



Montana Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Equipping for Ministry

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!

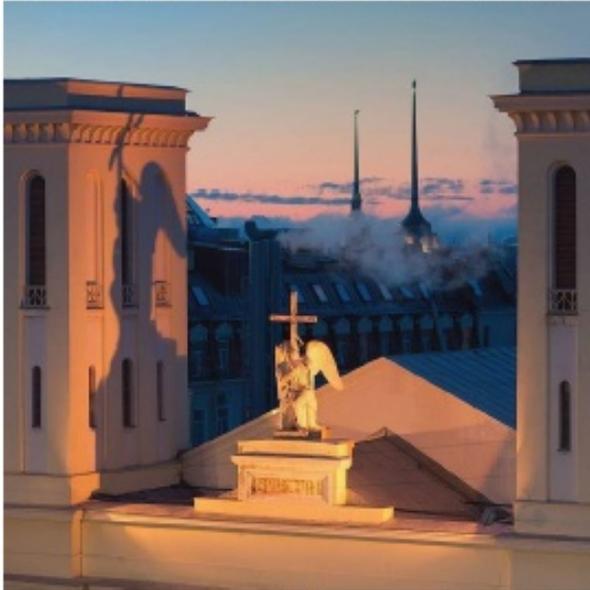
The Montana Synod has a Disaster Relief Fund set up to assist congregations and communities after a disaster such as a fire. And we have a coordinator, Dick Deschamps, who connects us with the other disaster relief personnel on the ground so that we can best help meet unmet needs that are not offered 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.

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General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia



“Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed.” - these words from Jeremiah 17 were the theme of the 5th General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia (ELCR), held October 15-16 on the premises of the Theological Seminary in the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in St. Petersburg (*photo left*).

This biennial meeting of the western and eastern parts of the Russian church focused on church administration and representation, theological education, confessional identity, public relations, and other common issues of ministry.

Among the items of on the agenda was my presentation of the results of three years of committee work on a new, comprehensive liturgical resource that includes settings for Sunday worship, special holy day worship services, occasional services, commentary, and everything related to the lectionary. All in all, almost 500 pages of materials have been prepared for a “test run” on congregations throughout the country.

At present the materials have been distributed as non-bound hard copies which can be placed into folders (also provided) for use during worship; the resource is also available in electronic format for those who would prefer to print on their own or use a projector. This trial version of the liturgical resource was given to synod delegates so that they might further distribute it and test it out in the “real life” conditions of their congregations. Evaluation forms are to be filled out by the middle of 2022, and the comments and requests made by congregational leaders will be considered for further editing and improvement. If all goes according to plan, the final version will be ready for approval at the next General Synod, followed by publication in book format.



Pastor Viktor Weber (TS '12) was installed as the new area dean of central Russia using the new order of installation the service book.

[Click here to download the full advent newsletter!](#)

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

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[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.

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