



Messiah Lutheran Church

Red Lodge, Montana

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Light in the Beartooths ~ Red Lodge, MT

Pastor Ben Cherland

June 2022 Newsletter





Light in the Beartooths

MESSIAH LUTHERAN NEWS

We established in last month's Newsletter that the western push of European immigrants and settlers in the 1800s brought with it the economic and political models of the Old World. These models put the highest value on obtaining and developing land. We learned that the processes by which land was obtained were carried out by the government and by the Church. The Church's strategy in this enterprise was the forced assimilation of indigenous children through Boarding Schools, stripping them of their connection to land, family, tribe, spirituality and culture. This was not an entirely successful strategy as indigenous communities continued to hold their land communally, retaining their source of economic and cultural independence, despite the forced dislocation of their children. But the lasting effects of the Boarding School program are felt even today.

The government strategy focused more directly on the land rather than the cultural roots of its inhabitants. Through treaties established with different Native tribes and communities (In Montana, these include the Crow, Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Shoshone, Assiniboine, Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arrikara) the government established claims on indigenous lands. These treaties, by default and design, confined tribal communities to officially established boundaries, called Reservations. These reservations generally did not correspond to traditional lands or the migratory patterns of tribes established over eons. Subsequent treaties and particular laws steadily reduced the size of reservations and moved them until the 1930s with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act.

Though reservations greatly reduced access to the land that defined the cultures and communities of tribes, reservation land initially continued to be held communally, keeping somewhat intact the economic and cultural independence of tribes. But each reservation, surrounded by the settlements of homesteaders, soon drew the attention and intention of settlers: It didn't seem (to them) that the land was being "put to any use." On their behalf, the government intervened, forcing the "reorganization" of the way tribes inhabited reservation land: The Allotment of reservation land began in earnest with the General Allotment or "Dawes Act" of 1887, whereby reservation land was split up into allotments and assigned to reservation inhabitants, one allotment per household.

The Dawes Act essentially "opened" reservations to non-native settlers. "Not all land is created equal" was a common phrase during this time, as tribal members were assigned land deemed less desirable. Assignments often split up members of tribal families, weakening communal ties. Allotments that were not claimed or "used" by the assigned tribal owner were then available to be absorbed into adjoining, "Settled" land, reducing the amount of reserved land and its control by tribal leadership.

The intention and consequence of the Dawes Act was the forced adoption of the European concept of land ownership among reservation tribes. Conforming reservation land and tribal culture to the alien philosophy of private property was arguably the single most calamitous event in the history of indigenous cultural destruction and the seizure of Montana and the American West.

Next month, we'll look at the history of these strategies as they were used on one indigenous community, the Apsaalooke (Crow) - the people on whose land we are now building.

Pastor Ben

Words from the Bishop: Following Christ in a World of Hate

Dear Friends in Christ,

Yesterday when I was listening to news coverage about the mass shooting at a Buffalo, NY grocery store this weekend, a woman being interviewed cried in lament and anger, “the world is full of so much hate!” And she is right. The world is full of hate. We can’t pretend that what happened in Buffalo is a mere isolated incident of one sick or hate-filled individual. Hate-filled people committing hateful actions are all around us. In fact, all human beings are capable of hate, and it seems that more and more people these days are choosing to act on that capability through violent words or actions. And it doesn’t help that we have such easy access to weapons designed to kill large numbers of other human beings in a very short period of time in order to carry out these hateful actions.

Just this past week three shootings grounded in hate made national news. Not only did we see blatant racism attack black people once again in a seemingly pre-planned massacre by a white man in Buffalo, NY, but we also saw hate expressed by a Chinese man who shot several Taiwanese worshipers in a Presbyterian church in CA and by a man who shot several Korean women in a hair salon in Dallas. Go back a few weeks and the list would become longer than this article could name.

