

Ole and Lena went to the hospital so Lena could give birth to their first baby. As Ole waited in the lobby, the doctor came out to inform him that he had some good news and some bad news. "The good news is that you have a normal baby boy. The bad news is that it's a Caesarian." Ole started crying: "Vell, I'm glad it is a healthy baby...but I was kinda hoping it would be a Norwegian."

Now that you got a giggle, let's talk LUTEFISK! A favorite time of year here at Elk Creek! Our annual Lutefisk Supper is Saturday, February 17, serving times are 12:30pm, 2 pm, 3:30 pm, and 5 pm. Tickets are only \$15 and the amount of food you will be have to choose from is extraordinary! Call Becky at (715)694-2181 for tickets (space is limited!!) We hope you will also consider joining us for the prep that happens on Friday (starting at 9 am!) and meatball prep on Saturday at 7:30 am. We are always looking for volunteers, young AND old alike! Sign-up sheets are in the narthex.



Lenten Service Schedule:

Feb 14 - Ash Wednesday 7:30 pm

Feb 21 - 7:30 pm Lenten Service (light supper at 6:30)

Feb 28 - 7:30 pm Lenten Service (light supper at 6:30)

March 7 - 7:30 pm Lenten Service (light supper at 6:30)

March 14 - 7:30 pm Lenten Service (light supper at 6:30)

March 21 - 7:30 pm Lenten Service (light supper at 6:30)

Interested in "Serving" an important role in Lenten Services?

We are offering a light supper for those that attend the 7:30 Lenten Services (typically 30-40 people). We are looking for individuals or families of all ages to help in this important service project. Sign up is in the Narthex or contact Lindsey Nelson at 715.533.0008

Your One and Only Life

What are you going to do with your **ONE and ONLY** life? As an old song says, you and I are going to pass this way but once. Christianity does not teach reincarnation, it teaches Resurrection and Everlasting Life. We don't get to keep coming back from death or some kind of reincarnation until we get it right. In the book of Hebrews, Chapter 9:27-28, the writer says, ***“And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”*** We only get to live this life here, once; and we only get to die from this life, once. Those who place their trust in Jesus Christ will be saved unto everlasting life with God in heaven. There is no need to come back and try to get it right a second or third time or however many times it would take you to get it right, by your own efforts. Jesus promises Resurrection and Everlasting Life for all those who believe!

What are you going to do with your **ONE and ONLY** life? I strongly recommend four bold actions during the Season of Lent that begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14th Valentine's Day.

- 1) **Repent** – Jesus began proclaiming the good news of God, ***“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” (Mark 1:15)*** Turn and live in God's way of grace and love. This means gathering with God's faithful people in worship and Bible study, volunteering and serving at church, and praying for the Spirit of Jesus to lead and guide you.
- 2) **Follow Jesus, Follow Jesus, Follow Jesus** - by studying and learning his teachings, serving others, and loving one another just as he loved us and gave up his life for the whole world on the cross. This means gathering with God's faithful people in worship and bible study, volunteering and serving at church, and praying for the Spirit of Jesus to lead and guide you.
- 3) **Fish for People.** Let the Holy Spirit guide YOU, day by day to catch people by the love and grace of God that shines through you. This means gathering with God's faithful people in worship and bible study, volunteering and serving at church, and praying for the Spirit of Jesus to lead and guide you.
- 4) **Remember and Believe** that your **ONE and ONLY** life is made complete and whole through the promise Jesus gave those who believe: ***“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26)*** This means gathering with God's faithful people in worship and bible study, volunteering and serving at church, and praying for the Spirit of Jesus to lead and guide you in your **One and Only** life.

Pr. Ahles

January 2, 2018 Congregational Council Meeting

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by President Steve Ebert. Members present were Steve Ebert, Pastor Valerian Ahles, Linda Odness, Brandi Berg, Lynn Nelson, Jim Odness, Kevin Eid, Keith Nelson, Stephanie Rumstick and Ryan Johnson

Pastor Ahles led us in prayer and devotion with a reading from Jeremiah 31. He also shared a poem form "Are You Joking Jeremiah", a conversation with God. Pastor encourages us to speak our minds, but also be open and listen to others as we grow in our Parish.

