

First Evangelical Lutheran Newsletter

February 2026

“Proclaiming the Good News of Grace and Forgiveness in Jesus Christ to Our Community and World”

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Greetings FELC,

About two months ago, I decided to audition at the Andria Theatre in Alexandria for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. I was surprised when the cast list came out to learn that I was cast as the role of the villain of the story! This character isn't just a villain but an evil priest who does some pretty bad stuff during the musical. It took me awhile to wrap my head around all of this as a pastor. But it has been a rewarding experience to work with the rest of the cast to get this show down. So if you decide to see the show, please remember that Pastor Ben does not play a kind and benevolent priest!

Acting is an interesting and sometimes uncomfortable experience because you have to imagine yourself in the character your playing's head. You have to think of what drives them as a character and how to act that out on stage. When it comes to real life, we only get one "role" to play out - the person who God made us to be. We all have different gifts and callings from the Lord. While we might not be in a musical or a play, it's easy enough to wear different "masks" to hide or obscure who we are, or to hide from where God is calling us. I think of Jonah who was called by God to tell the people of Nineveh to repent. Jonah goes in the completely opposite direction and it takes some course correction with a whale to sort things out! God knows who we are deep down, he's the one who made us. He's the one who calls us his beloved. The one who formed us in our mother's womb. I want to leave you today with one of my favorite psalms, Psalm 139, which reminds us that God doesn't see the many masks we often try to wear, but sees for who we are: fearfully and wonderfully made.

Psalm 139:1-14,23-24, "O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it. Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and night wraps itself around me," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well...Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Christ's grace and peace be with you always,

Pastor Ben Dyrhaug

February Birthdays

2/3 SueAnne Ritter
2/5 Wilma Weber
2/12 Anthony Ellsworth
2/12 Karsyn Lorine
2/13 Janet Hadley
2/14 Kali Hoppe
2/16 Susan Riedel
2/16 Lewis Struthers
2/19 Jim Schroeder
2/20 Michael Lorine
2/28 Holden Truax



In Our Prayers

Amanda Steinbeisser,
Tim Andree – grandson of Phyllis Haugen,
Barbara Syverson, Jody Lange, Andy Bowman,
Donna Hegg -mother of Nancy Noga
Pete Baugh -brother-in-law of Ken Bowman

Extended Care

Lucille Trisko, Carol Hanson, Avis Larson

May God Watch Over You During Your Service to Our Country:

Matthew Westad, Jordan Olson, Lukas Johnson, Jean Barbee- daughter of Bea Skoglund
Mitchell Cooper, Patrick Rubner, Dr. Drew Long – grandson of Carol Hanson



*Lord,
Hear Our
Prayer*

Children's Ministry

Sunday February 15 - Children will sing in church.

Sunday March 29 - Palm Sunday - Egg Hunt and Palm Sunday Breakfast before church, no Sunday School

Sunday April 5 - No Sunday School

Sunday April 19 - Children will sing in church.

Sunday May 17 - Last Day of Sunday School for the school year. Bake sale before and after church. Children will sing in church.

Sunday July 12 - Thursday July 16 - Vacation Bible School will be held at church with Luther Crest Bible Camp counselors



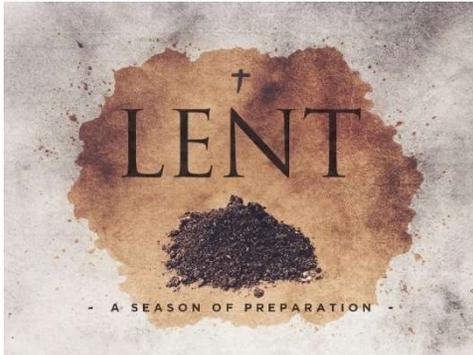
The Annual Meeting of First Evangelical Lutheran Church will take place on Sunday, February 8th following worship at approximately 11 am. Business will include reports from 2025, approval of the 2026 proposed budget, election of council members and any other business brought forward.

Following the meeting, a chili lunch will be served.



JAM will be cancelled for the month of February. It will resume in March. Thank you for your understanding.

2026 Lent Schedule



Ash Wednesday Worship with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion on Wednesday, February 18th at 6:30 pm

Mid-Week Lent Meal and Worship Services will be held on February 25th, March 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th. A meal will served at 5:30 pm with the service using Holden Evening Prayer at 6:30 pm.

Palm Sunday is March 29th. A Palm Sunday Breakfast will be served beginning at 8:30 am and an Easter Egg Hunt will take place before worship that morning. NO Sunday School.

Maundy Thursday – April 2nd. Worship with Holy Communion and First Communion for our fourth-grade students will be at 6:30 pm.

Good Friday – April 3rd. Worship at FELC at 6:30 pm. Worship at Elmo at 5:00 pm.

Easter Sunday - Resurrection of our Lord – April 5th. Worship with Holy Communion.
8 am at Elmo 10 am at FELC. NO Sunday School



NO Formal Confirmation Classes during Lent. Students are expected to attend the mid-week lent worship services. The meal is at 5:30 pm with the worship service at 6:30 pm.

