



Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

News of the Week, July 19, 2016

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Prayers for July 24, 2016 Tenth Week of Pentecost

Please remember in your prayers this week:
The community of Baker as they recover from tornados and the recent hail storm.

American Lutheran Church in Baker, the UCC Church in Baker, the parsonages and the community of Baker hit by hail, two weeks after a tornado.

Pastor Marty Dreyer (retired) whose Mother died in Billings.



From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Galata Lutheran
Devon Lutheran

La Crosse Area Synod

Words From the Bishop - Deepen Faith and Witness: Social Statement on the Death Penalty

"Social statements of our church do not intend to end such diversity by 'binding' members to a particular position. Social statements acknowledge diversity and address members in their Christian freedom."

In 1991, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly approved a social statement on The Death Penalty, amidst significant discussion. In 1972 the US Supreme Court put a moratorium on capital punishment, saying that the state laws regarding the death penalty were inconsistent and potentially discriminatory. Over the years a number of states re-instated the death penalty with laws that were consistent with the Supreme Court's ruling. In 1991, 36 states had the death penalty. In 2016, 31 states have the death penalty in some form or other. Both Montana and Wyoming have the death penalty.



While acknowledging that other opinions exist among our people, the statement strongly opposes the death penalty. The statement lists 3 broad reasons that the church opposed the death penalty.

1 " It is because of this church's ministry with and to people affected by violent crime that we oppose the death penalty." In this section of the statement, it is pointed out that executions focus on the convicted felon, not on the families of victims or anyone else touched by the crime. "Capital punishment focuses on retribution, sometimes reflecting a spirit of vengeance. Executions do not restore broken society and can actually work to counter restoration." The statement goes on to suggest that the death penalty by its very nature perpetuates cycles of violence.

2 "It is because of this church's commitment to justice that we oppose the death penalty." Using language from a predecessor church body's statement, the statement calls for "an assault of the root causes of violent crime," (There is some internal inconsistency here, using violent language to oppose violence.) The statement notes that many nations across the globe have abolished capital punishment, and that we would do well to join them. The statement points out that innocent people have been executed and that the death penalty, once implemented, is irreversible. It also states that race, gender, mental capacity, age and affluence of the accused have a significant role in whether the death penalty is imposed.

3 "It is because of this church's concern regarding the actual use of the death penalty that we oppose its imposition." The statement says: " The practice of the death penalty undermines any possible moral message we might want to 'send.' It is not fair and fails to make society better or safer. The message conveyed by an execution, reflected in the attention it receives from the public, is one of brutality and violence."

The statement ends with some commitments of the ELCA: "As a community gathered in faith, as a community dispersed in daily life, as a community of moral deliberation, and as a church body organized for mission, this church directs its attention to violent crime and the people whose lives have been touched by it." The statement goes on to elaborate each part of that sentence, suggesting action for individuals, congregations and the wider church.

Since this statement was adopted in 1991, the church adopted another social statement on Criminal Justice. You can find all of the social statements at www.elca.org/socialstatements.

In recent years both the Wyoming Association of Churches and the Montana Association of Christians have worked for abolition of the death penalty in our respective states.

If you are interested in having further conversation about this statement on the death penalty, perhaps in preparation for an adult forum, youth conversation or council study, the following colleagues have offered to make themselves available for consultation:

Pastor Peter Erickson, Pastor of Our Savior's, Columbia Falls and former MAC President
peter@oursaviorscfalls.com

Pastor Julie Long, Pastor of Our Savior's, Broadus and former Crime Lab employee
Jcblong@hotmail.com

Pastor Rob Nedbalek, Pastor of Freedom in Christ at the Montana State Prison
pastorrob@ficprisonministry.com

Bishop Jessica Crist

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

Grace Gathering August 10-13

There is just one week left to register for the 2016 Grace Gathering! Registration closes July 17. Reserve your spot today! The Grace Gathering will be held in partnership with the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans Aug. 10-13.

The gathering will bring people together from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Participants will see the Churchwide Assembly in action, worship with voting members, engage in experiential learning and attend a variety of workshops that will focus on Reformation history and theology, 500th anniversary observances and the Lutheran witness in action today. The complete list of workshops is available on ELCA.org/GraceGathering/Gathering-Details/Workshops.



Registration for the Grace Gathering is open until July 17.

Learn more and register at ELCA.org/GraceGathering.
We hope to see you there!

The Grace Gathering team
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Help and Prayer Need Continues

In early June a tornado hit the town of Baker, Montana, damaging and destroying homes and causing bodily injury. As the community was putting their lives back together, another storm hit again last week bringing severe winds and damaging hail. American Lutheran Church was damaged and will need windows and a new roof. Many more homes and vehicles were damaged in the second storm.

Right now the community of Baker needs your prayers for strength during recovery; prayers to help mend lives and emotions damaged in these storms. Please keep them in your prayers and if you have a minute, let Pastor Reba or Pastor Bruce know you are thinking of their community. They can be reached at trinity1@midrivers.com or at PO Box 786, Baker, MT 59313-0786.

