

November 15, 2011



MONTANA SYNOD, ELCA

Montana Synod Newsletter

Words from the Bishop—“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

In 1996, in response to an influx of hate groups, white supremacist groups and organizations using religious language to justify hatred, intolerance and violence, the Montana Association of Churches adopted a “Declaration on the Distortions of the Christian Gospel.” During the 1980’s and early 1990’s, MAC was a leader in challenging racist and hate groups, through education, advocacy and good theology. The Montana Synod was front and center in this effort, and Pr. Paul Seastrand developed the document that MAC adopted in assembly.

Times have changed

of hate groups in our state, we reaffirm our statement of 1996, and we encourage congregations and judicatories in our state to study the statement, and subsequent statements from our denominations. And we encourage congregations and leaders to speak out, both within the religious community and in the public sphere, modeling the barrier-breaking love of Jesus Christ for all humanity.

“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no

since 1996. The economic recession has brought new stresses to large numbers of people. Some are responding with compassion, some with despair. And some are looking for easy answers, and seeking scapegoats.

Fifteen years later Montana is again experiencing a growth in groups that claim racial, ethnic or religious superiority, and demonize those whom they consider inferior to themselves. So the Montana Association of Churches Board of Directors issued another statement affirming our commitment to loving neighbor as self.

The members of the Montana Association of

Churches stand against the theology and politics of division and hatred. We affirm that all people are created in God’s image. We repudiate any teachings that place one race above the others, one set of people above the others. It simply does not fit with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As citizens we honor others’ right to practice their own beliefs, however much we might disagree with them. But as Christians, we stand firm in repudiating any teachings that dehumanize any of God’s children, regardless of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, ability or any other criteria.

In light of the growth

longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3: 28

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22: 37, 38.

Bishop Jessica Crist



November

News Notes

Call Accepted

Will Sappington, from Sammamish, Wash., to Peace, Billings, Pastor, 9/1/11
Joel Skindlov, from Luther Seminary, to Christ, Big Sandy and Messiah, Havre, Pastor, 9/25/11
Jim Kidd, to American, White Sulphur Springs (Presbyterian)

Marriage

Elizabeth Roebke to Erik Sillerud, 9/3/11

Congregations in Transition

Key = V – Vacancy, I – Interim Assigned, S – Served by Seminary Intern, L - Served by LPA or SAM, C-Call Process Active (Interviewing Candidates)

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Arlee, V  
Billings, Good Shepherd, V I  
Billings, Messiah, V I  
Bozeman, Hope, V I Lead  
Broadus, V SAM  
Columbus, V  
Frenchtown, Valley of Christ, V  
Great Falls, First English, V, I  
Hardin, First, V SAM  
Helena, St. John's V I  
Missoula, Prince of Peace, V  
Kalispell, Bethlehem, V I  
Laurel, V I



## Give Back/Feed Back

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Thank you to all who are participating in our GiveBack/FeedBack text and telephone opinion response. The questions change every two weeks or so and we appreciate those congregations that are listing the “keyword” to text in weekly bulletins and newsletters, and reminding non-texters to call 1-877-253-9566.

The “keyword” for November 1-15 is givestart and for November 16-30 givesynod (both are multiple choice an-

swers).

The number to text those keywords to is



84700 (Note that there has been some “down” time experienced recently that

was the cellular company’s issue and out of our control. If you have any text questions or concerns please contact Pr. Adam Barnhart, Gloria Dei, Butte 406-723-9182.

Thanks again for your participation and for sharing your thoughts!

Pr. Dave Peters, DEM  
[dpeters@montanasynod.org](mailto:dpeters@montanasynod.org)

## Attention Treasurers

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Remittance forms are no longer being mailed to the congregations by Region 1, except upon request. Therefore, the **Remittance Form** your treasurer should use to send designated and undesignated benevolence may be found [here](#). Feel free to copy it and use it when you send your benevolence.