PP FOOD SHELF



The Parkers Prairie Food Shelf will be open on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 3:30-6:30 in the Church basement. You may stop in at any time during those hours as there will be someone to assist you. If you know someone in need, please pass this schedule on to them.

If you need immediate assistance, please call the church office at 218-338-5731 and we will try to help you with your needs.

February Worship Assistants

	2/1	2/8	2/15	2/22
Reader	Ken Bowman	Kelly Olson	Carlye Carlson	Carlye Carlson
Usher				Robin Douma Pat Sukraw
Communion Asst	Jim Schroeder		Jim Schroeder	
Music	Dale Plasek	Dale Plasek	Julie Lindgren	Brad Lambrecht
Acolyte				Blakelynn Douma
Sound System	Caleb/Jim/Owen	Caleb/Jim/Owen	Caleb/Jim/Owen	Caleb/Jim/Owen

January 2026 Financials

General Fund	01/04	01/11	01/18	01/25
Sunday Offering	\$3,535.00	\$1,272.00	\$1,465.00	\$867.00
Electronic Giving General & Building	\$535.00 (1st)		\$835.00 (15 th)	
Elmo Contribution		\$,340.33		AA \$45.00
Vanco	\$120.00			
Mission of the Month	\$25.00 LSS	\$25.00 World Hunger	\$25.00 LSS \$20.00 BackPack	\$25.00 Back Pack
General Fund Total	\$4,099.00	\$2,612.33	\$2,284.00	\$912.00
Building Fund	\$141.00	\$250.00	\$116.00	\$0.00

Mission of the Month - February Parkers Prairie Community Ambulance

We are fortunate to live in a community that has an Ambulance Service with EMT's. The Parkers Community Ambulance provides emergency service to the Cities of Parkers Prairie and Urbank. They also provide service to 6 townships in the area. They also provide mutual aid and have been on runs as far away as Osakis.

The challenge the Ambulance Service faces is having enough personal that are certified EMT's. Our congregation has members, that have been or currently are on the staff of the Ambulance Service. Most of us don't realize or appreciate the importance of having an ambulance service in our community until there is a medical emergency in our family.

Another challenge is funding. They do a series of fund-raising events throughout the year to supplement monies that are received from the city, townships and reimbursement for calls.



The council has chosen the **Parkers Prairie Community Ambulance to be the Mission of the Month for February**. You can add a contribution to this mission to your Sunday giving and that money will go directly to the Parkers Prairie Community Ambulance.

Prayer Ventures for February 2026

1 *National Freedom Day and Black History Month* Today commemorates the abolishment of slavery in 1865 and recognizes past, present and future work to secure and protect freedom, justice, equality and respect for all people. It is also the first day of Black History Month. Pray for strength, humility and penitent hearts so we may acknowledge our nation's history and the mistreatment of people based on ancestry, race, religion and perceived differences. Give thanks that our sins and weaknesses are met with God's immense grace and the Spirit's ability to effect change and newness in us, our church and society.

2 Remember in prayer siblings in Christ and communities of faith in the Caribbean region, especially those who are engaged in long-term recovery from natural disasters. Pray for the Caribbean and Florida-Bahamas synods, that their work will bear abundant fruit as they support congregations and ministries in proclaiming the gospel in diverse contexts throughout the region.

3 Pray for nations experiencing violence and war, including Venezuela, Ukraine and Russia, the Middle East, South Sudan and others. Ask God to guide leaders, diplomats and peacemakers as they seek lasting solutions and peace. Pray for the Spirit to inspire us to be advocates and bearers of peace, hope and justice in our communities and the world.

4 The Lord "has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8)? Ask God to help you understand the depth and breadth of justice, kindness, humility and love, which we are asked to exemplify in every aspect of our life and baptismal journey.

5 Pray for young adults who are discerning whether to say yes to serving in an outdoor ministry summer program. Ask God to give them confidence in their faith and the gifts that the Spirit has nurtured in them for service and ministry with children, youth and adults.

6 Ask the Spirit to provide us encouragement and guidance for our life and baptismal journey through Scripture, faith communities, the counsel and example of siblings in Christ, church leaders, people of faith who have gone before us, and prayer.

7 Give thanks and pray for the ELCA's partner church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and the challenging and hope-filled work of its school and ministries that serve both Christians and Muslims.

8 "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Give thanks for those who have inspired your faith. Pray that you are also a light for others, giving glory to God and shining bright with love, mercy and hope.

9 Pray for the ELCA's Congregations Lead Initiative, which equips and inspires congregations with innovation and tools that renew their ministry and community partnerships to create adaptable, relevant and thriving faith communities.

10 "The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail" (Isaiah 58:11). Give thanks and praise to God who is ever-present and sustains our faith, spirit and strength so that we can navigate times of adversity and uncertainty.

