

April 2021

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What's INSIDE?

# The Commentator

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.
- ❖ **Sanitation Team, Sound Booth/Tech Team, Worship Assistants, Ushers**

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Spring Plant Sale**  
**May 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>!**

*Atonement WELCA Board*

## FROM THE PASTOR

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the LORD to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. **Isaiah 52***

I'm feeling a little bit of the sense of joy God's people had as they returned to the Promised Land following their time of Exile in Babylon. After their long departure from the familiar, they return – renewed in their devotion to God and resilient from that which they have endured. There were tears of joy, songs of thanksgiving and prayers of gratitude that filled not only their lips, but hearts and souls as well. (If you ever want to read about it, study Ezra, Nehemiah, and the last 14 chapters of Isaiah.)

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, we held our first in-person worship service following our departure from worship in the sanctuary. I eagerly watched out the doors as I saw the familiar faces walking up the sidewalk. How beautiful were their feet (and that which they carried into our place of worship)! The masks over their mouths and noses couldn't obscure the smiles that radiated in their eyes. Yes, there were some tears: tears of sorrow for what we have missed over these long months, tears of joy to see friends and strangers, tears of hope as we step into this next chapter of our church life.

As with those returning from Exile knew, there will be a lot of "rebuilding" to do. Our ministry groups have been idle for far too long. Some folks have just "gotten out of the habit" of worship, study, and service. In this last year, some pretty important people in positions of leadership and service have died. There's a whole mix of emotion of what pausing much of our program ministry has meant – some grief, some disappointment and anger, some gratitude that we made the right decision, and more. All of that will need to be named, claimed, and healed.

But the one clear message that this month brings is that God – our God – is One of resurrection and new life. Death and sin and brokenness and despair will always give way to life and forgiveness and healing and hope. The joy of Easter is the great culmination of new life that God gives to his beloved people. Join us this month as we share in that joy!

✝ Pastor Darren

**We Bring The Hope We Share In Christ To All!**

## APRIL 2021

- ✝ **April 1** Maundy Thursday
- ✝ **April 2** Good Friday
- ✝ **April 4** Easter Sunday
- ✝ **April 5** Office Closed
- ✝ **April 5** WELCA Board Meeting  
Property Committee
- ✝ **April 11** Council Installation
- ✝ **April 12** Ed/Youth & Fam
- ✝ **April 13** Finance Committee  
Evangelism
- ✝ **April 14** Archery
- ✝ **April 15** Hope Circle Bible Study  
Synod Assembly Reg Due
- ✝ **April 20** Church Council Meeting
- ✝ **April 23-24** Council Retreat



## FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Friendship Club will not be meeting in April or May, hopefully next fall (Sept.) we can gather again with our potlucks & gatherings.

## NEWS FROM FPYV

Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley continues to help families work towards independence during COVID. They have been using the Transitional Housing apartments for emergency housing while families are not able to go to the churches. Two families have achieved a great milestone of one owning their own home and one working on their own home through Habitat for Humanity. This last project will actually take place in the Heights so wait for future information on how you can help with that house here in our neck of the woods. In addition, continued support of diapers for their project of providing diapers for families throughout our area is always helpful. No date has been set yet for when the families will return to Atonement and the other churches for our usual weekly rotation. And finally, thanks to all who helped support FP through donations to the 2021 virtual Beach Blizzard. It was a great success and they are thankful for the support of our Atonement members.

## HOPE CIRCLE LADIES BIBLE STUDY!

Hope Circle will meet on Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am at Atonement Lutheran Church. For details please contact Betty Wolff

**Christikon benefit auction**  
**April 6<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> on Facebook.**  
<https://www.facebook.com/Christikonbenefitauction>

## ATONEMENT LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

Easter Greetings from Atonement Lutheran Preschool!

He Has Risen, He Has Risen Indeed!

I would like to start by saying a BIG Thank You for everyone who helped make our Butter Braid Fundraiser a success. We were able to raise over \$1200! I hope you all enjoy your delicious pastries.

In April, we will be working with the letters V, W, X, and Y, learning about Plants (and the whole growing process) along with Earth Day, the weather, and making and flying kites.

We have opened the enrollment for the 2021-2022 preschool year. Please remember word of mouth is our best advertisement.

We could use your help with some of the supplies we will be working with in the coming months. If you

are able to find and donate these items, it would help us are great deal!

- ♥ 8: *Oh! The Places You'll Go!* By Dr. Seuss books
- ♥ Sunflower Seeds (in the shell)
- ♥ Animal Crackers in the boxes
- ♥ Snack size bags of Doritos, corn chips (we need around 50)
- ♥ Target/Albertsons Gift Card

Thank you for those that were able to help last month in donating items on the list. Thank you for your support and please keep us all in your prayers as we learn together!

