



ALC April 2025 Newsletter



Helping Our Neighbors

Dear Children of God at ALC,

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.” -Matthew 25:35

This month our benevolence gives us the opportunity to financially support the work that Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains (LFSRM) is doing in Billings to care for refugee families. When I lived in the Chicago area and the Minneapolis area, I had the chance to meet and serve many refugees. Getting to know these refugees and hearing some of the stories of the horrific violence they escaped in their own countries, strengthened my resolve to live out the Biblical call to welcome the stranger.

LFSRM provides a whole variety of programs and services including adoption, disaster relief, foster care, family support and education, immigration legal services, older adult programs, and refugee and asylee services.

Here’s some information from the LFSRM website about their work with refugees <https://www.lfsrm.org/Refugee-Asylee>

“In 1975, Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services) contacted LFSRM to begin resettlement of refugees. Since that time, the LFSRM Refugee & Asylee Programs have helped people who have been uprooted by persecution and violence work towards self-sufficiency through essential resettlement services, including housing, employment, English language, and cultural orientation.

LFSRM works together with Global Refuge, and other churches, organizations, community groups, businesses, and individuals to provide the services and supplies necessary for refugees to become self-sufficient and integrate into their new communities.

Refugees are individuals who are forced to flee their countries of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social or political group.”

The Lutheran roots of welcoming refugees to the U.S. date back to 1939 when in the aftermath of WWII, the U.S. Congress enacted the first refugee legislation allowing for over 650,000 displaced Europeans to find a new home in the U.S. There are nine national U.S. refugee resettlement agencies that welcome refugees at the airport and then assist them in transitioning to a self-sufficient life here. A majority of these nine agencies that are contracted by the U.S. government to resettle refugees are faith-based organizations including Global Refuge.

Since the spring of 2024, the Billings office of Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains has welcomed 14 refugee households into the Billings community. These 58 individuals, including 12 children, were granted refugee status by the U.S. government and settled in Billings within the last 8 months. However, in the past two months, the U.S. government has revoked all promised financial support to LFSRM and these refugee families. This leaves these vulnerable people without the support they desperately need to adjust to living in the U.S. and become self-sufficient.

LFSRM remains committed to continuing to support these refugee families in Billings. So they have reached out to churches and individuals to help provide the support needed. And now our congregation gets to be part of this way of supporting our neighbors!

“Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers for by doing that some have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

-Hebrews 13:1-2

Peace,

Pastor Melissa



Electronic Giving

Whether you choose to give online or in person, your support is vital to the continued ministry of our church community. We are so grateful for your generosity and commitment to our shared mission.



Thank you for your continued support of ALC!

Donation envelopes are also available in the church hallway.

Council President Update

On March 21, Randy Mogen shared with Pastor Melissa and the church council that he is stepping away from all church activities including responsibilities of the President for now. Vice President Leslie Beffert will be serving as Interim President with the support of the rest of the church council. Please keep Randy in your prayers.

April Birthdays

- 3 Lynnette Evanson
- 14 Butch Foster
- 15 Ian Flatgard
- 27 Charlie Mogen
- 28 Olga Mogen
- 30 Verne Beffert
- 30 John West



Praising God's Spring

We really look forward to this time of year...the birds are busy creating their nests as they entertain us with their songs. The deer that are all over our yards on Kindsfather Drive seem happy that there is some green grass. They provide a sense of peace as they

lie around enjoying the change in seasons. Their little ones will become visible later in the spring. Unlike dogs in the neighborhood, deer don't bark or cause a lot of commotion. We love them!

Our 11-year-old dog, Muffy, expects to go for a ride every morning, which we are happy to oblige! Going down Willow Creek Road we are amazed at the number of deer, geese, and now sandhill cranes and sometimes blue herons in the dormant wheat fields. It is the Lord's gift to us as He blesses us with a new season.

Once in town we notice the many people walking their leashed dogs, a great act of exercise for the dog and the handler, and both seem to have a smile on their faces. In the last 10 or so days we have seen a big, white domestic goose at the lagoon at Sacajawea, who peacefully mingles with the Canada Geese. The white goose is a beauty, and it is a blessing to see God's creatures get along so well.

