



## News of the Week December 6, 2023

# Prayers of the Week

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

For the victims of ongoing war across the world, including people of Israel and Gaza.

**From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:**

King of Glory Lutheran Church, Billings  
Atonement Lutheran Church, Billings  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Billings

Southeastern Minnesota Synod



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**Words from the Synod:  
Christikon Lutheran Bible Camp:  
The Adventure of Life Together**



-By Taryn Hauglie, Assistant Director

Since 1951, Christikon Lutheran Bible Camp has been a place for staff and guests to awaken and nurture faith in Christ as they explore God's creation and join in the adventure of life together. Christikon is tucked away in the Absaroka-Beartooth mountains and is an intentional Christian community where all are welcome, chosen, cherished, loved, forgiven, redeemed, and made worthy by none other than Jesus Christ himself.



Christikon offers programs for youth starting in fourth grade, with on-site and backpacking programs. During their week at Christikon, campers begin and end each day with worship, and there is always time set aside for daily Bible study. Diving into scripture allows campers an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about their faith. Worship and Bible Study center around a focal text and theme every day, tying into a greater theme for the whole week, so campers experience consistency between the programmatic elements of each day. There is also an opportunity for Quiet Time each day for campers to disperse in the meadow to journal, meditate, pray, and soak in the sights and sounds of the Boulder River valley.

Other activities at Christikon in the on-site program include hikes (a day hike and an overnight hike), all-camp games, folk dancing, service projects, among others. Our on-site programs are a great place to deepen friendships with your own church group as well as foster new relationships with folks from other places.

Our backpacking sessions allow for guests and staff to embark on a journey into the backcountry, seeing places few people have seen. They still have worship, Bible study, and quiet time each day, but are able to do them deep in God's creation. Backpacking groups

return to camp after five days in the wilderness tired, yet renewed, sore, yet inspired, ready for a shower, yet thirsty for justice.

In addition to youth camps, Christikon begins the summer season with a camp for adults with developmental or intellectual disabilities. This session offers opportunities for enjoyment of the mountain setting and growth in caring relationships. Campers will experience a variety of activities, such as hiking, group recreation, crafts, a dance, a talent show, a carnival, and more. Parents, guardians, and caregivers say this camp session is something the campers look forward to all year round, and it is a place where they feel like they truly belong.



Christikon also offers sessions for adults and families. The Continuing Education retreat is designed particularly for rostered ministers, interested lay people, and their families. It is part of the ELCA Montana Synod's continuing education program. Guests can participate in sessions to dive deeper into theological topics led by seminary professors, theologians, or Christian educators. Additionally, Mountain Weekend is a time for families to experience camp life, the

mountains around us, and have an opportunity to unplug for a weekend.

What have guests said about their experience at Christikon? "Christikon's commitment to the love of God revealed in Jesus and through Jesus' followers was evident from the moment we set foot in camp... The worship and bible studies were extremely well-crafted, deep, and invited a lot of conversation. The outdoor element of Christikon's ministry simply can't be replicated in many other settings," Pastor Mike Pancoast said.

McKinley Outsen, Youth Director of King of Glory Lutheran Church in Billings, said she sees a change in her youth after attending camp at Christikon. She notices a higher interest in church events and activities among her youth, and a higher spirit overall.

Between youth camps, adult/family camps, and the time the staff spends together over the course of the summer, Christikon is a place that values community and mental health. We ensure that Christikon is a safe space for guests to explore who they are and whose they are. All are welcome at Christikon. Christikon seeks to provide opportunities for campers young and old to grow as the Body of Christ. We move towards a deeper experience and awareness of Christian community centered in worship, where all are sustained in the covenant of baptism and drawn more deeply into the lives of each other.

As campers and guests return home after their time at Christikon, we hope they find themselves renewed in their spirit, supported in community, and are reminded there is a God who loves them from the highest mountains to the lowest valleys. And we hope Christikon can be a place guests long to return to in order for them to feel that everlasting grace time and time again.

For more information about Christikon, visit our website at [www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org) or contact the office at 406.656.1969.

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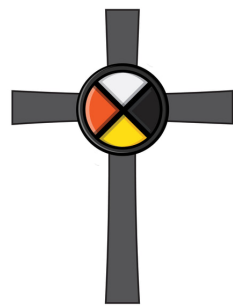
**Click here to leave a message on a  
Kudoboard for Pastor Peggy!**

## **Open House Honoring Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger, DEM**

Will be held at the Synod House 2:30pm - 4:30pm on December 14th.

**Please join us** in celebrating and thanking Peggy for her service to the Synod as she retires on December 15th.

1221 24th St. S  
Great Falls, MT 59405



THE RACIAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE  
OF THE MT SYNOD & N. WYOMING

### **Call to Action from the Racial Justice Task Force!**

Throughout September, the Racial Justice Task Force held a successful 5-session, Part 1 of a course developed by our teaching team entitled, "Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization and Processes of Colonialism to Strengthen Ministry." To continue providing further educational opportunities

for our Synod, a necessary next goal of ours is to raise further funding for our work.

