



## Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

## News of the Week January 13, 2021

### Prayers of the Week

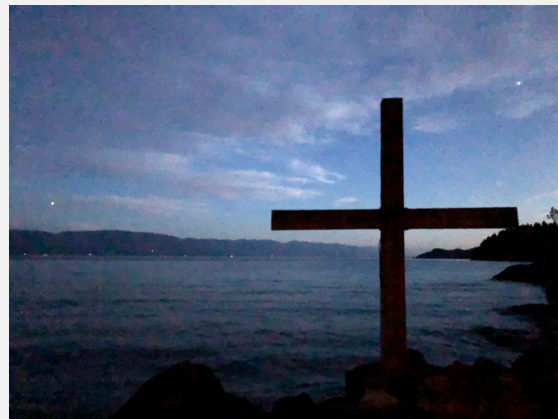
**Please remember in your prayers this week:**

For all experiencing loss and sickness due to the Covid 19 surge in cases and all those who work to treat those who are sick.

**From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:**

American Lutheran Church, Harlowton  
First American Lutheran Church, Hardin

Western Iowa Synod



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As people who pray, we turn to God as our nation experiences turmoil and conflict:  
God of all the ages, in your sight nations rise and fall, and pass through times of peril.  
Now when our land is troubled, be near to judge and save.

May leaders be led by your wisdom; may they search your will and see it clearly.  
If we have turned from your way, reverse our ways and help us to repent.

Give us your light and your truth, let them guide us; through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of  
this world, and our Savior.

Amen.

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### Words from the Bishop: *God's Law*

What is God doing in the world? As we go through these days of division that have reached the point of violence or threatened violence against the foundations of our society, we may be wondering "Where is God in this?" and "**What is God calling us do and be right now?**"

This is a paralyzing question in the midst of the

anxiety and fear and anger we may feeling. But perhaps some guidance directly from God Word (Law and Gospel) may be helpful in naming one of the most important ways God is showing up right now as you wrestle with how God is calling you to live into this time and place.

So I offer you this reminder in less than 2+ pages of what God's Law states to us. Note that this comes from Scripture, Luther's Small and Large Catechism, some familiar words from the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution, and bit of my own work in Christian Ethics. It's longer than usual so you may want to read on a computer or print it out rather than trying to read on your phone.



[Click here to download and read the full message](#)

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[Click here to download the Annual Meeting Letter from Bishop Laurie Jungling](#)

## Synod Council Spotlight



*Rev. Jessica Obrecht lives in Fairfield, MT and serves as the pastor of Grace Lutheran Church and St. Paul Lutheran Church. She also serves on the Board of Directors at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp and as the ELCA World Hunger Synod Coordinator*

During my time on the Synod Council I have learned about the many ways that the churches of the Montana Synod work together to support and uplift one another behind the scenes. I have met many leaders across the state, and have enjoyed hearing about all the exciting ministries happening throughout the Synod.

I feel that I am living out my faith by serving on the synod council because at the end of the day we are the BODY of Christ and we need one another in this journey of discipleship. Working on the Synod Council allows me to work with many parts of that body, and to learn and grow through those relationships.

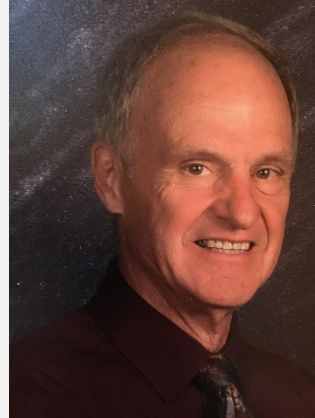
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I am Allen Hansen, a member of the executive committee on the council. I live in Roberts and worship at Messiah Lutheran in Red Lodge.

I have been a Lay Pastoral Associate since 2018 and a Biblical Storyteller since 2011. I grew up in Sidney, graduated from Billings West, and retired to Montana in 2009 after professional careers on the East Coast. I served in the Navy, the Merchant

Marine, and in Higher Education for thirty-five years.

I was fortunate to be on synod council during the selection process for a bishop. This is an interesting and moving process that certainly raised my awareness of the structure and function of the synod. I particularly appreciate that Bishop Laurie challenges us to remember that we, all the congregations, entities, and individual members, constitute Montana Synod. Synod staff and council are servants to the synod as a whole.



I have also come to appreciate in this period of a pandemic, the need for the Cluster arrangement within the synod. This structure can greatly enhance communication among congregations and between synod staff/council and congregations.

I would refer to Paul's pronouncement in 1 Corinthians 3:8-10 to explain how God works through me, as a member of the council, to build on the foundation that Christ laid.



## Winter Thursdays (and 1 Tuesday) with NRIT

### Grief: A Class in 3 Sessions

**Jan 21 Class 1 – Complicated Grief**, 10am to Noon

**Jan 26 Class 2 – Congregational Grief**, 1pm to 3pm

**Feb 4 Class 3 – Traumatic Grief**, 10am to Noon

Classes are two hours each. Registration includes all three classes. Attend as you are able.

### Vital Congregations: What are they and how do they do it?

**Feb. 11**, 10 to noon

Most people in a congregation wonder at some point how their congregation is doing and how it could be a center for God's mission. What are the signs of life and health in congregations? This can be an anxiety producing question. We worry sometimes about "survival". We yearn and grieve for days that are past and wonder about what God might be doing in the days to come.

There are layers of grief, but there are also signs of hope and life and dare we even say, new life, in congregations today!

**Free Class.**

**To register:** [www.montanasynd.org](http://www.montanasynd.org) – Click on the "Faith Formation" tab, top of the page and click on NRIT. Scroll down to find these class.

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**Synod Staff:**

Bishop

Laurie Jungling: [ljungling@montanasynod.org](mailto:ljungling@montanasynod.org)

Associate to the Bishop

Pastor Jason Asselstine: [jasselstine@montanasynod.org](mailto:jasselstine@montanasynod.org)

Director for Evangelical Mission

Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger: [ppleuzinger@montanasynod.org](mailto:ppleuzinger@montanasynod.org)

Director of Technology and Communications

Colter McCarty: [cmccarty@montanasynod.org](mailto:cmccarty@montanasynod.org)

Office Manager

Candi Standall: [cstandall@montanasynod.org](mailto:cstandall@montanasynod.org)

Director of NRIT

Jenny Kunka: [j.kunka@nrit.org](mailto:j.kunka@nrit.org)

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