-7622




Call to Make or Reschedule an Appointment
(507) 474-2221
bridgeshealthwinona.org

**ALL SERVICES ARE
FREE OF CHARGE
AND REQUIRE NO PROOF OF
INSURANCE**




Growing Together
A Family Event for Expecting
Parents & Families with Children
Birth - 2

Join Us!
Friday, May 1st
9:30 - 11:30 AM

Lanesboro Community Center
Lower Level
202 Parkway Ave S
Lanesboro, MN 55949

Hosted by




Sponsored by




**Breastfeeding
Support & Referrals**

**A CHANCE TO WIN
a Highchair or Wagon
Interactive Educational Booths
Family Activities
Prizes & Giveaways**



Don't forget about your BUCKETS OF BLESSINGS

A joyful, hands-on stewardship campaign inviting all members and friends of our congregation's to care for our church home. Just as drops of water can fill a bucket, the small gifts we share; spare change, extra dollars, or folded bills—add up to make a big impact.

Together, we can "Repair & Restore: One Pail at a Time."



How It Works

- Each household is invited to bring home a Buckets of Blessings pail from the back table.
- Throughout the year, you are all encouraged to place spare change, extra cash, or intentional gifts into their buckets.
- When your bucket is full bring it to church as an offering of gratitude and support and place it in the large pail up front. If your pail is for a specific mission leave it up front and grab another bucket.

Education



Growth and Education

The Leah Circle will meet on at 2pm at Park Lane. We use the bible study is from “The Gather” magazine, all are welcomed to join. Reach out to Carol Dixon for more information if interested in joining.

The Esther Circle Reach out to Ruth Abrahamson for more information if interested in joining.

Elizabeth Circle meets at 8:45am at Park Lane Contact Lori Bakke for more information.

Naomi Bible Study: will meet at 6:30 pm in 4/28/26 at Elstad. . Grab your bible and join us on as we exploring and engage with the bible through conversation, study and “Bible Journaling”.

WELCA Bible Study: 1st Wednesday 1:30pm @ Highland Prairie



Confirmation classes will resume on **April 8th** at Highland Prairie starting at 6:30pm with meal and fellowship. Remind your students to bring thier binders & Mentor sheets.

Education will start promptly at 7pm. If you have not signed up for a meal, please check the google drive link sent previously to sign up to bring a meal or reach out to the parish administrator for assistance.

March 22, 2026

Highland Prairie Lutheran Church Council Meeting

March 22, 2026

President Val Howe called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm.

Council Members present were Robert Anfinson, Kristi Gudmundson, Mary Gudmundson, Val Howe, Courtney Lee, Chellsey Lind, and Mike Pepin. Amy Jacobson and Mitch Paulson were absent.

Devotions were given by Mike Pepin. A quorum was determined, and a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of Biesanz stone was made by Robert Anfinson, Mike Pepin seconded. Motion carried.

Congregation members wishing to address the council. None

Treasurer's Report was given by Courtney Lee for February. The Month-to-date information provided was income of \$13,702.81, expenses of \$9,211.75; Income exceeded expenses by \$4,491.06. A motion to approve the report was made by Chellsey Lind, Kristi Gudmundson seconded. Motion carried.

President's Report – Reflected on attendance at Synod "Council as Leaders" event

Pastor's Report – Will be given at the Parish meeting.

Correspondence – None

Committee Reports: Church Committee – None

Grounds Committee – None

Worship Committee – Candle holders are in the process of being made.

Youth & Education Committee – Looking at mission trip options. Sunday School options still being looked at.

WELCA – Bible Study 1:30 Wednesday, April; 1 st ; Spring Bake Sale 10:00 – 1:00 Friday, April 3 rd at Sterling Drug; Tuesday, April 7 th 9:30 Quilting with noon potluck, Spring Quilt Frolic 9:00 fellowship hall is Friday, April 17 th & 18 th ; Meatball Dinner 11:30 – 1:3- Sunday, April 24 th .

