

March 2021

MONTANA Reflections

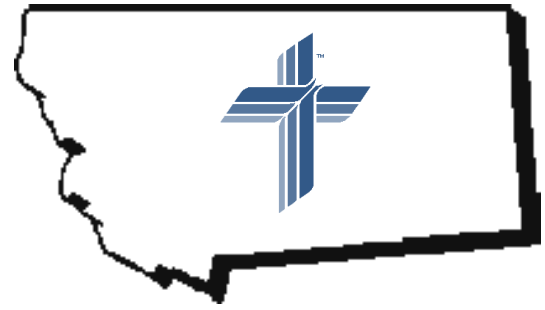
Montana District LCMS

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We Too Might Walk in Newness of Life

The “click” of the lock on the casket was entirely too loud. During the height of the infection rate of COVID I was conducting a funeral for a someone whose family was quite concerned about the virus. So, the service was held in a small funeral home chapel, with very few people. Before the service started, in the utter silence of that small room, it sounded like a bomb went off when the funeral director closed the coffin and locked the lock. Family members winced at the ominous announcement of finality. Dead is dead.

We have all lived with entirely too much death for the past year. Not since the routine six-o’clock-evening-news death count of the Vietnam war, (which few of you will remember) have the American people been subject to the trauma of a daily accounting of death in our nation. COVID, though not nearly as certain as the casket, looms large in the psychological culture of our country. Now that the numbers are going down, the media, casting about for something to prolong the headlines, is offering a steady stream of remembrances of those who have died. In the face of death, the best thing this world can offer is internet memes of those who have gone on.

Not so with you. *“Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father...”* (Romans 6:4). There is a meme that is not likely to attract many clicks. Maybe dead is not dead after all. There is little doubt that the stone rolled in front of Jesus’ tomb with an ominous crash. Those responsible for giving it a push surely thought, “Dead is dead.” They were finally rid of the threat to their autonomy that Jesus posed. Death was their only solution, and it presented itself as promising instead of ominous.

Then came Sunday morning. There are moments when life itself is shocking. Contrary to the members of the Sanhedrin, who would have been aghast at the reports of the resurrection, the members of Jesus’ little band, His disciples, were beside themselves with belief, disbelief, joy, and astonishment. Life is life! It is not supposed to overwhelm death, but, *“Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father...”*

Our shock, in the form of belief, joy, and astonishment ought be no less, all these years later. Perhaps it could be even greater, given that last year’s Easter celebration was muted by the powers that be, under the fear of a menacing deadly virus. Despite all the death, and the rumors of death of the past year, Jesus is alive, and we are free to rejoice in the power of that life.

May I remind you that we do not celebrate a scientific anomaly. Easter is not academic. It is a decidedly existential event. That is to say, the resurrection of Jesus is life, for you. Allow me to quote the rest of the text, *“Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”* (Romans 6:4) The resurrection of Jesus means new life for you. The lock on the casket has been unlocked, never to be “clicked” again. The tombstone is rolled away, and you are living a new life in Jesus. No matter how ominous the sound of death in our world, life is more powerful. Alive is alive!

Rev. Terry Forke
Montana District President

District President's Calendar

Mar 8: Divide Circuit Winkel

Mar 14: Trinity, Harlowton
St. Paul, Roundup

Mar 18-19: Regional COP, Sioux Falls, SD

Mar 21: Official Visit: First Lutheran Church,
Helena

Mar 28: Trinity, Harlowton
St. Paul, Roundup

District President's Calendar

Apr 1: Good Friday Service, St. Paul,
Roundup

Apr 2: Good Friday Service, Trinity,
Harlowton

Apr 4: Easter Sunday, Trinity, Harlowton

Apr 11: Trinity Lutheran Church, Great
Falls

Apr 18: Christ the King, Billings
Church Groundbreaking at 1pm

Apr 24-26, 30: COP meetings via Zoom

Apr 25: Trinity, Harlowton
St. Paul, Roundup

The LCEF "Take Heart Scholarship" is accepting applications until April 19, 2021.

