



ESTHER LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

February 2026 Newsletter

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

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Happy February! After these last couple of weeks of cold it is nice to see the temps rising above zero and some sunny days ahead. The longer days of sunlight bring us hope of spring, much like the light of Christ brings us hope in trying times. The news has been heavy this last month. It is hard to watch and listen to without experiencing some level of anxiety as things seem out of control. We can't ignore the things happening to our neighbors just a couple hours away. And while we can think it doesn't affect us, because it is not happening to us, it does affect us.

This past week in Confirmation class we were learning about spiritual gifts in the body of Christ, and we focused on 1 Corinthians 12. We went around the table and we each read a couple of verses and then shared which part of the text stuck out to us and why. It was a great conversation and interesting to hear what part of the scripture spoke to each person. One student shared verse 21, because they felt it tells us that we **do** need each other. Another student shared verse 22 because they felt that no matter how we view each other, everyone is important and a child of God. Somebody said they liked verse 26 and that was one that stood out to me also, probably because of the season we are in as a state and a nation, but mainly as the body of Christ. "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it". These passages give the analogy of a human body - each part works best together when every part is working well. Every part is valued and important. In the same way, our communities, and the body of Christ, works best if all the parts are working well and healthy - physically, mentally and spiritually - and work together for the good of the whole community/body. If one part of our body suffers injury - the whole body suffers. If one part of our community hurts - we all hurt. We are all better when we are all well and work together. We do not all have the same levels of capabilities, we do not all have the same gifts - and that's ok because we aren't meant to all be the same, we are meant to complement each other's strengths and weaknesses, to work together as one body.

Another verse that stuck out was 24b-25: "But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other". These words are good reminders for these times that we are living in. How we see each other as children of God and members of the body of Christ. How we treat each other, especially when we may not always agree.

We should not be divided, but have equal concern for each other. Each one of us is an important part of the body of Christ. Each one of us is a beloved child of God. Each one of us is created in God's image, just the way we were meant to be created, for this time and this place. Each with our own set of spiritual gifts. Each meant to use our gifts, our time, our talent, our treasure, our passion in our own unique, God-given way to share the love of God with our families and our neighbors near and far. To build up the body of Christ. To point others to Christ. To walk together in faith.

February brings us the time of transition between seasons of the church, Epiphany and Lent. The next couple of weeks of scripture from Matthew will be talking about Jesus' Sermon on the Mount with Beatitudes, Salt and Light. Feb 15 is Transfiguration Sunday, the 18th is Ash Wednesday. As we begin our 40 days of Lent, we will be learning about Jesus' 40 days being tempted in the wilderness. As we travel through Lent 2026 may we take time with God in devotions, prayer, quiet reflection as we look inward and at those things in our lives that try to tempt us away from following Christ. May we explore our own spiritual gifts and uplift the gifts we see in others and how we use them in our daily lives - individually and together as the body of Christ bringing peace, hope and love to our communities. May we love like Jesus does and share his light with all those we encounter.

Peace, Jewel



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

IN OUR PRAYERS

Jerry Anderson	Chris & Bruce Carter
Jaxson Bosl	Kristy Fyhrie
Larry Sather	Joan Burquest
Dennis Rosenquist	Lois Rosenquist
Brad Sanvik- nephew of Jewel Townsend	
Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner	
Dale Flemming – father of Laurie Ratajesak	
Doug Tvedt – brother of Joan Burquest	
Jerry Pogose – father of Chuck Pogose	
Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons	
Shirley Nesges – friend of the Thoms	
Joyce Muyres – friend of the Thoms	
Bev Guse-Ohlrech – friend of the Pedersons	
Reilly McCormick – friend of Esther congregation	
Allison Dotzler – friend of Kathy Mittag	
Cadence Smith – friend of Mandy Arvidson	
Becky Yttrie – friend of the Townsends	
Family and Friends of: Sarah Pomeranz, David Anderson, Ron Myren, Katie Jahnke, Dave Bendix, Megan Sheen, Colleen Burquest, and Chad Way	

