



No Service at Elk Creek on Sunday, July 3!!

*A community service will be held at
the Pleasantville Ball Field.*

Service @ 10:00



Vacation Bible School is back!!

- o Theme: ☹ ☹ ☹ On the Case ☹ ☹ ☹
- o Mark your calendars:
 - Sunday, **July 31st** after church (9:45 am-12:30 pm)
 - Wednesday, **August 3rd** (5:30 pm-8:15 pm)
 - Sunday, **August 7th** after church (9:45 am-12:30 pm)
 - Wednesday, **August 10th** (5:30 pm-8:15 pm)
- o A light lunch/supper will be served with activities and lessons.
- o It is again multi-generational! Bring your kids, bring your grandparents! Everyone is welcome.



July we will be collecting
bars of soap.

Elk Creek Lutheran Church Council Meeting -- June 7, 2022

The meeting was called to order by President Ryan Johnson at 7:08 PM. Members present were: Pastor Valerian Ahles, Jan Berg, Brian Christopherson, Ryan Johnson, Rhonda Koval, Dave Lyngen, Anson McCune, Lori Nelson, Becky Rongstad, and Bruce Thompson.

Devotions and Prayer -- Pastor began by reading Acts 4 : 31-35. He shared that as believers, we need to be willing to make bold statements for us to have deeper conversations with each other and with God. He closed with a prayer.

Secretary's Report -- It was noted that the Secretary's Report for May of 2022 had been sent to each of the Council members electronically, corrections made, and it had been approved prior to it being printed in the June Newsletter.

Treasurer's Report -- It was presented by Becky with information provided by Haukeness Financial Service. She indicated that new credit cards have been issued to named purchasers – Crystal Johnson and Anson McCune. A transfer had been made to the Building Fund with the money raised during the potluck on the final day of Sunday School. It was noted that the rates for Tri-County Sanitation may be going up in September. Bruce made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented; Brian seconded; and the motion passed.

Elk Creek Lutheran Church Account

- General Checking Account - \$44,508.00
- General [2050 Fund] Savings Account \$38,890.81
- Building Fund Checking - \$4,343.48
- Memorial Fund - \$4,139.69

Joint Parish Financial Accounts

| Assets | Elk Creek | Immanuel | Total |
|------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Beginning Balance - | \$3,872.07 | \$5,808.34 | \$9,680.41 |
| Deposits & Interest - | \$3,462.90 | \$5,194.33 | \$11,002.67 |
| Payments - | \$3,239.57 | \$4,859.29 | \$8,098.86 |
| Liabilities & Equity - | \$4,095.40 | \$6,143.38 | \$10,238.78 |
| Ending Balance - | \$4,095.40 | \$6,143.38 | \$10,238.78 |

Council
Meeting is
Tuesday,
July 5
at 7 p.m.

Pastor's Report --

Pastor conducted 5 worship services and 4 live stream services, including the joint service with Strum at Stoddard Park. He attended 4 Coffee Fellowships while selecting Hymns. He provided Holy Communion to 10 parishioners during visits to shut-ins and at area nursing homes. Pastor delivered devotions during the Cemetery Association Meeting and participated in the May 7th "God's Work, Our Hands" event. He met with the Confirmation class 2 times and once with the Choir. They will not be meeting again during the summer. Pastor attended 4 Dairyland Conference Pastor's Text Studies on Zoom and the Pastors' Farewell for Pastor Bowman and Pastor Morck. He served as the speaker at the Memorial Day services at Strum and Eleva. He led a June 2nd service at the Gundersen Tri-County Care Center. He will be on vacation from June 23 - July 6. (Ryan will locate a speaker for the June 29 services and the July 3 service will be at the Lions Park in Pleasantville. Pastor will find someone to cover for him in the event of a death or emergency.) Upcoming events include the Bridal Show & Reception on June 11, the dedication of the playground and picnic tables on June 19, and the Joint Immanuel / Elk Creek Council Meeting on June 21. Pastor Ahles' Office Hours at Elk Creek are generally from 8:30 - 12:30 on Wednesday mornings. Pastor Ahles can be reached at [cell] 533-0939 or [parsonage] 694-2427.

