



ESTHER LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

April 2026 Newsletter

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

11019 625th Ave – Parkers Prairie, MN 56361 Church Phone: 218-338-2171

Website: www.estherlutheran.com Office Email: secretary@estherlutheran.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/estherlutheran

Welcome, spring! I don't know about you, but I am looking forward to green grass, budding trees, and plants pushing up from the earth again. It has been a long winter, and now it's time to bring out the gardening tools, that we stored away months ago, in preparation for growing season. Spring is the season when what seemed dead comes back to life.

In the Church, this is also a season of new life. During this time, we reflect on the new life we have in Christ Jesus as we journey through Holy Week and look ahead to the joy of the Easter Resurrection.

As April begins, we find ourselves in the midst of this sacred week. Our journey starts on Palm Sunday, with palm branches waving and voices crying out “Hosanna,” filled with hope for salvation through Jesus. We continue to Maundy Thursday, remembering the Last Supper Jesus shared with his closest friends. We hear the depth of his words and feel the love in his actions during that final meal. Then comes Good Friday, when we will read and meditate on Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion. We remember his suffering: betrayed, beaten, and crucified, all for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus bore all of this—for us. Throughout this week, we see Jesus serving in love—breaking bread, washing feet, and ultimately giving himself for us.

As we reflect on the sacrifice Jesus made for us, I often wonder how the disciples and his other followers must have felt during those days. We know how the story ends—we know the tomb will be empty on Easter morning—but they did not. All they knew was that their teacher, their friend, the one they loved, was gone. When Jesus spoke his final words, they believed it was the end.

But it was not the end—it was only the beginning.

Just as plants that appear lifeless in winter return to life in the spring, Jesus rose from the dead, bringing with him the promise of new life for us all. This is what we celebrate at Easter as Christians—the very foundation of our faith: Jesus' victory over sin and death for the forgiveness of sins for all people and the promise of life eternal. This is what we remember each time we take the bread and wine of communion. A celebration of God's love for us through Jesus.

Holy Week is a journey that begins with cries of “Hosanna” and, seven days later, on Easter morning, resounds with joyful shouts of “Alleluia.” Just as we put away our gardening tools in the fall, at the beginning of Lent we put away our “Alleluias”—and now, at Easter, we bring them out again with renewed joy. Like the plants that break through the soil each spring, we celebrate the new life we are given through God's grace.

On Easter Sunday, we celebrate the joy of the resurrection. The women go to the tomb, find it empty, and encounter the risen Christ. In the same way, we are invited into new life as we encounter Christ anew.

May we take time to reflect during this holy season. May we embrace the new life offered to us through Christ's death and resurrection, not just on Easter, but each day. And may we share that life and hope with others—within our families, our communities, and beyond. Above all, may we grow in the love of Christ, walking closely with him each day. Peace, Jewel

IN OUR PRAYERS

Jerry Anderson Chris & Bruce Carter
 Kristy Fyhrie Larry Sather
 Joan Burquest Dennis Rosenquist
 Lois Rosenquist Ricky Hart
 Sara Skoglund
 Cheryl Farber – mother of Melissa Schlosser
 Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner
 Dale Flemming – father of Laurie Ratajesak
 Jerry Pogose – father of Chuck Pogose
 Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons
 Shirley Nesges – friend of the Thoms
 Bev Lorine – mother of Mandy Arvidson
 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
 Kim Casavan – friend of Mandy Arvidson
 Wayne Lund – uncle of Mike Townsend
 Family and Friends of: Sarah Pomeranz, David
 Anderson, Ron Myren, Katie Jahnke, Dave Bendix,
 Megan Sheen, Colleen Burquest, Chad Way, and Doug
 Tvedt

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Rachel Wunderluch 04/02
 Samantha Hoppe 04/03
 Joshua Hendershot 04/04
 Chad Stueve 04/04
 Shelly Hoppe 04/05
 Easton Arvidson 04/06
 Jeff Koep 04/07
 Kali Skoglund 04/07
 Josh Nordlund 04/08
 Gerald Anderson 04/09
 Matthew Burquest 04/10
 Georgia Hart 04/10
 Joseph Hoppe 04/14
 Deb Sanvik 04/14
 John Hoppe 04/16
 Laurie Ratajesak 04/19
 Jared Higgs 04/20
 Clarissa Edmond 04/21
 Wesley Kruse 04/21
 Sheryl Thoennes 04/21
 Megan Townsend 04/21
 Morley Carlson 04/23
 Justin Schlosser 04/24
 Elijah Denny 04/25
 Jeff McPhail 04/25
 Mark Wehking 04/26
 Erin Krueger 04/28
 Mark Kreidler 04/30