This year's question is: *Reflect on your faith walk during 2020. What steps did you take to stay connected with your church and your faith community at school or outside the church?*

To apply, visit: <https://lcef.org/scholarship/>

Thank you

Thank you for the grant money. The new console keeps are musical instruments organized. The book case holds our many books. The students are enjoying the new magnetic magna tiles and pattern activity kits.

King's Kids Preschool
Columbia Falls, MT



Around the District

Rev. Glenn Fluegge, a professor of Theology at Concordia University, Irvine, has returned the Call to Trinity Lutheran Church, Kalispell,. Pastor Kevin Bueltmann continues to serve the vacancy.

St. John, Deer Lodge, is in the call process. Pastor James Pierce continues to serve as the vacancy pastor.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Sidney and St. John, Fairview, have called Rev. Mark Chepulis of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cavalier, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Langdon and St. Paul Lutheran Church, St. Thomas, ND. Rev. Dr. Mark Nicolaus continues to serve the vacancy at Trinity, and Rev. David Behm, the vacancy for St. John.

Rev. Samuel Beltz of St. John Lutheran Church, Oskaloosa, Iowa, has returned the call to Trinity Lutheran Church, Great Falls. Pastor Bruce Zigel (Emeritus) continues to serve as the vacancy pastor.

Rev. Samuel Grayl, of First Lutheran Church-Bozeman, has returned the Call from Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Leewood, Kansas.

Rev. Wade Harr of First Lutheran, Fort Benton, has accepted the Call from the United Lutheran Parish, comprised of Christ Lutheran Church, Winner, Zion Lutheran Church, Hamill, and Trinity Lutheran Church, Reliance, South Dakota. Thank you, Pastor Harr for your faithful service in the Montana District! Please keep the members of First Lutheran in your prayers as they consider the Lord's leading for their congregation.

⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:4-7 (ESV)



Baptized at Zion in Chinook on February 28th was Addilyn Qaen McCann. Pictures are Pastor Marcus Williams, Addilyn and parents Paige and Cole McCann. Baby Addilyn is wearing baptismal gown belonging to her great grandfather Fred Miller who was baptized in the same church 78 years ago.
































COVID-19 Vaccination Creation

The chart below, created by the Charlotte Lozier Institute, lists eight major pharmaceutical companies, who have been funded by “Operation Warp Speed, to create a vaccine for COVID-19. The chart indicates which companies have used fetal material (abortion-derived cell lines) to create and test their vaccines. Education on the testing and creation of vaccines, and a wealth of information on research and life issues can be found at: <https://lozierinstitute.org/>



Analysis of COVID-19 Vaccine Candidates

Includes vaccine candidates that received “Operation Warp Speed” funding or have been submitted to the FDA for emergency use approval

 Sponsor(s)	 Status	 Development/ Production of Vaccine	 Lab Testing
 	Emergency Use FDA Application Approved		
	Emergency Use FDA Application Approved		
	Phase 3 Trials		
 	Emergency Use FDA Application Approved		
	Phase 3 Trials		
 	Phase 1/2 Trials		
	Phase 2/3 Trials		
	<i>Development Discontinued</i>		

Key

-  Does not use abortion-derived cell line
-  DOES USE abortion-derived cell line
-  SOME tests DO NOT use abortion-derived cells, SOME DO
-  Currently undetermined

See the following link for a chart of many vaccines being tested and more detailed information about each:
<https://lozierinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/COVID-19-Vaccine-Candidates-and-Abortion-Derived-Cell-Lines.pdf>

Last Updated March 3, 2021

Excerpts from Synodical President, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison's statement on the Equity Act

His entire letter can be found at:

<https://blogs.lcms.org/2021/lcms-presidents-statement-on-the-equality-act/>

A Word on the Equality Act

To the Pastors, Called Workers and Members
of the 6,000 Congregations of
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

The church's task is not political. It is the proclamation of the Gospel of free salvation in the cross and resurrection of Jesus for all (1 Cor. 1:23; John 18:36)...

Throughout history, governments have acted unjustly — sometimes in the name of race, atheism, communism, religion and even Christianity — and curtailed or denied the rights of conscience and the free exercise of religion. And governments continue to do so. Our Lutheran and biblical confession is that “it is necessary for Christians to be obedient to their rulers and laws. The only exception is when they are commanded to sin. Then they ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29)” ...

