
Light in the Beartooths

MESSIAH LUTHERAN NEWS

Messiah Lutheran Church, Pastor Ben Cherland



**In Christ there is no east nor west,
in Him no south or north,
but one community of love
throughout the whole wide earth.**

John Oxenham, 1852—1941



Our Common Witness - Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

One of the distinct privileges of this call as presiding bishop is seeing the church at work at home and around the world. The Lutheran movement is alive and well, speaking the gospel in a distinctive voice. Sunday after Sunday the good news is proclaimed in accordance with Scripture and the [Lutheran Confessions](#). In hundreds of languages and dialects, God's promise of grace, reconciliation and freedom is received and celebrated in places Martin Luther never knew existed. We are part of a worldwide family.

In many ways, and in the most important ways, we are alike. The cross is our center. Faith, grace and Scripture alone are our guides. A clear understanding of human brokenness and our inability to save ourselves sets us apart from societal and even some theological pressures that would try to draw us away from the source of our life and freedom. A world built on works and individualism promises salvation based on our own effort and denies salvation if we fail. The Lutheran movement points to another way. This is our common witness.

There are also glorious expressions particular to regions, countries and history: governance; organization; the role of laity, deacons, pastors and bishops; and the age for first communion, to name a few. And that's just the ELCA! Around the world the expression of Lutheranism takes on many different flavors—literally and figuratively.

In the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, porridge is a staple at all meals, so they pray, "Give us today our daily porridge." Spiritual healers are an important part of the life and ministry in the Lutheran church in Madagascar. Lutherans in Mexico celebrate the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which falls just a day away from the Swedish celebration of Santa Lucia. Lutherans around the world hold fast to the core and adapt to make the gospel accessible.

Part of Luther's genius was to make Scripture, preaching and worship available in the language of the people. In fact, this year we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the publication of his translation of the New Testament from the ancient Greek into the German language, known as the "[September Testament](#)." This publication paved the way for other translations of the Bible, making it accessible for people both at church and in their homes. All these variations make the Lutheran movement richer, especially when we share across borders and cultures.

It's good to remember the events of the 16th century, but we shouldn't get stuck there. We need to ask what it means to be Lutheran in the 21st century. What it means for the [Lutheran World Federation's](#) 149 member churches, representing over 77 million members in 99 countries, that are exploring Lutheran identity. For some member churches with a state church tradition—Sweden, for example—Lutheran identity is a novel concept. The Lutheran church was "The Church," and there was no need to think about identity. Now many churches in Africa and Asia are forging an indigenous expression of what it means to be Lutheran. Yes, they still sing hymns set to German, Swedish and American hymn tunes, but they are also developing music and worship using traditional instruments and styles.

What will our Lutheran identity be in the ELCA? We still treasure our immigrant roots—and we should. But if our ethnic identities become synonymous with Lutheran identity, we are missing the mark. The gospel, and Luther's clear exposition of it, transcends human boundaries. When a single culture's vernacular becomes the established language of the people, we hinder the gospel's free course in the world. We can become an alternative face of Christianity in the culture—one that moves across divisions, is meant for all, and that is a free and liberating gift.

Dear Messiah,

Advent is upon us! We've officially begun this new church year in worship (with Thanksgiving and the First Sunday of Advent comfortably under our belts) and are opening to the anticipation of the season with hope and joy.

It's interesting to me every year just how our gospel stories in Advent contrast so sharply with that hope and joy. We heard last week how no one knows when the Son of Man will come - not even Jesus - and this week we'll hear from John the Baptist about repentance, broods of vipers, and the "chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So between hopeful joy, and ominous repentance I find Advent unexpectedly reflective. Even for different reasons, is that true for you too?

It's difficult to hold that reflective space though in a culture full of commercial excitement, whipping everyone up into a consuming frenzy of Holiday cheer. Thankfully, church holds out opportunities for quietness, stillness, and space to feel whatever we're feeling - space where we can put down what we carry and experience love, belonging and feel the attention and love of God.

