



Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

News of the Week, January 20, 2016

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Prayers for January 24, 2016 Third Sunday after Epiphany

Please remember in your prayers this week:



From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

American Lutheran Parish, Harlem, Hogeland, and Turner

Companion Synods: Bolivia & South Africa

Global Mission Sunday

Words From the Bishop - Called to Proclaim the Mighty Acts of God.

We are in the midst of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In the northern hemisphere, it begins on January 18, the Confession of Peter. And it ends on January 25, the Conversion of Paul. Churches in the global south use a different calendar. But really, any time is a good time to pray for Christian unity, and to proclaim the mighty acts of God. This year's theme comes from 1 Peter 2:9-"Called to Proclaim the Mighty Acts of God."

Fr. Thomas Orians, Associate Director of Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute, writes:"The relationship between baptism and proclamation, and the calling shared by all the baptized to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord was inspired by two verses from the First Letter of St. Peter.... As Christians seeking the unity of the Body of Christ we are all called to recognize the mighty acts of God in our own lives and the life of the church."



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was founded in 1908. It was soon after that, in 1910, the ecumenical movement began with a world missionary conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. Prior to that churches operated independently. Both the Week of Prayer and the missionary conference helped to promote the idea that Christians are stronger together than we are apart, and the things that separate us are less important than the things that unite us.

In the Montana Synod, many communities have ecumenical worship celebrations or pulpit exchanges to demonstrate Christian unity. But there is no reason that they have to be limited to this week. Many congregations do joint vacation bible school, joint youth groups, joint food programs, cooperative ministry for the homeless. We are truly more effective together than we are separately. And these joint activities are among the mighty acts of God that we are called to proclaim.

A lot has changed since 1908 when the Week of Prayer was founded. We, the ELCA, are a church that has formed as a result of a number of mergers of Lutheran Churches who felt that their common interests were more important than their differences. And we are in formal full communion agreements with 6 other denominations: the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, The Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church in America, and the Moravians Northern Province. So do we need a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity?

I think we do. For one thing, it is a witness to those who are not Christian that we are more united than divided, that we do worship one God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, and that we follow the crucified living Christ. Many people judge Christianity only by the extremes that they say, and reject it as a violent and intolerant faith. We know better. And we can demonstrate it.

In addition, there are Christians across the globe who live in dangerous places where they are a persecuted minority. A Jewish friend regularly berates me for not doing more for Christians who are persecuted in the Middle East. A Week of Prayer for Christian Unity includes not just our neighbors down the street, but also our neighbors across the globe. When a Christian is executed by ISIS for being a Christian, it matters. As fellow baptized members of the Body of Christ, we hurt when other members are persecuted for their faith.

One of the ways you can be more involved with other Christians, learning their stories and hearing their proclamation is through the Wyoming Association of Churches or the Montana Association of Christians. Both organizations welcome your participation. As Christians we stand together with other Christians because Jesus prayed that his followers would be one. And we proclaim the mighty acts of God.

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, Colter 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.](#)

The Montana ELCA's sister Synod in South America is the country of Bolivia.



Bolivia is a land-locked country in the center of South America with 8 different regions and very diverse geography. In the north is rain forest with tributaries to the Amazon River. The south is very dry with salt flats, the east has palm trees and the west has very high mountains.

With over 10 million people, Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in the world with the average worker earning just \$2.00 US per day. Most of the people are concentrated in the major cities.

Although Bolivia is 95% Catholic with Spanish influences, Lutherans have been in Bolivia since the early 1900's as German immigrants moved to escape various political regimes. After WW2, many German & Italian refugees settled in South America. In 1531, the Spanish conquered the Inca's, taking over the Alto Peru which included Bolivia. In 1825 Bolivia became independent from Spain. In 1938 the ELAlta Church was founded by the Missouri Synod and became ELCA in 1970.

To read more, [click here.](#)

YAGM Taylor Wiese - 3 Month Update from South Africa

What's Up in Upington?

