



News of the Week October 4, 2023

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For retired pastor Larry Quanbeck as he undergoes surgery.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

American Lutheran Church, Richey
First Lutheran Church, Lambert
Nathanael Lutheran Church, Reserve

Oregon Synod
Pacifica Synod



Words from the Bishop: Truth, Healing and Boarding Schools

This year the ELCA began the “Truth and Healing Movement,” an opportunity for this church to increase our understanding of our colonizing impacts on Indigenous people in the past and present. As a church, we are committed to understanding our role in this tragic and sinful history so that we can journey towards healing together. [Please go to the website](#) to learn more about the opportunities and resources available to do work that will impact minds, hearts and lives across this church.



As part of this movement, the ELCA participated in the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools (September 30) by calling on us to wear orange to remember those who suffered because of such schools. (For resources about the federal Indian

Boarding School policies and the ongoing trauma those policies have caused, please go to the [“Truth and Healing”](#) website.).

Some people are wondering why this past is being dredged up and exposed now rather than buried in the past. In part it is to help bring healing to the families and communities of Indigenous peoples whose children were stolen from them and placed in boarding schools, often in the name of God, in order to assimilate them into the American culture and turned into “good Christians.” For nearly 100 years, children were forcibly taken from their families, communities and nations, sins that have left behind horrible scars on Indigenous communities and had traumatic effects on the health, the well-being and family structures of our Indigenous neighbors even unto this time.

Imagine having your children taken away, not only out of their family but out of their culture, and “parented” by boarding school officials, often abused, neglected, starved, even killed. Now imagine this happening to all the families in your community or nation. Imagine most of your children just gone, some to never return, and others who have been changed forever, losing who they were – their language, their customs, their spiritual practices and community stories. Whole generations lost, only just now trying to recover what’s left, including their missing but not forgotten children.

And so another reason we must expose the past to the light is that we must face the horrible truth of what we as a church participated in, whether through our actions or through tacit acceptance of what Christians were doing in the name of Jesus Christ. We must learn the truth of what actually happened in the past rather than continuing to cover it up, so that we will never do such a thing again and especially in God’s name.

Such learning can take place through paying attention as the truth is explored and exposed rather than burying our heads. We can also learn through an honest education about of our intertwined histories as Indigenous peoples and descendants of settlers. And we can act in various ways, including through the offerings by the Montana Synod Racial Justice Task Force and the ELCA’s “Truth and Healing Movement.”

We are also called by Jesus, the head of the whole Body of Christ past, present and future, to confess and repent for the actions of the church of the past. Even if we ourselves didn’t participate in these actions, our ancestors did. And since they aren’t here confess and repent themselves, we as their descendants who have inherited the life and work of Christ’s church are called by God to do so on their behalf. And since the injustice is still happening, we as church must also acknowledge, confess and repent for the actions we continue to do today that perpetuate the ongoing harm to our indigenous neighbors and their families.

Some may have noticed as they visited the synod office that we have orange banners hanging in the window and on the wall. Those have been hanging there as we continue to recognize, honor and remember the lives of the families and people who were harmed as a result of the boarding schools. Please consider how you might engage in a remembering practice for the sake of those who experienced such loss.

No, we cannot undo the past. But we can we learn from the past, including our past sins and mistakes. And we can make amends for it on behalf of those who are not here to do it for themselves. We as followers of Christ can have the faith to confess our sins in the love and grace of God in Christ, receiving the Spirit’s transforming forgiveness. But at the same time, through the command to love our neighbor and speak the truth in that love, we also hear God’s ongoing call to enter into the light of the truth and care for and lift up our Indigenous neighbors who are suffering by helping them in the healing process as they request.

Blessings to you as you follow Christ’s never-ending call to love your neighbor,

Bishop Laurie

There is still time to submit your 2022 ELCA Parochial Report. If your congregation hasn't yet submitted it, [click here!](#)

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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