



**Montana Synod**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

## News of the Week, January 6, 2016

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### Prayers for January 10, 2016 Baptism of our Lord

Please remember in your prayers this week:

Wade Brinkoph's brother, John Michael Brinkoph, who died unexpectedly on December 26th.



#### From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

American Lutheran in Chinook

Bethel Lutheran in Joplin

**Our sister synod:** Allegheny Synod, Pennsylvania

**Synods of Region 1:** Alaska; Northwest Washington; Southwestern Washington; Eastern Washington-Idaho; Oregon; and Montana

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### Words From the Bishop - In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north.

Epiphany Greetings!

On January 24, the Montana Synod is celebrating Companionship Sunday. We are celebrating that we are part of a church that is worldwide. January 24 is in the midst of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We are celebrating our global mission partners in the ELCA. And we are celebrating our companion synods, the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Cape Orange Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa.

There are many ways to celebrate our global partnerships. We are providing resources for you. They include a list of resource people you can contact for speaking on companion synods either in person or by Skype. Some are local, some are not. Some are available Sundays, some are available other times. If you want to have a companionship celebration some time other than January 24, go for it.

In addition, we are providing an ELCA-produced resource called "Global Church Sunday," a litany of thanks for the Cape



Orange Diocese and a litany of thanks for the Bolivian Church. All these resources are available as part of the News of the Week.

You may want to highlight global ministry by featuring the Young Adults in Global Mission program. This program gives young adults the opportunity to live in a country and work in a service ministry or agency. Young adults from the Montana Synod have served in Mexico, England, Palestine, Malaysia, Madagascar, South Africa, Argentina and more. We now have pastors who were once YAGMs. Any former YAGM will tell you-the experienced changed their lives forever.

Global mission is all about accompaniment. We walk together. We learn about one another. We share our strengths. And we share our weaknesses. We share the experience of Christ in our lives, knowing that wherever we go, Christ is already there.

So we learn about ministry of indigenous people in Bolivia. And we learn about radical forgiveness in South Africa. When we enter into conversations with Christians from other places, we learn new ways of understanding God, new ways of loving and being loved by Jesus.

On my office wall I have a collection of crosses. One is a study cross, made of a congregation's pews they no longer use. Another is made of barbed wire. I have crosses from different parts of the world-some colorful, some stark, some empty, and some with various depictions of Christ on the cross. Each cross tells the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. Each tells it with a twist, making it local. I learn from these crosses, as I learn from my sisters and brothers who practice their Christian faith across the globe.

I invite you to celebrate Companionship Sunday, and to pray for our global partners during this Epiphany Season and beyond!

Jessica Crist, Bishop

## Companionship Sunday January 24th

Mark your calendars, and watch for information and resources in the new year.

On January 24, the Montana Synod will celebrate our relationship with the Cape Orange Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa, and our relationship with the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church, our two companion synods.

We will provide worship resources celebrating both companion churches. And we will provide a list of speakers who could preach, do a children's sermon or temple talk, do an adult class or youth group on one or both of our companion synods. You could also use this Sunday to highlight other aspects of global mission, like the missionaries we sponsor, the Young Adults in Global Mission, and more.

Another possibility is to arrange to Skype with companions in Bolivia or South Africa. If you want assistance with that, Cdter McCarty will help you set that up.

January is the season of Epiphany, when the light of Christ shines on the entire globe. We'd like to celebrate with lifting up our companion synods. And if January 24 doesn't work for you, you can always designate another Sunday.

[Click here for both Litanies.](#)

## Resources for Companionship Sunday

As you prepare for Companionship Sunday, January 24, you may want to be in contact with one of these persons who have been part of companionship visits to our companion synods in Bolivia and/or South Africa. Some may be available by Skype. Some may be available at a time other than January 24.

[Click here to download the list.](#)

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## SYNOD YOUTH SNOW RETREAT 2016

Put it on your calendar and plan to attend!!

Feb 12-14 At Hope Lutheran, Bozeman

7<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Cost \$40

Register at: <http://www.montanasynod.org/youth-events-signup.html>

## HELP US MAKE BLANKETS!

The Montana Synod Youth attending the SNOW RETREAT this February will be making *Fleece Tie Blankets* to distribute to those in need this winter.

You can help by donating **fleece fabric** to your local congregation by **Sunday, November 29th!**



We are collecting:  
**3 yard cuts of FLEECE MATERIAL (solids & prints!)**

Also helpful:  
**Quality Fabric Scissors**



## Cherish All Children

Pray + Educate + Connect + Act

On Epiphany Christians celebrate the coming of the Magi to Christ child, bearing royal gifts to the one they believed to be the Messiah.

We learn that God's love, as seen through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, is meant for all the world, even those from faraway places.