In order for your congregation to receive credit on your statement, you are also

invited to send designated benevolence directly to Region 1. You may note the recipient and address on the form and Region 1 will see to it that it gets sent to the proper place.

Also note that the **Region 1 Treasurer’s Handbook** may also be found on the newsletter page [here](#). Print this document, keep it in a notebook and refer to it for questions your current treasurer may

have, or offer it to a new treasurer so they can acquaint themselves with the process. If you have questions, feel free to call Susan Hedahl at the synod office or Alyce at Region 1.

Alyce Bakker  
Region 1 ELCA  
4525 19th Ave NE  
Seattle, WA 98105  
206-624-0093 x107  
1-800-755-5831 x107



## Lutheran Social Services Update

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Try to imagine how it feels to go back in time and be immersed in the range of emotions that are part of the infant adoption process. That's exactly what we're doing at Lutheran Social Services of Montana, as we sort through the hundreds of adoption files that have accumulated in our Great Falls office since 1954. Our goal is to scan and index all of the documents we have collected, in part to save some of these treasured, fading pages before it is too late, and in part to make our search process a bit more efficient. In doing this, however, sometimes we just have to stop and reflect upon the powerful histories we hold in our hands. And to remember how blessed we are to be part of this amazing ministry.

On the left side of each adoption file is the adoptive parents' history, reflecting

the rigorous certification process, the thoughtful recommendation letters from family and friends, and the Decree of Adoption, which pronounces that a cherished baby boy or girl has become the adoptive family's "lawful child."

On the right side of the file resides the story of the baby's birth parents, which includes medical histories, accounts of often painful birthparent counseling sessions, and the baby's original birth certificate, which frequently includes a name chosen by the birth mother—a name her child might never even know.

And nestled among all of these documents are countless other treasures as well: unread letters from the birthmother to her child; photos and cards and letters from the adoptive family to the birth mother; and other heart wrenching mem-

orabilia, such as hospital ID bracelets and swatches of baby clothes. All of these precious items will be kept with us in perpetuity, and all of them deserve to be handled with reverence and respect, as reminders of the lives we have touched, and of the grief, the sacrifice, and the unspeakable joy that are all contained within the confines of these manila folders.

*Kathryn Sabol*  
Executive Director  
Lutheran Social Services  
406-655-7783  
[ksabol@sjlm.org](mailto:ksabol@sjlm.org)



## The Gifts of Advent: An Invitation to Reflect

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Advent is a season all about preparation. From gift-buying to decorating our homes, we do a lot of things to prepare for the holiday season. We also prepare, as Christians, for the coming of Christ; both in the manger and into the world a second time.

We invite you to prepare your hearts this season with four reflections on the gifts that this season brings to our lives; from

the gift of music to the gift of salvation, from the gifts we have received to the ones that we may give. Use the [Advent Devotional Book](#) to take time with your loved ones to share these reflections and, then, share them with the rest of us!

Pastor Adam Barnhart  
[pastoradamb@bresnan.net](mailto:pastoradamb@bresnan.net)  
406.723.9182 - Office  
406.498.8112 - Cell



## Our Saviour's Lutheran Church on the Rocky Boy's Reservation receives \$5,000 'Economic Bridge Grant'

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Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Rocky Boy's Agency, recently received a \$5,000 "Lutheran Community Economic Outreach Bridge Grant" from the Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation, based on its mission, financial stability, effectiveness in addressing basic needs such as food, clothing or shelter, use of volunteers and creativity.

Our Saviour's was one of 81 Lutheran organizations and congregations selected to receive funding as part of the final

phase of this pilot program. Organizations receiving the grant were also eligible to participate in an additional \$10,000 challenge grant in which funds raised by the organization would be matched by the Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation dollar for dollar.

"What a wonderful opportunity this is for our congregation to increase our outreach in the community through making our Rummage Sale Room a healthier and safer place," said Pastor Linda Webster

of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. "We appreciate all that Thrivent provides, but today we are especially thankful for the Economic Bridge Grant!"

For each dollar donated between Nov. 1, 2011 and Jan. 31, 2012, the foundation will supplement dollar for dollar up to \$10,000. You may designate this in your regular synod benevolence to "Matching funds - Thrivent EOB Grant."

## Announcements and Links

☀ **Malaria** is a leading cause of death in Africa. It claims the life of a child every 45 seconds. The 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted to approve the ELCA Malaria Campaign to help eliminate deaths from this disease—for good. Here is a [bulletin insert](#) that will help you introduce the ELCA Malaria Campaign to your congregation.

☀ **Advent Celebration at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp**, Dec. 2-4. Contact Brooke Ells at [brooke@flbc.net](mailto:brooke@flbc.net)

☀ Looking for a new **Church Management System**? [Here](#)'s a fairly current interactive chart of church management systems:

☀ **Immanuel Lutheran** is seeking a Christian Education Director, a Wor-

ship & Music Director and an Organist/Pianist. Contact Lynn Rhynard, Administrative Assistant, Immanuel Lutheran Church, 830 South Avenue West, Missoula, MT 59801, 406-549-0736.

☀ **Social Media** Anna Rendell's passion for faith development, writing and connecting with others is what brought her to the world of social media. She is now bringing [Vibrant Faith Ministries](#) into that world as their Social Networking Manager. Anna is the author of [Girl with Blog](#) (her personal blog), has created active community on Facebook and Twitter, and has also contributed articles to other websites and blogs. She recently hosted several webinars and led one on Social Media specifically to help church workers be able to take steps to-

wards understanding the uses for social media today. Anna introduced steps to take for learning how to set up and use websites, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. Want to get on board? Contact Anna at [arendell@vibrantfaith.org](mailto:arendell@vibrantfaith.org)

☀ **Apply now to be an ELCA Young Adult in Global Mission**

Young adults (ages 19-29) are invited to apply to serve for a year in an international program in Argentina and Uruguay, Jerusalem / West Bank, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Central / Eastern Europe, Southern Africa and the United Kingdom. See [www.elca.org/yagm](http://www.elca.org/yagm).

☀ See the **Montana Synod Women's Organization Fall Newsletter** [here](#).

☀ From the **ELCA Worship News E-Newsletter**: Beginning with Year B, the ELCA Worship site will offer the [Daily Lectionary](#). Along with our [Lectionary for Sundays and Lesser Festivals](#), these are tools that may be used for personal or group devotions or as planning resources. Check it out on November 18. Peter Perella, Director for Worship Formation, and Liturgical Resources. Sign up for their [newsletter](#)

☀ The **Lutheran Association for Christian Educators (LACE)** listed several resources for congregations, youth ministry, adult ministry, and lead-

ership in their recent e-newsletter. Become a member of [LACE](#) and receive valuable information to assist your congregation in its education programs.

☀ [Subscribe](#) to Administration Matters, an electronic newsletter for church leaders. November's issue had information on all of the following:

- \* Accounting Methods -- Cash Basis and Accrual Basis
- \* Insurance class action settlement -- Charity First
- \* Pre-tax retirement savings opportunities

- \* Safety and loss prevention
- \* Flexible spending accounts enrollment
- \* Congregational reports

☀ See the NRIT Newsletter [here](#) for information on the always popular Midwinter Theological Conference, in addition to upcoming events next spring and summer.



## Christikon Celebrates 60 years

Despite a delayed start on the camping season due to a late Spring and excessive moisture, it was in many ways an ordinary summer at camp — if another season of extraordinary experience in growing in the faith and in life together in one of the world's loveliest locales can ever be called simply ordinary.

This year also marks the completion

of six decades as an outdoor ministry of the church. On September 13, 1951, the Lazy Day Ranch was purchased by area Lutheran congregations; and next summer will be the camp's sixtieth season of using this former guest ranch and the surrounding Wilderness to bring people together with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We enter our seventh decade with thanksgiving and hope. Read [more](#)



# Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp Ski Retreat and Youth Gathering

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**YOUTH GROUP SKI RETREAT** at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

Date: January 20-22, 2012

Cost: \$65 (+ lift ticket)

Get ready to hit the slopes! The ski retreat at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp is coming soon! Youth groups from around the state gather to at Camp. Evenings are spent enjoying games, campfires, good food, fun with friends, and meaningful worship. Then ride the snow all day with friends at Whitefish Ski Resort or Blacktail Mountain. This retreat is very popular. Sign up now to reserve your spot! If your youth group is interested contact Aaron Ells at [406-844-3201](tel:406-844-3201) or [aa-ron@flbc.net](mailto:aa-ron@flbc.net) for more information or to register.

**ELCA YOUTH GATHERING**

New Orleans, July 15-22, 2012

Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp is planning a trip to New Orleans! This 'camp trip' is designed for congregations with 1-3 youth who would like to attend the youth gathering. We will begin and end our journey to New Orleans at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. Our well trained counseling staff will lead and direct the group. Watch for more details. If you are interested contact Adventure Director Aaron Ells [Aaron@flbc.net](mailto:Aaron@flbc.net) and get ready for "Citizens with the Saints,."

Aaron Ells  
Program Director  
Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp  
[406/844-3201](tel:4068443201)  
[aaron@flbc.net](mailto:aaron@flbc.net)  
[www.flbc.net](http://www.flbc.net)



## New Lutheran Disaster Relief Website Up

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The new [LDR.org](http://LDR.org) is now online! The new site uses a different kind of software which will function more like a blog than a traditional website. Our hope is for more frequent interaction between LDR staff and you -- our partners -- who serve as volunteers, donors, and supporters.

Go to [www.ldr.org](http://www.ldr.org) to check out the new site. Some new features are an enhanced version of the Volunteer Map as well as new information about ordering LDR Resources. I invite you to register as a site user, which will allow you to comment and ask questions on blog posts. To register, just click the "Register" link in

the upper right-hand corner on any page.

This new site will continue to grow and change, and we need your feedback to



make it better. Is there something you want to know more about? Is anything missing? Tell us about it! You can con-

tact us by e-mail at [disaster@elca.org](mailto:disaster@elca.org), or post on our [Facebook page](#) (which you already "Like," of course!), to let us know how the site can best serve you.

Thanks for your continued support of Lutheran Disaster Response. Together, we are bringing help and hope to disaster survivors!

Rev. Kevin Massey

Program Director, Lutheran Disaster Response

## Bishop's Mini-Sabbatical

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The Bishop will be taking a mini-sabbatical in the month of December. Other members of the Montana Synod Staff will be working and will handle any issues that come up. Pastor Walt Kirkegaard, who served as interim Bishop in 2001, will act on behalf of the Bishop for

any official duties that might transpire.

The Montana Synod Sabbatical Policy for rostered persons recommends a 3-month sabbatical after 5 years of service. Bishop Crist has been on the synod staff since 2002. The Executive Committee has

approved a 1-month mini-sabbatical in December, to be followed by two months in the coming year.

# A New Epidemic

This nation is in the midst of an epidemic. Bullying has “infected” almost every aspect of our lives. We deal with it at home, at work, and in our children’s schools. We see it constantly on news reports and television shows. We even see it in our places of worship. Here are some alarming statistics:

- 3 million students are absent each month because they feel unsafe at school.
- (<http://www.thebullyproject.com>)
- 9 out of 10 LGBT youth reported being verbally harassed at school in the past
- year because of their sexual orientation. (National Association of School Psychologists- <http://www.dosomething.org/tipsandtools/11-facts-about-school-bullying>)

tipsandtools/11-facts-about-school-bullying)

- A victim of bullying is twice as likely to take his or her own life compared to
- someone who is not a victim. (National Association of School Psychologists- <http://www.dosomething.org/tipsandtools/11-facts-about-school-bullying>)

Local congregations also deal with bullying. Often, bullies use the church to promote their personal agendas, regularly giving the congregation or church leaders ultimatums. The threat of withdrawing membership or financial support is one way these people further their agendas. In

short, every aspect of our lives can be targeted by bullies.

