

October 15, 2011



MONTANA SYNOD, ELCA

Montana Synod Newsletter

Words from the Bishop—“Let all things be done for building up” I Corinthians 14: 26

What excites you about your congregation?

What would you change if you could?

What is God doing in and through your congregation?

One of the central themes of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly was the centrality of congregations. Congregations are where weekly worship takes place, where children are taught and newcomers are welcomed. Congregations are where Baptism brings people in, where the Word is preached and the people fed. Congregations are where food banks and homeless shelters take root, where Bible study is combined with fellowship, where quilts are made and funds raised for world hun-

ger, and for congregational, synod and churchwide mission. What excites you about your congregation? What would you want to tell somebody else about your congregation if they asked you why you go to church? What makes your congregation special?

What changes would you make in your congregation if you could? What would you do differently, and who would do it? Who would object to doing something differently? Is there a way to enlist everybody and find consensus? Is your congregation open to suggestions from new people? What kind of help does your congregation need to make changes?

What is God doing in and through your congregation?

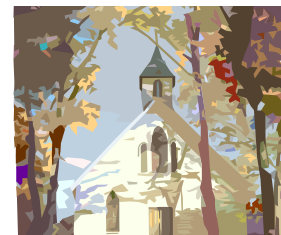
God is active in every congregation. Sometimes it is through something big, and sometimes it is through something very small. God works through individuals and through Christians who come together, praying, singing, sharing resources, and seeking God’s will. Many of our congregations are in transition. The communities that started them have changed. The needs are different. Some congregations celebrating significant anniversaries are looking back at their history with gratitude, and forward to their future with hope. God calls us to look forward, to move forward. Where is God calling your congregation? How might you respond to God’s call in a new and different way?

Congregations are the strength of our church, each one unique, each one with gifts to share. We don’t exist in isolation, but in cooperation with one another. Together we are strong, together we can reach out to the world in ways we could never do as a single congregation. We are blessed in the Montana Synod to have 130 congregations—130 centers of mission who can depend on God’s grace, and each other! And we are blessed to have full communion partners who expand our network of how we can do God’s work with our hands. In Montana and Northern Wyoming we work cooperatively with Episcopalians, United Methodists, Presbyterians and the United Church of Christ. The one RCA congregation in Montana works cooperatively with its neighbor, Redeemer Lutheran in Great Falls. Full communion partnerships enable us to share even more deeply—with exchange of clergy, sharing of staff, and more.

God is good!

In Christ,

Jessica Crist, Bishop



News Notes

Call Accepted

Bradn Buerkle, Missionary Pastor to Hermannsburg Mission, Novosibirsk, Russia 9/1/11

Kay Tostengard, Interim Associate, to LCGS, Billings, 9/25/11

Interim

Kris Mitzman, to Messiah, Billings, 8/1/11

Don Melchert, to Valley of Christ, Missoula, 10/2/11

Kristi Bummer, from LCGS, Billings, to Christ Lutheran, Fairbanks, AK 9/1/11

On Leave From Call

Kristi Bummer, from LCGS Billings,

9/1/11

Josh Magyar, from Tanzania, to CPE, Colorado 7/31/11

Retired

Greg Karlsgodt, 9/1/11

Louise Christensen, 10/1/11

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



## Board of Pensions

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

## **ELCA Health Plan Open Enrollment is Nov. 1 - 30**

Providing ELCA benefits is an investment in your employees and shows them you value their well-being, ministry and future. Enroll your eligible employees in the ELCA benefits program during the 2011 [open enrollment](#) period Nov. 1-30.

By enrolling during this period, eligible individuals who would normally be subject to a six-month wait for ELCA health coverage can begin health coverage effective Jan. 1, 2012. This is a great time to [provide your lay employees with ELCA benefits](#).

Additionally, to comply with [new federal law](#), adult children under age 26 who are not eligible for other group coverage through their employer may enroll in the ELCA health plan at this time regardless of their student, marital or tax dependent status.