Treasurer's Report provided and presented by Brandi Berg

- Checking Account - \$9353.83
Building Fund Checking - \$9542.37
- 2020 General Fund - \$30,281.24
Building Fund CD 2 - \$13,561.08
- Church Savings- \$5,721.03
Memorial Fund - \$3,577.52

Motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Jim; 2nd Kevin; motion approved.

Secretary's report for the December Congregational Meeting was read by Linda Odness; motion to approve made by Keith, 2nd by Lynn; motion carried.

Pastor's Report

- "We made it through Christmas."
- Pastor commented that both Sunday school programs were very good and helped to fill an empty feeling, as he was missing the children from his previous Parish.
- We discussed best way to contact the Pastor in case of an emergency. He will update the message on the answering machine at both churches and will include the Parsonage number and his cell phone number.
- Pastor attended the Conference Pastors meeting in Black River Falls and said it was very good.
- He also shared that he has visited with shut-ins and provided Holy Communion and is finding his way around the community.

WELCA

- Kitchen floor was installed by Halama's flooring and it looks great.
- Lutefisk dinner is set for February 17th with 4 settings and same price of \$15.00. Tickets are available from Becky Rongstad. Sign-up sheets will be in the Narthex and we can use everyone's help
- Good attendance for the Christmas Singalong and meal.

Parish Secretary Update

- Crystal would like to have permission to purchase office supplies as needed. Jim made a motion to give Crystal permission to make

purchases for office supplies at her discretion, second by Lynn; motion approved.

Parish Council

- Will be meeting in January.

Old Business

1. Lynn updated council on how helpful the new software is: printed annual giving statements from it. The program also tracks the monthly giving and makes updating membership very easy.
2. No new information regarding the roof or the driveway.
3. Brandi will reach out to Fred Ackley for clarification regarding the roof issue and our liability policy.
4. Water in the men's bathroom has been freezing will look into moving the pipes.
5. Jim contacted Travis Electric and he would be able to install the emergency lights at \$30.00 per unit plus installation. Ryan made a motion to have Travis Electric install an emergency light in the basement and church, 2nd by Stephanie, motion approved. Jim will call Travis Electric and get this set up once the location for the lights has been determined.
6. Parsonage bathroom plumbing has not been completed, Jim will contact Osseo Plumbing.
7. Jim contacted Nate Rongstad regarding plowing the parsonage and they are doing it.
8. Looking into the cost of replacing the garage door on the parsonage.

New Business

1. Discussion regarding the poor quality of the lighting in the Pastor's office and outer office. Keith made a motion to purchase 3 overhead lights, two for the church and one for the office in the parsonage, 2nd by Lynn, motion approved.
2. Jim shared a "Connect Card" from a church he recently visited, as a way to possibly update our membership records.
3. Reviewed positions needed for the upcoming annual meeting and a reminder that the nominating committee needs to meet soon.
4. Discussion regarding the cost of phone and computer service at the parsonage. It is recommended that the Parish board discuss this.
5. Auditing committee for the church treasure books is Leonard Robinson, Becky Rongstad and Barb Howard.

Motion to adjourn made by Ryan 2nd by Keith: Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:42. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Odness, Recording Secretary



We welcome everyone to coffee hour Sundays at 9:15 in the church basement. Join us for coffee and chats ☺

Council Meeting DATE CHANGE

The new date for the regularly scheduled monthly meeting will be the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.

February's meeting will be Tuesday the 6th at 7 p.m.

Elk Creek WELCA meeting

1/14/18

Meeting opened by President Berg with Creed and Theme Verse.

Treasurer report December 2017 Income \$928.89, Expenses \$1808.49. Ending Balance \$8284.13. Max Rate \$4429.91, CD (Seminary) \$10,224.40 No Bill yet for flooring, will be approx. \$300.00 higher due to leveling needed with tile removal. One half of the phone bill and one quarter of the electric bill also paid. Treasurer's report was placed on file.