Blessings from your Director of Atonement Lutheran Preschool,  
*Sara Westrope*

## HOLY WEEK SERVICES 2021

Maundy Thursday - First Communion Service April 1<sup>st</sup> - 6:45PM

Good Friday Service April 2<sup>nd</sup> - 8:00PM

Easter Sunday Services April 4<sup>th</sup>

Sunrise Service - 6:45AM (Outdoor Weather Permitting)

Resurrection Celebration - 8:00AM, \*10:00AM & 12:00PM

**Please RSVP the office for the service you plan to attend!**

Children's Easter Egg Hunt - 11:00AM

*Children through the 5<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to join in the fun and excitement.*

## THANK YOU!

Dear friends at Atonement, Thank you for the lovely flowers you sent. My mother loved you all immeasurably. Thank you for your support and love.

*Love, Merri Clifton*

Dear Pastor Darren Paulson, Thank you for your generous donation to assist our birth mother with her rent. It was very kind of you to deliver the check directly to her landlord. I appreciate your assistance and thoughtfulness. In gratitude.

*Rach Barth – Family Services St. John's United*

## GROWING THE SEEDS OF FAITH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW NOVEMBER 2019 - FEBRUARY 2021

The campaign is roughly 45% complete in terms of the 3 year time frame.

### Capital Campaign Giving vs. Campaign Pledge Amounts

Pledges by Category	Amount Pledged	Total given to date (February 2021)	% of Pledges given to date
Weekly	\$40,035	\$6,168	15.4%
Monthly	\$30,710	\$6,974	22.7%
Annually	\$41,299	\$20,938	50.7%
Full	\$298,930	\$169,191	83.2%
Totals	\$410,974	\$203,271	49.5%

### Big Accomplishments for Growing the Seeds of Faith Capital Campaign so far:

- 39% of the overall campaign goal of \$550,000 has been contributed
- 52.4% of the total pledged amount has been contributed (including unpledged contributions)
- \$12,202 in unpledged contributions (5.7% of giving thus far)
- \$215,473 total giving through February of 2021
- Mortgage principal balance reduced to below \$1,000,000 as of January 2021!!
- Mortgage payment reduction of \$680/month with 10% principal paid down in 2020 (paying lower interest)
- Ongoing support of Youth Director for Atonement Staff and community tithe ministries

### Looking ahead at Growing the Seeds of Faith Capital Campaign:

- Overall we are doing very well, but work remains to meet the full goal of **\$550,000 (still our total goal!)**
- We will continue to qualify for mortgage adjustments each year that we pay down the principal balance by 10% or more. We need about \$100,000 in debt reduction to qualify in 2021 and are well on our way!
- Review your pledge. We encourage your fulfillment of that pledge as we work toward meeting totals that have been pledged and the larger initial goal of the campaign.
- **Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!** For your support thus far and for all that you will consider to help Atonement reach these Capital Campaign goals.
- We will celebrate the goals we have met thus far and share more information about the Growing the Seeds of Faith Capital Campaign at the Sunday services on April 18.

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Many of us are receiving government stimulus checks – which is a good thing! For those who need it, this will be a great benefit to the livelihoods of many families. For others, this has the potential to be passed on to bless organizations and ministries. Atonement Lutheran has three funds which would welcome additional dollars: the General Fund, Building Fund and Capital Campaign. However, we also know many other agencies in our community have been on the front lines of assisting people in times of great financial need during these COVID days. If your stimulus check isn't considered essential for your household, consider passing the blessing to another!

*Atonement Stewardship Committee*

## ATONEMENT FINANCE REPORT

General Fund		Building Fund		Building Fund Reserve	
February 2021		February 2021			
Total Income:	\$ 29,293.78	Income:	\$ 7,808.00	12.31.2020	\$ 26,937.41
Total Expense:	\$ 26,935.28	Monthly Mortgage:	\$ 7,240.00	01.31.2021	\$ 25,524.62
Net Income:	\$ 2,358.50	Net Income:	\$ 568.00	02.28.2021	\$ 26,092.62
Net Income YTD	\$ (1,701.45)	Net Income YTD	\$ (845.00)		





## ATONEMENT LUTHERAN OUTDOOR MINISTRY NEWS

WOW! The Outdoor Ministry has a LOT planned for our congregation!



April 21<sup>st</sup>, at 6:30 pm – Come shoot Archery with us at the Atonement Campus! We have equipment if you don't! You will have many ways to win a prize and can work on your skills by attending on all of our planned dates: May 19<sup>th</sup>, June 16<sup>th</sup>, July 21<sup>st</sup>, August 18<sup>th</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup>.



