



**Montana Synod**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

## News of the Week, May 18, 2016

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### Follow Us!



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## Prayers for May 22, 2016 Holy Trinity Sunday

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For the ELCA Multicultural Leadership Summit

### From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Good Shepherd Lutheran, Polson  
Eidsvold Lutheran, Somers

Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod



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## Words From the Bishop - Deepen Faith and Witness - We are Lutheran

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's second emphasis for the ELCA is: "We are Lutheran." We are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a product of the Reformation that Martin Luther started. At our Synod Assembly and Theological Conference in 2 ½ weeks, we will explore Reformation themes and history.

Almost 500 years ago, Martin Luther, an obscure monk in northern Germany, challenged the religious hierarchy on matters of faith and practice. He wasn't the first to raise questions about how the church operated, but he raised his voice at an opportune time when many others, including secular rulers, agreed with him. His voice was amplified by the new technology of the day—the printing press—and soon the words of this Augustinian friar were being read all over Europe.



We are Lutherans. That was once an insult. Opponents of Luther scornfully called people who agreed with him "Lutherans." It was meant as a putdown, and Luther strongly objected. But it is the name we now live with, with hardly a thought. We do not worship Martin Luther. We are deeply grateful for his courage, his world-changing insights, his faith and his persuasive powers. But he didn't walk on water, and he was wrong about some things. As a church, we have repudiated his late-in-life denunciations of the Jews, which were in turn used by the Nazis to justify the Holocaust.

At our Assembly we will engage with church historian Mary Jane Haemig as she reflects on the Reformation and Christian freedom, and on the Reformation emphasis on the God who both speaks and listens. We will have workshops that focus on different aspects and implications of the Reformation. Here are some of them: Gift of Congregational Song from Churches of the Reformation; Teaching the Reformation to Children; Celebrating the Reformation in Bolivia; Luther's Struggle for the Gospel; Translating the Bible; Wittenberg Report; Luther's Footsteps; Celebrating the Reformation in South Africa.

The Reformation started a break between Catholics and Protestants that has persisted for half a millennium. Now, as we approach the 500th anniversary, Lutherans and Catholics are working together more closely. We are letting go of our 16th century condemnations of each other and seeking to find ways that we can work together, to affirm things that we have in common.

To that end, Lutherans and Catholics in Montana (and y'all in Wyoming are invited!) will have a service of commemoration on October 30, 2017, at the Helena Cathedral. Two Catholic and one Lutheran Bishop will be present to signify our commitment to Christian unity.

Being Lutheran does not mean that we are anti-Catholic. In fact, being Lutheran means that we seek Christian unity with any and all. That's why we have full communion agreements with 6 other denominations (Presbyterian, United Methodist, United Church of Christ, The Episcopal Church, Moravians, Reformed Church in America), and why we are part of ecumenical and interfaith organizations. When we say, "We are Lutheran," it means we know who we are and where we are coming from, so that we can speak with people of other backgrounds and other faiths, with confidence and integrity, but not arrogance.

Lutheranism is no longer a northern European phenomenon only. The Lutheran World Federation is made up of 145 member churches in 98 countries. Lutheranism is a global phenomenon, and its future is being shaped by churches like our companion churches in Bolivia and South Africa.

It is a great time to be Lutheran, to acknowledge our roots in the past and to marvel at the branches.

Jessica Crist, Bishop

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## Calling all LPA's, those considering being an LPA, and Mentors

On Saturday June 4th join us for lunch and discussion about the Montana Synod LPA program. If you are and LPA come to share your experience with the class and the ways you have served this synod. If you are considering the program this would be a great opportunity to get more information and ask questions.

We will be meeting in the Rains room at the Montana Conference Center at 11:45 on Saturday June 4th

To RSVP for the lunch please email Colter McCarty ([cmccarty@montanasynod.org](mailto:cmccarty@montanasynod.org)) by Friday May 27th

The cost of the lunch is \$5.00

Questions: call our office 453-1461 or email Colter or Rev. Jason Asselstine



Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Please mark your calendars for the next live webcast, "A Place for All," on Wednesday, May 25, at 7 p.m.

(CDT). As we continue the conversation on racism in the United States, we must look within our congregations and communities.