I believe that our society is able to identify situations where bullying is occurring, but it is in the reactionary process where we are stunted. The Montana Synod has adopted a resolution to create a plan to help combat this epidemic. As Christians, though, we face a difficult battle. We have been taught to “turn the other cheek” when wronged by others. We seek to be the peacemakers when conflict arises. So how do we effectively help deal with the problem?

The article, “Bullying-The Congregation’s Responsibility to Address Bullying,” on the ELCA’s website, lists many ways congregations can take an active role in tackling issues involving bullying.

They encourage congregations to:

Provide opportunities to discuss bullying issues from a Christian point-of-view

Provide a safe place for all members involved (even the person regarded as the bully!) to be able to discuss their role and the effect of the actions

Educate parents to recognize warning signs of bullying and tools to help end it

Provide a model of appropriate response to bullying within the

church.

(<http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Life-Transitions/Youth-Issues/Bullying.aspx>)

In the coming months, you will read more about the issue of bullying, and I encourage you to be an active participant in this process. Watch for more information in your local congregation’s monthly newsletter, our Synod newsletter and website, and at our Soul Café website: <http://www.soulcafe.org/group/montana-synod>.

*O most loving Father, you want us to give*

*thanks in all circumstances and to lay all our cares on you, knowing that you care for us. Grant that fears and anxieties in this mortal life may not hide from us the light of your immortal love shown to us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

(A prayer from p.359 of [Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pastoral Care.](#))

Peace and Blessings,

John Goodheart, Peace Lutheran Church, Billings, Montana, a member of the Anti-Bullying Task Force  
[captaingoodheart@hotmail.com](mailto:captaingoodheart@hotmail.com)

## Need an Intern?

Congregational and ministry leaders:

Now may be a good time to consider becoming an internship training site. Seminaries are looking for a wide variety of sites-- urban, rural, suburban; large, small, medium sized; single site, multiple point. Consult the ELCA and seminary websites for more information. Then call the Montana Synod if you think this may be a ministry for you.

### **Financial Support**

\$500 Travel Pool; \$1,000 administrative fee. \$1,100.00 stipend; FICA; work expenses; travel reimbursement; 1 Day off / week; two week vacation; housing; medical (\$2,500).

See Application for an Intern; Candidacy Manual; <http://www.elca.org/candidacy/>

[forms/](#) see “Forms Pertaining to Internship.”

Call the Montana Synod at (406) 453-1461, or e-mail [jallen@montanasynod.org](mailto:jallen@montanasynod.org).

## Grace in Unexpected Places

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We have two grants pending the call of a pastor. One grant is from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America office for new ministries. The grant is waiting in the wings as soon as the pastor is called. The other is a challenge grant from the ELCA Deaconess Community. If we can get our bank balance to \$75,000 by March 1, 2012, they have \$10,000 to add to it for the ministry. Having this \$75,000 in the bank will help secure a good start for development of the prison congregation. We believe in **grace in unexpected places**, and are looking to you to help us meet our financial goal. Currently we have just over \$49,000 in our bank account – **we need to raise \$26,000 between now and March 2012.**

Our hope is that you or someone you

know will be a gift of **grace in unexpected places**. As you consider your year-end giving, or your new-year giving, we invite you to consider the Freedom in Christ Prison Congregation Project. We already know that God is at work in the lives of the prisoners. We see it and we hear about it. We have been told over and over by prisoners that they are thankful to God they are in prison. Thankful to God because the life they were living was “killing” them. Now in prison they have a chance to make positive changes. The Freedom in Christ Prison Congregation Project wants to support them in making those positive and grace-full changes in their lives.