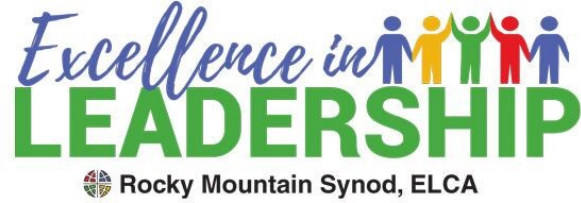
Recently, a generous anonymous donor and member of our Synod has graciously agreed to match up to \$3,000 of the funds we're able to raise now until the end of the month. In light of this AND in recognition that many organizations are petitioning for funds this time of year, we hope you'll also include the Racial Justice Task Force in your list of recipients. If God puts it on your heart to do so, directions for giving can be found on our webpage accessed via the Montana Synod website at <https://www.montanasynod.org/racial-justice-taskforce.html>.

Please note that all funds we do acquire through this current call to action will assist us in compensating our Indigenous teachers and curriculum developers involved in a possible Part 2 of the course mentioned above or any future educational offerings we plan to provide the Synod. More funds will also help us pay the Indigenous leaders consistently working alongside us to guide our strategies for action.

Thank you for thinking of us and praying for our work!

Happy Advent, one and all!

The Racial Justice Task Force of the Montana Synod and N. Wyoming



“It’s not easy to be the church these days”. This is a common sentiment in mainline Christian denominations. We know there is a need for hope and grace and the power of the gospel, but the ways of communicating that and the ways of being church in the world are shifting beneath our feet.

In response to this truth and the desire to raise up courageous, resilient, and faithful leaders, the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA, has created a leadership ministry called Excellence in Leadership. The coursework is a 13-month investment, meeting 2 times each month which will provide tools and resources to last a lifetime, and deep relationships with leaders from around the country to accompany you on your journey in your local community.

At the heart of this ministry is the belief that effective leadership begins with the individual and is honed in community. This ministry helps each person learn how to appreciate who they are, how they are embodied, and manage the way they personally respond to challenges and conflict. Through engaging in this work, individuals are then able to show up more effectively in places of anxiety, conflict, and frustration. When leaders show up in healthy ways, they are better equipped to help the people and systems they work in and with to also respond in healthier ways.

By engaging deeply in the studies of adaptive leadership, vulnerability, emotional intelligence, family systems, Theory U, and spiritual practices, we will be stepping forward to meet the future boldly. We are inviting participants from all regions and walks of life – lay or rostered, young or old. That includes you!

The next cohort will begin on January 5, 2024, and will meet twice per month on Friday mornings from 9:00am-12:00pm Mountain Time, with a commissioning on January 17, 2025.

Truly this initiative is helpful for not only for congregations, but for all people who wish to improve their leadership skills and increase their capacity for emotional intelligence in any area of their lives. Whether you would like to do it as an individual or would like to participate as a group, this initiative is for you. Listen to this testimony from Flip Wilson, a commissioned participant from the program. (note: the video mentions an 18-month cohort, which we also offer, beginning each fall)

<https://vimeo.com/748832132>

We don't know exactly what the future holds, but we do know that it begins with each personal journey toward emotional and spiritual wholeness. Let’s embark on this journey together.

Find out more information and register here: <https://www.rmselca.org/excellence-in-leadership>

Sign up today!

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## Montana and Northern Wyoming Synod Hunger Fund

At the September Synod Council meeting, a decision was made to establish a "Montana

and Northern Wyoming Synod Hunger Fund". The purpose of this fund is to provide money to congregations and ministries in the Synod who are working to feed hungry people in our local communities. The reports from several of these ministries is that they have been seeing an increase in the numbers of people who are requesting food and assistance. The need is great in rural areas as well as in towns and cities across the Synod.

There are several congregations who are actively seeking to help feed the hungry and offer Gospel love. Could you and / or your congregation make a gift to this fund this fall and on a recurring basis? The Montana Synod has generously supported the work of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. Can you help to feed people who are hungry here in our Synod, too?

A grant process is being established so that congregations and ministries can apply for funds. Thanks to the work of the Synod Council, seed money of about \$12,000 has been given to this fund. Be watching for information soon about how to apply for a grant from this fund.

As you give to the Montana/N. Wyoming Synod Hunger fund, please mark clearly on checks that it is for the Synod Hunger Fund. You may also give through [montanasynod.org](http://montanasynod.org) on the GIVE button via the dropdown link to the Synod Hunger Fund.

Thank you for your generous care for those in our communities who are in need!

### [Montana Synod Hunger Fund Poster Download](#)

## Sermon Manuscripts Available

Montana Synod leaders have been providing manuscripts for use in congregations through the Lent and Easter seasons. We are happy to announce that these manuscripts will be provided throughout the entire year! Thank you to the leaders in the Montana Synod who are providing these manuscripts every week. They can be found and downloaded on the [Montana Synod website here](#).

[Click here to give to the Montana Synod](#)

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