



News of the Week August 3, 2022

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For the guests, staff, and director of Christikon as they mourn the sudden death of a camper this week.

For all who are affected by the Elmo 2 fire and all the wildfires burning in our state, country and world; and for all firefighters who tirelessly work to contain those fires.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Northern Great Lakes Synod



Words from the Bishop: 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly

Dear Friends in Christ,

The time is upon us again for the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA). The voting members for the CWA who were elected by the 2021 Montana Synod Assembly are busy gathering last minute information and finalizing travel for the assembly which is gathering August 8-12 in Columbus, OH. It is mind-blowing what needs to happen to bring together 1000 people from across the ELCA to one place to conduct the Assembly's important work on behalf of the



church.

I know that for many of us this gathering seems a distant event, beyond our attention given our busy lives here in Montana or N. Wyoming. And yet, the Churchwide Assembly can and does affect our lives here on the frontier as some may remember from previous years.

As Bishop Eaton states in the video below, the Churchwide Assembly is the highest legislative body of the ELCA. This means that it is the Assembly (made up of voting members from every one of the 65 synods) and not merely the bishops who make the decisions about the broader policies and procedures of the ELCA. Of course, because the CWA meets every three years, there is a Churchwide Council that governs during the time between CWA meetings, a council that is elected by the Churchwide Assembly. As a result, the governing structure for the ELCA is much more of a level field than people often picture, with the laity comprising 60% of the assembly/council and the clergy (including bishops) comprising 40%.

The voting members that each synod sends to the CWA are just that – *Voting Members* – rather than delegates or representatives. These folks -- who come from all over the synod, who are male and female, who are different ages and from different backgrounds -- are called by the church to serve and vote on behalf of the whole church, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They are not delegated to vote in a particular way or elected to represent a certain viewpoint or constituency. They follow a conscience hopefully bound in Christ to make the best decisions concerning how we shall live together as Christ's church in the ELCA.

Of course, you may share your ideas, perspectives or concerns with us; it is through the many members of Christ's body that the Holy Spirit works after all. But in the end, the voting members vote in the best interests of the whole church inspired and empowered by God's Spirit.

This year's voting members from the Montana Synod are:

- Bishop Laurie Jungling (Great Falls)
- Dick Deschamps, LPA and Vice President of the Synod (Hope Lutheran, Bozeman)
- Rev. Jessie Obrecht, (Bethel Lutheran, Great Falls)
- Kristopher Schock (Faith Lutheran, Ronan)
- Lorrie Vennes, LPA (St. John's Lutheran, Helena)
- Dane Castleberry, LPA (St. Elizabeth Lutheran, Ekalaka)
- Rev. Darren Paulson (St. John's United, Billings)
- Kyle Lefler (Bethlehem Lutheran, Kalispell)
- Margie Fiedler (Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, Lakeside)

The bishop and vice president of each synod are always part of each synod's contingent; the others are elected at the synod's assembly a full year before each CWA.

And you too can attend the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, at least virtually. Each plenary session and worship service is live-streamed. Please check www.elca.org/assembly for the link to watch and participate. You can find a lot of other information about the assembly on this site as well including the schedule. (Remember that everything is listed in Eastern Time.)

What will be some of the work that the 2022 CWA will be doing next week? Bishop Eaton mentions a few important things [in her video](#): constitutional amendments, the election of a new Vice President of the ELCA, and responding to the many memorials that have come from synod assemblies across the church over the past 3 years involving social justice issues and church restructuring questions. If you would like to read the over 60 pages of memorials that we will be addressing, [click here to download Section VII](#) or consider [attending the hearing on the memorials](#) this evening at 6 p.m. MDT. You can also find the ELCA recorded budget hearing on the same [YouTube](#) page.

One of the highlights of this assembly will be the formal presentation of the [Declaration of the ELCA to the American Indian and Alaska Native People](#) as a follow up to the ELCA's repudiation of the doctrine of discovery at the 2016 CWA. We will also hear from Fawn Sharp, the president of the National Congress of American Indians.

A beautiful part of every Churchwide Assembly is the opportunity to worship together every day. As you might imagine, these worship services which are led by a wide diversity of clergy, deacons and lay leaders from across the ELCA make for some powerful proclamation, praise, prayer and presence together at the meal.

