



ESTHER LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

September 2025 Newsletter

"Knowing Christ – Making Christ Known Through Faith, Hope and Love."

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FIRSTS AND LASTS

As we start the new school year, we pray for all those that will be encountering the "firsts" and the "lasts". The first day of kindergarten or college, is exciting and maybe a bit scary for the child, and for parents maybe a little (or alot) sad. The same can be said for those with high school seniors celebrating their last-first day of school. Those "firsts" and "lasts" can be tough, and can bring us both joy and grief at the same time, but they are part of the journey. We grow and develop our knowledge and faith through these times of transition in this life.

We encountered this in our family these past few months. Megan graduated from college in May, and because her plans out east did not pan out, we were unexpectedly blessed to have her home for the summer. And though the initial disappointment hit hard, God had a plan. As the summer played out it was clear that she was meant to be home. She got the chance to have some special time and conversations with her uncle in his last weeks, as well as connecting with her extended family during this time. The last couple of months have been trying for our whole family, so it was nice to be together to comfort one another. This time also helped us as a family realize how important our faith is. Faith that God will see us through even the darkest days. God has a plan even greater than we can imagine, and even through our difficult times and trials, there is beauty in how He connects our hearts and souls with Him and others.

Jeremiah 29:11 tells us, *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

This scripture speaks to us as individuals and as a congregation. God has a plan for each of us, and though life will not always be easy, our faith is what can get us through those tough days, months and even years. God does not abandon us. He loves us and is with us always. He is with us from our first breath, until our last, and all the precious time in between.

As a congregation, sometimes it is hard to let go of old ways to make room to try something new. May we open our hearts and minds to see how the Holy Spirit is moving here at Esther. Stay tuned - there are some refreshing new ideas coming forward, and though it's a bit scary to try, it may bring us unexpected hope and joy as we gather and grow our faith together in new ways.

Let us cherish each first and last life event as they come. Let us honor our traditions while being open to new ideas. Let us allow ourselves to feel the joy and the sorrow that comes with letting go, and letting God lead. Let us thank God for the "firsts" and the "lasts", because it means that He has given us a life filled with others to love and opportunities to share in each other's lives throughout our time here on this earth.

In our family, as we end this summer, possibly our last one spent together under one roof, we are on the verge of a big "first", as Megan starts classes at Wartburg Theological Seminary on Labor Day. This is a sacred first for Megan - and our congregation. She is our first member to go through theological education working towards becoming an ordained pastor. May we lift her up in prayer as she learns and grows in knowledge and faith over the next four years while discerning God's call for her. And may her love for God and other people shine through her ministry, sharing the word of God, wherever the Holy Spirit leads.

Peace, Jewel

IN OUR PRAYERS

Jerry & Yvonne Anderson Colleen Burquest
Scott Hart Chris & Bruce Carter
Kristy Fyhrie Al & Donna Pederson
Larry Sather Dick & Luella Thom
Inez Haase Joan Burquest
Cindy Thiele Pr. Scott Hoecker
Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner
Dale Flemming – father of Laurie Ratajesak
Megan Sheen – niece of Linda Arvidson
Doug Tvedt – brother of Joan Burquest
Jerry Pogose – father of Chuck Pogose
Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons
Ivy McKane – friend of the Hagens and Guenthers
Jackson Drum – friend of Esther congregation
Shirley Nesges – friend of the Thoms
Carolyn Stockert – friend of the Thoms
Joyce Muyres – friend of the Thoms
Bev Guse-Ohlrech – friend of the Pedersons
Reilly McCormick – friend of Esther congregation
Leila Preston – wife of Pastor Dennis Preston
Marg Peterson – friend of the Thoms
Christopher Noll – friend of the Thoms
Cadence Smith – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Family and Friends of: Cindy Rachuy, Larry Carlson, Barb Burns, Rita Wehking, John Haffner, Ralph Townsend, Juanita Hughes, Marsha Clow, Kathy Hoppe, and Mike Heiser

