



PO Box 1259, Livingston
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ALC August 2024 Newsletter



Discipleship

Dear Children of God at ALC,

As part of our Adult Education series on discipleship, over the past month we have heard from leaders within our community who have shared with us about the challenges in our community and what is being done to address those challenges. As followers of Jesus, each of us are called to love our neighbor and to proclaim the good news of Jesus. How exactly we are to go about doing that is often difficult to discern. It's been helpful and powerful to hear from these community leaders to help us discover what God is already up to in our community and discern how we as individuals or we as a church might join in with what God is doing.

Here's a summary of the community leaders we heard from:

On **June 30** our focus was on hunger in our county. We first heard from Rachel Jones, Executive Director at **Farm to School of Park County**. The vision of Farm to School is a future where all Park County communities have a deep and meaningful connection to food and where it comes from. They do this through hands-on teaching, growing food throughout the county, and providing accessible, delicious and nutritious meals for school-aged children.

We also heard from Kaya Patten-Fusselman, Executive Director at the **Livingston Food Resource Center**. The LFRC acquires and distributes healthful food to individuals and families in need, develops a strong, sustainable, local food system, addresses the root causes of hunger in Livingston and Park County, and supports food-related economic development that drives the creation of jobs. Lately they have seen three times greater usage of their food pantry since the fall. About 43% of children in the country are food insecure. The LFRC serves 10% of the people in Livingston.

On **July 7** our focus was on schools, students, and families. We heard from John Gregory, the Director for Parent and Career Support Programs at **Community Health Partners**. John shared

about the parent support programs through CHP including parent liaisons, universal home visiting, parent training, family events (e.g. Wiggly Wednesdays), and collaborations. He shared about the negative impact Adverse Childhood Experiences have on children, but he also shared about healthy outcomes from positive childhood experiences. John emphasized the importance for children to feel safe, seen, known, valued, supported, and comforted.

We also heard from Lori Dust, recently retired **Park High Principal**. Lori shared about her experience working in other schools in addition to working at Park High. She shared some of the challenges faced by students. She focused in on the need to break the cycle of poverty for students and their families. About 50% of students and their families are living in poverty. Lori remarked that Livingston hides its poverty very well. While there are numerous systemic and situational factors that keep people in poverty, Lori shared a few stories of students who were able to break out of the cycle due to the care and support of teachers, administration, and community organizations like CHP. These sorts of strong and supportive relationships, along with a strong youth probation program, work-based learning, and fostering resiliency allow students to move out of poverty.

On **July 21** we heard about the work being done to ensure all people in our community have access to housing.

Katherine Daly, The **Park County Housing Coalition** Program Manager, shared with us about the Housing Coalition which is part of HRDC. Katherine shared some starting statistics with us about housing in Park County. In December 2019 the single-family median home list price was \$282,753 and in December 2023 it was \$649,000. The estimated median rent in the county is \$1,800 which is affordable for a household earning \$73,000 while the median renter household income is \$49,660. The 2022 Park County Housing Action Plan recommends 12 housing and policy tools for implementation. The areas of focus for the Housing Coalition for 2024 are Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Pilot

Program, Employer-Assisted Housing partnerships Pilot Program, and City of Livingston Zoning Reform.

Anna Stone, the Seeking Housing Services Coordinator at **HRDC**, also shared about other work being done in Park County through HRDC to provide housing. Anna and Katherine talked about the Housing Ladder which begins at the bottom with Emergency Shelter and goes up through housing that is federally subsidized all the way up to market rate housing. Anna shared a couple of stories of individuals who faced barriers to securing housing and were ultimately able to be housed through support from HRDC. Some of these supports include subsidized housing, housing choice vouchers, homebuyer education and support.

Garrick Fulmer-Faust, the Center Coordinator at the **Park County Senior Center**, shared a bit about the 24 affordable apartments for seniors. He also spoke about various programs and projects to help keep the senior in our community healthy in mind, body, and spirit. A fitness center for those aged 50+ is being constructed at the Senior Center. Garrick emphasized the need meaning, purpose, and social engagement for seniors.