11 Give thanks for your synod staff who help equip, support and encourage congregations and leaders to share the good news of Jesus Christ, serve neighbors in need and do God's work in the world.

12 As ELCA members, we are called to respond to our neighbors in need here and around the world. Pray that the impact we have with individuals and communities will grow with the work we do together through ELCA World Hunger, HIV and AIDS Ministry, Lutheran Disaster Response, AMMPARO Migrant Ministry and social ministry organizations.

13 Remember in prayer unsheltered neighbors and siblings in Christ, that they will have safe, secure and consistent places to live each day. Give thanks and pray for those who are part of the Homeless and Justice Network of the ELCA, a coalition of ministries called to serve people on the margins who are struggling with homelessness, poverty and justice issues.

14 Pray for the members of your congregation, their relationships and marriages, that they will experience love, forgiveness, joy, respect and mutual care.

15 *Transfiguration of Our Lord* "While [Peter] was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him'" (Matthew 17:5). Praise God for revealing to us that Jesus Christ is the son of God, the promised messiah, savior and bearer of God's love and mercy, who delivers us from the darkness of our sins and weaknesses.

16 Give thanks for Mission Builders, an ELCA ministry that uses a nationwide network of faithful and active men and women who eagerly use their diverse skills to support congregations, outdoor ministries and schools with construction projects that help grow the ministry and outreach of the church.

17 Ask the Spirit to help us refrain from complacency and silence in response to our neighbors who experience daily challenges and injustice, especially among immigrants and refugees, people experiencing poverty, unsheltered neighbors, the elderly, those who are incarcerated and others. Pray that our response to neighbors in need reflects the compassion, respect and justice that Jesus demonstrated throughout his ministry and implored us to follow.

18 Ash Wednesday Today is the first day of Lent. Ask the Spirit to help you reflect on your faith as a follower of Christ who — with imperfection — values and practices sacrifice, witness, service, generosity and spiritual growth.

19 Praise God for ELCA missionaries and Young Adults in Global Mission volunteers who walk together with Lutheran, ecumenical and interfaith siblings in Christ in 35 countries around the world to share the good news of Jesus Christ, care for the needs of communities, nurture leaders and strengthen ministries.

20 Pray that liturgical colors, symbols, Scripture and worship during Lent remind us that we are not left in the darkness of suffering and death. Give thanks that the Spirit always leads us to the empty cross of our risen Savior — Jesus Christ — who restores life and promises eternal life in the kingdom of God.

21 Remember in prayer the ELCA AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrants with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) strategy and the volunteers, advocates, congregations and synods that strive to protect and accompany vulnerable migrant children and their families who seek safe and welcoming places to reestablish their lives.

22 Is there some realm of life right now where you feel as if you're in a wilderness and being tested? Ask God for strength, wisdom and guidance, and lean into the faith given to you by the Spirit.

23 Give thanks for ELCA Witness in Society, the advocacy ministry of our church that works to change public policy through our collective and individual voices, which are shaped and guided by biblical values of peacemaking, hospitality to strangers, care for creation, and concern for people living in poverty and struggling with hunger and disease.

24 Pray for our 65 synod bishops gathered at the Conference of Bishops meeting for worship and study, mutual sharing and encouragement, and to conduct business on our behalf for the purpose of being responsible stewards of the church, sharing the gospel and doing God's work in a world that is always changing.

25 "Prayer must not be based on or depend on your personal worthiness or the quality of the prayer itself; rather, it must be based on the unchanging truth of God's promise" (Martin Luther, *Faith Alone*). Pray for whatever is on your mind today; be in conversation with God and trust that your words — imperfect, spoken and silent — are heard and attended to.

26 Gun violence continues to afflict our society. In 2025, there were 38,741 deaths related to gun violence and 408 mass shootings (gunviolencearchive.org). Ask God to give us the strength to be diligent in our work and advocacy to end such violence and care for those who suffer grief and trauma due to gun violence and accidental shootings.

27 Give thanks and praise to God for strengthened faith, blessings and the confidence we receive through God's word, water, bread and prayer, which equip and encourage us to go out into the world and do God's work — together.

28 Pray for the ELCA's directors for evangelical mission, the leaders who help coordinate the partnership between churchwide ministries and the 65 synods of our church. Pray for the work we do together to develop new-start ministries, revitalize congregations, practice stewardship and generosity, and develop and equip leaders for mission and ministry.

February 2026

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship w/Communion	2	3	4 Confirmation 5:30 pm Meal – Class to follow	5 11:30 am Senior Dining	6	7
8 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship 11 am Annual Meeting	9	10	11 NO Confirmation NO JAM	12 11:30 am Senior Dining	13	14
15 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship Communion – S.S Children sing	16	17 3:30 -6:30 pm Prairie Food Shelf	18 Ash Wednesday 6:30 pm Worship w/Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes	19 11:30 am Senior Dining	20	21
22 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship	23	24	25 Mid-Week Lent 5:30 pm Meal 6:30 pm Worship	26 11:30 am Senior Dining	27	8

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