



# THE COMMENTATOR

*"We bring the hope we share in Christ to all!"*

APRIL 2013

VOLUME 57—ISSUE 4

## Our New Church Home!

What an exciting day! On Sunday, March 24, 60 people gathered at the Little White Church for a sandwich, organizing Task Team talk and a tour of the new building! It was a very exciting day.

The sun shone brightly and the wind stayed in check until the very end as if to chase us from the building when it thought we had had enough. Standing in the driveway and then stepping into the new building helped everyone 'see' and 'feel' the size and shape of the building. Our tour guides, Bill Belden and Todd Koepp, helped everyone imagine how things would look with comments like, "the offices are going here, and over here is the kitchen!" Craig Canfield started the day with an introduction to the Task Teams and a review of a diagram of the floor plan.

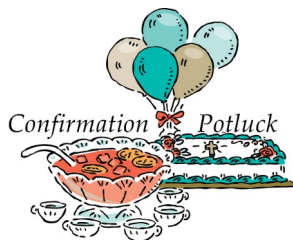
Participants asked about the classrooms, the pre-school, the youth room, storage areas and the like. There was discussion about where the tables would be stored, and how the kitchen was designed so that service could be made into the large hall or into the commons area. Lance King commented on the type of insulation and outer wall finish that was going to be applied to the building and everyone tried to imagine how the building color would blend in to the neighborhood.

Judy Belden prepared a great spread of food and by the end of the day everyone had been fed in body but especially in soul as we all shared in the excitement and conversation about the vision and the dream that is now taking shape on Sierra Granda Blvd! May God continue to bless those who faithfully visioned our ministry in this way; those who have generously supported this vision with financial giving and energy and time; and those who will now bring heart, soul and life to a building where all are welcomed in the name of Jesus.



The Confirmation  
Potluck will be held  
at Atonement on  
April 25th @ 6 PM!

Confirmation  
Pictures will be  
taken @ 7:15 PM!



Confirmation Sunday is on April  
28th. Please join us to support  
younger members of Atonement  
as they confirm their faith in the  
Lutheran Church!



## Questions!

It is natural and important to wonder what is happening now that Atonement is in Interim. One way the question is asked is, “What is happening about calling a new pastor?”

While you have been without a ‘settled’ pastor for four months, I have been with you as your Interim Pastor for a little over two months. During this time we have had two funeral/memorial services; adjusted our Confirmation ministry; appointed a Transition Team (read about the team in this newsletter); made changes in our staff; had a number of members in the hospital; started training me - your interim pastor - on how to work with you; elected a new Council; held 24 worship services, 5 Lent soup-supper programs plus Ash Wednesday! Youth ministry, Bible studies, Men’s Square, Education, Worship, Evangelism ministry team meetings alongside the Quilting and Prayer Shawl ministries and more.

There hasn’t been a dull moment since I joined you and I am privileged to be invited to join you for this Interim. It is a joy for me to join you in the important work of preparing to call new pastoral leadership.

At the same time Atonement has the very exciting task of preparing to move into a new church home! Leaders working on the building are organizing ‘task teams’ that will help paint, landscape, install sound and audio-visual equipment, and plan classroom and kitchen layouts. Packing up the office, Sunday school and quilting supplies and organizing the move when the building is ready will take a lot of energy!

In a recent ‘all ministry’ meeting, where we talk about how we can work together so no ministry gets left out, we also said that while we are busy with all these ‘tasks’, we need to remember and attend to caring for each other in spirit and soul. What good will it do if we get everything moved into the new building but discover that we have ‘stepped on each other’s toes’ and wounded each other’s spirits in the process!

The Transition Team has met two times and is preparing for the first part of its work: inviting the congregation into conversation about “*coming to terms with Atonement’s history.*” The work of preparing a Ministry Site Profile (MSP) for Atonement will take several steps following this basic outline:

- Atonement’s history [history timeline, what is important to keep and what can we let go, what we can learn about ourselves so we can change where needed].
- Atonement’s ministry [Who are we as a people of God in our ministry? What future in ministry are we being called into? What kind of ministry will we prioritize in order to serve the community where God has planted us?]
- Gifts and Skills we want/need in pastoral leadership [what specific skills and gifts will we need in our new pastoral leader in order to become the congregation God is calling us to be?]

Each of these sets of questions has a different focus and the Transition Team will be inviting the congregation to participate in conversations in small groups, at focus group events, at ministry meetings and coffee hour. At every step the congregation will be given the opportunity to review, comment and suggest changes to the MSP before it is finalized. This is really a very important time for the congregation and I encourage lots of discussion about your deep and important thoughts and feelings about ministry and leadership and life together.

