



Montana Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Equipping for Ministry

News of the Week January 19, 2022

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

Prayers of celebration on the Ordination of Pastor Joshua Wyman, who was ordained January 15th. Pastor Wyman is called to First American Lutheran in Hardin, MT.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

American Lutheran Church, Harlowton
First American Lutheran Church, Hardin

Western Iowa Synod



Words from the Synod: People's Food Sovereignty Program

-by Jenny Kunka

"Feeding hungry people has long been a valued ministry of our church," wrote Rev. Melanie Martin-Dent, pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran in Polson, Montana in a recent communication. Her letter was written to share details about the People's Food Sovereignty Program on the Flathead Reservation. As the Flathead Cluster pastors have learned more of this program, they've wanted to tell others and find out how to support this effort to feed our neighbors.

The People's Food Sovereignty Program was established in 2020 by Patrick Yawakie and Regina Mad Plume. It is a Native-led, nonprofit, grassroots organization, serving Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribal members and other tribal people living on the reservation.

Yawakie said they started by going door to door, delivering meat to tribal households. Soon, with the help

of grants, they were able to expand their capacity by purchasing freezers, trailers and paying for meat processing. As the program grew, more people became involved, Yawakie said. Local hunters donated deer and elk as did the Bison Range. Additionally, some meat processors have allowed the non-profit to purchase deer and elk that haven't been claimed.

"Our program has created a lot of partnerships in the tribal and non-tribal community, locally and nationally," Yawakie said.

Last winter, the food sovereignty program distributed over 2,000 lbs of elk and deer meat to tribal homes and this winter, two hundred families have applied for participation in the program.

As the program expanded, Yawakie and Mad Plume saw the chance to educate people about indigenous food and nutrition and decided to start a gardening network. The gardening project began with 50 households last summer with local partners and the University of Montana helping provide dirt, tools and seeds.

"We're trying to get garden food to the household and also to educate families about gardening and healthy food," Yawakie said. "This includes looking at health disparities and ills in our community. It starts with what you put into your body in your diet. Traditional meats, more localized meats and having a better understanding of where our food is coming from."

Going forward, the People's Food Sovereignty Program will be implementing a garden with a local school, focused on creating a garden classroom. Mad Plume, a teacher and Yawakie are working to create a curriculum for the school to use with the garden.

When asked about the term "Food Sovereignty," Yawakie explained that it was coined at UN conferences focusing on food insecurity. He said that indigenous people are taking on leadership within their homelands to ensure their cultures are preserved. This includes traditional food sources and ways of processing and cooking their foods.

Food Sovereignty, however, isn't only of importance on tribal lands. Yawakie said. It's also of importance in other rural areas where the movement is advocating that, instead of a national food system, people would have access to more local foods and include more local farmers and ranchers.

The movement only happens through partnerships, and this is what is occurring on the Flathead Reservation where tribal members, local hunters, farmers and ranchers, tribal government, schools, the local college, university and church communities are working together to feed people year around.

The work of the People's Food Sovereignty Program also speaks to the Montana Synod Racial Justice Task Force and the resolution establishing the task force saying that, "each congregation and individual be encouraged to live out their baptismal covenant, finding ways to advocate for racial justice through word and deed."

As Pastor Martin-Dent said, "This work is in alignment with our values as a church, accompanying people in the community who are doing good work. This is a work that would be good for the church to support."

*To learn more, check out People's Food Sovereignty Program on [Facebook](#)
Or Contact Patrick Yawakie at 612-964-9795 or Pr. Melanie Martin-Dent at 406-883-5864*

*Food producers can work with the program to donate beef, game or produce.
Congregations can donate through Indigenous Vision, a 501(c)(3) non-profit umbrella group.*



Free Class for Pastors and Lay Leaders

Registration closes Tuesday, January 25th!

Sponsored by the Montana Synod and NRIT.

We wanted to share this class with you as we continue to be physically and mentally impacted by COVID and other stressors. Please join us Jan 27th and Feb 3rd – one hour each day – for a Zoom we hope you'll find helpful. *Class will be recorded for those unable to attend.*

Trauma in our Bodies and Brains: What is trauma and how does it impact us? Join Dr. Betsy Stone to learn why your sleep is disrupted and your brain isn't functioning as it used to.

Thursday, January 27th from 10am to 11am.

Post-traumatic Growth: Not all trauma stops us in our tracks. Some of us actually grow from trauma. Learn about the arenas of posttraumatic growth, and think about how you might build them in yourselves, your families and your congregants.

Thursday, February 3rd from 10am to 11am.

Taught by Dr. Betsy Stone, a retired clinical psychologist who currently teaches as an adjunct lecturer at HUC-JIR, teaching pastoral and developmental topics in the School of Education.

Betsy consults on program development and community building. During the COVID-19 crisis, Betsy has led webinars on Trauma, Resilience and Post-Traumatic Growth for congregations, Rabbis, Hillels, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, The Jewish Teen Funders Network, Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Education Project.

Although this class is free, you will need to register in order to receive the link. Go to the [NRIT home page](#) on the synod website. Contact Jenny Kunka at j.kunka@nrit.org or 406-396-1398 with questions.



**Are you streaming your service? We want to put together a list on our website of all the congregations in the Montana Synod that have their services online and available to the public. Please send any links to Colter in the Synod office,
cmccarty@montanasynod.org**

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