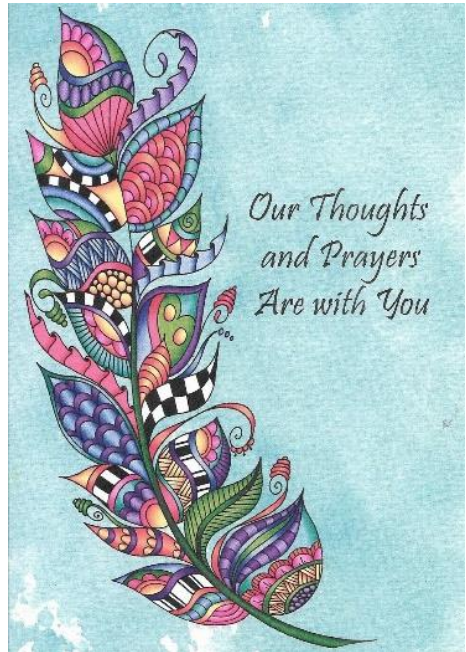
I invite you to continue to reflect on what we heard from these presenters. How might God be nudging you or our congregation to join in what God is already doing in our community so that all people might know and experience God's grace and love? We can't possibly solve all the problems in our community, but we are called to do something. The good news is we don't have to do it alone. God is already working in our community, and we have amazing organizations and leaders already doing so much to address the challenges in our community so that all people will have an opportunity to thrive as God intended them to.

Peace,

Pastor Melissa

Pastor Melissa will be out of the office for vacation and continuing education August 2-18. For Pastoral Care contact Dale Guidi 406-222-3939 and for other things contact, Randy Mogen 406-223-6478.

Randy and Linda Holland
Mike and Vicky Ryles
Mollie Waldum
Holly Happe
Carol Fagerli
Anita Bueling
Lynnette Evanson
Rich Muza
Bea Huber
Larry Lovely
The Family of Bill Harris
The Family of Debra Swandal
The Family of Dave Nelson
The Family of Carol O'Dell



Feeling Fear, Trusting God

I recently returned from a bucket list trip to the Galapagos Islands. Needless to say, it was an incredible trip. One of the daily activities we did as we journeyed to different islands of the archipelago was snorkeling. Prior to this trip I had snorkeled once, and the experience wasn't a pleasant one as my breathing tube had a small hole in it and I kept breathing in salt water and I thought I might drown. So now I was in the Galapagos and to really experience the place you must see what's under the surface of the water. On our first outing I put on my full body wet suit as I was instructed and reminded myself what our guide told us. You will not sink with the wet suit on! We boarded our dinghy and went to the spot for our time snorkeling. I knew in my head what to do as I had listened carefully to the guide and his pre-snorkeling instructions. Now it was my turn. I plunged into the water, and I literally found myself panicking. I don't why, maybe because it was new, my mask was leaking, and I didn't really trust the fact that I would not sink. Anyway, I gave my signal of distress, arm waving to

the guide and made my way back to the dinghy. He grabbed my arm and calmly assured me that I was okay. He asked if I wanted to get out, but in my stubbornness, I said “NO”. He then gave me a life ring to hold on to, tightened my mask and told me to relax, breathe, and enjoy the water. So here I was, hanging on to a life ring, floating along and beginning to see all the wonders under the water. That was my first day. By the fourth day of snorkeling, without a life ring, I was experiencing something beyond words. At times I was swimming with up to six pacific green turtles at a time, seeing all the tropical fish of varying color, shape and size. Looking at the huge variety of coral and sea life imaginable. My fear of everything in the water was gone. I was drifting along with the current, relaxing and being in awe of all the things God created.

At the end of our trip to the Galapagos, we were asked to share something with the group. I told them that I had so much fear of snorkeling at the beginning but thanks to our guide, his patience, his comfort and his understanding of what I was going through allowed me to be filled with gratitude and thankfulness for what he gave me so that I might experience something incredible.

I can't help but make the connection of what happened to me in the Galapagos to our own faith journeys we have. How many times I think about a time when I was in complete fear, fear of the unknown, fear of taking a risk, fear of trusting God completely. And I also think about what happens when we are given that life ring from God to trust Him and to experience His love for us in this world. I wonder how many times I have not trusted God so that I might let go of my fear and experience what He has in store for me.

