



ESTHER LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

March 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

This month of March we are in Lent and we journey with other Christians around the world, following Jesus to the cross. The 40 days of Lent offers an intentional time of repentance and reflection as we turn away from sin and turn our hearts and minds to God. A time to reflect on how we live our life for God and ask him to renew and deliver us and culminates in the greatest celebration of new life on Easter Sunday. Traditionally a time of prayer, almsgiving, and fasting, as a way of removing that which hinders our connection with God, Lent can also be a time of adding a practice each day like a devotion or time of meditation to re-center and create space for God to speak outside of our regular routine and breathe life into us. These practices and intentional time with God can be transforming.

Many times, we think of Lent as a time for self-discipline, but what if we looked at it as a time to allow God to transform us? I think of the verse Psalm 51:10-13 “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit”. A plea for transformation and to be close to God. A traditional Psalm that we use on Ash Wednesday worship as we mark our foreheads with ashes and gather together to begin our 40 days of repentance and reflection.

Our Lenten tradition at Esther continues as we gather for soup, sandwiches and fellowship for 5 Wednesdays during Lent. After the meal, we join together in the sanctuary for the beautiful Holden Evening Prayer service as our young people lead us in the songs and share a message each week. I hold these Wednesday evenings close to my heart. The songs are familiar, calming, comforting, and a beautiful way to end the day together. A way to fill out hearts and calm our minds. Thank you to the many people who make these evenings special.

As we worship together this month our Gospel readings will be from John. We will be with Jesus speaking with the high priest Nicodemus in the cover of night, which concludes with the beloved verses, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.” John 3:16-17.

We will be with Jesus when he meets the woman at the well, and offers her living water – the life-giving water of God’s grace – God’s love and forgiveness that never runs out. We will go with Jesus as he heals a blind man, and as he raises his friend Lazarus from the dead. And will end this month in the gospel of Matthew and Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, as we begin Holy Week.

As we travel through these weeks of Lent, we will also have an opportunity for a time set aside for intentional prayer during World Day of Prayer on March 6. On March 15, we will have the joy of welcoming Pastor Birgitte who will share about Peoples Church, a multicultural and indigenous ministry in our synod that lives out faith by showing God’s love for all people by providing shelter, meals and community. On March 22 we will hold All Peoples Sunday School and will celebrate First Communion with one of our young people.

We have a busy month ahead with many great opportunities to connect with God and one another. May we take the time - and cherish the time together. “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:24-25.

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



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

IN OUR PRAYERS

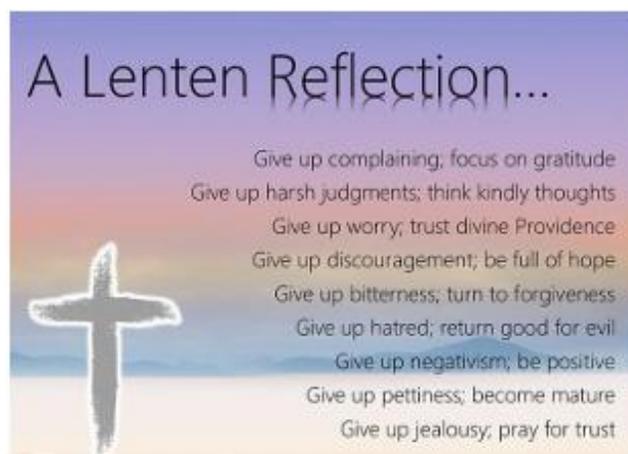
Jerry Anderson	Chris & Bruce Carter
Jaxson Bosl	Kristy Fyhrie
Larry Sather	Joan Burquest
Dennis Rosenquist	Lois Rosenquist
Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner	
Dale Flemming – father of Laurie Ratajesak	
Doug Tvedt – brother of Joan Burquest	
Jerry Pogose – father of Chuck Pogose	
Gary Borst – 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 MARCH

Pastor: March 1- Pr. Dennis Preston, March 8-SAM Jewel Townsend, March 15-Pr. Brigette, March 22-SAM Jewel Townsend, March 29-Pr. Greg Billberg
Organists: Marcia Guenther, Brad Lambrecht
Altar Care: Bev Arvidson
Usher: Rodney Peterson
Acolyte: Chase & Avery Stueve
Lay Reader: Chris Carter
Communion Assistant: Steph Stueve
Birthday Card Sender: Confirmation Class

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Thea Arvidson	03/01
Kristina Kreidler	03/01
Craig Pomeranke	03/01
Ella Ness	03/03
Emma Timm	03/03
Nash Vik	03/03
Evalynn Grinager	03/05
Amanda Dobratz	03/08
Brody Lenzen	03/08
Marcia Guenther	03/10
Callie Schlosser	03/11
Emma Arvidson	03/12
Letti Hamman	03/12
Larry Doll	03/14
Judy Thoennes	03/14
Kieda Wagner	03/14
Isaiah Schlosser	03/15
Michael Wunderlich	03/15
Kiley Peterson	03/16
Ty Lenzen	03/18
Lacey Grinager	03/20
Sara Dreher	03/23
Lana Doll	03/24
Nancy Bunde	03/25
Anya Wagner	03/28
Garret Wehking	03/31





