



## News of the Week March 15, 2023

# Prayers of the Week

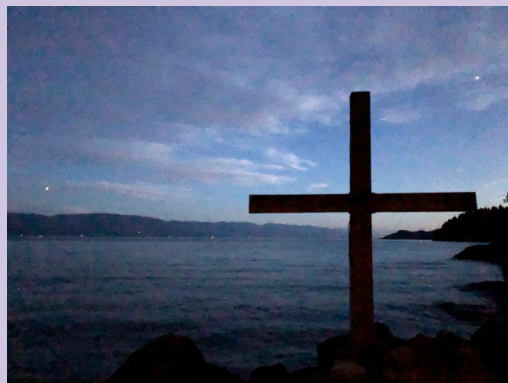
**Please remember in your prayers  
this week:**

**From the Montana Synod Prayer  
Calendar:**

Our Savior's Lutheran Church,  
Thompson Falls  
Faith Lutheran Church, Ronan

Central States Synod

Missionary: Pr. Bradn Buerkle, Russia (Currently in Germany)



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## Spotlight on the Wider Church: UP Wild Brings Worship Outdoors

Located in the town of Marquette in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, UP Wild Church is among the newest ministries in the growing movement of "wild" outdoor worship communities. The church holds its worship and prayer services outdoors and hosts nature walks, wilderness reflection and field trips to explore God's creation amid the scenic beauty of the peninsula.

An ecumenical ministry of the Northern Great Lakes Synod and the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan, UP Wild Church was started in 2019 to attract younger people and those disenchanted with traditional church,

and to foster a deeper spiritual connection with God outdoors.

Lantto is passionate about the outdoors and brought to UP Wild Church a wide social media network, a heart for social issues, relationships with local residents, history with the local Lutheran and Catholic communities, and boundless energy.

Jim Duehring, assistant to the bishop of the Northern Great Lakes Synod and a director for evangelical mission, supported Lantto in starting the ministry. “Knowing that Lanni has both life experiences and passions for doing this work well—and the fact that she is a layperson and not a pastor—provides a model for the creative ways that the church can be church in today’s day and age,” he said. “One doesn’t have to be a pastor to be a good mission developer.”



[Click here to read the full article](#)

[For more from Stories of Faith in Action click here](#)

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## **The annual Assembly of the Montana Synod of the ELCA will be held June 2-3, 2023 at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls, Montana**

Rev. Doris Tollefson, MT Synod Secretary,  
March 1, 2023

This year the assembly will be in Great Falls and is a Business Meeting. The theme is “Equipping for Generosity.” Our Churchwide representative is the Rev. Barb Lund.

The deadline for both nominations and resolutions is April 15, 2023. [Click here](#) to download the Guidelines for Consideration of Resolutions.

All registration information and materials will be sent via e-mail to rostered leaders and congregations and will also be posted on the synod’s website.

Check the weekly e-news or our website, [www.montanasynod.org](http://www.montanasynod.org) for more information and deadlines.

### **Assembly Nominations**

Dick Deschamps, the current VP of the Montana Synod ELCA, is not planning to run again for that position. We are in the process of searching for 2 people to put on the ballot at the 2023 Synod Assembly in June. If you or anyone you know has the leadership skills to fill that position, please contact Pastor Brenda in the synod office at [bfrelsi@montanasynod.org](mailto:bfrelsi@montanasynod.org)

The constitution of the Montana Synod describes the office of the VP in this way:

†**S8.21.** The vice-president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice-president shall be a layperson. The vice-president shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The vice-president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

**S8.22.** The vice-president shall chair the Synod Council.

†**S8.23.** In the event of the death, resignation, or disability of the bishop, the vice-president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the conduct of the duties of the bishop until a new bishop shall be elected or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop resumes full performance of the duties of the office.

In the words of our current Vice President, Dick Deschamps, “The main job of the VP is to run the council between assemblies, therefore the duties of the VP and that of the council become somewhat synonymous....The bishop and the VP are in close communication in developing the agendas of the executive committee and the council...The Bishop sometimes assigns duties to the VP...I convene and guide the Resolutions Committee as well as the elections committee. I do orientation for the synod assembly. These are other duties-as-assigned and will vary...The VP is also required to attend the Churchwide Assembly.”

If you would like to nominate a person for either the Synod Council, the Committee on Discipline or the Consultation Committee, [Click here](#) to download the Nominations Form.

