



**ESTHER LUTHERAN, ELCA**  
May 2024 Newsletter  
*"Knowing Christ – Making Christ Known Through  
Faith, Hope and Love."*

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## **Grace Experienced . . .**

In the past, I heard from some folks that you have to earn grace (or God's favor) . . . and (in the moment) I was able to speak to the Lutheran perspective . . . grace is free.

There's nothing you or I can do to deserve it as the small catechism notes, "I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him . . ."

Yet, giving the right answer (in the moment) didn't seem very satisfying because those hearing the answer seemed less than convinced. So, I spoke with my spiritual director about this and he noticed how challenging it can be to believe grace is free.

As I thought about this, I can see why it's hard to believe grace is free because on a daily basis - don't we live in an economy of merits (or doing) . . .

At work, there are evaluations for performance . . . And if we're self-employed, profit becomes the measure for performance . . . At school, there are grades given for homework . . . Grades that are tied to how much effort we put into our homework. At home, there are chores that when performed well . . . might bring praise while scolding might occur when they're not done well (or not done at all).

The economy of merits is all about doing and in this type of economy we are human doings. It's the water we swim in daily - isn't it?

Now, I'm not saying we should stop working or doing chores or going to school. There are things to do . . . Yet, before God we are human beings and the water we're called to return to and swim in . . . is the waters of baptism.

We return daily as we repent of our human doings and ongoing efforts to believe or come to Jesus Christ by our own strength . . .

And as the small catechism notes, "but instead, the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy, and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ . . ."

What if grace is free . . . And is experienced when and where God's Spirit chooses . . . As the Apostle Paul writes,

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — not the result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Pr. Scott

## IN OUR PRAYERS

Yuvonne Anderson  
Colleen Burquest  
Larry Doll  
Kristy Fyhrie  
Ernie & Georgia Hart  
Mike Heiser  
Al Pederson  
Luella Thom  
Ralph Townsend  
Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons  
Barb Burns – sister of Jerry Anderson  
Marsha Clow - sister of Linda Arvidson  
Ty Hawes – friend of the McDaniels  
Woody Hoiseth – friend of the Thoms  
Ivy McKane – friend of Hagens and Guenthers  
Jamison Pogose – nephew of Chuck Pogose  
Cindy Rachuy - sister of Dawn Kreidler  
Barb Tvedt – mother of Joan Burquest  
Jason Wehking – friend of Esther members  
Jen Wintheiser – friend of Esther members  
Family and Friends of: Cindy Skoglund, Mary Durling,  
Lee Wesolowski

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

05/01 Kyle Grinager  
05/01 Danny Townsend  
05/02 Amanda Arvidson  
05/04 Robert Hoppe  
05/05 Jennifer Higgs  
05/05 Kelly McPhail  
05/05 Dennis Rosenquist  
05/05 Christopher Skoglund  
05/07 Mark Ratajesak  
05/07 Doug Skoglund  
05/07 Kolten Wunderlich  
05/08 Anna Hagen  
05/10 Tyler Arvidson  
05/12 Kevin Bunde  
05/12 Camryn Schlosser  
05/13 Liam Arvidson  
05/17 Luella Thom  
05/19 Logan Arvidson  
05/20 Kylie Velde  
05/22 Andrew Sansness  
05/23 Lance Klimek  
05/24 Tanner Wambeke  
05/26 Bree Sansness  
05/26 Avery Stueve  
05/27 Grayson Timm  
05/28 Lisa Wunderlich  
05/29 Mary Robinson  
05/30 Reid Gardner

## SERVING IN MAY

**Pastor:** Scott Hoecker  
**Organists:** Marcia Guenther, Brad Lambrecht  
**Altar Care:** Linda Arvidson  
**Communion Assistant:** Larry Doll  
**Lay readers:** Lana Doll  
**Ushers:** Rick Arvidson, Mike Arvidson  
**Acolyte:** NEED VOLUNTEER  
**Birthday Card Sender:** Nancy Bunde  
**Tech Team:** Mandy Arvidson, Mike Lage, Jewel Townsend, Nancy Bunde  
**Birthday Fellowship:** Trent & Anna Hagen, Russ & Jen Higgs, Dennis & Gloria Rosenquist, Dave & Nancy Bunde



### **Wed, May 1**

6 pm – Mentor and family potluck and dinner  
worship

### **Sun, May 19 – Confirmation Sunday**

9 am – Arrive for pictures and reception  
10 am – Affirmation of Baptism worship

### **Those Affirming their Baptism:**

Wyatt Asleson, McKinnely Bosl, Landen Nistler,  
Calie Schlosser, Isabell Steidl



### **High School Graduate Recognition**

Congratulations to our PPHS

Graduates! We honored our grads on

April 28 with a reception before worship, and during  
worship they shared their future plans and received  
their tie blankets and a blessing from the congregation.