## **Rollovers Welcome!**

Did you know ELCA Retirement Plan members can [consolidate their retirement savings](#) to their ELCA retirement account? The ELCA Retirement Plan is designed for ministry. There

are no sales commissions and investment costs are generally lower than industry average. The plan accepts pretax rollovers of at least \$200 from traditional IRAs, 403(b) plans, 401(k) plans and governmental 457 plans.

To receive Administrator News, go to [www.elcabop.org](http://www.elcabop.org)

*Sign up to receive Administrator News from the Board of Pensions*

# NRIT



**The Gospel Road Show: Paul and Mark in a New Key** Dr. Laurie Jungling  
Monday Oct. 24 - Our Savior's Lutheran, Great Falls  
Tuesday Oct. 25 - First Lutheran, Havre  
Wednesday Oct. 26 - Zion Lutheran, Glendive  
9am - 3pm all three locations

**Lutheran Ethics: Christ Be For You; Therefore You Be Christ for the Neighbor** Dr. James Aageson  
Monday Oct. 24 - St. Paul Lutheran, Missoula  
Tuesday Oct. 25 - King of Glory, Billings  
9am - 3pm both locations

**Midwinter Theological Conference**

Dr. Cheryl Peterson  
**The Holy Spirit: Equipping and Empowering the Church** January 30 - February 1, 2012  
Izaak Walton Inn, Essex, MT

For more information go to [www.nrit.org](http://www.nrit.org)

## 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering—Registration is Open

Registration is now open for the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering. If your congregation is considering participating, go to the new 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering website at [www.elca.org/gathering](http://www.elca.org/gathering). You'll find up-to-the-minute information about the Gathering, tools to help with planning, and registration details. There is also a lively continuing conversation going on at [www.facebook.com/youthgathering](http://www.facebook.com/youthgathering). If you are planning on going to the Gathering and are wondering how to collect the information you need to register your group, there are paper forms that you can print out. Go to [www.elca.org/gathering](http://www.elca.org/gathering) and then click on **Planning for the Gathering** in the left menu and then click **Registration Information**. You'll find these forms:

- [Primary Leader and Adult Counselor Registration Information Form](#) -- all the information needed to complete online registration for the congregation and from each

adult counselor, including the primary leader.

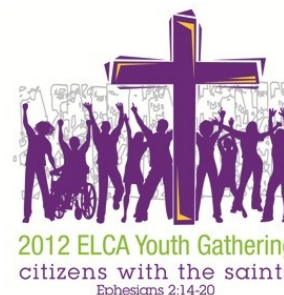
- [Youth Registration Information Form](#) - all the information needed to complete online registration for youth participants from your congregation.

For those of you who are definitely going and remember the old days where you had to register on opening day or weren't going to be able to go, don't fret. All registrations received in a timely fashion, by December 9, will be treated equally. While the Gathering staff appreciates those who register at the first opportunity because it helps with the planning process, they want you to know that there is plenty of space in New Orleans for your group.

At this point in time it does not look like the Montana Synod will be coordinating transportation to New Orleans. Some of us have done some investigating and found that a

bus would cost approximately the same amount as flying, once you factor in the cost of extra food along the way. It would also take far more time and energy. A train has the same issues. Plus there is the question of where to start from. For example, for our congregation's group to drive from Kalispell to Billings in order to get on a chartered plane probably makes less sense than just driving to Seattle and flying Southwest!

Please contact Pastor Andy Arnold ([andy@northridgelutheran.org](mailto:andy@northridgelutheran.org)) or the Gathering office ([gathering@elca.org](mailto:gathering@elca.org) - 1-800-638-3522 ext. 2100) if there are questions we can help you find an answer to.



## Give Back Feed Back

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 October 18-31 is [givelearn](#). It is a short answer question.

