



## News of the Week March 22, 2023

# Prayers of the Week

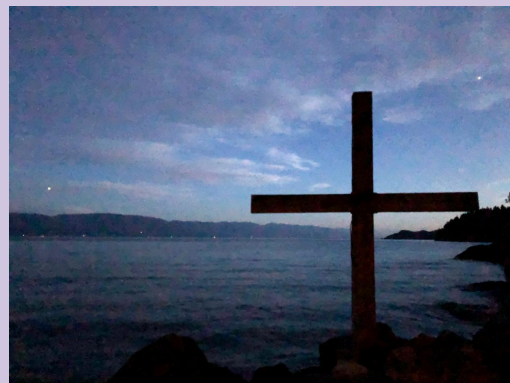
**Please remember in your prayers  
this week:**

For open minds, eyes, and hearts as we seek the most loving and just ways to follow Christ in our communities, state, nation, and world.

**From the Montana Synod Prayer  
Calendar:**

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,  
Polson  
First Lutheran Church, Plains

Central/Southern Illinois Synod



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## Words from the Bishop: New Perspectives

A couple of years ago I had cataract surgery and it changed my life. When I was seven, I started wearing glasses and every year they got thicker. Thank God for contact lenses! But both glasses and contacts came with a price – when I took them off, I could hardly see where I was going. While I wasn't living in the dark, life without my contact lenses or glasses was a big blur.

But now I can see! Not perfectly, but much more clearly. Thank God for the surgical gifts of those able to insert new lenses into my



eyes. Now on those dark starry nights when I'm camping, I don't have to fumble for glasses to find my way to the restroom at 2 a.m. I can just see the amazing beauty of God's creation shining in the dark. My life changed because now I can see in a new way.

Maybe that's what we as church and society need today, a spiritual, psychological, emotional form of cataract surgery. For it seems like there are a lot of people stumbling around in blurry darkness as we try to live together in the face of polarized realities and too much suffering in our world. This blurriness is made even worse as some people try hard to keep us blind and stupid as we who would follow Christ work to see the world through God's lenses of trust, hope, and unconditional loving kindness for all people.

What happens to us when we find ourselves stuck in the dark without any light? Many years ago, before cell phones, some friends and I took a tour of Lewis & Clark caverns. Part of the tour involved getting deep into the caverns and then shutting all the lights off so we could experience what full darkness felt like.

Even though I was prepared for it, the lack of light was a shock. My heart started beating faster, my breath sped up, my fight/flight/freeze instinct started to kick in. When my friend grabbed my arm in her fear, I jumped ready to defend myself against what I couldn't see. Time slowed down, my logical brain stopped working and the only thing I could think was "stay away from me."

That's what happens when we're stuck in the dark, whether the darkness of our eyes, our minds, or our hearts. We feel lost, scared, unable to think clearly. We become focused only on ourselves and what we're feeling. The humanity of other people disappears into a one-dimensional abstraction and they feel like a threat to us. Everybody we don't understand becomes a stranger, different than us, out to get us. And in our fear, our instinct is to protect ourselves and those we love from those we believe (often wrongly) are monsters in our darkness rather than the complex human beings created in the image of God that they truly are.

This is happening a lot in our society today. Because our sight is blurred or blinded with the cataracts of confusion, misunderstanding or fright, we see people of different political parties, races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, economic classes, religions, and so many other identities as a threat. And so we try to silence them, dismiss them, even drive them out from our midst, the same way the religious leaders did in last Sunday's text from the gospel of John. (Jn 11:34)

But the truth is that Jesus came into the world to change our perspectives, to cleanse our eyes from the dark cataracts clouding them, to open our eyes to the worth and dignity of all people and the whole creation. Jesus Christ is the light of the world and he calls us to be children of the light!

Changing our perspective alone is hard. We need the Holy Spirit to transform us, to give us the sight of Jesus Christ, and implant God's lenses in our eyes the way new lenses were put into my eyes during my cataract surgery. That's the Holy Spirit's job – to give us new eyesight so that we can see like Christ.

