



News of the Week January 11, 2023

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For Pastor Brenda Frelsi as she begins her ministry as Associate to the Bishop for the Montana & Northern Wyoming Synod, and the whole synod staff in this time of transition.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Messiah Lutheran Church, Red Lodge
Trinity Lutheran Church, Lenep



The synod office will be closed on Monday, the 16th in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Annual Meeting Letter from Bishop Jungling

In these times, I see God because I trust we are closer to God now than we were before. As our reliance on our own ways, goals and identities is peeled back layer by layer, we can begin to see more clearly God's presence with us and the new things that God has

been, is and will be doing among us. We see through a glass dimly, for sure, but with open eyes, hearts and wills, we can see.

And not only does God appear more present to us during this time, but our Spirit-given faith (trust) tells us that “God is Able.” This sermon title from Martin Luther King Jr. are words that I have been living with a lot over the past months: that God is indeed able. I think we forget that at times and begin to believe it is all up to us. But God is able to bring abundance out of scarcity. God is able to bring hope out of despair. God is able to bring life out of death. God is able to do all this and more again and again.



It's in the liminal spaces that the God-epiphany is revealed to us when we are open to seeing it. It's also in the liminal times that we need to cling to the promise that God is truly with us always, whether we feel it or not. And then, when we trust in this truth and the transformation that comes with it, we can participate in God's “new thing doings” by walking humbly with the God who is able, by doing our best to let go of the former things and by letting the Spirit work through Christ's Church to equip us for the ministry of the gospel.

I want to thank you for the ministry of the gospel you through each of your congregations and ministries have been doing in your threshold places in the Montana/N. Wyoming Synod. Thank you for the many resources, including the financial resources, you have shared with the synod, the ELCA and our ministries over the past year. These gifts are crucial to the equipping work we are doing with and for you. Thank you for the on-going service and generosity to “the least of these” through your love and justice work in your communities, this state and nation and across the world. And finally thank you for standing in the threshold with me so that we can support each other in these liminal times, sharing the new things from God that are springing forth around us.

May God bless you with new life, new possibilities and new hope in the year ahead!

With Gratitude and in Christ's Love,

Rev. Laurie Jungling
Bishop, Montana Synod, ELCA

[Download the full letter from Bishop Jungling here!](#)



“In Christ, all things in heaven and on earth were created...” (Col 1:16)

This is the verse that comes to mind for me when I think of the role that the “Creation Care and Changing Climate Task Force” is playing in the Montana/N. Wyoming Synod. As weather and climate related disasters monopolize our news and as people continue to live in relationship with a changing creation, the work that the CCCC Task Force is doing is crucial not only to our physical lives but our spiritual lives.

This is God's creation, created in and through Christ, and we are called to care for and

steward the creation God has provided, certainly for ourselves and the full creation and creatures that exist today but also for future generations. How we live in relationship with creation intersects with how we live in relationship with God.

As the letter below shares, the synod task force is doing thoughtful and specific work to guide us as a synod so that we can fulfill our part in caring for the fullness of creation. They offer a variety of opportunities to plug into ways that we can participate in God's on-going creative actions and are working to provide resources that can fit specific contexts across the synod.

Thank you to the "Montana and N. Wyoming Synod Creation Care and Changing Climate Task Force" for your willingness to walk with us and lead on this important journey of responding to climate challenges while trusting in what God is still doing in and for creation.

-Bishop Jungling



The Synod "Creation Care and Changing Climate Task Force" consists of church members and clergy from across the wide span of our Synod boundaries. The task force has spent many months establishing a vision and mission for implementation by our Synod congregations. We recognized early in our deliberations that the task force members alone cannot do the work that our founding resolution tasked us to pursue and that the key to having an impact on our environment is through the work of dedicated members of each congregation.

The task force had developed expertise and informational materials for four pillars of our mission:

1. Encouraging and Supporting the Move to Solar
2. Establishing Regenerative Ranching and Grassland Management Partnerships
3. Providing Worship Opportunities and Liturgy Materials
4. Promoting Youth Engagement

The link that follows is a letter to all our Synod colleagues in Christ. This letter further explains the why and what of our plan; please take a minute to open it and the short video that it contains. Our "Ask" is that each congregation find one or more of the pillars that are of interest and allow our task force members to advise and guide you through an exploration/implementation process.

[Creation Care and Changing Climate Letter](#)



A Message from the Board of Directors

Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry is a ministry of the Montana Synod. We, through the generous support of our donors, provide a pastor inside Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge, Montana, to provide worship services, Bible studies, pastor visits, funerals, and guidance to the men in their faith journeys.

Pastor Rob Nedbalek, pastoral leader of the ministry, retired on January 1, 2023. The Board thanks Pastor Rob for his service and ministry to the men inside since 2012 when Freedom in Christ was founded. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

The Board and the leadership inside the Prison are committed to continuing to empower this ministry as we move forward. We are, and have been for some time, engaged in strategic planning and exploring new possibilities for Freedom in Christ in the future.

The Board has selected a new pastoral leader for FIC who is completing the hiring process. We are confident this new leader will be instrumental in strengthening the ministry for the sake of the men inside. This person will be introduced as soon as the hiring process is complete.

We thank all those in the Montana Synod who have supported the ministry since its beginning and look forward to continuing to share with all in the Montana Synod of the ELCA and beyond about the important and life-changing work for and with the men inside Montana State Prison. Please check out the website at <https://ficprisonministry.com> for more information.

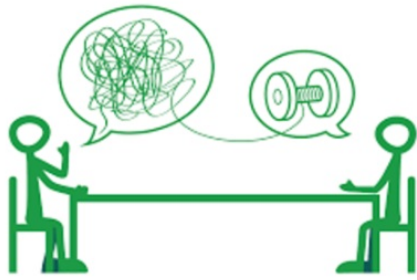
The current members of the Freedom in Christ Board are:

Rev. Kris Mitzman (Billings), Chair
Allen Hansen (Roberts), Vice-Chair
Rev. Paul Anderson (Hamilton), Secretary
Michael Johns, C.P.A. (Deer Lodge), Treasurer
Rev. Doug Anderson (Missoula)
Bea Rosenleaf, Executive Director
Rev. Peggy Paugh Leuzinger (Livingston) D.E.M. & Board Liaison

As we take our first steps into 2023, can we engage with the idea of new beginnings in a way that is hopeful yet realistic, faithful yet flexible, compassionate yet just?

Coaching can help with those transitions and all the others that we are face each day. It's a safe, confidential way to explore

Coach's Corner



ideas, work on alternative actions and options, and work out old frustrations looking for different answers. Montana Synod has coaches ready to help you discover your potential and find new energy.

***We are here to help, not direct, and not mentor.
It's your ideas, your plans, and your dreams.***

<https://www.montanasynod.org/coaching-in-the-montana-synod.html>

Contact: Ps. Peggy Paugh Leuzinger , DEM

for Montana Synod at: ppleuzinger@montanasynod.org
Or: Marilyn Hall, Montana Synod Coaching Coordinator at:
marilynlovestocamp@yahoo.com

Discernment Event for Intentional Interim Ministry

offered by Lutheran Transitional Ministry Association (LuTMA)

Am I being called to serve as an Intentional Interim Pastor? A 2-hour online discernment workshop will be offered on Tuesday, January 24, 1pm--3pm Central Time Zone. Register at [Lutheran Transitional Ministry Association](#)

[Download the 2022 Annual Report cover & Letter from Bishop Eaton here!](#)

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