

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

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**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work, Our hands.



## Follow the Star

When you follow something, it means that there is something ahead of you. One is traveling, in motion, working to reach something in the future or further ahead.

“Follow your dreams.”

“Follow the gravel road.”

“Follow the signs.”

These are looking ahead words.

As we approach the Christmas season, I invite you to *follow the star*. We will be using the symbol of a star throughout Advent. The wise men who traveled to see the little Jesus traveled for quite some time, a few years some scholars believed following a star. I wonder as they wandered what thoughts ran through their minds. What conversations were had among them? *Is this worth it? Will we find the child king? Will we lose our way?* I'm sure there was time for reflection as they drew nearer to the home of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem following Jesus' birth.

It seems, with each year, for one reason or another in our culture the Christmas decorations come out sooner. The Christmas music is heard even at the end of October. There are debates of what is “Christmasy” and what is not. But in the midst of that, I invite you, in some way to join in the season of Advent, the season of waiting for Christ's arrival. To pace yourself. To give yourself time to wonder. Perhaps to ask “Why do we/have we treasured this time of year?” and how that connects to the God who came down to earth.

This time of year can also be a difficult season at times. We realize that family dynamics are not like the movies on the Hallmark channel. The “perfect Christmas” may not exist. Some of our hopes for the season may not be realized. We mourn Christmases past. This is precisely the world God desired to enter in to when God burst onto the scene in Bethlehem. Jesus is indeed Immanuel. *God with us*, in all that this world is and hopes to be. With Christ's coming, there is hope ahead, life ahead, joy ahead of us in this life even in the midst of brokenness. These are the promises God gives us through Jesus, what we may find if we take time to *follow the star*.

May we diligent in a world of noise, fear, worries, anxieties, to follow the star and look to the one who came for us and the world.

United in Christ,

*Pastor Jeanette*

## **Our Church Calendar**

### **November 29<sup>th</sup>**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

*Liturgical Color: Blue*

Hanging of the Greens Service

*Come learn about the symbols of Advent and Christmas through songs and readings!*

### **December 6<sup>th</sup>**

Prelude: Christmas Band Sing-Along at 9:45a.m.

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

**Reading:** Mark 1:1-4

*Focus: Isaiah of the Exile, Isaiah 40:1-11*

### **December 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Traveling Christmas Program: All Ages  
Welcome to Participate!**

Practice is tentatively scheduled for 9:00 a.m.  
Please come before to receive your part!

## December 20<sup>th</sup>

Prelude: Christmas Band Sing-Along at 9:45 a.m.  
4th Sunday of Advent

**Reading:** Psalm 113

*Focus: Zechariah's Song, Luke 1:5-13, 57-80*

**Sunday School Christmas Program at 2:00 p.m.**

## December 24<sup>th</sup>

Christmas Eve Services at 4:00 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.

*Liturgical Color: White*

**Reading:** Psalm 146:5-10

*Focus: Birth of Jesus Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)*

## December 26<sup>th</sup>

*Tentative Youth Service*

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas

**Reading:**

*Focus: Beginning of the Good News Mark 1:1-20*

## January 3<sup>rd</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas

**Reading:**

*Focus: Jesus' Ministry Begun Mark 2:1-22*

## In Our Prayers

Myrtle Arvidson

Kristy Fyhrie

Eica Nelson

Wally Skoglund

Jennifer Bidne

Marcella Braun

Sister of Pastor Jeanette

Grandmother of

Pastor Jeanette

Wendy Kuhnau

Coworker of Jewel

Townsend

R.C. Christensen

Friend of the youth

Robert Dobratz

Father of Steve Dobratz

Jan Gilbertson

Sister of Jim Arvidson

Elmyra Jerome

Sister in law of Luella Thom

Thomas Collum

Great-Grandson of Gary &

Bev Kreidler

Carla Bettin

friend of congregation

Family and friends of Jayne Arvidson, James Higgs,

Louisa Carlson, Linda Pederson-sister of Al Pederson

## Office Hours

Office Hours for Pastor Jeanette include:

Tuesdays and Thursdays. 10 am-12 pm

Wednesday afternoons.

Due to pastoral needs and meetings, if you wish to make sure Pastor Jeanette is in the office, please give her a call at 507-339-1178, zip her an email or set up a time with her.

Pastor Jeanette will be celebrating Christmas with her family from December 25<sup>th</sup> returning January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please contact our secretary, Sue Ellwanger about office items or any pastoral emergencies. She will have the contact information for pastoral coverage.