Religious schools (K-12 and universities) are a prime target of the Equality Act, which will make it difficult to maintain standards for admission and codes of Christian conduct for students, faculty and staff.⁵ The Equality Act will forbid college students from using federal tuition assistance at schools that maintain standards of conduct on the basis of the Bible regarding sexual orientation and gender identity....

The Equality Act was recently passed by the House and is currently pending in the Senate. The margin is razor thin. If it does not become law now, we can be assured that it will be pressed again. We encourage all LCMS people to:

1. Treat all people with kindness and respect (“You shall love your neighbor as yourself” Mark 12:31), while holding firmly to “the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).
2. Become informed about the Equality Act and the issues of gender dysphoria. (See “Additional Resources” below.)
3. Consider your role as Christian citizens and make your voice known to your elected officials, particularly in the U.S. House (house.gov/representatives) and Senate (senate.gov/senators/index.htm).
4. Pray for our officials, government and the church in these challenging days.

Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison
President of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
March 11, 2021

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

(2 Corinthians 9:7–8)

A cheerful giver also makes glad the hearts of those who observe. It certainly works that way for me. I have seen this kind of giving again and again in the Montana District. I speak not only of individuals who care for the needs of others and their congregations. In addition, from time to time, congregations will call me and say something like, “At the end of the year we have this budget-surplus and we would like to give it in order to bless the work of the proclamation of the Gospel in Montana. Can you help us decide how and where to give?”

That is a thrilling moment. I don’t always point it out to the district, but today I want to because it is a remarkable story. A few years ago, Concordia Lutheran Church in Williston asked the Montana district for a little help getting through a financial difficulty. Now, at the end of the previous year, of all years, the COVID year, the leadership of Concordia called me and said they had some money they would like to give in order to help Montana district congregations. It was a substantial sum. God works in mysterious ways.

The rest of the story is that the congregations in Wolf Point/Plentywood/Glasgow, (triple parish) Livingston/Big Timber, (dual parish) and Anaconda were blessed by the generosity of their sister congregation in Williston. They didn’t ask for the publicity. They gave from their hearts. I wanted you to know that these kinds of miracles, this kind of love, still happens.

Some of you have heard me say previously that I think the future is going to be hard for us. It is no longer popular to be Christians. We will need each other more and more. Here is another example of God watching out over us, as He grants us His generosity to deepen our bonds.

Rev. Terry Forke



Trinity Lutheran Church, Billings, welcomed 32 new member on Sunday, February 14th Praise be to God!

Lutheran Schools

As another compromised school year draws to a close it might be a good time to take stock of the educational welfare of our children. This past year has been difficult for teachers and students. In addition to requirements in public schools to attend to COVID restrictions, there are now added pressures to teach politically correct positions on evolution, gender identity, sexual preferences, and critical race theory. These doctrines make it very difficult for our children to maintain the Christian faith.

Most families in the Montana district do not have the opportunity to send their children to Lutheran Schools. Nonetheless, our Lutheran schools are an important tool for inculcating the faith in the next generation of believers. While not immune to the difficulties of teaching during a pandemic, our Lutheran schools are not beset with the faithless doctrines that are ever encroaching on our national consciousness. Instead, they are teaching the Word of God according to our true confession. They do it in an atmosphere carefully crafted around the love of God for us in Christ Jesus. The Gospel is the center of life. Confession and absolution are not academic, but a practice for campus life.

If at all possible, please consider sending your children to a Lutheran school. If you are home schooling you may ask the closest Lutheran school for assistance on curriculum and methodology for teaching. If your children are in public school work with the school to mitigate that which may be contrary to the faith. In addition, talk with your Pastor about how to help your child maintain the Christian faith.

If you no longer have school aged children at home, but would still like to support our Lutheran schools there are two ways you can do that in the Montana district. We maintain a Lutheran Schools Fund which offers annual grants directly to our schools for various needs. We also maintain a Lutheran School Student Scholarship Fund. This fund is accessible to our school administrators to help students who would like to attend their school but have financial needs. All of us can keep our Lutheran Schools and their teachers in our prayers.