SERVING IN SEPTEMBER

Pastor: Sept 7 – SAM Jewel Townsend, Sept 14- Pr. Dennis Preston, Sept 21- SAM Jewel Townsend, Sept 28- Pastor Greg Billberg
Organists: Marcia Guenther & Brad Lambrecht
Altar Care: Donna Pederson
Usher: Mike Arvidson & Rick Arvidson
Acolyte: NEED VOLUNTEER
Lay Reader: Luella Thom
Communion Assistant: Anna Hagen
Birthday Card Sender: Nancy Bunde
Tech Team: Mandy Arvidson, Jewel Townsend, Mike Lage, Amy Stanley, Lana Doll, Nancy Bunde



PASTORAL CARE – If you or someone you know would like a visit and for emergency pastoral care, please contact Jewel Townsend at 320-760-2503

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Kathryn McDaniel	09/03
Christy Hart	09/09
Evangeline Krueger	09/12
Russell Higgs	09/14
Brady Arvidson	09/15
Brooklyn McPhail	09/15
Denelle Hart	09/16
Averie Dobratz	09/17
Derek Hart	09/18
Orran Hart	09/18
Ryan Sansness	09/18
Molly Stanley	09/18
Sawyer Ratajesak	09/19
Jeremy Arvidson	09/20
Ryan Ness	09/20
Vanessa Garlitz	09/21
Deanna Kreidler	09/23
Carrie Price	09/23
Colby Schlosser	09/24
Leann Aldrich	09/26
Michael Arvidson	09/26
Alicia Kruse	09/29
Benjamin Arvidson	09/30
Melissa Schlosser	09/30



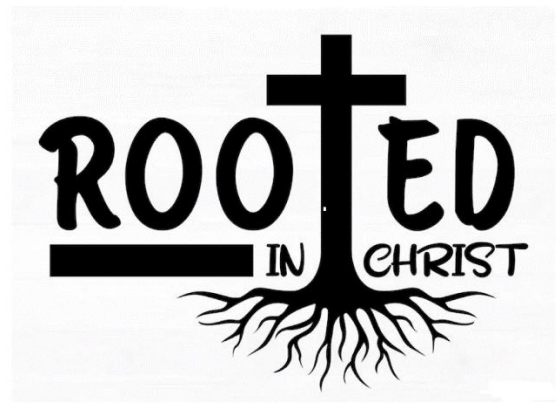


Sunday school will begin Sunday, September 14th at 9 am. Pre-k through 6th graders are invited!



Confirmation Class

will start up again with a Meet & Greet Potluck and Informational Meeting on September 10th at 6 pm for all students and their parents. We welcome anyone, 7th grade through adult, who would like to be a part of the class, whether you have already had Confirmation instruction or not. If you are interested in having your child or yourself in class, please contact Jewel Townsend at 320-760-2503.



The Esther Lutheran Youth Group leaders invite all Esther Lutheran Youth Group to join them for "Rooted in Christ" Bible Study this fall! Come ready to grow deeper in friendship and God's word. There is always a seat for you at his table!

Who: Esther Lutheran Youth

When: Third Sunday of each month - 9/21, 10/19, 11/30, and 12/21 (may change depending on holidays/activities).

Time: 9:00-9:45 am

Where: Esther Lutheran Youth Room

What to Bring: Your Bible (if you have one) and an open Heart

Any questions please contact Anna Hagen at 320-766-6371.



We are looking for hospitable people to serve Sunday Fellowship each week.

Responsibilities will be set up, make coffee, set out

treats (full supply in the freezer or you can bring your own), set out juice boxes, serve/greet people, and clean up. The sign-up sheet is in the Narthex. If you have questions, please contact Fellowship Coordinator, Kat McDaniel.



The Esther Lutheran Cemetery Board members will be planting trees again in the cemetery next spring. If you would like to help purchase trees, please make your donation to Esther Lutheran Cemetery Fund. You can also go to estherlutheran.com and click on the "Give to Esther Lutheran Church" tab and click on the Vanco Link or scan the QR code below.



