

The Church Mouse

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

Office: 402-224-5905
January 2019

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



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

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January Pastor Ponderings

Heartland Shared Ministries

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:19 (NRSV)

I'm guessing that I'm like a lot of people who are reading this newsletter. I can't believe it is already 2019! It does seem that time goes by fast at times. Now, I'm sure there are some who are reading this newsletter that it seems that it has taken a long time to get to 2019! In either case, it seems that things have happened that have affected our perception of 2018 and what 2019 will bring. One may say or ask are we a person who sees a half empty glass or a half full glass?

With all that in mind, I guess that is why I love the verse from Isaiah 43. It is such a positive verse no matter where you are in life or what you have gone through or will go through. It proclaims to all of us that God is at work! God is going to be doing a new thing! God is making us a way through the wilderness that we are in no what it is. God is springing forth a river in the midst of our dry, no life, desert. God is at work to help us out no matter what we have faced, are facing or will face. God tells us to look at what God has done and promises us that God will do more. God tells us all new things are coming! There is an excitement in the verse of Isaiah.

The words are for a people in exile, a people being held in captivity by a foreign ruler. They are hurting! They are questioning! They are wondering what is going on! In the midst of this terrible time, Isaiah speaks words of hope and reassurance! In the midst of this terrible time, God says that news things are coming, are springing forth!

The words are for us in the exile we may be in right here right now or the time to come. God speaks to us and says that God hasn't forgotten. God's care and love is still here! In the midst of our wilderness, desert, God gives us words of hope and life!

We don't know what 2019 holds for any of us. We do know that God holds 2019 in the palm of God's hands! God is about to do a new thing! God is at work in the midst of the wilderness, in the midst of our lives! God walks with us and carries us now and always!

A blessed new year!

Pastor Ethan

Kellie and I would like to wish all of you a Happy New Year! We also want to thank all of you for sharing with us so much over the holiday season. You are a blessing to us in so many ways! Thank you for your grace and support! God has called us here and we are so thankful! Thank you for all you have done, are doing and will do as the Spirit leads us all. We can't wait to see what God has planned for all of us here! Thanks so much for caring and sharing!! Pastor Ethan and Kellie

High School Youth Group Meeting

The High School Youth Group will meet at **Salem Lutheran on Sunday, January 6, noonish.** We will eat together. We will have a meeting following. We will be discussing local missions' trips to Hastings and/or Lincoln. We will also be discussing a summer mission trip. Please bring your calendars with you, we will need to pick out dates that will work for these trips and try to coordinate with the missions themselves. We will also be coming up with a group name.

Thanks for all who give back Time, Talents and Treasures!

As I go around to all the Heartland Shared Ministries churches, it amazes me how the Spirit is at work! There are so many God is calling, using, to proclaim and witness! I want to thank all of you who give back, who share the time, talents and treasures God has given you. You are touching lives! You are being a blessing! You are answering the Call to be the Body of Christ! Thank you so much for all you do and continue to let the Spirit lead!

Thanks to the Children and the Adults!

Thank you to all the children and adults who touched so many lives through the Christmas programs, singing during worship, and participating in any way! You were great! God used you to touch many hearts and lives! Thank you so much and may God continue to move you through the Holy Spirit, let the Spirit lead!



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Birthdays in January

- 5... Dennis Shuck
- 6... Gracie Anderson
- 7... Darlene Shaw
- 8... Landon Shaw
- 9... Mary Shipley
- 11... Joan Uldrich
- 13... Kree Kucera
- 14... Van Aschenbrenner
- 15... Martie Stark
- 20... Rita Shuck
- 21... Verna Coxbill
- 23... Karen Shuck and Christ DeVore
- 24... Jared Brockman

- 27... Joe McReynolds and Amanda Moody and Melinda Wescoat

*Please let Lisa know if she is forgetting anyone. Thanks

{ 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 Attendance

Communion Servers

December 2-Snow Day
9-56
16-85
23-28
24-94
30- not available at the time

Average: 66

Announcements:

