



**Montana Synod**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

## **News of the Week, December 7, 2016**

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## **Prayers for December 11, 2016 Third Sunday of Advent**

### **Please remember in your prayers this week:**

For Pastor Rob Nedbalek's daughter Danyelle who is undergoing surgery on Friday.

### **From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:**

First Lutheran, Circle  
American Lutheran, Richey  
American Lutheran, Baker  
Peace Lutheran, Plevna  
St. Elizabeth's Lutheran, Ekalaka

North Carolina Synod  
South Carolina Synod



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## **Words From the Bishop: Deepen Faith and Witness - Advent: Fear into Hope**

"Do not be afraid." It's what the angels tell people when they encounter them. The Angel Gabriel reassures Mary-"Do not be afraid. For you have found favor with God." The Christmas Eve angel who speaks to the astounded shepherds says: "Do not be afraid; for see-I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people." At the tomb on Easter morning after the earthquake that rolled away the stone and terrified the guards, the angel who looked like lightning told the women-"Do not be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified."



"Do not be afraid." It is the good news for a fearful world. It is an alternate reality, one that is based on love and hope rather than power and intimidation. Jesus was born into a world dominated by the ruthless Roman Empire. The birth narrative in Luke has his birthplace dictated by a capricious emperor who insisted on people returning to their ancestors' birthplaces. The narrative in Matthew has him a refugee in Egypt because of a local tyrant's attempt to stamp out goodness by slaughtering all the babies. Jesus was born into a world in which there was much to be afraid of.

Many of us live in fear today-fear of a medical diagnosis, fear of failure, fear of natural disaster, fear of human-made disaster, fear of rejection, fear of the unknown. We all have fears, and we are all, more or less, captives to our fears.

We don't have to be. The Good News of Jesus Christ is that we do not have to be afraid. It is not that there are not challenges and dangers in our world, and in our lives. They are still there. But they do not have ultimate power over us. God does. And God has our backs.

Three decades ago in Advent I learned the difference between wishing and hoping. The unimaginable had happened-my husband was diagnosed with an aggressive and inoperable brain tumor. With all my being I wished it away. But wishing is like dreaming. It is ephemeral, self-absorbed and weak. It doesn't go anywhere. Hope comes from a different place-from outside our selves. Hope is powerful because hope comes from God.

Hope is God coming into the world as a vulnerable infant in occupied territory in a temporary homeless shelter, and then into exile as a persecuted refugee. Hope is Jesus not pulling rank on his tormentors, and instead enduring torture and death. Hope is the Resurrection in spite of all odds.

Hope is the gift of Advent to the world. "Do not be afraid."

Jessica Crist, Bishop

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## 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.

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## 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

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## 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

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**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**

These sessions attempt a reading of Paul's letter to the Philippians placed into conversation with ancient love poetry and the writings of the contemporary philosopher of religion, John D.

Caputo. So, what do ancient poems and Caputo have to do with Jesus? Both poetry and Caputo are fierce opponents of philosophy's (and theology's, too!) bad habit of ridding God of mystery and ridding you of that certain something that cannot be named but gets you out

of bed in morning. Call it faith. Call it love. Call it hope. Both Paul and Caputo (and me, too) are convinced that the metaphysical God of the philosophers (This is the God you are supposed to explain and defend when you get the question why did God do this? from grieving parishioners) actually gets in the way of faith, hope, love, and longing. But the philosophical, theological, metaphysical God, the God who holds the secret to all of our whys?, is the default setting for so much of our (and I take this word very seriously) talk about God. So these sessions, like Paul's letter to the Philippians itself and Caputo's forty plus year career, are dedicated to the questions How might we have faith? and How might God's name be saved?

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](http://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.*

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## WELCA News

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

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# 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](mailto: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](#)

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## 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](http://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](mailto: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**

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**The Synod Office has a New Address!**

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

**Montana Synod Opportunities:**

**The Luther 5**  

**December Newsbrief: Luther Porpourri for Facts and Fun**

**[Download it here](#)**

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**Christikon Clips  
December 2016**

During this holiday season we celebrate the Christikon family, spread across the country and world. Our community continues to grow both in numbers and in faithfulness to our God. Bring your family to Christikon next summer and experience its rich tradition and strength of connection to one another.

Blessings to you and yours this Advent and Christmas.

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](mailto:secretary@christikon.org) • [www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org)



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## 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!](#)*



### 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 \(cell\)](#)

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## [News of the Week Archive](#)

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

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