

The Church Mouse

Rev. Ethan Feistner
PO Box 465
407 North C St.
Edgar, Ne 68935

Office: 402-224-5905
December 2019

Sunday School 10:00 am
Worship: 11:00am



Church of the Plains
407 North C Street
Edgar, Ne 68935

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From the Pastor's Desk

PASTORAL PONDERINGS.....

December 2019 Newsletter

*In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Luke 2:8
NRSV*

The verse quoted is a well known verse of a well known bible passage telling of angels visiting the shepherds and proclaiming the birth of Jesus, the Messiah. I picked this verse for this article based on words people have told me about life. Words people have used to describe what's going on in their life and/or the lives of their families. I hear the words people tell me when I read Luke 2:8. Do you know what those words are? They go something like this, "Life is busy!" Sound familiar!?

It just seems to me that people are busy! No matter what age, people seem to be doing so much. All those "time saving gadgets" that were supposed to make our lives easier, less busy, less stressful, must have missed something. It amazes me how people are running around more and more, trying to fit in more and more in each hour of the day. With all that in mind, the verse about the shepherds breaks into our busy lives/world.

While we are out in our "regions", in our "fields" keeping watch over the "flocks" we have, God sends to us the message. The message that breaks into the dark, exhausting, business of our lives. The message that tells us, as it did the shepherds, that we are loved more than we will ever know. We have not been forgotten by God. God meets us where we are. God meets us in the midst of our busy lives. God brings to us the good news of a Savior born for us. A Savior that will change the world, change life and death as we know it. God comes to us where we are living with the words of hope and love; words that help in the midst of the busy.

Life is busy! There is no doubt about it. I don't know if that is good or bad. It probably depends on the day. I do know that God is in the midst of our lives no matter what. God is Emmanuel—God with us! What good news! May the Holy Spirit lead us all that we may remember the good news. May that good news effect us as it did the shepherds in the midst of their lives; they had to see the miracle, the good news, the Messiah. May the Holy Spirit lead us to rejoice and proclaim in the midst of the busy! May the good news bring an exiting calm and reassurance! In the midst of our busy lives the word comes to us proclaiming, "*Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy...to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*" Luke 2:10-11 NRSV

A blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas to all!

Pastor Ethan

Kellie and I want to wish all of you a blessed, merry Advent and Christmas season. We celebrate our second season together. Wow, time is going by fast! God has called us together and we give God thanks and praise! We have been blessed by God through you. Thank you for the many gifts you have shared with us this past year, they have touched our hearts and lives. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to help us in this time and place, God is at work. We are blessed through this call by the many members of The Heartland Shared Ministries and the communities all around us. Thank you all! Pastor Ethan and Kellie

It was so good to see all the congregations represented at different activities at different churches, soup suppers, turkey suppers, etc. As we come together, in these simple acts and ministries of presence, the Body of Christ/Heartland Shared Ministries is built up. The Spirit leads and moves! Thanks be to God!



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Birthdays in December

- 3...Kathy Moore
- 6...Georganne Shaw
- 10...Jim Shipley
- 11...Patrick Moore
- 12...Dama Claycamp
- 13...Joel Shuck and James Cox
- 15...Austin Kinnaman and Darrell Beck
- 20...Charles Watts and Jason Brockman
- 21...Lance McReynolds
- 24...Sara Ninabuck
- 25...Kristin Tripe and Jordan Kucera
- 27...J.D. Horst and Ty Moore
- 29...Cheryl Brockman
- 30...Kenneth Overturf

Anniversaries in December

- 21...Dean and Janet Hansen 1994

{ CALENDAR }

OF EVENTS

*If you have anything to add or delete from the bulletin, please call the church and leave it on the answering machine or leave Lisa a note in her drawer at the church. Thanks.