I also think about our church, ALC regarding this as well. What do we fear so much that we can't trust God completely? I wonder what would happen if we could let God completely have our fear? Might we be filled with gratitude and thankfulness for letting God take our fear so that we might experience more fully what He wants us to do and become. I get excited thinking about the possibilities of what might be in store for us. We know that

God is with us. We know that God will walk with us in whatever we do. It might be something new, like snorkeling was for me, but when we trust God more, oh the joy we might experience. So let us give our fears to God and find ways to be thankful for what is revealed.

Yours in Christ,

Randy Mogen



5 Daniel Bakke
12 Teresa Huber
18 Dale Siegle

16 Joan Mogen
25 Marla Flatgard

Loaves & Fishes

We continue to serve the evening meal at Loaves and Fishes on the third Monday of each month (that's **August 19th** this month). 27 meals were served on July 15th. 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.



Being Joyful

How many times before the start of Sunday services, do you hear the sound of laughter coming from our church members? It's great to share some stories and happiness before the service starts. Maybe the minister might get a little something in her sermon that brings a little laughter from the congregation. In fact, Psalm 126:2 says: "We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, "What amazing things God has done for them."

Laughter, Excitement. God is a God of joy! And if we were heading into a nearby church for a first-time visit, that's exactly what we would hope to find---joy, laughter, excitement. But way too often we don't find that—at least in the faces of some of His would be followers gathered within the walls of some of our places of worship, our Houses of God. Christians can be some of the most dour people on the planet.

We claim to be different, but too often we look as joyless and angst-ridden as if we were unbelievers. We claim to be called to serve God who was the architect of the beauty all around us; yet we act and appear at times as if we have nothing to wake up to. We don't think others would find it appealing or attractive to be part of that setting.

Here's the saddest part of the whole thing: it doesn't have to happen. Times can get tough. We know; we've been there. But as followers of and believers in Jesus Christ—if we have asked Him into our lives—we have the joy and hope of the Lord of lords and the King of kings in our lives. A joy that can overcome whatever we face. A joy that leads us into all the fullness of our futures with Him in eternity.

Let it out! Let the joy out! Let the source of your joy--Jesus Christ—shine through you to the world around you. Let the joy, love and power of the God of the universe flow through you so that others see a twinkle in your eyes, a smile on your face, and laughter in your voice.

Then they'll see Him! And He is the one they'll be attracted to!

Dale and Gloria Guidi

LPA and LPA advisor



Benevolence

June benevolence went to Dough for Daily Bread in the amount of \$1520 July Benevolence goes to Livingston Food Resource Center to help with the summer lunch program.



August benevolence will go to Counterpoint. Counterpoint, Inc. was founded in 1976 and a small number of individuals began to be served in May of that year. Initially eight people lived at 318 North 3rd Street, a former nursing home, and received day training program services in the basement of the Lincoln School. In 1977 the first Board of Directors was elected. In that same year individuals began to participate in the Special Olympics in Bozeman. In 1979 day services were moved to Front Street and finally in 1983 Counterpoint's day, vocational and administrative services were moved to 116 East Lewis Street where they remain to this day. In 1984 we built a group home at 603 East Milky Way Drive and the individuals who lived in the prior group home moved in. In January of 1991 we opened up our 9th Street Group Home for six new residents and effectively doubled the overall number of our staff. Finally, in 1993 we purchased the Vocational Center at 116 E. Lewis Street.

Today we provide a broad array of transportation, vocational, work and residential services to approximately 30 individuals in Park Country. About half of these people live in their own homes or with their families and about half live in our two group homes. Counterpoint employs about 45 staff members to support the people we work for.

Our services are tailored to the specific needs and desires of each of our clients. Each individual has an Individual Cost Plan which he or she uses to purchase services from Counterpoint. Every person designs a Personal Support Plan which identifies the supports and services that Counterpoint will provide to them.

