



# Montana Synod, ELCA

Volume 2009, Issue 9

September 15, 2009



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## Words from the Bishop—Reflections on the Churchwide Assembly

Every other year the ELCA meets in Churchwide Assembly, and over a thousand voting members from 65 Synods gather to make important decisions on the future of the Church. In August, I was one of 12 voting members from our Synod to spend a week in Minneapolis praying, deliberating, listening, studying, worshiping and voting on a whole host of very important issues.

tive initiative with Lutheran World Relief and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod to fight malaria, a preventable and devastating disease, exacerbated by poverty.

**HIV/AIDS Strategy:** The assembly voted to approve a strategy to continue to address HIV/AIDS through the World Hunger Fund.

There were many other actions of the Assembly, and you can read about them on the ELCA web site, [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org). And you can look at the attachment to this newsletter.

But the actions that have received the most publicity and that have caused the most controversy are the actions on human sexuality. I have

Here are some of the things that the Churchwide Assembly voted on:

**Full Communion with United Methodists:** We voted overwhelmingly to enter into a full communion agreement with the United Methodists. This is the 6th such full communion agreement for the ELCA, and it is the one with the most potential impact in the Montana

**Health Care Reform:** Based on our 2003 Social Statement on Health, the Assembly adopted a resolution urging health care reform.

**Fuller Inclusion of Youth and Young Adults:** The assembly voted to amend governing documents to encourage the inclusion of both youth and young adults at all levels of decision-making

been traveling around the Synod since the Churchwide Assembly, and will continue to do so through September and October, listening to concerns and answering questions about the Churchwide Assembly's actions in the area of human sexuality.

I will address those issues briefly here, and refer you both to the attachment with this news-

Synod. As the Bishop of the Montana Synod I spoke in favor of the proposal, noting that after ELCA Lutherans, United Methodists form the next largest Protestant group in our Synod, and we are eager to have more possibilities for joint and cooperative mission.

**Lutheran Malaria Initiative:** The Assembly voted approve a coopera-

in the Church.

**Social Statement on Justice for Women:** The Assembly authorized the development of a social statement on Justice for Women to be presented at the 2015 Churchwide Assembly. (Two other social statements are in the works. One on Genetics is scheduled for 2011, and one on Criminal Justice is scheduled for 2013.)

letter, and to the meetings that have been scheduled around the Synod.

**Social Statement, "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust"** The Assembly adopted this social statement as a document of the church, the 10th social statement of the ELCA. The statement addresses a variety of issues related to human

(continued on page 2)

# News Notes

## Call Accepted

**Cleon Mark Lundquist**, from Southwestern Texas Synod to Chaplain, Benefis Health Care Systems, Great Falls 8/31/09

## Installation

**Jim Locke**, from PLTS, to First and American, Circle and Richey, 8/23/09 by Rev. John Allen, Associate to the Bishop

**Adam Barnhart**, from Wartburg, to Gloria Dei, Butte, 8/16/09, by Rev. Allen.

## Interim

**Carl Frederick Grundemann** (not on ELCA roster) to St. Paul's, Cut Bank 8/17/09

## Ordination

**Janet Young**, TEEM, to Trinity and First Presbyterian, Hot Springs, 9/12/09 by Rev. Jessica Crist, Bishop

## **Congregations in Transition**

Key = V - Vacancy, I - Served by Interim, S - Served by Seminary Intern

Arlee, V I

Billings, American, Associate, V

Cody, WY, Trinity, V

Cut Bank, St. Paul's, V I

Fairfield Parish, V I

Great Falls, Redeemer, V, I

Missoula, Atonement, Senior V

Plentywood, V I

Sidney, Pella, Associate VI

Whitefish, Christ, Associate, V I



## Words from the Bishop—Continued

sexuality, and emphasizes love of neighbor and the concept of trust. The social statement does not take a stand on same-gender relationships.

**Ministry Policies:** The Assembly voted to adopt, with some amendments, the ministry policy resolutions proposed by the task force. In so doing the Assembly committed first to “bearing one another’s burdens.” The next vote was to find a way for congregations wishing to do so to have a way to bless long-term same-gender relationships. A third vote was to find ways to remove barriers for same-gendered partnered people to serve as ministers. And the fourth was to find ways to implement the changes, including to allow congregations ways to stay in the ELCA and still to register disagreement with the policy changes.

It is important to note that the changes are not mandates. No congregation will be forced or even encouraged to bless same-sex unions.