WELCA Report -- Jan reported that everyone is working to prepare for the Bridal Show and Reception.

Youth Group -- Ryan noted that Jessica Berg had indicated the Youth Group plans to do a car wash during August – hopefully at the church. Bruce said he could supply extra hoses and Anson volunteered to donate some car wash cleaning supplies.

Choir, Memorial Committee, Sunday School, Janitor, Office Staff, & Joint Parish Council -- No reports

Old Business –

- Playground Equipment & Picnic Tables – Dedication is set for June 19th. There will be cake in the basement after the dedication.
- Stoves –The older gas stove has been moved and the new gas stove has been installed. Benedict's installer indicated that the older gas stove is working properly. It was noted that the gas line to both of the stoves can now be shut off using a valve in the furnace room. A discussion followed about the possibility of shutting the valve and turning it on when a stove or stoves are needed. It was noted that while the one gas stove has an igniter for the pilot lights, the other does not and that lighting some of the pilot lights for that stove would require laying on the floor to ignite some of the pilot lights. It was decided that the valve is tube open at all times. Becky said she had received information from Chippewa Valley Energy that they need to be informed when changes regarding the gas lines and appliances are made so that they can inspect the equipment. An official from the company will perform the inspection on June 28. They also recommended that a gas detector be purchased. Following discussion, Becky made a motion to purchase a natural gas detector and a combination smoke and carbon monoxide detector' Lori seconded; and the motion passed. Anson went online and purchased both detectors. Dave made a motion to pay Anson for the detectors; Rhonda seconded; and the motion passed.

- Wall-Mounted Oven – Becky said she had informed Benedict's, when they installed the new stove and checked both stoves, that we did not need a new wall-mounted oven.
- Curtition – We haven't heard anything from the company.
- COVID Policy – The Council discussed the passing of the Offering plates and returning to having Communion at the Rail. The Council agreed to both options. It was noted that Communion at the Rail will be on June 12 and July 10 and Communion at floor-level will be on June 19 and July 17 since the church service will be held elsewhere on the first Sundays of each month.
- Sewer Pumping – Becky indicated that the pumping had been done for both the church and the parsonage on June 6 and that the filter had also been cleaned.

New Business --

- Joint Worship Service – The Council members agreed that the Joint Service was nice and successful. It was noted that Elk Creek's share of the costs is approximately \$125 which will probably be taken out of the joint checking account.
- A "Thank You" was read from the Evangelical Church of America for the \$400 gift to the Lutheran Disaster Fund, as well as a request for an additional donation.
- Luther Park – It was announced that Luther Park will be having a Golf Outing on August 11 at Sioux Creek Golf Course in Chetek. Anyone interested in participating should contact Luther Park.
- Budget Items – Becky was directed to make the payments to Luther Park, Lutheran Social Services, and the Northwest Synod in the amounts originally budgeted.
- Bills – Bills for the annual subscription for the church's Website Domain, the cost for the skidder used to remove a tree behind the parsonage, an extension unit for installation of the new gas stove (which Bruce had purchased), and the two detectors were presented. It was noted that the bills for the sewer pumping and the new gas stove should arrive soon. Bruce made a motion that the presented bills be paid and that the bills for the sewer pumping and the new gas stove be paid when they arrive; Brian seconded; and the motion passed.
- Parking Lot – Becky said that Cedric Anderson had noticed several large cracks in the blacktop around the church. He recommended that the cracks be filled and the pavement sealed. Bruce volunteered to get bids for the fixing and sealing with the work to be done sometime this summer.

Next Meeting -- The next Council meeting will be on July 5 at 7 PM. The Pastor will provide paper copies of his Pastor's Report before the meeting since he will be on vacation on that date.