Secretary's report read and placed on file. No old business for follow up.

New Business:

Will need a representative to attend council meeting (takes place 1st Tuesday of Month). Stephanie has been going and volunteered to continue for this year. Discussion to include this in voting for officers next October.

2018 Books are available and being distributed. 4 small groups, and 2 large (Ruth and Martha). Crystal will put a message on Facebook for members to respond if they wish to have messages texted instead of phone call. Signup sheets out for help with Lutefisk dinner, workers and donations. Prep on Friday, Meatballs Saturday at 7:30am. Lynn has signed up for grant to assist with costs. Currently 5pm setting is the fullest.

Request that website be updated with Pastor's contact numbers.

Lenten services, unknown at this time if we will participate in Wednesday Lenten Round Robin, or time of services. Parish council to meet this week. Proceeds from Lenten meals goes to youth group. Linsey to contact families of Confirmation students about helping with Lenten meals.

Ladies request it be brought to Parish council to align communion to be the same dates at both churches. Barb will ask that this be put on the agenda for this week.

Thank You's were read from the following organization which we donate to:

Western Dairyland/ RSVP Birthday boxes, Quilts and \$500. Christmas from the Heart (Eleva - Strum). Good Gifts, Compassion Child, RIFF (Reading is fundamental), Tremp. Co, Health Care Center, Ruby's Pantry, Whitehall Food Pantry, New Horizons, Alzheimer Assoc., Heifer International, Tri-County Food Pantry (Osseo). Also Brian Christopherson for the Cookies, and the Berg Family.

Discussion on supporting campers at Luther Park. Need to do some research on cost and Pastors expectation of confirmation students to attend. Tabled for this month until more information is available.

Reminder that there are good articles on the Café portion of Seeds of the Parish. There will be no Circle in January.

Offering taken, Meeting closed with Lord's Prayer at 10:08 am.

Barb Fischer, Secretary

**These are the UNAPPROVED MINUTES from the Joint Parish meeting January 16, 2018
at Elk Creek Lutheran Church**

X	Tom Wagener	X	Pastor Ahles	X	Mike Nelson
X	Camille Skoug	X	Steve Ebert	X	Vicki Hanson
X	Clarissa Clark	X	Charlotte Myhers	X	Barb Fischer

Joint Parish council met for its scheduled meeting at Elk Creek Lutheran church at 6:30 on 1/16/18. Meeting was opened by with devotions by Pastor Ahles. Past meeting minutes were reviewed. Motion to approve minutes 11/28/17 meeting was made by Steve, second by Vicki. Minutes placed on file.

Pastor's Report

Since last meeting, late November Pastor has done 4 Funerals, 28 shut-in visits. 35 other general visits including 3 visits with families requesting baptism for their children. Presided over 15 worship services, practiced and performed with choirs of both congregations. Participated in Christmas Concert at Immanuel, and Carol Singing at Elk Creek

Pastor attended the Dairyland Conference Pastors' meeting and weekly text study in Osseo, Weekly Confirmation classes were conducted at each church, except the week after Christmas. 6 hospital visits (Eau Claire, Osseo, and Winona). Nursing home services at Dove Care facility (Osseo), and devotions for Senior Dinner program. Visited with the Quilters at Elk Creek, and attended Immanuel's Women's meeting in January. Attended the scheduled council meetings and CEBLC meetings.

Old Business:

Discussed Garbage for Parsonage, Pastor is currently taking the garbage and recyclables to Pleasantville. Did discuss the option of Tri-County Sanitation from Whitehall, garbage pickup. Purchase a roll of 10 bags for \$25.00. Pastor will monitor. At this time will continue to take the garbage to Pleasantville. Discussion on the Cable/Internet/Phone bill from TCC. Bundling of the services is less costly than

paying for the services separately. Immanuel had not paid for Cable services previously, this make up the biggest portion of the TCC monthly bill. At this time Pastor is paying for his own cell phone services, which runs about \$50.00 per month. Pastor offered to contribute \$50.00 toward the TCC bill in order to keep the bundle package with cable to be able to get local and PBS television stations. Motion by Camille to withhold \$50.00 from pay, leaving the remainder of the TCC bill to be split 65/35 by Immanuel and Elk Creek. Motion 2nd by Vicki. Motion passed.