Endowment Committee – None

Old Business – Appoint vacant Council member and Board of Education positions to run April 2026 to January 2027 –three names were brought forward for the Council position and a written ballot was done, Josh Dahl will be appointed.

Council Meeting dates/time – Discussed and was tabled until next meeting to include new council member.

Mission Statement – Discussed further

Shepherds Staff – church computer software update was given by Courtney Lee and the membership part is working great.

Biesanz stone concern addressed

New Business – Mowing provider gave notice to end service immediately. Advertisement for bids will be placed in Fillmore County Journal and social media.

Quarter review of repair list, spring should bring movement on completion of some items.

Reflections

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

A motion to adjourn with the Lord's Prayer at 5:30 p.m. was made by Mike Pepin, Kristi Gudmundson seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted.

Mary Gudmundson

Next Meeting April 12 th Noon, Highland Prairie Fellowship Hall.

Elstad Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes
Sunday, March 22, 2026
Elstad Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order by President Gene Topness at 6:45 p.m.

Roll call: Council members present were Gene Topness, Kathy Abrahamson, Jennifer Nepstad, Morgan Knutson, Tanya Wolfs, Matt Nelson and Trent Eide. Pastor Jackie Short was also present. A Quorum was called.

The agenda was reviewed. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Morgan Knutson, seconded by Kathy Abrahamson. Motion carried.

Congregation members present to address the council: None

Pastor's report: No additional report at this time.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer's report was reviewed by the council. Matt Nelson made a motion to approve, seconded by Morgan Knutson. Motion carried. Report will be placed on file and audited at a later date.

President's report: None

Correspondence received: None

Old business:

- No old business to discuss.

New business:

- Gene Topness mentioned adding window well covers to the south side windows of the church. Matt Nelson/Gene Topness will research options.
- Possible church fundraising opportunities were discussed. Morgan Knutson offered to look into some options to bring back to the next council meeting.
- The council has not yet received interest in the lawnmowing position from a congregation member, which would be the preference. The other option is to explore local lawn service companies. Council hopes to have someone in place in time for the spring mowing season.

The secretary's report was given. Motion to approve was made by Morgan Knutson, seconded by Matt Nelson. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Gene Topness, seconded by Morgan Knutson. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Next council meeting is at Highland Prairie on Sunday, May 17 at 4:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Tanya Wolfs, Council Secretary

Highland Prairie & Elstad Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes
Sunday, March 22, 2026
Elstad Lutheran Church

The meeting was held at Elstad Lutheran Church with Elstad's president Gene Topness calling the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

Roll call was taken. Council members present were Val Howe, Chellsey Lind, Courtney Lee, Pastor Jackie Short, Mike Pepin, Robert Anfinson, Gene Topness, Kristi Gudmundson, Mary Gudmundson, Kathy Abrahamson, Jennifer Nepstad, Morgan Knutson, Tanya Wolfs, Matt Nelson and Trent Eide. Mitch Paulson, Josh Dahl and Amy Jacobson were absent. A Quorum was called. Agenda was reviewed. Motion to approve the agenda was made by Morgan Knutson, seconded by Kristi Gudmundson. Motion carried.

Devotions were read by Mike Pepin.

Congregation members present to address the council: None

President's report: Highland Prairie President Val Howe reported going to the Council for Leaders meeting in Austin last month. She encouraged Elstad council members to attend, if possible, in the future. She thought it was very interesting and worthwhile.

Pastor's report: Pastor Jackie discussed the desire of the Whalan/Highland Lutheran Church parish council to meet with our Elstad/HP parish council to discuss the possibility of joining resources. Their pastor is retiring in August and like many small, rural churches, they are trying to decide how to move forward and whether or not to close the Highland Lutheran Church. Pastor Jackie also said there are conversations happening about Elstad hosting Baccalaureate this year.