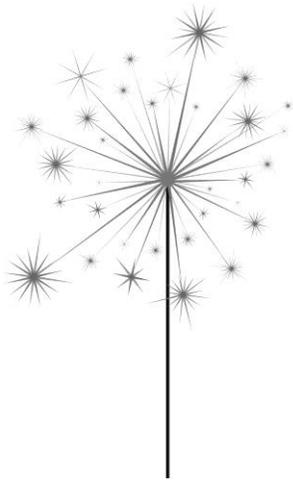
Adjournment -- Dave made a motion to adjourn; Brian seconded; and the motion passed. The meeting was closed at 8:15 PM with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Lori Nelson, Recording Secretary



Lines from LaVerne... Our savior came to earth to us as a light. He is the light that keeps on shining in the darkness. When you believed in Jesus you became a child of light. This brightness enters your heart. Rejoice as you are my cherished one, you have the light of the knowledge of the glory of Jesus shining in your heart. Rejoice. Your savior came into the world so that no one who believes in him should stay in darkness. The fact that we are not strangers to our heavenly father is really great. We have been known by God even before we were born. We are never alone and that is so wonderful. Jesus died on the cross so we never have to be alone. Jesus says, I hold you by your right hand. Jesus delights in transforming us into the one God created. Into the one he wanted you to be. The last enemy you will face and death but because of the crucifixion and resurrection Jesus gave us eternal salvation. He's making us fit for his kingdom as we go along on this road to heaven. You are one of his special people and you belong to God and he delights in you. Instead of focusing on your inadequacy, work on staying close to Jesus and rely on his help. Look to Jesus for help for all you need. Remember without Jesus, you can

do nothing. From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. John 1:16



God gives you joy in the journey of life. Without joy in your life you'll become weary and discouraged. Joy is not dependent on the circumstances in your life. Dear Jesus, I realize that I need to seek you in the morning, so I can stay connected to you the rest of the day. Your love helps me to know that together we can handle whatever the day brings. You give me the courage to persevere through all of problems. Because of your loving presence, I can sing and be glad. I can read scripture and pray. The benefits for spending time with me are spiritual, emotional and physical. Do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord, your God will be with you wherever you go. Don't forget to pray. Never underestimate the power of prayer. Jesus relied heavily on praying to his father. Never think that it is your last resort. Pray each day so God

knows you or he may say, who are you? I don't know you. Jesus is the one who keeps your lamp burning and he is your light. Trust in God and he will transform your darkness into light. You, oh Lord keep my lamp burning, my God turns my darkness into light. Meditate on scripture, search for God in the Bible. But the word of grace and truth soak into the depths of your soul and draw you closer to God. When you were in the midst of challenging circumstances it is crucial to keep on trusting. Tell Jesus, I trust you Jesus. How wonderful for us to have easy access to Jesus. Invite him to strengthen and protect you each day.

PS How great you are dear Lord!

Your Lay Minister, LaVerne



How Shall the Church Respond?

This month marks mine and Christine's 38th year as ordained ELCA pastors. We were ordained July 31, 1984. All the congregations that I have served over the years have been connected with small rural towns. Some have been congregations joined in a parish arrangement of two, three, and four congregations. One was a single congregation that I served for 15 years. Overall, the places that I have served have been positive places to grow in faith, love, and grace through God's holy Word, Jesus Christ.

At times, small Church Ministry has been hard. Like facing the changes that a global pandemic suddenly brought upon all of us making everything much more difficult. It is

sometimes harder to grieve alongside other parishioners, not only because I care about them deeply, but also having to grieve with my own family with our losses. I sometimes feel like some parishioners think that pastors have it all together when it comes to losing loved ones because they have had the training and a strong vibrant faith and knowledge of the scriptures to carry them through grief quickly. In my experience, that's a pile of horse dung. Grief becomes more "a way of life" with good days and difficult days of coping with the empty space that doesn't go away. I have a new understanding of what grief is like, because of the loss of our sons.