It's hard to know what to do with this hate that infects the human heart and mind. Often we wonder why. Why do we hate and how do we become trapped in it to the point of killing? The simple but correct answer, of course, is sin. But sin and the hate that emerges from it is a complex thing. Hate can take on a variety of forms, some of its most extreme forms culminating in violence and murder. But hate doesn’t start as hate. It starts as fear. And it often takes root in our lives with a fear of losing one or more basic emotional needs that every human being has: 1) a sense of self-worth; 2) a sense of having a purpose, of mattering to others; 3) a sense of belonging with others; and 4) a sense of security or safety.

When an individual or even a group *feels like* one or more of these four needs are being taken from them (whether they really are or not), anxiety starts to grow. This anxiety can, for some who haven’t learned how to manage it, quickly turn into outrage, fear and even terror. And for some that terror of losing one’s self, of not mattering, of being replaced in a community, of not being safe in the world emerges in violent, terrorist actions through irrational attempts to reclaim what may or may not actually be threatened.

These angry, violent acts wound and traumatize people, some of whom then respond out of their own fear of losing their self, purpose, place, and security. And the cycle continues, on and on, until our fear, anger and hate destroy us all. And this cycle doesn’t just happen at the level of frightened individuals; it takes on even more heinous forms at the group level as hate-filled rhetoric is reinforced through entire industries of hate.

So how are we as followers of Christ to live in a world filled with hate? Certainly, we are not supposed to follow the world's example and foment more hate by attacking others or seeking revenge, even if it is "only" through words. Various versions of Christianity, both in its individual and communal shapes, have been guilty of that in our 2000 year history.

No, the answer to hate is not more hate, fear, or rage even if it is in the name of self-protection. Jesus makes this clear in his Sermon on the Mount, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven..." (Matthew 5:43-45a) For Jesus, then, the answer to the question of how followers of Christ are to live in a world of hate is through love, love of both our neighbors and our enemies, our friends and perhaps especially those we fear.

I know how trite, even glib, that answer -- love -- can sound or feel, especially to people who are traumatized by the hate of others. It seems so wishy-washy, so weak and helpless and surrendering of one's self and power. But for Jesus and those who would follow him to and through the cross into new life, love is the strongest force in the world. For love is not mere sentimental feeling. The love that God is and the love we are called to live is action that has the potential of changing the world. It includes justice but goes beyond justice in its willingness to lose one's self for the sake of another's well-being. It is a love that sees every person's self as created in the image of God with dignity and worth and sees every person as someone who matters deeply to God for the sake of the world. It is a love that is expected to welcome all people without any "distinction between us and them" (Acts 11:12) so that all can experience belonging to Christ in the security of God's protecting and empowering arms. In other words, followers of Christ are called to do and say all we can to help every single person experience those basic emotional needs so that fear can more easily become faith in God and trust in each other.

This, I believe, is one of the purposes of Christ's church, for it is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we hear the good news that God accepts our selves as they are and gives them worth; the good news that we matter and have a purpose in God's world; the good news that we belong to something bigger than ourselves; and the good news that in God's community, at its best, we are secure in the love of God.

"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect," Jesus proclaims as concludes his call for us to love our enemies. Well, we can't be perfect in this kind of love; our bondage to sin is too great. Thank God for God's grace! But we can try to love in this way, doing all we can to seek a life beyond hate and the fear that leads to it. And when it's too hard and the fears threaten to overwhelm, we pray with the psalmist, "The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the refuge of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" giving those fears to God so that once again we can find the courage to love. (Ps 27)

In Christ's love,
Bishop Laurie



Silence

What we need most
in order to make progress
is to be silent
before this great God
with our appetite
and with our tongue,
for the language
he best hears
is silent love.

—John of the Cross, *Sayings of Light and Love*, trans. Mirabai Starr

John of the Cross describes the doubt that disrupts a soul in the dark night, when all sense of knowing God is absent. Mirabai Starr translates from John's classic work *Dark Night of the Soul*:

The deep suffering of the soul in the night of sense comes not so much from the aridity she must endure but from this growing suspicion that she has lost her way. She thinks that all spiritual blessing is over and that God has abandoned her. She finds neither support nor delight in holy things. Growing weary, she struggles in vain to practice the tricks [prayer practices] that used to yield results.

