



Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

News of the Week, June 15, 2016

In this issue

[Words from the Bishop](#)

[Synod House Update!](#)

[Travel to Germany with Bishop Crist](#)

[NRIT News: Digital Education Update!](#)

[Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Amazon Smile](#)

Follow Us!



Prayers for June 19, 2016 Fifth Week of Pentecost

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For Bishop Michael Rhyne of the Allegheny Synod, as he mourns the death of his father.

For the family of Pr. Everett Tande, who died June 4. The memorial service will be June 20 11-3 at St. Paul in Missoula.

Prayers for community of Baker, MT as they recover from the damaging storm and tornado this past week.

The people of Orlando.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Our Redeemer Lutheran, Nashua
Bethel Lutheran, Grain
Loring Lutheran, Loring

Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

Christikon Bible Camp

Upper Missouri Ministries Camp

Northeastern Iowa Synod



Words From the Bishop - Good is stronger than Evil, Love is Stronger than Hate.

Will the ELCA Bishops make a statement on the Orlando massacre? Yes. We already have. Following the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre several years ago, the bishops adopted a statement abhorring violence. In the years since then we have experienced more and more mass shootings—in a theater, in a community center, in a church, on campuses. A year ago we watched with horror the race-related Mother Emmanuel shootings. And now Orlando, motivated by hatred of LGBTQ people. We are a society of laws, designed to protect people. We welcome diverse opinions. But we do not tolerate mass murder. As Christians we reject violence and hatred. Please read the words of the ELCA Bishops below:



A Pastoral Letter on Violence adopted by the ELCA Conference of Bishops, March 4, 2013

"A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."
Jeremiah 31.15 and Matthew 2: 18

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Every faithful caregiver who sits with victims of violence knows what we know - as God's church, we are called to reduce violence and should, in most cases, restrain ourselves from using violence. Whether or not statistics show that overall violence has declined in recent years, every person wounded or killed is a precious child of God.

As bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we lament the tragedy of gun violence in our country. We are grieved by the way violence threatens and destroys life. We affirm the current soul searching and shared striving to find a way to a better future.

While the church grapples with this call to reduce violence and make our communities safer, we recognize that before God we are neither more righteous because we have guns nor are we more righteous when we favor significant restrictions. Brokenness and sin are not somehow outside of us. Even the best of us are capable of great evil. As people of God we begin by confessing our own brokenness - revealed in both our actions and our failure to act. We trust that God will set us free and renew us in our life's work to love our neighbors.

In this time of public attention to gun violence, local communities of faith have a unique opportunity to engage this work. As bishops, we were thankful to recognize the many resources our church has already developed (see below). We begin by listening: listening to God, to Scripture, and to each other. Providing a safe place for people to share their own stories, together we discern courses of action. Together we act. And together we return to listening - to assess the effectiveness of our efforts to reduce violence.

In the Large Catechism Luther says, "We must not kill, either by hand, heart, or word, by signs or gestures, or by aiding and abetting." Violence begins in the human heart. Words can harm or heal. To focus only on guns is to miss the depth of our vocation. Yet, guns and access are keys to the challenges we face.

We recognize that we serve in different contexts and have different perspectives regarding what can and should be done. But as we live out our common vocations, knowing that the work will take many forms, we are committed to the work of reducing and restraining violence. This shared work is a sign of our unity in Christ.

We invite you, our sisters and brothers, to join us in this work:

***The work of lament** - creating safe space for naming, praying, grieving, caring for one another, and sharing the hope in God's promise of faithfulness

***The work of moral formation and discernment** - listening to scripture, repenting, modeling conflict resolution in daily life, addressing bullying, conducting respectful conversations, and discerning constructive strategies to reduce violence

***The work of advocacy** - acting to address the causes and effects of violence. Knowing that we are not saved by this work, we undertake it trusting in Christ Jesus, who laid down his life for the world and who calls us to be peacemakers, to pursue justice, and to protect the vulnerable.

In this, as in all things, Christ is with us. Thanks be to God.

Important Resources:

*Video: "We have Work to Do" by Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Communication-Service/News/Releases.aspx?a=5271>

* "Community Violence" a social message, <http://www.elca.org/socialissues>

* "The Body of Christ and Mental Illness" a social message, <http://www.elca.org/socialissues>

* "Hearing the Cries: Faith and Criminal Justice," a proposed social statement

* "Peace: God's Gift, Our Calling," a 1995 social statement.

* "Ban of Military-Style Semi-Automatic Weapons," 1989 social policy resolution, <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Resolutions/Search-by-Topic.aspx#guncontrol> (both social policy resolutions are at address)

* "Community Violence - Gun Control," 1993 social policy resolution

Jessica Crist, Bishop

Assistance for Victims of Disaster

In response to the recent tornado that hit Baker, Montana, on June 11, 2016, the Synod is establishing a tornado relief fund to accept donations to help victims of the Baker Tornado, as well as other disasters which may plague our state this season. Some victims of the Baker tornado were members of American Lutheran Church in Baker.

Anyone wishing to send donations to the victims through this fund may send a check to the Tornado Relief Fund, Montana Synod, 3125 5th Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59405. 100% of your donations will reach the victims. Any funds received in excess of the needs of the Baker disaster will remain in the fund to assist with victims of future disasters.

