

The Commentator

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A publication of Atonement Lutheran

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HOW you can HELP

- ❖ **Billings Food Pantry Needs** – **See list posted in the Commons at the Food Bank shelf.
- ❖ Hospitality Ministry – Ushers
- ❖ Sanitation Team
- ❖ Funeral Luncheon Help
- ❖ Worship – Readers & Assistants
- ❖ Christian Education – Teachers

BLESSING BACKPACKS

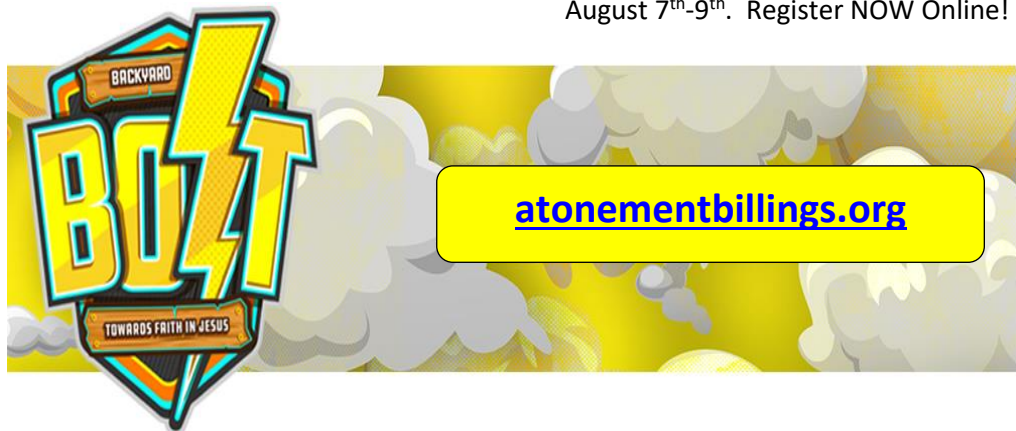
On Sunday, August 23th we will have a special time to offer a prayer of blessing as our younger members and school staff begin a new school year. Watch the [website](#) for details.

Nikki Groshans - *Sunday School Superintendent*



ATONEMENT VBS 2020

Join us at home for Backyard Bolt, Towards Faith in Jesus Vacation Bible School!
August 7th-9th. Register NOW Online!



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF SCHOOL KITS

LWR SCHOOL KITS: The time has come once again for Back to School Sales. Each kit contains the following items. Please keep Lutheran World Relief School Kits in mind and pick up one or more of the following items:

4 - 70 sheet Spiral Notebooks of ruled paper (approx. 8X10 1/2" NO loose leaf paper).

1 Blunt Scissor

1 (30 cm.) Ruler (inches may be on one side)

1 Pencil Sharpener

5 New # 2 Pencils with erasers

5 New ball point pens (blue or black ink no gel pens please)

1 Eraser approx. 2 1/2" long

1 Box of 24 Crayons

A tub will be located in the commons area for the collection of these items. A school kit may provide the only supplies for children returning to school after the disruption of war and may make the difference on whether the child actually gets an education. They are also used in adult literacy classes. If you do not like to shop but would like to help, specify your donation for this project and we will shop for you.

Thank you for all your help.

Any questions please call Julie Leno



ATONEMENT LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

A new school year is almost here at Atonement Lutheran Preschool! [We still have openings for students to enroll for the 2020-2021 school year!](#) If you know of any children preschool age, 3-5, word of mouth is the best advertisement. It is not too late to register!

Please look for the Wish List Board in the Commons Area for items the school will need for the coming year. We are thankful we can count on our Atonement family to help get our school year off with the supplies we need!

We have been approached to ask if we are able to offer scholarships for students in need, but our scholarship fund needs support to replenish it. Prayerfully consider sponsor a student this school year.

Thank you for your thoughts, prayers, and support!

Blessings from your Director of Atonement Lutheran Preschool,
Sara Westrope

CONFIRMATION ORIENTATION FOR 7th and 8th GRADERS

Mark your calendars for September 13th at 7pm for Confirmation Orientation gathering of **both** parents and students. We'll meet in the sanctuary and prepare for the upcoming year. Another date to remember is October 2nd – 4th which will be the Retreat to Christikon!

