

**Gold Hill Evangelical Lutheran
Church**

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



The Nugget E-News

April 20, 2020

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.

Synod Assembly Cancelled

With regret and in light of current circumstances around the world, the synod council has chosen to cancel the 2020 Synod Assembly. Our constitution requires that we meet a minimum of once every three years, so we have this option. As this was to be a theological assembly year, the business is minimal, and the council will act on behalf of the assembly until we can meet again next year. It is our hope that this decision will not only keep everyone safe, but also provide a little financial relief to congregations at this time.

The next assembly is scheduled for June 4-6, 2021 in Billings and will be a business assembly.

~Rev. Amanda Liggett

Montana Synod Secretary

~Dick Deschamps

Montana Synod Vice President

~Rev. Dr. Laurie Jungling

Bishop, Montana Synod

Update from the Synod Staff

In this time of uncertainty, as the COVID-19 virus continues to be a threat in our lives, **I am strongly recommending that congregations continue their "stay at home" practices until April 24 and then beyond if/when Gov. Bullock extends the date.**

Should the governor begin to loosen the directives, I will offer some guidance for congregations and leaders as you think about what coming back together looks like in your context. For now, the best guidance I will offer is: "even if you think you can come together,

LINKS:

[Click here to visit our growing website](#)

[Click here to visit our FB page and "like" us](#)

[Click here to support the Butte Furniture Bank](#)

[Click here to visit our Church Library Page](#)

CHURCH COUNCIL 2020

Mike Lawson -
President

Curt Quist -
Administration Director

Revonda Stordahl -
Treasurer

Peggy Graving -
Secretary

Julie Corbin -
Spiritual Growth Ministry
Team Leader

Chris Ketchum -
Worship Ministry
Team Leader

Lynn Aniksdal -
Leadership Ministry
Team Leader

Dale Schultz -
Outreach Ministry
Team Leader

**Interim Pastor
Trina Johnsten**

ask whether you should; and in the end do all things for the sake of your neighbor."

Also, until April 24, the Synod office will remain closed. All staff travel has been cancelled until at least May 26 unless it is an actual emergency. We do not 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

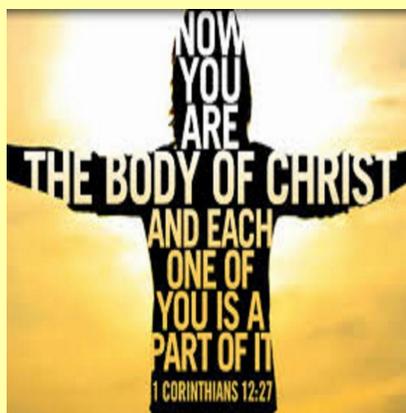
If you need to contact the Synod staff, please consider their email, or cell phone. That information can be found on the [Synod website](#).

Montana Synod Congregations Responding to COVID-19: Love in Action

by Jenny Kunka

Congregations around the Montana Synod have been reaching out to their communities and each other, striving to be God's hands in the world during these past weeks.

Quilters are putting their skills to work in making masks. Church members are faithfully calling each other to check on health and well-being. Pastors and lay leaders around the synod have been working diligently to record virtual worship services.



The realities of quarantine, stay-at-home orders, and social distancing call for creativity in ministry and congregations have responded in ways too numerous to list. Below are just a few examples of how our churches are reaching out to each other and to their communities.

Big Timber Lutheran:

Pastor Julia Seymour has been creating videos for children through Facebook Live. The videos include Bible content and age-appropriate psychological information about feelings and reactions. She's made use of puppets, drawings, stories, and conversation, keeping most videos fairly short. Pastor Seymour also tries to have an evening prayer each night on Facebook Live that can include a hymn, readings, and a prayer. The church has held Bible study over Zoom, and they are experimenting with a Zoom "coffee hour." Videos can be found on Pastor Julia Seymour's Facebook page and the church page [HERE](#).

Zion Lutheran in Glendive:

Pastor Brenda Frelsi and members of Zion Lutheran are focused on those who need help during this time. Church members who volunteer at the Dawson County Food Bank, keep Pr. Frelsi informed about the food bank needs and she passes that information along to the congregation. Additionally, Zion has a Loaves and Fishes program that provides food and gas cards and works with the local Salvation Army to help people with rent. Recently, the church was going through their Loaves and Fishes money at an alarming rate, but when the need was mentioned

during a (radio and Livestreamed) worship service, the congregation responded by giving generously.

St. Luke's Lutheran in Shelby:

Pastor Stephanie White has created a Children's Time for Tuesday and Thursday mornings that includes reading books and singing. She shares this on the church Facebook page and her own Facebook page and has noticed that adults seem to appreciate it as much as the children. Pr. White has also spent a lot of time calling and texting families, especially as Shelby has been hit hard by the COVID-19 virus and anxiety is high.

