

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

~ January 2022 ~

Pastor, Rev. Luther Mathsen

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January Worship Schedule

Worship Notes

On Sunday, January 9th, we'll be observing the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. During our worship we will renew our baptismal vows.

Please note that parish worship schedule is altered for one Sunday on Sunday, January 16th. Elstad will worship at 10:30 a.m. This will accommodate its annual meeting that will follow worship at 11:30 a.m. We return to the regular worship schedule on Sunday, January 23rd. Highland Prairie's annual meeting will follow 10:30 worship on that Sunday.

January Worship Schedule

Christmas 2, January 2nd

Elstad-9:00 a.m.

Highland Prairie-10:30 a.m.

Jeremiah 31.7-14

Psalm 147.12-20

Ephesians 1.3-14

John 1.1-18

Baptism of Our Lord, January 9th

Renewal of Our Baptismal Vows

Elstad-9:00 a.m.

Highland Prairie-10:30 a.m.

Isaiah 43.11-7

Psalm 29

Acts 8.14-17

Luke 3.15-17, 21-22

Epiphany 2, January 16th

Highland Prairie-9:00 a.m.

Elstad-10:30 a.m.

+++NOTE: CHANGE OF TIME TO ACCOMMODATE ELSTAD'S ANNUAL MEETING.

Isaiah 62.1-5

Psalm 36.5-10

1 Corinthians 12.1-11

John 2.1-11

Epiphany 3, January 23rd

Elstad 9:00 a.m.

Highland Prairie-10:30 a.m.

Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 12.12-31a

Luke 4.14-21

Epiphany 4, January 30th

Elstad-9:00 a.m.

Highland Prairie-10:30 a.m.

Jeremiah 1.4-10

Psalm 71.1-6

1 Corinthians 13.1-13

Luke 4.21-30

Pastor's Page

January 2022

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Some years ago while serving in Kenyon, I was blessed to be able to take a sabbatical from my pastoral responsibilities. I spent the better part of my time studying St. Cyril of Jerusalem's teachings for those who were preparing to become new members of the church. I was surprised and encouraged by the vigor and gravity of the preparation which included bible study, introduction to Christian teachings, Christian worship, and fervent prayer. The seriousness of the church's catechesis of new members was noteworthy.

For almost two weeks of sabbatical, however, Bobbi and I spent in Rome and the surrounding region, visiting countless historic churches and religious sites. We were in awe of the beauty and inspired by the reverence and piety of sisters and brothers we encountered. I remember that time with great gratitude.

A favorite day included a visit to the region of Umbria. There a man, St. Francis of Assisi, had roamed the hills preaching the word of God to merchants and beggars. As legend has it, he also preached to creation's creatures; birds and the various four-legged animals he encountered along his way. His was a life given to the pure praise of God, creator of heaven and earth. Hence, from his mouth came the song of praise otherwise known as the canticle of the sun:

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
yours are the praises, the glory, the honor,
and all blessing. To You alone, Most High,
do they belong, no man is worthy to
mention Your name.

Do you hear Francis asserting himself in the presence of God? Surely not. Rather he is heard giving God all the glory. And perhaps strange to our ears, he seems to relish the infinite distance between God and it all. Indeed, "it's not about him." "Praised be you!" he voices. And then again, "Praised be you!" It's as if his heart is ready to explode, so full is the joy initiated by the sheer excellence of God.

Teacher and churchman, Anthony Esolen, writes: "When we praise God, we surely render unto him what he does not need. But for precisely this above all do we praise him, that he does not and cannot need our praise. There is always something bravely extravagant about praise, something overbrimming, like a zucchini flower or a bird of paradise."

One may well ask, "Why did God create when surely he did not need to? Why did he create something and someone; other(s) than himself? He did so in love. That's why. He created beautiful things and beautiful people out of sheer love who reflect who He is. Esolen captures this truth. He writes: "And man who looks upon these things, man who alone among mortal creatures can see and love the playfulness and gratuitous beauty... gives God praise in return, a grateful heart for the grace of creation."

Brothers and sisters, we live to reflect the praise of God's glory. Even in these days of winter, such praise springs forth from the depth of our being as we share in the glory of his creative act and its fruit. And what is that but an expression of our gratitude. And born of such love, we are given to do nothing other than reflect it in words and deed to the praise of His glory. What wondrous love is this!!! Praise to the Lord, the almighty, the King of creation!

Happy and blessed new year in glorifying God be unto us all!

Your brother in Christ, Pr. Luther+

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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 Education

Confirmation instruction for 7th and 8th graders resumes on Wednesday, January 12th, 6:30 p.m., at Elstad. Parents and students should note that in the event of Wednesday weather that leads to early school dismissal or school cancellation, confirmation class will be cancelled. Also, if any parent considers that the road to Elstad is hazardous, Pr. Mathsen honors your judgment.

Adult Study

During January 2022, Pr. Mathsen will lead a Bible study on Paul's letter to the Ephesians. We'll gather at Highland Prairie on Thursday, January 6th, 13th, and 20th. Please let Pr. Luther know you plan to participate.

