



Montana Synod Weekly Announcements October 23, 2023



Friends,

In response to the escalating violence in and around Gaza, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has extended a [letter of support](#) to Bishop Sani-Ibrahim Azar of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. In it she pledges to accompany and support the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and its ministries. Images in the news are heartbreaking, and we extend our prayers to all those who have lost loved ones and are living in fear and uncertainty.

The ELCA has long-standing relationships with many partners in the region, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and Augusta Victoria Hospital, which is operated by the Lutheran World Federation.

The most pressing needs that Lutheran Disaster Response and our partners can address are food, water and medical supplies. Support for hospitals will be another priority as the need for medical assistance continues to grow. Additionally, Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries desk to provide interfaith emotional and spiritual care support for communities in the United States.

Bishop Eaton's letter also calls us to action:

“I encourage the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to unite in prayer for the families of innocent civilians whose lives were lost, as well as pray for healing for all the injured, fearful and traumatized.”

Lutheran Disaster Response has a history of providing support for our partners and anticipates answering calls for assistance when the time comes. Gifts to [“Middle East Crisis”](#) will be used to address humanitarian needs in the region. Above all, we pray for peace.

Give now

With gratitude,

The Rev. Daniel Rift
Director, ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response Fund
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Israel-Hamas War resources and statements

In the past weeks we have borne witness to the horrors of the escalating crisis between Israel and Hamas. In response to the Hamas attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7 and Israel's declaration of war against Hamas, including the ongoing siege of Gaza, the ELCA offers statements from some of our Lutheran and global partners in the region. Included are ELCA resources for a deeper understanding of the context, the humanitarian crises of the current war, and the ELCA's work for a just peace in Palestine and Israel. [Learn more.](#)



Draft social message on gun trauma

What is a faithful Lutheran response when considering U.S. gun culture? The draft of a social message on gun-related violence and trauma probes that question, and your feedback is requested. The draft focuses on trauma, public health and an ethic of shared responsibility for peacemaking, seeking to move beyond the strict polarization of gun rights versus gun control. This is an issue that affects everyone in the United States — let your voice in this process be heard! To participate in the public feedback period, [read the draft and use the response form](#). Responses are due by Jan. 31, 2024.

Invitation for Partners of Rostered Ministers

Spouses & partners of ELCA

Pastors and Deacons are invited to join this free, 12-session, online sacred place to take a deep breath, slow down, and create space to notice God's presence among us. Our goal is to foster community and be refreshed by God and one another. Each week our cohort leader - and fellow pastor's spouse - Susan Berg, will lead us through a curriculum of spiritual practices.

We will meet via Zoom twice-monthly on the second and fourth Mondays of the month, beginning November 13, 7pm-8:30pm. We will skip over a few of the busy weeks - Easter and Christmas for example - and conclude in June.

If your partner/spouse has

questions - or is interested in participating - please have them reach out to Susan@lutheransnw.org - soon as space is limited to a maximum of twelve participants.

This is a FREE opportunity!

In 2018, California Lutheran

University received a nearly \$1 million, five-year grant from the Lilly Endowment to create [Thriving Leadership Formation](#) (TLF) in partnership with its own Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and the 11 ELCA synods of Regions 1 and 2. This FREE spiritual practice cohort is one aspect of their larger grant goal of fostering spiritual and contemplative practices in order to enrich life and ministry, and help the church and its leaders thrive.

OTHER Cohorts

While this small group is specifically for those who are in the unique - and often challenging - role of being partnered with a deacon or pastor, there will be additional cohorts for rostered and lay leaders in our synod forming in the coming weeks – info will be posted here: <https://thrivingleadershipformation.org/cohorts/>



If you are a Sundays and Seasons subscriber, please take [this brief survey](#) regarding your familiarity with and use of the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue) and the Readings for the Assembly (Emended).



*Do you love to write? This retreat is for you!
Are you unsure about writing but you love a good story? This retreat is for you!
Would you appreciate time to nurture and appreciate creativity? Or could you simply just use a quiet retreat in the mountains? This retreat is for you!*

**Words of Wonder:
Using Writing to Nurture our
Relationships with the Bible, our
Congregations, and God.**

The NRIT theological retreat at Flathead

Lutheran Bible Camp. January 29 – 31.
Starts after lunch on Monday, January 29th and
ends after breakfast on Wednesday, January 31st.

Retreat schedule includes learning, discussion,
small group activities, games, prayer and shorter
periods throughout the day for rest and renewal.
Total cost of the retreat is \$265

Our teacher is Kaethe Schwehn - the author of
the post-apocalyptic novel *The Rending and the
Nest*, the poetry collection *Tanka & Me*, and a
memoir, *Tailings*.

Her poems and prose can be found in journals
such



as *Crazyhorse*, *Pleiades*, *jubilat*, *Witness*, *Minnesota Review*, and the
anthology *Fiction on a Stick*. She has been the recipient of a Minnesota Book Award
for Creative Nonfiction, a Minnesota State Arts Board Grant, a Loft Mentor Series
Award, the Donald Justice Poetry Prize, and a Best of the Net Anthology award.
Schwehn studied creative writing at the Iowa Writers' Workshop and the University
of Montana and earned a B.A. from Gustavus Adolphus College. She currently
teaches composition and creative writing at St. Olaf College.