If you have not already received a letter from the church, please contact us to make sure your student is included in our records.

MUSIC NOTES

Choir is on "Pause" while we wait to see how the virus is affecting our community and what the County Health Department's suggestions will be. Stay tuned for further updates. Keep on singing in your shower and along with the radio.




Emily Harris - Atonement
Choir Director

CHURCH FINANCIAL REPORT JUNE 2020

General Fund June 2020		Building Fund June 2020		Building Reserve	
Budget Expense:	\$31,166.74	Budget Expense:	\$7,925.00	02/20	\$25,680.52
Income Member:	\$30,083.83	Income Member:	\$6,281.00	03/20	\$23,858.00
PPP Federal Money:	\$10,245.52	PPP Federal Money:	\$4,401.20	04/20	\$23,268.60
Actual Expense:	\$29,586.04	Actual Expense: **	\$ 0.00	05/20	\$29,875.60
Actual Net Member Income:	\$497.79	** <i>(interest only, principle payment deferred by MIF)</i>		06/20	\$36,156.60
YTD PPP Federal Money:	\$52,897.76	YTD PPP Federal Money:	\$8,647.20		
YTD Member Income:	(\$4,548.15)	YTD Member Income:	\$19,256.00		



- Ages 3 - 5
- Experienced Teachers and Staff
- Small student-to-teacher ratio



Monday, Wednesday, Friday;
9am - 11:30am

Tuition: \$160/month
Registration Fee until April 1: \$50 /
After April 1: \$75

Online registration and
information available at:
[www.atonementbillings.org/
get-involved/preschool.html](http://www.atonementbillings.org/get-involved/preschool.html)

1290 Sierra Granda • Billings, MT 59105
245-7004
email: preschool@atonementbillings.org

FROM THE COUNCIL

Time is flying by and the summer is turning the corner toward fall. Your council continues to work on the planning, projects and events that are a part of who we are at Atonement. Even in spite of a pandemic that has slowed down activity across the world, the people of Atonement remain committed to this place, its members and the Billings Community.

With help from the PPP loan and continued financial commitment from our members, we are in a fairly good place right now in terms of our financial standing. In addition to regular giving, Atonement members have maintained steady additional giving to the Growing the Seeds of Faith Capital Campaign. This commitment, even during this time when we are only able to meet with small groups at the church or through zoom or telephone call will be what enables us to pick up and run when we are on the other side of this global pandemic concern.

At Atonement, projects have still been underway and activity continues on various scales. Atonement has hosted three groups of campers on their way to Christikon. Landscaping and planting projects are underway to improve the campus and continue campus integration with WyndStone. You will notice an improved sound and video system throughout the church when you are able to visit again. Plans are underway to hopefully move on with our fall activities or modify them so that some version of them will be available for members as we start a new school/church activity year.

A note on this COVID-19 pandemic. As you know, the executive council committee recommended that we return to recorded on-line services for the time being. This recommendation came in consultation with Atonement members involved with the technical aspects of worship service, musicians and the COVID-19 Response Task Force leaders. The meeting took place as an extension of the regular executive committee meeting on Tuesday, July 14. In the end, our discussion led us to determine that postponing on-site services for another unknown period of time gives us the best chance to stay ahead of the COVID-19 virus is the safest way to move forward for our guest Pastors, staff, worship leaders and members.

The council has recommended that we support the decision of the executive committee and will review the status of COVID-19 cases at the August Council meeting. It is very unlikely that the COVID-19 cases would reach a level that would allow us to comfortably return to on-site worship before then. We hope that the numbers of cases and the safety concerns related to this pandemic reverse soon so that we can all return to worship and activities at our Church home.

Finally, we look forward to the Sunday, August 16th when we can welcome Pastor Darren back from his sabbatical. We know that he has been enjoying his time away with camping trips, family time, time at Christikon and working on some of his home projects. Continue to hold Pastor Darren and his family in your prayers as he completes this time of renewal for the mission and ministry that lies ahead.