John of the Cross encourages those experiencing this dark night to trust the silence that comes when we surrender our need to speak to God using our own words:

This is no time for discursive meditation. Instead, the soul must surrender into peace and quietude, even if she is convinced she is doing nothing and wasting time. She might assume that this lack of desire to think about anything is a sure sign of her laziness. But simple patience and perseverance in a state of formless prayerfulness, while doing nothing, accomplishes great things.

All that is required here is to set her soul free, unencumbered, to let her take a break from ideas and knowledge, to quit troubling herself about thinking and meditating. The soul must content herself with a loving attentiveness toward God, without agitation, without effort, without the desire to taste or feel him. These urges only disquiet and distract the soul from the peaceful quietude and sweet ease inherent in the gift of contemplation being offered.

The soul might continue to have qualms about wasting time. She may wonder if it would not be better to be doing something else, since she cannot think or activate anything in prayer. Let her bear these doubts calmly. There is no other way to go to prayer now than to surrender to this sweet ease and breadth of spirit. If the soul tries to engage her interior faculties to accomplish something, she will squander the goodness God is instilling in her through the peace in which she is simply resting. . . .

The best thing for the soul to do is to pay no attention to the fact that the actions of her faculties are slipping away. . . . She needs to get out of the way. In peaceful plentitude, let her now say "yes" to the infused contemplation God is bestowing upon her. . . . Contemplation is nothing other than a secret, peaceful, loving inflow of God. If given room, it will fire the soul in the spirit of love.

Browsing through my work journal recently, I noticed the date when my entries stopped: March 19, 2020. The next week the Chicago-based churchwide staff began sheltering in place. I remember moving the magnets on the Office of the Presiding Bishop's attendance board to "out" for all of us, wondering when or if we would all return.



In the early days of the pandemic there was confusion, uncertainty and some fear. But there was also a sense of adventure as I stocked up on dry goods (no flour or yeast) and laid in a supply of dried beans and lentils (which I still have—I wonder if I can use them for pie weights). How long could this last? It was like a global snow day. Until it wasn't.

Pretty quickly reality began to set in. The numbers of infections, hospitalizations and deaths started to rise. Hospital staff were overwhelmed. We all worked to "flatten the curve," hoping to keep enough of us out of the hospital so there would be enough beds and ventilators for the sickest. Personal protective equipment was scarce. Space in morgues was filled, and refrigerated trucks had to be brought in to meet the grim demand.

Large gatherings were discontinued. Our congregations had to adapt to online formats. I was concerned that three Sundays in a row without in-person worship would force many of our congregations to close. How would we stay connected? What would our worship look like? We have congregations where dial-up is the only way to connect to the internet—if there is internet at all.

I thank God for the creativity and resilience [shown by our congregations](#). I thank God for the dedication and faithfulness of our pastors and deacons who have been stretched to the limit. They quickly adapted to make sure that the gospel was proclaimed and found ingenious ways to care for their communities. People checked on the homebound in their congregations and in their neighborhoods. Hunger ministries continued providing food. Bible studies and prayer circles dwelt in the word. We started a [COVID-19 Appeal](#) to shore up outdoor ministries, increase bandwidth, and provide technical assistance and equipment for worship. The church wasn't closed as some insisted. We had moved to another platform. We know that online attendance, even if for only for five minutes, was greater than in-person attendance and that people who had never set foot in our churches were hearing the gospel. We were all in this together. Until we weren't.

"Essential workers," many of whom had low-paying jobs, couldn't work from home. The inequity of our healthcare system had deadly consequences. Communities of color suffered disproportionately. People were out of work. Businesses closed. The country came to a moment of racial reckoning after the [murder of George Floyd](#). We went through a divisive election. Masks, social distancing and vaccines were politicized. We withdrew into smaller and tighter groups of like-minded people.

After two years of pandemic precautions, the effects of isolation, chronic anxiety, loss and grief have taken their toll. Research shows that we are angrier, more depressed and less patient. We are all experiencing unprecedented and extended trauma. Frayed relationships take effort and time to mend. There is no quick fix. Care must be taken now so that actions and decisions aren't born solely or mostly out of reactivity. How we deal with real and critical issues now will have consequences in the future.