Convenient ways to give to Esther through our Vanco online giving platform:

- Scan the QR code below.
 - Go to estherlutheran.com and click on the "Give to Esther Lutheran Church" tab and click on the Vanco Link or scan the QR code
 - Download the Vanco app.
 - Follow this link: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZP4R>
- If you have any questions please ask Office Secretary Mandy Arvidson.

QR Code for
Esther Lutheran Church



WELCA met Sunday, August 10 @ 8:30.

September 19th & 20th – Annual Convention at First Lutheran in Alexandria, MN

October 11th – Fall Conference 8 meeting at Messiah Lutheran in Hoffman


November 1st —making Christmas pots at Kathy Mittag's

We discussed at great length the ice cream social. What can we do differently as this has always been our big moneymaker. With attendance down significantly, we need to find ways to increase attendance. There were posters up in the surrounding towns, on Facebook, information sent to surrounding churches, the Parkers Independent, and Senior Prospective. If we added something to the church service, would that bring more to the ice cream social? We have had extras attend church and stay for the social in the past. This year right after church there were 87 of the total 160 attendance that came down immediately after church for the social. Another idea was floated in our discussion to have a fall chili or soup/sandwich supper that we charge for to try to make some extra money. And have a fall/winter Country Store hoping to sell some items for the Christmas holidays.

We still need more items for the Silent Auction baskets we are bringing to the Annual Convention. We are doing 2 - one with a theme of "Lake" and the other "coffee". If you have any items that could go in the baskets, please bring with you to church.

Don't forget to let Donna know if someone needs a card. There are many people on our prayer list. Let Donna know with address and she will send a card. Next meeting September 14 @ 8:30.

Luella Thom, President



OCTOBER *Upcoming Events*
NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

19th Annual Take A Stand Against Domestic Violence




Tuesday, October 14, 2025
5:00 P.M. at Zion Lutheran Church in Alexandria
Speaker: Josh & Niki Sakry, Parents of Ariel, Victim of Domestic Violence Homicide in 2022

Free Event, T-Shirts, & Food!

25th Annual Domestic Abuse Awareness Luncheon

Wednesday, October 15, 2025
11:30 – 1:00 P.M.
Broadway Ballroom
Speaker: Rhonda Martinson, J.D.
"Responding to Domestic Violence: How Even Seemingly Small Things Can Help"
Tickets: \$25 (individual) or \$200 (table of 8)

Questions?
Email: peaceinalexandria@gmail.com



We believe everyone has a unique and valuable place in God's family and we welcome all to share in the community of faith here at Esther. If you would like to become a member please contact Mandy in the church office at 218-338-2171 or secretary@estherlutheran.net or Jewel Townsend at 320-760-2503 or jewellht17@gmail.com



ALL PEOPLE SUNDAY SCHOOL will be held Sunday, October 5th at 9 am. All ages are encouraged to attend! A fun time for multiple generations of families and friends to come together for a morning of sharing faith stories and encouraging one in Christ.

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

Visit our website at estherlutheran.com
Follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/estherlutheran/

We encourage you to keep up on the happenings of our synod and the ELCA, along with our partner ministries, by going to our website www.estherlutheran.com and clicking on the "Faith Formation Resources" tab to find many great resources waiting for you to explore, including our synod newsletter "Northern Lights"

AREA HAPPENINGS:



You are invited to a Fall Book Study at Faith Lutheran in Miltna. We will be exploring the book *Belonging* "5 keys to unlock your potential as a

disciple" by Dr. Karoline Lewis. We will be meeting at Faith Lutheran on Tuesdays at 4:30 pm. The first session will be Tuesday, Sept. 23rd. There is a sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall at Faith so we know how many books to order. Any questions please contact Sue Ellwanger at 218-943-2891.



9-28-25 10AM-2PM

COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY "GOD IS GOOD"

Come one, come all to Immanuel Lutheran, the "Big White Church" in Parkers Prairie for our eleventh annual block party! We will have free food for everyone and fun games for adults and kids from any age. Come rain or shine!

