



Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

News of the Week, November 23, 2016

In this issue

[Words from the Bishop](#)

[International Consultation Report](#)

[Attention: Congregations and Pastors in Transition](#)

[NRIT News](#)

[WELCA Newsletter](#)

[2017 Youth Event](#)

[October Newsbrief](#)

[News of the Week Archive](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Amazon Smile](#)

Follow Us!



Prayers for November 27, 2016

First Sunday of Advent

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For Kay Hanson (spouse of Pr. Paul), recovering from surgery

For Pr. Steve Van Gilder, (Bethel, Great Falls,) returning to work after vocal cord surgery

For Gail Shatkus (spouse of Pr. Len), in hospice

For Pr. Bear (formerly of Cutbank), whose parsonage in Lemmon, SD, burned

For Ruth Allen's (Spouse of Pr. John) mother, Phyllis Wagnild, facing the end of life



From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Bethlehem Lutheran, Billings
Trinity Lutheran, Sheridan, WY

Metro D.C. Synod

Words From the Bishop: Deepen Faith and Witness - Happy Thanksgiving

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;
He chastens and hasten his will to make known;
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing;
Sing praises to his Name; he forgets not his own.

Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,
Ordaining, maintaining his kingdom divine;
So from the beginning the fight we were winning:
Thou, Lord, wast at our side: all glory be thine!

We all do extol thee, thou leader triumphant,
And pray that thou still our defender wilt be.
Let thy congregation escape tribulation:
Thy Name be ever praised! O lord, make us free!



(Theodore Baker, Translator of anonymous

text)

Jessica Crist, Bishop



International Consultation Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I have returned from my trip to Peru physically tired but spiritually renewed. The primary reason for my trip to Peru was to attend, along with Pastor Stacey Siebrasse of Billings, the International Consultation between synods of our ELCA who have partner relationship with a church in Latin or South America. The Montana Synod has had a long relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bolivia.

Stacy and I joined a community of over 75 who came to learn how we can support each other in our call to be Ambassadors of Reconciliation and to work on developing a new three-year plan for our partnership. Pastor Presidente Emillo was there from Bolivia and we worked with our new ELCA regional representative for southern South America, Gustavo, in taking the first steps in developing this new three-year plan. We will now write it up and have both Pastor Presidente Emillo and our Montana Bishop, Jessica Crist, review it and make suggestions for revision before formally accepting it. There will be specific steps for each year and an overall commitment to help both the Montana Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bolivia better understand our desire to grow our relationship with a renewed commitment to inter-culturality (realizing that we come from unique cultures that seek to understand each other better) and to the model of accompaniment (which means we walk together as partners in searching for ways for us to better live out our mission and ministry).

One goal will be have to a delegation from Bolivia come to our Montana Synod during the summer of 2017. The delegation will be comprised of youth and adults. We want to offer the youth an opportunity to be exposed to one, if not both, our church camps. If this part of the plan is accepted we will be asking for both financial support from our church and members of the Montana Synod to cover transportation costs and for hosts who will offer a few days to a week of hospitality for delegation members. I will share more information about this as the plans are developed and finalized.

During the consultation we learned that the Perurail would be shutdown for two days (to protest the lack of



access and cost for Peruvians to travel between Cusco and Machu Picchu). This threw a wrench into the plans of several attendees who were trying to include a visit to this world heritage site of the Inca people. Stacey and I made some last minute flight and rail changes so that we could spend a day at Macchu Picchu (and avoid the rail shutdown) but left us with two additional days in Cusco, which we utilized to visit more of the Inca sites in the Sacred Valley and around Cusco. The Inca culture and what they were able to achieve is so amazing. Sadly much of their heritage was destroyed by the Spanish who conquered them and, in many cases, forced them to accept Christianity and destroyed most of their temples or build Christian churches on top of them. The Spanish never found Machu Picchu so it remained "lost" until rediscovered by Hiram Bingham, an American archaeologist and politician who in 1911 initiated the scientific study of Machu Picchu. It is considered one of the "Seven Wonders of the World."

I am grateful to Bishop Crist for inviting me to attend the Consultation, for Hope Lutheran who endorsed my participation and gave me some days of vacation time to visit Machu Picchu and Cusco. Thank you also to Vicar Annie who provided pastoral coverage for me while I was away.

Together in Ministry and Mission,

Pastor Steve

Attention: Congregations and Pastors in Transition

We have been informed that the ELCA portal for pastors' RLPs and congregations' MSPs will be unavailable December 15 through January 17.

That means that nobody will be able to post or download. Please be aware of this.

2017 Salary Guidelines

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

Concordia College Christmas Concert



The Concordia Christmas concert will be rebroadcast on Montana PBS stations this year!

Broadcast times are:

December 24th 8pm

December 25th 1pm

Concordia College of Minnesota re-imagines the Christmas message with new music embracing peace and reconciliation under the artistic leadership of composer and conductor Rene Clausen. This concert production marks the 125th Anniversary of the College's founding by Norwegian immigrants. 400 student musicians perform in front of an original mural measuring nearly 200 feet wide.

