

# American Lutheran Church

May, 2018

## Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends at American Lutheran,

*In cooperation with ELCA recommendations, a sabbatical of twelve weeks may be granted by the Church Council to rostered clergy after serving at the Church for no less than five years.* This statement was taken out of our congregation's Employee Handbook. In my annual reports to Bishop Crist, she has been encouraging me to take a sabbatical and to make it a part of our congregation's life.

This past Fall, American Lutheran's Church Council voted to grant me a sabbatical in the summer of 2018, and Pastor Elizabeth a sabbatical in the summer of 2019. Being part of a team ministry will mean that the impact to congregational life, worship, and budget will be minimal at these times since one pastor is always on duty. It won't be unlike when Pastor Elizabeth has been on maternity leave (although maternity leave is no time for rest for the mother!).



A sabbatical is based on the Biblical concept of Sabbath. It is to be a time of regeneration and renewal, of study and rest, of continuing education

and visiting other churches and otherwise generating new ideas for the life of the congregation. I'm at a different stage in life with this sabbatical than the one you granted me eleven years ago. With grown kids around the country, Marcia by my side, and new perspectives on ministry with more years under my belt, I'm excited for opportunity to travel, spend time with my adult kids, and invest in turning towards the next stage of our life together as a congregation.

Many of you have asked what we are doing during the sabbatical. Here's our agenda:

**May:** officiating at the **wedding of Macy Carman**, daughter of former ALC members Mark and Nancy Carman, at **Mammoth in Yellowstone Park**

--**Festival of Homiletics in Washington, DC:** we'll attend a large preaching conference (1,500-1,800 preachers in attendance) and see the sites in our nation's capital

**June:** spend a long weekend in **Chester, MT**, where Marcia grew up, for her father's birthday

--spend a week in late June traveling by RV in the **national parks of Utah**

**July:** spend two weeks reconnecting with my family in **Minnesota**, which will include spending a couple days on a northern Minnesota lake

During sabbatical time at home, I'll be working on a reading list and doing some manual labor as I finish some projects around the house. My last day in the office will be **Thursday, May 10** and then I'll be back to work on **Tuesday, August 14**.

Many thousand thanks for this gift of a sabbatical! I am so grateful for this time of regeneration and renewal and the renewed energy for ministry that it promises.

Serving Christ with you,

Pastor Tim

## Bi-Annual Meeting

This meeting of the congregation will be on Sunday, May 6 between services at 9:45 a.m. This spring meeting is the one in which we elect Church Council members, delegates to Christikon Bible Camp and St. John's Lutheran Ministries, trustees for the Mission Endowment Trust, and Pre-Kindergarten Board members. The meeting will also include an update on the church budget, the *Be the Light* campaign and the summer youth schedule.

On this Sunday, we will also dedicate the skylights, as well as the the elevator, the remodeled parking lot, and the handicapped accessible restrooms that are a part of our *All Are Welcome* campaign.

## Adult Forum

May 6

### Bi-Annual Meeting

May 13

### Reception for the High School Graduates of

**2018:** Come and hear from our graduates about their future plans.

May 20

### Marc Priest Scholarship and Volunteer Appreciation

**Sunday:** During this forum, we will hear more about the Marc Priest Scholarship. This scholarship was established in 1989 in honor of Marc Priest, son of Arlene Priest, who was active in all areas of his congregational life at American Lutheran. He was a senior at St. Olaf College when stricken with a life-threatening illness which resulted in his death in 1980. The scholarship supports those American Lutheran young people attending Lutheran colleges or seminaries. This scholarship is the Special Offering for May.

We will also express our appreciation for all the volunteers who contribute to the life of American Lutheran.



## Staff Planning Day

The staff will be gathering to plan activities and ministry for the year ahead on **Thursday, May 3** from **11:00 am—3:00 pm**. Please keep us in your prayers as we evaluate the year that is past and envision the coming year and beyond.

## Tom Keesecker Recital

**Former ALC Music Director Tom Keesecker** will be in Montana in May. On **Wednesday, May 9 at 7:00 pm**, he'll be giving what Tom calls an *informal recital - a way for me to share what I've been writing lately. I'll have two*

*new piano CDs for sale. The music is based on Advent and Christmas hymns.* After the recital, we'll catch up with Tom and his wife Tricia at an **ice cream social** in the Fellowship Hall.



## Friends' Group

Will meet for a drive into the country and for lunch on **Thursday, May 10 at 11:00 a.m.** The group will take the bus to the **3 North Bar and Grill in Acton**. We will be back at the church between **1:30 and 2:00 p.m.** If you are interested, please sign up at the reception desk.