Congregational wedding policies are currently congregational, and they will stay that way. Nor will any congregation be forced or even encouraged to call a pastor in a same-gender partnership. Congregational call processes always give the congregation the option to say “no,” and it will stay that way.

These changes in ministry policy, which have been a long time in the making, have come as a surprise to many. Many people have told me that they had not heard about these proposed changes until after it was too late. Some are feeling disenfranchised. So I ask you, the readers of the Bishop’s words in the Synod Newsletter, what can we do about this? How can we let people in our congregations know about what it going on in the wider church? Some congregations who have e-mail lists of their members have decided to forward the Synod Newsletter to everyone on their e-mail list. Others have decided to print it out and make it

available at the Church. Finding ways to communicate effectively with our people is very important. I ask for your assistance.

And finally, I ask for your assistance in this difficult time for many in our church. I ask for your prayers, for your patience, for your participation in “bearing one another’s burdens,” for your speaking well of your neighbor, and for your staying in touch with me, particularly if you or your congregation are considering drastic acts. I would much prefer a note or call from you to hearing something third hand from another pastor, or reading something in your newsletter.

May God be with you.

Bishop Jessica Crist

# Leadership in Small Congregations

Applications are now available for the fifth Summer Collegium—a nine-day ecumenical conference for clergy of small congregations and their spouses. For each of the past four summers, Virginia Theological Seminary has hosted 25 pastors and their spouses who were renewed and energized for ministry in the small church. The dates for the 2010 Summer Collegium are June 23 to July 1, 2010. (Spouses attend until June 27).

The theme for the 2010 Summer Collegium is *Leadership in the Small Congregation*. The Rev. Dr. Alice Mann of the Alban Institute will be the keynote speaker. Workshops will be led by experts in small-church ministry. During the Collegium, the seminary will also host a Small Church

Religious Arts Festival to celebrate the various arts of small churches in our area and beyond.

*All costs related to the Collegium, including travel, room and board, books, pulpit supply and child care are paid for by a grant from the Lily Endowment, Inc.*

You are encouraged to apply, especially if you:

- Are in mid-career—not ready to retire or just out of seminary;
- Are committed to small church ministry;
- Have healthy relationships with your congregation and judicatory, and in your personal lives; and

- Will take seriously the reading and other assignments given before you attend the Collegium and the follow-up when you return to your congregation.

Application materials are available to be downloaded from our website at:

[www.vts.edu/education/collegium](http://www.vts.edu/education/collegium)

The application process has several parts and the deadline is December 15, 2009.

Marilyn Johns, D.Min.  
Project Manager  
Virginia Theological Seminary  
3737 Seminary Road  
Alexandria, VA 22304  
[SummerCollegium@vts.edu](mailto:SummerCollegium@vts.edu)

## WAC and MAC News

### Wyoming Association of Churches

Reserve October 9 on your calendar for the Annual Meeting of the Wyoming Association of Churches, to be held in Cheyenne.

Our guest will be the Rev. Peg Chamberlin, President-Elect of the National Council of Churches (NCC) and Executive Director of the Minnesota Council of

Churches.

John Peacock, Director,  
Wyoming Association of Churches

### Montana Association of Churches

The 36th Annual Assembly will be held on October 19 and 20, 2009 at the Ursuline Retreat & Conference Centre, 2300 Central Avenue, Great Falls, MT 59401. The telephone

number at the Ursuline Centre is 406-452-8585.

Montana Association of Churches  
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Interim Executive Secretary: Pam Shelden  
Email: [macexecutivedirector@montana-churches.net](mailto:macexecutivedirector@montana-churches.net)

## Kogodus News

Be sure to mark October 30 – November 1 on your calendars. A Kogodus (K-1) “Faith and Life” retreat will be held at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. It is open to both men and women (single or married). The retreat will begin at 5:30 p.m. Friday and end at 1:30 p.m. Sunday. Registration forms

will be available on the Kogodus website: [www.kogodus.org](http://www.kogodus.org)

The retreat at Montana State Prison had to be canceled because only a couple of inmates signed up. A group of us, however, from the Five Valleys, Russell, and Great Divide Clusters are getting ready to

begin a regular Bible study at the prison to share God’s Word with the inmates and to nurture a caring, faith community.

Please include all of these endeavors in your prayers.

In Christ,

Pr. Greg Karlsgodt, Kogodus Director

# Announcements & Attachments

(posted on the newsletter webpage)



+**Stories of Faith in Action**, "A Long Journey Home" bulletin insert.

+**Bread of Life Re-**

**treating** at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp – November 13-14. Gather around the warm hearth at FLBC during this cold time of year.