When the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) is nearing completion the Church Council along with the Transition Team will prepare the congregation to elect a “Call Committee”. The Call Committee will take the MSP and working with the Bishop will review, select, interview and recommend a candidate for call to the congregation.

It will take some time to work through these various steps deliberately. It will be ‘time well spent’ if taken seriously because calling pastoral leadership is one of the most important decisions a congregation can participate in. In the meantime, if you have questions or concerns or comments please talk with Pastor or any member of the Transition Team or Church Council. We all want to listen carefully and share openly what we can so that the congregation will complete the tasks of this transition time with honesty, integrity and confidence.

Sincerely,

Pastor Retiz

Happy April Atonement!

It's been amazing to see how things are moving along here, both within our own transition as well as with the building project. Palm/Passion Sunday marked the last gathering of the Lenten book group, and I must admit I'm going to miss our time together. The group that committed to the 5 weeks spent the time sharing their stories, faith, questions, and yummy food, and it was an honor to be a part of it all.

The last chapter of the book is titled, "The World Needs What We Have." I asked the group what it is exactly that we have that the world needs, and what I heard from them is that both as Christians who happen to be Lutherans, and as Atonement Lutheran Church, we offer a message of grace and love to the world. We acknowledge where we have failed to be gracious and loving, and in confessing those sins, we are able to receive the beautiful grace of God's forgiveness.

For the next 50 days as we celebrate our Easter season, I encourage you to do what I have encouraged our book group to do: find one concrete thing that you can do that will get you out of your comfort zone. This could be as simple as going to a different service, sitting in a completely different part of the sanctuary, or stepping up to help assist during our worship services. Our group has already identified what they will be doing, and we will hold one another accountable. As the body of Christ, we have been given the privilege to encourage, love, and uphold one another in our faith journeys.

So, what will you be doing to celebrate our Easter season?

Peace,  
Vicar Jenna



Dear Friends,

Thank you for sharing memories of my ministry with me at the reception March 17th at the Little White Church: caring for your children in the nursery, Bible studies and committee meetings, fun times at Vacation Bible School, and, of course, twenty-five years of worshipping together. Others sent emails and cards with expressions of encouragement and assurances of continued success. I appreciate your support and recognition that we accomplished many good things together. But plans change and now we go our separate ways, even as we remain the body of Christ and continue to serve the Lord in new ways.

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

In faith,  
Kathy Slehofer  
Associate in Ministry

To our church family,

Thank you to our church family for cards, donations, prayers, and hugs at the time of our loss. Thanks to the ladies who served lunch to our guests. Thanks to the ladies who make those beautiful prayer shawls. They were a wonderful gift to Ashley and Levi. Ricky enjoyed attending church here. He and Ashley were married here, baptized Levi here, and attended regularly.

May God be with you all.

Ashley and Levi Rost, Donna and Steve Slater, and Stephanie and Rick Downs



## Celebrating 50 years of Living Opportunities!

Do you remember the year 1963? A year that was full of history in America. Martin Luther King delivered his “I have a Dream” speech; to the shock of the American people, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated; and Beatle-Mania took the world by storm. Little did we know that history was also being made right here in Billings, Montana. November 19, 1963 was the day that the first residents moved into Wing 1 of Chapel Court. Within three days, 20 happy residents called St. John’s home. Now, 50 years later, we have over 500 residents who call St. John’s, Mission Ridge and The Vista their home.

It is hard to believe that St. John’s is celebrating 50 wonderful years. It is hard to imagine our community without St. John’s. The ministry of St. John’s has grown along with the needs of our community. The ministry is driven by a love in Christ for those who most need to be lifted high. It has never been about buildings or a beautiful campus, but always about the people and those we serve. Continued commitment, compassion and innovation have inspired the St. John’s mission of *providing living opportunities within nurturing environments of hope, dignity and love*

If you’ve never had the opportunity to visit St. John’s and experience the vibrancy of our campus, I encourage you to put that on your “to-do” list for the year. Whether you join us for a summer concert, a great regional art show, or just stop in for a tour and cup of coffee. You will wonder why you didn’t do it sooner! We look forward to the year to come and hope you can come and help us celebrate 50 great years.

Shelley Pierce  
Foundation Director  
St. John’s Lutheran Ministries

### The Love Offering for March~ Atonement Scholarship Fund



*Love Offering envelopes can  
now be found on the two tables  
at the back of the sanctuary.*

If you have any information or announcements you would like added to the Commentator throughout the year, please email Jackie Clemo at [jackie@atonementbillings.org](mailto:jackie@atonementbillings.org)

Thank you!

Rita Emond has volunteered to head up the care team ministry. If you would like to be a part of this important ministry at Atonement or want more information, please call Rita Emond @

896 - 0107.