And we will have the opportunity to build relationships with people from all over the ELCA who have very

different life experiences and perspectives on what it means to be church together and yet are loved and welcomed by the same Savior in Jesus Christ. The fellowship that happens at the assembly allows for us to listen to each other in a spirit of learning, compassion and transformation so that, as Paul writes, we can “grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.” (Eph 4:15-16)

As the voting members, guests and Churchwide staff from across the ELCA gather for the CWA, **I invite you to pray for each of us as well as the whole Assembly that we may be empowered by the Holy Spirit to discern God’s wisdom and receive Christ’s love so that together for the sake of the whole church we may do justice, engage in loving kindness and walk humbly with our God.** (Micah 6:8 Say a double prayer for that last one!)

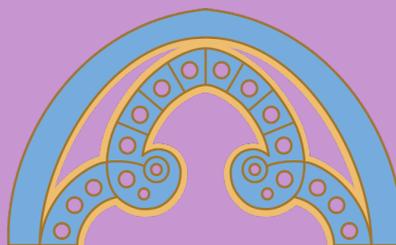
In Christ’s Love,

Bishop Laurie



Montana Jewish Project update

Dear Montana Jewish Project supporters,
It’s been a very busy few weeks for the Montana Jewish Project, and I’m eager to update you all on our latest news.



**MONTANA
JEWISH
PROJECT**
לדור דור

We reached an agreement with the Catholic Bishop of Helena to push back our closing date another month—to August 31, 2022. MJP is waiting to hear if we’ve received a major grant for

acquisition. Since we won't get word on this until the end of July, Bishop Vetter graciously agreed to move closing a month to make the logistics easier on us all. This will be the last closing extension.

The great news is that we are very close to returning this historic synagogue to Jewish use for the first time in 86 years!

However, we aren't quite at our goal. We need to raise a final \$200,000, and we are seeking your help in this last stretch. This is not as daunting as it might sound. We feel very positive about the grant and our ongoing meetings with a donor at the \$50,000 level. This leaves us with \$50,000 more to raise in the next four weeks. This is where you can help!

Remember that MJP will return in full any donation marked "for acquisition only" if we fail to buy back Temple Emanu-El. We hope we will not have to do this!

After you make your donation, we ask that you please forward this message to those in your life who support thriving Jewish community and traditions. You could also include the [fantastic feature article](#) Moment Magazine (*Editors note: Bishop Jungling is quoted in this article and her full letter is [available here](#)*) just published about Temple Emanu-El, the 1890s community who established it, and MJP's work to reacquire it.

As always, please call or email me with any questions. We remain committed to reclaiming our synagogue. We are excited to enrich Jewish life around our state. Thank you for helping us make this happen.

With gratitude as always,

Rebecca Stanfel

Board President, MJP

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An addition from Rebecca Stanfel: MJP is asking for everyone's prayers for our success to complete this acquisition, for those who support our works and have the means to contribute, we gratefully and humbly continue to accept donations.

Updated Synod Job Description: Office Manager

Start date: As soon as available. Accepting applications until the position is filled.

Compensation and Benefits

- Full-time, hourly. \$17 per hour, 40-hour week, time and a half overtime when needed and approved in advance.
- Benefits: health and retirement benefits, vacation, sick leave and family leave, continuing education support.

Position Description:

The Office Manager 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 events, maintaining a contacts database and a variety of front office reception tasks.

[Download the full job description and application instructions here.](#) Please feel free to share this in your congregation's newsletters!

Stewardship in Congregations

As leaders are thinking about the fall and making plans for the rest of 2022 and 2023, in the midst of post-covid and the inflation that we are experiencing, you maybe are wondering how the Montana Synod is working to provide resources for your congregation to address questions of stewardship, congregational finances and other issues. Please note these options available to congregations in the Montana Synod.

End-of-Summer Stewardship Conversation Via Zoom

Wed. Aug. 31, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Join with others in the Synod for a 1 1/2 hour time of learning with DEM Peggy Paugh Leuzinger, Dennis Trotter, Synod Stewardship Consultant and members of the Stewardship Task Force on basics of Stewardship and Generosity. Topics to be covered include the state of giving in the church today, challenges and opportunities to talk about money in the church and a beginning conversation about how to equip leaders to encourage and strengthen generosity in the congregation. The Zoom link will be posted with this announcement in mid-August. Leaders – invite those in your congregation to join in this time of learning and conversation together now.

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