Learn to bake bread, or hone your skills with new recipes and techniques. We will also enjoy meaningful worships centered on the Bread of Life, great meals and fellowship. Beginning and experienced bakers are all welcome! The cost is \$75. Please call or email Brooke Ells to sign up or for more information, 406-844-3201, [brooke@flbc.net](mailto:brooke@flbc.net)

+**"Brief Summary of Actions,"** a tri-fold report from the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

+Join Montana Faith Leaders For A **Smokefree Sabbath Weekend** at places of Worship across the State. September 26-27, 2009. A flyer is available.

+Frequently asked questions about the 2009 Churchwide Assembly actions regarding human sexuality can be found here: <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements-in-Process/JTF-Human-Sexuality/cwafaqs.aspx>

+As people in local settings throughout the world try to cope with recent economic crises, how might they begin to draw upon interfaith perspectives and practices? This new issue of **"Thinking It Over,"** by Dr. Mar-

tin Sinaga of the LWF/DTS staff, explores this question. One version is full page and the other is bulletin insert ready.

+**Who we are and What we do.** Ever wonder who to call at the Synod Office? See the link titled "Who We Are and What We Do", which gives a detailed listing of the duties of everyone working at the synod office.

+A **Boundaries Training** Workshop will be held on September 26, 2009 at Central Christian Church in Great Falls, facilitated by The Rev. Dr. Ruth Fletcher. If you need to take a boundaries class and live in the Great Falls area, this would be a great opportunity to get this training. Contact the Synod office for a registration form. Cost is \$5 for lunch.

## Upcoming NRIT Events



**Spiritual Leadership: Connecting Soul and Role**, with Rev. Jane E. Vennard.  
September 28, Our Redeemer's, Helena

**Luther Lectures 2009**, with Rev. Dr. James Vigen  
October 1-2, Chico Hot Springs

**Retired Pastors and Spouses Retreat**, with Rev. Virgil Thompson

October 5-6, 2009, Seeley Lake

**Boundaries Training**, with Rev. Greg Holler-Dinsmore and Rev. Alvena Olstead.  
October 8, Zion Lutheran, Glendive

**Preaching Between the Lines**, with Dr. Melinda Quivik  
October 15, Peace, Billings  
October 16, Gloria Dei, Butte  
October 17, Immanuel, Missoula

**LPA Retreat** with Rev. Dr. Mark Gravrock  
October 16-17, Great Falls

**Gospel of Luke**, with Rev. Dr. Mark Gravrock  
October 27, Zion, Glendive  
October 28, First, Glasgow  
October 29, Faith, Great Falls

Jenny Kunka, Director  
NRIT  
[jkunka@nrit.org](mailto:jkunka@nrit.org)

# Introducing new ELCA Missionaries to Bolivia

Pastor Justin Eller and his wife, Kari, a new Global Mission couple have just arrived in Bolivia to begin their work with our companion synod, the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Both Kari and Justin are from Salisbury, NC, and attended NCSU in Raleigh. Kari's major in Spanish with a teaching degree and ESL Certification doubtless will serve her well in Bolivia. She will have a multi-faceted educational position there, meeting the needs of the Bolivian church. She also taught Spanish and ESL in Chicago, working on her Ph. T. (Putting Hubby Through; old seminary joke ;-)

Justin graduated from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. His mission responsibilities will involve working as pastor-educator with

indigenous Aymara Lutheran pastors. The Bolivian Church's ministry efforts are directed toward securing the rights of Bolivia's indigenous peoples (approximately 85% of the population) and developing programs and procedures to sustain their work for the future.

For many years the ELCA has been providing grants for evangelism, leadership development and administration. Justin and Kari are the only ELCA personnel serving the church in Bolivia. For more information on Global Mission personnel throughout the world, see your ELCA Global Mission Annual. It's an excellent place to get information about where in the world the ELCA is involved, and what we are doing together as a church.)