Wednesday at noon this week, a small group of Messiah members with Pastor Aimee and myself, did the first of four Advent Midweek worship services. These services take the shape of the Vespers service in our ELW hymnal, with singing, prayer, silence and the reading of scripture. Light is a theme that weaves through it that I hope we'll engage fully when Epiphany (the season of light) comes around after two Sundays of Christmas. But our little group found that stillness and quiet in that time together, even as we sang, prayed, and listened to readings.

What opportunities are you finding to "feel what you're feeling" this Advent. The growing darkness of the days, if not also these Sunday gospel readings, certainly invite quietness. It's easy to get wrapped up in all that needs doing for us this time of year, but I hope you're taking time where you can to sit and listen, feel, and remember the God and the baby that sit at the center of the story we're living these days.

If you need help finding that time, I invite you to come to Calvary on Wednesday at noon and join our little midweek worship service. The service offers riches just as the simple soup lunch served immediately following does. Mexican chili and homemade bread, as well as warm fellowship in the parish hall fed our spirits as much as the service did.

It's an opportunity offered for us to be with each other, engage in the story, be fed and filled with the light of God and the gift of this community amidst darkening days. It's an opportunity offered for you to engage the season and hold again the stillness God invites us to.

Simple and profound gifts both are found in the dark and the quiet. Wherever you find it these days, a blessed Advent to you all.

Pastor Ben

SPECIAL OFFERING

Each month Messiah Lutheran supports a designated charity. If you would like to contribute to this cause, please designate “special offering” on your check or with your online gift.



Transforming lives at Montana State Prison

We are equipping our community for the Gospel with a ministry of presence. Our message is not “get right with God” and you will be saved. Rather we walk alongside others in their trials, not promising to make it better, but only that they are loved and valued. We are a grace-based ministry.

Join us because

We believe everyone deserves a second chance.

We are all broken. We are all sinners.

Just as God forgives, so should we. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person—questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God’s work in Christ’s name at Montana State Prison. Our arms are open and we welcome all into our worshipping community.

Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry is a worshipping community of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Church in America.

We are the only ecumenical worshipping community within the Montana State Prison providing a pastor on a full-time basis. Our pastor provides worship services, Bible studies, pastoral visits, bereavement visits, and funeral services.

We invite you to help us bring hope, love, forgiveness, and faith into a place that often does not share these values.

Transforming lives at Montana State Prison through the power and presence of Jesus Christ.

Our special offering for December supports the Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry at Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge. This mission is widely supported by Montana Synod – individuals, congregations, the Synod Office, and Churchwide. Even so, funding over the past three years has dwindled placing the Ministry at risk. Due to financial concerns, Pastor Rob has been placed in a part-time status and Board members have been asked to take on some of the fund raising efforts.

Putting dollar issues aside, the Ministry remains incredibly important as a resource that inmates turn to for support, guidance, and spiritual renewal. Transforming Corrections published a study in 2017, **The Impact of a Volunteer Prison Ministry Program on the Long-term Recidivism of Federal Inmates**, that showed that recidivism rates dropped by 21% for inmates engaged in Prison Ministry. For women, older inmates, and low risk offenders, the rates dropped by nearly 60%. There is virtually no ELCA presence in the Women’s Prison in Billings and Montana Synod has the most involvement of the mainline Protestant denominations in the Men’s Prison. FIC hopes to engage with the Women’s Prison in the next two years if more consistent funding is established.

The Men’s Prison houses nearly 1,600 inmates and has their own issues with staffing and funding from the state. Visitor access has been dramatically curtailed leaving inmates with little or no contact with the ‘outside world’. FIC tries to fill some of that void.

Please keep FIC in your prayers and consider donating to this month’s special offering.

“We have operated in the Montana State Prison for ten years and the recidivism of our guys is low, which coincides with statistics showing that faith ministries inside prisons (and re-entry programs) reduce the return to prison by 80%.”

That's good news! That's why we do what we do!



Christikon Clips

December 2022



Advent and Christmas Blessings

The Light of the World –

We anticipate with longing to welcome Christ into our world and our hearts. May we reflect His light to one another and the world so all may know and share in this gracious gift.