Do the people in our pews reflect the people in our neighborhoods? If not, how do we take steps to invite and welcome our neighbors to participate in the work of this church? How do we engage with and advocate for vulnerable populations?

As members of the ELCA, we believe that we are a church that belongs to Christ. There is a place for everyone here. Yet contentment, fear or racism - individual and institutional - can hold us back from being the diverse, welcoming church that Christ calls us to be.

Please join me once again for a conversation with panelists from the ELCA who are committed to and experienced in growing diverse communities of faith. Together we welcome:

- The Rev. Ruben Duran, director for new congregations for the ELCA
- The Rev. Matt Stuhmuller, pastor, Redeemer Church, Chicago, Ill.
- And moderator, Mikka McCracken, director for planning and engagement, ELCA World Hunger

Tune in to the live webcast on May 25 by visiting [ELCA.org/webcast](http://ELCA.org/webcast), where a link to the recorded video will be made available after the broadcast. A live stream also will be available at [Facebook.com/Lutherans](https://www.facebook.com/Lutherans). If you would like to submit a question to be considered during the live webcast, please send it to [livinglutheran@elca.org](mailto:livinglutheran@elca.org) and provide your name and your congregation's name, city and state. God's peace,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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## FORUM ON THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR THE REPUDIATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

One of the few but very important items of business to be considered by the 2016 Montana Synod Assembly is a [Resolution for the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery](#). This Resolution is recommended by the Montana Synod Council, and if adopted will be forwarded to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, which meets in August, for action.

The "Doctrine of Discovery" is a legal principle that colonizing European nations who "discovered" the "New World" could claim the land, and that its Native American inhabitants had no property rights of their own.

To help our Assembly Voting Members learn more about the "Doctrine of Discovery" and the proposed Resolution for our Synod and the ELCA to repudiate it, **we will have a special Forum on Friday, June 3, from 1:00 - 2:30 pm.** Ms. Prairie Rose Seminole, ELCA Program Director for American Indian and Alaska Native ministries, will be with us.

**Since this 1:00 pm Forum will be just before the official start of the Assembly, we encourage voting members and visitors to join us! We hope to see you there!**



From Jim:

A World Council of Churches delegation led by the Moderator, Dr. Agnes Aboum, and the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Olave Fykse Tveit, has just completed a two week long Racial Justice Pilgrimage to the United States. The NCC assisted in the organizing of the pilgrimage and accompanied the WCC on their journey through Washington, DC, Charleston, SC, Ferguson, MO, and Chicago, IL.

Delegation members were deeply troubled by the pervasiveness and depth of racism in our nation and the present climate of hostility to immigrants, Islamophobia, and racially charged rhetoric in the presidential campaign. I have little doubt their final report will be difficult for many Americans to read, but it is essential, at times, for Christian sisters and brothers from other parts of the world to hold a mirror to us. That is part of what it means to be connected through faith to believers throughout God's Creation.

[Read More...](#)

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## Stoles and Banners!

Are you bringing a Reformation-themed stole and/or banner to the Synod Assembly in June? If so, we would like to have some information about your artwork to display on a card alongside your banner and/or stole. [Please fill out this form](#) and email it to [tonya.eza@gmail.com](mailto:tonya.eza@gmail.com). We're looking forward to seeing the creativity of the people in the Montana Synod!

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## ELCA Administration Matters

For the May issue of Administration Matters from the ELCA [click here.](#)

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# The Luther 5

## Three Reformation Cities

Tom Lee and I have known each other since 1965 when we were both interns in southern California. We both went on to do graduate work after receiving our M.Div. degrees (then known as B.D.)

Tom is a scholar. I am a tactile learner. Mostly I learn by traveling. I have spent time in all of the "Three Reformation Cities" which Tom mentions. I have visited the Castle Church in Wittenberg. The original wooden doors were destroyed by fire and replaced by bronze which nails don't penetrate. I have visited Calvin's church in Geneva, a huge cathedral-like structure, austere gray stone and stripped of most of the Pre-Reformation Roman Catholic decoration. I found his grave in an out-of-the-way cemetery. At least I think it was his. It had a modest marble stone marked simply "JC."

But Constantinople??? A Reformation city? I've visited the absolutely awe-inspiring Hagia Sophia, built 532-537, the largest church in Christendom for 1,000 years; transformed into a mosque when the Ottoman Empire took over and renamed the city Istanbul. Ataturk, father of modern Turkey changed it to a museum after World War I to keep the Muslims and Orthodox Christians from fighting over it, saving it from possible destruction.

