

### Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends in Christ,

*Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing" (Genesis 12:1-2).*

These words from the beginning of the story of God's people helped form the work of our Strategic Planning Team. I quote from the Strategic Planning Update that is part of the 2017 Annual Report: *We found that when we struggled to answer who are we and what do we do as a congregation, we best found the answer in Genesis 12:1-2. We are God's people, "kindred," called to take chances, and go where God will lead us even if we can't see that place, and to do so that we might be a blessing. As a kindred people, we are part of a church family. But our having two different worship service times makes this goal of being kindred more difficult. The Listening Sessions that were a part of the Strategic Planning process clearly showed us this. I've been struck in conversations with our members how worshipers at either the early or late services do not know each other.*



With the goal of building community and strengthening our life as a *kindred* people, at its February meeting the Church Council voted to move to one worship service this summer at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday. Our hope is that you will embrace this new schedule as an opportunity to worship and fellowship with our full family of faith. One service will allow us to plan extended social time in the summer- think lemonade and ice cream!

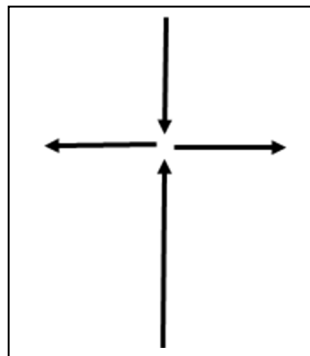
While this plan may change the rhythm of your Sundays, the Strategic Planning Process speaks of being a people *called to take chances so that we might be a blessing*. A stronger, more cohesive church family will most certainly bless us and in turn bless the work we can do for our neighbors.

While we wait out the darkness and see daylight slowly lengthen our days, we joyfully anticipate a summer of praising God together in worship, fellowship, and service as a united community in Christ.

Serving Christ with you,

Pastor Tim

### Stewardship Matters



Last month, the DOWN, IN and OUT concept of the cross as a symbol of stewardship was introduced: God makes the first vertical line DOWN. Stewardship begins at creation, where God first comes down to us. Next, God's faithful people

follow by moving IN to the center, responding with gratitude to the grace freely given. Finally, we look OUT to our neighbors on either side, both near and far, to see how God is calling us to love our neighbor with all that God has entrusted to our care.

We focus this month on IN: What God has entrusted to our care.

God loved us so much that God gave each of us varying talents and time. As Peter writes, "like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received" (1 Peter 4:10). We each have unique gifts and talents that we can use. Sharing our talents makes us feel good, so much so that it can become self-serving. As a congregation of *kindred* called to be a blessing,

how do we each use our gifts of talent for the benefit of others, particularly those beyond our walls? God has also blessed us with time. We lead very busy lives, but we seldom reflect on how we are using this time. Are we using our time well to reflect on God's grace in our lives? How are we using our time to just "be" in God's presence? Are we remembering that time spent in worship and in service to others is more than just another to-do item on a busy weekly calendar? How might God be calling us, both as individuals and as a congregation? How are we individually and collectively called to use our time to be the light of Christ and be restored in the light of Christ? Looking IN and recognizing the abundance of time, talent and resources in our lives, we know that the cross is not complete until we actively move OUT. As we begin to focus on a year of being *kindred* in Christ so that we may be a blessing, we invite you to keep in mind the image of DOWN, IN and OUT.

Source material: Stewards of God's Love, published by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2013. [http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/ELCA\\_Stewards\\_Of\\_Gods\\_Love\\_Resource\\_and\\_Inserts.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/ELCA_Stewards_Of_Gods_Love_Resource_and_Inserts.pdf)

## Lenten Services

Will be held on Wednesdays, **February 21** through **March 21**. The first service will be at **noon**, followed by a **soup lunch**. **Soup supper** will begin at **6:00 p.m.** and be followed by our **evening service at 6:30 p.m.**

**Lenten Wednesdays:** Schedule will be as follows:

- Noon-** Lenten Service
- 12:30 p.m.-** Soup Lunch
- 5:00—6:00 p.m.-** Kids' Club
- 6:00 p.m.-** Soup Supper
- 6:30 p.m.-** Lenten Service
- 7:00 p.m.-** Confirmation, Youth Group, and Chancel Choir

## Holy Week

### March 25

#### **Palm/Passion Sunday:**

8:30 and 11:00 a.m. worship, including procession of palms and dramatic reading of the passion drama.



Palm Sunday Breakfast served from 9:30 am—11:00 am. Please note this change from our

**Breakfast**

traditional breakfast. It will allow our youth group, their families, and our kitchen staff to spend Easter with family.

### March 29

**Maundy Thursday:** 7:00 service includes Footwashing and Holy Communion

### March 30

**Good Friday:** Noon and 7:00 p.m. worship

## Easter

### April 1

#### **Easter Sunday Celebratory**

**Worship:** 8:30 and 11:00

a.m. Coffee, treats, and fellowship between services.



## Youth Schedule

The schedule for Sunday and Wednesday youth activities during the month of March is listed below. Please email Rochelle at [rochelle@amluth.org](mailto:rochelle@amluth.org) if you have any questions.