May you be filled with expectation, rejoicing, peace, and love in Jesus Christ.

It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ— exploring God’s creation and the adventure of life together.

CHRISTIKON • 1108 24th Street West • Billings, MT 59102
406 656-1969 • secretary@christikon.org • www.christikon.org

December, 2022



November 22, 2022

Messiah Lutheran Church
PO Box 1330
Red Lodge, Montana 59068

Hi Ben,

Once again, thank you and the good folks at Messiah Lutheran Church for your continued faithful support of Christikon. Your recent gift of \$1,000 helps support our mission to be an arm of ministry on your behalf.

We are uniquely positioned to impact kids, families and adults, those at-risk, and those with developmental disabilities. We see ourselves as a training ground for future church leaders as well. Of the roughly 600 former staff people at Christikon, the vast majority are actively involved in their respective congregations, and close to 100 went on to ordained ministry and serve faith communities across the nation and world. This ministry makes a difference in the lives of campers and staff alike, and your gift helps us continue following where God leads.

Thank you for your continued partnership in Christikon's mission and ministry. We pray for God's blessings in your context. Camp has been put to bed for the coming months and we continue our preparations for the 2023 season.

I firmly believe that now, as much as ever, the Church and the world needs solid and faithful outdoor ministry that helps connect Jesus' story to our life and world. As always, we look with hope and great expectation towards the future, and pray that God will guide us still as we seek to be God's people in this time and place.

Again, thanks for all the ways you have, and continue to, champion the mission and ministry of Christikon. If you're interested, I'd love to talk with you about coming to your congregation in person. God bless you and yours, and this ministry we love and share.

Pax,

Mark

Thank you, Messiah friends ☺

Mark

It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ — exploring God's creation and the adventure of life together.

1108 24th Street West
Billings, Montana 59102-3810
406 656-1969

Mark Donald, Pastor/Director
<http://www.christikon.org>
director@christikon.org

summer: 4661 Boulder Road
McLeod, Montana 59052-8839
406 932-6300

An outdoor ministry of Lutheran congregations in southern Montana and northern Wyoming. Affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

December, 2022



November 4, 2022

Messiah Lutheran Church of Red Lodge
PO Box 1330
Red Lodge, MT 59068

Dear Friends,

On behalf of St. John's United, I offer thanksgiving for your gift of \$1,000.00 as Benevolence.

Your kind generosity is a welcome witness to the St. John's United vision of being *a place where every day for every age there is healing, meaning and purpose.*

Your gift, together with gifts from others, brightens the lives of those who reside at, serve within or visit St. John's United. Your gift also helps St. John's United to fulfill its beloved mission, which is *to provide living opportunities within nurturing environments of hope, dignity and love.*

Gratefully,



Tom Schlotterback
VP of Mission Advancement

*Thank you, Friends.
How very kind!*

St. John's United has not provided any goods, services, or intangible religious benefits in consideration of your donation. Therefore, your entire donation is deductible as a charitable contribution for federal income tax purposes.

Please keep this acknowledgement for your tax records. Tax ID#81-0459472

Brief notes from the Fall Delegate Learning Day at St John's United

Saturday Oct 29, 2022 St John's hosted a learning day for delegates from participating congregations.

Tom Schlotterback, VP of Mission Advancement, welcomed those attending.

Pastor. Karl Guhn, Director of Pastoral Care, offered devotions, reminding us that Luther considered the Bible as the cradle of the true Word, Jesus Christ.

New SJU Leaders were introduced:

Mark Wagstaff, VP of Health Services

Jan Ostermiller, Employee Health & Wellness Coordinator

Stacey Nybo Black, Director of Strategic Advancement

Shannon Bloyder, Director of Rehab

Volunteer Services Re-engagement

Carissa Welsh, Director of Volunteer Services and Grants noted that areas of volunteer engagement are being re-established post Covid.