December

- 1...First Advent
9:00 services with Pastor Ethan
- 2...12:00 Congregate meal
- 4...10:00 coffee at the church
4:00 Advent Supper at Salem
- 5...2:00 Last Presbyterian Women's meeting
- 8...11:00 services with Pastor Bill/Potluck/Election of Officers/decorating the church
- 9...12:00 Congregate meal
- 11...10:00 coffee at the church
- 15...11:00 services with Pastor Ethan/Children's Christmas Play/Joy Offering
- 16...12:00 Congregate meal
- 18...10:00 coffee at the church/Return Giving Tree Gifts
7:00 Session meets
- 19...The Comforters will not meet in December
- 22...11:00 services with Pastor Ethan
- 23...12:00 Congregate meal
- 24...7:00 Christmas Eve Candle Light Service
- 25...Jesus' Birthday!
- 27...1:00 to 5:00 Bargain Bin with be open
- 29...11:00 services with Pastor Bill
- 30...12:00 Congregate meal
- 31...Happy New Year!
- January 1...No Congregate meal
- 26...26th Annual Congregation Corporation meeting

Attendance in November

November 3-42
10-51
17-43
24-Services at Salem
Average: 45

Communion Servers

Melanie Aschenbrenner
and Jeanette Shaw
Communion: 38

Ushers and Greeters:

- December 1...Dave and Sandy Nienkamp
- 8...Jerry and Shirley Horst
- 15...Deloris Springer and Darlene Shaw
- 22...Dixie Osborne and Linda Moore
- 29...Darren and Megan Shaw

INGATHERING for COUNSELING CENTER

Revive Ministries Recovery and Counseling Center is an organization in Hastings that provides counseling and has the potential to house 33 individuals in a sober living environment while they are recovering from substance abuse.

During the winter months they have a dire need for electric blankets and for both men and women: sweat shirts, hoodies, gloves, and winter jackets.

Also needed are laundry soap, toilet paper, and other household items.

Deb Troutt is applying for a Thrivent card and she and her daughter, Jodi, are beginning a drive in their respective churches to gather items for this need.

Gently used items and household items may be left in the Fellowship Hall. Deb will deliver all the collected items.



Tuesday, December 24, at 7:00 p.m.

NEW WORSHIP TIME

At the meeting of the Heartland Shared Ministries Coordinating Council held on Nov. 24 the following worship schedule, beginning the first Sunday in February and continuing through 2020, was approved for recommendation to the congregations to be adopted at each 2020 Annual Meeting:

Salem Lutheran – 9:30 a.m.

Church of the Plains – 11:00 a.m.

United Church of Christ – 11:00 a.m.

Dave Nienkamp will develop and distribute the new worship schedule.



The Senior High Youth Group will be getting together after worship on Sunday, December 15th. The plans for the time together will be coming via text so keep your eyes open. All those who went on the trip to the Haunted Forest on October 26th had a great time! There was good car time, good screams and good food and fellowship! Thanks for all the support and participation!

NEWS from the HEARTLAND SHARED MINISTRIES

Each month news, announcements, schedules, and other information that will be of interest to all the congregations of Heartland Shared Ministries will be included in each church's newsletter.

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SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP for DECEMBER and JANUARY

Date	Clay Center UCC	Edgar Presbyterian	Salem Lutheran
12-1-19	9:00 pulpit fill	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 Pastor Ethan
12-8-19	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill	11:00 Pastor Ethan
12-15-19	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill
12-22-19	9:00 pulpit fill	11:00 Pastor Ethan	9:00 Pastor Ethan
12-24-19	9:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.
(Christmas Eve)	Pastor Ethan will conduct all three services.		
12-29-19	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill	11:00 Pastor Ethan
1-5-20	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill
1-12-20	9:00 pulpit fill	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 Pastor Ethan
1-19-20	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill	11:00 Pastor Ethan
1-28-20	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill

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YOU ARE INVITED!!

The congregations of the Clay Center and Edgar churches are invited to attend the Advent Supper and Devotions at Salem on Wednesday, Dec. 4. The pot luck supper will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will be followed by devotions by Pastor Ethan. Due to scheduling conflicts, only one Advent Supper and devotions will be held this year.

An emphasis for the evening will be an Ingathering for the Revive Recovery Center in Hastings. As colder weather approaches, there is a need for warm clothing and other items.

