



Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

News of the Week, June 22, 2016

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Prayers for June 26, 2016

Fifth Week of Pentecost

Please remember in your prayers this week:

Jerry Olson (retired) as he struggles with health issues.

Gail Shatkus (wife of Pr. Len) who has a brain tumor.

John Sheppard (LPA) on the death of his Father.

Region 1 Women of the ELCA as they meet in Seattle.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Saco Lutheran, Saco
Whitewater Lutheran, Whitewater
Malta Lutheran, Malta

Northern Great Lakes Synod



Words From the Bishop - Deepen Faith and Witness- "I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

We moved our office this past week. It was only 15 blocks, and we had a lot of help. But a lot can accumulate in an office building that has been there since 1975. And those cupboards are remarkably deep. We recycled a lot, we threw out a lot, but still, we moved a lot. And now, in our new location (temporary, until we build the Synod House), we are surrounded by boxes, wondering where the post-it notes are, and when we will get phone service. We are grateful to the people of New Hope Lutheran Church who welcomed us into their space, put flowers in our offices, and gave us cake the day we moved. Still, we are feeling dislocated.



But our dislocation is nothing compared with the more than 60 million people across the globe who are refugees-the greatest number since World War II. Most are refugees because of war, famine, natural disasters, political oppression, racial or tribal or religious prejudice. Most flee for their lives. Too many lose their lives in the process. Refugee camps are a stop gap measure, not a permanent solution.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service is a pan-Lutheran agency that started resettling Lutheran refugees after World War II. As a child, I can remember the Latvian woman who came to live with my cousins. She was one of the many who came to the United States from Eastern Europe. LIRS has broadened its scope over the years, responding to changing patterns of refugees across the globe. Many of us remember the Southeast Asian refugees after the Vietnam War, the Russian refugees after the Cold War. And now there are Central American children fleeing from death squads and Syrians escaping a brutal civil war.

LIRS is a reminder to all of us that refugees are our business, and that as Christians we cannot simply look away. LIRS joins with other agencies to advocate for refugees in Washington DC and in states. LIRS actively resettles refugees, accompanies people to court hearings, and works with government and private agencies to find ways to welcome new neighbors. The ELCA is an active partner with LIRS. In 1998, the ELCA Church Council adopted a Social Message on Immigration, and in 2009, the Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution on reform of US Immigration policy. LIRS provides resources to congregations who want to learn more about immigration and refugees. Go to www.lirs.org for educational materials to use in your congregation. This week was World Refugee Day, but you can observe it any time.

Montana and Wyoming do not experience the volume of refugees that some other places face. But that is no reason for us to turn our backs on the world's neediest people. Scripture is full of admonitions to care for the poor and the stranger, the alien in our midst. Remember, we follow Jesus, who started his life as a refugee.

Moving our office has shaken us up a bit-mostly in a good way. I have rediscovered some things I had forgotten about, and I've let go of some things that I don't really need anymore. And this experience of minor dislocation is a good reminder to me that the God who led the Israelites out of Egypt was not a comfortable God, not a stationary God, but a God on the move.

Jessica Crist, Bishop

New address: 3125 5th Ave. S., Great Falls, MT 59401

A Big Thank You to:

Taylor Asselstine
Daniel Asselstine
Jen Asselstine
John Blank
Ann Rose
Pr. Steve VanGilder
Pr. Natalie Faltin
Pr. Steve Nelson
and Eklund's Furniture

These are the volunteers who donated their time and backs Friday morning to help us move the



Synod office to our temporary location! For the next year or so the Montana Synod will be located at New Hope Lutheran Church. Our address is:

**3125 5th Ave S
Great Falls, MT 59405**

Editors Note: Our phones are still not up and running, but we hope to have them later this week. if you need to get in touch feel free to [email](#) or call our cell phones.

God's Work, Our Hands

On Sunday, Sept. 11, 2016, congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will again join together for "God's work. Our hands." Sunday. Whether we clean parks and roadways, visit the elderly and homebound or bake cookies and write thank you notes for first responders, this dedicated day of service celebrates the work you do every day and gives us the opportunity to share God's love with all people.

