



**Montana Synod**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

## **News of the Week, January 27, 2016**

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### **Prayers for January 31, 2016 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

Please remember in your prayers this week:

Julie Omland (wife of Rich Omland) for healing for a hip broken in a fall on black ice.

Kent Burgess (CEO St. John's Lutheran Ministries) for recovery from back surgery.

#### **From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:**

Hope Lutheran in Powell, WY

Peace Lutheran in Basin, WY



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**[Click Here to take the Companionship  
Sunday Survey!](#)**

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## Words From the Bishop - Deepen Faith and Witness

The Montana Synod Council adopted 5 benchmarks for our life together, and we have emphasized a different one each year. This year's focus is on deepening faith and witness. Our benchmark explanation reads:

"We remember that Jesus called us to go and make disciples of all nation. We will support and encourage congregations to remain faithful in worship, Word and Sacrament. We will support congregations as they encourage their members to grow in faith and to broaden their witness in their communities and beyond."



This benchmark is about growing and deepening in faith, in order to serve others. Lutherans are known for our service to others. From our quilts and kits to our nursing homes and day cares, from our soup kitchens and homeless shelters, we are known for serving. Early on, we set up hospitals and orphanages, schools and colleges. Even today, one in 5 people in the United States is touched by a Lutheran service agency. We thrive on this kind of service.

But what keeps us going is the grounding in our faith. It is what inspires us, it is what challenges us, it is what supports us. That's why we have a strong tradition of adult education, of confirmation that engages young people where they are, of campus ministries and outdoor ministries, of youth events and Sunday school (or Wednesday school), of Bible studies, of worship and study, of continuing theological education (NRIT).

Almost a decade ago the ELCA started a new initiative designed to get more people to read the Bible. Lots of resources were produced for Bible study for all ages. We talked about helping people to become more fluent in the first language of the faith—namely the Bible. The ELCA declared itself a Book of Faith church, and our Montana Synod followed suit.

The ELCA does not claim that the Bible is inerrant. Rather we confess:

"This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith and life." (see your congregational constitution: 2.03).

This is further clarified in 2.02.c.:

"The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world."

We are Bible-believing Christians, and our witness is strengthened as our faith is deepened. We deepen our faith through prayer and bible study, worship and service. Sometimes these are called "Faith Practices." There are many books you can read on faith practices. A popular one is called : "Practicing Our Faith," edited by Dorothy Bass, with 15 chapters on different faith practices by different authors. During Lent the Words from the Bishop will focus on 7 faith practices identified by the ELCA.

Jessica Crist, Bishop

**A reminder:** Please send in your Rostered Leader reports to the Bishop ASAP. We have had a great response so far, so keep them coming!

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# Immanuel Lutheran

— COMMUNITIES —

INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR

## POWER & HEALTHY FOODS & AGING

An informative luncheon event at The Villas at Buffalo Hill

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH  
11:00a.m.

### Buffalo Hill Terrace

40 Claremont Street  
Kalispell, MT 59901



Please RSVP at **406-752-9624** as seating is limited.

### 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.

[Click here to read more!](#)



**KOGUDUS RETREAT AT ROCKY BOY'S**  
**April 14-16, 2016**



Our Saviour's Lutheran Church and the Bear Paw Cluster extend an invitation to the members and friends of the Montana Synod to take part in a "Lament & Laughter" retreat on the Rocky Boy's Reservation.

We will gather at Our Saviour's Thursday at 6:00 p.m. for dinner and getting acquainted. This Kogudus Renewal Ministry retreat features small group Bible study, creative worship, singing, joke telling, and personal sharing.

[Click here](#) for more information and the registration form

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## 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.

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## 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

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## 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>

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## 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](#).

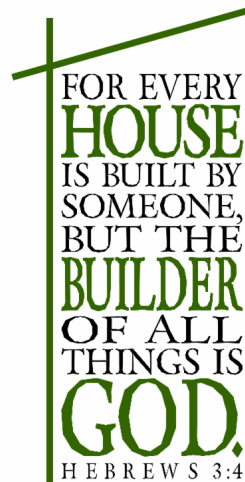
Welcome to 2415 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in Great Falls - the home of the Montana Synod.

Come on in and look around. The Bishop's office is to the right while Susan and Colter share the office to the left. And there is the work room with the copy machine and supplies needed to carry out business.

Go down the stairs and you will find the bathrooms (yes, they are down a flight of stairs), and two offices - one for Pastor Jason and Pastor George has a conference room lined with full file cabinets to keep him company.

Oh there are more file cabinets there - the foyer has some and the office shared by Susan and Colter. Full file cabinets everywhere.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! We need space for our staff to work efficiently and effectively. Your gift to the Synod House Campaign will help us provide space to work - and yes, space for file cabinets.



## Previous news and notes:

### 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](http://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 24<sup>th</sup> Street West • Billings, MT 59102**  
406 656-1969 • [christikon@aol.com](mailto:christikon@aol.com) • [www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org)

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### A Chico Heads Up

Sorry for any confusion! The only accommodations that are left at Chico Hot Springs Resort are for 3 partial reservations (meaning for 1 or 2 nights only, not for all three) and two off-site houses (no discount offered by CHSR) that can accommodate 4 to 6 people each. The Resort has provided a list of alternate lodging that they recommend.

Registration materials will come out February 9<sup>th</sup> (Fat Tuesday) on the Synod website.

Rev. Linda Webster  
Logistics Chair for the MT Synod Pastors' Conference

[Click here for Alternate Lodging Information](#)

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### Grace Gathering



Grace Gathering Invitation

Learn more and register at [www.ELCA.org/GraceGathering](http://www.ELCA.org/GraceGathering)

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## 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.imluchurch.org/womensretreat](http://www.imluchurch.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.

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

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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 Lectonary**

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

Webcast: Narrative Lectonary Study Series - June 7<sup>th</sup> - 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](http://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.

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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.**

## **Help Plant a Tree in Wittenberg**

"Even if I knew that the world were to collapse tomorrow, I would still plant my apple tree today."  
(attributed to Martin Luther)

In anticipation of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, the Lutheran World Federation in sponsoring "500 years of reformation-500 trees for Wittenberg." The Montana Synod has been asked to participate by donating a tree. A representative our reformation task force, Tonya Eza, will be present for the planting of the Montana Synod tree.

You are invited to participate by helping to raise the \$500. that the tree will cost. You could:



Dedicate a Lenten offering.  
Do a special appeal on Earth Day, April 20.  
Use it as a Sunday School, youth group, Bible Study group project.  
Do a special offering.

Send checks to Montana Synod with "Wittenberg tree" in the memo line.

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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**[Click Here to Take the, "Yes I read the Entire News of the Week Survey"](#)**

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### **Upcoming Events, etc.**

#### **February**

1 NRIT Midwinter Theological Conference  
12-14 Synod Youth Snow Event



**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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