It has been three months in South Africa, three months since my first 12-hour Intercape bus ride from Joberg to Upington as I pulled closer to my new home. As my wide eyes took in the muted browns and greens of the dusty landscape, I felt prepared for a new season of openness in my life. No matter what I was expecting or what advice I had been given, South Africa was going to reveal itself in ways that were completely beyond my preconceptions. The bus pulled into Upington's Intercape station, and I stepped into a period of wide newness and great dependency.



New LPA Class - Fall 2016

2016-2018 Lay Pastoral Associate Class Nominations

Now is the time to consider lifting up individuals with the gifts and skills for the Montana Synod Lay Pastoral Associate program (LPA). The next class will begin in October 2016, but now is the time to be educating those in the congregation about the LPA program, and seeking their commitment.

The congregational meeting is a good opportunity to nominate and support those in your congregation who have the desire and skills to serve as an LPA in the Montana Synod. At this annual meeting the congregation can pray for and, with the guidance of the pastor, recommend individuals to the Bishop for approval.

For more information, go to the [Montana Synod website](#) or call Pr. Jason Asselstine, Associate to the Bishop.

Interested in becoming an LPA?

1. Talk to your church pastor. Talk about what it means to fill in for him or her and the traits it takes to provide pastoral leadership (albeit, temporary).
2. If your church does not have a pastor, feel free to contact our office. We'll put you in touch with someone who can shed some light on the role of an LPA.
3. **Have your church pastor contact Bishop Crist or Rev. Jason Asselstine, Assoc. to the Bishop via email or phone call. This contact and conversation will be your pastor's recommendation for your participation in the MT Synod LPA program.**

After approval from the Bishop (to enter the program), please ensure you have the following items to our Synod office at least 3 weeks prior to the class start date (our staff admin person will send you the paperwork to begin the process):

1. Completed biographical, information sheet.
2. Initiation of a required background check
3. First year's payment of \$200 via check made out to "MT Synod" with "LPA training program" in the check's memo section. This can also be brought with you to the 1st group retreat.

Still have questions? Call our Synod office at 406-453-1461

Christikon Clips

February, 2016

Information for our Congregations



Christikon Youth Camp Brochures have been mailed to every young person in your congregation who are in grades 4-12. The brochures detail some very special possibilities, and some very special deals for registering early for camp, and for bringing a friend to camp as a new camper. Save by registering before March 15. Additional brochures are available from your church office.

Do it online! You can use the Internet to register for all camp sessions at Christikon, or to make a gift, or to find out more about this special ministry. Go to www.christikon.org.

Save the dates: The annual Christikon Benefit Auction at the Billings Depot is coming on Sunday, April 24

Too few young people (not to mention adults) have significant outdoor experience. Christikon combines spirited outdoor experience with focused community experience, helping to open people to the deeper realities of the life of faith. Think about joining the Christikon life this coming summer. It can do a world of good...

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

CHRISTIKON • 1108 24th Street West • Billings, MT 59102
406 656-1969 • christikon@aol.com • www.christikon.org

SAVE THE DATE
Our 5th ANNUAL
Mountains of Courage Conference

When Someone Dies-
Dialogues with the Living about Death and Dying

February 20, 2016
Baxter Hotel
Bozeman, Montana

Join us for heartfelt, authentic dialogues about the end-of-life journey.

[Register Now, Click Here](#)

Spirit of Hope Nominations

The Spirit of Hope award was established by the Montana Synod Council to recognize individuals and ministries who have exemplified the spirit of hope in their lives.

For Perseverance and Faithfulness in Ministry with the People of the Montana Synod

Please submit a letter nominating a person, group or ministry for the Spirit of Hope award by February 15, 2016. The Montana Synod Council, in its meeting February 26-27, 2016, will select the Spirit of Hope awardee.

