



PO Box 1259, Livingston
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ALC

September

2024 Newsletter



Being Refreshed Through Friendship and Learning

Dear Children of God at ALC,

Each year, pastors in the ELCA are required to do 50 hours of continuing education. There aren't really any rules about what the continuing education has to be other than it be something that helps the pastor become a better pastor. It could take the form of a multi-day conference, a workshop, an online course, or self-study. So far of all the continuing education I've done, the most helpful and my favorite has been the continuing education that some of my pastor friends from seminary have organized each summer since we graduated.

A couple of weeks ago, five other pastors and I got to spend a week at Camp Onomia which is located on Lake Shakopee in central Minnesota. The ELCA has SO many great camps across the country and this one was a tree filled campus right on the lake. My pastor friends and I were lucky enough to have basically the whole camp to ourselves for the week!

Before we gathered, each of us read a book related to theology or the work of the church. While we were at camp we gathered in the gazebo (swatting the occasional mosquito while my dog, Livi, patrolled the property for squirrels) and we each gave a presentation to the others about the book we read. The book topics included preaching, having spiritual conversations, the language we use for God, Christian Nationalism, and relying on God in the midst of changes in church and society.

After each presentation, we then took plenty of time for questions and discussion. This was where the real learning happened. We talked about how we might apply the concepts from the books to each of our churches (or at a camp in the case of one friend who is serving as the program director at a Lutheran

camp). We identified the shortcomings of the ideas in the books and added what we thought was missing.

When we weren't talking about our books, we had plenty of time to enjoy games, puzzles, the discovery of freshwater bryozoans, exploring Lake Shakopee, so much good food, hikes in nearby State Parks, a fire tower, doggy playtime, campfire, and s'mores.

I'm so grateful for the opportunity to be able to gather in-person with this group each summer to continue to strengthen our relationships. These people are faithful and wise pastors who I have learned so much from since our days in seminary. We have sustained and supported one another through many challenges and joys of being pastors. I hope you have had groups of people like this in your life!

Peace,

Pastor Melissa

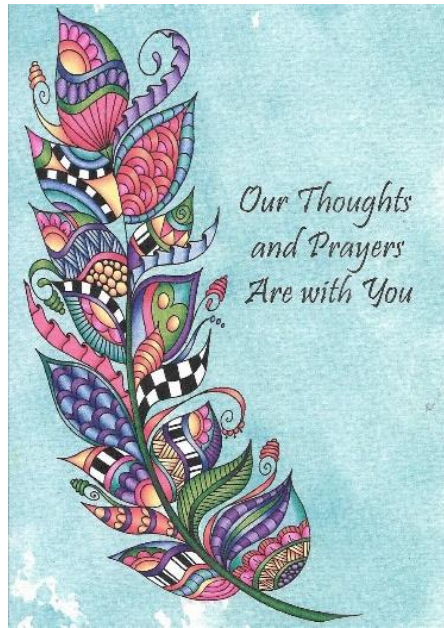


On **Sunday, Sept. 8**, congregations of the ELCA will join together for our annual day of service, **"God's work. Our hands."** This day continues to be an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the ELCA — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.



Agape Circle is a women's Bible study based on the reading from the Gather magazine. Agape meets monthly either at church or in group member's homes. The September gathering will be Tuesday, March 17 at 7:00 pm at the church.

Randy and Linda Holland
Mike and Vicky
Ryles
Mollie Waldum
Holly Happe
Carole Fagerli
Anita
Bueling
Lynnette Evanson
Rich Muza
Bea Huber
Larry Lovely



Noticing God's Presence

Where have you seen God lately? Pastor Melissa has posed that question to us more than once. Ever since she did that, I find myself being more aware of God's presence wherever I go. Last month I shared with you about my experience of going to the Galapagos Islands. Prior to going to those famed islands, I spent four days in the Amazon jungle. It was a place so different, with unique plants and animals that I had never seen before. On one of our daily outings, we were walking in the jungle and our guide led us to a massive Kapok tree. The moment I saw this tree, the question of "Where have you seen God lately?" popped into my head. I stood in awe of this tree, this creation of nature, this creation of God. The indigenous people of the Ecuadorian Amazon also recognized this tree as a creation of the Creator.

