



Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

News of the Week, October 26, 2016

In this issue

[Words from the Bishop](#)

[Report from the Cape Orange Diocese](#)

[NRIT News](#)

[Transitions Pilot Project](#)

[2017 Youth Event](#)

[October Newsbrief](#)

[News of the Week Archive](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Amazon Smile](#)

Follow Us!



Prayers for October 30, 2016 Reformation Sunday

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For the Ecumenical Reformation Celebration in Mund, Sweden

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

NRIT

Candidacy Committee meeting on the 5th



Words From the Bishop - Deepen Faith and Witness- *Reflections on Standing Rock: Protest, Protect, Pray, Presence*



Oh, the layers of complexity at Standing Rock! Indigenous rights, property disputes, law enforcement, energy policy, environmental priorities, water rights, racial justice, jurisdictional ambiguity. And on and on and on. What's a church to do? I know that for some the answer is clear: "Stay out of it!" There are some who think the church should simply stay away.

But many disagree. This week a group of ELCA leaders (6 bishops, 2 leaders of the Native American Lutheran Association and a group of local pastors and lay people) visited Standing Rock. We talked with tribal leaders, with people in the encampments, and with law enforcement officers. All of our conversations were civil, everything we did was surrounded by prayer. Nobody wants this thing to blow up. Everyone wants a peaceful settlement, especially the people who will continue to live there, both tribal and non-Indian, after the pipeline dispute is over.

Why is this our business? In 2016, both the Montana Synod and the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted a Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, which, among other things, pledged to walk with the tribes in their quest for justice. And in 2010, the Montana Synod adopted an Apology to the tribes of Montana, and promised to stand with them in the future. In short, this is our business, because we pledged accompaniment. This is also our business because it is not simply a local dispute. It is not simply about one pipeline on one piece of land.

The vigil at Standing Rock has become a defining moment for Native Americans in understanding what it means to be both American citizens and members of a sovereign nation. A history of broken treaties, unkept promises, land and water disputes, assimilation, genocide, poverty, and racism has drawn advocates, sympathizers and witnesses to come to Standing Rock. It's like a Rosa Parks moment for American Indians. Enough. People have come from all over the world. There are 320 flags along "Avenue of Flags." I found myself standing under the Episcopal Church flag, just a couple of flags away from the flag of the Blackfeet Nation.

Many people assume that what is going on at Standing Rock is protest. There are certainly elements of that. And there are some people there whose primary agenda is protest. But not the vast majority. The whole response to the proposed pipeline began last spring with prayer. A group of tribal members gathered on a hill overlooking the Missouri and prayed together for a long time. Not a quick pro forma blessing, but extended prayer. Prayer continues to be the bedrock of this movement. Everywhere we went we were asked to pray—with law enforcement, with pilgrims, with tribal leaders. The separation of church and state that we cling to so fiercely in the rest of civic life was simply not an issue. This is a deeply spiritual movement.

Tribal leaders see their goal not as protest, but as protection—protection of the river, protection of the earth, protection of future generations. Protest is focused on being against something.

Protection is focused on being for something.

So what is a group of bishops doing there? Presence. We followed in the footsteps of many faith leaders from other denominations and faith groups by simply showing up. By bringing coats and hats and blankets and firewood, by praying, by listening and simply by being there. As faith leaders we do not have the power to direct the Army Corps of Engineers or to stop the private security company's surveillance helicopters. We do not have the authority to set up roadblocks or enforce treaties. But we do have the power of prayer, and we do have the power of presence.

Jessica Crist, Bishop

2017 Salary Guidelines

The new Salary guidelines are now available on our website under the Resources tab. They can also be downloaded [here](#).

On behalf of Bishop Crist, I attended the 21st Synod (similar to our Synod Assembly) in early October. The Synod included clergy and lay people from around the Cape Orange Diocese as well as several guests.