Anyone wishing to send donations to the victims of this disaster 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.

Organ Donation

This is a Yamaha D-80 Electronic Organ. It has a 3 manuals with rhythms and single fingered chording if desired. I played it primarily as a standard organ when taking lessons. It is one owner and in a walnut cabinet, mint condition. It has one octave of pedals and has the tonal quality and capacities of a console organ, but in a spinet size. Several years ago it appraised

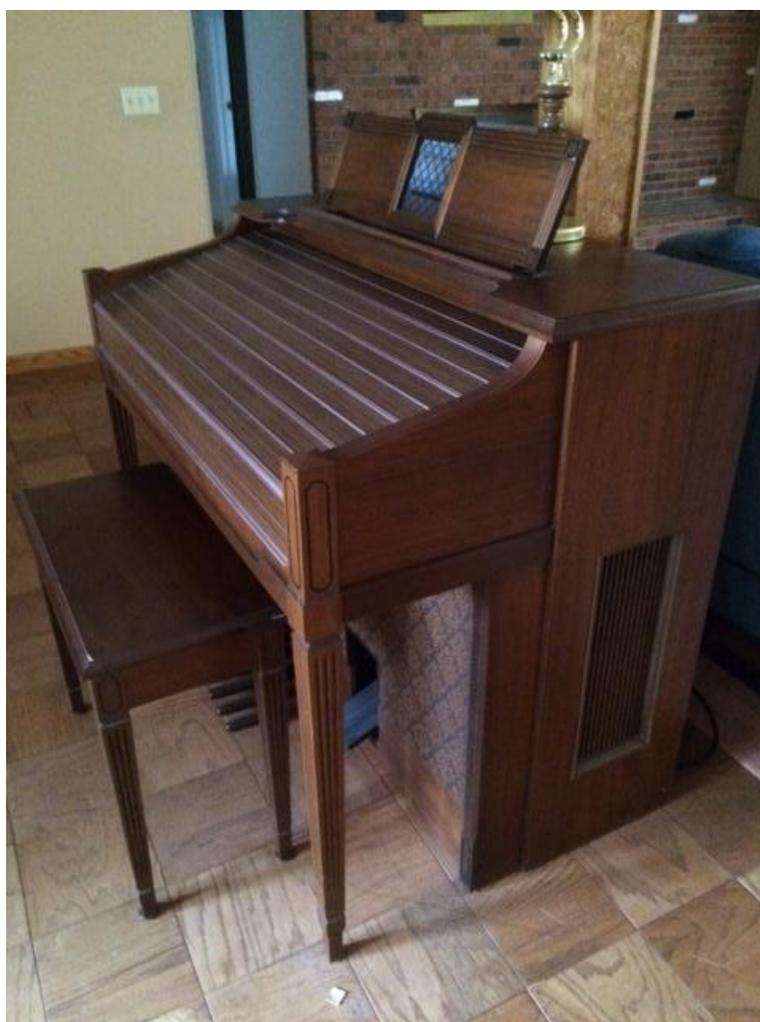
at \$1930, purchased in 1978 for \$3500. Eight years ago I had it serviced by Andy Seitz to make sure everything stayed in perfect working condition and continued to play it until my move to Mission Ridge two months ago.

I would like to donate it to a Montana Lutheran congregation that might be in need and who could, preferably, come to my home in Billings to safely load and transport it. It weighs 264# not including the bench (which has storage).

If you are interested please contact:

Sharon Harris
3840 Rimrock Road Apt.
1111
Billings MT 59102-0124

Landline: 406-325-8088



Boundaries Training

The Eastern Washington Idaho Synod is offering a Boundaries Workshop on August 18, from 9-3 at Central Lutheran Church, Spokane. Pastors Mark Nelson and Janine Goodrich, both experienced trainers through Faith/Trust Institute, will lead the session.

If you have not yet had boundaries training, or need a refresher, this is an opportunity.

To register, contact Cathy Steiner office@ewaidsynod.org.

Mission Support

We want to thank the congregations who have given us an intent for mission support and who are keeping up. And we want to remind other congregations who are not keeping up with mission support that we plan our budget based on congregational statements of intent. If congregations do not follow through, all our ministries suffer.

We encourage "first fruits" giving. Even if your congregation is only receiving a percentage of what you anticipate, please remember your commitment to the wider church. If you receive less than you budgeted, you can still send on a portion.

Thank you,

The Montana Synod Officers

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.

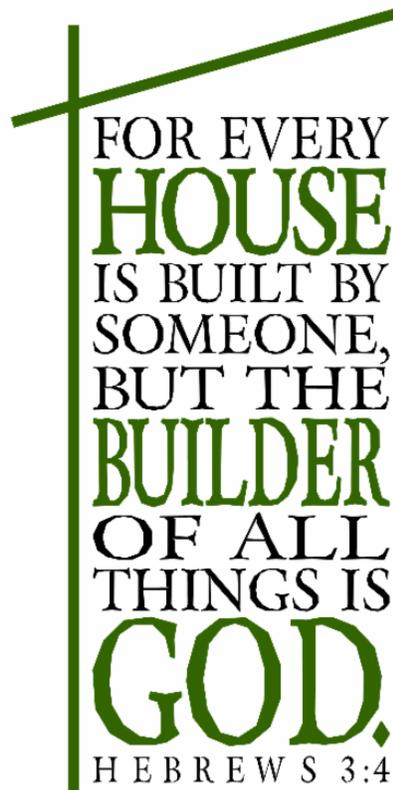
Interested in becoming an LPA?

