

ESTHER LUTHERAN, ELCA **January 2024 NEWSLETTER**
“Knowing Christ – Making Christ Known Through Faith, Hope and Love.”

Pastor Scott Hoecker Email: prscott@estherlutheran.net Cell: (218) 355-0187
11019 625th Ave – Parkers Prairie, MN 56361 Church/office Phone: 218-338-2171
Website: www.estherlutheran.com Office Email: secretary@estherlutheran.net
Caring Ministry Email: caringministry@estherlutheran.net
Facebook: www.facebook.com/estherlutheran



Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

*“Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.
You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call
him Jesus.” Luke 2:30-31*

Dear Beloved in Christ of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod,

This message is written in the season of Advent, a season I have loved since I was old enough to know that there were seasons. There is something about this season's mix of melancholy and hope, darkness, and light, that resonates with me. Children are central to the stories of Advent and Christmas – both in their preciousness and in their vulnerability. Every parent knows the agonizing mix of hope and fear that we carry for our children. As I write this, there is a devastating war happening in the land where the stories of our faith unfolded. And tragically, this war's devastating cost is landing mostly on children. *“A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children...”* (Matt 2:16). Join me in praying every day for a just peace in the lands of Israel and Palestine and for protection for the children.

As a parent and now grandparent, I know that the most desperate prayers we pray are for our children. When I visit congregation members and leaders across the synod, one deep question is always lurking: “What will our children's and grandchildren's experience of church be?” What I have learned is that making it about our kids means making it about faith in Jesus, plain and simple. We must give up needing our kids' experience of church to be like ours was, and instead pray for and work toward a church where children simply have a deep faith in Jesus Christ and a community of faith that loves them. It's back to basics! Back to basics often involves letting go of cherished traditions, buildings, and ways of doing things that may have worked for us, but now only hinder us from focusing on growing our and our children's faith.

So, much of our work this last year has and will continue to focus on how to become a church where a child's faith can grow. This does not mean throwing programs and events at our kids, hoping something sticks. IT MEANS MAKING OUR LIFE TOGETHER ABOUT OUR FAITH IN JESUS and then generously, freely and often, sharing our faith with our children. Jesus-loving adults are the force that shapes the faith of children. This means freeing up communities to expend less energy on “keeping this thing going”, and much more on hearing the gospel, praying, dwelling in God's word, serving the neighbor and seeking Jesus in everyday life.

Hence, this year has been filled with hard and focused work of continuing to build out a robust network of support and accountability for lay ministers who serve in Word and Sacrament ministry under the mentorship of a seminary-trained, ordained pastor. Our process for vitality of smaller member congregations, “Rural Revival,” has drawn us deeply into finding right-sized ways of providing word and sacrament ministry tailored to the unique needs of each community. While neither of these efforts look like “youth ministry”, they really are because they free people to be more focused on the basics, more focused on following Jesus. ANY church that is focused on following Jesus is a church that is for the children.

So that is my simple appeal to you as you gather for your annual meetings this year. Let's make it all about being Jesus-followers sharing our faith with everyone, starting with our children.

Your Partner in Christ's Mission,
Bishop Bill Tesch

IN OUR PRAYERS

Colleen Burquest
Kristy Fyhrie
Ernie & Georgia Hart
Mike Heiser
Anniley Lambrecht
Cindy Skoglund
Luella Thom
Ralph Townsend
Marsha Clow – sister of Linda Arvidson
Ty Hawes – friend of the McDaniels
Cindy Rachuy - sister of Dawn Kreidler
Barb Tvedt – mother of Joan Burquest
Jen Wintheiser – friend of Esther members
Family and Friends of Jaci Schlosser, Joan Arvidson,
Kathy Koep, Doug Muyres, Merton Arvidson

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1/01 Shauna Nordlund
1/01 Bea Skoglund
1/03 Andrea Carlson
1/03 Samuel Krueger
1/08 Inez Haase
1/08 Don Ellwanger
1/08 Elliott Arvidson
1/10 Nicholas Aldrich
1/12 Marge Nelson
1/12 Megan Gardner
1/14 Eleanor Thompson
1/15 Cindy Skoglund
1/16 Elaine Fyhrie
1/18 Spencer Pomeranz
1/20 Joey Orsello
1/21 Laney Grinager
1/23 Jace McCarty
1/24 Clayton Skoglund
1/26 Sawyer Sather
1/26 Stephanie Stueve
1/27 Derek Denny
1/30 Dick Thom
1/30 Delmar Wehking



Quilting Ministry will be on January 11 and January 25, starting at 9 am. Please bring a lunch. We look forward to a fun time of quilting and fellowship!