## Youth Schedule

It's been another fun and eventful year for the kids at ALC, but unfortunately, it's coming to an end. Below is our schedule for the month of May. Please feel free to contact Rochelle if you have any questions.

### May 2<sup>nd</sup>

Kid's Club, 5:00 – 6:00

Meal, 6:00 – 7:00

Confirmation, 7:00 – 8:00

LAST Youth Group, 7:00 – 8:30

### May 6<sup>th</sup>

Sunday school, 9:45 – 10:45 (Opening in the chapel)

### May 9<sup>th</sup>

LAST Kid's Club, 5:00 – 6:00

NO Meal / NO Confirmation / NO Youth Group

Senior Quilt Selection and Ice Cream Social, 6:00 – 7:00

### May 13<sup>th</sup>

Sunday school, 9:45 – 10:45 (Opening in the chapel)

### May 20<sup>th</sup>

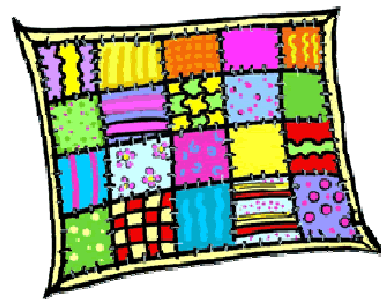
LAST Sunday school, 9:45 – 10:45 (Opening in the chapel)

## ATTENTION SENIOR CLASS of 2017!!

We will be holding our annual senior quilt selection and ice cream social on

Wednesday night, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. Each year the ALC quilters spend each Tuesday making quilts for Lutheran World Relief, and during that time they are able to make a few 'special' quilts for our high school graduates.

These quilts are blessed, and serve as a token of the love and prayers that ALC sends with these kids on



their next adventure in life. We are asking all graduating seniors, their families and our quilters to join us at the church on Wednesday (5/9) evening for quilt selection, fellowship and ICE CREAM!! We hope you all can make it. Each quilt selected by our seniors will be formally presented to them during our Senior Quilt Blessing on Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at the 11:00 service.

## Sunday school Thank You

We had another great year of Sunday school, and none of it would have been possible without the help of our AWESOME Sunday school teachers! They do an excellent job every year, and I couldn't have asked for a better group of teachers! **Thank you Joe and Clarissa Olson, Jennifer Michael, and Katie Rehberg.** Our teachers are volunteers, and give up an entire year of Sundays to ensure that our kids can have Sunday school classes. Please be sure to say 'Thank You' when you see them.

## Lock-In



We will be rounding out another great year of Youth Group with our annual overnight lock-in at the church. This lock-in is for current ALC youth group kids (9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade) and it will be held at the church on Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>

starting at 7:00 pm. This is a fun event that the kids always look forward to. We will play some games (KGB??), watch some movies, and will have plenty of snacks to munch on throughout the night. On Saturday, we will let the kids sleep in a bit and ask that they be picked up (or depart) by 10:00 am. I hope that a majority of our youth group can attend this fun event - I look forward to spending my evening with them! Please let me know if your child will be attending, so that I can get an idea on numbers for food, etc. Feel free to get a hold of me via email ([rochelle@amluth.org](mailto:rochelle@amluth.org)) if you have any questions.

## Baby Layette Team Volunteer Lunch

cutters, sew-ers, assemblers, deliverers for all those who play a part in this ministry

- Thursday, May 10th at noon
- Lunch and appreciation is provided
- Call or text American Lutheran to RSVP

## Thank You

To the women of American Lutheran Church- You're wonderful!

Thank you for donating your time and skills and making such a beautiful blanket. My baby boy and I have been given one.

Nikki

(a patient of Midwifery & Women's Health)

## Congratulation to the new recipients of ALC's Heritage Vase:

All women and girls of American Lutheran! We are happy to honor you for the many ways you serve our congregation, our community and our world. Please watch for the Heritage Vase on the Sunday mornings during the month of May. The flowers in it are a tribute to you all!!

## ALC Volunteer Appreciation Day

# VOLUNTEER



- Sunday, May 20th, all morning
- Gifts, treats, thanks and love for you all!

## Church Directory Photo Update:

Thanks so much to everyone who has already had their photo taken. We're on our way to a lovely, complete church directory. For those who have not yet been photographed, please stop by the chapel after either worship service on Sunday, May 13th (Mother's Day) and we will easily take care of it. And, if it's not possible that day, then we will accept clear, close-up, non-copyrighted digital photographs. Please email them to [sydne@amluth.org](mailto:sydne@amluth.org) as soon as possible.