Correspondence received: None

Old business/committee reports: Courtney Lee provided an update on the new Shepherd's Staff software that was recently installed. Courtney is still training on how to use all of the features, but the membership management is up and running and working well. Chellsey Lind expressed concerns about confirmation students' behavior during Lenten Services. Pastor Jackie will address with the students/parents.

New business: The council reviewed estimates for a printer/copier in the church office. Chellsey Lind made a motion to table the decision until the next meeting after other vendors can be explored. Kathy Abrahamson seconded. Motion approved. Stewardship for all Seasons is a SEMN synod program that Barb Streed will be presenting to the parish council. Council members will look at dates for an upcoming council retreat.

The secretary's report was given. Motion to approve was made by Morgan Knutson, seconded by Matt Nelson. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by President Gene Topness. Mary Gudmundson seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m. and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next joint council meeting is at Highland Prairie on Sunday, May 17 at 5:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Tanya Wolfs, Elstad council secretary

April

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 HP Bible Study 1:30pm Pastor Off	2 Bulletin Items Duel!	3	4 Easter Egg Hunt @ Elstad 9am
5 Easter Sunday Elstad W.: 9 Highland Prairie W: 10:30 Easter Egg Hunt & Breakfast @ HP 8am	6 Bible Study @ Bethlehem 9:30am	7 Worship Committee Meeting 6:30pm	8 Pr. Jackie Office 8-4pm	9 Bulletin Items Duel!	10	11
12 Elstad W.: 9 Highland Prairie W: 10:30 HP: Meatball Dinner @ 11am HP Council Meeting @ 4:30pm	13 Bible Study @ Bethlehem 9:30am	14 HP WELCA Quilting @ 9:30am Education Committee Meeting 5:30pm	15 Pr. Jackie Office 8-4pm	16 Bulletin Items Duel!	17	18
19 Elstad W.: 9 Highland Prairie W: 10:30	20 Bible Study @ Bethlehem 9:30am	21 Newsletter Items Duel!	22 Pr. Jackie Office 8-4pm	23 Bulletin Items Duel!	24	25
26 Elstad W.: 9 Highland Prairie W: 10:30	27 Bible Study @ Bethlehem 9:30am	28	29 Pr. Jackie Office 8-4pm	30 Bulletin Items Duel!		

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



April 2026
Newsletter

Highland Prairie
Acolytes/Readers/Greeters

Sunday, April 5, 2026

Acolyte: Clara Hoiland
Readers: Arlene Johnson, Kaelynn Evenson
Greeters: Courtney Lee
Communion: David Markegard
Ushers: Ken Bakkum & Gary Rustad

Sunday, April 12, 2026

Acolyte: Slade Pepin
Readers: Brode Vickerman, Slade Pepin
Greeters: Kay Dahl

Communion: Chellsey Lind
Ushers: Brody Gellersen & Val Gudmundson

Sunday, April 19, 2026

Acolytes: Dominic Humble
Readers: Brody Gellersen, Joey Evenson
Greeters: Brode Vickerman, Brody Gellersen
Communion: Brenda Markegard
Ushers: Josef Pettit & Ken Bakkum

Sunday, April 26, 2026

Acolytes: Bella Westby
Readers: Mary Gudmundson, Bella Westby
Greeters: Martha Stensgard
Communion: Sharon Boyum
Ushers: Sharon Boyum & Chellsey Lind

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

Elstad
Acolytes/Readers/Greeters

Sunday, April 5, 2026

Acolyte: Quentin Daniels
Readers: Vicky Topness, Quentin Daniels
Greeters:

Sunday, April 12, 2026

Acolyte: Nolan Eide
Readers: Carol Overland, Nolan Eide
Greeters:

Sunday, April 19, 2026

Acolytes: Mason Wolfs
Readers: Dick Haight, Mason Wolfs
Greeters:

Sunday, April 26, 2026

Acolytes: Norah Eide
Readers: Carol Smith, Norah Eide
Greeters: