



Montana Synod, ELCA

For up-to-date information on the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, August 17-23, go to www.elca.org/assembly for streaming video, and for a more local view, you can go to the Montana Synod's blog, at www.montanasynd.org/blogs/blog2.php.



Words From the Bishop—Dare to Dream!

Inside this issue:

Words from the Bishop	1
News Notes	2
Prayer Calendar 2009	
Prison Ministry Update Jesus, Justice, Jazz	3
Announcements & Links NRIT	4
Leader Directory FaithWellMT MTSWO Convention	5
Resources CE at Luther Seminary Barb's Kidney Walk	6
Let Justice Roll Clergy Clinic Bolivia	7
Calendar	8

One of my favorite stories is the Pentecost story in Acts—the rush of the wind, the tongues of flame, the amazing cacophony of speech, that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, actually makes sense to people who thought they had nothing in common! And then when Peter speaks, he is inspired by the prophet Joel: ***“I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall***

dream dreams.” The Holy Spirit whooshed into their lives and stirred things up. And they dared to dream. And the faith spread like a Montana prairie fire.

We are 50,000 Lutherans in Montana and Northern Wyoming. We are the largest organized Protestant group in this territory, where close to a million people live. That is a lot of territory, and a lot of people who are un-churched. Montana and Northern

Wyoming are not the Midwest, nor are we the Northwest. We're somewhere in-between. Even in the “Religion by Region” series that so eloquently describes the religious histories and realities of the various parts of the country, our territory in the Northern Rockies is presented as disconnected. We experience some of the influences of the still-churched Midwest, some of the influence of the northwest's “None Zone,” where the fastest-growing religious preference is “none,”

and some of the fierce independence of the Rocky Mountain west.

Many of our congregations were founded by immigrants from Europe, who were looking for a piece of home in the new country. Still others of our congregations were founded by those older congregations, as an outreach to newcomers to our communities, as the populations shifted. And still others were formed in the post-World War II baby boom, as denominations across the country expanded with the population. And still others were founded since then,

as folks moved into new areas, as seeds got planted, as people dared to dream.

And here we are, in 2009, almost through with the first decade of the 21st century. Do we dare dream? Do we dare become the Church that reaches out to the un-churched, to the unnoticed, to the stranger? I think we do. We as a church have spent a lot of energy in the last months dealing with internal issues. In the past months I have received a regular stream of letters and e-mails about human sexuality. But I have received none about outreach, none

about mission, none about our imperative to preach the good news. In our synod's five years of focus, we are in the first year of emphasis on Word and Sacrament. It is something we do well. It is something we have to offer. But let's not keep it to ourselves! Let's open our doors, our windows, our hearts, our minds!

It is time for us to move forward. It is time for us to take seriously the Great Commission, to go out and make disciples. It is time for us to own up to our own commission to be disciples, and to reach out to others.

News Notes

Call Accepted

Leonard Shatkus, from Plymouth, Ohio, to St. Luke's, Shelby, 8/10/09

Interim

Sara Akre, to Pella, Sidney and Lambert, Interim Associate 8/1/09

Resigned

Sara Akre, from St. Paul, Cut Bank, 6/28/09

Congregations in Transition

Key = V – Vacancy, I – Served by Interim, S – Served by Seminary Intern

Arlee, V I
 Billings, American, Associate, V
 Cody, WY, Trinity, V
 Cut Bank, St. Paul's, V I
 Fairfield Parish, V I
 Great Falls, Redeemer, V, I
 Missoula, Atonement, Senior V
 Plentywood, V I
 Sidney, Pella, Associate VI
 Whitefish, Christ, Associate, V I



2010 Prayer Calendar and new Prayer Coordinator

Sharon Amor, AIM, the Montana Synod Prayer Coordinator, will be retiring at the end of this year.

Kris Mitzman, recent graduate of LSTC, will be the synod's new Prayer Coordinator. She will begin December 1. We are gathering prayer concerns for the 2010 Prayer Calendar for the Montana Synod.

If you have a specific prayer need for your ministry, e-mail your request to the synod office before October 15.

Please send your prayer -mail to ssmith@montanasynod.org



Words from the Bishop (continued)

It is time for us to dare to dream.

We have a new position in our Synod—Director for Evangelical Mission. Pastor Dave Peters has been called to remind us of our calling, and to help us articulate our dreams. In September a group of clergy and laity from across the Synod will meet at the Synod's new Mission Table. Together with the Director for Evangelical Mission and the Bishop, they will

set directions for us in outreach, stewardship and mission support in the years to come. Together they will remind us that God calls us to be the church, regardless of our differences of opinions, backgrounds, even language. Together they will remind us of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit disrupted everything, and the chaos that followed was the Church. And it was good.

Dare to dream!

Jessica Crist, Bishop

Prison Ministry Update

Those of us who live in Montana are used to doing a lot of driving. A place that I hope to someday go may surprise you: Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge. I think such a trip would be life changing and a blessing. Such opportunities await the beginning of a new prison ministry in Montana that would enable many to gather and worship within the confines of the prison walls with men who would welcome and appreciate this special faith connection with the outside world.

The foundation is being laid for the establishment of a prison congregation inside Montana State Prison. While open to participants from diverse faith backgrounds, the plan is to call a Lutheran pastor to serve and be part of the connection between this prison congregation and other congregations in the Montana Synod, sup-

ported by individual donations as well as donations from ELCA and partner congregations in the Synod. Benefits to the inmates would go beyond the primary goal of developing close and meaningful relationships with our Lord Jesus. The inmates associated with this congregation would be mentored into being increasingly responsible for planning and leading worship, thereby developing leadership skills and building a supportive faith community for inmates within the walls.

We strive to honor God with our obedience to His Word and will, including visiting those in prison. While financial support is important to this ministry, hands-on caring would be offered as well.

Please join the Prison Ministry team. Your participation will challenge lifelong biases and fears and

expand your boundaries of caring to include those whose lives are defined by isolation, failure and guilt. Extend grace and forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ and be prepared to experience growth and blessings in return. Financial commitments (one time donations or on-going pledges) are needed. Information and donation/pledge cards are available at: <http://www.montanasynd.org/prisonministry/prisonministry.html>.

Members of the Task Force welcome questions about the program.

Kathy Eff, Prison Ministry Task Force

effmontana@montanasky.us
(406) 257-6789

Jesus, Justice, Jazz

The 2009 National Lutheran Youth Gathering was held in New Orleans, LA where 38,000 youth and adult leaders traveled from all over the country to help clean up what Katrina left behind. Each group of teens was given a different project to tackle on their service day. On Thursday, July 23, we stepped onto a bus with about 50 kids and headed to the St. Bernard

Parish. We were given a presentation on the St. Bernard Project, which is working to get the Parish back on its feet. We were then split into groups and dropped off at our destinations. Seven of us were chosen to mud the dry wall of a house under reconstruction. We were privileged to meet the homeowners, Nathan and Gloria. When we first arrived, Nathan told us about his



family's experience during Katrina. They lost all of their possessions, including the family dog. Nathan shared pictures with us that weren't even recognizable; I couldn't believe I was standing in the same home. The mold that covered the walls looked like bad wallpaper, the kitchen looked as if it had been ransacked, and the bedrooms brought

tears to my eyes. Just when everything was getting to be too much, a beautiful, smiling woman walked through the door and greeted us all with the love of a grandmother. As much as we wanted to sit around and visit all day, it was time to get to work. The AmeriCorps volunteers at the house showed us how to mud the dry wall...it was so much fun!! We took a break for lunch and were pulling out our subway sandwiches when I smelled something amazing. Gloria came in carrying noodles,

salad, chicken, and much more and told us that our sandwiches weren't the type of food working people should be eating, so we indulged. At the end of the day, each of us wrote in a journal that Nathan and Gloria had for all of the volunteers that had come through their home. I could not believe the gratitude these people had for seven teens that had spent only a few hours in their home. That's what I love about New Orleans...you could be walking down the street and someone would

see you had an orange servant life shirt on and stop you and thank you for the work "you Lutherans" were doing.

Now it is my turn to thank all the people who prayed for us and supported us during our journey to the Big Easy. Your prayers not only touched us, but touched everyone in New Orleans.

Randi Phelps
MLYO President

Announcements & Links

- National Council of Churches' **Young Adult Stewards Program** November 10-12, Minneapolis. Information on [news-letter web page](#).
- **Stories of Faith in Action—Restoring Hope in the aftermath of War—Northern Uganda.** Bulletin on [newsletter web page](#)
- The ELCA has a new web site to support everyone involved in call process work: rostered leaders from all four of our rosters, congregations, church-related organizations and synods. It is found at www.elca.org/call. The new forms that were created for call process work now interact with a searchable churchwide database, allowing ministry sites to publish their vacancy and allowing rostered leaders to have their mobility information readily accessible to synod bishops. Visit the site and learn how it functions by reading the online guide found under the menu option, "Using this Site."
- **The Holden Board seeks** an Executive Director or team of Executive Directors for Holden Village. The Executive Director(s) is (are) responsible to the Board to tend and keep the Vision and Mission of Holden Village as the vital center of Holden's life and work. Click [here](#) for more information.
- A \$700 grant has been awarded to the **PEACE Project**, a part of the Violence Free Crisis Line in Kalispell to provide peer education for the prevention of dating and sexual violence to teen girls from the churchwide organization of Women of the

ELCA. Congratulations!

- Free Baptismal Font: 38" high – not including the cross, 18" wide and 18" deep, made of oak. The cross is removable. Contact Dar Ellingson at Hope Lutheran, Bozeman. Dar@HopeBozeman.com
- **The Montana Association of Churches** recently sent a letter to all congregations concerning the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act, which will take effect on October 1. For an electronic copy of that letter, [click here](#)
- A newsletter from Rev. Bradn Buerkle, serving in Russia, is located on our [newsletter web page](#)
- The Mission Investment Fund has a new Church Building Consultant for the Montana Synod. She is Anne Gerrietts and can be reached at: anne.gerrietts@elca.org
- Have you thought about e-mailing the Montana Synod newsletter link to your church council or members of your congregation?
- The Synod has several copies of the blue hymnal, [The Concordia](#), and the red hymnal, [Service Book and Hymnal](#). Possible uses: at home for devotions, by the piano or organ for holiday music, place a copy of each in your church library. If anyone would like copies of these, we will gladly mail them.

NRIT news

Fall events include:

Sept. 28th – [Spiritual Leadership](#) with Rev. Jane Vennard – Our Redeemer's in Helena

Oct. 1-2 – [Luther Lectures](#) with Rev. Dr. James Vigen – Chico Hot Springs

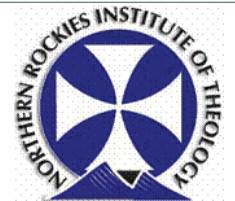
Oct. 8 – [Boundaries Training](#) – Zion Lutheran in Glendive

Oct. 15-17 – [Preaching Between the Lines](#) with Dr. Melinda Quivik – Peace Lutheran in Billings, Gloria Dei in Butte, Immanuel Lutheran in Missoula

Oct. 27-29 – [The Gospel of Luke](#) with Dr. Mark Gravrock – Zion Lutheran in Glendive, First Lutheran in Glasgow, Faith Lutheran in

Great Falls
Look for brochures for each of these events in the coming weeks. For more information or to register go to www.nrit.org.

Jenny Kunka,
NRIT Director



ELCA Congregation Leader Directory is Easy 4 You and Helpful 4 Us

At the Synod Office we keep files of information about congregations, rostered and lay leaders, and lots of other things. To contact congregations, rostered leaders and a few others, we look in a file or do what you probably do, look in the Montana Synod Yearbook and Directory.

Contacting council presidents, call committee leaders, or WELCA officers sometimes takes some investigative work. We can call your church office, or we can look in your congregational file and hope that someone has mailed us some recent information. One of the simplest ways for you to provide and for us to find information is to look at the

Congregational Leader Directory at the ELCA website. That's form B of the annual parochial report. The churchwide ELCA uses that roster mostly for sending the Seeds for the Parish publication. But Synods can also use it to get contact information for your current leaders. This can be especially important during pastoral vacancies.

You can help us by taking some time to update that form B whenever there is a change in congregational leadership. It's not difficult, but it takes a little preparation:

1) Be sure you have the name, address, and e-mail address of all of

your current leaders.

2) Have your congregation ID and password ready. You can find this on the form A which is mailed to the congregation each year, or you can contact Susan Smith at the Synod Office.

3) Click the following URL: <http://archive.elca.org/ScriptLib/OS/FormAC/facLogin.asp>

4) Log in and follow directions.

Taking the time to do this will make serving you more efficient and easier.

Pr. John Allen, Associate to the Bishop



FaithWellMT Presents

Vision and Spiritual Leadership for Vibrant Faith Formation

guide for Clergy, Church Councils, and other leadership by Dr. Dick Hardel with Dr. Merton Strommen and Lyle Griner.

This is a 53-page booklet to strengthen spiritual leadership of

lay leaders and clergy to keep a congregation focused on the "business" of the congregation--to make disciples through faith formation of children and transformation of the lives of adults through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Available online at www.faithwellmt.com
Or call to order at (406) 322-9832

Dr. Dick Hardel
FaithWellMT
79 Lewis Trail
Columbus, MT 59019
www.faithwellmt.com



Montana Synodical Women's Organization

The MTSWO will be having their 2009 convention at the Holiday Inn in Great Falls on September 25-27, 2009. The theme is "**Let Living Waters Flow**". The keynote speaker is Dr. Harry Wendt, founder of Crossways International. Workshops include Anti-Racism, a book review (The Shack), the

Health Initiative, domestic Violence, and LWR Work Center.

For more information and to download a registration form, [click here](#). Hotel reservations are due by August 25; September 1 is the participant registration due date and late registration closes September 15.



Resources—Site-Seeing: Popular Bible websites

Bible Gateway

<http://www.biblegateway.com/>
Search the Bible in more than 80 languages plus 20 different versions in English. Many also available in audio format. Includes links to *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*.

Bible Words

<http://netministries.org/bbasics/bbwords.htm> Select from an alphabetical list of Bible names to hear correct pronunciation and find links to other related resources.

Biblos <http://biblos.com/> Study the Bible using this virtual library in-

cluding atlas, thesaurus, commentaries, concordance, dictionary and the Bible in 40 languages. This site also offers devotions and graphics.

Blue Letter Bible <http://www.blueletterbible.org/> Listen to passages from the Bible while searching commentary and images. Examine Hebrew and Greek texts. Search by chapter and verse or use the Daily Bible Readings.

E Bible Teacher

www.ebibleteacher.com Use these free graphics and backgrounds for PowerPoint presentations in Bible teaching and worship.

Used with permission from [Librar-](#)

[ies Alive](#), Publication of National Church Library Association, Vol. 54, No. 3

Montana Synod Resource Center

Many new resources have been added to the Montana Synod Resource Center recently. Click [here](#) to see our newly updated lists.



Continuing Education Classes at Luther Seminary

Celebration of Biblical Preaching, Oct. 5-7, 2009

Join nationally known preachers and teachers as they explore how, in their preaching, they make the move from the world of the Bible to the world of today. Cost: \$225
www.luthersem.edu/celebration

Stay for the Lectionary Overview Oct. 7-8!

Faculty from Luther's New Testament and preaching faculty will help you gain theological insights and preaching ideas for the coming year.

See **upcoming KAIROS courses** at www.luthersem.edu/kairos

See **upcoming Lay School courses** at www.luthersem.edu/layschool

Created and Led by the Spirit, Planting Missional Congregations, November 6-7, go to:

www.luthersem.edu/missional_consult

Laura Kaslow
Luther Seminary
651-641-3451
www.luthersem.edu

Barb's Kidney Walk

I'm going on the "Kidney Walk" in Billings, Sept. 13th to raise money for the National Kidney Foundation. It's a 2-mile walk that raises awareness of kidney disease and treatment.

26 Million people have chronic kidney disease and another 20 million are at risk. The NKF's Kidney Walk presents an occasion for dialysis patients, organ transplant recipients, donor

families, living donors, the medical communities, and the general public to celebrate LIFE and support the Foundation's mission.

I am asking you to help by supporting my fundraising efforts with a donation. Your tax-deductible gift will make a difference in the lives of many! You can make your donation online by simply clicking on the link

below. Any amount, great or small, helps in the fight. I greatly appreciate your support and will keep you posted on my progress. Click [here](#) to visit my personal page.

Barb is currently on a waiting list for a new kidney.

Pr. Barb Westhoff
gbmw@nemont.net

Let Justice Roll 2009

October 3-5 (Saturday to Monday)

This year's theme is Hearts4Justice and will feature as speaker Rev. Dr. George Johnson. George is the former director of the hunger program in the Lutheran Church nationally and the author of *Beyond Guilt and Powerlessness*. He also founded the Hearts4Justice Conference held in Tijuana, Mexico with internationally known leaders, speakers, and writers like Larry Rasmussen, Renita Weems, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Francis Moore Lappe, and Walter Brueggeman. Music and worship will be led by Eric Thompson, who is currently Wor-

ship & Youth Director at Trinity Lutheran Church in Covington, WA. Eric loves to compose original music and liturgy around peace and justice themes.

The program includes presentations on the biblical call to justice, discussion of current justice issues, small group sessions, a service project, and lots of time to relax, hike, and enjoy the gracious hospitality of Holden Village. The goal of LJR is to equip young people to be peacemakers and justice-seekers in their homes, churches, schools, communities, and the world.

The cost of LJR is \$150 which includes round-trip boat trip on Lake Chelan, 3 days/2 nights and 7 meals and the program at Holden Village.

Download the basic information, individual and group registration forms, complete and send in to the address listed on the forms. For registration information go to www.tlc.edu/cyfcenter.

For more information/questions contact Dr. David Ellingson david.ellingson@tlc.edu, 425-249-4722. See you at Holden and LET JUSTICE ROLL!

Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center's *Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process* in Lombard, IL. *Clergy Clinic* meets three times a year for three successive days each time for a total of nine days. Group A meets October 26-28, 2009; February 22-24, 2010; April 26-28, 2010. Group B meets November 9-11, 2009; March 8-10, 2010; and May 17-19, 2010.

It is possible to spread the cost for *Clergy Clinic* over two budget years: paying \$500 upon registering and \$400 after January 1, 2010.

Attached is a PDF of the current *Clergy Clinic* brochure as well as for another current LMPC event: *Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders*. Please feel free to copy and distribute widely.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center
101 W. 22nd Street, Suite 206
Lombard, IL 60148
ph: 630-627-0507
fax: 630-627-0519
www.LMPeaceCenter.org

Bolivia

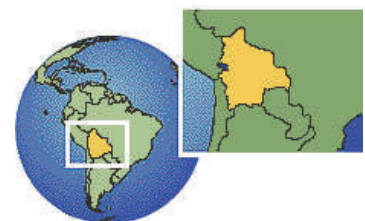
Bolivian churches struggle to overcome violence amid change and political tension—World Council of Churches

Santa Cruz , Wednesday, August 5, 2009 (ALC) - The more radical social and political changes are, the more likely they are to bring out

tension amongst social actors. It is in a context such as this - a World Council of Churches Living Letters delegation visiting Bolivia in mid July heard - that Bolivian churches struggle to overcome violence in society.

To read this entire article and see

other information and links, go to: <http://www.oikoumene.org/>



2415 13th Avenue South
Great Falls, Montana 59405

Phone: 406-453-1461
Fax: 406-761-4632
Email: mtsynod@montanasynod.org



www.montanasynod.org

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

Calendar

August, 2009

Montana Synod Newsletter

August, 2009

17-23 ELCA Churchwide Assembly,
Minneapolis, Minn.
28 LSS Golf Tournament, Missoula

September, 2009

5 Synod Newsletter deadline
7 Labor Day Holiday
8 Synod Staff Retreat
9-13 WELCA Immersion, Rocky Boy
15 Synod Newsletter sent
18-19 Synod Council, Great Falls
25-26 Eastern LPA class, Epping, ND
28 NRIT Spiritual Leadership, Helena

October, 2009

1-2 NRIT Luther Lectures, Chico
1-6 Conference of Bishops
2-4 LPA Class #3, Great Falls
5-6 Retired Pastors Retreat, Seeley Lake
8 Boundaries Training, Glendive
15 Synod Newsletter sent
16-18 MLYO Fall Gathering, Helena
18-20 MAC Assembly, Great Falls

+ **The Montana Synod Newsletter is published monthly on or about the 15th of each month. Articles for each publication are due in the synod office by the 5th of the month. E-mail your story ideas to Susan Hedahl, Newsletter Editor, at shedahl@montanasynod.org.**

+ **You are welcome to copy and use any part of this newsletter in your congregational announcements, bulletins, and/or newsletters. Consider forwarding it to your council members and other interested members.**

+ **If you received the newsletter by USPS, you have either requested it in that format, or we don't have your e-mail. If you would prefer to receive it by e-mail, send us your e-mail address and we will send it to you next month in that format. (Send your e-mail address to shedahl@montanasynod.org)**

+ **You will need Adobe Reader to download the newsletter. For a free download of this software, go to:
<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html?promoid=BNRM>**