SERVING IN JANUARY

Pastor: Scott Hoecker
Organists: Marcia Guenther, Brad Lambrecht
Altar Care: Deb Koep
Communion Assistant: Deb Koep
Lay readers: Deb Koep
Ushers: Jeff Koep, Brady Arvidson
Acolyte: NEED VOLUNTEERS
Birthday Card Sender: Jewel Townsend
Tech Team: Mike Lage, Jewel Townsend
Birthday Fellowship Families:
Dick & Luella Thom, Larry & Lana Doll

SIGN UP SHEETS FOR 2024 WORSHIP TASKS ARE ON THE NARTHEX TABLE.

PASTOR SCOTT WILL BE ON VACATION December 31 through January 27.

Deacon Sharon Bridges will be covering any emergencies during this time. Her contact number is 320-808-5515.



Join us Sunday, February 4 to celebrate Lois Henningsgaard-Rosenquist on her 99th Birthday! A reception will follow worship.



Click below to view the December 2023 issue of the Northwest Minnesota Synod, ELCA monthly newsletter:
<https://mailchi.mp/cord/nwmn-synods-northern-lights-e-newsletter-15729958?e=69992f3bc5>

You can also subscribe to the newsletter at:
<https://www.nwmnsynod.org/subscribers>

All Financial books and reports are due to the church by Friday, January 12, for the auditors to do their work. Please include all bank statements from 2023.

All final written financial and committee reports for the Annual Meeting packets are due to the church office by Sunday, January 21.

If you are willing to help put together Annual Meeting packets, please contact Jewel Townsend in the church office.

Notification of Annual Meeting **Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA**

Notice is given for the Annual Meeting of Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA. The meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2024. The meeting will take place at Esther Lutheran Church at approximately 10:45 a.m. There will be Election of Council Members, Election of Cemetery Board Members, Approval of the 2024 Proposed Budget, Reports from the 2023 year will be presented, voting members to the Synod Assembly will be elected and any other items of business can be brought to this meeting. All confirmed members of Esther Lutheran are voting members of the congregation. The back up date for the Annual meeting is Sunday, February 5, 2024. A meal provided by the Youth Group will follow the meeting. If you have any items to add to the agenda, please contact Council President Mike Lage.

CHURCH COUNCIL NOTES

Kathryn McDaniel and Jewel Townsend are looking for people to take the next 3 years of their council terms. If you are interested, please contact Kathryn, Jewel or one of the other council members.

COMMUNION SUNDAYS this month will be on January 14 and January 28.

We will be taking down the Christmas tree and decorations on January 21 after worship. Many hands make quick work!

Thank you to Marcia Guenther for continuously coordinating our worship music and for encouraging and helping others share their musical talents, as well as sharing her own.

Thank you to Megan Townsend for leading worship on December 31 and January 7.

Thank you to Pastor Tom Kolden for leading our worship on January 14.

Thank you to the Youth Group and their leaders for leading our worship on January 21.

As we start this new year, we ask each of you to prayerfully discern how you can share your time, talents and treasure here at Esther and in our communities. We have many opportunities at Esther to join a variety of committees and serve your congregation during worship services. We encourage you to try something new, share your ideas and skills with others, and be an encourager of those around you to do the same. We pray for God's blessing on each of you, on our communities, and on our congregation, as we walk together as a community of faith this coming year.



Financial Update as of December 31, 2023

Budgeted Contributions	123,606.00
Actual Contributions	109,472.66
Difference	-14,133.34

Checkbook balance as of 12/31/23 6,003.62

Savings balance on 01/01/23 = \$14,718.96

Savings balance on 12/31/23 = \$10,462.60

	Attendance	Offering
12/3	55	924.00
12/10	114	900.00
12/17	53	1,230.00
12/24 10 am	50	2,020.00
12/24 7 pm	68	1,633.00
12/31	19	520.00



ESTHER WELCA REPORT January 2024

The December meeting was held Sunday, December 10th @ 8:30 AM. We did not have a Christmas Party this year as we had the October Women's Night out instead.

We have in our checking account \$ 3,119.88 and in our savings/memorial account \$ 9,653.30.

There were only 3 of us in attendance but needed to take care of year end business. We usually do all our donations at the end of the year.