One of the purposes of the Synod was to elect a new Bishop as current Bishop William Bowles had made the decision to retire. (In ELCSA, a Bishop is elected and serves until

retirement). Amid a joyful and relaxed atmosphere, we gathered for worship, learning, reports, and an evening to honor Bishop Bowles. The Presiding Bishop and the General Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) were present to conduct the election of the Bishop. (The Presiding Bishop serves part time in that position while also serving as Bishop of the Western Diocese.

The General Secretary is a pastor who serves full-time and handles much of the administrative work of the whole Diocese). After introducing the constitutional requirements, the Presiding Bishop read the names of the men who had declined the nomination - a total of six names.

Eight names had been lifted up by the Diocese and had been approved at the Churchwide Council meeting just a week before. After the Presiding Bishop read the names of those who had declined, one of the Deans in the Cape Orange Diocese stood and stated that he respectfully withdrew his nomination too. One name was left. With a pause and then with a smile, the Presiding Bishop stated: "We have an election."

Pastor Motsamai Manong has served as the Executive Secretary, similar to an Associate to the Bishop in our Synod, for a number of years. In the last years, as Bishop Bowles has dealt with health issues, he has taken on more leadership and it seemed that it was a strong symbol of support for him in that all the other candidates withdrew their nominations. The mood was jovial and there was a sense that he was clearly the one raised up to continue to lead the Diocese. The Cape Orange Diocese will be in capable hands with him as leader.

In my greeting to the Synod, I told the people that we in the Montana Synod hold them in prayer.

Thank you again for the opportunity to represent the Montana Synod with our Companions in the Cape Orange Diocese. We continue to be in conversation about how to expand and deepen that relationship, including the arrival of Pastor Edwina Letshwiti in the spring.

Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger
Secretary, Montana Synod
Livingston and Wilsall, MT



Bishop-elect: Pastor Motsamai Manong greeting the Synod after being elected Bishop of the Cape Orange Diocese in South Africa

Ideas that Impact: Politics and Religion

Faith & Politics: Finding a way to have a fruitful conversation

A rabbi and a pastor reflect on what it takes to create fruitful conversations and collaboration between faith communities and political parties.

[Read more from Arthur Gross-Schaefer & Robert Cornwall](#)

Must we keep the church out of politics and politics out of the church?

Despite all our attempts to keep religion and politics apart, they do come together in the church, writes a pastor.

[Read more from Laura Stern](#)

Election Day, in the shadow of the cross

Despite our desire to find a comfortable middle ground, the incarnation means there may not be a clear, easy way through the midst of cultural conflict, writes a retired United Methodist elder.

[Read more from Edgar Moore](#)

Dear Congregational Leaders,

Your Mission Support helps to fund ministries of the church that no one congregation can do alone. Through it, your congregation is part of all that our church does in Montana and northern Wyoming through the Montana Synod. In addition, the Montana Synod passes on 40% of what it receives to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for its work nationally and throughout the world. Thank you for your partnership in making all the ministries of our church possible!

Watch for the large envelope from the Montana Synod with the bright pink label on it. Discuss at your next Council meeting. Return your 2017 Mission Support Intent Form by February 1, 2017 in the self-addressed envelope.

For the coming year 2017 we will be emphasizing the fourth of our Montana Synod's Benchmarks: "Promote Unity". With God's help, we do this in our congregations and also in the ministries of the Montana Synod and the ELCA. In all the expressions of our church, we do God's work together! Thank you for your partnership in our shared ministries through your Mission Support!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor George Karres
Director for Evangelical Mission - Montana Synod



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.

Midwinter Theological Conference - Izaak Walton Inn Jan 30-Feb 1

A wonderful time to gather with colleagues, relax in the hot tub or around the lobby fire, ski or snowshoe in a winter wonderland and to delve into Paul's writings with Dr. David Fredrickson.

*Adult Study Opportunity

Syria in the Bible and in the Early Church: A Heritage at Risk We hear about the war in Syria almost every day, but many of us don't know a lot about the history of this country and especially how it relates to the early church. Pr. Tom Lee, a retired pastor and Old Testament Scholar spent time on archeological sites in the middle east and for one summer in Syria. He agreed to sit down with Colter McCarty and record this class on the antiquities in Syria and what they can tell us about our history as Christians. You can access this digital/online hour long class for \$25 and continue to have access for a year. A great opportunity for an ongoing adult study. (Pr. Lee shares reading resources as well.)

