

Dear Friends in the Montana Synod,

Many of us who are Montana residents and property owners have the opportunity to apply for a \$400 tax rebate. I don't know about you, but my husband and I paid our taxes with no expectation of getting anything back. So we are asking ourselves, and we encourage all of you to ask what the best thing is to do with this money that our government is giving back to us.

I would like to encourage you to think about making it a charitable contribution. Your congregation could use that money for its mission in the community. The Montana Synod could use that money to help us build the capacity to do the kind of outreach we are called to do.

There are various ministries in the synod, and in the ELCA that could use the money to help them do their vital work. Campus Ministry, NRIT, camps, Lutheran Social Services, nursing homes, World Hunger are among the many options. Your contribution to the ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission could help a seminarian prepare for ministry without the pressure of student loans. Your contribution to the Lutheran World Federation could make a difference in the life of a child made homeless by AIDS. Your contribution to NRIT could help bring a national speaker to the Montana Synod to teach and enrich our lives. Your contribution to the companion synod program helps cement our synod's relationships with our companion synods in Bolivia and South Africa.

You could make a difference in any of these ministries now by an immediate contribution. Or you could make a lasting contribution to the endowment funds of the ministries you choose to support.

This tax rebate is a gift. And fun as it is to receive a gift, it is even more satisfying to give. I encourage you to pray about it, be creative, and be generous with your tax refund. If you need ideas, I would be happy to talk with you.

Your servant in Christ,

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