



PO Box 1259, Livingston  
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# ALC May 2024 Newsletter



## Uncertainty and Connecting

Dear Children of God at ALC,

The account of the Easter story from the gospel of Mark has been lingering in my mind the past few weeks. The women came to the tomb that first Easter morning seeking Jesus. They anticipated finding Jesus' lifeless body. Their relationship with him and wanting to care for him (even in his death) drove them to seek Jesus. The women came to the tomb filled with grief for the past. They came worried about the present and completely uncertain about the future.

Instead of encountering death, the women were sent back to the disciples and back to Galilee, the place where they first experienced Jesus' fullness and life. The women didn't know what to do. Nothing made sense to them. And Mark's gospel tells us that the women didn't say anything to anyone because they were afraid.

Two thousand years later we aren't that different from the women who came seeking Jesus.

We continue to seek Jesus. You come to worship and are part of this community of faith because you want to see Jesus. You want to experience God's love and grace and freedom that are possible in and through Jesus. We also come with grief for the past- whether personal loss or the loss of what the church once was. We come with worry about our present lives and the world around us. And we come with uncertainty and fear about the future- both our personal future and the future of the church.

As we seek Jesus, we experience Jesus' fullness and abundant life. But we, like the women, as the body of Christ in this place and time sometimes don't know what to do. Often nothing makes sense and life is confusing and messy. We don't know how to or are afraid to share with others about the transformation and new life that Jesus gives us.

In recent conversations, I've heard people in the community around us longing for connection- connection with other people and connection with God or something bigger than themselves. There is something innate in each human being that longs for spiritual connection. God created each of us to be spiritual beings. All human beings need a spiritual connection in order to be well, to thrive.

We have the women who first discovered that Jesus was alive to thank for spreading that good news. The women had to wrestle with figuring out how to share about the abundant life they experienced through Jesus. They eventually figured out how to share, despite the fear they felt. I wonder what story will be told 2000 years from now about the people in Livingston who overcame uncertainty and fear to share Jesus' love with the community longing for spiritual connection? I think it's going to be a really good story!!

Peace,

*Pastor Melissa*



Randy and Linda Holland

Mike and Vicky Ryles

Mollie Waldum

Carole Fagerli

Anita Bueling

Lynnette Evanson

Carol O'Dell

Bea Huber

Holly Happe

**KEYS:** In an effort to update things, do you have a key to the church? Does it work? Please check, then let Annette know which door it opens. If it doesn't work, please turn it into the office to get it out of the books. Thanks!



## Growing through Light

Wow, a lot has happened in the last month at American Lutheran Church. Since our vote to approve replacement of 12 windows in our church, we now have 12 new windows! While I anticipated it might change how it would feel inside, I just didn't realize how much it changed. We now have new windows in all the rooms along the north side of the building on the main floor, from the church office to the end of the hall. Not only will the new windows allow more light in and ventilation, but we also have three egress windows in the rooms that are being rented out. Good news on that front. As for the sanctuary, I love the amount of light that now enters our space. I'm sure you will also feel the difference when you walk into the sanctuary. To me it helps create a space that is inviting and fresh. Thank you for your support with this endeavor.

We now have Pastor Melissa for three-quarter time starting May 15<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your questions, thoughts, conversations with each other, and ultimately your vote to support her increase in time with us. We are in a different place than we were even two years ago. While her schedule is still being worked out, she will be adding one more Sunday each month to her calendar of sharing the Word from the pulpit. She will also be adding more time throughout the week by one day. This might be a full day or split between two days. In either case, she will be present with us, in the church, or out and about connecting with the community, visiting more with members, or checking in with those in need. It is an exciting time for us at ALC. We are listening to each other, to God, and being more aware of the nudges from the Holy Spirit.

As we see the changes in the surrounding area from the brown of winter to the green of spring I am reminded again and again of the never-ending cycle of the seasons. I look forward and relish the warmth of the sun filled days. Let us keep looking to God, to renew us when we feel brown and worn out, knowing that God will replenish us, renew us, and help us to grow in our faith.

Let us find ways to completely let God into our lives so that we may be able to be open to where God wants to use us to let him into the lives of those around us.

Thank you, people of God! Thank you for who you are and what you are already doing in the community of Livingston.

Yours in Christ,

*Randy Mogen*



7	Ashton Fink	19	Nels Swandal, Jr.
12	Cookie Linstead	22	Diane Mueller
17	Leslie Beffert	23	Linda Holland
18	Nancy Curtis		

### Loaves & Fishes

We continue to serve the evening meal at Loaves and Fishes on the third Monday of each month (that's **May 20th** this month). We served 39 meals were served on April 15. If you would be willing to help, please let Pastor Melissa or Cookie Linstead know or just come down to Loaves & Fishes at 10am and/or 3:30pm.