SERVING IN FEBRUARY

Pastor: Feb 1-SAM Jewel Townsend, Feb 8-Pr. Dennis Preston, Feb 15-SAM Jewel Townsend, Feb 22-Pr. Greg Billberg
Organists: Marcia Guenther, Brad Lambrecht
Altar Care: Donna Pederson
Usher: Brady Arvidson & Jeremy Arvidson
Acolyte: Logan Arvidson
Lay Reader: Jim Arvidson
Communion Assistant: Christy Hart
Birthday Card Sender: Mandy Arvidson
PowerPoint: **NEED VOLUNTEER**
Tech: Mike Lage



2026 Proposed Budget	\$107,114.00
Contributions needed per month	\$8,365.00
Contributions needed per week	\$1,930.50

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Clara Pogose	02/02
Lois Rosenquist	02/04
Dustin Pomeranz	02/05
Michael Grinager	02/06
Peyton Skoglund	02/06
Emma Gardner	02/11
Sherri Rupert	02/11
Kathy Townsend	02/18
Mike Townsend	02/21
Amber McCarty	02/22
Cody Rupert	02/22
Amelia Arvidson	02/23
Lisa Arvidson	02/24
Lindsey Fitch	02/24
Jacob McCarty	02/24
Rylee Zylstra	02/26
Dave Arvidson	02/27
Jaxson Bosl	02/28
Gloria Rosenquist	02/28



SCHEDULE FEBRUARY & MARCH

February 4th: Meal: Martha Circle – Class w/skit practice
February 11th: Mentor & Student Potluck and Class-Spiritual Gifts & Spiritual Practices
February 18th: Ash Wednesday Service – 7 pm
February 25th: Lent – Skit
March 4th: Lent – Skit
March 11th: Lent – Skit
March 18th: Lent – Skit
March 25th: Lent - Skit



The Confirmation Class will host a Pancake Brunch after worship on February 8th. Free will offering will go to the local family who recently lost their home in a house fire.



An easy way to give to Esther! Scan QR code, go on our website, or download Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement app. Any questions, please contact Mandy Arvidson Download App: Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement or go to

estherlutheran.com – Give to Esther Lutheran Church



World Day of Prayer will be held at church on March 6th from 7 am – 7 pm. More info to follow. Any questions contact Jewel.



VBS will be held Sunday, June 14- Thursday, June 18th.

There will be a VBS Planning Meeting following worship on Sunday, February 15th. ALL ARE WELCOME!



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.



Join us February 18th 7 pm for Ash Wednesday Worship with Holy Communion.



Reminder the Worship & Committee sign up sheets are in the Narthex.



Quilting Group will meet Thursday, February 12th & 26th at 9 am. Bring a sack lunch



WELCA February 2026

WELCA met Sunday, January 11, 2026. We have \$4,231.20 in our checking account, and \$7,823.76 in our savings/memorial account.

There were questions about the Backpack Program for our year-end donations. Upon further research, they purchase and pack two weeks at a time. The first week the recipients get fresh fruit etc., the second week it is more canned fruit and other items. They send home two breakfasts, two lunches, and two snacks for each child every weekend. They make purchases of ready-to-serve items that kids can heat in the microwave themselves. They tried for a year or so buying different things that required more work to make them and maybe a little healthier, but the kids did not eat them. Currently there are 70 kids getting this benefit and this is split evenly between elementary and high school. They purchase most things from Sammy's as they are a great supporter. They get their suppliers to help donate to the program as well. Based on this information, we donated \$450 to this program. If they are running short of funds, they post on the Parkers Prairie School Facebook page, we hope you will be able to help them out.

We set Bible School for Sunday, June 14 thru Thursday June 18th. We are asking again for WELCA's help with serving the meals for the Bible School kids. Twenty-two women from WELCA helped last year. There is an organizational meeting following worship on Sunday February 15th. All are welcome to attend and help out.