At times over the years, the congregations I have served have had to wrestle with hard issues facing the Church and society: like racism, sexism, gays, lesbians, transgendered people, refugees and immigrants, gun violence, and election problems. These are all divisive issues that are hard to address and respond to because parishioners and pastors become polarized. I have often been labeled as a liberal. A lot of rural people are labeled as conservatives. But, wrestling with these issues is not about arriving at a political platform we can all agree on. Rather, it is an issue of faith. Faith in God's Word, Jesus Christ, who calls me and you, to address these issues we face in the world with respect, integrity, love and grace with each other, so that we might make a difference in the world of our day.

Over the last 4-5 years, there is more hatred and anger especially between liberals and conservatives. It's like people are losing respect for those who are different in their thinking and convictions, and there is name-calling and life threats against each other.

So, how does the Church respond? How do pastors respond? Do we all just ignore it because it is too controversial to talk about? Does the bible forbid us, or ask us, to speak to the issues we all must face together? God's Word, Jesus Christ has something to say to us and help us move through contentious issues. The people of faith, the children of God, respond to hard, difficult issues without tearing each other down. We all must take into our minds, hearts and souls the command of Jesus, "Love one another".

All of us who believe and follow God's Word, Jesus Christ, have a common identity from which we can live faithful, loving, and grace-filled lives. By our baptism into Christ, we are all children of God. We are sons and daughters of God just like Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus said, ***"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*** (John 13:34-35)

This means that whatever sector of society we individually identify with, be it liberal or conservative or somewhere in between, as Christ's Church our primary identity is that we are sons and daughters of God who treat each other with respect, love, and grace. The way the Church responds to the difficult issues of our day is to show "Love for one another" despite our differences. Let us all work, play, and pray together; showing faith, love, and grace for one another, for the sake of the world.

Pr. Ahles



Elk Creek Ladies Meeting June 2022

6/12/2022

Elk Creek Ladies meeting was called to order by President Jan.

Treasurer's report: Beginning balance: \$8630.90, Income: \$834.60, Expenses \$1560.04, Ending Balance \$7670.10. No change to savings account (\$1456.30). Report was accepted and placed on file. Secretary's report was read and approved as read.

Old Business: Fabric has not yet been purchased for May Mission project.

Credit card has not yet been received, Becky will contact the bank again.

Bridal Show Event held yesterday went very well, 54 dresses were shown, with approximately 62 guests in attendance. A Thrivent Grant was used for a large part of the expenses. Income from the event was \$480.00 from free will donation and Dress Raffle. \$50.00 of Quilt raffle tickets also sold. Event was videotaped by TCC and Matt Weaver. TCC will let us know when it will air, but it can be accessed On Demand from your computer at: <https://co.trempealeau.wi.us/community/tcctvmediacenter>, Click on, Watch On-Demand (or can watch on ROKU). At this point you can select History Files –Bridal Fashions, Bridal Fashions through the ages.

New Business: Kitchen: Gas stove should not be used as extra counter space – plastics may melt be ruined if too close to the pilot light. Caution signs will be made to post near gas stove.

Lake Martha Days Booth Saturday June 18th. Sign up sheet passed for volunteers to man selling raffle tickets, and giving away cookbooks.

Coffee hour Sunday 6/19 will have cake for the dedication of the playground equipment. Mary volunteered to provide for coffee on June 26th (Group 1)

Bible Study at the Pond June 20th. Church at Pleasantville July 3rd.

Vacation Bible School Sunday 7/31, and the first 2 weeks of August.

A new Eternal Candle (battery operated) was ordered for the Alter by Crystal, motion by Tammy, 2nd by Debbie to pay Crystal for this. It had become difficult to keep the oil in the current candle filled, and oil has become quite expensive to keep this candle burning at all times.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Rosanne, 2nd by Debbie. Meeting closed with offering and Lord's Prayer at 10:14 am

Barb Fischer, Sec.