## Taking Care of One Another

In the last several weeks our lives have been affected by the sudden deaths of several friends, relatives, neighbors and others that we looked up to; our understanding is that their passing was "un-expected." It seems we have a lot of questions with very few answers.

I don't exactly know why but we subscribe to 3 newspapers, and we read the obituaries, probably wondering if an old friend in south central Montana has passed away. A lot of times we read some of the obituaries, whether we knew the person or not; amazed by the fabulous way that person lived their lives. Their lives were full of family, friends, activities, and a place in their communities. We are especially touched by their connection to their faith in the Lord, and involvement in their Church.

Gloria, as a nurse for over fifty years has seen the alpha and the omega. She has brought many into the world, and helped to ease the passing of those who were leaving it.

In Sunday's Billings Gazette, one of the comics, "For Better or for Worse", a father explains to his daughter as she is grieving over the loss of the family pet, he tells that no one lives forever, that is why we are all so special, our time on this earth is just a loan from God, and no one, except The Almighty, knows how long it will last. That's why we have to take care of each other and to remember every day to appreciate the ones we love.

*Dale and Gloria Guidi*

LPA and his mentor

## Newsletters and Bulletins

If you know of anyone who would like a hardcopy of the newsletter, please let the office know at 406-222-0512 or [alclivingston@gmail.com](mailto:alclivingston@gmail.com).

**Bulletins are now available online!** Weekly Announcements, weekly bulletin, monthly calendar, and current newsletter are available online at <https://www.alclivingston.org/copy-of-calendar>

## Benevolence

March benevolence of \$1135 went to LCM Campus Ministry at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT. April benevolence went to ASPEN.

May benevolence will go to Farm to School whose motto is, “Teach, Grow, Eat, Repeat!” Farm to School of Park County guides schools and communities in building a prosperous local food culture that places healthy food on the plates and in the minds of all Park County children and their families. If you would like your contribution to go to the Farm to School program, mark “benevolence” on your contribution envelope.

### Council Minutes Summary from April 7, 2024

- Pastor Melissa attended a Pastors’ Conference in Chico after Easter.
- Benevolence for April went to ASPEN. May’s recipient will be Farm to School; June will be Counterpoint.
- A list of the 2024 ALC Committee members is available.
- The Council Secretary, Jane Haugen, has a list of people eligible to vote at congregation meetings. When there is a vote, who is eligible will be clarified.
- The window project is moving forward with tentative construction beginning April 17-19.
- Spectrum will be contacted to clarify how the Wi-Fi is set up to make sure that we are getting the coverage needed.
- ALC is looking for members to attend the Montana Synod. Please let Pastor know if you are interested.
- The Financial Committee is looking into online giving.





WELCA is a community of women here at ALC who are committed to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, society, and the world. Please contact Jane Haugen for more information.

### Lutheran World Relief

May 5 the quilts, school kits, and personal care quilts will be blessed. Thank you to everyone who contributed their talents, time, and resources to make these projects for those in need.



### Agape Circle



The Agape Circle is a women's Bible study that meets monthly either at church or in group member's homes. The group uses the Bible study out of the Gather magazine. The next gathering will be Thursday, May 23 in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 pm. Please bring a salad to share.

## Shout Outs!!

A Shout Out and thank you to those who are making a difference in our community and church! These people and their stewardship are examples of God's loving grace. (Remember you can submit something for the shout outs at any time to [alclivingston@gmail.com](mailto:alclivingston@gmail.com)).



Shout out to...

- ❖ Jane Haugen and Dana Latsch for changing the parapets with the changing seasons.
- ❖ To all the people who made the delicious breakfast for Easter Sunday's potluck.
- ❖ To the Meals on Wheels crew who serve the homebound in our community, Dale & Gloria Guidi, Larry Hildebrand, Dean Nelson, and Dorothy Johnson. *They could use another driver to help deliver meals!*
- ❖ To the Loaves & Fishes crew who serve the hungry in our neighborhood, Cookie Linstead, Jane Haugen, Lana Sheen, and Dale Siegle on dishes. *Will you help out on May 20<sup>th</sup>?*
- ❖ To Cookie & Jane who painted the new window trim.
- ❖ Diane Mueller who organized the quilting, school kits, and personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief.
- ❖ Verne Beffert and John West for keeping the snow off the sidewalks all winter...are you done yet?
- ❖ Dana for keeping our grass trimmed.
- ❖ Randy Mogen for working closely with Nevins Glass to organize the installation of the windows.
- ❖ Lana Sheen for making the jellybean baggies on Easter to give us a little treat and remind us of the gift and wonder of what Easter is all about.
- ❖ Nancy Curtis for all the beautiful music she gives us- especially during Holy Week!