Atonement Church Council

PROPERTY COMMITTEE HAPPENINGS

The Atonement grounds and landscaping continue to look great thanks to a committed mowing crew and committed Adopt-a-Plotters and lots of irrigation. Please thank all those volunteers when you see them.

Over 70 Canadian chokecherry trees have been donated and planted by Youth and parents. Thank you, Tom Danielsen, for your donation and hard work in keeping them watered. Thank you, Nikki and the Youth, for your willingness to plant, fertilize, and water back in June.

In follow-up to the Hetzel grant that was awarded last year, the Atonement Walking Path has been laid out and pathway cut. The pathway will be joined to the Little White Church sidewalk. The path will be soft surface and will circle both the labyrinth and holding ponds on the south side of our property. Thank you to Cal and Rane Paulson for the donation of their skid steer and to other volunteers for spreading and packing of the road material. Sometime in the future, this pathway will also tie into the columbarium.

In late July, King Constructors will be completing repairs on the church siding due to damage from the 2019 hails season. Thank you to Lance King for working closely with our insurance carrier to make this happen. The WELCA shed has been painted to match the outside of our church and should look nice for several more years to come.

Watch for the Handyman's Sprinkler Winterization coming in October (3rd).

Todd Koepp – Property Committee Chairperson

**ATONEMENT LUTHERAN QUILTER'S
ANOTHER GREAT YEAR DESPITE COVID-19!
MAY 2019 TO JULY 2020**

- 1184 Quilts,
- 363 School Kits
- 100 Personal healthcare kits filled by Atonement members sent to Lutheran World Relief.
- 558 Quilts, 26 pillows, and 149 baby bibs made and given to Billings Family Services.
- 30 Quilts made given to the Heights Fire Department to use on emergency calls.
- 58 Quilts, 98 walker/wheelchair bags, six pillows, 32 fidget quilts for Alzheimer's patients made and given to WyndStone, Saint Johns, Eagle Cliff Manor, the Library, and various other places.
- 115 Quilts were made and sold at Atonement's Annual Fall Bazaar in November.
- 254 Dog beds, 320 dog pull toys and 269 cat toys all made from fabric scraps were donated to the animal shelter.
- 21 Floor pillows were made for Atonement Lutheran Preschool.
- 85 Crocheted hats were made and donated to the cancer center.
- 501 COVID-19 Facemasks were made and donated to various organizations.
- 25 Quilts and 1 pillow were made and donated to Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley.

Bringing it all to a total of 1970 quilts and 54 pillows that were made and given away!!!

A huge thank you to everyone who donated fabric, sheets, blankets, schools kit supplies, healthcare supplies, etc. We could not do this without your support.

Quilters you are awesome!!! 1970 quilts is a huge amount!! And the best part is that we have had a good time, lots of laughs, fellowship, coffee, and desserts while we are quilting. We really miss you! Please come join us when we start up again!

THANK YOU LORD, FOR ALL YOU PROVIDE!

ELEANOR ANDERSEN & JULIE LENO

Calling all those who can sew!

St. John's United in Billings has been affected by the personal protective equipment national gown shortage and is currently accepting homemade cloth gowns. Gowns should be made of medium weight cotton fabric. Completed gowns can be dropped off at the St. John's campus check in points off of Rimrock Rd or Poly Dr.

<https://ukhealthcare.uky.edu/sites/default/files/isolation-gown.pdf?fbclid=IwAR11450ZsJMzNNpN9J2F5kC6-YYifVdty3Mx4bmp4SptClvm935-rP6jnIE>

Thank you for your support helping keep our most vulnerable population safe!

Thank you, thank you to Jack Beals, Todd Koepp and Bill Belden for loading, transporting, unloading and then reloading the hundreds of boxes of quilts, school kits and health kits for Lutheran World Relief on a larger truck. We appreciate your hard work!

The WELCA Board

For all you are, for all you do. Thank you! Thank you all for your quilting ministry. You are a blessing to our church and the community. Thank you for the fabric that I used to make 211 COVID-19 facemasks that were giving to St. John's United, our church, friends of the Library, and anyone who needed.

Carol Young

ATONEMENT 2020 TREE PROJECT



This summer a faithful group of members has embarked on a tree planting project for our Atonement campus of Canada Red Chokecherry trees. On June 9th 72 holes were dug with a power auger and on the 9th and 10th the youth group and adult helpers planted the trees. They also made wire cages to help keep the trees safe. Since then, a small but dedicated group has watered every day. Every day!!

The watering now has been fine-tuned using hoses across our acres and can be done in less than 2 hours. The trees have also been given root fertilizer and treatments to keep the grasshoppers from eating the tender young leaves. It has paid off and as of July 20th there are 37 trees that show new growth. Often new growth shows up on otherwise dead looking trees, so we remain hopeful that there will be more trees that survive this summer.

Time will tell, and we won't know until next spring how all of them fare. And maybe that is a metaphor for us, a weary people of the virus. We are all waiting for next spring and to come out of this anxious time shining and grateful for the gifts we enjoy.

A special thank you goes out to acknowledge the faithful attention that Ashley Kapperud, Tom & Janie Danielsen and Cindy Osland have offered in hand watering daily.

like a tree planted by streams of water...

Psalm 1:3

Dear Atonement Family,

We've been on a roller coaster these past months. It's gone very high up and then straight down; a few turns that were taken quickly, a slowdown and then a fast stretch that we didn't expect. Dave Ramsey, Financial Expert, advises, "The worst time to get off a roller coaster is when it's moving." The roller coaster is still moving.

Thank you all for hanging in there on this wild ride. Ministry has become complicated and challenging while we navigate life during a pandemic. We look forward to welcoming back Pr. Darren and leaning on his leadership but we've had some great lay leaders while he's been on sabbatical and many people to say thank you to for stepping in and "being the church".

Thank You: Mark Halverson, Ryan Kapperud, Jan Westrope, Tom Danielson, (Executive Committee), our Church Council (too many good and faithful people to list), staff--Nancy Rupe, Sara Westrope, Nikki Groshans, Julie Amundson, Julie Anderson, Pierre La Ve' and Tina Williams who help prepare and video worship. We have a group of ushers and sanitation crew that kept in-person worship safe and clean and a nursery crew ready to tackle that future task. Teresa Beals has been sanitizing, disinfecting and making the church sparkle. All of those who've installed new equipment and who have planted new trees and kept the church grounds looking fabulous, thank you so much! For all of the sharing our congregation does with one another through phone calls, cards, messages, pictures, prayers (on Facebook and in your own homes), your work is the hands and feet of Jesus. What a blessing you have been.

These past few months have demonstrated that the church will continue on, in one form or another while we ride this roller coaster. At some point, things will resemble our former days, but until then, hang on tight, pray, laugh, cry, be safe and remember that we are on this ride together led by the Holy Spirit and with God close beside us.

Peace and Blessings,

Kristin La Ve' – Director of Music & Worship/LPA



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Montana Synod
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 God's work. Our hands.



AUGUST 2020

- ☞ Aug 5 Preschool Open House
 10am
- ☞ Aug 7-9 Bolt Backyard VBS
- ☞ Aug 14-16 AOM Camp Out-Trout Creek
 Big Timber, MT
- ☞ Aug 17 Newsletter Deadline
- ☞ Aug 18 Church Council Meeting
- ☞ Aug 23 Blessing of the Backpacks
- ☞ Aug 31 WELCA Board Meeting

YOUTH NEWS

The Atonement youth will be holding a Youth Yard Sale on September 12th to raise money for the [2021 ELCA National Youth Gathering](#). If you have any smaller items or boxes of items you would like to donate please feel free to bring them into my office anytime leading up to the sale. We will also be taking donations of larger items like furniture, but due to lack of storage for these items I ask that you hold onto them until the weekend of the sale. This will be a donation only sale so no need to price any items prior to donating. **No clothing or electronics please!** Thank you for your support!

Nikki Groshans - Director of Youth and Family
doyfam@atonementbillings.org

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Friendship Club is still on hold. I hope this finds you all well. Looking forward to seeing everyone. Happy trails till we meet again. God Bless. Questions Sandy Gonzalez



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