

Gold Hill Evangelical Lutheran Church

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**Empowered by the Holy Spirit,
United to Serve**



Montana Synod News

The Montana Synod is curating information and resources on the Montana Synod Website

Click [HERE](#) to be taken to the COVID-19 resource page. There you will find information released by the Synod office, resources, and tools for your congregation.

Update from the Synod Staff

For reopening questions please click [HERE](#) for Bishop Jungling's pastoral letter and addendum on the Synod website.

The Synod office will be closed until May 8th, then open and staffed on May 11th. **Our hours will be limited to the public from 12-4.**

All staff travel has been cancelled until at least May 26 unless it's an actual emergency. We don't want to spread anything to you or bring it back to our homes; nor do we want to catch anything and have to stop serving you. So please, continue to stay in touch with staff through email, phone calls, and through the regular Zoom opportunities available to you.

Bishop Laurie

If you need to contact the Synod staff, please consider their email or cell phone. That information can be found on the [Synod website](#).

Words from the Bishop: Lament in a Pandemic



Dear Siblings in Christ,

I've been thinking a lot about lament lately. Maybe it's because life seems so precarious right now or perhaps it's because I've been encouraged to do so by those who say it is a necessary part of walking through the stress, anxieties, fears and grief of a pandemic. But lament has been much on my mind and I've been wondering if it might serve as a helpful way to connect with God.

A lament is a type of prayer that expresses the in-depth feelings of a suffering person or community to God. Usually a lament has five parts, not necessarily in this order:

- 1) **A cry**, wail, moan, or wordless wail that expresses the suffering of the person praying. "How long, O Lord?!" or "My God, why have you forgotten me?" or just "Why, God?" are good examples. Or check out [this music teacher's song](#) expressing her feelings about online teaching to her students.
- 2) **An airing of grievances to God** or sharing of feelings. Telling God what's wrong, naming the sufferings, calling out who the sufferer thinks is responsible. Basically, laying at God's feet all that sucks in one's life right now.
- 3) **Invoking God**. This can include a sharing of memories of God's help

LINKS:

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in the past or telling of God's history of salvation. It might also describe the petitioner's trust in God, even in the midst of the suffering.

4) **The ask.** Here those praying ask God to help them, to give them relief, to bring about some sort of deliverance from the pain being experienced.

Sometimes a reason is given as to why God should help such as "I've kept the faith" or "what will others think about you if you fail me."

5) **Praising God.** Lifting up God's glory, might, grace, justice, faithfulness or goodness in worship, praise, and song.

The Bible, particularly the Psalms, is full of both individual and communal laments. A lament that many of us may be familiar with is Psalm 22 which is read on Maundy Thursday. The first line, "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?!" is what Jesus cries from the cross as his lament. Another shorter lament is Psalm 13 which is printed below. See if you can find the five parts of the Lament.

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,
and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed';
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

But I trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

During these days of suffering of all different types - grief, anger, fear, hopelessness, apathy, anxiety, or whatever you're feeling - I invite you to share your sufferings with God in your own lament. I know it helped me when, last week, I wrote down my lament. (If you want to hear it, [watch the worship service](#) for Sunday, May 3. A written version is on the website [here](#).)

As you consider this idea, remember that there is no one right or wrong way to lament. Maybe you sit down and write one out or maybe you speak it, pray it, sing it, think it, moan it, exercise it, or sigh it. No need to worry about the words you use: look at what some of the lamenters in the Psalms wrote and you'll see they hold back no punches, either with God, themselves, or their enemies. It does not have to be perfect; it doesn't even have to be good. These are your sufferings and emotions and God will understand what you're trying to communicate. And you don't need to share it with anyone but God.

For some further guidance on how to write a psalm of lament as well as a list of the Psalms of lament in scripture, click [here](#).

In the meantime, take home to your hearts the words from Psalm 31 for this week, which is also a lament: "In you, O God, I seek refuge...You are indeed my rock and my fortress...Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God."

May God bless and keep you in this season of laments,

Bishop Laurie

An important reminder:

As you decide to reopen your worship space, please check with your insurance company for liability coverage. Insurance companies that have been consulted by congregations have indicated that if a congregation does not follow federal (CDC), state, and local guidelines closely, the insurance company may drop coverage and will not cover the congregation in the case of a lawsuit. Also remember that if a lawsuit for a Covid-19 related death is filed, it will most likely include not only the congregation, but also the individual pastor and individual council members and perhaps even the synod. While it may be difficult for any plaintiff to prove "gross negligence," just the hassle of being named in a lawsuit and responding to it may be enough to deter you from opening before you are ready. So, consult your insurance company before you open!



Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp News

Read FLBC's COVID-19 updates and find resources [here](#).

We will continue to share any updates on our [website](#), our Facebook & Instagram pages, and through our E-news.

The Summer 2020 Early Bird Discount deadlines have been extended!

You now have an additional month to register at the Early Bird prices! Register by May 1st to receive \$50 off & register by June 1st to receive \$25 off! Register today [here](#).

Be sure to keep up with our [social media pages](#) as we post Virtual Campfires, First Words, and more!

Instagram: Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

Gold Hill Lutheran Church Welcomes You!

Are you looking for a place to connect with a faithful community, grow in faith, and put your talents to work in serving others? Look no further, we welcome you at Gold Hill Lutheran Church! To learn more about the mission and ministry of Gold Hill Lutheran Church, please contact us at 406-723-4242.