# Giving Our Time & Talents to God - Page 1

## Communion Preparers

April 7: Diane Cunnington  
 April 14: Betty Jo Furstenberg  
 April 21: Tammy Johnston  
 April 28: Julie Andersen

## Communion Bread

April ~ Vicki Evans  
 May ~ Donna Kembel



## Lectors



	<u>8:00 AM</u>	<u>9:45 AM</u>
<u>April 7:</u>	Janet Rubich	Todd Koepp
<u>April 14:</u>	Lora Pederson	Betty Jo Furstenberg
<u>April 21:</u>	Pat Zellar	Terri Porisch
<u>April 28:</u>	Marva Drain	Linda Michaelis

## Hospital Visitation

April ~ Betty Jo Furstenberg  
 May ~ Erin Koepp



## Acolytes



<u>April 7:</u>	
8:00 a.m.	Angela King
9:45 a.m.	Julia Mulkey
<u>April 14:</u>	
8:00 a.m.	Brianne Malchow
9:45 a.m.	Zachary Schacht
<u>April 21:</u>	
8:00 a.m.	Abbie Roe
9:45 a.m.	Samantha Willoughby
<u>April 28:</u>	
8:00 a.m.	Dejahn Dixon
9:45 a.m.	Kara White

## Sharing Flowers for Worship

<u>April 7:</u>	Gary & Julie Amendson
<u>April 14:</u>	Open
<u>April 21:</u>	Betty Jo Furstenberg & Lillian Scheafer
<u>April 28:</u>	Gary & Cindy Dunmeyer; Viv & Jack Beals



The 2013 Flower Chart is on the table outside the office at the back of the sanctuary. Cost is \$25.00 per Sunday for two bouquets given in honor or memory of a loved one.

## Van Drivers

<u>April 7:</u>	Marlon Leno	248-5359
<u>April 14:</u>	Stan Newton	245-8456
<u>April 21:</u>	Kyle Johnston	256-1980
<u>April 28:</u>	Todd Koepp	256-1569



## Common Grounds

### Men's Square



April: Sandwich Ziplock Bags  
 Individual Pudding Cups

# Giving Our Time & Talents to God - Page 2

## 2013 Atonement Lutheran Church Council

Lance King, President	656-1183
Vivian Beals, Vice President	248-7930
Kim Plaggemeyer, Secretary	860-0365
Gary Dunmeyer, Treasurer	724-552-6693
Tyler Westrope, Past President	670-3878
Linda Lange	245-4766
Dave Mangels	256-2029
Doug Harper	373-6384
Sara Hull	245-6414
Debbie Rensvold	259-2485
Jesse Gonzalez	698-7709
Don Richard	248-9934
Alie Evans - Youth Representative	896-0310

## Cantors

### April 7 :

8:00 a.m. Becky Lujan, Debbie Heyd  
 9:45 a.m. *Sono Me* Praise Band

### April 14:

8:00 a.m. Chapel Choir  
 9:45 a.m. Lisa Hammond, Maria Martin

### April 21:

8:00 a.m. Terri Porisch  
 9:45 a.m. Nicole Evans, Alie Evans

### April 28:

8:00 a.m. Elinore Quander  
 9:45 a.m. Emma Quinn, Becky Lujan



## 8:00 AM Ushers

April 7: Clarence Robinson; John & Bertha Olsen; Vicki Leatherberry  
April 14: Clarence Robinson; Del & Rose Steiner; Francesca Lees  
April 21: Clarence Robinson; Bette Wolff; Jo Bott; Bob Holloway  
April 28: George & Shirley DeMars; Ed & Rita Reeve

## 9:45 AM Ushers

April 7: Tyler Westrope; Stacey & Gene Arneson; Jay & Janelle Berry; Cindy Dunmeyer  
April 14: Craig & June Canfield; Betty Jo Furstenberg; Kyle, Ben & Hailey Johnston  
April 21: Jack & Vivian Beals; Bob & Shellie Ehrmantraut; Linda Lange; Francesca Lees  
April 28: Todd & Erin Koepp; Dave Mangels; Joyce Nitschke; Charlie Plaggemeyer; Marlon Leno

## Piano Schedule ~ 9:45 a.m. Worship

April 7: JoAnn Martin  
April 14: Elinore Quander  
April 21: Sara Hull  
April 28: Sara Hull



## Prayers for Members of our Congregation

*Pray for blessings, health, safety and general well-being of these members of Atonement. Give thanks for all who are workers with us in the mission we share.*

**April 7:** Steven Gonzalez; Debbie Goodheart; Harold, Shannon, Zane & Briana Guse

**April 14:** Stephanie, Lily & Lori Gushwa; Bill, Barbara, Ryan & Lauren Gustafson; Stephen, Brenda, Sadie, Phoebe & Madelynn Gustafson

**April 21:** Curt & Sloane Hagerman; Monica Hagerman; Barry, Lisa, Cassandra, Haylee & Nicole Hammond; Glenn, Jane, Kyle & Eric Hansen

**April 28:** Cliff, Sheila, Amanda & Kelli Hanson; Larry, Etta & Tiffany Hanson; Doug & Marlehna Harper



**PRAYERS**  
*of the*  
**WEEK**



## Transition TEAM



### Transition Team Starts Work!

The Transition Team has met three times with one of those times a joint meeting with the Council at the leadership retreat.