The following were designated:

Immanuel Lutheran Angel Tree support \$ 300.00
There were over 600 gifts needed for our little angels this past Christmas.
Parkers Prairie Backpack Program \$ 200.00
Parkers Prairie Ambulance \$ 100.00
Hilltop Kitchens \$ 100.00
Sunday School \$ 200.00
Pastor Gift \$ 100.00
Justin Schlosser \$ 200.00

Thank you to all who purchased Poinsettia's to add to our Christmas decorations. The WELCA ordered a number of pixie poinsettias for the shut-ins and those we wanted to recognize and "Thank" for their work this past year for our congregation. Please make sure you give your personal thanks to Marcia, Mike, Jewel, as well as the band members.

Faith Lutheran from Eagle Bend invited our WELCA to their Christmas Program/Party. I was the only one who attended from Esther. They had a nice service and a quilt show, many of them were Christmas. A beautiful lunch was served. There were about 60 in attendance. Many door prizes were given out.

Sue brought back the secretary book since she has been tied up with her secretary job at First Lutheran. We need someone to take over the secretary's position. Looking for volunteers.... Please remember the Parkers Prairie Food Shelf this winter if you have any extra to spare. There is a record number of our neighbors that are in need.

The WELCA will help host the Men's Night Out. This will be held Wednesday evening at 6:00 PM on January 31st at Herby's in Carlos. A separate invitation has been mailed to all the guys listed in our directory and a recap of the invitation is shown elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our next meeting is Sunday, January 14th @ 8:30. Please try to make it. Do we need to switch the days so more of you can make it??
Luella Thom
President

COMING UP IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH:

- Ash Wednesday, February 14
- Acolyte Training (Sundays before worship)
- Third Grade Bible Classes (during Sunday School)
- First Communion Classes (TBD)



Men of Esther - You're Invited

You are invited to an ***Esther Men's Night Out***. We will meet at Herby's in Carlos. A get together where no one must work..not even the women!!

Wednesday, January 31st, 6:00 PM

Hosted by the Esther MELCA
(men with help of WELCA Esther Lutheran)

A condensed menu will be available for your purchase.... as well as any beverages you wish.

We hope you can join us for a night of **relaxation**, conversation, and catching up with what your latest projects are.

Please RSVP to Luella @ 320-815-7701 so she can reservations for all of us.

Hope you can join!!!

If you are interested in being on the future Call Committee, please contact a member of the church council.



You are welcome to drop off eyeglasses that you are no longer using, in the collection box in the narthex.



LUTHER CREST
SUMMER 2024

CREATED TO BE

Brochures are available in the narthex. For more summer program information, visit luthercrest.org or call 320-846-2431

- Elementary Camps
- Middle School Camps
- Senior High Camps
- Day Camps
- All People Camps
- Women's Week
- **FREE** camp opportunities through Camp Magi, Blazers, Keepers and more!

Luther Crest Early Bird Registration runs through Feb. 14, 2024. Brochures are available in the narthex or visit www.luthercrest.org

The **Esther Camp and Spiritual Growth Fund** was created to help our young members attend bible camp to enrich their faith journey. To date the fund has over \$5,000. The Camp Fund Application can be found on our website www.estherlutheran.com under the "Faith Formation" tab.



NOW HIRING FOR SUMMER 2024

Luther Crest Bible Camp 2024
Summer Staff applications are being taken. Check out www.luthercrest.org for full job descriptions and application process.

We are looking for an individual to learn the church secretary position as a backup. For more information regarding responsibilities and hours, please contact Jewel in the church office.

If you would like to be added to our email list, please contact secretary@estherlutheran.net

Visit our website at estherlutheran.com

Follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/estherlutheran/

We look forward to worshipping with you!

January 2024 *“Knowing Christ-Making Christ Known through Faith, Hope and Love”*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 7 pm Council	4	5	6 Epiphany
7 Baptism of Our Lord 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship Coffee Fellowship after worship 2 pm Worship at St. Williams	8	9	10	11 9 am Quilting Ministry	12	13
14 Second Sunday after Epiphany 8:30 am WELCA 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship w/Communion & Noisy Offering Coffee Fellowship after worship 2 pm Worship at St. Williams	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Third Sunday after Epiphany 9 am Sunday School 9:30 am Birthday Fellowship 10 am Worship Coffee Fellowship after worship 2 pm Worship at St. Williams	22	23	24	25 9 am Quilting Ministry	26	27
28 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship w/Communion 11 am Annual Meeting 12 pm Meal served by Youth Group 2 pm Worship at St. Williams	29	30	31 6 pm Confirmation Mentor Potluck			