Opportunities include Christmas door decorations, especially by children, drivers, At-home program services, fall raking & spring planting, 1st Fridays

"Frameworks" has received \$100,000 grant for alternative learning

Kathy Hernandez, Greenhouse Manager at Gainans Commons downtown:

Facility was bought in 2020, to be used for Home Health/Hospital/Family Services offices. 50 water pump towers have been installed, Using rainwater and solar power for vertical aeroponic gardening to supply fresh produce for SJU residents.

Seeds of Kindness Annual Funding and Day of Giving

Heather Estus, Director of Donor Relations and Annual Programs

\$63,000 has already been donated by SJU employees.

Giving Tuesday, Nov 29 anticipating additional donations

Year-end Giving Opportunities

Rachel Simonson, Foundation FP Gift Planner

3 aspects: Stewardship, capital Greenhouse program, endowments
Goal to "disinherit" the IRS through wise planning

Wing 3 Repurposing/Childcare Relocation & Programming

Stacy Nybo Black, Director of Strategic Advancement

Kelly Schallenberger, Senior Admin Officer-Support Services

Daycare has existed for 20+ years; wing 3 being repurposed to ultimately accommodate 97 children (currently at 60 children).

Employee children given 1st consideration before outside families.
Received \$970,000 grant for Daycare facility, with intergenerational involvement.

Transitional Rehab Center

Jan Ostermiller, Employee Health & Wellness Coordinator

Facility at corner of Shiloh & Rimrock has current capacity of 17 which will double to 36 beds, incorporating student nurses for care

Luther's Lodge & First English Lutheran Church Project

Tom Schlotterback, VP of Mission Advancement

The Lodge, for out of town patients/family is currently @ Glenwood & Rimrock Rds. Considering sharing facility of 1st English which has a much smaller membership now. Renovations would allow for 6 rooms, each with private bathroom. Worship space would be decreased.

SJU Updates/Information/Challenges/Repositioning

David Trost, President and CEO

David is "cautiously optimistic" about the future. There is much work involved to live out SJU's mission statement. Striving for family stabilization. Allocating \$900,000 to keep families intact. Purchase of assisted living facility in the Heights is being considered.

SJU has \$6M less now in savings than in 2019. A hard decision to close a building on campus during Covid, but staff was retained.

Closing remarks followed by a delicious lunch!

Respectfully submitted by Susan Leaverton, Messiah Lutheran Church delegate

December, 2022

Building Report



Please note, the cross in this photo is not the one that will be in place when the sanctuary is finished.

The main activity in November was to get insulation in and sheetrock up. Prior to that the HVAC, insulation and fire wall elements were completed. Tapers and painters will be working during the month of December. The Mission Investment Fund loan has closed and we will begin drawing on that this month. We are still on track to be in by Easter.

COUNCIL CORNER

- Our chimers will be playing at Christmas Stroll this year.

- Christmas Kids Shoppe needs volunteers!! See newsletter article for more information - We decided to get a checking debit card instead of using travel cards for automatic and online purchases. The travel card has been cumbersome and requires constant balance updating. For safety, we will open a 2nd checking account that has a much smaller balance than our operating checking account.

- Planned for annual meeting in February. Nominating Committee will be looking for people to fill vacancies. Please consider volunteering your time for one of these important positions.

- Thanksgiving and Advent/Christmas schedule was discussed. More details to follow.

Our next meeting will be held on December 13th at 4:30pm.



AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support Messiah Lutheran every time you shop at no cost to you. When you want to shop on Amazon, simply type in smile.amazon.com in your web browser and select “Messiah Lutheran Church Red Lodge” as the non-profit organization before you begin shopping.

AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to

December Birthdays

12/8 Alex Elberry

12/14 Michael Mullaney

Allen Hansen

12/15 Sugi Hansen

12/16 Laurie Grygiel

12/18 Megan Gildehaus

December Anniversaries

12/16 Jeff & Renee Gildehaus

12/22 Joe & Marietta Johnson

Community Choir

The Community Church is inviting all interested singers to participate in performing the Christmas Cantata "What Sweeter Music, a Festival of Carols" by Mark Hayes. Practice times are Mondays at 7pm and Wednesdays at 1:30pm.