Trinity Lutheran in Choteau:

Trinity Lutheran has a preschool and the work for this is ongoing, at home. Pastor Kim Peterson created take home chapel packets so the children would have supplies for the crafts and she has made a number of online chapel videos for preschool aged children. Additionally, Pr. Peterson reads stories and leads songs during the online Wednesday night education program. She also compiled a video of children retelling the Easter story with words through words and artwork. It is available [HERE](#).

For adults, Pastor Peterson decided to create "Fireside Chats" to targeted audiences each week so she can address different groups via Facebook video. Recently she recorded a "Parents, you got this," video.

Trinity Lutheran has been raising money for the Teton County Food Pantry by doing "Music Madness" which is like March Madness but with hymns. Participants could submit a completed hymn bracket alongside a gift of any size for the food pantry and then, during each round, people could vote for their hymns on Facebook using a survey monkey link.

At Trinity they are trying to use Facebook more interactively, not just with videos but with more interactive, targeted posts such as: "What can we pray for today? What are you thankful for today?"

First English in Great Falls:

First English Lutheran serves its neighbors through Helping Hands, a food pantry and clothing store. This resource has been an important part of the congregation's ministry for many years and a needed resource for the local community. When the COVID-19 virus began making news, Helping Hands staff quickly instituted disinfection, handwashing and glove use and closed their clothing store. Before long, however, faithful volunteers had to pull back because most of them were over 60 and many had chronic health conditions. This triggered questions about the viability of the ministry and people began to wonder if they were going to have to close.

Pr. Barb Gwynn said that they serve very vulnerable people through Helping Hands. "By and large they are disabled & marginalized peoples: mental illness, PTSD, addiction, chronic illness, chronic poverty, Native, elderly without family nearby. Plenty who shelter additional friends or relatives with little means. Without adequate food, these would become even more vulnerable to the virus. It was unconscionable to close."

Then a saving idea came forth. Why not change to Saturday afternoon hours when younger healthier people could help? They made the change while also pre-bagging food, creating a pick-up station and setting up orange cones where people could wait at six-foot intervals down the sidewalk for their bags of food.

First English plans to continue this work as long as they can, likely

feeding more and more people as word gets around. "Most people find us when they learn that a friend or neighbor brought home food. Word of mouth is powerful. Kindness and hope embodied by the volunteers doesn't hurt either," Pastor Gwynn said.

Missoula Community:

With the aid of community organizers, Missoula area pastors and congregations are reaching out to meet needs in a variety of ways. Missoula community organizers have opened a warehouse to provide non-food items for residents. Volunteers can both donate non-food items and staff the warehouse, handing out supplies such as baby formula, diapers, and can-openers.

Volunteers are also helping to coordinate active callers who are organized in their particular neighborhoods around Missoula. These callers can check in with people to see what particular needs might be met. This is especially important for people who aren't using other channels to connect and who might need assistance. Non-profits, neighborhood groups, congregations and unions are also working together to find other ways to meet needs in the community, finding out who is in need and connecting them to resources who can help.

These are only a few of the many stories of creativity and care in the Montana Synod. Thank you to all of you who are reaching out in so many ways to show God's love for your neighbor.

How you can help



Dear partner in ministry,
Weeks may have passed since you last walked in the doors of your congregation and worshiped, face-to-face, with your community of faith. To be sure, being the body of

Christ looks and feels differently than it ever has before.

Despite all of this, we are called to be church - together. The ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) looks different now, but it has not stopped. Nor have the needs of our communities and the world. Our church and its leaders continue to minister to its members, to those who are hurting and searching for peace, and to those in need.

The congregations and ministries of this church rely on your weekly offerings and gifts. Without in-person worship services for many weeks or even months, the financial impact could be devastating.

Please continue to give to your congregation and give regularly.

Your congregation and its leaders continue to minister to your community of faith. This ministry relies on your weekly offerings.

Find out how you can continue your pledge or regular offering though online giving, automatic monthly giving, or mail.

I know that, for many of us, this is a time of uncertainty and financial hardship. However, for those of you who are in a position to do more, the needs are great.

In the United States, unemployment has soared. We are already seeing rising demands on our food pantries, homeless shelters, and social services. Around the world, millions of people living in poverty are facing this pandemic without reliable access to

sanitation and health care.

With congregations and ministries across the country, and a network of companion churches and partners in over 70 countries around the world, we anticipate this crisis will affect us all. Your gifts to the ELCA's COVID-19 Response Fund (click [HERE](#) to donate) will provide funds to the ministries of the ELCA most in need and best positioned to help. This includes our congregations as well as local and church-wide ministries capable of reaching and assisting those in need. If you are able, please help with a gift today. I have been reflecting on the words of Peter: "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received" (1 Peter 4:10). Now is a time when we need one another. Now is a time to live and act as faithful people of God.

Be of good courage, dear church, and remember that Christ is with us now and always.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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.