



News of the Week October 13, 2021

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

All of our Pastors and Deacons in the Montana Synod during this Clergy Appreciation Month. Also for all of our LPA's who carry out the important work of ministry.

For Pastor Brenda Frelsi, having surgery on her thumb tomorrow.

For Pastor Melissa Johansen, who was ordained on October 10th, starting her call at American Lutheran in Livingston.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Froid Lutheran Church, Froid
Fort Peck Lutheran Church, Fort Peck
Zion Lutheran Church, Fairview
Slovak Zion Synod



Words from the Synod Office: Equipping for Ministry Through Technology

-by Jenny Kunka

In the midst of the COVID response, the ELCA released grant money and encouraged that it be used for technology or other needs in synods. The Montana Synod decided to make the money available for technology improvements and invited any interested churches to apply for a technology grant. Because of the quick shift to online worship, there was a need to assist congregations as they worked to change how they communicated. Most of the grants were not large but were intended to be a help as congregations improved technological capabilities.

Over the course of the last year, the synod has disbursed \$10,000 to about sixteen congregations. No one was turned down. The following are examples of how three churches used the grants to help share the Gospel.

Pastor Tim Tharp at First Lutheran Church in Savage.

At First Lutheran Church, the grant was used to help off-set the costs of a new sound system and video broadcast system in the church. Features of this new system include wireless headset and lapel mics, wireless handheld mics, and corded mics. It all ties into a new sound-board that is in the balcony instead of in a back room to the side of the altar. This has greatly enhanced our Facebook live broadcasts as it feeds the audio directly into the streaming feed instead of an external video/audio source receiving the sound from the speakers in the sanctuary. In addition to this, we tied the audio/video feed to monitors throughout the rest of the church, including a large 85" TV in our brand-new fellowship hall, the basement (former fellowship hall area), and a classroom. This way, we can send the full experience of a service into multiple overflow areas during a large funeral or other event in the church.

I was never a fan of live-streaming services, but after COVID hit, this ministry became a priority. We now have regular Facebook worshipers who are consistent every single Sunday and people who are traveling, at the lake, or elsewhere on a Sunday morning have all reported that they 'attended' FLC via technology. Also, we only have services at Grace Lutheran in Skaar, ND every other week, but there are members who watch on Facebook on those off-Sundays.

Due to the installation of the large TV and the audio/video tied to monitors through the church, First Lutheran also now has the capability to provide a quality experience for "virtual" meetings and classes. Their technology can be used for synod-sponsored distance events, NRIT classes and any other online classes or trainings the church wants to offer to members of the congregation or community.

Pastor Seth Nelson at Faith Lutheran Church in Ronan

Faith Lutheran Church received a generous grant from the Montana Synod to help us install a video camera and audio system to livestream our worship services on YouTube. This project was first inspired by the temporary need to worship remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, but was given greater purpose and vision at a funeral we had in May of 2020. Several family members were unable to travel back for their grandmother's service, so we used a video camera to record the service which we then uploaded and made available online afterwards. Family members were able to attend the service remotely from Texas, Pennsylvania, New York, and as far away as Peru. We realized after the service, that families are far more spread out than they used to be and there is real ministry in livestreaming our services on a permanent basis. The grant we received from the Montana Synod helped us make this happen, and we are grateful for God's guidance and blessing on this expanded ministry opportunity.

For the first seven months of the pandemic, Pr. Seth pre-recorded services, which required about 20 hours a week of his time to shoot, edit together and publish. It was a recipe for burnout so the technology, which allows the church to livestream instead, has freed him from that burden.

Pastor Peter Erickson at Our Savior's Lutheran in Columbia Falls

At Our Savior's Lutheran, the grant money helped to buy a controller unit for a PTZ optics camera. The church had purchased the camera with their own money but only had a remote control which was clumsy. Having the controller, which includes a joystick, makes camera movements much smoother. It's easy to use and means that just about anyone can now run the camera – they simply follow the bulletin, press the right button at the right time, and the camera maneuvers into place and zooms in or backs out. The easy-to-use equipment expands the number of people who can help with streaming and recording.

Our Savior's also purchased an interface system so the sound from the recording goes into the computer and connects with the livestream. This means that people hear the actual audio from the sound system rather than the fuzzy audio from the whole room. Quality audio helps the online viewer feel closer and more connected to the worship service. Because there are people at Our Savior's who participate in the service only through Facebook and YouTube videos, the church is thankful to have the right equipment so they can provide quality recording and streaming.

Last, but not least, Our Savior's Lutheran used part of the grant money to buy a new external hard drive to store the numerous video files they've created.

Bishop's Convocation

The Bishop's Convocation will be held online, November 3rd and 4th, from 9:30 to noon both days. Please mark your calendars as attendance at the Bishops Convocation is required for all rostered leaders.

Chico Pastoral Conference Cancellation

Dearest Colleagues,

We are sorry to say that, for the third time, the Pastoral Retreat at Chico for the first week of November has been postponed. Due to the current surges within the state's hospitals, we do not feel it is appropriate to come together at this time.

We do plan to pursue a retreat at Chico the week after Easter next year, however we are currently striving to learn how to live with Covid.

Please remember to cancel or move your reservations to the week after Easter next year!

As of October 4th the Synod Staff will begin traveling for essential reasons only.

Also, masks are required in the Synod office and we ask that if you plan to come into the building for longer than a drop off, that you are vaccinated.

The Synod Office will be staffed, so please always feel free to contact us by phone or email.

The Montana Synod Staff will be providing a recorded sermon following the lectionary for any interested, especially those congregations currently without a pastor.

Check the Synod website every Friday or the Vimeo playlist [here](#). These will be provided every week now through the end of the year.

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