



Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

News of the Week April 28, 2021

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For Pastor Julie Long (Our Savior's, Broadus) and her family as her mother, Abigail Beguhn is in hospice care.

For Victoria Seymour, daughter of Pastor Julia Seymour (Big Timber) who is having brain surgery at Denver Children's Hospital tomorrow.

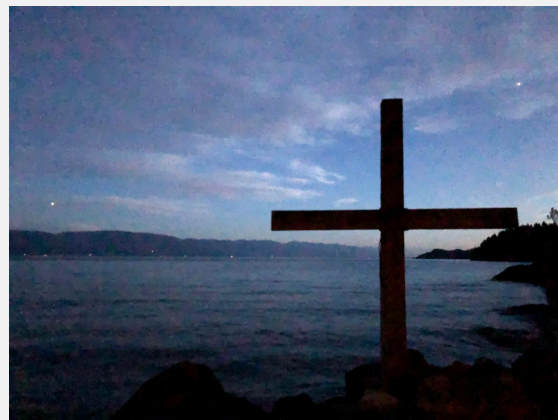
For the family and friends of retired Pastor Cliff Gronnenberg, who died this week.

Congratulations to Pastors Barb Gwynn (First English Lutheran, Great Falls) and Scott Hedegaard (Redeemer Lutheran, Great Falls) who were married over the weekend.

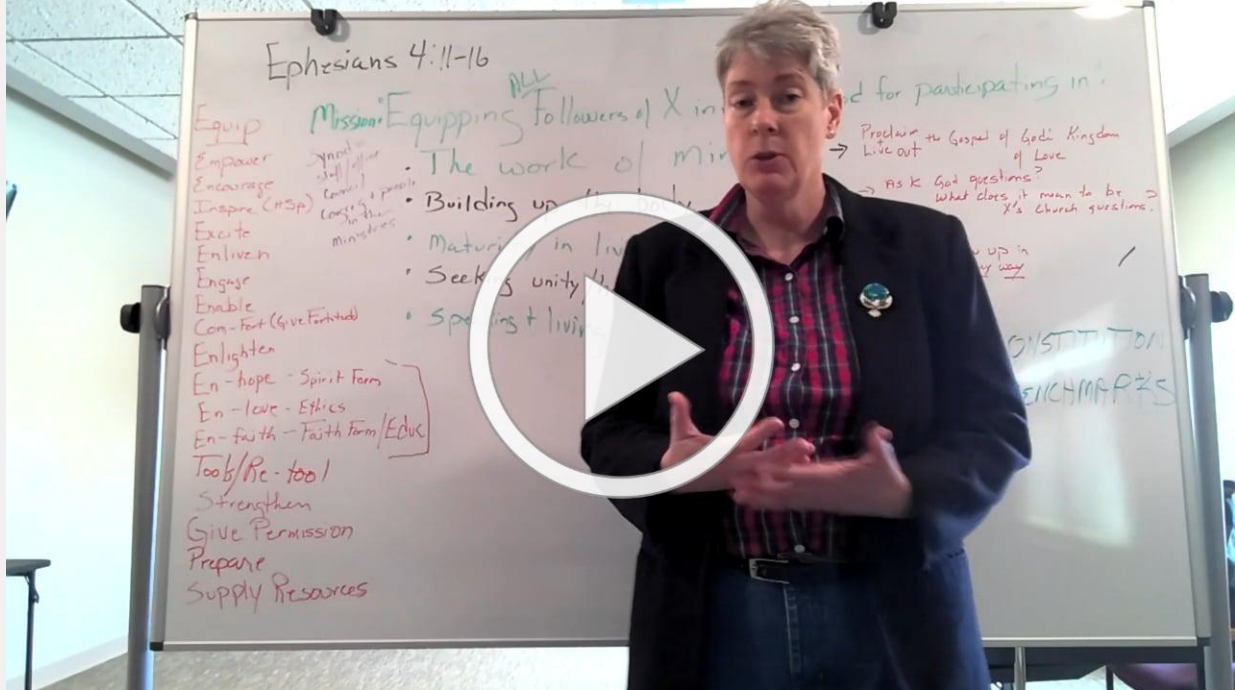
From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

American Lutheran Church, White Sulphur Springs
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Townsend

La Crosse Area Synod



Words from the Bishop: Equipping for Ministry 2



Jesus calls us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

But how can we best love our neighbor right now during this time?

One easy way is to get vaccinated against the Covid-19 virus. This action shows love not only for yourself but also for your neighbor and your community as we work together to stop this thing in its tracks, develop communal immunity, and practice neighbor love as followers of Christ.

I know from experience that getting vaccinated can involve some suffering – I got my second dose last Monday and it wiped me out to barely functional on Tuesday as the vaccine activated my body to empower itself to face the virus head on.

But I've recovered – the miracle of the human body and the science that can support it never ceases to amaze me! Thanks be to God!

Getting vaccinated is one of the clearest ways we can express our love for neighbor and ourselves right now. **So please get vaccinated.** In this, you will be blessed and also share God's blessings of health and hope with your neighbors! Bishop Laurie

Why Do We Have a Synod Assembly?