And what kind of Messiah will Jesus be? Psalm 72 provides an answer to that question. What amazing words of hope to those who suffer the oppression and violence of sex trafficking! Their lives are precious! God is at work to redeem them!

Jesus calls us to be light for those victims. January 11 is International Human Trafficking Awareness Day.

### **Between today and January 11, I invite you to:**

1. Sign an [online petition](#), asking the Associated Press to stop using the phrase "child prostitute."

The words of a young woman who was trafficked:

*I was not a child prostitute or child sex worker. I was a victim and survivor of child rape. And so are the other kids out there now who are being bought and sold for sex. They are victims and survivors of child rape.*

*But, too often, when the media reports on child sex trafficking, or attempts to tell our stories, the ways we are described mislead the public about what is happening to trafficked children.*

2. Share this link on your Facebook page and other ways you connect with your friends.
3. Share this link on your church's Facebook page, website, bulletin, or newsletter.

Over the rest of January, track the language used in the news you read or hear when there is an article or report about child sex trafficking. Is the language appropriate, according to what is said in this petition? If not, contact the news editor to share your concerns and request that

improvements be made.

**Gracious and merciful God, we thank you for caring about the needy, the weak, and the poor. Help us to be your hands and feet of service to those in need. We thank you for seeing victims of trafficking as precious and redeeming their lives. Help us to share your love for them in creative, effective ways, so the oppression and violence may end. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Today's *Wednesday Prayer* was written by Diaconal Minister Amy Hartman, National Director of Cherish All Children.

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## Starting Strong:

**Opportunity for Clergy who have started a new call in the last 12 months.**

Have you started a new call in the last 12 months? Maybe it is a first call, maybe it is a second or third or fourth or fifth. We are re-designing the Transitions seminar to reach people sooner in the process of beginning a new call. The new design features a small group of pastors (up to 6) meeting with a coach by video conference to learn from one another and from the coach about the issues common to transitions.

The cost is \$200 for 6 sessions. The first 6 who sign up will receive a scholarship of \$100. For more information, contact Pastor Jean Larson [jeanklarson@gmail.com](mailto:jeanklarson@gmail.com) or 406 360 7658, or the Montana Synod Office. Or go to the website: [www.jeanlarsoncoaching.com](http://www.jeanlarsoncoaching.com)

The group will start in early February.

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[\*\*Click here to download the 2016 Annual Meeting Letter from Bishop Crist\*\*](#)

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## Worship: Beyond Style

**January 11-14, 2016**

*Join us after Christmas at PLTS for a time of learning and renewal*

### Week of Renewal

is now an integrative event with afternoon workshops and morning plenaries in which all participants partake. The overarching theme is "Worship: Beyond Style," which draws our focus to issues of liturgical language and participation as grounded in our Lutheran identities.

Week of Renewal begins noon on Monday, January 11, and concludes at noon on Thursday, January 14. These days include daily worship, a Jonathan Rundman concert, and meals together on campus. An optional excursion through the Bay Area may occur on Friday, January 15, if there is enough interest.

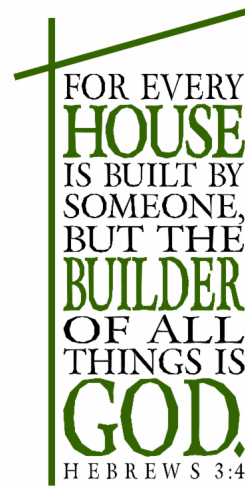
[Learn more](#) about the week, including detailed schedule and presenter biographies.

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## Synod House

"Then opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

We invite you to open your treasure chest and offer an Epiphany gift to the Synod House Campaign.



## Previous news and notes:

### Calling All Coaches!

As the new coaching coordinator for the Montana Synod, I am compiling a list of everyone who is trained in some form of coaching, who might be interested in coaching for the church. Every coach - ordained and lay-is invited to sign in. The ELCA is revamping its approach to coaching, and we want to be prepared for however the Montana Synod decides to make use of this good and helpful tool.

If you are interested, please email me the following information:

Your name and contact info, including your coaching website, if you have one. Please also include the congregation to which you belong.

Your training and experience. Please specify the type of coaching you do - leadership, executive, or life coaching on the one hand and programmatic coaching (Natural Church Development or other church-based program) on the other. Or both. Specify the provider and dates of training, the number of hours of instruction, and any mentoring hours you have received (or provided). Regarding experience, please be specific - if you do leadership/life/executive coaching, note how many individual and group client hours you have in, and any professional credentialing you have achieved. If you do programmatic coaching, please specify how many congregations you have worked with, approximate dates of service, and with which programs. Also please specify if you are a volunteer or professional coach-that is, if you work on a pro bono or fee basis.