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 purchasing, you will receive access information.

Transitions Pilot Project: Ending Well

Calling all BBCR's (Baby Boomers Considering Retirement):

The Synod used to do Transitions Workshops through NRIT, and I had the good fortune of leading 3 of them with my husband Daniel. Following a successful pilot of the "Starting Strong" part of Transitions in a new format last spring, I am doing the same for those of you who are aiming at "Ending Well."

Using a group coaching and peer learning model, with some good research materials from the Alban Institute, I am offering a 4-session video conference pilot project for those of you who are planning to retire in the next year or two. While Portico leads us through the financial planning parts of retirement, there is so much more going on!

I had the good fortune of being coached all the way through my retirement planning, as I was receiving coach training from Auburn Seminary. It was helpful. Issues of timing, leave-taking tasks, boundaries, and celebrating are some of the meat and potatoes of "ending well." The wisdom and support of peers is an essential and valued part of the project.

We'll gather for 4 90-minute online sessions this fall, scheduled at the convenience of those who sign on. Group size is limited to 5. Two individual coaching sessions will be included as part of the pilot project. \$200 covers the group and individual sessions. CE funds can be used.

Please email or phone me if you have questions or would like to sign on. We can talk about it at the Bishop's Convocation as well.

Blessings and peace,
Jean

Rev. Jean Larson, ACC (International Coach Federation)
Leadership Coaching for People in Ministry
www.jeanlarsoncoaching.com
jeanlarson@gmail.com 406-360-7058

Sabbath Center Retreat

Watchful Waiting:

Attending to the Holy Spirit Inside Us and in the World

St. Thomas the Apostle Retreat Center
Cody, Wyoming
Cost: \$190

Presbytery of Wyoming

Speaker: Rev. Christopher Brown

Thursday, Nov. 3rd 6:00pm
- Saturday, Nov. 5th (Lunch)



Immanuel Lutheran
— COMMUNITIES —



1957-2017

In 2017, Immanuel Lutheran Communities will reach a milestone of service to the elders in Montana.

You can help as we prepare to celebrate by sharing with us your memories and memorabilia from the past 60 years of history. Contact Ronalee in the Development Office if you have any questions.

Your stories, photos, and memorabilia can be sent to:

Immanuel Lutheran Communities
Attn: Ronalee Skees
185 Crestline Avenue
Kalispell, MT 59901
Email: rskees@ilcorp.org
Phone: 406-752-9243

We would be honored if you would share your memories with us.

Dear Synod,

Your response to the socks and books has been fantastic. The ladies and I imagine the men are really enjoying socks without holes and socks that are warm.

The beggar is back though. As you may know I have had 7 baptisms. I have given the ladies a horseshoe nail cross, a candle and a prayer shawl to let them know to whom they belong, they are the light of Christ and that they belong to the body of Christ which surrounds them with love and prayer for their well-being. I have just about depleted the WELCA of First Lutheran supply of prayer shawls, so if any the churches in the Synod have some to spare we could use them. I have more baptisms coming. We are going to start making them ourselves, but still first need to learn to crochet and then start making them. We could also use yarn and J size hooks. Thanks so much for any assistance.

We will with the Spirit's help be forming support groups outside and will also be working on them.

Salaam/shalom

Pr. Chris Holler-Dinsmore
Spirit of Life
400 Garfield Street
Wolf Point, MT 59201
choller-dinsmore@fpcc.edu
406-650-1497

Looking for more information on the 2017 Portico Health Benefit Changes?

