



# Montana Synod Weekly Announcements December 4, 2023

## North American Church Leaders Call for Peace in Holy Land in Advent Prayer Resource

CHICAGO (Nov. 29, 2023) – The leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and The Episcopal Church (TEC) have released the Churches Beyond Borders 2023 Advent Cycle of Prayer.

The prayer resource calls for justice and peace, especially for churches impacted by the war in the Holy Land, and for lifting up Palestinian Christian communities and ministries and the congregations and institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

In a [letter](#) to accompany the Advent resource the leaders write, “We call for a ceasefire, an end to violence in the West Bank and the opening of humanitarian corridors in Gaza.” The church leaders contributed prayers for the four Sundays of Advent, focusing on the themes truth, justice, peace and hope. [View / Download](#) the Churches



## Give Yourself the Gift of Resources

Amidst the joy and celebration – and, yes, stress – of this season, your body can use all the help it can get. Whether it’s treatment for a pesky cough, a listening ear to help process impostor syndrome or budget worries, or ideas for a new healthy holiday tradition, check out Portico’s [curated list of resources](#) to support you and your family this season (and Advent blessings to you!)

## December FSA Countdown

Still have a balance in your Flexible Spending Account (FSA) – either for health or dependent care expenses? Be sure to spend those dollars by Dec. 31, 2023, so you won’t lose them. Check your balance on myPortico, and submit receipts via the link to Further. Need ideas on what you can use your dollars for? This list can help.

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

The theme for the 2024 [Week of Prayer for Christian Unity](#) will be “You Shall Love the Lord Your God ... and Your Neighbor As Yourself” (Luke 10:27). Resources for the week, January 18-25, 2024 or whenever you choose, have been jointly prepared and published by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches’ Commission on Faith and Order, and they can be downloaded [here](#).



NRIT Retreat on Flathead Lake, 3pm January  
29<sup>th</sup> – 9am January 31st

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

This retreat offers a combination of presentation, small group activity, quiet time for writing and contemplation.

Led by Dr. Kaethe Schwehn, author and professor

Cost: \$265 includes class, food and lodging  
Registration Deadline: January 15



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Zoom: Thursday, Jan 24th and Thursday, Feb 1 from 1pm to 2:30pm both days

### **NRIT Facilitated Video and Group Discussion: Presiding Bishops Elizabeth Eaton and Michael Curry Respond to Christian Nationalism**

Using materials from "Christians Against Christian Nationalism," an organization endorsed by both ELCA Bishop Eaton and Episcopal Bishop Curry, participants will discuss how our Lutheran and Episcopal beliefs contrast with Christian Nationalist views.

Discussion facilitated by The Rev. Valerie Webster. Associate Priest, All Saints in

Big Sky

Cost \$20 for both days  
3 Contact Hours of Continuing Ed



Zoom: Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup> from 6pm to 7:30pm

## **Lazarus Bound: Ministry to the Margins**

Pastor Marlow Carrels will lead this class on welcoming our neighbors who are leaving the prison system and re-entering society outside that system.

Marlow Carrels is Pastoral Leader for the Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry

Cost: Free but pre-registration is required  
1.5 Contact Hours

Zoom: Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 9am to Noon

## **When Bad Theology Happens to Good Christians**

Law and Gospel. Theology of the Cross versus Theology of Glory. Works-righteousness. The Lutheran theological buzzwords can get overwhelming sometimes. We know the basics of what we believe, but sometimes our domesticated concepts seem to shrivel when faced with some of the wild ideas floating around these days. What's a Lutheran to do when bearing witness to God's grace in a crowded marketplace of ideas?

Led by Julia Seymour, Pastor at Big Timber  
Cost \$40

3 Contact Hours Continuing Ed



## **December 2023**



As we move into the dark days of winter, and in the midst of a world weary of brokenness and war, we look yet again towards the promise of the coming Christ child. As the gospel writer proclaims, "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it."

Shine, Jesus, shine...in our hearts and homes, our community and world.

A blessed Advent and Christmas to you and yours from your Christikon family.

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

Synod updates from FLBC, Nov 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023

There are still openings for the **Advent Retreat** Dec 8-10, **Young adult retreat**, Dec 27-29, and for the **Ski and Board** retreat, January 12-15. All retreats include great fun, games, Bible Study, worship, playing in the snow, relaxing, and great food. For more information and to register. Go to [www.flbc.net](http://www.flbc.net)



**Join NRIT at FLBC** for the educational retreat with Dr Kaethe Schwehn, professor at St Olaf, Jan 29-31. Our theme is “Words of Wonder” .... using writing to nurture our relationships with the Bible, our congregations, and God. Besides wonderful Educations sessions and worship, with Dr. Schwehn, and continuing ed credits, there will be time for relaxing, enjoying FLBC’s new sauna, hiking, reading, and just catching your breath before Lent. Open to all pastors, spouses, LPA’s and interested adults. To register go to: [www.montanasynod.org/nrit/html](http://www.montanasynod.org/nrit/html)

**Registration for week long Family camp** opens Jan 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10am. Please call the office, 406-752-6602 or email [office@flbc.net](mailto:office@flbc.net) Or [registration@flbc.net](mailto:registration@flbc.net) Family means “family of God” Single adults, couples, single parent families, and couples with children are all welcome. This week fills fast.... first come first serve. Make memories with your loved ones at FLBC this summer as we explore God’s creation under the theme, “Created to Be.”



Remember to use your **Thrivent Choice** distribution for the good of ministry, at your camp, campus ministry or church, Thrivent Choice makes a big difference! THANKS for Choosing Ministry!!

Our staff are enjoying meeting people and working with congregations in our **Outreach Ministry**. We have been to Polson, Sunburst, Helena and Jacko Valley. If you are interested in staff coming to your congregation on a monthly basis, or for a one-time lock in.... contact: [Amanda@flbc.net](mailto:Amanda@flbc.net)

**Mark your calendars for the Confirmation/Campfirmation Retreat** at FLBC, March 15-16. Only 1-2 students in confirmation? come.... a chance for them to build relationships with others around

the state; Whether you have 2 students or 20...we guarantee growth, learning and FUN at camp.

The **Shalom Home** (for staff and guest housing) is coming along

GREAT. THANKS to all who contributed to make this needed home a reality. We hope (and pray) to have it done by this summer. THANKS Tim Rogge Construction!

Blessed THANKSGIVING to each of you! THANKS for your care!



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