But-a Reformation city? Tom's Newsbrief opened a whole new perspective for me, indicating some of the connections between the Orthodox Church(es) and some in the Reformation tradition, both now and also back then. Thank God for scholars in our midst, like Tom Lee. [Read, and prepare to have your horizons expanded.](#)

Paul K. Hanson

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FOR EVERY  
**HOUSE**  
IS BUILT BY  
SOMEONE,  
BUT THE  
**BUILDER**  
OF ALL  
THINGS IS  
**GOD.**  
H E B R E W S 3:4

**We've Put the Building on the Market and it is Under Contract**

As we plan for a new Synod House, selling the current building to raise cash is essential. We have received an offer, and are waiting for the paperwork to come through.

Stay tuned for more information, AFTER the Assembly.

The Synod Staff ( Bishop Jessica Crist, Pastor Jason Asselstine, Pastor George Karres, Susan Hedahl, Colter McCarty, Jenny Kunka)

## Previous news and notes:

### LSS Sunday

In May we ask congregations of the Montana Synod to remember Lutheran Social Services. You could choose a Sunday to do a special offering, include LSS in your prayers, have an adult forum on the work of LSS. Watch for resources.



### Christikon Clips

June, 2016

It's not too late to register for camp this summer! Space remains in most youth sessions and in those for families and adults. You can register online at [www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org) or use the forms distributed with the youth and family/adult brochures in your congregation. Or call us at the camp office for further information.

Christikon Director Installation: **Pastor Mark Donald will be installed as the Christikon's director at the MT Synod Theological Conference on June 3rd at the evening service at the Radisson Hotel. Join us for worship!**



Christikon covers the full costs for each at-risk kid participating in Sojourners Camp. (We expect to have 24 this summer) We invite individuals, congregations and their auxiliaries to consider special giving for camp scholarships this summer.



Special guest speakers become part of the Christikon life this summer during sessions for adults and families. During Mountain Weekend 1 (July 8-10) we feature **James Darchuk**, Senior Pastor of King of Glory Billings. During the Continuing Education Retreat (August 1-4), we are joined by Lois Malcolm, professor of systematic theology at Luther Seminary and Tim Westermeyer, Senior Pastor of St. Philip the Deacon Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Minnesota. Come spend a few days of relaxation, learning, and faith growth with us. Mountain Weekend 2 (August 5-7), topic to be announced. Register now!

Check out our Spring Trailblazer on our website. Use the link below:

Newsletter link: <http://christikon.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Spring-2016-Trailblazer.pdf>

Remember to pray for your congregation's ministry through Christikon this summer, for the summer staff, and for all who join in the Christikon life.

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

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406 656-1969 • [secretary@christikon.org](mailto:secretary@christikon.org) • [www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org)

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## **Cochamba and Futbol -Pastor Stacey Siebrasse**

Visiting Cochabamba was one of the highlights on our trip to Bolivia. At least it was for me. The city parks and walkways are straight out of a storybook: lovers walk hand-in-hand, bushes are manicured to look like gumdrops, lights illuminate gushing water fountains, and flowers at the foot of leafy trees offer the kind of aromatic shade that entices



readers to finish just one more chapter before going back to work. We saw a lot of cityscapes like these as we clicked along in our bus that took us from our inner-city hotel to the neighborhood of Taquiña. The closer we got to our destination, however, the less frequent these parks became.

[Read More...](#)

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## **Travel to Germany with Bishop Crist!**

[Click Here](#) for information about a Montana Synod trip to Germany to visit Reformation sites in May of 2017. Join Bishop Crist and others from around the Synod on this trip to Wittenberg.



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## **The 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's 95 Theses (1517-2017)**

### **May 9-18, 2017**

## **Travel to Germany With Bishop Crist**

The Montana Synod is offering a chance to tour Germany to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's Nailing of the 95 Theses to the doors of the All Saints Church in Wittenberg.