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:

Montana YAGMs

Three Montana Synod Connected people have been chosen as ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission for the upcoming year, beginning in August.

Erik Bay of Hope Lutheran in Bozeman will serve in the United Kingdom.
e_bay08@hotmail.com.

Sarah Vatne, from Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp will serve in Southern Africa.
sarahvatne@gmail.com.

Savanah Phelan, from Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp will serve in Cambodia.
phelanss@plu.edu.

Please keep these volunteers in your prayers, along with the 84 others serving across the globe. You can keep in touch through email, and sign on to their blogs. You can also help support them. Each volunteer is responsible for raising \$4000. for her or his year.

The Young Adults in Global Mission Program is a gem in the ELCA. Many young adults from the Montana Synod have served over the years. YAGMs deepen their faith and understanding of the world. Some become pastors-and we have several pastors and seminarians in our Synod who are YAGM alums. YAGM alums also serve the world in a variety of other ways. As Lutherans, we are committed to celebrating the gifts of the baptized, wherever they may lead.

Congratulations, YAGMs. And the rest of us, pray for and support these folks. And be thinking about recommending the program to young adults you know.

Thinking about Tech

Now that our office is moved, the phones work, and all our computers talk to each other again (whew)!

wanted to give a quick reminder to all congregations in the Montana Synod. I am available to travel to your congregation and consult with anyone interested in future tech needs, or current problems.

Lets schedule a trip if you need help with:

- Web design
- Software questions/training
- Computer trouble
- Social media strategies
- Office networking
- A/V worship needs



Give me a call at the Synod office: 453-1461

Email: cmccarty@montanasynod.org

A request from Pr. Chris Holler-Dinsmore

The Tribal Correctional Facility could use books for their library. We could use novels and mysteries by authors such as Grisham and Erdrich, collections of essays and reflections by people such as Kathleen Norris, Annie Lamont, and adult coloring books and colored pencils as well as puzzle books. Books by Native American authors would be greatly appreciated or about Tribes. Books can be sent to:

Spirit of Life
400 Garfield Street,
Wolf Point 59201

Youth and Family Director Needed

Bethlehem Lutheran Church (ELCA), Kalispell, MT

We are seeking a candidate to work together with staff, parents and volunteers to encourage, equip, mentor and guide youth in their faith journey as our Youth and Family Director. This is a newly expanded full-time position that will have responsibilities for K-12 youth and their families. The compensation is \$25,000-\$30,000 dependent on experience and includes benefits and subsidized housing.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church is located in NW Montana's scenic Flathead Valley, and only 30 minutes from the entrance to Glacier National Park. We are one of the founding congregations of the Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp (20 miles south of Kalispell) and host FLBC's office staff on our campus.

A complete position description can be found at <http://www.bethluth.org>. To apply, send a cover letter and resume to office@bethluth.org. Screening will begin July 15th and applications will be accepted until August 31st.

Travel to Germany with Bishop Crist Time to Register!

A Billings travel agent is organizing a Montana Synod trip to Reformation sites in Germany in May, 2017. Information was sent to every congregation, and it has been advertised in our news of the week. Although the trip is more than 9 months away, the agency needs some indication about the interest in the trip, which will be accompanied by Bishop Jessica Crist.

Please read the information below and contact Brian Mathis with questions and indications of interest.

[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.

The Luther 500

July Newsbrief: Luther and the Apocrypha

Quick - do any of these biblical texts ring a bell for you: Baruch 3:9; Wisdom of Solomon 5:15; Sirach 24:1-3; Hezekiah 6:8?

The last one listed is fictitious - an old joke among pastors and Bible teachers. But the first three "biblical" books listed all have texts that might get read on a Sunday morning in congregations using the Revised Common Lectionary's alternate First Readings. They're among those "biblical" books you may have seen in Bibles used by Roman Catholics, but probably not included in the Bibles you have ordinarily used.

Tom Lee - pastor, biblical scholar, teacher, ecclesial servant (among other roles) - offers a brief introduction to those books called "the Apocrypha" in this month's Reformation 500 Newsbrief, with particular attention to their use by the church throughout the centuries, and to Martin Luther's regard for them. (Tom's comments also will provide background for why the quotation marks are placed around the word "biblical" in the previous paragraph.)

Well worth reading: both the Apocrypha, and Pastor Lee's Newsbrief. Check out the latter by clicking [here](#).

-Bob Quam

[Download it here](#)

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

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.

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! 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
23-24 Synod Council

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)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)