And when we see through Christ's eyes, we see through God's lenses of love, light, and hope. We see through faith which trusts that God is able to and in fact does walk with us through the shadowed valleys of death and brings new life.

Seeing through Christ's eyes reveals the amazing good news that we each – you and me and yes, even those we fear in our darkness, are beloved children of God. When we see through Jesus's lenses of love, we don't judge people into sin or hell for who we think they are but rather focus our eyes on the logs in our own eyes and welcome the Spirit's work in removing them. When we see through God's lenses of love, we don't conflate any earthly nation with God's kingdom (they are never the same) and instead recognize that God's way, truth, and life in Jesus Christ is radically different than any ideology we humans try to construct or defend.

How do we receive this gift of new perspective? In our baptisms. In our daily and eternal baptism, we receive the amazing grace of "once being lost in the darkness but now found, once being blind but now able to see." In baptism, every day our eyes are washed and implanted with the Spirit's lenses so we can live the way of Christ. In baptism, we are able

to see Christ who forgives, heals, brings us into healthy, whole, holy relationship with God and our neighbors – even and especially those we fear, don't understand, or want to drive out from our presence.

In baptism, God's love is poured into and over you so that your entire perspective changes and you are transformed to love the world God loves. All of it! God's love changes how you see. And when you see through Christ's eyes instead of eyes of fear, you can't help but want to live the way of Christ who welcomes all.

So at the end of the day, it's all a matter of perspective, of how and through whose eyes we see. We can make the choice to see differently when we let the Spirit heal our eyes and transform them into Christ's eyes. And when that happens, everything changes – a new world is opened to us and we live as beloved children of God, risen from the dead, bathed in the shining love of Christ, and seeking all that is good and right and true, even in the darkest valleys. So let us walk as children of the light on Christ's way together.

God's blessings to you all!

Bishop Laurie

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## 2023 Assembly Information

Registration information will be available in next week's news!

Check the weekly e-news or our website, [www.montanasynod.org](http://www.montanasynod.org) for more information and deadlines.

### Assembly Nominations

Dick Deschamps, the current VP of the Montana Synod ELCA, is not planning to run again for that position. We are in the process of searching for 2 people to put on the ballot at the 2023 Synod Assembly in June. If you or anyone you know has the leadership skills to fill that position, please contact Pastor Brenda in the synod office at [bfrelsi@montanasynod.org](mailto:bfrelsi@montanasynod.org)

The constitution of the Montana Synod describes the office of the VP in this way: †**S8.21.** The vice-president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice-president shall be a layperson. The vice-president shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The vice-president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

**S8.22.** The vice-president shall chair the Synod Council.

†**S8.23.** In the event of the death, resignation, or disability of the bishop, the vice-president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the conduct of the duties of the bishop until a new bishop shall be elected or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop resumes full performance of the duties of the office.

In the words of our current Vice President, Dick Deschamps, “The main job of the VP is to run the council between assemblies, therefore the duties of the VP and that of the council become somewhat synonymous....The bishop and the VP are in close communication in developing the agendas of the executive committee and the council...The Bishop sometimes assigns duties to the VP...I convene and guide the Resolutions Committee as well as the elections committee. I do orientation for the synod assembly. These are other duties-as-assigned and will vary...The VP is also required to attend the Churchwide Assembly.”

If you would like to nominate a person for either the Synod Council, the Committee on Discipline or the Consultation Committee, [Click here](#) to download the Nominations Form.

## Assembly Resolutions

[Click here to download the resolutions form](#)

The goal of a resolution is to inform and educate people so that they are inspired to act and approve the resolution. Every resolution should:

- Address only one issue.
- Call the Synod Assembly to action on something it can influence.
- Address concerns relevant to the Synod.
- Propose an action or a solution to a problem.
- Be based on sufficient background and analysis. You should be able to back it up.
- Provide enough background to give someone with sufficient knowledge of the subject to make an intelligent and informed decision.