Please also remember to keep in your prayers those faithful Christian teachers who are working in public schools. While not all the public schools in Montana are under the same pressure, these people are working hard, under difficult circumstances, to give a good witness to Christ as Lord. We need faithful Christian to work on the front-lines, striving for the best for the children in their schools. Even if we have difficulty with what may be taught in public schools, we can still support, and cherish the faithful Christians who teach in them.

Rev. Terry Forke

Montana District Convention

The Montana District Convention has been moved to June 13-16, 2022. It will still be held in Billings, at Trinity Lutheran School. Registration and delegate information will be sent out next Fall.

“Here I Stand” Sunday

April 18, 2021

I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God.

-Martin Luther

Endorsed at the 2019 Synodical Convention, resolution 4-09, encourages all LCMS congregations to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s courageous refusal to recant his writings and teaching at the Diet of Worms in 1521.

Please join your brothers and sisters in Christ in prayer, study and fellowship, as the anniversary of this tremendous act of faith reminds us to stand firm in the immutable truth of scripture, and encourages us to share the Good News of the Gospel with the world.

More information and resources can be found on the LCMS website at: <https://www.lcms.org/here-i-stand-sunday>

Montana District Camp Red Lodge 2021

Family Camp (Session 1): June 25th-27th
Family Camp (Session 2): June 29th-July 1st

“Not to be Served but to Serve”

(Matthew 20:28)



Join us for Bible study, devotions, hiking, crafts, campfires and more!

The registration fee is \$100 per family. Please register by June 1st

Registration information can be found at: <https://mtdistlcms.org/district-committees/district-youth/>

2021 Congregation District & Synod Mission Plan of Support / Donation Summary

Circuit	City	Congregation	# Confirmed Mbrs. Reported	2021 Plan of Support (Italics=No Plan submitted, 2020 Actual)	Remitted February 2021	Total YTD 2021
Southern						
1	Belfry	St. John	46	\$3,900	250.00	500.00
1	Billings	Christ the King	121	\$6,000	500.00	1,000.00
1	Billings	Hope	47	\$600	50.00	100.00
1	Billings	Mt. Olive	415	\$12,000	1,000.00	2,000.00
1	Billings	Our Savior	156	\$2,000	0.00	0.00
1	Billings	Trinity	1063	\$98,497	10,995.00	30,047.00
1	Bridger	St. Paul	61	\$1,200	0.00	0.00
1	Crow Agency	Crow Ministry	43	\$1,265	91.00	569.29
1	Hardin	Redeemer	100	2000 pd in 2020	0.00	0.00
1	Harlowton	Trinity	22	750 pd in 2020	0.00	0.00
1	Lame Deer	Circle of Life	40	2400 for 2020 pd 2021	0.00	2,400.00
1	Laurel	St. John	428	\$31,840	2,734.10	2,734.10
1	Park City	St. Paul	95	\$1,300	0.00	1,300.00
1	Roundup	St. Paul	13	\$200	0.00	0.00
1	Worden	Our Redeemer	16	\$1,500	0.00	0.00
Total			15	2666	\$165,452	15,620.10
Western						
2	Condon	Faith	20	\$207	0.00	380.00
2	Hamilton	Grace	320	\$26,785	1,677.20	5,553.00
2	Missoula	First	506	\$70,297	5,026.00	13,025.57
2	Missoula	Messiah	58	\$6,000	1,500.00	1,500.00
2	Salmon, ID	Shepherd/Valley	102	\$13,963	1,188.30	1,188.30
2	Seeley Lake	Holy Cross	51	\$2,600	200.00	200.00
2	Stevensville	Our Savior	135	\$5,000	0.00	1,250.00
2	Superior	Trinity	30	\$5,945	0.00	1,388.00
2	Thompson Falls	Shepherd/Valley	34	\$4,265	355.42	710.84
Total			9	1256	\$135,062	9,946.92
Eastern						
3	Colstrip	Mt. Calvary	150	\$3,500	215.75	493.00
3	Fairview	St. John	37	\$250	0.00	0.00
3	Fallon	Grace	20	\$500	0.00	0.00
3	Forsyth	Concordia	150	\$8,400	700.00	1,400.00
3	Glasgow	Faith	20	\$500	0.00	500.00
3	Glendive	Our Savior	742	\$12,000	1,000.00	2,000.00
3	Hysham	Trinity	40	\$605	605.00	605.00
3	Miles City	Trinity	321	\$23,674	2,169.16	3,197.97
3	Plentywood	Trinity	62	\$3,000	250.00	500.00
3	Sidney	Trinity	180	\$7,500	0.00	0.00
3	Williston, ND	Concordia	92	\$8,000	1,082.19	2,017.11
3	Wolf Point	Trinity	29	\$1,200	0.00	0.00
Total			12	1843	\$69,129	6,022.10