## Church Staff

Pastor	Jeanette Bidne
Organist	Marcia Guenther
Custodian	Lorrie Pomeranz
Secretary	Sue Ellwanger



## Serving Us In December

<b>Pastor:</b>	Jeanette Bidne
<b>Organist:</b>	Marcia Guenther
<b>Lay Reader:</b>	Vicky Arvidson
<b>Acolytes</b>	Susan Hart Megan Townsend
<b>Ushers:</b>	Scott Hart, Rodney Peterson
<b>Communion Asst.</b>	Christy Hart
<b>Altar Guild:</b>	Deb Koep
<b>Greeters:</b>	Christy & Orran Hart
<b>Birthday Fellowship:</b>	Brian & Vicky Arvidson Rodney Peterson Delmar & Margaret Wehking

## Join Us!

November 29th<sup>h</sup>

### **Hanging of the Greens during Worship.**

Are you going to decorate for Christmas? We will begin the Advent Season at Esther with a *Hanging of the Greens Service*, a service that shares the meanings of Advent and Christmas symbols. The evergreens of the Advent wreath? The lights on our tree? Let's learn together!



12/1 Erica Nelson  
12/4 Rodney Peterson  
12/5 Casey Aldrich  
12/6 Alivia Arvidson  
12/10 James Arvidson  
12/10 Rick Guenther  
12/12 Arewen Dobratz  
12/13 Steph Velde  
12/16 Bill Wagner  
12/16 Lizz Peterson  
12/16 Alvia Arvidson  
12/17 Brock Peterson  
12/20 Jaci Schlosser  
12/22 Conner Sather  
12/22 Carol Kreidler  
12/24 Brian Arvidson  
12/28 Byron Klimek  
12/28 Margaret Wehking  
12/30 Rick Guenther  
12/31 Summer Dobratz

### ***Seeking Young Bell Ringers***



Would you like to learn how to ring the bell at Esther? See the bell that is in the tower? After the first of the year we are inviting anyone 5<sup>th</sup> grade and older to learn about the bell and how it is rung. Watch for a sign-up sheet and a learning time about the bell as the New Year begins!



<b>Beginning Balance</b>	\$ 321.45
<b>Deposits</b>	\$ 7,384.00
<b>Disbursements</b>	\$ 7,595.69
<b>Ending Balance 9/30/2015</b>	\$ 109.76

### **Contributions needed based on budget**

	\$ 86,205.00
<b>Actual Contributions</b>	\$ 78,453.35
<b>Budget Shortfall</b>	(\$ 7,751.65)



### ***Stewardship Corner***

“The word “steward” comes from the Anglo-Saxon term “sty warden,” the person who took care of the pig sty! The term has evolved to describe anyone who is the keeper of another person’s possessions. Steward describes your relationship with God the creator. It helps you to see that God has “created me and all that exists” (Luther’s Small Catechism, Apostles’ Creed, explanation of the First Article). And all that we are and all that we have, come from God as blessings. As a follower of Jesus Christ, it is our responsibility to care for and use these blessings wisely. This includes your time, relationships, talents, passions, energy, lifestyle, the environment and money.” – From *Stewardship 101* at [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)



### **Sing-Along at Esther December 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>**

Beginning before worship (around 9:45 a.m.) on December 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> join Esther musicians in a sing-along of Christmas songs in the sanctuary. Many of our young people have musical talents and it is a great way to enjoy favorite carols together!

## Advent and Christmas Eve Family Readers

We are looking for families willing to read and help light the candles of our Advent Wreath and help with various parts of the Christmas Eve service. Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex or contact the church office if you are interested.



*The Christmas Season can be tough. A Blue Christmas, Longest Night Service* is scheduled for Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> 7 pm at the United Methodist Church in Clarissa. All are welcome to come, reflect and hear a message of hope in this quiet service. Those experiencing any type of loss are especially welcome.



## Traveling Christmas Program

*December 13<sup>th</sup> 9am through Sunday Evening*

Would you like to help share God's love and Christmas Spirit?!

Join us for our second annual Traveling Christmas Program. All ages are welcome and a variety of parts from speaking, to choir members, to sitting with residents are needed.

### Here is what our day will look like!

**9 am** Gather at Esther to practice, hand out parts, and have a brief devotion.

**NOTE: WE WILL NOT HAVE A REGULAR WORSHIP SERVICE. Instead those not traveling with us are invited to join us at 9:00 for devotions and prayer before we hop on Harts Bus.**

*Programs at various Nursing Homes in Parkers Prairie and Alexandria*

Pizza Party to follow at Pizza Ranch of Alexandria

We encourage all to participate, share with others if they would like to attend one of the programs, and enjoy this opportunity to be Church together on the road!



The youth made \$430.00 towards the support of Abdurahmen. Thank you to everyone who attended our chili feed and your generous support!!

**2016 Calendars.** Our youth are selling calendars again this year. There is a sample calendar and signup sheet on the table in the narthex.



## **WELCA November 2015 Meeting Minutes**

Treasurer's Report: Checking: \$1,842

Memorial Fund: \$7,113

\$360 was deposited from selling Herberger's coupon books!!

Thanks to all who helped with this project! Especially, Bev Arvidson for heading it up.