### **Wednesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>**

- 5:00 – 6:00 Kid's Club
- 6:00 – 6:30 Soup Supper
- 6:30 – 7:00 Lenten Worship in the Fellowship Hall
- 7:00 – 8:00 Confirmation
- 7:00 – 8:30 Youth Group

### **Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>**

NO Wednesday Night Activities – Holy Week

### **Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>**

9:45 – 10:45 Sunday school (opening in chapel)

### **Sunday, March 25<sup>th</sup>**

NO Sunday School – Palm Sunday Breakfast (8:30 – 11:30)

## Calling all Easter Bunnies...

We are collecting wrapped Easter candy and plastic eggs during the month of March. Please drop off your donations in the blue buckets near the reception desk in the lobby area. These items will be used for the 20th annual American Lutheran Church Easter Egg Hunt at the Moss Mansion on Easter Sunday.



# All Daughter Luncheon

Saturday, April 28 at noon

For the women and girls of our congregation, and their guests



Featuring everything from the nifty 1950s, including Sandee's food truck



Tickets on sale during the month of April \$5/person

## Coming this Spring: Our Brand New Church Picture Directory...

The Congregational Life Committee wants to create a fresh, new American Lutheran picture directory, and we want every member to be part of it! Picture directories aid us in connecting with one another, and further reaching our congregational goal of becoming "kindred". Besides updated photos, our directory will contain updated phone numbers and email addresses.

Photos for this directory will be taken on Sunday mornings in the chapel (the pretty "blue" room on the left that is up the steps from the coffee window) on four consecutive Sundays: March 25 (Palm Sunday), April 1 (Easter Sunday), April 8 and April 15. No reservations or appointments are needed. Photos will be taken after both the early service and the late service on those days. There is no cost, and nothing

to purchase. The finished directories will be free of charge for members of ALC.

### Photographers are needed!

If you would like to help take photos, please contact Kristin Rapacz at [kristin@amluth.org](mailto:kristin@amluth.org).



## Adult Forums

March 4



Andrea Chambers, Outreach Coordinator for Senior Independence of Montana, will be with us to talk about this relatively new ministry. It is part of the Home Health and Hospice program of St. John's Lutheran Ministries.

March 11

A representative of the St. Vincent de Paul Society will be with us to describe their ministry. This is one of the social service agencies that have been supported by American Luther over the years. Their mission is summed up in the following prayer: *Make us worthy, Lord, to help those who live in poverty, homelessness or hunger. Give them, through our hands this day, their daily bread, and by our understanding love, give Peace & Joy. Amen. Mother Teresa of Calcutta*



March 18

The Lutheran Center, now named Luther's Lodge is a home away from home for patients and/or family members in town for medical reasons. It is supported by the local Lutheran churches and room fees. Several American Lutherans have served on their board. Director Sheryl Scheafer will be with us to update us on this ministry.

March 25

Palm Sunday Breakfast served from 9:30 am—11:00 am. Please note this change from our traditional Easter breakfast. It will allow our youth group, their families, and our kitchen staff to spend Easter with family.



## Family Promise at American Lutheran Church

One of ALC's most meaningful ministries is our Family Promise week, when we host 4 homeless families in the evenings and overnight in our church building. Our next turn at hosting is over Holy Week, March 25-April 1.

There are a number of ways that you can be part of helping out during the week: bring a main dish or a side dish for the evening meal, be an evening host that serves the meal and hangs out with families for a few hours, sleep on an upper room futon as an overnight host, help with the set-up and/or tear-down of the temporary bedrooms, cook Saturday morning breakfast, or do a couple of loads of laundry when the week is done.

It takes a village to pull off our week, so please get involved! Clip boards will be circulated at the beginning of the worship services on March 11th and March 18th. Sign up and be part of something great!



## Family Promise Evening Hosting and Overnight Hosting Info Sessions

Find out everything you need to know about volunteering for these simple but important roles. Anyone who is interested is invited to attend. Sessions will be brief (less than 20 minutes)

### Sunday, March 18th

- after the 8:30 worship service we'll gather in the Shepherd Lounge
- after the 11:00 worship service we'll gather in the fellowship hall

You can now make a contribution to American Lutheran Church with a quick text message from your cell phone!

Simply send a text to **406-221-1343** with the amount you would like to contribute. Choose your dollar

amount along with the word for which fund you want that contribution to go towards.

GEN = General Fund

SKY = Be the Light-

Skylights

RAD = Radio Broadcast

FLO = Altar Flowers

Contact the church office with questions.



## Christikon Clips

**March, 2018**

*Information for our  
Congregations*



### Bus Attendants needed for 2018

– Would you or someone you know be willing to ride with youth on their way to Christikon? Yes? Please call Kerry in the office at 406-656-1969 or email at [secretary@christikon.org](mailto:secretary@christikon.org) for details.

**Don't miss out on the Early Registration Discount for youth campers: Register by March 15 and save \$25 in any youth session.** If you don't have the camp brochure mailed to you, pick one up at the church, or register online.

Christikon is an extension your congregation's ministry

**Adults and families: Check out the special focus** for each of the family/adult weekends next summer at Christikon: work projects, faith formation, and Bible study will be woven together with worship, meal fellowship, re-creation, folk dancing, and much more. Family/adult brochures are available at churches in early March, or check out camping for adults and families online at [www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org).

**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 24<sup>th</sup> Street West • Billings, MT 59102**

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