



News of the Week May 18, 2022

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For Keith Weatherford's father, Robert, who died last week.

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

St. John's Lutheran Church, Helena
Whitewater Lutheran Church, Whitewater
Grace Lutheran, Worland, WY

Metro Chicago Synod



Words from the Bishop: Following Christ in a World of Hate

Dear Friends in Christ,

Yesterday when I was listening to news coverage about the mass shooting at a Buffalo, NY grocery store this weekend, a woman being interviewed cried in lament and anger, "the world is full of so much hate!" And she is right. The world is full of hate. We can't pretend that what happened in Buffalo is a mere isolated incident of one sick or hate-filled individual. Hate-filled people committing hateful actions are all around us.

In fact, all human beings are capable of hate, and it seems that more and more people these days are choosing to act on that capability through violent words or actions. And it doesn't help that we have such easy access to weapons designed to kill large



numbers of other human beings in a very short period of time in order to carry out these hateful actions.

Just this past week three shootings grounded in hate made national news. Not only did we see blatant racism attack black people once again in a seemingly pre-planned massacre by a white man in Buffalo, NY, but we also saw hate expressed by a Chinese man who shot several Taiwanese worshipers in a Presbyterian church in CA and by a man who shot several Korean women in a hair salon in Dallas. Go back a few weeks and the list would become longer than this article could name.

It's hard to know what to do with this hate that infects the human heart and mind. Often we wonder why. Why do we hate and how do we become trapped in it to the point of killing? The simple but correct answer, of course, is sin. But sin and the hate that emerges from it is a complex thing.

Hate can take on a variety of forms, some of its most extreme forms culminating in violence and murder. But hate doesn't start as hate. It starts as fear. And it often takes root in our lives with a fear of losing one or more basic emotional needs that every human being has: 1) a sense of self-worth; 2) a sense of having a purpose, of mattering to others; 3) a sense of belonging with others; and 4) a sense of security or safety.

When an individual or even a group *feels like* one or more of these four needs are being taken from them (whether they really are or not), anxiety starts to grow. This anxiety can, for some who haven't learned how to manage it, quickly turn into outrage, fear and even terror. And for some that terror of losing one's self, of not mattering, of being replaced in a community, of not being safe in the world emerges in violent, terrorist actions through irrational attempts to reclaim what may or may not actually be threatened.

These angry, violent acts wound and traumatize people, some of whom then respond out of their own fear of losing their self, purpose, place, and security. And the cycle continues, on and on, until our fear, anger and hate destroy us all. And this cycle doesn't just happen at the level of frightened individuals; it takes on even more heinous forms at the group level as hate-filled rhetoric is reinforced through entire industries of hate.

So how are we as followers of Christ to live in a world filled with hate? Certainly, we are not supposed to follow the world's example and foment more hate by attacking others or seeking revenge, even if it is "only" through words. Various versions of Christianity, both in its individual and communal shapes, have been guilty of that in our 2000 year history.

No, the answer to hate is not more hate, fear, or rage even if it is in the name of self-protection. Jesus makes this clear in his Sermon on the Mount, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven..." (Matthew 5:43-45a)

For Jesus, then, the answer to the question of how followers of Christ are to live in a world of hate is through love, love of both our neighbors and our enemies, our friends and perhaps especially those we fear. I know how trite, even glib, that answer -- love -- can sound or feel, especially to people who are traumatized by the hate of others. It seems so wishy-washy, so weak and helpless and surrendering of one's self and power.

But for Jesus and those who would follow him to and through the cross into new life, love is the strongest force in the world. For love is not mere sentimental feeling. The love that God is and the love we are called to live is action that has the potential of changing the world. It includes justice but goes beyond justice in its willingness to lose one's self for the sake of another's well-being. It is a love that sees every person's self as created in the image of God with dignity and worth and sees every person as someone who matters deeply to God for the sake of the world. It is a love that is expected to welcome all people without any "distinction between us and them" (Acts 11:12) so that all can experience belonging to Christ in the security of God's protecting and empowering arms.

In other words, followers of Christ are called to do and say all we can to help every single person experience those basic emotional needs so that fear can more easily become faith in God and trust in each other. This, I believe, is one of the purposes of Christ's church, for it is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we hear the good news that God accepts our selves as they are and gives them worth; the good news that we matter and have a purpose in God's world; the good news that we belong to something bigger than ourselves; and the good news that in God's community, at its best, we are secure in the love of God.

"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect," Jesus proclaims as concludes his call for us to love our enemies. Well, we can't be perfect in this kind of love; our bondage to sin is too great. Thank God for God's grace! But we can try to love in this way, doing all we can to seek a life beyond hate and the fear

that leads to it. And when it's too hard and the fears threaten to overwhelm, we pray with the psalmist, "The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the refuge of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" giving those fears to God so that once again we can find the courage to love. (Ps 27)

In Christ's love,

Bishop Laurie

[Register for the 2022 Montana Synod Assembly Here](#)

If you have not received a confirmation email, please check with your congregation's registrar to confirm that you are in fact registered!

There will be **NO in person registrations at the assembly!**

Only 6 days left!

**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

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.*

Friday offerings will be split between the Lutheran Campus Ministries, Emmaus and MSU.
Saturday offerings will be split between First Call and The Montana Jewish Project.

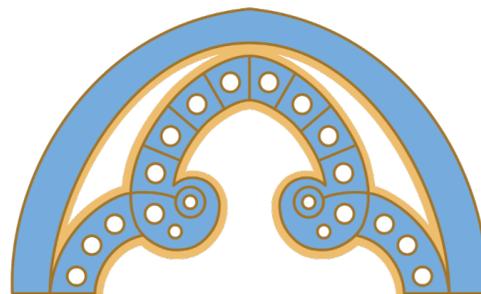
There will be no physical packets to pick up this year! All assembly material will be available online previous to the start of the assembly. If you are a Voting Member at the assembly, make sure to regularly check the [Montana Synod website](#)

for up to date information and to bookmark the page on whichever device or browser you'll have with you at the assembly.

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.

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

Synod Assembly Orientation Information



MONTANA
JEWISH
PROJECT
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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

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 offered meetings will be held on:

May 21, 2pm

May 26, 7pm

If you are a voting member interested in joining one of these meetings please email 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

Contact: Tracy Moseman | tracy.moseman@mt.gov | 406-202-9465

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[Click here to be taken to the newsletter archive on our website](#)