The 2016 "God's work. Our hands." Sunday will also mark the 15-year anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States.

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director for ELCA Domestic Mission and former bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan New York Synod at the time of Sept. 11, shares the story of an ELCA pastor who served as a fire department chaplain.

"When the first plane hit the first tower he rushed across the Brooklyn Bridge to the site where firefighters were mustering," said Bouman. "He was asked to anoint the heads of firefighters with oil with the sign of the cross, for those who wanted this baptismal remembrance. They then rushed into the building. Survivors making their way down the smoky stairways remembered those brave rescuers, heads glistening with oily crosses, rushing to rescue, baptized for this moment."

Reflecting on this, ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton said, "In baptism we have been marked with the cross. We are the ones who go into the broken places of the world. We are the ones who, by showing up on 'God's work. Our hands.' Sunday, shine the light of the cross in our communities."

Now is a good time to begin exploring opportunities for your congregation to participate in "God's work. Our hands." Sunday.

As you begin making plans for the day of service, we ask that you register your congregation.

This will help us share and tell stories about the good work that we do together. Click here to register.

Visit ELCA.org/dayofservice where you will find helpful resources for your planning for 2016. This includes an updated study guide designed for congregations to discuss what it means to serve with a joyful heart. You'll also find the 2016 version of the toolkit, bulletin inserts, posters and more. A new worship resource will be available later this spring.

Old Lutheran will once again have T-shirts available for purchase. The bright-yellow shirts provide a wonderful visual impact across the ELCA. The deadline for ordering your congregation's personalized T-shirt with Old Lutheran is Aug. 19.

If it's not possible for your congregation to participate on Sept. 11, please consider another day for your service activities.

Following the 2015 dedicated day of service, the Rev. Jason Adams, pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church in Las Vegas, described what the day meant for his congregation. "Of course, in our vocations we are serving neighbors every day, but when we are serving together, we are growing together as the people of God."

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday celebrates who we are as the ELCA - one church, freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor. We look forward to doing this work together again this year.

Pews to a good home

Trinity Lutheran Church in Sheridan, WY just remodeled their sanctuary and now have: Three 13' pews, twenty 6' long red pew cushions, and twenty 7' red pew cushions.

If you are interested, call Pastor Phil Wold, 307-672-2411.

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 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, pray 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 (syrups, 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: Luther and the Old Testament

Several years ago I attended a Jewish-Christian conference in Maryland that included a trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. Aside from the impact the museum had on me (I slept for 12 hours), I cannot forget the Jewish woman who stood up and said: please tell your students the difference between being anti-Semitic and being anti-Jewish. Since then I have been teaching that Hitler was anti-Semitic, while Luther and other reformers were anti-Jewish, angry that the Jews would not or could not believe as Christians did.

By the time of the Reformation, most Jews had been chased out of Western Europe. Spain and Italy remained safe havens for Jewish scholars who were instrumental in bringing Hebrew studies to the North. Beginning with Petrarch in Italy, secular scholars called humanists called for a re-examination of texts, both classical and biblical, using primary sources, in an effort to correct faulty translations and misinterpretations. As Pastor Tom Lee explains in his article, the idea was to study a text in its original cultural context. This, of course, necessitated the study of ancient languages, including the Hebrew and Greek of the Bible.

Martin Luther was an Old Testament professor who knew the loving and merciful God through his study of the Psalms, the prophets, and the Book of Genesis. Christian humanists, especially, encouraged church leaders to take another look at Genesis with its emphasis on the goodness and beauty of all creation and human beings made in God's image.

Pastor Lee points to the rise in popularity of studying Hebrew in order to uncover the same loving and forgiving God in the Old Testament that Christians continue to meet in the New Testament. This is an invitation to take another look at the Old Testament.

Pastor Judy Wozniak

[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

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

The new address for the Synod Office is:
3125 5th Ave S
Great Falls, MT 59405

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

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 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



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!

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

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!](#)



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

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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

*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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