A Christian Response to Orlando

A service of mourning, solidarity, and hope sponsored by ELCA Lutherans. We welcome all affected by this human tragedy, especially LGBTQ and Muslim friends. Come as you are.

Sunday, June 19 at 7:00 p.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church (830 South Ave. West)

Montana Synod Office Disruption

As the Synod office relocates to our temporary location at New Hope Lutheran in Great Falls, expect a few disruptions to our usual service. Our main phone lines will not be up and running until Wednesday at the earliest.

If you need to contact Synod Staff please [email](#) or call our cell phones.

Memorial Gathering for Rodney & Pauline Kvamme

Paul, John, and Phil Kvamme invite you to join them for a memorial gathering to remember their parents, Pr. Rodney and Pauline.

Monday, June 27, 2016 11AM

To be held at the Best Last Place - the Seeley Lake Cemetery
(1899 Hwy 83, Bonner, MT - 3 1/2 miles North of US Hwy 200/Hwy 83 Junction)

We are expecting this to be a casual time to remember Rodney and Pauline, and to rejoice together for the ways they shared and touched so many lives. No RSVP is required, but it would be wonderful to know if your plans will include this gathering.

- The Kvamme Boys

Rural Healthcare Promoters in Bolivia

-Pastor Justin Eller

As Amalia timidly stands up, taking her turn to present on the traditional medicines she made from local, ancestral plants found throughout the area surrounding Lake Titicaca near La Paz, Bolivia, she gently speaks in Spanish to explain that the majority of the women in her rural community, many who had gathered to hear her presentation, only speak their indigenous Aymara language.

With the her first words in Aymara, she transformed from a shy student to a commanding, intriguing, informative, and inspiring teacher. She explained the illnesses, treatments, and remedies of each of the four colored bottles on the table in front of her with their corresponding medicinal plant ingredients and where to find them. Her educational presentation captured the attention of the 20 plus women huddled together and brought forth testimonies of previous illnesses in some of them and how Amalia had helped in their healing process. Many of the community members who benefit from Amalia's training, care, and medicines have little-to-no access for formal medical attention due to their rural locations. She chuckles as she explains that sometimes she arrives to a neighboring community and people come in search of her to consult her about a minor illness or call her cell phone asking her to visit a sick relative. She goes on to explain that she doesn't just take the medicine she has prepared, but also listens to their stories, prays with them, and teaches them about how they can better their health.

Amalia is one of about 30 members (lay and clergy) of the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Boliviana- IELB in Spanish) being trained as a Rural Healthcare Promoter (Responsable Popular en Salud- RPS in Spanish) in the "Integral Community Health" program of the IELB, which is supported by a ELCA World Hunger grant.

The project began in 2008 has recently completed an in-depth evaluation with with recommendations on how to further develop and bring to market their traditional medicines, widen their curriculum to involve more women from rural areas, and explore ways to include an intentional "Train the trainer" methodology into the two-year program.

Together, the Integral Community Health program of the IELB in Bolivia and ELCA World Hunger are actively accompanying rural Lutheran healthcare promoters in their traditional medicine training, making natural herbal medicines (syrops, juices, clays, and pomades), community support, and spiritual accompanying skills. Your support helps make projects like this possible. Thank you.

The Luther 5

June Newsbrief: Three Reformation Cities: Wittenberg, Geneva, and Constantinople

[Download it here](#)

[Parish Papers for July and August are up on the Website!](#)

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

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.

We will be moving to our temporary office space at New Hope Lutheran in Great Falls, this Friday, June 17th.

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

Previous news and notes:

**Johnny Cash Concert,
Dinner, Auction**

Please Help!
Freedom in Christ is a key partner in bringing Healing Communities training to Montana. We would like to ask for your assistance in helping to promote our fundraiser on June 25. This fundraiser will help raise much needed funds to keep our ministry alive at Montana State Prison.
[To learn more, click here!](#)

[To download the bulletin insert click here.](#)





Healing Communities Training with Rev. Doug Walker

Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry, in partnership with the Evangelical United Methodist Church is hosting Healing Communities Training in Billings, Montana.

WHEN:
MONDAY, JUNE 20, 2016
4:00PM - 8:00PM

WHERE:
EVANGELICAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
345 BROADWATER
BILLINGS, MONTANA

BRING YOUR SUPPER OR ORDER IT IN

Who Should Attend?

Volunteers connected with churches and organizations in Billings and the surrounding area who are willing to help their local community become a community of healing and hope for families of those incarcerated.

Primary Components of Healing Communities:

- * Stigma reduction & a welcoming, supportive atmosphere
- * Formal & informal support
- * Volunteering
- * Mentoring
- * Network of referrals
- * Advocacy & mobilization

To register go online at www.beliefandjustice.com/events.html
or contact Rev. Wendy Ochs at
office@actyourfaith.org or 406.259.1897

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 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.

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

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.



Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

**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.

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



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. 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!

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!



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 \(cell\)](#)

Upcoming Events, etc.

September

11 God's Work Our Hands

October

14-15 Bishop's Convocation



Please put these important dates on your calendar:

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

~~~~~  
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](#)

---

## Amazon Smile

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



---

*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!