If your congregation doesn't al-

ready support a missionary, consider including the Ellers in your budget, or make some other arrangement to allow your members to have this tangible contact with global mission work. Plus—we know from experience, missionaries find it very helpful if they have several supporting congregations in the same synod. It makes it much easier for them to keep in touch and make visits to congregations\*. Paul and Kay Hanson, Global Mission Coordinators

\*How can your congregation begin supporting a missionary? See: Ways to Sponsor a Missionary in the April Montana Synod newsletter, or Go to: <http://www.montanasynd.org/newsletters/april/Ways2SponsorMissionary.pdf>

## MLYO Fall Gathering

The Montana Lutheran Youth Fall Gathering is **October 16-18, 2009** at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel in Helena. This is only about a month away, so PLEASE talk with your youth about our event. A registration form is attached. Please make as many copies as you need and return the completed forms right away. Our focus text will be Matthew 18:3, and while our theme

"Color Outside The Lines" may stir memories of a Middle School Gathering from a couple of years ago, rest assured that we will not be offering the same program. We will also be accepting nominations for people who would like to serve on the MLYO Board. The nomination form and a page with member responsibilities are also attached. We will be electing new board members

at Fall Gathering. We're excited about our new time and location for this annual event. Please call me if you have any questions or need more information. Hope to see you there!

Tammy Bull, AiM  
Synod Youth & Family Coordinator  
(406) 799-7285

## ELCA Youth Ministry Network

We exist to **strengthen** and **empower** adult youth ministry leaders in service to Christ as a part of God's mission

### Why Should I Join the Network?

Joining the Network lends support to you in your ministry and gives

you opportunities to support others in their ministry. Supporting one another also supports the greater vision and lends a louder voice for Youth and Family Ministries throughout the ELCA.

<http://www.elcaymnet.org/>



### Network Office:

ELCA Youth Ministry Network  
11821 98th Place N.,  
Maple Grove, Minnesota 55369  
866.ELCANET (toll free)  
[Todd@elcaymnet.org](mailto:Todd@elcaymnet.org)  
Todd Buegler; Executive Director



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**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
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The Mission Investment Fund fulfills a simple, powerful idea: Grow your church, while you also grow your financial portfolio. With the investments made by ELCA congregations and their members, and ELCA-related ministries, the Mission Investment Fund makes loans to ELCA ministries for building and renovation projects.

When you invest in the fund, you invest in ministry that changes lives every day, in positive lasting ways.

Our investment products feature flexible terms and competitive rates. MissionPlus works like a money market account, but it also offers unlimited access to your funds like a checking account. And our current rates are tough to beat. PLUS remember... in our 90 year history, investors have ALWAYS been paid on time, and NO ONE has ever lost any money while investing in the Mission Investment Fund!

For more information on MissionPlus and other investments offered by the fund, call 877.886.3522, or visit [elca.org/mif](http://elca.org/mif). Or contact [Margie.fiedler@elca.org](mailto:Margie.fiedler@elca.org) or call her in Coeur d' Alene, ID at 208-664-7973.

\* Annual Percentage Yield. See Mission Investment Fund Offering Circular for complete terms and conditions.

## RELIGION, POLITICS & ADVOCACY

### AN INTERFAITH RELIGION SPECIAL TO BE BROADCAST SUNDAY, SEPT. 27 ON THE CBS TELEVISION NETWORK

RELIGION, POLITICS & ADVOCACY, Sunday, Sept. 27, on the CBS Television Network. Please check your local station for exact time.

Faith groups have always played the role of "activist" in society. Churches, synagogues and mosques run soup kitchens, provide shelter for the homeless, and run disaster relief operations in the United States and abroad. but they also play an important role in shaping legislation. Jim Winkler, General Secretary of the United Meth-

odist General Board of Church and Society, states, "We're not trying to seek legislation here that benefits any of our faith groups. This is really for the society as a whole, and that has power that trumps, in the end, the power of money."

RELIGION, POLITICS & ADVOCACY looks at the day in the life of a religious advocate - who they are, who they represent and how they lobby Congress on behalf of those who may not have a voice.

RELIGION, POLITICS & ADVOCACY also follows "citizen advocates" who participate in the Bread for the World's annual Lobby Day in Washington, D.C. This is a Christian advocacy organization, whose mission is to end hunger and poverty throughout the world. We hear from the group's founder and presi-

dent emeritus, Arthur Simon, and current president, Rev. David Beckmann, as well. During lobby day, spiritually minded citizens from all across the United States put faith into action. Through working groups and role playing, participants learn the finer points of lobbying, everything from how to shape their message, to how to approach their legislators on Capitol Hill. Lobby Day ends with a one-on-one visit with their local Congressman and Senator.

Ava Martin  
 ELCA Department for Communications

## Make a Plan

Perhaps the most important component of being prepared for disaster is to **Make a Plan**. When you plan, you are forced to think about different scenarios and how you might handle them in the case of an emergency. It is true that, under stress, our brains cannot be trusted to work the same way as they do normally. But having a plan, testing the plan, and even the process of making a plan ahead of time, means that our brains can go into autopilot and know exactly what to do.

