



News of the Week August 2, 2023

Prayers of the Week

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

**From the Montana Synod Prayer
Calendar:**

Trinity Lutheran Church, Choteau
St. John's Lutheran Church, Great Falls
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Cut Bank

Northeastern Ohio Synod



News from the Synod: Ministry in a Hybrid World

-by Colter McCarty

What kind of discussions should we as both individual congregations and as a churchwide community have regarding our presence online, especially when it comes to social media? I ask this question not as an introduction to an essay that will give the “right” answer or blanket solutions; for in that regard I have none. Rather, I am asking this to hopefully start (if not continue) a worthwhile discussion that needs to be held at all levels of the church.

Social media, as we have all come to know, can both amplify a message, reaching massive amounts of interested people and expose that very same message to those who would never have seen it in their everyday lives without that digital platform. This modern reality also contains within it the reality of algorithmically (an algorithm in this sense is code that serves to provide content based on a user’s likes and dislikes) vulnerable consumers who can be easily misled and deeply hurt based on the predatory practices of those who wish to polarize, misinform, and take advantage of everyday people who just want to check the news or catch up on what their family and friends are up to.

So, the questions we must ask as church are, 1) How do we best use these tools for the work of the gospel and 2) What are we being called to do and be in this digital society?

The first of these questions is a technical challenge that must be addressed by each of us in our individual contexts. This is not to say that we cannot collaborate, help each other, and find common strategies for engagement. Each worshiping community has the task of understanding what potential audience there may be for an online communication ministry and how that ministry will be able to be maintained.

Things to consider include:

- Which platform(s) should be used?
- Where is our community online?
- What, how, and when will we post?
- Who decides the content that should be posted?

Important to the conversations that have been and will be had in the future is that of platform. The Twitter experience of the past few months has been an exemplary example of how an internet stalwart of more than a decade can very quickly decline and effect how people communicate. It also raises questions that must be asked about how we as communities of faith want to engage on platforms online. What kind of content does the algorithm of a certain site prefer to feed to its users, what about ad placement, is there any form of control regarding hate speech? Just a few questions to consider when determining an online strategy for your community.

The second question is more open, less a technical challenge of what and where, but more of an adaptive challenge surrounding our place as church in the very real society that has emerged in online spaces over the last 20 years. Our calling as Lutherans has resulted in a worshiping community that spans the globe. More specifically, ELCA World Hunger initiatives along with other programs both from a churchwide level and local community ministry have impacted the lives of countless people. The right social media presence can help in these ministries through spreading the message to those who are in need. This presence can also open our eyes to the possibilities of just what we may be able to do as the church in the world.

Things to help prime the adaptive challenge discussion:

- Can we be the patient listener and voice in a space that prefers a cacophony of noise?
- We can reach out with loving hearts to those who have never experienced love in a church setting and are looking for a way to continue their faith.
- Our message of Christ's grace can be an exemplar for all who are lost in an online world that can value divisiveness over unity.

Without being present in online spaces, we cannot bring the message of love, grace, and salvation that we all share together in Christ to those who will never set foot in our physical churches. Our message, when faithfully thought out and communicated, can reach those who may not even know they are missing our voice. We are called to be present in the world and to serve our neighbor and all who are in need.

Thanks be to God that there is now more than just our physical world where our work and the Word can grow and flourish.

Summer Generosity/Stewardship Conversation on Wed. Aug. 2nd from 6 - 7:30 pm on Zoom

Join with others in the Synod for a time of learning together with DEM Peggy Paugh Leuzinger on the basics of generosity and stewardship. Topics to be covered include challenges and opportunities to talk about money in congregations, and tools to equip one another to encourage and strengthen generosity in the congregation.

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83007382539?pwd=WXkxaHMzMFZESUpFcDh2WGhYRTRxZz09>

Click here to see the new Racial Justice Task Force page on our website and learn more about their important work!

WANT TO BE A HEALTHIER LEADER?

- Deepen Emotional Capacity
- Understand Systems
- Build Self Awareness
- Reinvigorate your Spirituality
- Join a learning community

BECOME THE HEALTHY LEADER YOU WANT TO BE

Excellence in Leadership
LEADERSHIP
Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA

WWW.RMSELCA.ORG/EXCELLENCE-IN-LEADERSHIP

Rostered leaders, LPAs and lay leaders: Consider participating in Excellence in Leadership, a process of learning more about your own leadership and working to enhance and strengthen how you lead in your congregation.

Check out the Rocky Mountain Synod website and link for more information and to register for the upcoming fall cohort. (All the sessions are held via Zoom.)

Contact DEM Peggy Paugh Leuzinger if you have any questions about EIL.

Effective Leadership?



Reminder: If you are emailing a synod staff member, make sure that you are sending it to the correct montanasynod.org email address. Sometimes alternate, personal addresses that you may have are checked infrequently and are not used for work purposes.

New resources up for congregational assessments and Holy Closures

[Click here](#) to go to the new page on the Montana Synod website for more information!

Sermon Manuscripts Available

Montana Synod leaders have been providing manuscripts for use in congregations through the Lent and Easter seasons. We are happy to announce that these manuscripts will be provided throughout the entire year! Thank you to the leaders in the Montana Synod who are providing these manuscripts every week. They can be found and downloaded on the [Montana Synod website here](#).

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

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