- ❖ Candy Parks for playing for a few weeks for us while Nancy was out of town to ensure we continued to be able to worship in music and song.
- ❖ Dale Guidi for working on the exit doors to ensure they open and close smoothly.
- ❖ All the quilters for the many hours they put in to make all the quilts that will help convey God's love and warmth to people around the world.
- ❖ Jane and Dana for moving furniture around some of the classrooms to ensure the groups using space at ALC have a comfortable and useful space to use.
- ❖ The Faithful Innovation Team (Dennis S, Curt, Dale and Gloria, Randy M, Lana, Tena) for the time and energy they are giving to engage with the process to help our church to discern what God is doing in our congregation and in our community.
- ❖ Annette for her diligent work in updating ALC's records and keeping all the things organized!

### May Worship Teams

- May 5 Tena Versland, Dale & Gloria Guidi
- May 12 Diane Mueller
- May 19 Don & Lana Sheen
- May 26 Jim & Bonnie Evanson

### June Worship Teams

- June 2 Randy & Joan Mogen
- June 9 Jane & Dana Latsch
- June 16 Doug & Cookie Linsted
- June 23 Curt & Dee Gosda
- June 30 John & Diane West



**On vacation:** Annette will be on vacation from May 25 through June 16. If you have anything that needs attention or changes in scheduling, please contact Pastor Melissa.



### I Am Still with You

The final month of the school year is upon us. For some of our students it's the final month of their college careers. This time of year, is filled with project deadlines, looming exams, monstrous papers, and all the late nights, high anxiety, and fuzzy brains that come along with the course load. The majority of our students are in survival mode, and as far as campus ministry is concerned, we are doing what we can to help these busy humans reach the finish line.

There is a line in Psalm 139 that gives me pause every time I come across it. In some translations the second half of verse 18 reads, "I come to the end -- I am still with you." The psalmist is trying to count God's thoughts, to understand God's ways, and in doing so reaches his limits. The way I read it, the psalmist comes "to the end" of his probing reflection and exhausted declares, "I am still with you." It seems that understanding God, at least for him, ultimately takes a backseat to being with God.

Our students are coming to the end of a semester, a grad degree, a college career. They will cram their heads full of as much knowledge as possible until their final, final is complete. Like the psalmist, they will stretch their brains to the limit. And when the end comes, I hope they, like the psalmist, are struck with the realization that whatever the outcome, God is still with them, and they are still with God.

That we are with God and God is with us is an easy message to

share, but a hard one to realize. It's one thing to know a subject or to master a discipline. It's another thing to know and fully embrace God's presence. Yet that is what this Easter season is all about, knowing and trusting God's living presence in the here and now, even and maybe especially, when we've reached our limits.

We come to the end - of another school year, of a college career, of ourselves - God is still with us.

Grace & Peace,

JP Carlson, Campus Pastor



## Christikon Clips

May 2024

**There is still room to register for camp this summer!**

Space remains in most youth sessions and families/adult sessions, including the

**Work Weekend, May 24-27. Families register online.**

**Remember there is no cost. Just bring your willing hearts and hands!**

**See you there!**

**Special guest speakers** become part of the Christikon life this summer during sessions for adults and families. During Continuing Education Retreat (July 29-Aug 1) we feature **Professor Jason Mahn. Session Topic: Gifted and Graced: Christian Discipleship in the Anthropocene-** creation-centered discipleship that helps heal our relationship with earth.

Watch for more details on our website for both Continuing Ed and Mountain Weekend. Come spend a few days of relaxation, learning, and faith growth with us. Full details can be found on our website

**[www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org)**

**We covet your prayers for Christikon's** this summer, for our summer and fulltime staff, and for all who join in the Christikon life.

**It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ—exploring God's creation and the adventure of life together.**

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**DOUGH FOR DAILY BREAD:** The Montana Synod will host a series of bike rides around the synod this summer to raise funds for the Montana Synod Hunger Fund which recently disbursed 10 grants to congregations addressing hunger in their communities. A bike ride will be held on Saturday, June 29 from Bozeman to Livingston, ending at ALC. Consider joining us for the ride! If biking isn't your thing, you might consider dreaming up a run/walk/hike/other activity to raise funds for the Montana Synod Hunger Fund. We will also need volunteers to help with providing a meal for the cyclists after the ride and support along the course. To register for the ride, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8a2z53>. Contact Pastor Melissa if you are interested in helping to plan or volunteer to support the ride.



**FULLER CENTER BIKE ADVENTURE** For 15 years the Fuller Center has enabled hundreds of new and experienced cyclists alike to tackle incredible adventures by bicycle. Their rides are focused on serving God and each other as they raise money for families around the world, building and repairing homes through The Fuller Center for Housing. They will be spending the night here at American Lutheran on June 21. Would a few people be interested in organizing dinner on the 21<sup>st</sup> or breakfast on the 22<sup>nd</sup>? If so, please let Pastor Melissa know.