



## News of the Week May 25, 2022

### Prayers of the Week

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

For the all families of the victims in the tragic Robb school shooting that took place in Texas.

**From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:**

Bethel Lutheran Church Joplin  
Goldstone Lutheran Church Gildford

Metro New York Synod



### Words from the Bishop: Another One?!

Dear Friends in Christ,

Another mass shooting happened yesterday. Less than a week after the last one in Buffalo NY and California and Dallas TX. In today's NYT Morning newsletter, David Leonhardt lists some of the mass shootings and school shootings that have happened in just the last decade:

- Mass Shootings: Supermarkets in Buffalo, NY and in Boulder, CO.; a rail yard in San Jose, CA; a birthday party in Colorado Springs; a convenience store in Springfield, MO.; a synagogue in Pittsburgh; churches in Sutherland Springs, TX, and in Charleston, S.C.; a Walmart in El Paso; a FedEx warehouse in Indianapolis; a music festival in Las Vegas; massage parlors in the Atlanta area; a Waffle House in Nashville; a nightclub in Orlando, FL; a movie theater in Aurora, CO; and so many more.
- School shootings: Sandy Hook Elementary School, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Oxford High School, Santa Fe High School, Columbine High School.



· What Leonhardt's list doesn't include are the accidents and suicides by gun, the bystander and drive-by shootings, or shootings of police officers or by police officers that happen every day in communities, neighborhoods, and streets across this nation.

And now Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, TX has joined this horrific list. Yet another man with easy access to weapons designed to kill a lot of human beings in a short period of time killed 19 children, two teachers and shot his own grandmother. And so again we lament the unnecessary loss of human life, children who were simply learning and getting ready for their summer break, teachers sacrificing their own lives trying to protect those children.

Violence, especially gun violence, has become a normal, even predictable part of our culture, the go-to solution for too many people and groups facing problems. They are so regular now that we are numb to the pain and horror such violence causes in our lives.

And yet God's message of love, hope, and peace to us in Christ is clear: life, love, compassion, and forgiveness are the answers to our problems, not violence and not the weapons being used by far too many irresponsible people to kill and wound others.

Often after these acts of gun violence, we hear people say, "our thoughts and prayers are with them." But what should we be thinking and praying about before, during and after such violence? Do we bother to pray to God at all? Or has it become one of those nice things we say but never really follow up on because we think that since nothing is changing, God doesn't seem to want to do anything about it, that in fact God supports such violence and the tools used to commit it?

As followers of Christ who trust in the depths of God's love for all, we believe that God weeps with us and is outraged alongside of us in the face of such violence as what happened in Uvalde or Buffalo or in so many places. We believe that God responds to our prayers with divine power and the gift of new life out of death in Christ.

But we also believe that God's Spirit works through us in this world, that we are to be God's hands, mouths, and feet, participating with God to create a more peaceful and safe place to live. It does us no good to pray to God to fix things if we aren't willing to participate in God's solutions.

So yes, we should lift up our lament, anger and confession to God about the worship of violence and its tools in our culture. Let us pray for the victims of the shootings that have happened in the past week, those who died and those who are still alive fighting for their lives. Let us pray for the far too many families and friends who are grieving the loss of their loved ones too soon and those who are waiting by the bedside in the hope that their loved one will regain a life beyond their injuries. Let us pray for the victims of suicide and accidental shootings and the unjust acts of violence against others due to hate.

Let us pray for all who have been traumatized by violence in body, mind, heart and spirit: for those children and teachers who are afraid to go to school; for those law enforcement officers who face these waves of violence every day and yet put themselves on the front lines to protect us the best they can; for those first responders and doctors and nurses and counselors and mental health care workers who in the midst of their own suffering and trauma must clean up the mess and try to heal us after the violent choices others in our culture make.

Let us pray for our leaders at the local, state, and national level -- our mayors and governors, commissioners and council members, state and national legislators, judges, and our nation's president; but let us also pray for lobbyists, businesses and industry owners who profit from people's violent desires and choices. Let us pray for all who have the ability, power and wealth to create change but who, through fear, apathy, greed, grief, anger, ignorance or a lack of wisdom, choose not to act to minimize the violence.

And let us pray for ourselves who in our own grief, anger, fear, apathy, ignorance and our unwillingness choose not to use the mouths, minds, hearts, spirits, hands and feet that God gives us to make responsible choices, and even sacrifices for the good of all who live in fear of violence.

But, finally, let us pray for the courage to do what it takes as individuals and communities to, at the very least, limit the violence and work together to live in peace. True freedom will never be found in our constant fear of people who would use violence to deal with their problems. Neither will freedom, peace or safety be found behind protective measures and systems that actually imprison us and let those who would use violence roam free. As Christ's followers, let us go beyond prayer and act with our hands, mouths and feet and seek real freedom that opens doors, changes lives and creates opportunities for living

lives without gun violence in our midst.

May the Holy Spirit bless us and empower us in our churches, communities, schools, states, and nation to honestly and lovingly seek the truth about, pray for, talk about and act on life-supporting solutions to this country's worship of violence and its tools.

In Christ's peace,

Bishop Laurie

## **Assembly Registration is now closed**

**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**

If you are a voting member, [click here](#) to access all the relevant information and schedule for the assembly.