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

SERVING IN APRIL

Pastor: April 5-SAM Jewel Townsend, April 12-Pr. Ken Bowman, April 19-Pr. Dennis Preston, April 26-Confirmation Class
Organists: Marcia Guenther & Brad Lambrecht
Altar Care: Deb Koep
Usher: Larry Doll
Acolyte: Chase & Avery Stueve
Lay Reader: Lana Doll
Communion Assistant: Megan Townsend
Birthday Card Sender: Elaine Fyhrie



2026 Proposed Budget	\$107,114.00
Budgeted contributions YTD as of 2/28/26	\$17,852.83
Actual contributions YTD as of 2/28/26	\$14,865.00
Difference YTD as of 2/28/26:	\$ -2,987.83





HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Maundy Thursday: April 2nd

7 pm: Worship with Holy Communion

Good Friday: April 3rd

7 pm: Worship

Easter Sunday: April 5th

7 am: Sunrise Service with Holy Communion

8 am: Sunrise Breakfast served by the Youth

10 am: Worship with Holy Communion



Looking for donations of flowers for the graves. Also, if anyone is interested, please make up some wooden cross stakes for the flowers. We need to replace many of the ones we have. Any questions, please ask any member of the Council.



BEHOLD
the new has come



BEHOLD THE NEW HAS COME! SUMMIT 2026

DATES: Friday-Saturday, May 1-2, 2026

TIMES: Arrival by 6:30pm on Friday - 5:00pm Saturday

LOCATION: First Lutheran Church, Detroit Lakes

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Pastors/Deacons/SAMs of the Behold the New Has Come Project Cohort
- Behold Vision Team members from each congregation

What is the event about? This Summit is A THRESHOLD MOMENT for the Behold Project!

- A gathering to see, name, and imagine
 - A place where leaders experience the church AS A SENDING COMMUNITY
 - A moment of shared identity across congregations
 - Creating the Vision and Strategy
 - Tapping into the power of positive stories
- Please contact SAM Jewel Townsend if you are interested in attending with her.



What a Mess! VBS at Esther will be held June 14th-18th starting each evening with supper at 5:30 pm with lessons, music, crafts, and worship from 6-8 pm. For more information contact the church office at secretary@estherlutheran.net. Be sure to invite friends, grandkids, cousins, and neighbors to join in the fun! Next meeting will be on April 12th following worship.



Thank you Rose City Canopy & Sign for installing and generously gifting the new lightning for the cross in the sanctuary. We truly appreciate your kindness and support!



Parkers Prairie High School Student Council is planning for its annual Day of Caring on Friday, May 22nd. 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 Miltona area, contact the PPHS Student Council Advisor David O'Brien at dobrien@pp.k12.mn.us.



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.



Our new Vanco online giving site is up and running! 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



SCHEDULE APRIL & MAY

- April 2nd** – Maundy Thursday – Worship 7 pm
- April 3rd** – Good Friday – skit “Judas & Mary” – Bode & Cora- Worship 7 pm
- April 5th** – Easter Sunday – Worship 7 am & 10 am
- April 8th** – **NO CONFIRMATION**
- April 15** – 6 pm - Meal: Ruth Circle – Parts of worship 3 – plan a worship service
- April 22nd** – Meal: Naomi Circle – Parts of worship 4- plan a worship service
- April 26th** – **Lead Worship 10 am – please arrive at 8:30 am to practice**
- April 29th** – 6 pm – Meal: Church Council – **DITCH CLEANING SERVICE PROJECT – parents, family, and mentors encouraged to help**
- May 6th** – End of year family, mentor & student potluck and activity



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.





WELCA met Sunday, March 8, 2026 with Lana, Linda, Donna, Kathy, Chris, Luella in attendance.

We currently have \$3,200.72 in the checking account. We have \$7,823.76 in the Savings/Memorial Fund.

Spring Conference 8 meeting is Saturday, April 18th at Bethesda Lutheran Church in Alexandria, MN. Please let Luella know by April 6th if you can attend. I will send in the registration for our church. They are asking for items for Life Connections of Alexandria. Suggestions: baby wash, ointment, wipes, Huggies or Pampers Size Preemie to Size 12. If you would like to donate any of these items for us to take to this meeting, please bring to church by April 12th.

Vacation Bible School will be June 14-18th. The theme is "WHAT A MESS". God loves us even us when we are a mess. We are again asking WELCA to help with making and serving the food. We will have sign-up sheets out shortly for food items. Last year we had 22 volunteers to help out and it made things very easy. The curriculum has suggestions for "messy" foods. We are asking for kids to sign up by the middle of May so we have some idea for most of what we might need. We are asking for donations for items we can use for VBS. You will see on the Narthex table a box for satin ribbons. We want preferably ¼ double sided satin ribbon but will also take any 1/8 inch as well. We need all colors.