SCHEDULE MARCH & APRIL

- March 4th:** Lent – Skit – practice 5:30
- March 11th:** Lent – Skit- practice 5:30
- March 18th:** Lent – Skit - practice 5:30
- March 25th:** Lent – Skit - practice 5:30
- April 2:** Maundy Thursday Service 7 pm
- April 3:** Good Friday Service 7 pm – Skit practice 6 pm
- April 5:** Easter Sunday – Worship 7 am & 10 am
- April 8: NO CONFIRMATION**
- April 15:** Confirmation 6 pm- Meal: Ruth Circle, Parts of Worship 3 – plan a worship service
- April 22:** Confirmation 6 pm- Meal: Naomi Circle, Parts of Worship 3 – plan a worship service
- April 26: Lead Worship** – arrive at 8:30 for practice, worship starts at 10 am
- April 29:** Confirmation 6 pm- Meal: Church Council, **Ditch Cleaning Service Project** – parents, family, and mentors encouraged to help.



VBS Planning Meeting will be held March 22nd following worship at Rose City Bar & Grill. VBS will be held Sunday, June 14- Thursday, June 18th.



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



Pastor Birgitte Simpson from Peoples Church in Bemidji will lead worship with us on Sunday, March 15th. Noisy offering that day will go towards their congregation.

Peoples Church is a multicultural and indigenous ministry of the ELCA in the NWMN Synod. They live out their faith by showing Creator God’s love for all people by offering shelter, hot meals, and community. For more information go to: peopleschurch-elca.org.



First Communion Class will be held on March 15th at 8:30 am. The suggested minimum age for this class is 5th grade. If you, a family member, or friend would be interested in attending this class please contact Karin Wagner or Jewel Townsend.



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



Reminder the Worship & Committee sign up sheets are in the Narthex or contact the church office.



World Day of Prayer

Friday, March 6, 2026

"I Will Give You Rest: Come"

Matthew 11:28-30

Informed Prayer and Powerful Action

World Day of Prayer will be held on Friday, March 6, 2026, 7 am to 7 pm, in the Esther Lutheran Church Sanctuary.

Join us and fellow Christians around the world for an intentional time set aside to pray for our families, our communities, and our world.

Schedule:

- 7 am: Morning Prayer Service
- Noon: Midday Prayer Service
- 6:30 pm: Evening Prayer Service
- We will be holding a Prayer Vigil throughout the entire day, 7 am to 7 pm. You are invited to come and sit and pray for as long as you wish.
- Please place your prayer petitions/concerns/special prayers in the "Prayer Jar".

World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome all people to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. The common day of observance is the first Friday of March.



We invite you to join us each week of Lent. Soup and Sandwich supper will be at 6 pm and worship service at 7 pm. We will be using the Holden Evening Prayer for our Wednesday evening service each week. Please join us as we gather to hear the Word from our confirmation students through their skirts during the service. Christy Hart has volunteered to coordinate and sign-up sheets are in the Narthex.

Wednesday, March 4th "Things of God: Coin"

6 pm: Soup & Sandwich supper 7 pm: Lenten Worship

Wednesday, March 11th "Things of God: Cup"

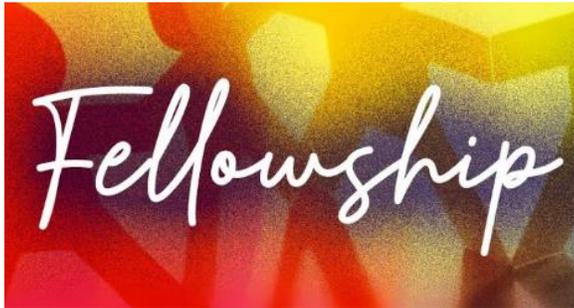
6 pm: Soup & Sandwich supper 7 pm: Lenten Worship

Wednesday, March 18th "Things of God: Sponge"

6 pm: Soup & Sandwich supper 7 pm: Lenten Worship

Wednesday, March 25th "Things of God: Thorn"

6 pm: Soup & Sandwich supper 7 pm: Lenten Worship



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.



April 2nd – Maundy Thursday

7 pm: Worship

April 3rd – Good Friday

7 pm: Worship

Sunday, April 5th – Easter Sunday

7 am: Sunrise Service

8 am: Youth Breakfast

10 am: Worship with Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend

2 pm: Worship at St. William's

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".



The meeting was called to order by Lana at 8:30 am. Lana, Bev, Kathy, Linda, and Donna were in attendance.

We have \$2,909.46 in our checking account. There is \$7,823.76 in the memorial/savings fund.

We talked about having the Bible School students decorate cups and WELCA could add some flowers and give them to the nursing home residents or sell them.

We need to set a date to make cookies, bars, etc. for our Sunday fellowship once the cookies we purchased from Hilltop Kitchen get low.

Porch pot making will be on November 7th at Kathy Mittag's home.

Lefse Making: First Round will be November 20th & 21st and second Round will be December 4th & 5th.