All these specifics will help our database be as complete and useful as possible. Please email your information to: [jeanklarson@gmail.com](mailto:jeanklarson@gmail.com) Thank you!

Pr. Jean Larson, Montana Synod Coaching Coordinator



## A Message from MAC's President

Recently MAC's President-Elect Valerie Webster and I sent a letter to the major newspapers of Montana regarding the Syrian refugee crisis and how our nation is handling it. We utilized MAC's position paper created just a couple of years ago on Immigration. This letter will be used by various faith-based groups to lobby state and national government not to further restrict the resettlement of Syrian refugees in our country. In this first edition of our email newsletter, we'd like to share it with you. A special thank you to President-Elect Valerie for composing this letter! May our Christian unity move us to welcome and protect the vulnerable fleeing violence and persecution!

Peace,  
*Peter Erickson*  
President  
Montana Association of Christians

## **Press Release: MAC urges Montanans not to allow fear to degrade our citizenship**

### **Statement by the Leaders of the Montana Association of Christians**

We, the leaders of the Montana Association of Christians (MAC), made up of eight denominations, as well as numerous congregations and individuals across Montana, stand in solidarity with the victims of persecution and violence at home and across the globe. With each new mass shooting or act of terrorism, we too experience anxiety and are tempted to succumb to fear. Yet, grounded by God's peace which passes our understanding, and inspired by the biblical call to love God, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, we recognize in this stressful time

a call to courage. Let us not only pray 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done,' let us do it.

We at MAC invite all Montanans, many of us descendants of immigrants ourselves, to welcome those fleeing persecution in other countries, including refugees seeking asylum from Syria. Consider that Joseph and Mary protected Jesus from Herod, by becoming refugees in Egypt. Consider further, the possibility that extending opportunity and hope to those fleeing the brutality and oppression that threaten their lives, might also lay the groundwork for a safer tomorrow. Scripture instructs God's people, who themselves have been sojourners, refugees, and immigrants, to defend, protect, and honor the rights and dignity of the stranger.

We encourage our fellow Montanans to follow the laws and protocols currently in place in our nation and to continue to welcome those fleeing persecution from other countries including Syria. We urge Montanans not to allow fear to degrade our citizenship, but with wisdom and judiciousness to seek a course that upholds the humanity not only of the stranger in our midst, but ultimately ourselves.

The Rev. Peter Erickson  
*President of MAC, and ELCA Lutheran Pastor*

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The Rev. Valerie Webster  
*President (Elect) of MAC, and Episcopal Priest*

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## **NRIT News:**

***The following events require pre-registration:***

### **Green Team Training Webinar with Dr. David Rhoads**

The purpose of this workshop is to offer practical, hands-on guidance and resources for introducing care of creation into the life of your congregation - worship, education, property, discipleship at home and work, and public witness. Congregations are encouraged to form a team of 3 to 5 people to gather for the webinar. Groups will continue to share throughout the coming months and will gather for a follow-up webinar after 6 months.

**(If you only have 1 or 2 people interested in working to green your congregations, individuals or small groups are welcome!)**

Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> from 2-4:30 pm (2.5 CEUs)

### **Midwinter Theological Conference - Spiritual Pilgrimages - Following a Migrant God: Pilgrimages, Chosen and Unchosen with Dr. Marty Stortz**

All over the world people are on the move. This past year 237,000 pilgrims made the journey to Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain. At least that number of refugees and asylum seekers sought entry into the European Union. Add to these numbers people in this country who find themselves temporarily or chronically without a permanent address. All over

the world people are on the move.

On the surface, pilgrimage, trans-national migration, and homelessness seem to have little in common. But these experiences come together in Jesus, who observed to disciples then and now: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Luke 9:58, Matthew 8:20). What do these experiences tell us about a migrant God?

Feb. 1-3, 2016 at Izaak Walton Inn, Essex, MT (11 CEUs)

### **SCHOLARSHIPS!**

We realize that new pastors can carry heavy educational debt. We also know that some churches are not able to provide the recommended amount of continuing education assistance and what is offered doesn't always go far enough. At the same time, we strongly believe in the importance of continuing education for our synod and we support the ELCA expectation of 50 hours of continuing education credits a year.

- Scholarships are now available to cover half the cost of NRIT events.
- Apply online or by leaving a message for Jenny at 406-453-1461.

\*NRIT is grateful for financial gifts in support of this scholarship fund. Designate by writing "Jessica Crist Scholarship Fund" in the memo line.