Plans are underway for a 'History Wall', a 'wine & cheese' and/or 'root beer float' event where congregation members will be asked to share impressions about Atonement's past. [Save the date - May 4/5] This is all part of "*coming to terms with Atonement's history.*"

We are also planning a community map where members will be invited to put a colored pin marker on their address. This will help 'visualize' where congregation members live in relation to the new church site. The 'history wall' will give people an opportunity to mark a time that was particularly important to them or their family. You may also write a comment or paste a picture about an event or time that gave you great joy, or also a time of pain for yourself or the congregation.

This part of the work will take several months and be coordinated with the other ongoing ministry events like – Confirmation, ending of Sunday School, First Communion, graduations etc.

The Transition Team is: Daren Severson, Randy Shelton, Kim Plaggemeyer, Mike Rubich, Nikki Salvesson, June Canfield, Jane Fitch Mezaros, and Alie Evans. Feel free to "ask questions" or engage them in conversation about how their work is going.

You might also keep Atonement in prayer as we all work together during this time of Transition.

Dear Friends at Atonement Lutheran Church,

Grace and peace to you. I want to thank you, on behalf of the Montana Synod, for your mission support in 2012. With your faithful remittance of over \$29,000 to the Montana Synod, you are one of the top 10 givers in our Synod. And you give not only money, but also volunteers to the wider church, both pastor and laity. And you always provide excellent hospitality for a group that needs to meet. Thank you.

And you have done this while you continued with the rest of your ministry, and have been in the midst of tremendous transition—staff, building, and more! Instead of simply focusing on your own survival, you have continued to reach out and to see the big picture. We are so grateful. As I think of you I am reminded of the theme for the ELCA's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year: "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new!" (II Corinthians 5: 17)

So thank you for your faithful ministry in your own congregation and community even while you help make possible ministry across the Montana Synod, across the ELCA, and across the globe. Your gifts help us to provide prison ministry in Deer Lodge, and develop a native ministry in Poplar. Your gifts help start new congregations in fast-growing parts of the country, and provide relief and development to parts of the world that are suffering.

Our Synod Council has adopted 5 Benchmarks for measuring our faithfulness as a Synod:

1. Meet the future boldly.
2. Serve the world, especially the poor and those in need.
3. Deepen faith and witness
4. Promote unity.
5. Strengthen congregations.

Because of you, we can reach those benchmarks. Thank you and God bless you.

In Christ,  
Jessica Crist, Bishop



## Financial Report

February 2013 Income	\$24,049.92
February 2013 Expenses	\$23,032.68
Net Income for month	\$1,017.24

### March 2013 Offerings & Income

March 3, 2013	\$4,117.02
March 10, 2013	\$6,870.75
March 17, 2013	\$4,461.59
March 24, 2013	\$4,628.28
Simply Giving through 03/26/13	\$5,024.00
Total as of 03/26/13	\$25,101.88

## Pastoral Acts

### Baptisms:

03/17/13 Evan Asher Clayton

### Funerals:

03/16/13 Stephen Gulbrandson

### Marriages:



**Friendship Club**  
April 10, 2013  
11:30 AM



**Bible Study**

### JOY Bible Study

The JOY Bible Study is a women's study group that meets every Wednesday at 6:30 a.m. at City Brew.



**Wonderful  
Wednesday -**

**April 10th @ 6 p.m. at  
the Play Inn**

Marvelous Monday!  
Wonderful Wednesday!

**Marvelous Monday -  
April 22nd @ 6 p.m.**

**at the Bull Mountain Grill**

### Hope Circle

*Hope Circle meets April 18th @ 9:30 a.m. @ Atonement. The Bible study is from Gather magazine (formerly Lutheran Woman Today).*

**Thursday  
Bible  
Study**



Thursday Bible Study ~  
9:30 a.m. ~  
Novak Room  
*Reading through the Old  
Testament*



**GRACE BIBLE  
STUDY**

will not meet until further  
notice.

For information,  
contact Tina Williams at 256-7761.



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**Atonement Staff**

Interim Pastor .....	Philip Reitz
Pastoral Intern. ....	Jenna Pulkowski
Office Manager .....	Joann Estal
Organist .....	Gwynn Pederson
Chapel Choir Director .....	Emily Prouty