### **Old Business:**

\* Circle 1 will be serving the dessert after the Thanksgiving Eve committee service on Nov 25<sup>th</sup>  
\* Our Christmas Party will be Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1:30 p.m. Our theme will be *Christmas around the World*.

Any decorations from other countries you are willing to share would be greatly appreciably.

### **\* New guidelines were discussed:**

1. If a Circle member is unable to donate to an event the Circle is serving, it is requested that they donate \$5.00

2. If the family requests, the Esther WELCA will serve light refreshments for the family during and/or after a visitation at our church.

\* The kitchen committee will work on getting quotes for our next project, counter and cupboards along the back counter.

### New Business:

\* Elections were held:

President: Margaret Wehking

Vice President: Inez Haase

Altar Committee: Deb Koep

Sunshine Committee: Sue Ellwanger

\* Our donations to Phebe Hospital will be doubled by donating through the *Give to the Max!!*

\* We voted to donate \$100 to the Parkers Prairie Food Shelf and \$25 to PAI



### Solar power for Phebe Hospital

A big thank you to all who donated money in October

Together we collected \$450 to give towards solar power for Phebe Hospital in Liberia.

The donation was given on *Minnesota's Give to the Max Day* and our donation will be doubled!!!



All ladies of the congregation are invited to a Christmas Program at Esther on Thursday, December 3rd at 1:30 p.m. Join us for a program, dessert and fellowship with the ladies of Faith, Eagle Bend, Faith, Miliona and Rose City Free Church

### Christmas Program Invitation

Esther ladies are invited to Faith Lutheran in Eagle Bend for their annual Christmas party on Wednesday, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm. Let Margaret know by Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> for an RSVP to Faith.



Congratulations to Jessica Doucette and Brady Arvidson who were married on November 21<sup>st</sup> at Esther!

God's richest blessings as they being their lives together as husband and wife.

## Change of Address

Please update your directory with the new address and telephone number for Wilbur & Colleen Burquest. Their new address: 13315 Resser Road Parkers Prairie, MN 56361. Their phone number is: (218) 338-2440.

### NORWEX – GET TOGETHER..

Margaret, Linda, Elaine, Cindy, and Luella attended a Norwex extravaganza. In an effort to help get more environmentally friendly with chemicals and cleaning products at Esther Church, we wanted to host one of these at Esther to try out a number of the products on our church. We will work with Lorrie to come up with a list of products that will be very helpful in the upkeep of our church. Norwex is offering a number of extra promotions in the month of January that will go towards the list of needs for Esther also.

Please mark your calendars for January 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at Esther Church. We will have books ahead of time where you can order for yourself as well as Esther. We are extending the invitation to everyone in our congregation as well as any friends you want to bring. Lunch will be provided. We guarantee you will be surprised at what and how these products work. *Seeing is believing...*



**Invitation to India.** Sue Ellwanger, has received an invitation to attend the 35<sup>th</sup> biennial women's convention of the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church our companion synod in India. The convention is January 13 -15, 2016. Sue is president of the NW MN Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) and needs to personally raise funds for this opportunity. Please speak with her if you would like to support her as she represents the NW MN SWO in India.

# Weekly Giving for Families

<i>Monetary Giving by Family Per Week: 2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>
<u>\$100-120/wk</u>	<u>1 family</u>	<u>2 families</u>	<u>5 families</u>
<u>\$90-100/wk</u>	<u>1 family</u>	<u>0 families</u>	<u>1 family</u>
<u>\$80-90/wk</u>	<u>0 families</u>	<u>1 family</u>	<u>0 families</u>
<u>\$70-80/wk</u>	<u>1 family</u>	<u>0 families</u>	<u>2 families</u>
<u>\$60-70/wk</u>	<u>1 family</u>	<u>3 families</u>	<u>2 families</u>
<u>\$50-60/wk</u>	<u>1 family</u>	<u>0 families</u>	<u>1 family</u>
<u>\$40-50/wk</u>	<u>3 families</u>	<u>3 families</u>	<u>0 families</u>
<u>\$30-\$40/wk</u>	<u>6 families</u>	<u>3 families</u>	<u>4 families</u>
<u>\$20-30wk</u>	<u>2 families</u>	<u>2 families</u>	<u>5 families</u>
<u>\$10-20/wk</u>	<u>11 families</u>	<u>12 families</u>	<u>8 families</u>
<u>\$0-10/wk</u>	<u>11 families</u>	<u>12 families</u>	<u>9 families</u>
<u>Families giving on a regular basis:</u>	<u>12 families</u>	<u>12 families</u>	<u>19 families</u>
	<u>49 families</u>	<u>50 families</u>	<u>55 families</u>
			<u>64 families</u>

*Thank you for your support of the ministries at Esther through time, talents and treasure!*

*We encourage you to consider your giving as we approach the end of the year.*