Provisional Concerns of Congregational Life

Your parish council is most grateful for your financial support of the parish during 2021. Your continuing consideration of your offerings that help the church carry out her public ministry 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.

Thank you

Pr. Luther and Bobbi wish to thank the parish for the Christian love, gestures of kindness, and gifts we have received throughout 2021. But most of all we are thankful for the ways in which members of this parish witness to the grace and mercy of Christ in daily life. We feel most blessed to be in your company. Bless you all!

2022 Annual Meeting News

The annual meeting of Elstad Lutheran Church will be held on Sunday, January 16th, 2022, following worship. Elstad will worship at 10:30 a.m. and the annual meeting will be held at 11:30 a.m. The annual meeting of Highland Prairie will be held on Sunday, January 23rd, 2022, following 10:30 a.m. worship. The meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m.

Highland Prairie Lutheran Church Council Meeting

December 12, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by President Gordon Johnson.

Council Members present were Robert Anfinson, Karen Bakken, Joyce Dahl, Mary Gudmundson, Chris Hoiland, Steve Howe, Gordon Johnson, David Markegard and Lyle Meldahl; Tim Stensgard was absent.

A quorum was determined and a motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Steve Howe, Chris Hoiland seconded. Motion carried.

Devotions were given by Pastor Luther.

The Treasurer's Report was given by Karen Bakken. Year to date information provided are income \$79,493.00 expenses \$82,450.00; expenses exceed income by \$2957.00. A motion to approve as presented was made by David Markegard, Steve Howe seconded. Motion carried.

No President's report.

Pastor Luther reported on preparations for 5:00 Highland Prairie and 7:00 Elstad Christmas Eve Worship services, 9:00 Highland Prairie on Christmas Day. Worship times change in January to 9:00 at Elstad, 10:30 at HP. Confirmation continues; Advent Bible study cancelled; Note from ELCA regarding recent natural disasters in Midwest and will be included in prayers and giving information; Christmas Program today thanks to the parents working with our kids and thank you also to other lay leaders and volunteers in our congregation, Lisa Chiglo, parish secretary, and custodian Alison Feine; COVID's affect on our congregation and the concerns that this may be our new normal.

Correspondence received included an email notice from Synod regarding natural disasters; Thank you from Pastor Marie for support of Haiti, Thank you from Synod for support.

Committee Reports: General discussion.

Old Business: Council members on upcoming ballot, Chris Hoiland and Tim Stensgard are going off, replacements will be needed.

We have received generous donations and future commitments towards the door project. Doors for kitchen and Sunday school entrance have been ordered already. Discussion on ordering the double doors for upstairs now, prior to the funds being received. That would leave the basement double door yet to be ordered. Motion by Joyce Dahl, Steve Howe seconded to proceed ordering the upstairs set of doors. Motion carried.

Discussion on purchase of I pads and software needs. Chris Hoiland will provide numbers at next meeting.

New Business: Salaries for custodian, organist and treasurer were discussed and a motion for a three percent increase for the custodian was made by Karen Bakken, David Markegard seconded. Motion carried.

The Secretary's report was read and a motion to approve was made by Chris Hoiland, Joyce Dahl seconded. Motion carried.

A motion to adjourn at 6:27 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer by Pastor Luther was made by David Markegard, Steve Howe seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Gudmundson

Next meeting will be on January 9th at 7:30 pm at Highland Prairie.

Martin Luther on the Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6th)

Let us then observe how these Wise Men took no offense at the mean estate of the Babe and his parents, that we also may not be offended in the mean estate of our neighbor, but rather see Christ in him, since the Kingdom of Christ is to be found among the lowly and the despised in persecution, misery, and the holy cross. Those who seek Christ anywhere else find him not. The Wise Men discovered him not at Herod's court, not with the high priests, not in the great city of Jerusalem, but in Bethlehem, in the stable, with lowly folk, with Mary and Joseph. *In a word, they found him where one would have least expected.*

“They presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Incense is a live confession, full of faith, by which we offer all that we have and are to God. The Wise Men traversed a long distance to bring this gift. Spiritually we can bring it swiftly and easily. The gift of gold is that we should confess Christ as King, laying aside our own esteem and the dictates of our reason and good intentions, that we should present ourselves as foolish, naked, and ready to be ruled. The sons of obedience are tractable, gladly accept their King, and bring all into submission to Christ. The incorrigibles who resist their King fall into tumult, anger, dissension, murmuring, and blasphemy. Thus we see that incense is faith and gold is hope, because faith believes that all things are and ought to be of God, and hope accepts and sustains what faith believes. The myrrh is love. Faith takes us from ourselves, that we should refer everything to God with praise and gratitude. Hope fills us with the concerns of others, that we may endure all in patience without resentment. Love reduces us to that nothing which we were in the beginning, so that we desire neither goods nor anything outside of God, but simply that we should commit ourselves truly to his good pleasure. This is the way of the cross by which we come most speedily into life.