New Business

Lenten Services are tentatively scheduled as: Ash Wednesday Services 6pm at Immanuel, 7:30pm at Elk Creek. Pastor will check to see if it is still possible to participate in the Lenten Round Robin. Pastor to speak with Jeanette Tobiason as to what time would work the best, may possibly look at an earlier service in Strum (4pm). Confirmation students to attend/participate in the weekly Wednesday Lenten Services. No confirmation class will be held during lent. Elk Creek will plan on 7:30 pm services, with a light meal before the service. Immanuel TBD. Service time rotation will take place June 3rd. Elk Creek going to early service, Immanuel late service for the next year. Also discussed having Joint service on the 5th Sundays of the month. This occurs in April, July, September and December for 2018. Parish council all agreed this would be a good thing to try. Communion schedule was discussed. Immanuel has on 1st and 3rd Sundays, Elk Creek first 2 Sunday of the month. It would be easier for the formatting of the bulletin if the congregations were on the same schedule. The change to the first 2 Sundays had been made at Elk Creek after it had been brought forward that members who worked every other weekend were rarely able to participate in communion when it fell the same every other Sunday that they worked. Elk Creek does Communion at the alter rail on the first Sunday and by Intinction the 2nd Sunday. Immanuel parish

council members felt it would be good to take this to their council.

Continuing Education opportunity for Pastor to attend the Rural Ministry Conference March 3-6, 2018 in Dubuque, Iowa. Supply pastor would not be needed as it will not interrupt the scheduled services. Cost is \$180.00 plus hotel. Motion to approve attendance by Camille, 2nd by Clarissa. Motion passed.

Announcements:

Trempealeau Co. Food distribution at Immanuel on Saturday, 1-5. Help is always welcome.

Lutefisk dinner at Elk Creek Saturday, February 17th.

Next Parish Council meeting Tuesday, April 24th at Immanuel in Strum.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

HELP THE HOMELESS

There are MANY containers/pans/dishes that have been left to fend for themselves in the church kitchen, and we are hoping to reunite them with their loving families. Please check to see if any belong to you 😊

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Kellen & Lindsey Nelson on the birth of their baby boy, Jennings Joseph Nelson.

Born January 24th, 7 lbs 12 oz.

Lines from LaVerne... The greatest temptation in everyone's life is not to believe God. Remind yourself to pray and seek God's wisdom. If we desire to follow Christ, we have an enemy-the evil forces of Satan. He desperately wants to destroy the image of God in mankind. Satan doesn't hate humans but he does hate God. We cannot demonstrate the love, unity and wisdom of God around us if we cannot communicate. Thirty-eight percent of families and forty-three percent of males say they often feel lonely. Satan likes to figure out all the good things that God created and turn them upside down in rebellion. We need to realize we live in "enemy occupied territory" when Satan tries to destroy everything we do. He wants to isolate us from each other and from God. The enemy of our souls is always there to confuse both us and the ones we are trying to reach. The day we stop working at communication, is the day we begin to walk away from a relationship. If we have problems we are doomed if we decide to quit talking. Anything our enemy can do to cause misunderstanding among people, he will do. He wants us to overact or not to react and either one will serve his purpose. Our enemy's strategy must be defeated. If we try to accomplish God's goals using Satan's ways, we will lose because God must remove His blessings from us. We also must pray. We are all made in the image of God. We judge from outside appearances, but God judges the inner person. How's your heart? God is love. Can we all walk each other home with love, the way Jesus taught us to do?

PS Remember Valentine's Day

Your Lay Minister,
LaVerne