



## News of the Week April 27, 2022

### Prayers of the Week

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

For Brenda Trippel, wife of pastor Tim Trippel, as she continues to recover from a severe case of the flu.

**From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:**

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Butte  
Gold Hill Evangelical Lutheran Church, Butte

Indiana-Kentucky Synod



### Words from the Bishop: Comfort, My People

“Comfort, Comfort, O my people!” God announces to the Israelites through the prophet Isaiah.

“The Lord is my shepherd...your rod and staff comfort me,” the psalmist prays to God.

Comfort is a common theme through out the scriptures. We hear the cries for comfort to God.

We hear promises of comfort by God. We hear thanksgiving for comfort received from God.

But what is this comfort we are crying for? What does it mean to be comforted by God? And perhaps more importantly for Christ’s Church in these changing and uncertain times, what does it mean to be comfortable in God?



There are actually a couple of different ways we can understand comfort and what it means to be comfortable. Many of us, when we come to worship or engage in church activities, say we want to be in a place or community that is comfortable. And often what we mean by that is the definition that is found in many dictionaries: *a state of ease, well-being and freedom from pain or constraint; a feeling of relief or encouragement; a satisfying or enjoyable experience*. In other words, to be comfortable for many is to seek a life without pain, suffering, grief, fear, difficulty, challenge. To be safe and secure from all potential harm. To find that warm, fuzzy cuddling-under-a-quilt-with-a-teddy-bear-on-a-chilly-evening, never a care in the world feeling.

Now perhaps some of the more privileged among us have found such moments of this “comfy-ness” in life, as I call it. But for most of us, that type of comfort is rarely experienced, whether in church or not. For most of us, to be comfortable like that, in a life without difficulty or pain or challenge, is a pipe-dream.

But what if that understanding of comfort is not the full story? What if being comfortable has little to do with a life of ease or security from all external challenges? What if, instead, comfort is about being fortified with the strength and the resilience to live within life’s messiness and not be overcome by it?

In fact, that’s what the word “comfort” meant in its original language of Latin. (Thanks, Pastor Paul Hanson, for this reminder!) In Latin, “com” means “with” and “fort” means “strong.” Think fortify, fortress, even force. So comfort means to be with strength or to fill oneself or another with fortification.

At a WELCA event several years ago, Pastor Angela T. !Khabeb (currently writing for *Living Lutheran*) offered this challenging statement to all who would hear: “Christianity is not comfortable. If you are comfortable in Jesus, you are doing it wrong.” When our understanding of comfort is a warm, fuzzy comfy-ness, then Pr. !Khabeb is absolutely correct. While we may have hope and trust in a future realm of God without suffering, right now, here and today, such understanding of comfort is not helpful and is not, I think, what scripture means by the comfort God provides to us.

Instead, the comfort God gives is fortitude – the strength, sustenance, and reinforcement in the promises of faith, hope, and love – that empowers us to withstand and even move forward through the challenges and sufferings of humans experience in this world. God’s comfort doesn’t take our pain away; God’s comfort holds us up (like on eagle’s wings) as we move through the tough stuff of life. God’s comfort gives us the courage and resilience to “keep on keeping on,” perhaps even into a transformed place of growth and new life.

The life of a follower of Christ in this world filled with suffering and death is hardly a comfy one. Both Jesus and Paul make this quite clear when we read their words carefully. (Luke 9:58; Romans 5:1-5) In fact, being a part of the body of Christ should never be comfy. We are always called to face the suffering of the world head on and even dive into it to help fortify, strengthen, and support others in their pain. Perhaps we might even work to ease the worst of the injustice and help bring about a life of basic well-being for those most in need.

But in order for us to do that as Christ’s followers, we too must be comforted and fortified in our hope, faith and love. And we do this in part by hearing the Word of new life given to us in Christ again and again, welcoming the resurrection gospel into our whole selves and letting the Spirit of love transform us into fortified people with Easter always in our eyes. “Comfort, Comfort my people,” says our God. Be strengthened and encouraged to face the many challenges ahead. For we know through faith that we are indeed revived every day through our baptism by the fortitude of Christ and the empowerment of the Spirit.

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Bp Laurie

# Job Opening in the Montana Synod Office

We are sad to announce that Candi Standall will be resigning to move to Memphis, Tennessee to be closer to family at the end of June.

Therefore we are opening up applications for our Office Administrator position! If interested, please download the full application below and mail to the synod office or email:

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

## **Open Position: OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR**

Full-time, hourly + benefits

Interviewing is expected to begin May 2, 2022.

Start date: June 13, 2022 (at the earliest)

Accepting Applications until the position is filled.

## **Position Description:**

The Office Administrator for the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is an integral part of the synod staff team whose primary responsibilities involve the day-to-day activities within an office environment including answering phone calls and email, maintaining paper and on-line filing systems, organizing synod events, maintaining a contacts database and a variety of front office reception tasks.