The Cantata will be performed at the Community Church December 18 at 3pm.

Flowers

Please contribute to the altar flower fund at the Episcopal church. Any amount is appreciated. Write your check to Calvary Episcopal Church with "flowers" in the memo line. You may sign on a particular Sunday if you wish to honor someone. The sign up sheet is in the hallway corridor across from the women's restroom.

CHIMERS CALLING CHRISTMAS CAROLERS

Messiah Chimers are rehearsing to make music during the annual Christmas Stroll. While they ring, carolers will encourage passersby to join in Christmas songs. Can you share Messiah Lutheran's singing spirit for an informal 15 minutes' gig?

To join the holiday spirit—singing or ringing—please speak to Martha or Dick Crofts or phone the church office.

There will be no chimes practice Dec. 11, Dec.18, Dec. 25 or for the month of January.



December, 2022



Advent Giving Calendar

Each day add an item to a box. On Christmas Eve, bring the box to church to be donated to BareTooth Cupboards.

- December 1—box of cereal
- December 2—peanut butter
- December 3—stuffing mix
- December 4—boxed potatoes
- December 5—macaroni and cheese
- December 6—canned fruit
- December 7—canned tomatoes or tomato sauce
- December 8—canned tuna
- December 9—jelly
- December 10—small bag of flour
- December 11—small bag of sugar
- December 12—dried beans
- December 13—can of chili
- December 14—box of crackers
- December 15—package of rice
- December 16—container of oatmeal
- December 17—package of pasta
- December 18—spaghetti sauce
- December 19—chicken noodle soup
- December 20—tomato soup
- December 21—can of corn
- December 22—bottle/jug of juice
- December 23—can of carrots
- December 24—can of green beans

If you would prefer to participate by giving a monetary donation instead, the value of the items listed above is \$68.50.

BareTooth Cupboards is grateful to all who participate!

BareTooth Cupboards

P.O. Box 665

17 E. 11th Street

Red Lodge, MT

<https://baretoothcupboards.org>

LOW INCOME HOME *Energy* ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

How LIHEAP can help:

- Energy Assistance helps pay part of winter heating bills from October 1st through April 30th.
- Emergency Assistance, in certain circumstances, is available to help with furnace repairs or emergencies.

DO I QUALIFY?

To qualify for LIHEAP assistance, you must meet these requirements:

- Be responsible for paying your home's heating costs.
- Be a United States citizen or legally admitted for permanent residency.
- Meet the following income and resource guidelines:

Household Members	Income Limits	Resource Limits
1	\$28,136	\$12,645
2	\$36,793	\$18,975
3	\$45,450	\$20,241
4	\$54,108	\$21,507
5	\$62,765	\$22,773
6	\$71,422	\$24,039

WHAT DO I NEED?

Before mailing your application, make sure you:

- Answer all questions completely.
- Ensure everyone in the home is included on the application.
- Ensure everyone age 16 or older signs and dates the application.
- Include your recent heat and electric bills.
- Include income records for the previous month for everyone not receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.
- Include a recent bank statement for all open bank accounts.
- Include copies of Social Security cards.

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply, you need to submit an application by April 30, 2023.

An application can be found at liheap.mt.gov or by contacting your local LIHEAP eligibility office.



Scan me!



Scan the QR code with your smartphone's camera to visit the liheap.mt.gov website and apply today!

If you've been approved for LIHEAP or SNAP, you may be **automatically eligible for the Low Income Home Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)**



UPDATED JULY 2022

December, 2022

CHRISTMAS KIDS SHOPPE

DECEMBER 3

9 am—3 pm

Roosevelt Community Center



Volunteers are needed! Please volunteer and invite your friends and neighbors to come and help, too.

Friday—December 2

9am we will set up the shoppe at Roosevelt Center in the gym.