There was discussion about a quilt for the Luther Crest Auction on July 11th. The quilt must be delivered to Luther Crest by June 26th.

We will put flowers on the graves for Memorial Day. Looking for people to make up some wood stakes to attach flowers for the graves and having a point on them makes it easier to pound into the ground. Flowers can be stapled or zip tied to the stakes.

Are there any Thrivent members that can apply for \$250 to be used for the Ice Cream Social, VBS, and lefse?

If you know of anyone that is in need from our congregation, bring name and a financial donation can be given to them.

We decided WELCA will help by donating to Bible School. The Theme this is year is "WHAT A MESS!" Jewel, Marcia, Anna, Kathy, and Luella have started meetings to get ready for June 14th-18th. We will be again asking for the WELCA's help in making/serving the suppers for the kids. Last year 22 of you donated your time/food to do this. It was AWESOME! We are looking

at the curriculum to see ideas for the food that are MESSY and go along with the lessons.

Conference 8 Spring Meeting will be held at Bethesda Lutheran in Alexandria on Saturday, April 18th. Registration is 8:15 am- 9:00 am. The registration fee is \$20. Anyone wishing to go, please let Luella know as we need to send one reservation in from Esther listing all who will be attending.

When we had our Fall Meeting over at Messiah in Hoffman, a new Coordinator and Recorder were elected. Since that time, both individuals elected have declined. Nola Smith and I are doing the job again for this Spring meeting. We have Mary Suckstorff from First Lutheran in Kensington volunteering to take over the coordinator position. We still need someone to take over the Recorder job. It is a 2-yr position. I am willing to help if any of you are willing to do the job.

Our next WELCA meeting will be on Sunday, March 8th at 8:30. Hope you can make it.

Luella Thom, President



Easter Garden Flower orders are due March 11th.
Order forms are in the Narthex.

Lilies:

1 stem 6-8 blooms	\$15
2 stem 10-12 blooms	\$30
3 stems 15-18 blooms	\$45

Others:

Begonias	\$18
Cyclamen*	\$18
Daffodils*	\$15
Hyacinths*	\$15
Tulips*	\$15

*Potted spring bulbs are not guaranteed to bloom on Easter, but are guaranteed to be beautiful.



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.

Put on your calendars: First round of lefse making is November 20th & 21st, 2026 and the second round is December 4 & 5th, 2026

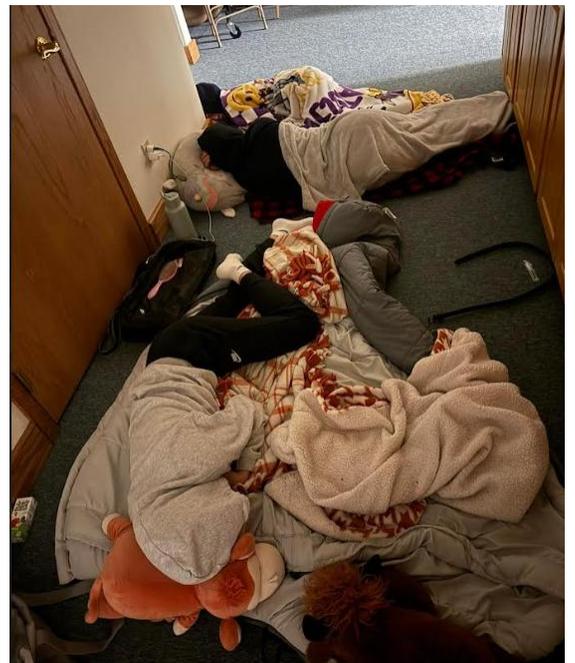
The Youth had a great turn out for the lock in this year!



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



Youth

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 <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
8 <u>Third Sunday of Lent</u> 8:30 am – WELCA 10 am – Worship led by SAM Jewel Townsend 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	9	10	11 Lent Soup & Sandwich Supper 6 pm Worship 7 pm	12 Quilting Group 9 am – Bring a sack lunch	13	14
15 <u>Fourth Sunday of Lent</u> 8:30 am – First Communion Class 9 am – Sunday School 10 am – Worship led by Pr. Birgitte 11 am – Council 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	16 Worship Committee 6 pm	17	18 Lent Soup & Sandwich Supper 6 pm Worship 7 pm	19	20	21 The Great NWMN Synod Get Together in Bemidji
22 <u>Fifth Sunday of Lent</u> 9 am – All People Sunday School 10 am – Worship with Holy First Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend 11 am – VBS Planning Meeting at Rose City Bar & Grill 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	23 Caring Ministry 6:30 pm – Luella Thom’s home	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
29 <u>Palm Sunday</u> 9 am – Sunday School 10 am – Worship led by Pr. Billberg 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	30	31	April 1	2 Maundy Thursday Worship 7 pm	3 Good Friday Worship 7 pm	4
5 <u>Easter Sunday</u> 7 am - Sunrise Service 8 am – Youth Breakfast 10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend 2 pm – Worship at St. William’s	6	7	8 NO CONFIRMATION <u>Council</u> 6 pm	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.

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