Constitutionally, congregations are part of something bigger, they are part of the whole Montana Synod. The synod is the 125 congregations and the ministries within our territory. The synod is congregations populated by people. And this synod, made up of all of us, has business that must be attended to each year. The assembly is the business meeting that calls members from every congregation together to:

- Approve and pass a budget for the coming year
- Vote for synod council members
- Set direction for the synod through resolutions and conversations
- Vote for members to attend churchwide assemblies

This business must be done each year and yet, theological education is also important. Because the Montana Synod values both the business and the education, every other year a good portion of the assembly is focused on theological education to allow an opportunity for learning as followers of Jesus.

We believe in the reality of the Body of Christ – that all of us together, are the Body of Christ. The ELCA is not supposed to be a top-down organization where a few make decisions on behalf of the whole church. Rather, it's a bubbling up of the Holy Spirit in the people of the Montana Synod. We have a communal understanding of our synod, encouraging the people in the pews to participate and to realize they have a say.

In the same way that we gather in our congregations for an annual meeting, we gather together as a synod for the assembly each year. We talk about everything from finances to governance to vision and mission, discussing how we fulfill God's mission in the world as the church.

Both congregational annual meetings and the synod assembly are opportunities for the people of God to come together. Each congregation elects voting members to the assembly who are called to discern the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in their vote, not only representing the viewpoint of the congregation but also listening to the Spirit and experiencing how the synod is working together. Even voting for the budget can be Spirit-led.

The purpose of the synod assembly is for the Body of Christ to guide and govern the Body of Christ, and to do so as a community.

Thank you to Rev. Peggy Paugh Leuzinger, DEM and Bishop Laurie Jungling for their thoughts reflected in this article.

Keeping in Mind Global Mission in South America

Dear friends:

I am sharing my newsletter, "Keeping in Mind Global Mission in South America" April 2021, reporting updates about the global mission in South America.

Thanks for your prayers and your support.

Please accompany us through prayer and support.

For more updates about Global Mission in South America, please visit and subscribe <https://www.regionlac.net>

Peace and grace.

Gustavo

[Download the newsletter here](#)

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April 2021
Newsletter
Keeping in Mind Global Mission in South America

Amid this pandemic, where is God?

In times of pandemic, the problems have worsened in the five continents, where there are millions of sick people and hundreds of thousands of dead. Countries have closed borders and normal activities such as education and commerce. Global society faces unprecedented political, economic, and social challenges. There is anguish, there is hunger, there is a lack of jobs, and there is an increase in gender-based violence.

But we have also reduced environmental pollution. We have discovered the benefits and limits of video conferencing. We have witnessed the selflessness of many professionals and the solidarity actions of so many communities, churches, and anonymous people.

But amid the pandemic, where is God? The silence of God becomes very hard. Some people pray, asking for miracles, asking for an end to the pandemic, but the miracle does not come. Then, the doubt gets worse: where is God?

God is in the one who agonizes and in the one who serves others. God is in all these realities. God is with us suffering, crying, caring, investigating, working, and giving us hope. Through Jesus, God is present in the people who suffer, in the people who die, in nurses who lovingly care for the victims of this pandemic. God is in the scientists, in those who pray, helping us carry this situation with hope.

God is also in the churches that continue to preach and evangelize, and at the same time serve the needy. Companion churches in Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Venezuela and Argentina have implemented emergency assistance programs for the hungry and homeless. Churches have served their communities with food distribution and psychosocial support programs in many congregations and social services with funds provided by ELCA/Lutheran Disaster Response.

The path of faith is to continue even when the night is dark, because we know that the God of Life, of the Resurrection, does not abandon us. In his Commentary on the Magnificat of Mary, Luther says:

On the other hand, no one is willing to look into the depths with their poverty, disgrace, squalor, misery and anguish. From these all turn away their eyes. Where there are such folk, every one takes to his heels, forsakes and shuns and leaves them to themselves; no one dreams of helping them nor of making something out of them.

Therefore, to God alone belongs that sort of seeing that looks into the depths with their need and misery, and is high unto all that are in the depths; as St. Peter says, "God resist the proud, but to the humble he gives grace."

God is at our side in times of difficulty; let us pray for God to help us in the discouragements of life, being in solidarity and respect, and giving us strength to collaborate with the work of creation.

This pandemic can become an opportunity for us to renew our life and start a new life, simpler, not so greedy, more collaborative among all, more supportive, more respectful, and more sensitive to everything because everything is interconnected. This is what God wants, and God will continue to be present even during our difficulties.

IELB, Bolivia, Presiding Pastor Rev. German Loayza at the opening of a new congregation Jesus The Galilee, near La Paz, April 2021

IECO Colombia, Food Distribution program, serving migrants women, in Bogotá

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Montana Synod Devotion for the Easter Season is Ready to be Distributed in Your Congregation

EQUIPPING...
FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY



EASTER SEASON DEVOTIONS
WRITTEN BY LEADERS IN
THE MONTANA SYNOD

Leaders and pastors in the Montana Synod have written reflections for Easter Season Devotions that are now available for congregations to print to distribute to people in congregations or to prepare to share on the Congregations' web site or Facebook page.

The document is available [here as a PDF link](#). It is also available to download on the Montana Synod website. It prints out well as a bifold booklet, IF your printer has that capability. Otherwise, it will print with each page being 8 1/2 x 11 in size.

If you prefer to post each day's devotion on your congregation's Facebook page, you can do that from the

Synod's website or share it from the Synod's Facebook page.

Congregations and leaders are encouraged to share this as a way in which the whole Synod is growing together as we are "equipped for ministry."

Please contact Candi in the Synod office if you have questions about how to print the document. Please contact Colter if you have questions about how to share the devotions electronically.

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