Other signs of spring awakening include increasing activity at the skate park, the track and field teams practicing, and softball and baseball teams at their practice. We love seeing this as we recall how much we were involved with youth baseball and softball. It seems these young players are more skilled and intense than back in the days. Our players knew if they did well, there would be a trip to Mark's or the Dairy Queen!

We return to our home and think about the many gifts we have received from the Lord! Our views of the sky, the mountains, river and the incredible wildlife keep us entertained. We think about the bible passage that starts with: "I lift my eyes to the hills from whence cometh my strength!" We both love to honor our Lord by looking out at our view and sing "How Great Thou Art" maybe followed by the "Lord's Prayer" or a another one!

We are so fortunate to celebrate our faith, and the Lord's love in a supportive, religious environment surrounded by our brothers and sisters who share our common beliefs. Thank You Lord Jesus! Christ's peace be with you,

Dale and Gloria Guidi

Soup & Bread & Worship



Join us Wednesday April 2 and April 9 at 5:30pm for Soup & Bread & Worship. This is special time we set aside to enjoy fellowship, delicious soups and breads.

Women ^{of the} ELCA

WELCA has additional Norwegian Meatballs with gravy for sale \$10/box. There are also some meatballs without gravy for sale only \$8. Please check with a WELCA member and purchase some delicious meatballs.

WELCA would like to thank all those in the congregation that are bringing goodies for the School Kits and Personal Care Kits. We continue to collect items through April prior to sending them on to Lutheran World Relief. If you would like to add to the bags, check out the list of items to be included in the kits. Those lists are found in the laundry baskets near the coffee area. **Thank You** for your support of these projects!

LWR QUILTING: Calling all quilters and non-quilters to help every Tuesday from 9am-noon! Experience is not needed! Are you cleaning out closets? We can use donations of colored sheets (not twin size) and lightly used blankets.

We continue to serve the evening meal at Loaves & Fishes on the third Monday of each month (that's **April 21st** this month). 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.



Thank you to our dedicated volunteers, Lana, Sue, Dale S., and Pastor Melissa who feed 38 hungry community members in March.



Remember In Prayer

Randy and Linda Holland

Mike and Vicky Ryles

Mollie Waldum

Holly Happe

Carole Fagerli

Anita Bueling

Lynnette Evanson

Randy Mogen

Bea Huber

Denice Harris

Larry Hildebrandt

Council Minutes, March 9

Financials: Giving amounts will be listed monthly in the bulletin rather than weekly because of online giving. Lana will be asking for help with counting the weekly offering. \$10,000 from the endowment fund was used for building improvements with another \$10,000 earmarked for future building needs.

Pastor's Report: Pastor will be attending a pastoral conference the week after Easter; Princeton Preaching seminar will be June 7-13 including travel days; vacation March 28-April 5. Several grants have been applied for. A community church picnic will be on July 12 in conjunction with a fundraiser for the *Montana Synod Hunger Fund*. The Hunger Team continues to add miles and raise funds during the Lenten challenge.

Old Business

Benevolence: March will go to a local family that lost their house to fire. Our April benevolence will go to the Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains Billings Office, to help refugee families.

Building & Grounds: The internal assessment of the building has been completed with rooms being mapped and measured. The chimney is gone, and a new furnace has been installed in the Fellowship Hall. The new circular windows were installed. The Phase I Building Task Force committee will enter into an agreement to complete more of the outside work. The Property Committee will hire someone to repair the gutter by the elevator door. For improvements under \$1000 the council approved that 2

of 3 sources, Pastor, Council President, or a member of the Property Committee, may approve work to be done.

Building Usage: Elevate Montessori is looking into a grant for the AED.

New Business

John West has been incredibly busy with snow removal in February using a lot of time and his equipment.

Missing items from the quilting rooms have been located.

Next meeting: April 8.



Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday	April 13	9am
Maundy Thursday	April 17	7pm
Good Friday	April 18	7pm
Easter Sunday	April 20	

8am Potluck Breakfast

9am Worship Service

Benevolence

Our April benevolence will go to the Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains Billings Office, to help refugee families become self-sufficient. Lutheran Family Services supports 14 families including 12 children within those families who recently resettled in Billings. The organization needs financial help to continue to support the refugee families because of federal funding freezes and refugee resettlement contracts canceled by the federal government. Click on the "Give" tab at alclivingston.org and choose April Benevolence or write "*benevolence*" on your giving envelope.

February's benevolence was sent to **Loaves & Fishes**. Thank you for your generous support of \$1595. The March benevolence went to the family who lost their home this winter in a fire.




Shout Outs!!


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...


 The Building and Grounds committee for their work on the internal assessment of the building mapping and measuring all the rooms. Special thanks to Cookie, Kitty, Jane, Gary, and Dennis H.

 Dennis S. for working with the contractors on the building improvements. This includes the chimney removal, new furnace in the Fellowship Hall, and electrical updates for the upstairs and downstairs furnaces.

 Those who brought soup and bread for our Lent Soup Suppers: Don and Lana, Nancy, Dennis and Kitty, Jenna and Ian, and Dale and Gloria. Thank you for helping us to worship and experience Communion in a meaningful and delicious way!

 Nancy and Jane who helped Pastor Melissa pick hymns for upcoming worship services. Thank you for making sure we are able to worship in song.

 Leslie for being open to stepping into the role of interim council president. Thank you for helping us to continue with our ministry in this time.

 Lynnette for helping to come up with the funny sayings for the closed pews during Lent. Thank you for helping us to approach this experiment with some humor and lightheartedness!

Agape

Agape Circle is a women's Bible study that meets monthly either at church or in a group member's home. The group uses the Bible study out of the Gather magazine. This month we will meet Thursday, **April 24 at 7pm** at the church.



Building Task Force

“And most of all, we give thanks to God our Father through our Lord Jesus Christ for calling us to be workers in His Kingdom and for filling our hearts with His Holy Spirit that we might have the vision to begin and the faith to finish the work He has laid out before us. We Pray that He will continue to be with us in the future as He has so graciously been in the past.”

Prayer from the Church Council when the Education Wing was completed.

Why is the Building Task Force necessary? Minimal maintenance has been done to the church for the past number of years. That being said, we have a solid foundation and a prayer to have the vision to take our building into the future so that it might best serve our community. Post Covid, we see a shifting in our culture and societal norms and needs. How can we best address these changing needs in our church and in our community?

Thank you to everyone who came to the Building Task Force update on Sunday, March 23, and continued thanks to all those who are on the task force. The Dream Team is taking your feedback and questions and will continue working to explore possible future uses for our building. Put your partnership, contacts, ideas, and suggestions in the box at the back of the church.

What has been done so far? On the exterior the precarious chimney was demolished and a new furnace installed in the Fellowship Hall. Some additional electrical work was needed upon installation. Additional gutter work near the elevator entrance is in progress. The circular window above the main entrance was replaced and has made a huge difference in the main hallway. Some windows were replaced on the north side and sanctuary of the building to provide ventilation and egress. Hopefully we will see an impact on our energy bills.

Boise Brothers, a local contractor, will begin work in late April on the parking lot to increase drainage and mitigate damage that has been done to the building from inadequate drainage over the years. This will include inspection and fixing the soffits, eaves, and fascia.

The Interior Assessment committee mapped the rooms, noted condition of the spaces, and amenities in each room. They also recommended changes and updates to the rooms to make them safe and usable. Plans include a professional assessment of the buildings. Check with the church office if you would like additional details or information.

The Finance Team is looking at traditional and creative ways of financing projects. In addition to traditional sources of capital campaigns, the Team is looking for grants (possibly a grant writer?), crowdfunding, partnerships, and other revenue sources. Self-sustaining ministries could include the use of space to offset the cost.

What can you do? Continue with traditional giving. If you are moved by the Spirit, give a donation to the building fund. This can be done by marking “building fund” on your offering envelope or select “Building Fund” on the GIVE tab on the church website. Additionally, donations are accepted through wills and QCD (Qualified Charitable Distribution). When someone has Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) on their IRA or other retirement fund, the RMD can be given to any qualified non-profit, and it will directly offset your taxes. Contact your plan administrator for further details.