The Call Committee for the prison pastor position has received additional names to

consider and will be reviewing them this month.

November seems to be a time when we think about being thankful more than any other time of the year. We want to take a moment to tell you how thankful we are for **you!** Without your support these past three years, we would not be as close to establishing the new congregation as we are. **You are grace in unexpected places!** Thank you.

Bea Rosenleaf, Project Administrator  
Freedom in Christ Prison Congregation Project  
P O Box 617, Anaconda, MT 59711  
406.560.4993

Check out our website!

<http://ficprisonministry.com>

## Montana Synod High School Ski Retreat

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SAVE THE DATE: February 24-26 at Hope Lutheran Church

Montana Synod High School SKI RETREAT (Formerly known as MLYO FALL GATHERING)

Hope Lutheran Church, Bozeman MT

Cost: \$99 includes meals, programming, lodging, and 1 day lift ticket at Bridger Bowl. (Rentals and Lessons cost extra!)

Join youth from all across Montana for a weekend of learning, music, games, and of course SKIING! We will all meet at Hope Lutheran Church on Friday night for a late night opening event. All day Saturday will be spent on the ski slopes. Saturday evening there will be time for learning, fellowship and more! Sunday morning we will worship together before all depart for home.

For more information please contact Paul Goodman, director of Youth and Family Ministry at Hope Lutheran at

[Paul.Goodman@hopebozeman.com](mailto:Paul.Goodman@hopebozeman.com).

Look for registration material in the next few weeks!



## 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering: Citizens with the Saints Updates

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Have you lost the posters that your congregation received back in December? Did they languish on someone else's desk and never even make it to you? Do you want a poster with the new artwork on it to hang on your bulletin board? The ELCA Youth Ministry Network Tech Geek explains how to print out a tiled poster to replace the one you have, or maybe never had, [in this article](#). Or order

a Gathering banner from [OldLuther-an.com](#).

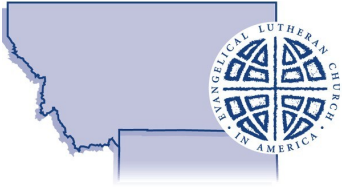
As of November 4, **28,656** participants have registered.

Sign up to receive [e-news](#).

Banners, pens, t-shirts, and other Gathering items are available at [OldLuther-](#)

[an.com](#)





**MONTANA SYNOD, ELCA**

2415 13 Ave So.  
Great Falls, MT 59405

Phone: 406-453-1461

Fax: 406-761-4632

*Marked by the cross of Christ forever, abundantly  
blessed, we faithfully serve God and neighbor.*



## Calendar

**November, 2011**

15 Newsletter posted to website  
18-19 Candidacy, Synod Office  
24-25 Thanksgiving Holiday

**December, 2011**

Bishop Crist on Sabbatical this month.  
5 Newsletter Deadline  
15 Newsletter to website  
15 The Lutheran Insert Articles Due  
23-26 Christmas Holiday  
25 Merry Christmas  
30 Synod Office Closed

+ **The Montana Synod Newsletter is published on the 15th of each month. Articles are due in the synod office by the 5th. E-mail your story ideas to Susan Hedahl, Newsletter Editor, at [shedahl@montanasynod.org](mailto:shedahl@montanasynod.org).**

+ **Please use any part of this newsletter in your congregational announcements, bulletins, and/or newsletters. Consider forwarding the newsletter to your council members and others.**

**Montana Synod, ELCA**

Rev. Jessica Crist, Bishop

Rev. John Allen, Associate to the Bishop

Rev. Dave Peters, Associate to the Bishop, Director for Evangelical Mission

Susan Hedahl, Executive Assistant  
Communications, Assembly, Roster, Financial

Susan Smith, Administrative Assistant  
Mobility, Candidacy, LPA Programs

