

Gold Hill Evangelical Lutheran Church

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



The Nugget E-News

May 25, 2020

Gold Hill News

Meet Gold Hill's Pastor!



Pastor Marlow Paul Carrels was born in FT Riley, KS. After some years as an Army Brat his family settled in Belgrade, MT where he was a semi-proud Panther and member of Peace Lutheran Church (now LCMC). He joined the Montana Army National Guard in 2005 and was assigned to the 631st Chemical Company in Butte, MT. He graduated from Montana State University - Bozeman in 2008 with a BA in English Literature, commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Chemical Corps and went on Active Duty. He

served in the 110th CM Battalion - Technical Escort at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington and returned to Montana to live in Townsend, work at Canyon Ferry Dam, and begin seminary at Wartburg Theological Seminary through the Distributive Learning (online) model. He also returned to the MTARNG and served as a Company Commander and Brigade Chemical Officer before transferring to the Reserve to become a Chaplain in 2016. After breaking his back, Pastor Carrels ended his military career in late 2019.

Pastor Carrels graduated from Wartburg with a Master of Divinity in 2017 and is currently working on his thesis project for a Sacred Theology Masters with a focus on violence and theology at the Institute of Lutheran Theology. In the church he has served the communities of Jordan, MT (lay pastor), Prairie du Sac, WI (Intern / Vicar) and Westby, MT. His current favorite scripture verse is James 4:8: "Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." He currently serves on the NRIT Advisory Committee, the Chico Pastor's Retreat Planning Board, and has four

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ministries of special interest: Veterans, the Homeless Population, Just War Tradition, and Historical Theology. Three interesting facts about Marlow: he has sung opera professionally, was a meat cutter, and has stepped foot on every continent except Antarctica. Pastor Marlow is an avid fisherman, hiker, camper, skier, museum goer, and bibliophile.

Pastor Marlow is married to Nikki Pontier-Carrels, who hails from Great Falls (Go Bison!). The two met at MSU and were married in 2009. Nikki is an advocate for the environment, believing in minimal packaging, recycling, upcycling, and creating as little garbage as possible. She thoroughly enjoys her practices of yoga, reading, and simplicity. Interesting facts about Nikki: she was a one-room school-house teacher, has published multiple children's books, and is an art teacher. Her favorite medium is oil on canvas, but she also enjoys drawing and watercolor. Nikki is also an avid fisherwoman, hiker, camper, museum goer, and bibliophile.

Sammie Jean Carrels is an amazing eight-year old who enjoys cats, wearing pretty dresses and doing messy science experiments, and building / engineering / creating traps, machines, and living spaces. Interesting facts about Sammie: she has lived in 3 states and 5 cities and she is super excited to move to Butte!

Final interesting fact for the whole family: Between the three of us we have lived in Helena, Great Falls, Bozeman, Belgrade, Townsend, Sand Springs, Westby, and Conrad, MT. And for those of you who just need to know, yes, the picture above was our family photo this year. It was taken by a lovely couple at the Upper Missouri Valley Fair in Williston, ND. We even wrote a little story about how Sammie was a great little bank robber.

Happy News!

Cheryl Neuhart shares incredibly good news; the birth of her great-grandson, Elijah Evander, born May 22nd. Everyone is doing well! Congratulations Cheryl on becoming a great grandma.



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: Gratitude...now?!

What do we have to be grateful for right now?

For some of us, the answer to this question may sound like "not much." We're being attacked by a virus we can't see, and some days it feels like the cure of staying distant from one another is worse than the disease. Our lives - economic, social, recreational, mental, and spiritual - have been disrupted to the point of not knowing what normal is anymore. We're worried, afraid, and angry at the loss of freedoms we feel we're experiencing. We're sad at having to let go of our expectations and hopes for the spring and summer. We miss church and worship the way it used to be. And we're sick of being told we have to innovate, to try something different, to change. What in that is there to be grateful for?

And yet gratitude lies at the heart of our faith in God. As Paul writes, "Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart." (2 Cor 4:15-16)

We do not lose heart. Instead, we live in our trust in the God who saves us. Grace -- the free gift of God's unconditional love for you and for the whole world in Jesus Christ -- creates faith which grows gratitude in us like a seed in springtime soil. To follow Christ in faith is to live life in the Spirit's gratitude. This a gratitude that remembers the deep and rich blessing we've received in Christ and the power of the Spirit always working in our lives.