[Click here to download the full job posting and application information](#)

## **A Letter of Support for the Jewish Community in Montana**

In honor of our abiding inter-relationship with our Jewish siblings, **the Montana Synod Council and I ask you for your support of the Jewish community in Montana** in a particular way during this holy time for both of our religious traditions. We invite your financial support for the Montana Jewish Project (MJP) centered in Helena but serving throughout the state.

The Montana Jewish Project is trying to repurchase the synagogue in Helena that was sold more than 100 years ago and has passed through several hands over the years. An opportunity has risen for them to buy back this important place of Jewish heritage in order to develop it as a community educational center for all Montanans (and others) to learn about the Jewish experience in Montana, to grow in a relationship of mutual support with the Jewish community, and to experience the Jewish faith as they practice and cherish it. ([See here for more info](#))

The Montana Synod Council has already given \$4000 toward the project in the spirit of relationship with our Jewish neighbors. In this way, we are fulfilling the ongoing pledge we as the Montana Synod made in the "Agreement between Montana Synod Lutherans of the ELCA and Montana Association of Jewish Communities" signed in June 1995. Through this gift, we also stand with the wider ELCA in its "Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community," originally adopted in 1994 and then reaffirmed by the Churchwide Council in 2021 and the "Declaration of Inter-Religions Commitment" adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in 2019. ([You can find these documents here](#))

**And we would ask you and your congregation to join together with the rest of the Montana Synod to match the council's \$4000 so that we can increase our support to \$8000.** In this way we can continue our ongoing work of building mutually encouraging relationships with our Jewish siblings

We are hoping to raise this money by May 15, 2022. **You may donate by [clicking here](#) and selecting Montana Jewish project or sending a check to the Synod office with "MT Jewish Project" in the memo line.** Whatever gifts we are able to gather, we plan to give to the leaders of the

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

## The time has come to register for the Montana Synod Assembly!

Friday, June 3, 2022 ~ 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Billings Hotel and Convention Center - 1223 Mallowney Lane, Billings, MT - 406-248-7151**

The Montana Synod Assembly theme this year is, "Equipping for the Gospel" and will be held over two days, June 3-4 at the Billing Hotel and Convention Center. Please be aware that all attendees are responsible for their own room reservations. Call the hotel at: 406-248-7151 and reference the Montana Synod Assembly.

### ***Room Block (Expires May 12, 2022)***

We will be having our assembly in person this year! A live stream will be provided but there will be NO online voting. All voting members will need to be present in order to cast their votes.

As per the Assembly Rules:

### **Addendum to the 2022 Assembly Rules**

*All voting members and visitors will be expected to be fully vaccinated (except for medical reasons) as defined by CDC guidelines at the time of the Synod Assembly. Alternatively, a negative test the day before arrival will be acceptable. Monitoring will be done on the honor system, and each attendee will be trusted to make their own decisions in the spirit of Christ's ongoing call to us to love our neighbor and seek their health and well-being.*

*Masks will be optional unless circumstances arise that will again require us to wear masks while gathering. The Yellowstone County Health Department and the CDC guidelines will be consulted for recommendations one week before the date of the assembly and a final determination regarding mask use will be made then.*

*Approved by Synod Council 3/12/2022*

A few things to remember before registering:

- Have all information needed to register beforehand including Name, email, physical address, and any meal requirements for each person registering.
- Carefully read all options available before registering, make sure to select the appropriate option for your registration.
- An individual email is required for each person.
- If prompted for a country code at the address portion of the registration, enter the number 1.
- All payments are online only.
- There will be **NO in person registration** at the assembly. All voting members **Must** be registered before the registration cut off date of May 24th.

- There is **no need** to print the tickets generated by Tithely. You will receive your registration packet in person at the assembly.
- When filling out the address, enter the number 1 in the box labeled "Country Code"
- Any questions should be directed to Colter McCarty: [cmccarty@montanasynod.org](mailto:cmccarty@montanasynod.org)

[Register for the 2022 Montana Synod Assembly Here](#)

[Click here for the list of openings](#) that will be voted on at the assembly as well as the [Nominations Committee members](#).

**[Are you a ministry partner interested in providing a video greeting or hosting a display table at the assembly? Download the application here!](#)**

### **Rostered ministers who have been granted retired, disability, or on-leave-from-call roster status**

-from the Secretary of the ELCA, Sue Rothmeyer

As we notified you several weeks ago, security concerns prompted us to temporarily hide personal contact information in the online ELCA Directory for those rostered ministers who have been granted retired, disability, or on-leave-from-call roster status.

We intend to restore personal contact information to the online ELCA Directory by May 13. We are giving you opportunity to OPT OUT of this process. If, for personal reasons, you DO NOT WISH to have your information available in the ELCA Directory, please contact your synod office with your request WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK. The office will then communicate your request to the churchwide organization, and we will make the appropriate adjustments. If you wish to have your information made public once again, no action is required.

Thank you for your patience with this process as we try to balance rostered ministers' concerns for privacy with their desire to stay connected.

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#### **Synod Staff:**

Bishop

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Associate to the Bishop

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

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