Our mission is to nurture personal growth and support meaningful lives for adults with disabilities. If you would like to donate to Counterpoint, mark "benevolence" on your contribution envelope.

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...

- Pastor Melissa for organizing different speakers to nudge us into being disciples in our community.
- Pastor Melissa for meeting with various people throughout our congregation. If you haven't met with her yet, please schedule a time!
- Jane and Dana for coming to the church early on Sundays to open up the windows and doors to cool down the church.
- Everyone who is watering the flowers and grass!

August Worship Teams

August 4 Don & Lana Sheen
August 11 Curt & Dee Gosda
August 18 Tena Versland, Dale & Gloria Guidi
August 25 Diane Mueller, Ian & Jenna Flatgard

September Worship Teams

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



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.com, phone 630-981-7910, or text.



LCM Campus Ministry will be having our annual Rummage Sale again this summer and we can use your help!

In order to make this event successful, we need your DONATIONS of good quality items. We are accepting everything except clothing and old computer equipment this year. You can simply drive by the Christus Collegium (714 S 8th Ave in Bozeman) between 8:00am and 9:00am on August 24th ONLY to drop off your items. We will have a team present to help you unload whatever you bring!

You can also help us by shopping the sale! We are once again following a "Pay What You Can" model for all purchases.

Lastly, please help us spread the word about this event!

Want to volunteer? Contact JP Carlson at jp@lcmboycats.org



Summer Fun and Fellowship!

This is the group that biked from Bozeman to Livingston for the Montana Synod Hunger Fund (plus Marla, one of our awesome snack stop crew members!). Thank

you all for your support! Five riders biked from Christ the King Lutheran Church in Bozeman to American Lutheran Church in Livingston.



They rode 35

miles with 1,655 feet of elevation gain! A fantastic volunteer crew ensured the riders were safe and well-fed throughout the day.



Young Families Night! We had 5 little kids, two babies, and their parents. The kids had a scavenger hunt, played with chalk and bubbles, and there were brief games of River/Bank and Duck, Duck, Goose. The adults got to get to know each other and found some neat common connections. Thanks to Lana for organizing the meal, to Cookie and Billie Kaye who helped serve and clean up, and to everyone who donated ingredients for the meal!



Thank you to everyone who helped host the group from the Fuller Center for Housing June 21st!! They were very appreciative of the hospitality. What a beautiful thing that we could help them achieve their mission while using the asset of our building!

Christikon Clips

August 2024



As you are reading this clip, we are readying for the last sessions of our 73rd season. We hosted over 500 campers so far this season including youth, families, adults and at-risk youth. We have retreats scheduled through mid-October.

Our summer staff will be completing their stay with us and will soon be heading back to their lives outside of Christikon.

We look forward to our congregational and family retreats scheduled this fall. A few retreat times are still available. Call Kerry in the office and reserve a time.

We continue to ask for your prayers for those traveling to camp, our staff, and our campers.

Blessings to all of you who support Christikon with prayer, time, skills, and your generous donations. We are grateful! Please visit <https://christikon.org/donate-to-christikon/> and continue your support.

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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Mission Endowment Fund Committee

The MEF Committee met on Thursday, July 18th. The committee would like to report that the funds ALC have invested are doing very well and will continue to grow. The totals as of June 30th, for the four funds are:

Mission Investment Fund:	\$12,373.78
ELCA MIF Term Deposit:	\$20,760.88
Thrivent Mutual Funds:	\$20,182.49
Ministry Growth Fund:	\$204,367.50
Total Funds:	\$257,684.65

The committee is able to distribute around 4% of the interest earned from these funds each year back into the church. Some of the projects that have been funded by the MEF are the renovation of both Pastor Melissa’s office and the main church office; the Owl Meeting system; a new church safe; and a scholarship to Christikon for a young camper. We are asking for help from the congregation. If anyone has an idea, suggestion, possible project, or special need within the church that these monies could be used for, please visit with Pastor Melissa, Dale Guidi, Anna Smith, Leslie Beffert, Larry Hildebrandt, or Bonnie Brekke. Our next meeting will be October 17th.

Also, please remember that members of the congregation can donate/contribute monies into these funds at any time.