



Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

News of the Week, June 29, 2016

In this issue

[Words from the Bishop](#)

[Synod House](#)

[GWOH 2016](#)

[Travel to Germany with Bishop Crist](#)

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

[Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Amazon Smile](#)

Follow Us!



Prayers for July 3, 2016 Seventh Week of Pentecost

Please remember in your prayers this week:

Pastor Stan Hoobing
recovering from health issues.

For the people of Poplar and Brockton on the Fort Peck
Reservation, suffering from severe storm damage. We will
be accepting donations to assist families.

The Trinity Lutheran Cody Honduras team as they leave Friday for a week at the LAMB institute in
Honduras.



From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Bethany Lutheran, Dutton
Lutheran Church of Sunburst
St. Luke's Lutheran, Shelby

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
East-Central Synod of Wisconsin

Words From the Bishop - Who needs Social Statements?

Seven years ago, when the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted the Social Statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust, people began to ask, "Why do we need social statements? Isn't the Bible enough?" And the answer is that while the Bible is our norm for faith and life, the Bible does not address directly some of the social issues that we face in our lives today. As Lutherans we take the witness of scripture very seriously. We also believe that God has given us other resources to help us discern how to respond to contemporary issues. They include our Lutheran theological traditions, modern science and social science, contemporary ethics. Our social statements use all these resources and more to inform and shape the social statements. Social statements are a significant part of the ELCA.



"ELCA social statements are teaching and policy documents that provide broad frameworks to assist us in thinking about and discussing social issues in the context of faith and life. They are meant to help communities and individuals with moral formation, deliberation and thoughtful engagement with current social issues as we participate in God's work in the world."

In our 28 year history the ELCA has adopted 12 social statements at Churchwide Assemblies. Each social statement was initiated at a previous Churchwide Assembly and involved numerous years of study as well as several opportunities for input and feedback. In addition, the ELCA Church Council has adopted 14 social messages, shorter statements on topics that are more focused, less far-reaching. These statements and messages are useful and important, and I commend them to you for study in your congregations-in adult studies, women's and men's groups, youth and young adult groups. You can find them at www.elca.org, and many of them also have study resources to go with them.

Because these statements are such important documents for our church, I will be using this "Words from the Bishop" column to address each of the social statements over the next few months. Today I want to address one of the very first social statements, adopted in 1991-"The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective." This social statement outlines why we do social statements, and what is at stake. It is an excellent place to begin.

The statement begins with 6 Affirmations, setting the context. First is "The gospel and the Church," which states that the church's witness in society stems from its identity as a community. The second Affirmation is "The Church Universal," which affirms that we are a part of a larger church, a larger world. The third Affirmation is "The Church 'In' But Not 'From' the World." This reminds us that, "The Gospel does not take the Church out of the world, but instead calls it to affirm and to enter more deeply into the world."

The fourth is "The Church's Responsibility in Society." This Affirmation challenges us: "As a prophetic presence, this church has the obligation to name and denounce the idols before which people bow, to identify the power of sin present in social structures, and to advocate in hope with poor and powerless people." The fifth Affirmation, "The Baptismal Vocation of Christians," states that "Christians also exercise their calling by being wise and active citizens." Affirmation six is that the church is "A Community of Moral Deliberation," and that "this church is open to learn from the experience, knowledge, and imagination of all people, in order to have the best possible information and understanding of today's world."

Then come 3 Commitments, "Sustaining Vocation," "Witnessing as an Institution," and "Deliberating on Social Questions." These commit the ELCA to responsible and prayerful development of social statements. The statement concludes with "God's Faithful Love," stating, "We in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America set forth these affirmations and commitments with prayer that our words and deeds may be earthen vessels that witness to the power of the cross. We care for the earth and serve the neighbor in society with the joyful confidence that God's faithfulness alone sustains the Church, and renews our faith, hope and love."

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly will not be considering any new social statements, but will receive an update on the progress of the statement on Women and Justice, scheduled for consideration in 2019.

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

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.

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, 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: 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 the Bishop.

Interested in becoming an LPA?

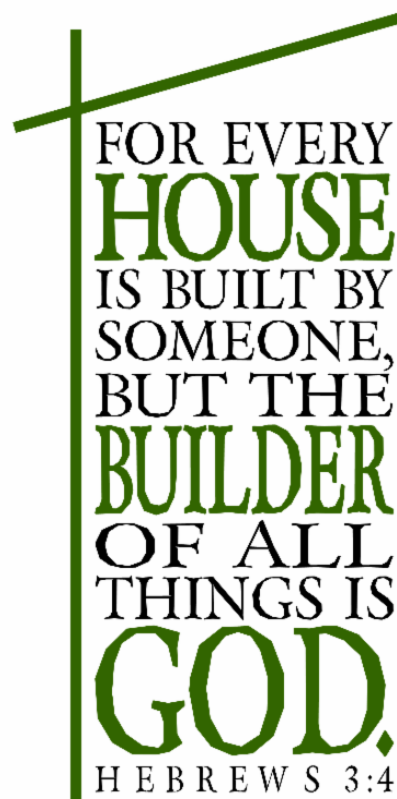
1. Talk to your church pastor. Talk about what it means to fill in for him or her and the traits it takes to provide pastoral leadership (albeit, temporary).
2. If your church does not have a pastor, feel free to contact our office. We'll put you in touch with someone who can shed some light on the role 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



The new address for the Synod Office is:

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

Previous news and notes:

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.

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.

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!

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!

October 7-8: Delegate Retreat & Annual Meeting

Are you an FLBC delegate or ambassador for your congregation, excited to share the story of this ministry? Mark your calendar! This no cost Delegate Retreat will equip you to serve your congregation as the FLBC connection. On October 8th the retreat concludes with the Annual Meeting/Celebration!

November 11-13: Crazy About Quilting Retreat

New and experienced quilters alike are welcome at this great retreat! Gather your friends and go crazy with quilting this weekend! [CLICK HERE](#) for more information and to register.

December 2-4: Family Advent Retreat

You won't want to miss this retreat as we prepare for the coming of Jesus' birth! Give your family or friends the Christmas gift of this retreat by registering today! [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 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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