**It was a joy to have Gary & Karen Tuil and family join us for worship at Esther on April 28 to celebrate their marriage that took place at Esther 50 years ago – Happy Anniversary and Congratulations!**

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**On Sunday, May 26, we will be having a special worship service, to honor Pastor Scott and Jacey in appreciation for their years of care and service to Esther and this community. Potluck to follow worship. We hope that you can join us! Pastor Scott's last day of serving Esther will be May 31.**

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VBS at Esther will be June 9-12, starting each evening with supper at 5:30 pm with lessons, music, crafts and worship from 6-8 pm. For more information contact Karin Wagner. Be sure to invite friends, grandkids, cousins, and neighbors to join in the fun! There will be a sign up sheet for students and volunteers, as well as for food/items needed, in the coming weeks on the narthex table.

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**Esther Youth that are attending the youth gathering this summer are starting to actively sell stock. As a stockholder you are entitled to the following:**

1.) Access to New Orleans updates! Stock holders will have exclusive access to

communication with us during the trip via postcards and Facebook updates daily.

2.) An invitation to the Stockholder Presentation! After returning home from the Gathering, we will hold a Stock Holders presentation to which stockholders will be invited to come enjoy treats hosted by the Gathering participants as well as a presentation about the trip.

3.) An opportunity to pray for our youth! You can pray for our hearts and minds to be open to this experience, to learn something new, to deepen our faith & spiritual growth.

Stock purchase forms are located on the narthex table. If you have any questions, please contact Joan Burquest, Brady Arvidson, or one of the Youth Gathering attendees. Those attending are Emma Arvidson, Taya Arvidson, Wyatt Asleson, McKinnely Bosl, Arewen Dobratz and Elora Wagner. Thank you for your support of Esther Lutheran Youth through your purchase of shares of stock.



**Thank you to Esther Harmony for sharing your voices - it is a blessing to have special music during worship! Thank you to Marcia Guenther for coordinating practices and leading the group!**





**On April 14, ten students received Spark Bibles and 3 students received Spark Story Bibles at Esther!**  
*"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*  
*Psalm 119:105*

<b>2024 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>\$124,376.00</b>
<b>Contributions needed per month</b>	<b>\$10,364.67</b>
<b>Contributions needed per week</b>	<b>\$2,391.84</b>
<b>Contributions YTD as of 4/30/24</b>	<b>\$38,124.64</b>
<b>Budget needed YTD</b>	<b>\$41,458.67</b>
<b>YTD Actual Contributions vs. Budget</b>	<b>- \$3,334.03</b>

**ESTHER WELCA REPORT May 2024**

WELCA met on April 14th, 2024 @ 8:30. We had 6 members present for the meeting.

We are still in need of a voting member to attend the Annual Convention September 20 & 21. WELCA pays for the registration and hotel accommodation.

Ice Cream Social is right around the corner ... make sure on your calendar: JULY 28th .

Ruth Circle will Make the Ice Cream  
 Naomi Circle will serve  
 Martha Circle will do advertising

Checking account is at \$ 2,035.07. Savings/memorial is at \$ 6,914.21. There are still expenses to come out for Cindy's funeral.  
 The Anderson Florist invoice just arrived and needs to be paid \$349.

The AED is here and installed. The WELCA covered the costs to get it ordered. We had pledged \$1000 to the unit. Currently, we are still hoping to get some help from the congregation to help cover the rest of the costs; namely, \$1065.00.