PORTICO

Benefit Services | A Ministry of the ELCA

As your organization kicks off a new year of ministry, it's also time to look ahead to next year's benefits. Portico's 2017 Annual Enrollment starts soon, and now is the time to prepare. I encourage you to share these resources with the people who make your organization's benefit and budget decisions:

- [Custom Comparison Report and Spreadsheet](#)
Use this PDF report and Excel spreadsheet to review your options and estimate your 2017 costs.
- [Webinar: A Closer Look at 2017 Health Benefits and Rates](#)
Watch this 30-minute recording to learn about the cost drivers behind our 5% baseline health contribution rate increase, and to preview our innovative new approach to help plan members purchase care with an eye to both quality and cost.

Between Oct. 3 and Oct. 28, your organization will need to select one ELCA-Primary health benefit option to offer your plan members for 2017. After organizations complete 2017 Annual Enrollment, plan members will make their benefit selections between Oct. 31 and Nov. 16. We look forward to receiving your organization's selection on EmployerLink starting Oct. 3.

Save the Date!



Mark your calendars, the 2017 Synod Youth Event will be held, February 10-12 at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Billings.

[Click here for the pdf version of the poster](#)

[Click here for the Microsoft Publisher version](#)



intermountain

Caring Solutions ■ Strong Families ■ Healthy Communities

Perhaps it is still a little early to be thinking of Christmas... BUT, we want to make sure to get these materials into your hands well in advance so you can be prepared for Advent and a special resource

provided to us by Intermountain's chaplain, Chris Haughee.

Have you ever seen an Advent devotional based on Chrismons? What's a Chrison, you say?! A Chrison is a type of symbol. Chrismons, or "Christ Monograms" are all hung on a tree, the Chrison Tree. The tree itself is also a symbol for the Christmas season, a reminder of the truths we celebrate as we recall Jesus' birth. Many churches use the Chrison Tree as a way of reminding their congregations about the truths celebrated this coming holiday season. They were first used as a way to celebrate Advent by Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia!

Perhaps your congregation has a Chrison Tree? It really is a wonderful way to celebrate Advent, and now it's a great way to connect with Intermountain's Residential Services and their chaplain, Chris Haughee, too.

Chaplain Chris has written an Advent devotional based on the Chrison symbols, based on lessons he has used in chapel services at Intermountain. Intermountain would like to pass these on to the churches of the Montana Synod of the ELCA as a way of saying thank you for a wonderful year of mission together bringing healing through healthy relationships.

Click [HERE](#) to download a copy of the free resource for your church!



WyndStone Facility Grand Opening!

Ribbon Cutting Event on October 27th!

WyndStone, a remarkable independent and assisted living community located in Billings Heights, is now open! First residents moved in October 3rd, with many others planning to arrive throughout the days of autumn.

Visitors are welcome to come by and admire the hospitable features, beautiful interior, and grand vistas that WyndStone offers. Apartments still remain available, including significant savings for those who choose to move in within the first 120 days of opening.

A Grand Opening celebration is scheduled for Thursday, October 27th, 3 - 6 pm, including a ribbon cutting ceremony at 4 pm. The public is invited! WyndStone is located at 1920 WyndStone Way.

Montana Synod House Build

Thank you for your interest in partnering with the synod on this project. By utilizing volunteer labor, we will be able to save upwards of 15% of the building costs. With congregations from across the state participating it will truly be "our house!"

Here is what the project will look like;

We will be working with the ELCA Mission Builders. They have worked on a number of projects in our synod including Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, Bethel Great Falls and Our Redeemers Helena. You can go to their elcamissionbuilders.org to find out more about them.

We will be seeking crews to start on June 6th and **expect to finish in early September.**

Make up of crews

We will be looking for teams of 4 builders and 2 cooks to work each week. The build team will be working under the supervision of the Mission Builder manager and foreman. There will be four mission builders joining the project. The cook team will provide snacks for the crew. Note that safety is key on the jobsite so hardhats and the use of safety equipment will be required.

Work Week

The work week will begin on Tuesday and end on Saturday. Mission builders works from 7:30am - 4:30 pm. with a morning break and devotions, lunch at noon and an afternoon break.