Being there, so far from Livingston, made me realize more than ever the presence of God in our world. It made me realize the connectedness we have in all parts of the world to our God. It reminded me of the quilts that are sent out to other places each year far from our home. It made me realize how important it is for

me and the people of our church to continue to look for God's presence wherever we go and whatever we do.

During an after-church education time, Pastor Melissa continued to lead us about discipleship. On this Sunday, we focused on "God's Work, Our Hands." We traced out our hands, cut them out, first using green paper. On the cut out of our hand we wrote down things we could think of that demonstrated how we lived out our faith by joining in what God is doing in our community and our world. There are so many things that people already do that demonstrate God's love in our world and community. It was not hard to see where God was through the loving acts of the people of God. Next, we again cut out the traced hand, this time in blue. We put on this hand our hopes and dreams for what we want to continue to do and what we might do in the future individually and as a church. But I also wonder if this might have been a way to write down the possible nudges that we get, those nudges from the Holy Spirit that are just waiting to be acted on. I encourage you before church or after to look at the hands that are up on the wall. I encourage you to put your own hand up on the wall if you happened to miss this education time.

So, when you are out and about, keep your senses open to God's presence. God is here now. God has always been with us and will be with us in the future. Sometimes in our hectic world and lives we don't always see God's presence. We need to be reminded again and again of his presence in the simple things, the amazing things. When we see God, let our hearts be filled with joy and let us give thanks for all we have. Let us also remember that God is not done with us and God is not done with American Lutheran Church. I hope and pray that we will be open to seeing God's presence and the possibilities of what might be!

Yours in Christ,

Randy Mogen



Loaves & Fishes

We continue to serve the evening meal at Loaves and Fishes on the third Monday of each month (that's **September 16** this month). 45 meals were served on August 19. If you would be willing to help, please let Pastor Melissa or Cookie Linsted know or just come down to Loaves & Fishes at 10am and/or 3:30pm.



Women ^{of the} ELCA

ALC-WELCA will meet Sunday, September 15 following worship. 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. It's hard to believe those summer months are behind us and we are approaching fall. We will begin our discussion regarding the sale of our Norwegian Goodies while considering the preparation dates for the coming months. We would love your contribution to that discussion. Please join!! Visit <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/> for more information.



- 6 Michael Ryles
- 10 Pastor Melissa
- 11 Jim Evanson
- 13 Carol Fagerli
- 14 Paul Waldum
- 22 Lexxy Bueling

Benevolence

July benevolence went to Livingston Food Resource for summer lunches. Thank you for the contributions that totaled \$1,360.

August benevolence went to Counterpoint.



September benevolence will go to Christikon. Since 1951, Christikon has been a special place for spiritual growth and renewal with friends, old and new; an intentional Christian community where all are welcome, chosen, cherished, loved, forgiven, redeemed, and made worthy by none other than Jesus Christ himself.

Worship begins and ends each day. We study the Bible together. We take time to reflect and be alone with God. We worship and play, enjoy time together and apart, time for silliness and song and time for rest and reflection.

All are welcome at Christikon, and there is a place for you here. Christikon is a place of joy that lifts up God's gift of life. Christikon is a place for you. We invite you to come with your questions, your doubts, your challenges, and your joys.

If you would like to donate to Christikon, mark "benevolence" on your contribution envelope.

This summer through **Dough For Daily Bread**, as a whole synod we raised \$10,068 for the Montana Synod Hunger Fund!! Thank you to all the bike riders and volunteers who helped make it possible to do the bike ride from Bozeman to Livingston!!! And thank you to all of you who made a donation to Dough for Daily Bread through our June benevolence!! Thank you for helping us provide financial support for congregations across the synod who are engaged in feeding people in their communities.