Linda took 2 quilts to use for the Parkers Prairie Ambulance fund raising they were holding. Luella took 2 quilts to great nieces who lost everything in a fire. Six were taken to the Osakis Fire Dept. The Parkers Ambulance also took 2. Think there were 6 given to Todd County Social Service. We also took 3 quilts to the Conference 8 Spring meeting. They were going to a women's shelter in St. Cloud that Patty Wetterling funds. We offered the quilts to the congregation; but no one has made any requests they wanted to purchase any. Jewel suggested we donate 2 or 3 to Luther Crest for the Quilt Auction. It will be held live this year rather than on-line. We will need to box up some of them to go to Wadena in early June to deliver to the truckline there for Lutheran World Relief. The rest we will save to use as fire quilts or if an organization request any.

April 28th was the Senior Recognition Day for our seniors: Camryn Schlosser, Seth Sansness, and Brody Lenzen. Nancy chaired and pretty much did all the work for the event herself without any help from the rest of the Martha Circle. The blankets were presented during the worship service. THANK YOU, NANCY,... GREAT JOB!! Thanks also to Jakki Wehking for doing the embroidery on each of the blankets. We discussed the coffee cups in the kitchen. We do not have enough to use for an event, and they are very small. Talked about possibly using the leftover anniversary cups ... ordering new ... but making sure we donate the old cups to Someplace Safe so they are not taking up space in the kitchen.

Kathy Mittag volunteered to make hot pads to use under big hot dish pans for potlucks or funerals. Hot items directly on the stainless-steel tables cool down very quickly if something is not used.

We also discussed the old electric roasters. One does not work for sure; one runs extremely hot and is hard to control. We need to investigate throwing away the old ones and possibly purchasing new. Larry & Lana had difficulty with the roasters when making the beans last year for the Pork Chop Dinner. They will go through the roasters and throw out the ones not working and report back to WELCA.

We discussed needing to add purchasing some water bottles for the family when we do funerals. Many are coming down to get glasses of cold water and trying to carry them back upstairs. Much easier to have water bottles for the immediate family available.

We discussed the amount of money donated to the NWMN Synod. We had a list showing how much each church has donated. When we have our Spring and Fall conferences, for years have been giving \$25 for assessments and \$25 for offering. It was decided to increase that amount to \$50 for each of these going forward.

The Backpack program needs money in Parkers Prairie. It was voted to give them \$100 to help for the rest of this year. The Food Shelf is also in need of money, so we decided to donate \$100 to them as well.

Nancy, Jewel, Donna, Yuvonne, and Luella attended the Conference 8 Spring gathering at Peace in Ashby on April 27th. The music was wonderful; especially when you have 137 ladies singing. There were 17 churches represented out of the total of 30 in our Conference 8. There was a record number of attendees; mainly because the speaker was Patty Wetterling. She talked about how faith and hope got her through all those years waiting for answers regarding her son Jacob.

The Conference 8 Fall Gathering is at First Lutheran in Parkers... in our back yard, so please put this on your calendar. The date is October 8th.

Next meeting is May 12th ... Mother's Day.

Luella Thom, President

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**2024 DIRECTORIES ARE AVAILABLE ON THE USHER TABLE.** We will not be labeling directories this year – please take as needed for you and your family. Additional copies will be printed as needed throughout the year. If you would like a directory sent to you by email or USPS, please contact [secretary@estherlutheran.net](mailto:secretary@estherlutheran.net).

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If you would like to be added to our email list, please contact [secretary@estherlutheran.net](mailto:secretary@estherlutheran.net)

Visit our website at [estherlutheran.com](http://estherlutheran.com)

Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/estherlutheran/](https://facebook.com/estherlutheran/)



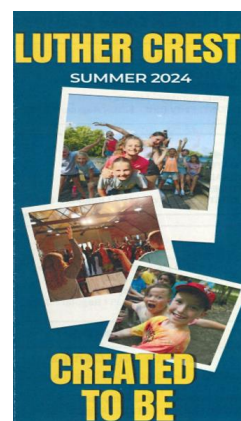
**SUMMER IS ALMOST HERE**, and that means that **CAMP REGISTRATION IS OPEN!** Luther Crest has added programs back into the summer schedule, many of which they had prior to 2020. Luther Crest also has some new programs, and favorite programs that they have had for many years. Following are the list of programs on the schedule for this summer for youth, families, women, and pastors/church leaders.

