



News of the Week June 29, 2022

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

Prayers of thanksgiving for the healthy birth of twins to Pastor Brenda Frelsi's daughter, Lizz.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Lutheran Church of Sunburst Church,
Sunburst

St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Shelby

Christikon Bible Camp, Pr. Director Mark Donald
Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, Director Margie Fiedler
Upper Missouri Ministries Camp, Epping ND

North Carolina Synod
North/West Lower Michigan Synod



The synod office will be closed Monday, July 4th, in observance of Independence Day

Words from the Bishop: All are Really Welcome

“An argument arose among [the disciples] as to which one of them was the greatest. But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, and said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes this

child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest.” Luke 9:46-48

“All are welcome!” That’s what many signs in front of our churches or statements across our bulletins announce. All are welcome! But do we really mean “all”? And what does it mean to welcome all these “alls”?



During this month of June, the lives of a group of people who often have not been welcomed in our churches have been recognized and celebrated by our society, communities and churches as human beings worthy of dignity and respect. These people often self-identify by using one or more of a group of letters, LGBTQIA+, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, plus others who don’t really fit into these categories but don’t fall into a societal norm either.

Sadly, LGBTQIA+ people have not been and still are not regularly welcomed or accepted by the church that claims to be the body of Christ. Worse yet, God’s name and Word have been used by those calling themselves Christian to do horrible damage to LGBTQIA+ people in their bodies, spirits, hearts, and minds. In other words, “All” have not been welcomed; only some.

Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines “all” as the *whole* amount of or *every* member of. Nothing is excluded when we use the word all. So when we use the word “all,” we have to mean “all” in our words, actions, even thoughts. All means everyone. And since God’s welcome into Christ’s body is without condition, so must the church’s welcome be to all, everyone, even in the midst of our discomfort or fears.

As Jesus himself proclaims, when we welcome those whom the world has often considered to be the least in society, we welcome Christ himself into our places, spaces and lives to be loved, accepted and cared for by the body of Christ.

It is so easy to exclude or dehumanize or demonize those who are different or those we don’t understand. That is the way of the world without the love of God’s welcome in it. But followers of Christ are called to welcome even in the midst of not understanding -- listening to, learning from, accepting, loving and supporting all who are different as human beings created in the image of God and as beloved children of God marked by Christ’s cross forever.

Welcoming LGBTQIA+ folks into our communities means putting aside our fears, anxieties and ignorance and instead opening our hearts to the gifts, skills and experience these children of God bring into our lives. It’s about remembering to walk humbly with God, never putting ourselves in God’s place to condemn but instead exhorting ourselves to love and learn from our neighbors, even those who may live their lives differently. It’s about “all of us being one in Christ,” never putting worldly identities ahead of the identity each of us has been clothed with in our baptism into Christ. (Gal 27-28)

And so I invite you to practice welcoming LGBTQIA+ people into your communities of Christ. Because the church has so long struggled with accepting LGBTQIA+ people, this is a hard practice for congregations and their members to enter into. Maybe a good place to start is by confessing our weakness in welcoming all of God’s “alls” and by repenting, changing our direction toward the love Christ calls us to embody. Maybe it’s time to explore becoming a “Reconciling in Christ” congregation.

<https://www.reconcilingworks.org>)

Or maybe we begin simply by saying to a LGBTQIA+ person, “**God loves you and so do I.**” For as Paul reminds us all in Romans 8:39, “There is nothing in all of creation that can separate you from God’s love in Christ Jesus.”

May God bless you this week with the Spirit's infallible love. And please, let us celebrate this nation's birth safely!

Bishop Laurie

In this interim time during our search for an Office Administrator, the best way to reach the Synod staff is by email or cell phone.

We will of course be checking voicemail messages in the office and get back to you!

Job Opening in the Montana Synod Office

If interested, please download the full application below and mail to the synod office or email:

cmccarty@montanasynod.org

Open Position: OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Full-time, hourly + benefits

Interviewing is expected to begin immediately

Start date: ASAP

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](#)

Synod Staff:

Bishop

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