**DOUGH FOR
DAILY BREAD**

Council Minutes Summary from July 28, 2024

- Pastor was out for vacation and continuing education from August 2-18. Pastors from MSU campus ministries, Dale Guidi, and Lorrie Vennes covered those Sundays.
- Benevolence for September will go to Christikon.
- Building & Grounds: the flashing has been replaced on the ridge cap. Dennis is working with local trades people to determine the best solution for the chimney.
- Building: Montana Legal Service Association/ ASPEN moved out of the space they were renting. Elevate Montessori is considering the space.
- Finance: Vanco will provide services for online giving. Look for more information as it becomes available. Annette Hart agreed to be the backup person for the bookkeeper. Shelving will be purchased for financial records in the locked room. The room on the lower level will be used for financial and historical records.
- Endowment: 4% of the account, approximately \$10,000, will be distributed once a decision are made regarding suggestions. \$2,000 will go towards a hospitality room. This will be further reviewed in October.
- New business: Annette Hart will be working on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Council retreat is set for Saturday, September 28, 9-3. The lower coffee tables work better for coffee hour, so Lynnette will look into the cost.
- Next meeting will be September 8.

Meet with Pastor Melissa

While leading parttime, Pastor Melissa had minimal time to get to meet and know congregants. Take a few minutes and schedule a time to meet with Pastor so she can get to know your family. Contact her at the church 406-222-0512, via email [pastormelissaj@gmail](mailto:pastormelissaj@gmail.com), phone 630-981-7910, or text.

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).



Shout out to...

- Dale & Gloria Guidi and Larry Hildebrandt for helping our seniors by delivering Meals on Wheels.
- Cookie Linsted, Lana Sheen, and Pastor Melissa for feeding the hungry souls at Loaves & Fishes.
- Cookie, Bonnie, and Sue for painting. Thank you for helping to make our space look refreshed and welcoming.
- Randy, Lana, Don, Leslie, Verne, Billie Kaye, and Dennis H. for cleaning out a storage room and the financial office, assembling shelves, hauling away trash and donations, and moving all the church financial and other records. Thank you for helping to make better use of the space we have and keep our records safe.
- Randy for thoroughly washing walls.
- Dennis S and Jerry for cleaning out debris from behind the chimney.
- Jerry for swapping out door knobs. Thanks for making sure our church is secure.
- Lana for decorating the sanctuary. Thank you for making our worship space beautiful!
- Cookie, Jane, and Dana for watering the flowers and grass. Thank you for continuing to make our church a source of beauty and welcome in our neighborhood.
- Cookie and Lana for helping set up, serve, and clean up for the reception after Bill Harris' funeral. Thank you for helping to offer hospitality as we remembered and celebrated Bill's life.
- Lana for creating the God's Work, Our Hands poster. Thank you for helping us reflect on how we are living out our faith!



Here Comes the Sun

A new school year is dawning. You can see the rays from the sun slowly fill the Bozeman skyline in the form of students settling into their various dwellings, increased foot traffic on campus, and school related messages popping up everywhere and in every form, e.g., yard signs, flyers, posters, emails, texts, etc.

The psalmist, when writing about Zion, the city of God, proclaims, "God will help her when the morning dawns" (Psalm 46: 5). As a campus pastor looking out over the student body of Montana State University at the dawn of another school year this line from Psalm 46 fills me with hope. God will help the timid freshman. God will help the questioning sophomore. God will help the overwhelmed junior. God will help the burned out senior. God will help the chronically anxious grad student. God will help all in need at the dawn of this semester.

LCM Campus Ministry is here at MSU to embody the help God freely offers in Christ. We are here for the freshman looking for community. We are here for the sophomore asking tough life questions. We are here for the junior who needs a space to breathe deeply. We are here for the senior seeking guidance for the next step. We are here for the grad student in need of deep, abiding peace.