Past awardees have included a family who has adopted a dozen special needs children, a congregation whose building burned down on Christmas Eve and rebuilt by the following Easter, Lutheran Disaster Relief fire relief workers, individuals who have battled life-threatening illness, people who have gone above and beyond to serve their community, and more

Summer Internship Opportunity for College Students

Messiah Lutheran Church in Vancouver, WA, is again offering two internships for full-time college students this summer. These will be 10-12 week full-immersion experiences into the life of the congregation. The program is specifically designed for young adults to discern whether God may be calling them into professional church work (including ordained ministry) or to other vocational pursuits. Housing is provided along with a \$4,250- \$5,100 summer stipend. An internship description and application materials are available online at: <http://bit.ly/Summer-Intern-Program-2016>

Grace Gathering



Grace Gathering Invitation

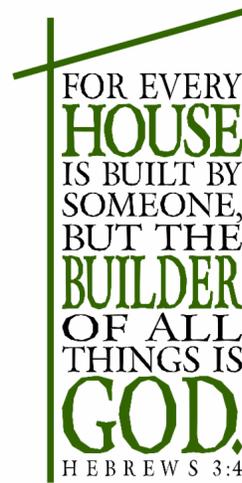
Learn more and register at www.ELCA.org/GraceGathering

Synod House

This week's second lesson, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a, begins

"...just as the body is one and has many members,"

the work of the Montana Synod comes into focus. Many ministries, many councils, many congregations, many people, and yet we are all part of the Montana Synod. We are now joined in an effort to provide a new and efficient home where all of these ministries can gather to learn, pray, plan, and go out into the world to share the news. Your contribution to the Synod House Campaign will enable us to proclaim that we are an important part of the body of Christ - the Montana Synod.



Previous news and notes:

A Chico Heads Up

Do not delay in making your room reservations.

The Pastors' Conference at Chico from Mar. 29-Apr. 1 will be hosting the presiding bishops of the ELCA and the Episcopal churches, as well as, the Montana bishops of each of church body. Because we are anticipating a larger the usual registration for this event, please consider making your room reservations now. There is still plenty of space available at Chico as we have reserved almost the entire facility. But, we are expecting that some event participants will have to stay in places other than at Chico Hot Springs. So, if you have not made arrangements yet. I urge you to do so soon. The information for registration for the event itself will not be going out until early February (Fat Tuesday, which is our "usual" target date, unless, of course, plans change between now and then!).

Blessings!

Pastor Linda Webster
Logistics Chair for the Pastors' Conference

***P.S. Chico Hot Springs Resort and Day Spa phone: (406) 333-4933
Reference the MT Synod Pastors' Conference when you make your reservations to
get our 35% discount on your room costs.***

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 or 406 360 7658, or the Montana Synod Office. Or go to the website: www.jeanlarsoncoaching.com

The group will start in early February.

Women's Spring Retreat

April 22-24, 2016
Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

SAVE THE DATE! Plan now to attend the WOMEN'S WOMEN'S RETREAT. Motivating speaker, Fun, Fellowship, Service projects, Music, Great food (no cooking!)... Bring your

friends, daughters, mothers, granddaughters (14 and up) along for a fun, restful, spirit-filled weekend on beautiful Flathead Lake. Check out www.Impluchurch.org/womensretreat for more details, to get on our mailing list and to register! Hope to see you there. Sponsored by the Five Valleys Women and Great Divide Clusters.

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

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 Thank you!

Pr. Jean Larson, Montana Synod Coaching Coordinator



NRIT News:

The following events require pre-registration:

Rural Ministry Workshop

with Dr. Alvin Luedke Luedke

Tuesday, March 1st

9:30am - 3:30pm

Zion Lutheran, Glendive, MT

This workshop will provide a chance to gather with colleagues to talk about rural ministry. The morning hours will focus on change in communities and congregations and the griefs, challenges and opportunities associated with change. The afternoon will include time for asset mapping.

\$75 for clergy (JC Scholarship Funds available)

\$50 for New to Ministry, LPA, retired (JC Scholarship Funds available)

\$20 for lay not needing CEUs

Register on the NRIT website

Narrative Lectionary

I have not been successful in attempts to plan an NRIT class on using the Narrative Lectionary. I haven't given up but, in the meantime Luther is offering the following that looks excellent.

Webcast: Narrative Lectionary Study Series - June 7th - Feb. 7

Designed to provide theological insight and preaching ideas. Each webcast session is archived and available throughout the preaching period covered.

Go to www.luthersem.edu/kairos for more information.

SCHOLARSHIPS

We 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.

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.

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! 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)

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.montanasynd.org](http://www.montanasynd.org)

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