Housing

It appears that it would be more cost effective for the volunteers to stay in hotels. RV's and campers could be utilized, the cost at KOA is \$65 per night. It would be great if the congregations of Great Falls could provide some housing for volunteers during the project.

Food

Each team member will contribute to the food kitty. There will be 4 breakfast and dinner meals, 5 lunches as well as morning and afternoon snacks. The last evening is usually a celebration night where the teams go out together. The suggested contribution is \$40. It would be helpful if once a week a congregation or congregation members could host a meal either in homes or at the church.

Equipment

When you have registered we will provide you with a list of items you might bring with you.

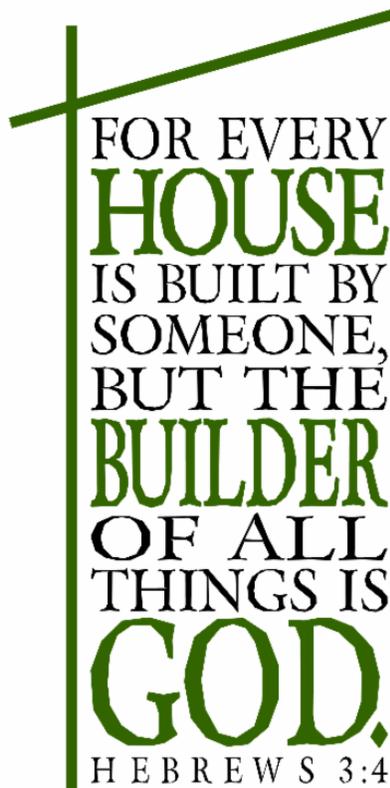
Expertise

Through all phases of the build we will be able to utilize the skill level of each member of your team. If there are specific skills needed that will be communicated once we have the building schedule.

Questions?

Rev. Arne Bergland arne@ourredeemerlives.org

[Click here to download the full signup sheet!](#)



The Synod Office has a New Address!

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

Montana Synod Opportunities:

The Luther 5

October Newsbrief: Martin Luther's View of Creation

How to think about and relate to the world around us has probably been a challenge since the earliest times of the human race. And probably also since the beginning, people have done that relating and thinking in markedly different ways.

Just think of some of the words we may use: nature... the natural world... ecosystem... creation... Each seems to refer to something of the same realities; but of course, each bears its own constellation of meanings. And think of the long (and sometimes very unhappy) history of how people of faith have engaged the realities behind the words. For example, it sometimes feels like it's a long way from Gerard Manly Hopkins's sonnet that begins, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God," to concerns about pollution, climate change, and ecological collapse. Yet people of faith might still find themselves wanting somehow to hold it all together as they find themselves called into the ongoing conversation - and action - about these realities and concerns.

Our forebears in the faith still offer us some useful resources in the conversation, even though they may not have had words like "ecology" in their vocabulary. In this month's Reformation Newsbrief, Tonya Eza, who serves as pastor of Hope Lutheran Church in Powell, Wyoming (among other roles), briefly cites some elements of Martin Luther's thought that can help us continue to develop a useable and faithful frame of reference for our own thinking about and relating to the world around us. Check it out at the Montana Synod web site.

-Bob Quam

[Download it here](#)



Community Lecture Series

If you are in or near Billings, check out the lecture series being put on by Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. More information can be [found here.](#)

Christikon Clips October 2016

2017 Calendar!

The calendar and sessions listing is on our website www.christikon.org. It's not too soon to start planning for next summer's trip to camp!

Fall Retreats:

We have retreats scheduled into October with dates still available. Bring your group and enjoy fall in the mountains!



Thank you for your prayers for Christikon

this summer, for the summer staff as they transition back to "real life", and for all who have joined 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! Also, watch for our 2016 Summer Brochure around Christmas! Be sure to register early for your first choice of weeks and programs!



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 with our quilter in residence, Susan Hedahl! [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 \(cell\)](#)

[News of the Week Archive](#)

Upcoming Events, etc.



November
7-9 First Call

Please put these important dates on your calendar:

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

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[www.montanasynod.org](http://www.montanasynod.org)

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