For more info [click here](#)

Any questions should be directed to Doug Brekke of Big Timber Lutheran. 406-932-5400

The Progressive Clergy Network of Montana

The Progressive Clergy Network of Montana (PCNM) is a multi-denominational statewide network of clergy and faith leaders dedicated to the values of equality, justice, and supporting human rights in Montana. The mission of PCNM is to educate and advocate on behalf of progressive issues, as well as provide a support network for clergy in both urban and rural areas. PCNM welcomes faith leaders from all religious backgrounds, denominations, and locations within Montana to connect with each other, share resources, and work together towards creating a powerful faith-led voice in Montana's progressive movement.

Join Us for the Inaugural PCNM Retreat!

PCNM will workshop together, receive training in faith-based advocacy, and shape our mission, vision and voice. Furthermore, we will set our priorities for the 2017 Legislative Session.

Tuesday, December 6th from 10:00am-3:00pm St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Helena Please register for the retreat at:

<https://progressivedergynetworkmt.com/retreat-registration/>

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 letter to the Philippians with Dr. David Fredrickson.

Conference starts with supper Monday at 5pm and ends at noon on Wednesday. 11 Contact hours available.

For more information or to sign up: <http://www.montanasynod.org/nrit>

***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.

Giving thanks for the Synod

I have lots to be thankful for this Thanksgiving. I am especially thankful for the great response by the Montana Synod to the various appeals I have made for the people in the Adult Correctional Facility. A special thanks to First Lutheran of Havre and St. Jude Catholic Church for socks, and a multitude of books! Many thanks to the prayer shawl ministries of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Missoula and Northridge Lutheran in Kalispell; and Ms. Susan Hedahl for shawls, yarn and undergarments; to Carol Karres for coloring books and pencils; to Peace Lutheran in Billings for a generous monetary donation of \$500.00; to Pr. Avis of Glendive who keeps on giving; the Saspers of Choteau for their multiple donations, and to all who have given so generously of books. Wow, such love poured forth on behalf of Jesus!

I would like to share a story. One of the ladies has had many struggles. She has been in solitary at times for serious infractions. One Saturday after Word and Sacrament I showed the 2012 Youth gathering talk given by Pr. Bolz-Weber. The next Monday at bible study, a friend of hers drew me aside to let me know that for the first time in her friend's life, she feels loved by God. The next Saturday she was baptized and

now she wears the cross of Jesus. When she leaves she will be able to wrap herself in the warmth of a red prayer shawl - the love of Jesus - our hands, God's work. Thank you on behalf of these ladies. Happy Thanksgiving to all, Pr. Chris - Spirit of Life

PS It is getting cold here and there is a need for cold weather gear for the adult correctional facility so people can still have a chance to get fresh air. Because of the situation in prisons personal clothing is not possible. So, if you have some closet bound winter gear here is a chance to bring them out of the closet. Thanks.

Pastor Chris Holler-Dinsmore

WELCA News

[Click here for the full fall newsletter](#)



Montana Synod Winter Youth Gathering 2017

When: February 10-12, 2017

Where: Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Billings, MT.

Cost: \$50 (before January 13) (\$60 after January 13) Adult Leaders Free.

What: A youth Gathering for Jr. & Sr. High youth

Why: To Grow as Disciples of Jesus through togetherness, service, music and fun.

To register your group or for more information Contact Pastor Jason Asselstine at jasselstine@montanasynod.org #(406) 453-1461



For more information and to advertise in your congregation:

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

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

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!](#)

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**

The Synod Office has a New Address!

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

Montana Synod Opportunities:

The Luther 5 

November Newsbrief: Luther and the Devil

Our society today has paradoxical views of the devil. On the one hand, we think that we are rational creatures who can explain away any Biblical references to the devil or demon possession by referring to them as a guilty conscience, or physical or mental illness that people in previous centuries did not know how to properly diagnose, and therefore blamed on the devil. On the other hand, we like to scare ourselves with horror movies, and there are legitimately some things that happen in life that we simply can't explain away rationally. In this month's newsbrief, Paul Seastrand takes a look at what Luther thought about the devil. Contrary to the idea of the devil in a red suit with horns and a tail, Luther thought of the devil as a real spiritual presence that worked to tear people away from the true Gospel by using such tools as doubt and temptation. If you've ever had doubts about the baptismal questions which ask us to renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways, then this newsbrief is for you.

Download it here

Christikon Clips November 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!

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday November 13th at Big Timber Lutheran Church beginning at 3:30pm. Your appointed Delegates and Pastors will be hearing about this past summer and the plans for the 2017 season, cabin renovation, and much more. Thank you to Big Timber Lutheran Church for hosting!

We look forward to seeing you all there!

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!](#)



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.

January 13-15: Jr. & Sr. High Youth Ski Retreat

Come for an awesome time of food, fellowship, snow games, worship, skiing, and FUN! [CLICK HERE](#) for more information. 1 adult attends for free for every 10 youth!

[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.

February
10-12 Synod Youth Gathering



Please put these important dates on your calendar:

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.montanasynd.org](http://www.montanasynd.org)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)