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). We have a choice—we can be conformed to this world and remain isolated and reactive, or we can live as the new creation in Christ and be a witness to the world of the reconciliation we have received from Go



Your Church Council met on Tuesday, May 17th this month. Please find a full set of minutes and financials on the bulletin board. Below are some of the highlights from this month's meeting

- Heard from RLACF employee, Tesla, regarding the need in Carbon County for child care. Council is exploring the idea of allowing a portion of the new building to be used as a child care facility.
- Discussed changes to our current building plan that would be needed to accommodate a child care facility.
- Decided to move \$300,000 from our LIB Vanguard account to the LIB money market account.
- Fun and fellowship is back! Potluck picnic on the land following worship in June and a trip to Heart Mountain this summer are being planned.

We meet again June 21 at 4:30 PM



Fragrance Free Zone

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

**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.**

If you have something you'd like to be included in our monthly newsletter, please send an email to redlodgemessiah@gmail.com with the blurb you want included, no later than the 25th of the month.



June 2022



June Special Offering: Red Lodge Soccer

Christikon Clips

June, 2022

Information for our Congregations

We welcome our summer staff May 30th and the first session this summer will be our Developmentally Disabled Adults in June.

Family Adult Camps: We welcome Rev. Dr. David J. Lose who is the Senior Pastor of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (Minneapolis, MN), to the Continuing Ed Retreat and Mountain Weekend. **Topics include** Continuing Ed: *Preaching & Teaching the Bible in the Congregation and Leadership in the Church Post-Covid; Mountain Weekend: Luther Now! Join us at camp for these great conversations. Register at www.christikon.org.*

Campers! There is still room in our on-site sessions. Please visit our website to register. www.christikon.org

We have a few trails spots available – call the office for availability. 406-656-1969.

Remember to pray for your congregation's ministry through Christikon this summer, for the summer staff, and for all who join in the Christikon life.

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



June 2022

Building Update

Things are progressing nicely. The foundation has come a long way. Soon plumbers and electricians will be in laying wires in preparation for the walls going up. It won't look like much for a few weeks, but rest assured progress is being made! The congregation was in support of using the building for child care so we are exploring changes needed to accommodate the various age groups.

GOT PICTURES?

Susan Leaverton is keeping a photo journal of the progress on our new building. If you have pictures , please share them with her at seleaverton@nemont.net. Thank you!

Blessing of the Quilts Sunday, May 8, 2022

Over the past year, members and friends of Messiah created 59 beautiful, warm quilts which were blessed and sent to Lutheran World Relief in Minneapolis, MN. The quilts will be collected and distributed to needy people in the United States and throughout the entire world. Keep watching because we now have the ability to track these quilts and will find out where they eventually wind up. Below, the final paragraph of the blessing.

P: Let us ask God's blessing on each of these quilts as they go forth.

C: Merciful God, receive these quilts, the work of our hands, and go with them into the streets and homes where we cannot go. Shelter from sin and sickness those who wrap themselves in these, our gifts. Grant that all your children who find comfort in these quilts, may also know the comfort of your loving arms. Amen.





- 6/3 Marietta Johnson
- 6/5 Derrick Downing
- 6/6 Matt Mullaney
- 6/12 Grazia Giacomelli



- 6/02 Brooke & John Flynn
- 6/07 Barbara & Jim Ochiltree
- 6/19 Jeri & Jim Kyner
- 6/27 Andrea & Bob Holmen
- 6/27 Dick & Martha Crofts
- 6/28 Dolly & Jim Koski



Women's Safari Book Club

Date: June 16

Time: 3:00 PM

Book: Tattooist of Auschwitz

Author: Heather Morris

Facilitator: Lucy Nilson

Location: Jackie Cordill's home

Messiah Choirchimes Ensemble On Sunday, May 15, Messiah held its initial Choirchimes Ensemble rehearsal. Twelve ringers were present. While we prepare to bring music to worship sometime this summer, rehearsals, downstairs following most Sunday services, have an open door. The Malmark Company of Pennsylvania invented their Choirchimes in the 1970s. Recently, to honor their founding of the Hyacinth Series of Concerts (Naples, Florida) forty years ago, Dick and Martha Crofts were honored with a 3 octave set of chimes for use at Messiah Lutheran.