The keyword for November 1-15 is [givestart](#). And the number to text those keywords to is 84700 (There was some "down" time experienced recently. Please note it was the cellular company 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

## Exploring Seminary

**Exploring Seminary is a six week online course for all those interested in learning more about seminary study and discerning a call to public ministry.**

The course includes weekly readings and discussion of topics with the professor, Craig Nesson, Academic Dean at Wartburg Theological Seminary. Participants will interact with one another and the instructor to reflect on the fundamentals

of theological education. Cost to participants involves only a technology fee of \$50. Register online at [www.wartburgseminary.edu](http://www.wartburgseminary.edu)

For more information, contact Dr. Kristine Stache, [kstache@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:kstache@wartburgseminary.edu), Adjunct Professor of Distributed Education and Director of TEEM & Online Learning.

**Upcoming Dates:  
January 2 - February 10, 2012**

**The Rev. Shelley Wickstrom**

Coordinator for Ministry Leadership, Region 1  
4525 19th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98105  
206-624-0093 ext 109  
206-626-0987 Fax  
[shelley.wickstrom@elcaregion1.org](mailto:shelley.wickstrom@elcaregion1.org)  
[shelley.wickstrom@elca.org](mailto:shelley.wickstrom@elca.org)

## Announcements and Links

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☀ "Stepping Out in Faith", this month's Stories of Faith in Action bulletin insert, is the story of a woman's journey to ordination through Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM). TEEM enables small rural congregations to be served by a pastor. Read about the Rev. Diane Eggemeyer's unlikely road to ordination.

☀ From our Companion Synod in Bolivia: a newsletter from Kari Eller, ELCA Missionary in Bolivia. To see it, please visit the website. <http://karieller.weebly.com>. Also, you really want to see a video in the Our Videos section of the website called Bolivian Chola! I think you'll enjoy it! Blessings, Kari Eller, Missionary, ELCA/IELB

☀ Check out the synod website for some links for a new ecumenical resources tab [here](#). Sylvia Bull, Montana Synod Ecumenical Intern.

☀ If your congregation is embarking on a website redesign, this blog series may be of interest: <http://www.faithandweb.com/2011/09/13/redesign-your-congregations-website/>

☀ **Worship and Prayer Resources for Wild Fires as well as Storms and Flooding.** For use in your individual or congregational prayers and devotions, resources are available on the [ELCA Worship homepage](#).

☀ New Resources Available from Lutheran Services in America about

nonprofit voter engagement, state Medicaid programs, Medicaid managed care, and the new census poverty data. [Read more »](#)

☀ Greetings, dear friends in Christ! You'll find my latest missionary newsletter on the synod newsletter page [here](#) Peace and blessings! Pastor Bradn Buerkle

☀ **Diaconal Ministry: Discernment, History and Formation**  
Course Description: This course has two components. It introduces students to the historical, theological, and social contexts in which the work of diaconal ministry

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has been expressed throughout the church's history and asks how that history continues to impact the present. The course also explores a theology of spirituality based in the Lutheran confessional writings and provides opportunity for the discussion and development of a baptismal discipline and vocational discernment, particularly as it pertains to the diaconal calling. The course carries 3 hours of academic credit; a recommended maximum is fourteen students.

Christina Erban  
Deaconess Community  
773-380-1705

☀ From the ELCA NEWS SERVICE, October 3, 2011

**Jessica Crist elected chair of the ELCA Conference of Bishops** -- The Rev. Jessica R. Crist, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Montana Synod, Great Falls, Mont., was elected Oct. 1 to serve as chair of the ELCA Conference of Bishops. Crist, who will serve a four-year term, is the first female synod bishop ever to hold this position. To read the full release, go [here](#)

☀ **Support for new missionaries**  
The ELCA will soon be seeking

long-term and two-year contract missionaries for 2012. Missionaries will be recruited to serve in Madagascar, Slovakia, Egypt, Senegal, Ethiopia, Kenya, Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Japan, Central African Republic, Cameroon and Malaysia. Sponsor support is needed. To support a missionary, go to [www.elca.org/missionarysponsorship](http://www.elca.org/missionarysponsorship).