We are American Lutheran Church. This costly project will need all of us to be successful. What is your part? What is your vision? How are you being moved by the Spirit to help?

Montana Synod’s Lenten Journey to Hope: 40 Days from Great Falls to Jerusalem

Our church is joining with other churches across the Montana Synod for a spiritual and physical journey this Lent. So far as of Thursday, March 30, as a synod we have traveled 2271 miles of the 6,574 miles from Great Falls to Jerusalem. We have raised \$1832 to support the Synod Hunger Fund! If you are logging miles and fundraising, thank you and keep going! For those who aren’t logging miles, you can support other congregation members who are by donating to their individual fundraisers (ask them for a link) and offering some encouragement! And everyone can join in by praying for a hunger ministry in the Synod each day.

Christikon Benefit Auction

In Person and Online

Christikon Benefit Auction – Quilts, Vacation Get-aways, and a Whole Lot More will be on Sunday April 27th at the Billings Depot. Items are some of the finest artistry including a variety of hand-made quilts, artwork, gift baskets, getaways, jewelry and so much more.



Raffle Tickets on sale now! 1995 Yamaha Motorcycle! Go to

<https://christikon.org/donate-to-christikon-one-time/>, choose gift: other and put raffle in the text box. Do not have to be present to win. Tickets sell for \$10 each, 3 for \$20 or 10 for \$50.

Online auction begins April 20th at noon.

Watch for the link to our auction platform on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Christikon or on our website www.Christikon.org Like our page and share it with your friends! Watch for sneak peeks! Online auction ends on Sunday the 27th – be present and you can pick up your items at the Depot.

Campers: Don't forget to register for one of our many sessions available this summer!

How about Work Weekend? Bring your family and enjoy camp/fellowship and more while helping to prepare camp for the season! We look forward to welcoming you to camp! Go to www.christikon.org and register!

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

CHRISTIKON

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Aspen Fundraiser

Aspen's Annual Community Event will be held April 4@5:30 at the Livingston Depot. Tickets are \$25 for catered dinner, silent auction, and raffle packages. Purchase tickets online at aspenmt.org/end-the-silence.

Worship Teams

April

- April 6 John & Diana West
April 13 Verne & Leslie Beffert, *Palm Sunday*
April 18 Don & Lana Sheen, *Good Friday*
April 20 Curt & Dee Gosda, *Easter*
April 27 Tena Versland, Dale & Gloria Guidi

May

- May 4 Diane Mueller, Ian & Jenna Flatgard
May 11 Jim & Bonnie Evanson
May 18 Jane Haugen & Dana Latsch
May 25 Doug & Cookie Linsted



Picnic, Bike Rides, and Walks!

Save the date for a bike ride, walk, and picnic on Saturday, **July 12th**. Walkers can walk any distance they are able around Sacajawea Park. Bikers will have the option to ride from Chico to Sacajawea Park (25 miles), from Sacajawea Park to Carter's Bridge and back (10 miles), or just from Carter's Bridge to Sacajawea Park (5 miles). Walkers, bikers, and picnic-goers will all come together for a picnic lunch and celebration. This will be an opportunity for us to gather together for fellowship with other area churches as well as fundraise for the Montana Synod Hunger Fund. All around the Montana Synod, more and more people are experiencing hunger. Congregations are responding to the hunger needs in their communities in a variety of ways from food pantries to community meals to community gardens. With ever increasing demand, the Montana Synod Hunger Fund provides grants to congregations working locally to end hunger. Watch for more details and registration information coming soon.



Lenten Luncheons 2025

April 9 at 11:45am will be the last Lenten Luncheon. Join us at Holbrook United Methodist Church on 5th & Lewis. The cost is \$6 and additional donations to the Park County Ministerial Association are MUCH needed and appreciated! All are welcome!



Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Looking for a volunteer

The Montana Synod is looking for a volunteer to help coordinate Disaster Response efforts in the synod and liaising with national Lutheran Disaster Relief response efforts.