January 3... 2:00 Presbyterian Women meet
6... **9:00 Service with Pastor Ethan**/Communion/potluck
12:00 Youth Group meets at Salem
7...12:00 Congregate meal
10...Annual Reports are due!!!
13...11:00 Don Canady preaches
14...12:00 Congregate meal
16...6:00 Deacon's meet/7:00 Session meets
17...9:00 Comforter's meet
20...11:00 Pastor Ethan preaches
21...12:00 Congregate meal/Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
27... 11:00 Pastor Ethan preaches/Annual Meeting following service
28...12:00 Congregate meal

Ushers and Greeters:

January 6... Rita and Greg Shuck/Communion
13... Jerry and Shirley Horst
20... Deloris Springer and Darlene Shaw
27... Joe and Kathy McReynolds

February 3... Garry and Mary Steele

*We really could use more volunteers to ushers and greet. There will be a sign up list on the table. Thank you.

IMPORTANT NOTICE! As we contemplate our budgets, how God has blessed us with so much, let's not forget how God has blessed us with The Church of the Plains. It is only through the sharing, the giving back to God, the gifts of time, talents and treasures that The Church of the Plains stays open and active in our lives and the life of this community. The Church of the Plains spread sheet may be in the red for now but the Holy Spirit is at work, and the Call will be answered. Thanks for sharing what God has given and being good stewards as you answer God's call to be the Church!



INTERESTED in STARTING/SPONSORING a JR. HIGH YOUTH GROUP?

Is the Holy Spirit calling you to start/sponsor a Jr. High Youth Group? Pray about it and let the Spirit lead! If you are interested in starting a Jr. High Youth Group, please contact Pastor Ethan.



Please email all reports to the church by January 10th
(churchoftheplains@gmail.com)

Annual report meeting with be January 20th

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
1-6-19	9:00 pulpit fill	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 Pastor Ethan
1-13-19	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill	11:00 Pastor Ethan
1-20-19	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill
1-27-19	9:00 pulpit fill	11:00 Pastor Ethan	9:00 Pastor Ethan
2-3-19	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill	11:00 Pastor Ethan
2-10-19	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill
2-17-19	9:00 pulpit fill	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 Pastor Ethan
2-24-19	9:00 Pastor Ethan	11:00 pulpit fill	11:00 Pastor Ethan

PRAYER CONCERNS

Clay Center UCC – Jane Skolaut, Louis Reasland (Sharon's brother), Sherrie McBride, Ruth Watts, Sandy Denten, Shaun Johnson.

Salem Lutheran – Carolyn Shuck, Vergene Gunn, Cyndi Schoof, Murlene Schleufer, Shirley Peters, Ruth Watts, Deb Troudt, Irvin Schleufer, Tom Blackburn, Raile and Sierra, Krew Anderson, Sandra Dickison, Burton Thomsen, Vaden Kramer, and Terry Bargaen.

Church of the Plains – Kendall Schendt, Jean Swanson, Dixie Tripe, Bryan Taylor, Owen Looper, Nelva Mays, Martha Wacker, Robin, Cyndi Schoof, Vergene Gunn, and Carolyn Shuck

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING

December 9, 2018

The Coordinating Council of Heartland Shared Ministries met for their quarterly meeting on Sunday, December 9, 2018 at 2 p.m. at the Church of the Plains, Edgar, Nebraska. The meeting was postponed one week due to a snow storm.

Present were:

UCC, Clay Center: Bob Swanson and Jim Eads; Salem Lutheran: Carol Mueller; Church of the Plains: David Nienkamp, and Greg Shuck; Pastor: Pastor Ethan Feistner

Absent: Ruth Epley

Opening prayer was by Dave Nienkamp.

Agenda and Minutes: The Agenda was reviewed and approved by consensus vote. A quorum was present.