☀ **2012 Salary Guidelines** have been posted on the Montana synod website. Please note: an error was made in calculating the housing equity amount. It should read \$1679.00, not \$1479.00.

## Freedom in Christ Prison Congregation Update

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The Freedom in Christ prison congregation at Deer Lodge is inching closer to reality. The call committee is actively working with the hope of having a pastor in place by January 1, 2012, if all goes well. The task force/call committee has been active for several months with reviewing resumes and interviewing candidates. Pray that the process will bear fruit in the coming weeks.

The prison task force is currently also working on fund-raising to support the ministry for the first year. The task force anticipates that approximately \$17,000-\$18,000 plus an expected small grant early next year will accomplish this goal. If your congregation has endowment or memorial funds available, please consider a gift to the Prison Congregation Fund.

Please make any donation checks to: Montana Synod Prison Congregation Fund and mail to Freedom in Christ Prison Congregation Project, P.O. Box 617, Anaconda, Montana 59711-0617. **Or**, you may add the amount you wish to give to your regular benevolence form which your treasurer sends to Region 1.

George Sorensen, Prison Task Force member

## Introducing the ELCA Malaria Campaign



The 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly overwhelmingly passed the vote to launch the [ELCA Malaria Campaign](#) and join hands with our sisters and brothers in Africa to do our part and end deaths from malaria -- for good.

Nearly 800,000 people die each year from malaria -- most are children under five. It doesn't have to be this way. The disease is completely preventable and treatable. Working as a church, through churches in Africa, we already have the structure in place to reach individuals and communities that other organizations cannot. But we need your help to get started.

Please spread the word about the ELCA Malaria Campaign in your congregation, and [give generously](#) to support this effort.

[Learn more](#) | [Donate](#) | [Congregational resources](#)

The 2012 Montana Synod Assembly and Theological Conference to be held in Billings at the Crowne Plaza on June 1-3, 2012, will be supporting the ELCA Malaria Campaign with its offerings during our worship services. Think about how you and your congregation can lift up and support this worthy campaign between now and next June.

## NAAC—Regional Training Institutes

The North American Association for the Catechumenate--an ecumenical organization that connects with the ELCA and its full communion partners--is offering three regional training institutes in 2012 for pastors, musicians, and lay leaders in the following locations: Phoenix (Feb. 24-26), Baltimore (April 13-15) and Minneapolis (May 18-20).

1. Regional Training Institutes Flier
2. Regional Training Institute brochure--with registration form
4. Regional Training Institute Overview

and Presenters

### 5. Regional Training Institute Schedule

Most items are all also currently on the NAAC website at

*An ecumenical organization which provides training and support for churches engaged in the process of baptismal conversion and making Christian disciples.*

[www.catechumenate.org](http://www.catechumenate.org).

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions through e-mail or by calling me at 612-710-7959. You can also contact our registrar, Devra Betts at [devra@holyspiritlc.org](mailto:devra@holyspiritlc.org) or by phone at 702-232-8383.

Rick Rouse, Grand Canyon Synod Staff and President, North American Association for the Catechumenate



## Registering Copyrights in the U.S. free Webinar

**The Future of Art & Commerce:**  
What creators and users of visual content need to know in these rapidly changing times

### Registering Copyrights in the United States

October 19, 2011  
1:00pm ET

Join us for the second session out of a series of ten free webinars jointly produced by the American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP) and Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) to educate creators and users on copyright, licensing and monetization of content. The series will open an honest dialogue about conflicting pressures for both content creators and users; while exploring a variety of mutually beneficial

suggestions and solutions.