A successful resolution will: 1) identify and explain what you want to be addressed. This is the WHEREAS portion. 2) propose a solution, a plan of actions. This is the RESOLVED portion.

The two parts of a resolution are the “WHEREASES” and the “RESOLVEDS.” The first part of a resolution is the “WHEREAS” portion which consists of declarations of fact that can be supported and backed up. Opinions are not expressed in this portion of a resolution. Each fact should be listed as a separate sentence or paragraph that begins with WHEREAS, followed by a semi-colon. The final WHEREAS ends with a semi-colon followed by “therefore be it.”

The second part to the resolution states the action proposed to address what is identified in the WHEREAS portions. A good reminder to keep in mind is that this section should be able to stand on its own. The WHEREAS section should make it clear what is being asked for. The RESOLVED portion of a resolution is where opinions are expressed. If more than one solution or action is proposed, each separate solution or action should be listed as a separate sentence or paragraph that begins with the word “RESOLVED.” When a resolution contains multiple “RESOLVED” statements, they are linked by the phrase “and be it further” at the end of each RESOLVED statement, except for the last one.

### SAMPLE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, this is the part of the resolution that explains the issue or problem; and  
WHEREAS, each resolution should address only one issue or problem; and  
WHEREAS, each “Whereas” statement should address only one fact, idea, or supporting argument related to the issue or problem; therefore be it  
RESOLVED, that this is the part of the resolution that restates the basic issue or problem and proposes a solution to the issue of problem identified in the “Whereas” statements; be it further  
RESOLVED, that each “Resolved” statement should address a separate action to be taken or solution proposed to resolve the issue or problem; and be it further  
RESOLVED, that the “Resolved” statement should stand alone and the action proposed therein should be clearly understood by the reader without having to refer back to the “Whereas” statements.

The deadline for both nominations and resolutions is April 15, 2023. [Click here](#) to download the Guidelines for Consideration of Resolutions.

**Looking for more Reports to the Bishop!**

If you are an actively called rostered leader and have not yet turned in your 2022 Report to the Bishop please do so now! [Click here](#) to be taken to the report page.

If you are on the Retired Roster or an LPA please click the links below in order to submit your report to the Bishop. Thank you for your ministry in whatever form it takes!

[Retired Pastor](#)

[Lay Pastoral Associate](#)

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## **Chico Pastoral Conference Registration now open!**

*A note from Registrar Pr. Marlow Carrels:*

Hello friends, **registration for Chico will close on March 31st** . Also, scholarships are available if needed, please contact Marlow Carrels directly for those at [mcarrels@gmail.com](mailto:mcarrels@gmail.com).

The Pastoral Leader Conference at Chico will be April 11-14 (Tuesday - Friday).

To reserve a room contact Chicodirectly and state you want a room with the "Pastor's Conference."

[Click here to register](#)

## **Sermon Manuscripts Will Be Available to Use in Congregations Who Do Not Have a Called Pastor**

Look for a special Passion/Palm Sunday offering next week!

As a pilot project in the Lenten and Easter seasons, several pastors (including rostered Synod Staff) have agreed to provide a Sermon Manuscript for each of the Sundays in Lent and Easter. The Sermon manuscript is a gift to the worship leaders/leaders in congregations who serve in the places where there is no pastor. Please follow the link to find the sermon each week and use it as it is needed. This is one more way in which the Montana Synod leaders are providing resources to equip us for the ministry of the Gospel.

The Manuscripts will be found on the [Synod's website](#) and the Manuscript for the upcoming Sunday will be posted by 12 noon on Saturdays. (Maybe before, but at least by 12 noon on Saturdays for the upcoming Sunday. The Sermons will be based on the Revised Common Lectionary.)

Please contact me if you have questions about this in general or contact Colter at [cmccarty@montanasynod.org](mailto:cmccarty@montanasynod.org) about any technical aspect of this.

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