The minutes from the meeting of September 16, 2018 were reviewed and approved.

Financial Report: Financial reports provided by Teresa Sullivan, CPA, were reviewed, discussed and approved. An invoice from Teresa for \$375.00 for her services from August through September, 2018 was approved.

- Pastor Ethan's compensation package – The Coordinating Council went into executive session at 2:10 p.m. to discuss the pastoral ministry budget. Pastor Ethan was excused from the meeting. The executive session ended at 2:17 p.m. and Ps. Ethan rejoined the meeting. Motion was made and approved to retain the current salary figure of \$47,000 plus insurance and benefits. The budget will also need to be approved by each congregation at their annual meeting.

- Giving Units – It has been determined that the method of determining Giving Units is not the same in all three congregations. In order to simplify the calculation, Greg suggested the total donations given from November 30 to October 31 in each congregation to their current/general expense fund be totaled and that amount divided into each church's donations to arrive at a percentage for each congregation to contribute to the Heartland Shared Ministries budget. No funds from special accounts would be included. Motion made and approved to change method.

The information will be shared with each council. The change will also need to be made to the Heartland Shared Ministries Covenant and approved by each congregation at their annual meeting. Jim and David will work on wording of the changes.

Pastoral Report: Pastor Ethan provided a written pastoral report. He stressed that better communication is needed in each congregation and throughout HSM. He commented on the great time enjoyed at the Thanksgiving joint worship on Nov. 18 at Clay Center and the dinner that followed. He also mentioned the opportunities to do mission projects together.

Pastoral Review: The Clay Center church conducted a pastoral review with Pastor Ethan which resulted in a positive evaluation. The Coordinating Council accepted the UCC evaluation. It was discussed to have the Call Committee conduct an evaluation with Pastor Ethan on the one year anniversary of his accepting our Call.

Loose plate offering from Thanksgiving worship: The loose plate offering from the joint Thanksgiving service totaled \$224.06. Motion by Bob, second by Greg, to designate it to the Heartland Shared Ministry youth fund. Pastor Ethan reported that the group is planning a mission trip in the coming year and also other close-to-home mission opportunities.

Inquiries from other churches: HSM has received a letter from Bethany Lutheran Church at Ruskin, NE stating their desire to meet with the Coordinating Council to discuss possibilities as they pursue pastoral services. David will contact Doyle Christensen, chairperson of Bethany's congregation, to schedule a meeting in January for their council to meet with the Coordinating Council. Discussion followed on consistent understanding of procedures when another church inquires on joining our group.

Joint worship services: Considering the success of the joint worship service for Thanksgiving, possibilities for future services were discussed. Pastor Ethan suggested having a joint worship service and pot luck dinner whenever a 5th Sunday occurs in one month on the calendar. It was decided to hold joint worship on March 31 at Edgar, on September 29 at Clay Center, and on Nov. 24 at Salem. March 31 and Sept. 29 are 5th Sundays, Nov. 24 is the Sunday before Thanksgiving in 2019. It was also decided that we would not do the Progressive Supper in February.

Conference in Kearney:

The Nebraska Synod held a "Branches on the Vine" conference in Kearney on Nov. 30 –Dec. 1. The purpose of the conference was to provide leadership and share experiences with churches considering cooperative ministry. Attending from HSM were Dave Nienkamp, Bev Hays, Pastor Ethan, and Carol Mueller. The conference speaker was a pastor from Texas who leads a four-church cooperative ministry. The conference continued through early Saturday afternoon but was cut short for many attendees by a blizzard.

Logo designs:

The logo designs that had previously been submitted were reviewed. Two designs were selected as being possibilities for a letterhead and for t-shirts and/or other uses. The designs will be forwarded to the art department at Sandy Creek High School for further development.

Next Meeting:

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 3, at 2 p.m. at the United Church of Christ, Clay Center. Closing prayer was by Pastor Ethan.

Carol Mueller, Secretary