May 23<sup>rd</sup> after the 10:30 service: Summer Kick-off! The Outdoor Ministry will provide the food so you can have fun! Games and fellowship in God's great outdoors at the Atonement Campus.



June 11-13: Camping weekend! We are working on a location and will have more information soon!



June 16<sup>th</sup> – We will begin planning for the Big Game dinner which will be held in February, 2022. If you would like to be a part of this, please contact Gene Arneson.



July 30-August 1: Camping weekend! We will be camping at Spring Creek Campground in Big Timber. Please call them to make your reservation!



August 20-22: Camping weekend! We will be camping at Itch-Kep-Pe Park in Columbus. Several are going up on

## ATONEMENT COLUMBARIUM

Celebrate with us! The columbarium is becoming a reality! Due to the generous contributions of anonymous donors, we will not have to wait until more niches are sold to order our columbarium. The contract has been signed, the payment has been made, and site work is going forward. It is so exciting to see this dream coming to fruition. Eickhof, the company we have contracted with, will begin the construction soon, and we hope to have the columbarium delivered and in place by the end of summer. This will be such a wonderful addition to our campus. Thank you to all those who have made this vision a reality.

If you have any questions, or want to purchase a niche at this time, please contact a member of the columbarium committee:

*Marilyn Franklin*

*Tom & Janie Danielsen*

*Butch Morse*

*Bob Holloway*

*Paul Mueller*

*Rose & Del Steiner*

*Roger & Carol Young*

*Marva Drain*



## ATONEMENT CLEAN-UP DAY

At 9AM on April 17th, Atonement will be having our first Cleanup Day of the year both outside and inside the church. With the pandemic, we have many areas needing attention, as we continue to maintain social distancing and masking. Immediate families can work together in close proximity.

Outside will consist of washing all outside windows, trimming shrubs, weeding, mowing as needed, fertilizing, watering trees, picking rocks, testing sprinklers, planting new trees, and sweeping gutters.

The Adopt-a-Plot program still needs foster families to adopt and care for some landscaping. Areas available include:

- The rock by the new Black Hills spruce donated by Jake Ketterling, with the intent to downsize the area that another family has been managing.
- The two ditch drains need reassigning.
- The "V" area of rock close to the roundabout needs a volunteer family to weed as needed.
- The area around the archery range could use some TLC, if a family is willing.
- The island closest to the mailbox also needs reassigning.
- And the grass and bush corner area just outside the youth room is up for grabs.

Posters will be displayed in the Commons as a reminder of all areas assigned as time approaches. Please bring lawn tools including bush trimmers, brooms, shovels, etc. If you plan to wash outside windows; squeegees, buckets, rags and step ladders.

Inside the church in the bathrooms and kitchen, the floor drains will need to be flushed to maintain adequate drainage. Since the list is long, if members are available, we will continue on Sunday afternoon April 18th for work that is not completed Saturday. Thank you to all members that are willing to volunteer to get our church grounds looking well groomed.

Questions can be directed to Todd Koepp

We Bring The Hope We Share In Christ To All!

May						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



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## WEDNESDAY ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

We continue our Wednesday study of the Revised Common Lectionary – doing a deeper dig into the prescribed readings for Sunday's worship service. Meeting In-Person in the Sanctuary or by Zoom.

### **April 4<sup>th</sup> - Resurrection of Our Lord: Easter Day**

Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24  
1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8

### **April 11<sup>th</sup> - Second Sunday of Easter**

Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133  
1 John 1:1--2:2; John 20:19-31

### **April 18<sup>th</sup> - Third Sunday of Easter**

Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4  
1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

### **April 25<sup>th</sup> - Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23  
1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

*Email the church office to get the Zoom link and join us  
Wednesday mornings at 10am, facilitated by Pastor Darren.*

## FAMILY CAMP AT CHRISTIKON

Looking for some quiet renewal... meaningful family time... relaxation in the beauty of God's creation? There will be camp staff-led activities for the kids, free-time for rest or recreation, worship around the campfire – and much more! Brochures are available in the Commons Area at church or go online to [www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org) for more information. July 30<sup>th</sup> through August 1<sup>st</sup>, Scholarship dollars are available if you need some financial assistance!

## CONFIRMATION CAMP

Attention ALL incoming 7<sup>th</sup> Graders enrolling in our Confirmation Ministry program! We will prepare for Confirmation with a camp session June 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> at Christikon Lutheran Bible Camp. Lessons will be taught by Pastor Darren, we'll also enjoy the leadership of the trained camp counselors with games, music, campfires and other outdoor fun! Please contact Nikki at [doyfam@atonementbillings.org](mailto:doyfam@atonementbillings.org)