We can present our gifts in the same way as the Lord says: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” He who gives of his goods to help the poor, to send children to school, to educate them in God's Word and other arts that we may have good ministers---he is giving to the Baby Jesus. He was not only born poor and needy but also, on account of Herod, had at once to flee the country. On the journey into Egypt the presents of the Wise Men must have come in very handy. So in our day we should not forget those who are suffering persecution.

Highland Prairie Financials for November 2021

YTD Income	\$ 79,493
YTD Expenses	\$ 82,450
Expenses exceed Income	\$ 2,957
YTD Budget	\$ 87,725
YTD Income	\$ 79,493
YTD Under	\$ 8,232

JANUARY 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*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

*Happy
Anniversary*

2~ John Smith
4~ Michelle Rein
6~ Sandy Kiel
~ Bricker Dahl
7~ Angel Bakke
8~ Mark Dahl
9~ Nathan Bakke
10~ Philip Dragvold
~ Nancy Rustad
~ Sawyer James
12~ Kay Dahl
13~ Steve Chiglo
~ Joshua Dahl
~ Daniel Sjarpe
~ Tyler Berg
~ Darren Stockton
14~ Michelle Ryan
~ Colton Horning
15~ Carolyn Smith
~ Kasten Klug
16~ David Bakke
~ Owen Dammen

17~ Jennifer Nepstad
~ Stacy Mensink
~ Shane Jacobson
~ Lucas Redalen
18~ Barb Lee
~ Brenda Chiglo
~ Peter Stensgard
~ Ann Hoiland
19~ Easton Grabau
23~ Katherine Chiglo
~ James Bearbower
24~ Martha Stensgard
~ Deborah Mensink
25~ Ellen Feine
~ Sarah Freese
~ Paula Howe
26~ Arden Nepstad
27~ Michael Oian
~ Dave Lawstuen
~ Stephanie Erickson
29~ Freda Kiel

7~ Dan & Erika Lind
15~ Jerry & Julie Dragvold
28~ David & Sue Larson

JANUARY

2022

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 <i>Happy New Year!</i>
2 EL—9:00 a.m. HP—10:30 a.m.	3	4	5 Bulletin	6 Bible study at 10:00 a.m.	7	8
9 EL—9:00 a.m. HP—10:30 a.m. Council Meetings EL—5:30 p.m. Parish—6:30 p.m. HP—7:30 p.m.	10 Deadline for Annual Reports!	11	12 Confirmation 6:30 p.m. Bulletin Deadline	13 Bible study at 10:00 a.m.	14	15
16 *Time Change HP—9:00 a.m. EL—10:30 a.m. Elstad's Annual Meeting 11:30	17	18	19 Confir- mation 6:30 p.m. Newsletter Deadline! Bulletin Deadline	20 Bible study at 10:00 a.m.	21	22
23 EL—9:00 a.m. HP—10:30 a.m. 11:30 HP Annual Mtg. 30 EL—9:00 a.m. HP—10:30 a.m.	24 31	25	26 Confirmation 6:30 p.m. Bulletin Deadline	27	28	29

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

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Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage Paid

Peterson, MN 55962

Permit No. #6



January 2022 Newsletter

HIGHLAND PRAIRIE ACOLYTES/READERS/GREETERS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2022

ACOLYTES: GUS HOILAND

READERS: GRANT DEGEORGE, SYLVIA PASSOW

GREETERS: GORDON & ARLENE JOHNSON

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2022

ACOLYTES: CHASE HUMBLE, GRANT DEGEORGE

READERS: CREIGHTON HOINESS, ARLENE JOHNSON

GREETERS: SHARON & PAUL EHLER

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2022

ACOLYTES: GRANT DEGEORGE, GUS HOILAND

READERS: LUCAS REDALEN, SHARON EHLER

GREETERS: ROGER & SARAH BEARBOWER

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2022

ACOLYTES: CHASE HUMBLE, CHEYANNE DAHLE

READERS: CHEYANNE DAHLE, SCOTT BESTUL

GREETERS: DOUG LIND FAMILY

SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2022

ACOLYTES: CHEYANNE DAHLE, CARSON JOHNSON

READERS: KENNA GUDMUNDSON, LYNNETTE PEDERSON

GREETERS: LYLE & ANN MELDAHL

ELSTAD ACOLYTES/READERS/USHERS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2022

ACOLYTE: THEA ARENDS

READERS: KYLE DANIELS, CAROLYN SMITH

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2022

ACOLYTE: SARI REIN

READERS: INDY QUALY, TOM DYBING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2022

ACOLYTE: JENSYN STORHOFF

READERS: LIZ HAGEMAN, GENE TOPNESS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2022

ACOLYTE: MILEY KNUTSON

READERS: SARI RYAN, JOHN ABRAHAMSON

SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2022

ACOLYTE: AUBREY DANIELS

READERS: JENSYN STORHOFF, LORI BAKKE

USHERS: LARRY TOPNESS, DICK HAIGHT,
WAYNE FINNEGAN, RICH NEPSTAD,
J.T. REIN