We hope to have our completed photo directories published early this summer. Black and white copies will be provided free of charge to members of ALC, and color copies can be purchased (price yet to be determined). As people of American Lutheran, we hope that our new directory will be a tool for helping us get better acquainted and more connected. We are kindred...

## Stewardship Matters: Norms and Averages

Though churches are no longer tracking certain metrics as a sign of health or success, there is one measurement that can't be ignored, but for reasons one might not suspect.

Reason #1 - Congregational giving does not measure financial success of the church; it measures the abundance of an individual's *commitment to the ministry* of the church, which is the work we are called to as Christians.

Reason #2 - Stewardship campaign pledges do not dictate the church's budget; the *ministry desired by church members* drives the budgeting process.

What do ALC's numbers for 2017 tell us? We have 709 members comprising 409 giving units.

285 Giving Units received statements of giving, which leaves 124 Non-Giving Units Demographically speaking:

22 Giving Units in the Under 40 group collectively averaging \$970.56 per week

133 Giving Units in the Sandwich Generation group collectively averaging \$2,052.98 per week

125 Giving Units Over 70/Retired group collectively averaging \$1,972.07 per week

In general:

171 Giving Units give less than \$25.00 per week

88 Giving Units give between \$25.01 – 100.00 per week

25 Giving Units give more than \$100.00 per week

\$29.17 average giving per week

50.7% of annual offerings were given towards a pledge

Studies indicate that church giving is based on habit and that many people don't know what's normal or average. It's easy to tell if you are average or not based on congregational data, but how do you know if you are giving a normal amount? That's a tough question. Here are some ideas to ponder: Scripture often speaks about tithing 10% as the normal or expected amount, a tall order for many. Stewardship programs encourage growing by 1% or stepping up in \$10 increments from current giving. Yet the needle rarely moves in congregational giving with either

method. Are there other methods that might be more easily achieved?

Drop Three Zeros: If annual income is \$60,000 then weekly giving equals \$60.

Make it Equal: Give as much as spent on kids' activities, meals eaten in restaurants, travel or entertainment. What if some of us gave us much each week to church as we did to Target?



What difference might that make in the life of ALC? Look again at the data above and then decide. We invite you to consider being among those making a difference, keeping in mind that giving is personal – it is not data driven, nor is it driven by guilt or shaming. But sometimes data can help us reflect more deeply on the impact of our personal commitment to giving. Collectively, our giving is a reflection of abundance and the difference it makes in our church, our community and our world.

## Financial Update

	Income	Expense	Net
Month of March 2018	\$ 40,923	\$ 44,387	\$ (3,464)
2018 YTD Actual	\$ 115,080	\$ 139,476	\$ (24,396)
2018 YTD Budget	\$ 146,737	\$ 146,737	\$ -
Variance YTD	\$ (31,657)	\$ 7,261	\$ (24,396)

## Summer Schedule Begins

Sunday,  
May 27<sup>th</sup>

Worship at **9:00 a.m.**  
with coffee fellowship  
following.

## April Pastoral Acts

Funeral: Myrna Loken Metz



## Spring Giving Tree is Back!

*to benefit the General Fund of American Lutheran Church*

### How it Works:

- 1) Pick a "leaf" off the giving tree located in the narthex.
- 2) Fill out the information on the card.
- 3) Include the card and your donation in the envelope.
- 4) Place your envelope in a green flower pot.



5) OR you can visit [amluth.org](http://amluth.org) and select the "Giving" icon on our home page.

Thank You! Your donation will be posted toward your annual pledge.

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

May, 2018

*Information for our Congregations*



**It's not too late to register for camp this summer!** Space

remains in youth sessions and families/adult sessions, including the **Work Weekend, May 25-28.**

You can register online [www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org), or use the forms distributed with the youth and family/adult brochures in your congregation. Or call us at the camp office for further information. Trails? On-site? You pick!

**Christikon covers the full costs for each at-risk youth participating in Sojourners Camp.** (We expect to have 24 this summer) We invite individuals, congregations and their auxiliaries to consider special giving for camp scholarships this summer.

**Special guest speakers** become part of the Christikon life this summer during sessions for adults and families. During Mountain Weekend 1 (June 29-July 1) we feature **Phil Wold** pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Sheridan, WY. During Continuing Education Retreat (July 31 – Aug 3) we feature **Dr. Phil Jamieson and Dennis Trotter**. Topic details can be found on our website. Mountain Weekend 2 (Aug. 3-5) topic to be determined. Come spend a few days of relaxation, learning, and faith growth with us. Full details can be found on our website [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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**Summer Office Hours Begin**

**May 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Monday-Thursday 9:00-4:30**

**Friday 9:00-12:30**