## Looking for more Reports to the Bishop!

If you are an actively called rostered leader and have not yet turned in your 2022 Report to the Bishop please do so now! [Click here](#) to be taken to the report page, thank you!

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*Fevral (February). Source: The New Yorker*

As I am writing this, it is one year ago to the day that our family landed in Istanbul.

A month after that, my two youngest sons and I made our way to Germany, with my wife and oldest son joining us just after the end of the school year.

The time since then has flowed in a way that I have never experienced before - as if extremely slow and intensely quick at the same time. I want to apologize to you that I have found it so hard to reach out and share with you while pondering how to put together a newsletter last fall...then winter.... I aspired to say something profound, clear and honest, something that could reflect our family's personal journey, while at the same recognizing that the bigger and more significant stories have to do with the way God's children are suffering because of the war in Ukraine and the churches' witness in these times. Complicating things further still, in the back of my mind I cannot rid

myself of the (admittedly slight) possibility that what I write here could in some way be harmful to the people that I care so much for in Russia and/or that it might negatively affect my chances to get back there some day.

But a year has passed now, and I cannot see how to reach these high expectations of myself. So, in the knowledge that saying something is better than remaining silent, in this newsletter I will try to give you snippets of life in the church in Russia in the context of war. I will inform you of the ministries you are continuing to support, and will hopefully give you more concrete ideas about prayer needs. Finally, I will let you know what other opportunities for ministry God has opened up for me as I continue to serve in mission.

Despite the more-than-challenging times, God has continued to accompany congregations as they engage in preaching the Gospel in word and deed. You will read more about their work below. As for me, distance has hindered my ability to contribute as before, though lay ministers and fellow pastors tell me that they still find my weekly sermons for parishes without a pastor and text studies over Zoom to be useful. I continue to accompany the deanery of the Far East, I lead occasional lectures for local study programs, and I support the specialized ministries



(pastoral care and men's ministry) that have been close to my heart. All of this use of Russian seems to leave little space in my brain for the German I'm trying to learn! Perhaps, with time, I will get a better idea of how God is leading as one episode of life has closed and another begins. In the meantime, I promise to keep you better informed.

Yours in Christ,  
Bradn

[Click here to download the full newsletter](#)

## **Chico Pastoral Conference Registration now open!**

*A note from Registrar Pr. Marlow Carrels:*

Hello friends, registration for Chico will close on March 31st, BUT Chico is only offering their 35% discount through the 20th so reserve those rooms now! Also, scholarships are available if needed, please contact Marlow Carrels directly for those at [mcarrels@gmail.com](mailto:mcarrels@gmail.com).

The Pastoral Leader Conference at Chico will be April 11-14 (Tuesday - Friday).

To reserve a room contact Chicodirectly and state you want a room with the "Pastor's Conference."

[Click here to register](#)

## **Sermon Manuscripts Will Be Available to Use in Congregations Who Do Not Have a Called Pastor**

Look for a special Passion/Palm Sunday offering next week!

As a pilot project in the Lenten and Easter seasons, several pastors (including rostered Synod Staff) have agreed to provide a Sermon Manuscript for each of the Sundays in Lent and Easter. The Sermon manuscript is a gift to the worship leaders/leaders in congregations who serve in the places where there is no pastor. Please follow the link to find the sermon each week and use it as it is needed. This is one more way in which the Montana Synod leaders are providing resources to equip us for the ministry of the Gospel.

The Manuscripts will be found on the [Synod's website](#) and the Manuscript for the upcoming Sunday will be posted by 12 noon on Saturdays. (Maybe before, but at least by 12 noon on Saturdays for the upcoming Sunday. The Sermons will be based on the Revised Common Lectionary.)

Please contact me if you have questions about this in general or contact Colter at [cmccarty@montanasynod.org](mailto:cmccarty@montanasynod.org) about any technical aspect of this.

Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger  
Director for Evangelical Mission for the Montana Synod  
[ppleuzinger@montanasynod.org](mailto:ppleuzinger@montanasynod.org)  
406 451 8461 Cell

## **Parochial update and reminder**

The deadline has been extended to March 15th due to several issues that have been encountered during submission. If you have issues submitting form A or C, try the following:

- Submitting the form on a different computer
- Clearing the cache on your browser
- Using another browser

Any further questions can be directed to Colter in the synod office:  
[cmccarty@montanasynod.org](mailto:cmccarty@montanasynod.org)

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[Click here to give to the Montana Synod](#)

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### **Synod Staff:**

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