Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For Pastor Tim Tostengard, ALC, Billings, recuperating from surgery

For the people of Ukraine, and all those who are suffering senseless violence and aggression.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Polson
First Lutheran Church, Plains
Central/Southern Illinois Synod

Synod Ministry Spotlight: Confluence
-by Jenny Kunka

For most of us, a quick glance at our pews on a Sunday morning is all that’s needed to see that young people are missing from our congregations. This, however, doesn’t mean that young adults aren’t looking for something that feeds them spiritually, according to John Lund. Lund is the ELCA campus pastor at the University of Montana and director of Emmaus
Campus Ministry. He and other leaders in Missoula have talked with young adults who have grown up in the church, worked at our Lutheran camps and possibly been involved with campus ministry, but who are not going to church.

“These are our best and brightest, upcoming leaders,” Lund said, adding that often these young people say they miss the community they felt at camp or church.

“They miss having a space where they can have deep meaningful conversations, but they don’t perceive our Sunday morning church as a place where that happens,” Lund said. At the same time, they have a desire to find a welcoming grace-based-everybody-belongs community.

In response to the need for a place where people can have conversations about tough topics and find a faith-based community, a group of leaders in Missoula started Confluence, a weekly gathering that welcomes participants of all ages to meet for something a little bit different.

Rebekah Cochrane, a member of the leadership team for Confluence, said they gather on the first and third Sunday evenings at the UCC church in Missoula. “Our gatherings are a time of contemplation and conversation,” she said. They include elements of contemplative worship, singing, the telling of biblical stories and the reading of poetry and prose. The gathering provides a place to reflect on the readings as well as a place for participants to share their own stories.

“The whole gathering is guided by different rituals,” Cochrane said, “We have liturgical movement but have an expansive understanding of what that means. The liturgy opens up the space to connect to music, stories and each other.”

Confluence also plans social events about four times a year. “We’re hoping that people are finding ways to connect with each other to build and rebuild relationships. We hope this space can create and deepen relationships,” Cochrane said.

Confluence has a shared leadership model so that everyone, even the leaders and local pastors, can come and participate without being the person in charge. That way everyone gets fed. “It has been beautiful, the trust that we all share to do leadership like that,” Cochrane said.

Although Confluence began with and continues to focus on young adults, they’ve been surprised by the age diversity of participants, including children, retirees and all ages in between.

Confluence is not connected to any one church, they do see themselves as a partnering ministry of the area. “We don’t need to be separate,” Lund said. “We can be an arm of our Five Valley churches. A group that can explore and lean into the harder questions and harder conversations and give space for that to happen for people who might already be part of our other churches.”

Confluence Leadership Team: Rebekah Cochrane, Lars Anderson, Colter Murphy, Karin Craven, Kalani Padilla and John Lund.
Greetings Friends and Supporters,

The Rev. Rachel and I wanted to reach out to you to share a brief update on the situation in Central and Eastern Europe. We put together a 2-minute video that you can watch here. Please feel free to share this on your social media feeds and/or with your congregation.

Please continue to pray for our partner churches in the region—and the incredible work that they are doing to show God’s love and mercy to people in a great hour of need. Pray for all those in Central and Eastern Europe who are affected by this situation, and most of all, pray for a swift and merciful end to the violence.

For those of you wishing to financially support our partner churches who are doing the work on the ground to respond to the needs of refugees, you can donate here.

Finally, we’ve attached to this email is a bulletin insert created by ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response that might be a helpful resource for you. There are many strong relationships between the ELCA and Lutheran companions in the region who are acutely impacted by this conflict, we’re also attaching a document that summarizes some of the current responses of our partners and ELCA support.

In Christ,

Pastor Zach

Zachary Courter
he / him / his
ELCA Missionary
**Fundraising Appeal for Our Saviour's Lutheran Church on the Rocky Boy's Reservation**

[Click here](#) for the latest edition of the TeePee Smoke newsletter and [click here to support](#) their ongoing ministry, serving the community.

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**Time to register for the Chico Hot Springs Pastoral Conference!**

[Click here](#) to go to the registration page and to find out speaker and registration info, as well as instructions on how to make sure you have a room at Chico!
2022 Hetzel Grant Applications are now available.

Agencies, institutions, and ministries which serve the elderly and youth in the Montana Synod of the ELCA are eligible to apply for grant assistance from the Hetzel Foundation.

ELCA organizations are eligible to apply, provided that they demonstrate evidence of project partnership, participation, and/or investment from within an ELCA entity. For example, a non-ELCA affiliate could ask an ELCA church to co-author the grant with them. The application deadline is March 15, 2022.

Go to our website for more information and to download the application.

www.hetzelfoundation.org

Click here to download the application

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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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