Circuit	City	Congregation	# Confirmed Mbrs. Reported	2021 Plan of Support (Italics=No Plan submitted, 2020 Actual)	Remitted February 2021	Total YTD 2021
Central						
4	Chinook	Zion	65	\$0	0.00	0.00
4	Denton	Our Savior	29	\$750	20.00	20.00
4	Fairfield	St. John	20	\$0	0.00	0.00
4	Ft. Benton	First	34	\$1,746	2,537.00	2,537.00
4	Great Falls	Christ/Deaf	24	\$200	0.00	0.00
4	Great Falls	Peace	121	\$9,600	800.00	1,600.00
4	Great Falls	Trinity	277	\$13,000	0.00	1,083.33
4	Havre	St. Paul	90	\$9,456	717.33	1,415.23
4	Lewistown	St. Paul	100	\$2,852	257.65	257.65
4	Power	Zion	81	\$5	0.00	0.00
4	Stanford	Trinity	30	\$1,080	0.00	0.00
Total			11	871	\$38,689	4,331.98
Divide						
5	Anaconda	Redeemer	14	\$450	0.00	0.00
5	Belgrade	Holy Trinity	162	\$8,796	733.00	1,466.00
5	Boulder	Faith	25	\$1,000	0.00	0.00
5	Bozeman	First	448	\$32,000	0.00	2,500.00
5	Butte	St. Mark	146	\$5,200	1,400.00	1,400.00
5	Deer Lodge	St. John	97	\$6,000	500.00	1,000.00
5	Dillon	Living Water	19	\$100	0.00	0.00
5	Livingston/Big Timber	Emmaus Luth. Mission	25	\$1,425	0.00	715.14
5	Ennis	Shepherd/Hills	42	\$7,878	558.62	1,189.82
5	Helena	First	434	\$35,265	2,850.51	6,216.15
5	Three Forks	Grace	87	\$3,500	0.00	0.00
5	Whitehall	Zion	74	\$2,500	625.00	625.00
Total			12	1573	\$104,114	6,667.13
Flathead						
6	Columbia Falls	Our Redeemer	235	\$7,000	0.00	584.00
6	Eureka	Holy Cross	138	\$5,500	0.00	450.00
6	Creston	Church at Creston	269	\$20,151	0.00	3,873.00
6	Kalispell	Trinity	826	\$23,238	1,633.33	3,266.66
6	Libby	St. John	130	\$8,415	913.50	1,589.04
6	Polson	Mt. Calvary	65	\$5,680	622.10	1,098.20
6	Ronan	St. Paul	89	\$5,000	0.00	0.00
6	St. Ignatius	Zion	27	\$6,900	575.00	1,150.00
6	Whitefish	St. Peter	38	\$7,134	689.10	689.10
Total			9	1817	\$89,018	4,433.03
TOTALS						
Total Congregation Donations 2020:			68	10026	\$601,465	47,021.26
2021 Plan or 2020 Actual			68	10026	\$601,465	47,021.26
Congregation Donations in 2020:			68	10026	\$601,465	47,021.26
25% Contributed to Synod in 2021:			68	10026	\$601,465	47,021.26
Net + - from previous year:			68	10026	\$601,465	47,021.26

The Montana District's most recent annual audited financial statement, current year unaudited quarterly financial statements, and current year MT District Budget can be found online at <http://www.mtdistlcm.org/treasurer-3/> or by contacting the MT District office.

Net + - from previous year:

(279.46)