We talked about starting a scholarship for our seniors - college, tech college, or any future instructions they are going to do. The Council also discussed this. We want to do something to keep in touch with our young people after they graduate. Thinking of You cards regularly to the graduates if one way we were thinking about. We were going to think until our next meeting.

We voted to donate \$300 to the Women's Seminary Stipend Fund. This goes to the NWMN SWO. They gather all women that are currently going to seminary and all the money received during 2026 will be divided among those women. We also voted to give Megan Townsend \$500 to help with Seminary costs.

We also voted to buy another batch of \$100 worth of cookies from Hilltop kitchen. We will then try to schedule a date later when we can get together at church to make up a bunch of items to put in the freezer.

Senior Recognition will be May 17th. WELCA always hosts this event and presents tie blankets to each of the graduates. We have two graduates we will be honoring this year- Evalynn Grinager and Isaiah Schlosser. We will need to set a date soon to make these blankets.

If anyone knows of someone in our congregation needing some help, please let Jewel or Mandy know and we will be ready to help anyone out.

Our next meeting will be on April 12th at 8:30 am. We hope many of you can come. It sure would be great to have some new ideas or suggestions.

Luella Thom, President



It takes the whole church to care for our community. The Esther Caring Ministry will have packaged meals available in the kitchen freezer for you to take to anyone who could use a meal to nurture their body and spirit.

If you would like to donate a meal, please:

- Place the meal in an airtight, freezer-safe container
- Label the meal with its name and any major allergens
- Include the date the meal was prepared and frozen
- Provide cooking instructions (whether it needs to be fully cooked, for how long and at what temp, or just needs to be thawed and reheated)

Meals will be kept in the freezer for no more than three months, so please place newer items toward the bottom to help with rotation.

The next Caring Ministry will be on Monday, April 27, 6:30 pm at Dick and Luella Thom's home. ALL are invited to attend!



We will be mailing cards for our troops for Armed Forces Day on May 16th. We have cards to color in the Narthex. Please have them back by April 19th. Thank you to Emma Arvidson for designing them!

Congratulations Nora Stanley on your First Holy Communion! God Bless you always!



Lord, how can we ever thank You enough? You endured more pain, more shame, more sorrow, more grief than we can possibly fathom. Help us remember why You gave Your life. Because of love. Because of mercy. Because we desperately need them both and do not deserve it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thank You Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus to save me from my sins. Thank you that you loved me enough to send a perfect sacrifice, so that we could live together eternally. I confess that I am a sinner and need forgiveness. I ask you to come into my heart, and I commit to following Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord God, You loved this world, you loved us all, so much that you gave your one and only Son, that we might be called your children too. Lord, help us to live in the gladness and grace of Easter Sunday, everyday. Let us have hearts and souls that are forever grateful for your sacrifice. Let us have eyes that look upon your grace and rejoice deeply in our salvation. Help us to walk in that mighty grace and tell your good news to the world. All for your glory do we pray, Lord, Amen.

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".

April 2026 "Knowing Christ-Making Christ Known through Faith, Hope and Love"

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2 <u>Maundy Thursday</u> 7 pm – Worship with Holy Communion	3 <u>Good Friday</u> 7 pm- Worship	4
5 <u>Easter Sunday</u> NO SUNDAY SCHOOL 7 am – Worship w/Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend 8 am – Youth Breakfast 10 am – Worship w/Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	6	7	8 NO <u>CONFIRMATION Council</u> 6 pm	9	10	11
12 <u>Second Sunday of Easter</u> 8:30 am - WELCA 9 am – Sunday School 10 am – Worship led by Pr. Bowman 11 am – VBS Planning Meeting after worship 2 pm -Worship at St. William’s	13	14	15 <u>Confirmation</u> 6 pm – Meal: Ruth Circle	16	17	18 Conference 8 Spring Meeting at Bethesda
19 <u>Third Sunday of Easter</u> 9 am – Sunday School 10 am – Worship w/Holy Communion led by Pr. Preston 2 pm -Worship at St. William’s	20	21	22 <u>Confirmation</u> 6 pm – Meal: Naomi Circle	23	24	25
26 <u>Fourth Sunday of Easter</u> 9 am – Sunday School 10 am – Worship led by the Confirmation students 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	27 Caring Ministry 6:30 pm – Luella Thom’s home	28 NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE TO CHURCH OFFICE	29 <u>Confirmation</u> 6 pm – Meal: Church Council DITCH CLEANING SERVICE PROJECT	30	1 BEHOLD Summit in DL	2 BEHOLD Summit in DL

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.

Esther Lutheran Church
11019 625th Ave
Parkers Prairie, MN 56361