September is *National Preparedness Month*, a helpful reminder that all of us could be better prepared for the unknown and the unthinkable.

This year, Lutheran Disaster Response encourages you to be the ReadyChurch, and it takes all of us working together. Take time this month to prepare your family, your friends and neighbors, and your congregation by following the three simple steps -- 1) Be Informed, 2) Make a Plan, and 3) Get a Kit. Get started today by visiting [www.ldr.org/ready](http://www.ldr.org/ready).

This week, create your disaster plan by thinking about meeting places, evacuation routes and area shelters, emergency contacts, and how you and your neighbors might help one another in a time of crisis. Most people avoid this planning because



they think that imagining the unthinkable is alarmist, but studies show that being prepared actually makes us less anxious. So Make a Plan, and be better prepared today for what might happen tomorrow.

Together, let's become the ReadyChurch!

**Lutheran Disaster Response**  
***Bringing Help and Hope...***

Phone: 773-380-2748

Fax: 773-380-2493

Visit us on the Web at [LDR.org](http://LDR.org)

## Your stories are needed

The ELCA social statement, "**Caring for Health: A Shared Endeavor**" states that "the Christian Church is called to be an active participant in fashioning a just and effective health care system."

We know that people are struggling and many still need access to affordable health care. "Our obligation could be met through any one of several combinations of personal, mar-

ket, and governmental means, although none of these means alone can provide equitable access to health care," according to the "Caring for Health: A Shared Endeavor" social statement.

We want to hear from you! The ELCA Washington Office staff is collecting stories about your health care experiences. Share a story with us of obtaining health insurance, medical services

or prescription drugs. Your stories help us when we advocate to Congress and the White House that everyone should have ready access to basic health care services. Submit your story to ELCA's Director for Domestic Public Policy, Robert Francis, at [robert.francis@elca.org](mailto:robert.francis@elca.org).

Jodi Deike  
ELCA Washington Office. Director for  
Grassroots Advocacy and Communication

## Luther Seminary's Interactive Bible website

A new interactive web site was launched in August by Luther Seminary in St. Paul. It is designed to be an aid in lifelong study of the Bible. Sunday school teachers, students, laity and pastors will be able to choose their own study path. For example, users can find who wrote a particular book of the Bible, a sum-

mary of the content, and the context in which it was written. It will also be easy to define biblical terms.

The web site also includes 175 video clips of Luther Seminary faculty members talking about various topics. It also includes 20 maps, 77 works of art and other biblical resources.



Visit the web site at  
[www.EnterTheBible.org](http://www.EnterTheBible.org).

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**[www.montanasynod.org](http://www.montanasynod.org)**

*Marked by the cross of Christ forever, abundantly  
blessed, we faithfully serve God and neighbor.*



## Calendar

September, 2009

Montana Synod Newsletter

### September, 2009

18-19 Synod Council, Great Falls  
25-26 Eastern LPA class, Epping, ND  
25-27 MTSWO Convention, Great Falls  
28 NRIT Spiritual Leadership, Helena

### October, 2009

1-2 NRIT Luther Lectures, Chico  
1-6 Conference of Bishops  
2-4 LPA Class #3, Great Falls  
5-6 Retired Pastors Retreat, Seeley Lake  
8 Boundaries Training, Glendive  
15 Synod Newsletter sent  
15-17 NRIT Preaching, various  
16-18 MLYO Fall Gathering, Helena  
18-20 MAC Assembly, Great Falls  
27-29 NRIT—Luke, various

### November, 2009

2-4 FCTE, Great Falls  
11-12 Region 1 Global Mission mtg.  
13-14 Bread of Life Retreat, FLBC  
18 Candidacy Committee, Great Falls  
26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday

+ The Montana Synod Newsletter is published monthly on or about the 15th of each month. Articles for each publication are due in the synod office by the 5th of the month. E-mail your story ideas to Susan Hedahl, Newsletter Editor, at [shedahl@montanasynod.org](mailto:shedahl@montanasynod.org).

+ You are welcome to copy and use any part of this newsletter in your congregational announcements, bulletins, and/or newsletters. Consider forwarding it to your council members and other interested members.

+ If you received the newsletter by USPS, you have either requested it in that format, or we don't have your e-mail. If you would prefer to receive it by e-mail, send us your e-mail address and we will send it to you next month in that format. (Send your e-mail address to [shedahl@montanasynod.org](mailto:shedahl@montanasynod.org))

+ You will need Adobe Reader to download the newsletter. For a free download of this software, go to:  
<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html?promoid=BNRM>