+ Free Will Offering for Jackson Drum +

10 AM
Worship Service,
Everyone Welcome!

11 AM
Serving FREE
Hamburgers, Brats,
Hotdogs, Beans,
Coleslaw, Potato
Salad, Chips and Bars

Free Will Offering for
Jackson Drum

12 PM
Bean Bag Tournament

12 - 1 PM
Children's Games

1 PM
Bike Drawings

2:00 PM
Ice Cream Sundaes,
Door Prize Drawing

Salad Luncheon

Sunday, September 14, 2025
10:30-12:30 PM
Immanuel Lutheran Church
709 S Douglas Ave – Parkers Prairie, MN

Menu :

*Assorted salads,
ham sandwiches and
beverage.*

Hot dogs, chips available for kids

Adults - \$10
Ages 5-12 \$5
Preschool - Free

Proceeds go to Cabin Lois at
Lutheran Island Camp

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FALL MEA DAY CAMP

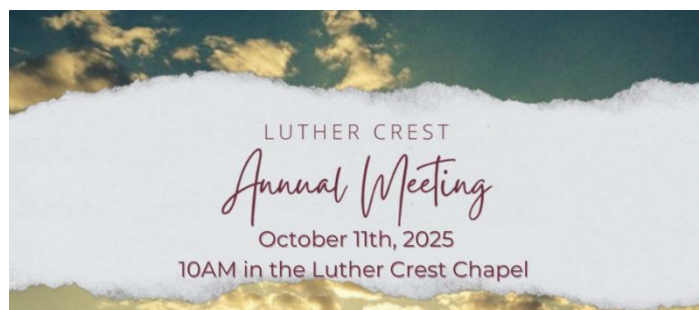
DATE(S): October 16 and 17, 2025

GRADES: K-5

TIME: Thursday-Friday

COST: \$65 for both days or \$33 per day (including a \$30 non-refundable deposit)

Join us here at camp for 2 days of games, crafts, learning, singing, and fun! This Day Camp runs 9AM-5PM on the Thursday and Friday of MEA weekend (October 17-18). Together we'll spend time getting to know one another, playing fun fall games, and diving into our theme: "Love in Action!" Through scripture, worship, crafts, and games, we will discover ways that God's love for us empowers us to love others and the world around us! Campers currently in grades K-5 are welcome to come for one or both days (both days will have different programming). Lunch and an afternoon snack will be provided. Drop off is 9AM, pick up time is 5PM (you can also choose to come and be a part of closing worship at 4:30PM each day!)



September 2025 “Knowing Christ-Making Christ Known through Faith, Hope and Love”

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>Fellowship before and after worship</i> 10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	8	9	10 6 pm – Confirmation Meet & Greet Potluck 6 pm - Council	11	12	13
14 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>Treats provided by WELCA before worship</i> 8:30 am – WELCA 9 am – Sunday School begins! 10 am – Worship led by Pr. Preston 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	15	16	17 6 pm – Confirmation meal 6:30 – Confirmation	18	19 WELCA Annual Convention at First Lutheran in Alexandria	20 WELCA Annual Convention at First Lutheran in Alexandria
21 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>Fellowship before and after worship</i> 9 am – Sunday School 9: am – Rooted in Christ Bible Study 10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	22	23	24 6 pm – Confirmation meal 6:30 – Confirmation	25	26	27
28 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>Fellowship before and after worship</i> 9 am – Sunday School 10 am – Worship led by Pr. Billberg 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	29 *Newsletter articles due to church office	30	1 6 pm – Confirmation meal 6:30 – Confirmation	2	3	4
5 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>Fellowship before and after worship</i> 9 am – ALL PEOPLE Sunday School 10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by Pr. Preston 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	6	7	8 6 pm – Confirmation meal 6:30 – Confirmation	9	10	11

Join us for Sunday Fellowship each week before and after worship. Come early and stay after to catch up with friends and meet new ones. Coffee, juice and treats provided.

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