**Programs for Summer 2024:**

**(Re-added Programs from prior to 2020)**

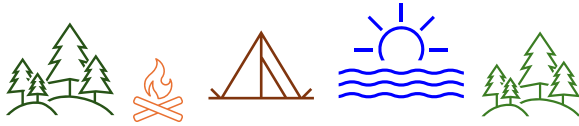
**(New Programs as of 2024)**

- On Site Day Camp (Grades Completed: K-5th)
- Explorers (Grades Completed: K-2)
- Seekers (Grades Completed: 2-4)
- Leapers (Grades Completed: 3-6)
- Witnesses (Grades Completed: 6-9)
- Xtreme Camp (Grades Completed: 7-9)
- Night Owls (Grades Completed: 6-9)
- Wet and Wilderness (Grades Completed: 7-9)
- Blazers (Grades Completed: 9-12) FREE!
- Keepers (Grades Completed: 10-12) FREE!
- Proclaimers (Grades Completed: 9-12)
- Women's Week
- Camp Magi
- Family Camp
- All People Camp



Brochures are available in the narthex. For more summer program information, visit [luthercrest.org](http://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!



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](http://www.estherlutheran.com) under the "Faith Formation" tab.

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## DAY OF CARING

Parkers Prairie High School Student Council is planning for its annual Day of Caring. On Friday, May 17, the students of PPHS will be ready, willing, and able to help out in the community.

If you would like help with spring clean up or have a special project that needs to get done in the Parkers Prairie, Urbank, and Miliona area, contact the PPHS Student Council Advisor David O'Brien at [dobrien@pp.k12.mn.us](mailto:dobrien@pp.k12.mn.us).

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Our 15th Annual Spring Fundraiser is here! We invite you to be a part of our Annual Spring Fundraiser in whatever way you can! With so many options to choose from, we hope you will find a way to join us in making a difference in the lives of crime victims in Douglas County. Someplace Safe works to create safer communities in West Central Minnesota by providing high quality crime victim services. Participate in our silent auction and bid on items, or buy one outright! [www.betterunite.com/springfund24](http://www.betterunite.com/springfund24)  
OR

If you aren't able to participate in the auction, you can also mail a check to: Douglas Advocacy Office | 700 Cedar St. Ste. 268 | Alexandria, MN 56308

Auction will be open to bidding May 1, 2024, at 8:00 am and will close May 5, 2024, at 8:00 pm.



## CALL COMMITTEE

If you are interested in serving on the Call Committee, to help complete the Call Process, there is a sign-up sheet and resources on the table by the offices. You can also research the responsibilities of the Call Committee and the Call Process by going to <https://www.nwmnsynod.org/resources/pages/call-process-resources> and clicking on "Call Process Handbook".

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At the Annual Meeting the congregation voted to again do BINGO at the Fall Festival on August 3 & 4. However, we did not have anyone step up to coordinate/chair this event. If you are interested in volunteering to coordinate/chair BINGO, please contact the church office by June 1. If we do not have anyone volunteer, the Fall Festival Committee has other organizations willing to take this over.

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## WORSHIP BY THE WATER JULY 14<sup>TH</sup>

Worship by  
the water  
will be at  
Rodney



Peterson's home on Sunday, July 14<sup>th</sup>. Worship will begin at 10 am with a potluck following. Be sure to invite friends, family and neighbors to this annual fun event!

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 6 pm Confirmation Mentor and Family Potluck 7:30 pm Council	2	3	4
5 <b>Sixth Sunday of Easter</b> 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship w/Communion Coffee Fellowship after worship 2 pm Worship at St. Williams	6 6 pm Worship Committee	7	8	9	10	11
12 <b>Seventh Sunday of Easter &amp; Mother's Day</b> 8:30 am WELCA 9 am Sunday School (last day until Fall) 9:30 am Birthday Fellowship 10 am Worship w/Noisy Offering 2 pm Worship at St. Williams	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 <b>Pentecost &amp; Affirmation of Baptism</b> 9:15 am Confirmand Reception 10 am Affirmation of Baptism Worship w/Communion 2 pm Worship at St. Williams	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 <b>Holy Trinity Sunday</b> 10 am Worship w/Pastor Appreciation Potluck following worship 2 pm Worship at St. Williams	27 <b>Memorial Day</b>	28	29	30 Newsletter articles due to church office	31 Pastor Scott's last day at Esther	

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