Especially needed are electric blankets, men's/women's sweat shirts, hoodies, gloves, winter jackets, and laundry soap, toilet paper, and other household items.

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HSM Prayer Concerns

Clay Center UCC – Mindy Schultz, Donna Carns, Dick Bedlan, Vince (Nanette's brother), Louis Reasland (Sharon's brother), Patricia Miller (Charon's sister), Jim Barber, the After School Program and Leaders, Prairie Association, flood victims, first responders, and military.

Salem Lutheran – Pastor Ivan Dean, Carol Hayes, the Shroyer and Bohlen families, Tate Ross, Jim Jensen, Wyatt Smidt, Irvin Schleufer, Dixie Osbourne, Jim Richardsen (brother-in-law of Kevin Wulf); Kirby Marr (brother-in-law of Ps. Ethan), Brent Jensen, Louise Schultz, Julie Schleufer (daughter-in-law of Irvin and Murlene), Carly Gebers, Vaden Kramer, and Terry Bargaen (Cheryl Mohler's brother).

Church of the Plains – Ken and Nancy Overturf, Kendall Schendt, Jean Swanson, Dan Fisher, Jerry Horst, Clark and Deb Stertz, Mary Gunn, Lana Horst, Madilynn Meers, Vergene Gunn, Peg Schlichtman, Julie Cochran, Jeanette Shaw, Van Aschenbrenner, and all who are having surgeries and those being tested for cancer.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM HSM COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING

The Coordinating Council of Heartland Shared Ministries met for their quarterly meeting on Sunday, November 24, 2019 following lunch after the joint Thanksgiving worship at Salem Lutheran Church.

Present were:

UCC, Clay Center: Bob Swanson and Jim Eads

Salem Lutheran: Ruth Epley and Carol Mueller

Church of the Plains: David Nienkamp

Pastor: Pastor Ethan Feistner

Guest: Teresa Sullivan, CPA (continued)

Absent: Greg Shuck

Agenda and Minutes: The Agenda was reviewed and approved by consensus vote. A quorum was present. Opening prayer was by Pastor Ethan.

The minutes from the meeting of September 8, 2019 were reviewed and approved.

Financial Report: Financial reports provided by Teresa Sullivan, CPA, were reviewed, discussed, and approved; approved payment to Teresa for services from September through October, 2019, in the amount of \$350.00.

Committee to determine pastoral compensation – Ruth, Bob, and Dave met with Teresa prior to the Coordinating Council meeting to discuss financial compensation for Pastor Ethan for the coming year.

Executive session - The Coordinating Council went into Executive Session at 1:20 p.m. to discuss financial compensation for Pastor Ethan for 2020. Pastor Ethan was excused from the meeting. The Council came out of Executive Session at 1:26 p.m. Pastor Ethan re-joined the meeting.

The Committee to determine pastoral compensation recommends an increase from cash salary of \$47,000.00 to \$49,000.00. The Gold Plus insurance program will be continued as well as an annual furnishing allowance of \$8,100.00 and an annual housing equity allowance of \$1,000.00. The total compensation package for 2020 is \$89,261.90. Motion to recommend to each HSM Congregation Council the increase in compensation to Pastor Ethan as noted above was carried.

The recommendation now goes to each council and will be voted upon at each congregation's annual meeting.

Change in worship time rotation - The following worship schedule was approved for recommendation to each Annual Meeting to be adopted beginning the first Sunday in February and continuing through 2020:

Salem Lutheran – 9:30 a.m.

Church of the Plains – 11:00 a.m.

United Church of Christ – 11:00 a.m.

Motion to recommend above schedule was carried. Dave will develop and distribute the new worship schedule.

Other business –

Expiring terms – the four year terms of David, Bob, and Carol are all expiring at the end of 2019. Each has chosen not to seek re-election. The process of seeking candidates was reviewed for each congregation. The process of transitioning the chairman and secretary positions was discussed.

Shared purchasing – the possibility of pooling purchases (example - paper) within the three churches for goods that all churches would use was discussed. No action taken.

Appreciation for the service of the three retiring council members was expressed. All three expressed confidence in the council's continued success in the future.