[Click here for more information and to register!](#)



# Needing Continuing Education in Florida during Montana's (or Wyoming's) winter?

## MINISTRY STAFF SEMINAR

January 28-31, 2012

This seminar is designed for those who also serve in staff settings: associate pastors, worship and music directors, youth and family ministers, parish nurses, volunteer coordinators, parish administrators, etc.

## TRANSITION SEMINAR

January 31-February 1, 2012

Offered between the Ministry Staff and Head of Staff Seminars, the Transition Seminar focuses of those individuals who have recently moved from one ministry setting to another.

## HEAD OF STAFF SEMINAR

February 2-5, 2012

Are you newly called as a senior/head of

staff pastor? The focus is on the roles that the head of staff plays in visionary, mission-oriented leadership of a congregation and guiding the development of a congregational staff team.

## DEADLINES

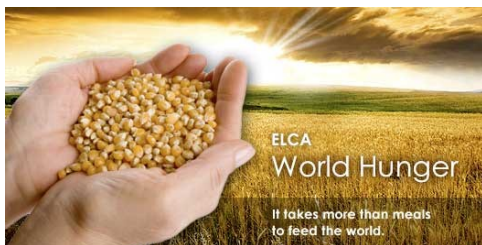
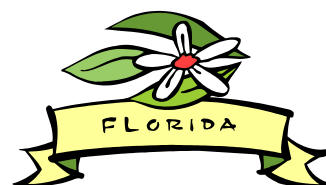
Registration deadline is January 16, 2012. Since these events fill up quickly, please call 612-330-1467 after December 15 to check for availability.

## LOCATION

The seminars are held at the Duncan Conference and Retreat Center, 15820 S. Military Trail, Delray Beach, Florida, 33484, 561-496-4130. Registration for each of the events begins at 11 a.m. in the main conference room.

Space for spouses is available. Your spouse is encouraged to participate as he/she wishes at no additional registration charge. There is an additional charge for lodging and meals.

If you have other questions, contact Lonna Field at 612-330-1467 or [fieldl@augsborg.edu](mailto:fieldl@augsborg.edu).



**Disaster volunteers needed in North Dakota** [Lutheran Disaster Response](#) is in need of volunteers in Minot, N.D., where severe flooding earlier this year damaged or destroyed 4,000 homes. Many in the community are in a race against the clock

to gut and clean their homes before the worst of winter arrives. The snow could start to fall in the next few weeks and several hundred homes are still untouched. Volunteers are being coordinated by Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota. Register by calling 800-366-9841.

Is your congregation, synod or community active in the fight against hunger and poverty? Tell us what you're up to. Email

[laury.rinker@elca.org](mailto:laury.rinker@elca.org).

To see more about what the ELCA is doing about hunger, go [here](#)

*ELCA World Hunger:  
"It takes more than meals to  
feed the world"*

## Bread of Life Retreat at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

November 11 - 12, 2011

Cost is \$75

Gather around the warm hearth at camp during this cold time of year.

Learn to bake bread or hone your skills with new recipes and techniques.

We will also enjoy meaningful worship centered on the Bread of Life and have great food and fellowship time. Beginning bakers are welcome.

Contact Brooke Ells, Program Director for more information and registration.

406-844-3201 or [Brooke@flbc.net](mailto:Brooke@flbc.net)



# LACE—Lutheran Association of Christian Educators

## LACE Board Nominations 2012

It's that time of year again. The following positions are open for election for 2012: VP for Communications, Financial Secretary, Secretary-Historian, and Representatives for Regions 1, 4, 5, and 8. If you would like to nominate someone for one of these positions, please ask for approval first and then download the Nomination Form found on our website, fill it out, and send it or email it to the address on the form. [Click here](#) and scroll to the bottom of the page.

## Leadership Resources:

RevWriter is a website where you will find a variety of church resources in which Pastor Sue Lang has been involved

as a writer and consultant.