St. John's United

2022
SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

FREE • 7PM THURSDAYS
ST. JOHN'S UNITED CAMPUS • CORNER OF RIMROCK & SHILOH

JUNE 30	THE CROSSINGS, LAUREL • BRIGID & JOHNNY REEDY OPENER: JOHN ADAMS
JULY 7	SJU CAMPUS • KYLE SHOBE & THE WALK 'EM BOYS OPENER: JESSICA EVE
JULY 14	SJU CAMPUS • YOUNG DUBLINERS OPENER: JESSICA ALLESTAD
JULY 21	SJU CAMPUS • EVERLY BROTHERS EXPERIENCE OPENER: DANIEL KOSEL
JULY 28	SJU CAMPUS • WOOD BELLY OPENER: JIM BAUM & TAMMY STAPLES
AUGUST 4	SJU CAMPUS • THE JIMMY CARPENTER BAND OPENER: PARKER BROWN
AUGUST 11	WYNDSTONE, HEIGHTS • ROB & HALLADAY QUIST OPENER: HALLADAY QUIST

WELCOME TO BRING YOUR OWN PICNIC DINNER. FOOD TRUCKS AVAILABLE.

Bible Study



Every Tuesday
Women's Group
at Messiah

**10:00 a.m. In person and
online via Zoom**

**Contact Andrea Holmen if
interested**

Ongoing Prayer Concerns

Lowell Anderson

Emma Balsam

Manuel Cabanas

Lenny Erickson

Brooke Feister

Larry Fry

Nathan Green

Andrea Holmen

Jim Johnson

Jim Koski

Rick Koski

Sandy Koski

Neil Laird

Jim & Linda Lian

Ray Loyning

Venessa Reyes

Jim Zenz

Shilo & Kingston
Moncada

James "Bud" Ridenour

Dick Rosekelly

DJ Rosekelly

Josh Wilker

Eva Wilker

Herb & Myrna Hunt

PRAYER REQUESTS

**For prayer requests, contact the church office at
446-2430 or messiahprayers@gmail.com**

with specific information and permission from the person you are adding.

Messiah Calendar—June

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
			1	2	3	4
5 9:30 AM Worship Day of Pentecost Congregational Meeting following Worship	6	7 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study Building Committee Meeting 4:00 PM	8	9	10	11 Highway Cleanup 9:00 A.M.
12 9:30 AM Worship	13	14 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study	15	16 Safari Book Club	17	18
19 9:30 AM Worship FATHER'S DAY	20	21 Women's Bible Study 10:00 AM Council Meeting 4:30 PM Building Committee Meeting 4:00 PM	22	23	24	25
26 9:30 AM Worship On the Land Followed by Picnic and Fellowship	27	28 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study	29	30		

June 2022

HIGHWAY CLEANUP

Saturday, June 11

Meet at the church at 9:30 AM

Bring gloves and black garbage bags

Opportunity for Faith, Fun, and Fellowship

How many people are interested in going to the Japanese Interpretative Center between Powell and Cody this summer?

Go out for dinner afterwards? What day would work best for you.?

A sign up sheet is on the table in the Narthex of the church.

Or call Marla Ebel at 406-664-3178 (h) or 406-446-4277 (c).

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: 406-446-2430

Office Hours: Administrative: Mon-Thurs. 10 am - 2 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: 723 S. Adams
P.O. Box 1330
Red Lodge, MT 59068

Website: www.redlodgemessiah.com

Facebook: Messiah Lutheran

Email: General: redlodgemessiah@gmail.com

Prayer Requests: messiahprayers@gmail.com

Pastor Ben: pastorbencherland@gmail.com

Sunday Worship Service:

9:30 AM



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