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# The Luther 500

**The Reformation 500 Task Force is looking for people to serve with our group. The only requirement is an interest in Reformation history and how the church is continually reforming. Many of our meetings are held via Google Hangouts so that very little lengthy travel is necessary, also helping to fulfill the first benchmark of the Montana Synod, "Meet the future boldly." If you would like to join our fun group, please contact Rev. Tonya Eza.**

In conjunction with the Montana Synod's third strategic benchmark, "Deepen faith and witness," the 2016 Synod Assembly and Theological Conference theme will be the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Yes, it's a year early, but this is part of how we meet the future boldly, so that when 2017 comes along, we will all be prepared! In conjunction with the Synod Assembly, the Reformation 500 Task Force is sponsoring a Reformation stole and banner contest. We invite the member congregations of the Montana Synod to bring original stoles and/or banners with them to the Synod Assembly in June. Following are the rules that we ask you to follow:

If you are making a stole:

- Stoles must be able to be worn while presiding over worship, and should be able to withstand 10 worship services (feel free to experiment with materials!).
- Stoles should be between 3" and 6" wide at the shoulder, and between 48" and 54" long.
  - o Be sure also to consider weight of stole and range of motion for the pastor in your design.

*Stoles need to be appropriate for a liturgically red service*
  - o Red doesn't need to be the only color in the stole, but it should play a prominent role in the color palette of the stole.
- The stole should be your own original design - it is fine to use established patterns (provided they are not copy-written) as long as they are put together in your own way.

#### **If you are submitting a banner:**

- Banners should be appropriate for display in a worship context



o The size of the banner should be able to fit comfortably within the dimensions of your sanctuary.

- Banners should be of an original design. You may use established patterns (provided they are not copy-written) as long as they are put together in your own way.

Please bring the stoles and banners with you to the Synod Assembly, and they will be displayed in a place where everyone can see. Assembly attendees will vote on their favorites.

Questions? Please contact Rev. Tonya Eza, chair of the Reformation 500 Task Force, or any of the other members of the group.

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## Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

### Retreats, Events, and Updates:

*For additional information about these great upcoming retreats and events, check out our website at [www.flbc.net](http://www.flbc.net)! Also, watch for our [2016 Summer Brochure around Christmas!](#) Be sure to register [early for your first choice of weeks and programs!](#)*



### January 21-22: Camp Songs & Liturgy Review Retreat

FLBC will be reviewing camp songs and liturgies in preparation for the 2016 summer camping season! You are invited to join Pr. Roberta Smythe, Pastor Grant Applehans, Jeremy Duprey, and others for an overnight retreat at camp, from Thursday noon until Friday noon. Call the camp [office for more information!](#)

### January 22-24: Junior & Senior High Youth Ski Retreat

Come with your youth group to ski or snowboard at Whitefish Ski Resort or Blacktail Mountain. Enjoy excellent food, fellowship, worship back at camp! [CLICK HERE](#) for more information!

### March 13: Outdoor Ministry Sunday

Celebrate camp on Sunday, March 13th at your congregation (or pick a Sunday that works for you)! [CLICK HERE](#) for more information!

### March 18-19: Middle School Retreat

A one-night overnight retreat to bring your youth group to camp, filled with fun, games, Bible study, craziness, and an introduction to our 2016 summer theme, "Living Like Jesus." [CLICK HERE](#) for more information!

### March 18-20: Cross Country Ski Retreat

Whether you are brand new to cross country skiing or an expert, this retreat is for you! Participants must be 13 years of age or older. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information!

[Rev. Nathan Clements, Associate Director](#)  
[Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp](#)  
[603 S Main St](#)  
[Kalispell, MT 59901](#)  
[\(406\) 890-5104 \(cell\)](#)

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# Upcoming Events, etc.



## January

18 Executive Committee Meeting, Great Falls  
24 Companionship Sunday

### Please put these important dates on your calendar:

**2016 Montana Synod Assembly and Theological Conference:** June 2-5, 2016, Holiday Inn Grand, Billings

**2016 Bishop's Convocation,** October 14, 2016, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Helena, Montana  
**2016 First Call Theological Education:** November 7-9, 2016, Great Falls

**2017 Montana Synod Assembly:** June 1-4, 2017, Best Western Heritage Inn, Great Falls

**2017 First Call Theological Education:** November 6-8, 2017, Great Falls

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Find upcoming issues of **The Parish Paper** [here](#)

To see what's coming up on the Montana Synod Calendar, go [here](#)

To download or view our Clergy Roster, Congregational and LPA Directories, find them [here](#)

Roster Transitions are updated mid-month and may be found [here](#)

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## Amazon Smile

Shop at <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-3514273> in support of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.



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*This e-letter is intended to convey information from synod staff, ministries and congregations, and we reserve the right to edit all submissions. All items must be received by the Monday before publication on Wednesday. Send submissions to [Colter McCarty](#).*

## Contact Information

phone: (406) 453-1461  
[www.montanasynod.org](http://www.montanasynod.org)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)