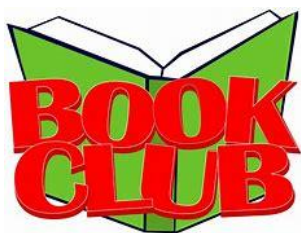
Saturday—December 3

9am—3pm the shoppe will be open. We need volunteers to shop with the kids and bag the gifts.

3pm until finished - pack up leftover gifts and take down tables.



WOMEN'S SAFARI



Date: December 15

Time: 11:30

Book: The Shepherd, The Angel, and The Christmas Miracle Dog

Author: Dave Berry

Facilitator: DJ Rosekelly

Location: The Pizza Company

Contact host, Marla Ebel, at 406-664-3178 if you need more information.

December, 2022

Every Tuesday
Women's Group
at Calvary Episcopal Church
10:00 a.m. In person and online via Zoom
Contact Andrea Holmen at 406-425-2657 if interested

Ongoing Prayer Concerns

Lowell Anderson	Andrea Holmen	Shilo Moncada & Kingston
Emma Balsam	Jim Johnson	James "Bud" Ridenour
Robyn Brownlow and Adaya Lynn	Jim Koski	Dick Rosekelly
Rose Block	Rick Koski	DJ Rosekelly
Manuel Cabanas	Sandy Koski	Christian Strickland
James Beckham	Jim & Linda Lian	Al & Dolly Stuber
Lenny Erickson	Ray Loyning	The family of Mitzi Vorachek
Brooke Feister	Howard Marquart	Josh Wilker
Cassidy Flynn	Lois Miller	Eva Wilker
Jesse Graves	Juan Morales	Jim Zenz

PRAYER REQUESTS

**For prayer requests, contact the church office at
406-446-2430 or redlodgemessiah@gmail.com
with specific information and permission from the person you are adding.**

Messiah Calendar— November, 2022

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
				1	2 Christmas Stroll 8:00 pm Chimers & Carolers RL School of Dance 9—2 Set up For Christmas Kids Shoppe	3 Christmas Stroll 7:30 pm Chimers & Carolers The Pollard 9—3 Christmas Kids Shoppe
4 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship Choirchimes Following Worship	5	6 10:00 Women's Bible Study 1:00 pm Chimers The Willows	7 Advent Mid Week Service Noon	8	9	10
11 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	12	13 10:00 Women's Bible Study 4:30 Church Council 4:00 Building Committee Meeting	14 Advent Mid Week Service Noon	15 11:30 Safari Book Club Pizza Co	16	17
18 9:00 Joint Worship With Calvary Greening of the Church 3:00 pm Christmas Cantata	19	20 10:00 Women's Bible Study	21 Advent Mid Week Service Noon	22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 7pm
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 10:00 Fellowship	26	27	28	29	31	

Messiah's Mission:

“Live by Faith, Share Christ's Love, Be a Voice of Hope”

HOW TO CONTACT US AND STAY IN TOUCH:

Church Office located in the Commons Room at Calvary Episcopal Church: 406-446-2430

Office Hours: Administrative: Mon-Thurs. 11 am - 3 pm

Pastor's Office Hours:

Monday: 9:00-4:00

Tuesday : 9:00-4:00

Wednesday: 9:00-3:00

Thursday: **OFF**

Friday: 9:00-4:00

Saturday: 12:00-4:00

Sunday: 8:00-12:00

Pastor's Cell Phone: (646) 708-1389

Church Address: P.O. Box 1330
Red Lodge, MT 59068

Website: www.redlodgemessiah.com

Facebook: Messiah Lutheran

Email: General: redlodgemessiah@gmail.com

Prayer Requests: redlodgemessiah@gmail.com

Pastor Ben: pastorbencherland@gmail.com

Sunday Worship Service:

10:00 Fellowship

10:30 Worship

Calvary Episcopal Church
9 N. Villard, Red Lodge, MT



In an effort to make Messiah comfortable and welcoming for everyone we ask that you refrain from using strong personal scents or perfumes.

Thank you.



Fragrance Free Zone
Please help us to accommodate those who are chemically sensitive to fragrances and other scented products.