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### **Pilgrimage to Germany, Palestine, and Israel**

Pastor Paul Rowold of Polson will be leading a Pilgrimage to Germany, Palestine, and Israel from October 4-18. He has led numerous groups in the past, and emphasizes renewal of body and spirit, with significant contact with the Christian peoples in each country. Included in this trip are guided visits to the major Reformation sites (including Erfurt, Mansfield, Eisleben, Wittenberg, and Eisenach, with the Wartburg Castle) and the significant sites in the Holy Land. Visits to the homes of Christian families and worship in Bethlehem and Eisenach will highlight this Pilgrimage.

The 15 day experience departs from New York JFK and includes breakfasts and dinners at 4 star hotels each day. Cost is \$3225 per person (based on double occupancy). For detailed itinerary, contact Pastor Rowold at 406 883 5864 or paul.rowold@gmail.com

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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.

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



NRIT News:

*The following events require pre-registration:*

Our first digital offerings are now available on our website. When you purchase the classes, you will have access to them throughout 2016 so can offer the class as a multi-session adult study or watch on your personal computer at your convenience.

## **DIGITAL EDUCATION**

### **Learning Our Place: Wilderness and Wonder from a Biblical Perspective**

With Dr. Kathryn Schifferdecker, professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary This course explores the book of Job and several biblical texts for insights about God, creation and humanity. What kind of world is this? What is our place in this world? How does the Bible speak of wilderness and wild creatures? What about "acts of God?" Cost of 12 months of access to the class is \$40



## Syria in the Bible and in the Early Church: A Heritage at Risk

With Dr. Thomas Lee who served for many years as Lutheran campus pastor at the University of Montana, Missoula, where he also-as a faculty affiliate-taught biblical Hebrew and Aramaic in UM's Religious Studies Department. During the 1980s and into the 1990s he served on the staff of two archaeological projects in the Kingdom of Jordan and one in the Republic of Syria. In recent months we've become aware as well of the tragic loss of Syria's rich cultural heritage at the hands of ISIS and by those who profit from the looting and sale of antiquities. This loss of antiquities and the humanitarian tragedy are not unrelated. As Dr. Amr al-Azm, a former official in the Syrian Ministry of Antiquities who now teaches Middle Eastern History and Archaeology at Shawnee State University in Ohio, reminds us: "A people without a history is a lost people . . . and history without people is meaningless." Not only the Syrians, but we too are deeply invested in Syria's history as evidenced by the bible and in the history of the early church. The loss of Syria's cultural heritage, then, is not only a tragedy for the Syrian people, but a tragedy for us as well. In this NRIT presentation by Tom Lee, we will explore the importance of ancient Syria for the bible and the church and will attempt to convey some sense of the threat posed by the Syrian civil war to our common cultural heritage.

The Cost of the class is \$25. After the percentage taken out by the online registration company, the remaining amount of each registration fee will be sent to the American Schools of Oriental Research for their "Syrian Heritage Initiative." ASOR's "Syrian Heritage Initiative" is committed to assist in whatever ways possible the preservation of antiquities under threat by the Syrian civil war.

*To purchase these classes, go to [www.nrit.org](http://www.nrit.org). Click on the NRIT logo on the upper left side of the page. This will bring you to the NRIT home page. Under the logo, to the right side, click on NRIT Digital Education Store. Then click on the class you would like to access. You will need to pay online with a credit or debit card. After you have placed your order, you will be sent an email with all of the access information. Look for more offerings to come!*

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# The Luther 5

**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!](#)*



### May 27-30: Thrivent Memorial Day Family Work Retreat

Fun (and work!) for the whole family as we prepare our facilities for the summer camping season! This is a great time to introduce your children to camp and to meet our 2016 summer staff, who are eager to work, worship, and play with you! Call (406) 752-6602 to reserve your spot. This retreat is FREE in thankfulness for your assistance and funding from Thrivent Financial.

### June 3-5: Women's Retreat

Calling all women! Join us for worship, great food, relaxation, yoga, spa time, and sessions with Dr. Nancy Eldredge-Hess, who will lead us in the theme, "Unsung Heroines of the Bible." [CLICK HERE](#) for more information!

### September 2-5: Labor Day Family Camp

Family, faith, and fellowship on Flathead Lake as summer comes to a close. What could be better? [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.

### June

3-5 Montana Synod Assembly

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



**2016 Montana Synod Assembly and Theological Conference:** June 3-5, 2016, Radisson Hotel 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)

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