<https://www.montanasynod.org/nrit.html>

Women ^{of the} ELCA

MT Synodical Women's Organization President's Message

"Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life."

Paul's letter to the Philippians, Chapter 4, vv 1 – 4. [The New Student Bible, NRSV](#)



Rebekah French, MT SWO President

I read this verse on Saturday, October 14, after attending a full day continuing legal education seminar sponsored by the Women' Law Section (WLS) of the Montana State Bar. I have been involved with the WLS since moving back to Montana in 2003 – so far longer than I have been involved in WELCA. I have committed to using my time, talent and treasure to serve both of these organizations because they share a similar mission – to help to empower women in their respective communities (the Montana State Bar and the ELCA) and beyond those communities to the world at large. Both organizations have provided me with the opportunity to meet amazing women who have become friends and have been sources of support for me.

Paul's urging of Euodia and Syntache (his sister followers of Christ) to "be of the same mind in the Lord" may indicate that they were causing trouble in Philippi by arguing with each other or with their male colleagues. As an attorney and a Christian, I have never shied away from expressing my disagreement with views expressed by other attorneys and Christians. But I have found loving support that goes beyond that disagreement in both WELCA and the Women's Law Section – and I hope that Euodia and Syntache also found that loving support. For me personally, Paul's words demonstrate that women played an important role in the early church.

I am hoping that you will find inspiration in the articles submitted from those lucky women who attended the Triennial Convention and/or Gathering. I was unable to attend myself because I had a previously scheduled trip to Athens, Greece. But I have heard from a couple attendees that it was an amazing experience. I encourage you all to consider signing up for the 2026 Triennial in Des Moines.

As the Montana/Northern Wyoming SWO is still without a treasurer – units and clusters can send their donations to me at PO Box 1741, Great Falls, MT 59403-1741.

Blessings to all.

Rebekah French, SWO President

Thank You For Your Support!

FLBC staff is excited to be beginning our Outreach program for the 2023-24 year! Up to once each month, October 2023,- April, 2024, FLBC staff will come to your congregation to help with an outreach event. Youth programming, lock-ins, holiday events, and many more can be coordinated through FLBC. Contact Amanda@flbc.net for more information and to sign up!!



Mark your calendars!

Staff applications will be open for summer 2024, beginning Nov 1st. Know of someone who might benefit from a summer at FLBC? They will learn leadership skills galore! Minimum age to apply is 18.

Summer registration opens Nov 10th, 2023 – send us an email or call the office if you would like a copy of the brochure sent to you. The FLBC web site will be open for registration Nov 10th.

Pastors and volunteers, get your first choice of weeks for summer 2024. Go to www.flbc.net, beginning Nov 10th, for the application! We are excited for our theme "Created to Be," as the curriculum for 2024.

FLBC is exploring the possibility of offering an online and retreat based confirmation program for students in congregations around Montana. Right now we are looking for pastors and leaders who would be interested in this program to help us consider what the program should look like and what topics to cover. We are also offering a confirmation retreat for those interested in a possible FLBC facilitated confirmation program and congregations that would like to bring their confirmation class to camp. Contact amanda@flbc.net for more information!

The Bible in 24 hours, October 29-31, (Sunday-Tuesday) Come enjoy FLBC in the fall. Relax, hike, sip some wine, and enjoy learning more about the Bible with Dr. Rachel Wrenn, Biblical Studies professor at Trinity Seminary, Columbus, OH.

FLBC's annual Quilting and Crafting Retreat will be on November 9-12, 2023! Bring all your supplies and join other crafters as we quilt, knit, crochet, scrapbook, and do a variety of other special crafts! You can register online, or call the office to get signed up.

Looking for a fun way to get ready for Christmas? The FLBC Advent Retreat will be held December 8-10, 2023. Come with your family, or a group of friends or fellow church members to camp for a time of crafts, baking, singing, and time to explore our faith and the true reason for celebration during the Christmas season. There will be fun for young and old alike, and you will even have the opportunity to cut and take home a Christmas tree from FLBC! Call the camp office for more information or to get signed up!

Young Adults! Plan now to attend the young adult retreat, Dec 27-29 at FLBC. Ski, play, enjoy the new sauna, with a dip in the lake! Join Baird Linke, and the FLBC staff who will lead the sessions, on the theme: "Spiritual Wilderness" \$100 per person; 18-35 year olds. Registration deadline Dec. 13th.



November 2023

Information for our Congregations

Our summer calendar is set and on our website (christikon.org). If you have questions about the 2024 season or would like to register, give us a call or do so online. It was a powerful summer of ministry this year, and we look forward to welcoming you to camp in the new year.

The 2023 Annual Meeting will be on Sunday November 12th at 3:30pm. We'll tell stories from

the summer and share plans for the 2024 season, construction, and much more. We will be meeting in person at Big Timber Lutheran Church.

We continue to hold you in prayer as together we navigate these uncertain times. We also trust in, and give thanks for, a God who promises to never let us go, no matter what life throws our way. May God bless you and yours as we move through fall and towards the holiday season and the new year.

Thank you as always for all the ways you support Christikon.

**It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ—
exploring God’s creation and the adventure of life together.**

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