She has owned and operated [RevWriter Resources](#), consulting with congregations and judicatories since 2004. Lang works to empower leaders and congregations to realize their full potential in living together as a community in Christ. For a list about resources for leaders and to learn more about her network ministry [click here](#).

## Resources for Youth Ministries:

[Search Institute](#) shares that the vast majority of people who work with youth are, by nature, asset builders. But in the busyness of daily life, it can be easy to forget the things that matter when it comes to working with young people. The asset framework helps us remember these im-

portant, positive things. [A list of tips is listed](#) on the Search Institute website.

On their website, it is also stated that youth workers who aren't trained or able to support asset-building practices are at a disadvantage. And they provide a list of skills that youth workers can develop to build the [40 Developmental Assets](#). And it's free! They are organized around the eight categories of assets.



## Travel to India with Equal Exchange Contest

**Sign up for the contest before December 31st, 2011.** These are the three ways in which your congregation may qualify to win an Interfaith spot on the delegation:

[Sign up for the contest](#) and purchase 12 cases of Equal Exchange organic tea between Oct. 1st and Dec. 31st, 2011, and your congregation's name will be entered into a random drawing for a spot on the delegation.

[Sign up for the contest](#) and sell as many

cases of Equal Exchange organic tea as possible between Oct. 1st and Dec. 31st, 2011. The congregation that purchases the most tea from Equal Exchange will win a spot on the delegation.

[Sign up for the contest](#) and come up with a creative way to promote Equal Exchange organic tea and carry it out during the contest time period: Oct. 1st and Dec. 31st, 2011. Submit a 250 word or less description of the project with no more than 2 pages of photos or visuals. The ideas will be judged by an Equal

Exchange contest committee. The first place congregation will win a spot on the delegation.

The trip will be 7-10 days long next March, 2012 - the exact week will be announced by December 31st, 2011. The prize will include air fare, food, and accommodations. Participants will visit tea gardens, participate in tea tastings, and learn how tea is grown, harvested, and processed.



## Practicing what you preach... Sometimes it is hard to talk about money.

[Money Leadership: Your Life with Money](#) is an online course developed to help pastors and other congregational leaders increase their confidence in money leadership. The course is designed to encourage greater freedom to talk about the relationship between money and faith and to examine and, perhaps, change behaviors.

With this freedom and through the infor-

mation and activities in this course, you will become more confident in your private and public behaviors related to faith and money issues.

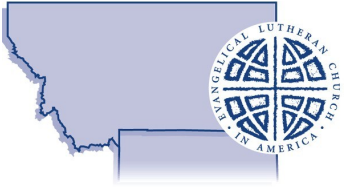
This 6 week course is offered [Oct. 28 to Dec. 9](#).

**Select Learning**, 1175 Winston St, St Paul MN 55108, 877-675-6275

A program of the Congregational and Synodical

Mission unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America





**MONTANA SYNOD, ELCA**

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Phone: 406-453-1461  
Fax: 406-761-4632

E-mail: [mtsynod@montanasynod.org](mailto:mtsynod@montanasynod.org)

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

**www.montanasynod.org**



## Calendar

### October, 2011

14 Newsletter posted to website  
17-18 MAC Assembly, Great Falls  
21-22 LPA Reunion Retreat, Great Falls  
24-25 NRIT Lutheran Ethics 101  
25-26 NRIT Gospel Road Show  
31-Nov.2 First Call Theological Education, GF

### November, 2011

1-2 FCTE (continued)  
5 Newsletter deadline  
10 Boundaries Workshop, Lewistown  
11 Bishop's Convocation, Lewistown  
11-14 ELCA Church Council  
15 Newsletter posted to website  
18-19 Candidacy meeting  
24-25 Thanksgiving Holiday

### December, 2011

5 Newsletter deadline  
15 Newsletter posted to website  
15 The Lutheran Insert Articles Due  
23 Synod Office Closed  
25 Merry Christmas  
26 Synod Office Closed  
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