The school year is upon us! With God's help, join us in welcoming the dawn and everyone who comes with it.

Grace and Peace,

JP Carlson

September Worship Teams

September 1 Jane Haugen & Dana Latsch
September 8 Jim & Bonnie Evanson
September 15 Randy & Joan Mogen
September 22 Doug & Cookie Linstead
September 29 John & Diane West

October Worship Teams

October 6 Billie Roberts, Anna Smith, & Karla Pettit
October 13 Dennis & Billie Kaye Harms
October 20 Verne & Leslie Beffert
October 27 Dennis & Kitty Springer



LWR School Kits

Education is one of the strongest tools a community has for breaking the cycle of poverty. Ensuring that girls attend school, especially in places where their access is deprioritized, has even stronger results. Lutheran World Relief School Kits contain essential supplies to help children — and in some cases, adults — continue learning in the face of serious obstacles. That learning leads to a better life for them, their families and their communities.

School Kits provide normalcy in times of crisis.

In northern Iraq, many families were unable to buy school supplies for their children when returning to their homes after years of ISIS conflict. The students couldn't complete their schoolwork; some skipped school entirely because they lacked basic supplies. Thanks to a shipment of more than 13,000 LWR School Kits, students of all ages received what they needed to continue their education and return to the normalcy of a regular school routine. As school absences decrease and schoolwork is completed, students are beginning to heal from the trauma of witnessing violence and conflict.

While school supplies are on sale, pick up a few extras. The list is available in the back of the church.



Potluck and Conversation

A small group of ALC members came up with idea that we as a congregation should gather together this fall in the *True Lutheran Fashion* which is none other than a potluck dinner! We came up with the title of Potluck and Conversation simply because of two things Lutherans cherish, and actually are naturally good at, are food and conversation. Pastor Melissa said she is most excited to try all the desserts! The first potluck is scheduled for Wednesday September 28, from 5:30-6:30pm. We invite everyone to come and enjoy one another over great food. There are two more potlucks scheduled, one in October and a final one in November (those dates have not been set yet). We ask that you mark your calendars for Wednesday September 25, 5:30-6:30. P.S. Anyone that is on first name basis with the following individuals, would you please inform Sven, Ole, and Lena of this event. It just won't be the same without them!



Join us September 22 when Pastor Marlow

Carrols will be here to discuss his work with Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry, a worshiping community of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Church in America.

Did you know that FIC is the only ecumenical worshiping community within the Montana State Prison providing a pastor on a full-time basis? Pastor Marlow provides worship services, Bible studies, pastoral visits, bereavement visits, and funeral services. FIC invites you to help us bring hope, love, forgiveness, and faith into a place that often does not share these values.





Christikon Clips

We are grateful for your prayers for Christikon this summer, for the summer staff as they are called back into the world newly equipped to share their mountaintop experiences, and for all who have joined in the Christikon life. We ask for your continued prayers and support.

We also ask for prayers for Mark and Julie Donald as they prepare for their move to California. As you may be aware, Mark will complete 11 years of ministry with Christikon in September. We are grateful for his faithful service and wish him blessings as he begins a new chapter of ministry. You can go to our website for more information and details.

Please keep the **leadership of Christikon** in your prayers as they move through the search for the new Executive Director. Watch our website and Facebook for updates as they become available.

Summer season #73 is in the books. What a journey it has been with so many opportunities for us to be about God's work. Our exceptional staff have headed back to their lives outside of camp, the campers are back at school and work, and we begin the planning for 2025.

We hosted campers from Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Kentucky, Montana, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah, Texas Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Wonderful opportunity to connect with people from these out of state congregations and forge long lasting friendships sharing the Christikon experience.

Our special guest speakers Professor Jason Mahn and Rev. Kent Claussen Gubrud led sessions at our CE Retreat and Mountain Weekend.

Fall Retreats: We have retreats scheduled into the middle of October with several dates including weekends available in September. Bring your group and enjoy fall in the mountains!

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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