We planned an Artisan Bread Class on January 26th with Dave Vaske leading. We had 15 people attending the class. It was a great time. We learned a great deal about making bread without kneading, but measuring accurately so it all comes out the same, as well how to bake in a Dutch oven. We had all three ovens going with different kinds of bread. Of course, we had samples of all of them. We each brought an ice cream pail and mixed up a batch of two loaves of bread to take home. It was a great time. Dave also does an Artisan Bread 2 Class. We will practice with the recipes he gave us and will schedule the class in the fall.

We were trying to plan ahead for the year. We are planning to do the Christmas Market and Soup/sandwich lunch on December 6th. We are asking all to start working on some crafts you could possibly donate to this cause. We will also plan two days for making lefse. We will be offering pre-orders at end of October so we know how many to make. This will make sure we have enough for all.

February 4th is Lois Rosenequist's 101st birthday. If you get a chance send her a card to wish her Happy Birthday. She wants to come to Esther to celebrate with her church family. We will bring her to church on Sunday, February 8th. We will have cake to celebrate this special day with her. If you are driving by the big electronic marquee off McKay and County 82, Arabella, where Lois lives, put her picture and wishes up on the board.

We are looking at getting a cabinet made to place where the big table is on the north side of the kitchen. We were going to make it all cabinets, but after talking with our lefse gals, we are going to make a counter on one end to have an extra place to roll out lefse, and to hold items needed for events. The cabinet will hold the extra plates, cups etc. now stored in the storage room. We are trying to move some kitchen decorations, etc. to this cabinet to free up room in the storage room. Also will have area to hang table clothes as well as recycling bins.

Please put on your calendar Saturday April 18th . This will be the Conference 8 Spring Meeting. This will be held at Bethesda Lutheran in Alexandria. Speaker with be teaching us about Mary of Bethany, Lazarus sister. Registration will be from 8:15 to 9:00. We will have more information in the next couple weeks, but please put on your calendar.

Our next meeting will be February 8th at 8:30.

Luella Thom, President



Annual Meeting

- *Decided to keep the church services at 10 am.
- *Wood floors will be replaced along with the carpet runner in the Sanctuary.
- *Carpet will be replaced in the area of the ushers to the steps.
- *Worship by the Water will be July 12th.

Lana Doll, Secretary



The Esther Lutheran Cemetery Board members will be planting trees again in the cemetery in the 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.



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

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".



Thank you all who attended the Artisan Bread Making Class! Thank you so much Dave Vaske for teaching us!



February 2026 "Knowing Christ-Making Christ Known through Faith, Hope and Love"						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 <u>Fourth Sunday after Epiphany</u> 9 am – Sunday School 10am – Worship with Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend 2 pm – Worship at St. William's	2	3	4 <u>Confirmation</u> 6 pm – Meal: Martha Circle	5	6	7
8 <u>Fifth Sunday after Epiphany</u> 8:30 am - WELCA 9 am – Sunday School 10am – Worship led by Pr. Preston 11 am – Confirmation Pancake Brunch 2 pm – Worship at St. William's	9	10	11 <u>Confirmation</u> 6 pm – Mentor & Student Potluck <u>Council</u> 6 pm	12 Quilting Group 9 am – Bring a sack lunch	13	14
15 <u>Transfiguration of Our Lord</u> 9 am – Sunday School 10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend 11 am – VBS Planning Meeting 2 pm – Worship at St. William's	16	17	18 <u>Ash Wednesday</u> 7 pm - Worship	19	20	21
22 <u>First Sunday of Lent</u> 9 am – Sunday School 10 am – Worship led by Billberg 2 pm – Worship at St. William's	23	24	25 Lent Soup & Sandwich Supper 6 pm Worship 7 pm	26 Quilting Group 9 am – Bring a sack lunch	27	28 Newsletter Articles Due to Church Office
March 1st <u>Second Day of Lent</u> 9 am – Sunday School 10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by Pr. Preston 2 pm – Worship at St. William's	2	3	4 Lent Soup & Sandwich Supper 6 pm Worship 7 pm	5	6 World Day of Prayer 7 am – 7 pm	7
<i>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.</i>						

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