But this gratitude is hard to do when it feels like we're being threatened at every turn.

So, what does living in the Spirit's gratitude look like even in the tough times? Well, it pays attention to what it does have or can do rather than what we don't have or can't do. The Spirit's gratitude sees problems we face not as roadblocks but as opportunities to find other ways of living out the mission of the gospel that God calls us to fulfill. The Spirit's

gratitude gives thanks for the positives that can come even out of the toughest experiences. The Spirit's gratitude sees everything as a possibility because nothing, even life out of death, is impossible with God. For in Christ, the glass is neither half-empty nor half-full; the glass is always overflowing with the abundant love of God and the power of new life that God shares with us every day.

In the Spirit's gratitude, we see the world and the difficulties of life differently. No, our problems don't go away, but we see them through Spirit-lenses rather than fear-lenses, through Jesus-lenses rather than anxiety-lenses, as "having enough in God" lenses rather than scarcity lenses. "If you're grateful, you're not fearful, and if you're not fearful, you're not violent. If you're grateful, you act out of a sense of enough and not a sense of scarcity, and you are willing to share. If you're grateful, you are enjoying the differences between people and you are respectful to everybody..." (David Steindl-Rast)

But more than just changing our view of the world and those around us, the Spirit's gratitude leads and empowers us to act on that gratitude. A thankful church and its grateful followers of Christ looks at the many gifts and assets of the community and then asks, what can we do to serve God's kingdom with the abundance we DO have?

Ultimately service to others is an act of gratitude. As Henri Nouwen proclaims, "We are so full of God's presence, we are so aware of God's promise, that we don't want to hold it back. We want to share it...it is freeing to know that the presence of God is practiced by acts of grateful service." [1] And we want to do so with those who are most in need.

And you all have done that! I am grateful to you and to God for all that you have given for the sake of the ministry of the gospel, not only in and around the Montana Synod and your communities but also for the people of Bolivia. I am grateful for the monetary gifts you've given to your congregations, the synod, and around the world, but also for your kindness, patience and support you've given to your pastor, the synod staff and your bishop. I'm grateful for the many ways you have stepped up or stayed home to take on the responsibility of protecting your church and your community. I'm grateful for your wisdom, gentleness, and faithfulness in these times when too many are choosing to express their fears and frustrations through angry demands and hateful speech. Your generosity humbles me as you share your gratitude for all God has done with the world around you. Thank you for living out the Spirit of gratitude in everything you do and say.

I close with this reminder from Paul as we seek to follow Jesus during this time:

"As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,
Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness,
and patience.
Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another,
forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must
forgive.
Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything
together in perfect harmony.
And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you
were called in the one body.

And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom: and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col 3:12-17)

In gratitude, Bishop Laurie

[1] Henri Nouwen, "Following Jesus: Finding our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety, p. 130, 131.

Here are several important reminders for you and your congregations:

PPP loan is not automatically forgiven. Congregations must apply for loan forgiveness; you can [download the form here](#).

As you begin to gather for worship, please take down names of those physically attending for the purpose of trace contacting if needed.

The Synod office will go back to regular office hours June 1. Also beginning June 1 staff travel will resume on a very limited basis, for necessary congregational business only. Staff will meet with small groups such as councils, call committees, pastors, or other committees, except in congregational meetings where a Synod staff member must be present. Staff will not be traveling to conduct worship or other congregational events at this time. This policy will be revisited at the end of June.

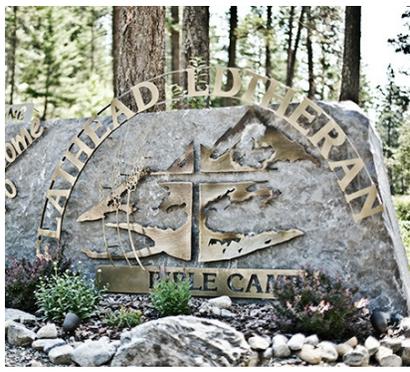
An ecumenical liturgy will be shared for Pentecost on Monday.

Presiding Bishop Eaton will share a sermon for June 7th for use in your congregations if so desired. Pastors, this is a good opportunity to take a Sunday off.

The office will be closed on Monday, May 25th in observance of Memorial Day.

Check with your insurer:

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.