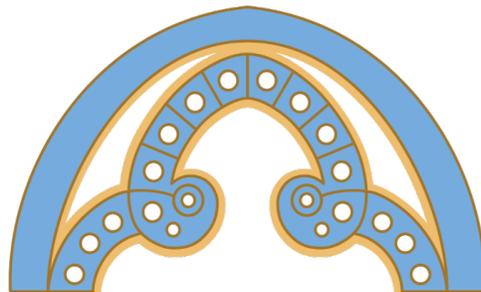
**There will be no physical packets this year!**

If you would like physical copies of the material, make sure to print it out beforehand. Check with your fellow voting members before the assembly to make sure everyone has what they need before making the trip to Billings.

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.*

Check out the orientation video below to make sure that you are prepared for the assembly!

## **Assembly Orientation Information**



**MONTANA  
JEWISH  
PROJECT**  
לדור ודור

**We are still looking to reach our goal of \$4000, there is still time to donate!**

Dear Montana Jewish Project supporters,

I hope you are all doing well. It's an incredibly busy and exciting time for the Montana Jewish Project (MJP), and I wanted to update you.

We are getting close to our June 30, 2022 deadline to close on the sale of Montana's oldest synagogue and some nearby properties that are part of our sale agreement with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Helena. As you know, MJP has been working hard to reclaim Helena's 1891 synagogue and return it to Jewish use for the first time since 1935. We are making good progress fundraising, but we need your help to cross the finish line.

We have raised over one-half of the purchase price! MJP is grateful to the nearly 2,000 individual donors from around the world who have contributed to establishing a statewide Jewish community center in this majestic building. We are also honored to have received recently a \$50,000 grant from the Molly Blank Fund of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation. In only six months of fundraising, we are halfway to owning the historic synagogue! It's pretty extraordinary for an organization that just turned one year old to have made such strides.

The MJP Board decided last week that we will immediately sell the freestanding house behind the synagogue that is part of the sale package (the historic synagogue, this house, which was appraised for about \$400,000, the yard next to the synagogue, and a rear parking area). This decision brings us closer to our goal. But we need your help to make a final push to buy back this synagogue. Every dollar puts us closer to making this dream a reality.

Last week, MJP hosted Rabbi Laurie Franklin from Congregation Har Shalom (Missoula) and Rabbi Sonja Pilz from Congregation Beth Shalom (Missoula), along with speakers from ADL and the Montana Human Rights Network in a [free online event to mark Yom HaShoah](#) (Holocaust Remembrance Day) and discuss the disturbing rise in antisemitism across Montana. I learned that last year we had the highest number of antisemitic incidents and assaults since 1979. Returning the former Temple Emanu-El to Jewish life is a concrete act that pushes back against this trend. MJP will proudly and visibly stand in our state capital—in this important building— and provide an anchor for all ages from all around Montana to come together to learn, celebrate, and share our tradition.

MJP's all-volunteer board has been fundraising and launching programming. We want to hit the ground running in our historic home with events, education, and speakers coordinated by our future programming director in collaboration with Montana's Rabbis and congregations.

We've got a lot of great opportunities for learning and community-building coming up...and this is before we've even reacquired the building. Check out what's on tap below. Following our website, Facebook, and Instagram accounts will also let you know what's coming up.

If you support community programming, and want to keep this historical gem of a building in community hands, [we need you to join with us](#). We received notice of our tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. MJP is officially a 501 (c) (3) organization! All donations are tax-deductible, including those made after May 20, 2021.

We are also proud to be participating in [Greater Helena Gives](#) on May 5-6, presented by the Helena Area Community Foundation. Joining with other local non-profits in this fundraising effort is just another example of MJP's commitment to our broader community. And this is an easy way to donate to MJP and share with your networks.

We can't wait for the possibilities ahead!

Gratefully,

Rebecca Stanfel

Board President, MJP

*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 MJP before the end of June which is an important deadline for them in purchasing the property.*

## 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](#)

## Pre-Assembly Budget meetings

We will have three budget meeting opportunities before the assembly for all those who are interested. They will be lead by Synod treasurer Dave Scholten and will be a time to learn about the proposed budget and time for questions. There



will be no budget meeting the dates of the assembly outside of regular business.

The last meeting will be held on:

**May 26, 7pm**

If you are a voting member interested in joining one of these meetings please email [cmccarty@montanasynod.org](mailto:cmccarty@montanasynod.org) for the link.



MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

## Faith and Community Based Services Regional Summits

### May 16 - May 27, 2022

#### THEME: FAITH & COMMUNITY LEADERS IN ACTION FOR THE WELLNESS OF MONTANANS

Join a one-day summit in a location near you. Each event will run 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM with lunch provided.

Sidney	May 16
Miles City	May 17
Billings	May 18
Bozeman	May 19
Missoula	May 23
Kalispell	May 24
Great Falls	May 25
Helena	May 26
Butte	May 27

Individual event details can be found on [Eventbrite](#). Scan the QR code below using your smartphone's camera to jump to the website.



#### During this summit, faith and community leaders will:

- Learn why this new office was created and how it can be in service to local faith and community organizations
- Share data and resources to support faith and community organizations as they support Montanans in many dimensions of health (spiritual, financial, emotional, physical, social, occupational, environmental, intellectual)
- Share with state officials about the local needs and current efforts in your community
- Network with others across the state to learn about programs, projects and initiatives happening across Montana

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**Synod Staff:**

Bishop

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