News of the Week
December 15, 2021

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For Pastor Audrey Rydbom (Pella Lutheran, Sidney) and her family as they mourn the death of her mother Shirley.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Shepherd
Grace Lutheran Church, Barber

Southwestern Texas Synod
Southwestern Washington Synod

The Gospel in Four Minutes or Less: God With Us
The Montana Synod welcomes new interim treasurer, Dave Scholten.

Dave is a member of Bethel Lutheran Church in Great Falls, Montana and lives in Ulm. He has worked a variety of jobs in the banking industry and currently runs an audit and consulting firm which has grown over the years from one bank client in Dutton, to dozens of community and regional banks throughout the western United States. His work allows him to travel, work hard, and try to be as kind and encouraging as an auditor can be.

Dave was born in Minnesota and raised in the Reformed Church of America. His first experience with Montana was as a five-year-old on a family trip to Yellowstone where he was bitten by a bear. Through that trip he fell in love with the mountains but is still a little afraid of bears.

As an adult, Dave moved to Montana and raised a family with his wife, Tamy. They have two adult children: Bridger (married to Natalie) and Aiyana.

In 2012, Dave and his family became part of Bethel Lutheran and the ELCA. He completed LPA training in 2016 and coaching training in 2019 and is now stepping in to complete Sue Ost’s term as Sue leaves to focus on other opportunities. A new treasurer will be elected at the 2022 Synod Assembly.

Through the varying ways he is involved in the church, Dave is excited to be part of a rich tradition and sees challenges as opportunities for richer, fuller, deeper relationships with God and one another.

Disaster Response

Dear Friends of the Montana Synod,
Some of you have reached out in generosity wondering how you might assist the people of Denton and Great Falls after the destructive fires last week. Thank you for your willingness to help your neighbor in need!

The Montana Synod has a Disaster Relief Fund set up to assist congregations and communities after a disaster such as a fire. And we have a coordinator, Dick Deschamps, who connects us with the other disaster relief personnel on the ground so that we can best help meet unmet needs that are not offered by other organizations or resources. We have already begun that communication with the proper persons in those communities to discover how we can helpfully respond to the recovery effort of the fires at both Denton and in Great Falls. But because the recovery is still in the beginning stages, we are still in learning mode.

If individuals or congregations would like support these communities or others in the MT Synod during their time of need after a disaster, including the Denton and Great Falls fires, please encourage them to send a donation to the MT Synod disaster relief fund for our use in responding to this disaster and others. That can happen through the website by clicking the GIVE link at the bottom of the home page or by sending a check to the synod office (no cash please). Just indicate that it should go to the Lutheran Disaster Response and it will be used for those purposes.

Also, if your community ever experiences a disaster such as a fire, these funds are available for you and your congregation to use to help support people with unmet needs. While this fund is not bursting with money, we can offer some assistance. Please contact Bishop Laurie, Dick Deschamps or the Synod Office for more information on how to receive some funding assistance after a disaster.

Rev. Dr. Laurie Jungling  
Bishop, Montana Synod ELCA  
ljungling@montanasynod.org  
Office: 406-453-1461
Invitation to Vital Congregations Training for Leaders

Is your congregation ready to take some steps (even small steps) toward renewal or revitalization? Are you ready to try some new things, share some ideas, gain a greater understanding of the broader mission, bring clarity about your own congregation's mission, acquire knowledge on how to live that out in community, gain confidence to share what you have learned with the world, and find new allies from within a cohort of congregations? Then, you are invited to attend the 2022 Spring Session of the ELCA Vital Congregations Re-BOOT Camp.
This is a fast paced co-creative and co-experimental RE-BOOT CAMP facilitated by leaders with steep experience in redeveloping congregations as well as added guest presenters from a variety of settings with a wealth of knowledge. These principles and more will be explored: focusing on Jesus and justice, being expectant of the Holy Spirit, living as disciples of Jesus, multiplying leaders who are young, diverse and bring fresh insights, and aligning with purpose and core values.

This will be a four-session training. The training sessions will be held two times per day from 1:30-3:00 p.m. (eastern time) and from 7:30-9:00 p.m. (eastern time) on January 13th, January 27th, February 3rd and February 17th. You may choose the best time each day that works for you. All sessions will be recorded and available to all registered participants. Pastors and congregations are encouraged to come as teams of 3–5 people for a time of inspiration, learning, planning, sharing, experimenting, visioning, and implementing. NOTE: This training is for people who did NOT attend the Vital Congregations Re-BOOT Camp in 2021.

For more information please contact your synod’s DEM (Director for Evangelical Mission), or contact Neil Bullock at Neil.Bullock@elca.org (773) 380-2884 or Rev. Anna-Kari Johnson (773) 990-0814 Anna-Kari.Johnson@elca.org

All courses will be coordinated by DEM Rev Nancy Nyland, and team in partnership with the ELCA Christian Community and Leadership Congregational Vitality Team.

With our thanks and prayers for you all in Jesus Christ, Beautiful Savior,

Anna-Kari

Pastor Anna-Kari Joy L. Johnson
Associate Director for Congregational Vitality
ELCA Christian Community and Leadership
773.990.0814 (cell)
773.380.2467 (w) or 800.638.3522, ext. 2467 (w)
Anna-Kari.Johnson@elca.org
ELCA.org | blogs.elca.org/congregationalvitality

Click here to download the Vital Congregations PowerPoint

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. There will be no sermon provided for January 2nd.
Synod Staff:

Bishop
Laurie Jungling: ljungling@montanasynod.org

Associate to the Bishop
Pastor Jason Asselstine: jasselstine@montanasynod.org

Director for Evangelical Mission
Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger: ppleuzinger@montanasynod.org

Director of Technology and Communications
Colter McCarty: cmccarty@montanasynod.org

Office Manager
Candi Standall: cstandall@montanasynod.org

Director of NRIT
Jenny Kunka: j.kunka@nrit.org

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