



Our Savior's Lutheran Church

1326 1st Ave N., Great Falls MT
A congregation of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

March 2025 Newsletter *God's Work—Our Hands!*

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March 2nd & 16th

Loaves & Fishes
March 21st

Lenten Midweek
Services

Our Savior's Lutheran
Worships each Sunday at
10:00 a.m., with
Refreshments and
Fellowship in the Church
basement following
services.

Office Hours are
Mon. - Thurs., 9:00-1:00

Contact us at
406-727-4304 or
officeoslcgf@gmail.com

Visit us on the Web at:
oslcggreatfalls.org

Staff

- Pastor Eric Finsand
pastoroslcgf@gmail.com
406-799-7788
- Ellen Forslund—
Worship & Music
Director
- Bonnie Knight—Office
Administrative Assistant
- Tyler Gunderson—
Sexton

Twentieth Annual Loaves and Fishes Dinner!

FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2025

SERVING: 4:30 PM TO 6:30 PM

FREE WILL OFFERING

ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT FISH

Come to an Evening with Good Food that supports Jesus' Call to Feed the Hungry. Included this year will be a Salmon Loaf, Cucumber Sauce, Rolls, Coleslaw, Jell-O, Dessert Bars plus, Silent Auction and Raffle.



We welcome you and everyone you know to an opportunity for a good meal and fellowship on Friday March 21st !

Are you able to help FISH! We are in need of donations of raffle items or silent auction items. Do you knit or crochet? Are you crafty? Do woodcarving or woodworking? Do quilting or needlework? Paint? or making theme gift baskets. If you know a local merchant who is willing to donate a gift certificate or card these would be greatly appreciated. All of the proceeds raised will go to FISH, the emergency food program or the hungry of Great Falls.

If you have raffle or auction items to donate, please drop them off at Our Savior's Lutheran Church (hours 9 to 1) by Wednesday, March 19th.
Thanking you in advance.

Sunday School Begins this Month

The northeast corner of the Church basement will be alive with learning and fun as we gather after worship services for our first two lessons.

- On **March 2nd**, we'll plunge into the stories of ten people who encountered Jesus and found their whole life changed. One of those ten responded differently than the rest—and for that person it changed everything that came next.
- On **March 16th** we'll meet Martha and Mary, who think they know the end of the story. But Jesus will surprise them with the news that God never lets go of us—that's what God's love means!



And these words...
shall be upon your heart;
and you shall teach them
diligently to your children...
-Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Words from the Pastor

There are some changes brewing on the horizon—possible changes for our congregation, certain changes for my family.



At our Annual Meeting on January 26th, I spoke about some possible decisions we as a congregation will need to face. These decisions revolve around the persistent gap between the congregation's amazingly generous giving and our budget goals and responsibilities. I spoke in thanks for the congregation's commitment to worship and service and support, as well as recognizing that giving had increased dramatically in 2024. Nonetheless, our year ended with a twenty thousand dollar deficit, with a twenty six thousand dollar deficit projected for 2025.

Having thought and prayed about this chasm for months and months, I spoke of a way to bridge this gap that would see me moving from full time to eighty percent time—from five days a week to four. When one does the math, and all salary and benefits are considered, trimming my time to eighty percent just about covers the deficit. In my mind, it buys us time to consider how we can be best stewards of our gifts and resources in this season of Our Savior's life and ministry.

At this point, our Council and I are looking towards calling a Special Congregational meeting to have conversation and consider formalizing this change. Our thoughts are to have this meeting once the Easter season is done, perhaps April 27th.

At the same time I've been pondering these changes in Our Savior's finances, I've been listening to some hopes and dreams inside my family.

Some of you have had occasion to meet our oldest son, Simon. He works full time and remotely from our home as an Accountant with a firm based back where we came from in Bellingham, WA. Covid initiated his working from home, which he's continued ever since.

Before we moved, his hope had been to purchase his own home there in Bellingham. The extraordinarily expensive housing market on the west coast made that initial purchase a challenge.

So Simon moved with us in our journey here to Great Falls. A real trouper, he's been making do in his ten by thirteen foot room/office—just putting away money to someday purchase his own home.

Chris and I feel blessed by his presence—not just because we happen to have warm feelings towards him, but because his earlier training as a CNA allows him to give special care to my wife on the days when her

Leukemia is particularly oppressive.

As we've wondered what the future holds for Simon and his long term housing goals, we've explored lots of options. Last Spring we trekked all across Montana's mountains looking at plots of lands which we could transform into his permanent home. Like almost everyone who dreams about Montana, his dream was a meadow and trees and view of the mountains.

In the Fall we finally threw up our hands on the idea of buying land and slowly building a log cabin. Rather than being an economical path, it was turning out to be Most Expensive.

So his home search transformed into a search for an existing home—with meadow and trees and a view of the mountains.

This past month, he found his home.

I write about this because Simon's dream has become our entire family's.

The home we've found is going to allow Simon the space and potential to use his entire life through. And, it has space for Chris and me to live on a main floor—partners with Simon now, and perhaps cared for as Leukemia progresses and as the years turn me more and more into an old man.....

All these things have been happening in concert with each other—the realization that Our Savior's is likely going to need to trim my contract to make ends meet, and the chance to relocate family into a long term setting that is going to tend everyone's situation.

So—some change is going to come to our family. With our son, we're purchasing a new home. Its on a bit of acreage, with trees and meadow and view of the mountains. In fact, the property line flows right into the National Forest and Glacier National Park.

For me—this change means a commute into work. A good two hour commute to Great Falls. My thoughts are to drive into town early Sunday morning, then set up camp in one of the unused classrooms while I work through the week. The Peak will become my living room and recreation hall.

I've always made my cell phone available to everyone in the congregation, and will still be "on call" even on those days I wouldn't be in Great Falls. I'd be available for funerals or hospital visits—they override any schedule!

I write about these changes so that we as a congregation can think about these things and process out whether this feels like a doable fit for this time in our congregational life. My hope is to hear what you think as we gather in a Congregational Meeting to consider these things and see if this is where we're being led.

Pastor Eric

Lenten Renewal Begins this Month!

This year our Lenten journey will be rich in Renewal and Fellowship as we share midweek services with folks from *First Presbyterian Church*. Our plan is for each congregation to host three Midweek services – the first three at Our Savior’s, the concluding three at First Presbyterian. Holy Week Services will be in our own locations.

A Lenten Soup Supper will also be shared—humble in menu, rich in fellowship! A sign up sheet near our Usher’s Table awaits those who wish to offer a crock pot of soup!

While **no Supper will be offered on March 5th** (*Ash Wednesday*), Our Savior’s will host suppers on March 12th and March 19th. First Pres. will host the remaining three meals on March 26th, April 2nd, and April 9th.

Both meals and worship will occur in the hosting congregation’s Fellowship Hall. Like the early Church, we will eat and then worship at table.

Our worship will be grounded in a Lenten Midweek Liturgy by Marty Haugen titled “**Holden Evening Prayer**”. Stepping away from the Lectionary, the weekly homilies will follow themes drawn from Dr. Martin Luther’s portion of the *Small Catechism* on *The Lord’s Prayer*. Written as a resource for families to listen to their heritage and talk about their faith around their kitchen table, Luther offers not only the petitions of the *Prayer*, but reflections on what Jesus’ words mean as they leap from page to our heart.



- **March 12th—The Introduction and First Petition.**

What does it mean that God invites us to call on God
with the trust of a child to a parent?

- **March 19th—God’s Kingdom Come, God’s will be done.**

Where should we expect to see signs of God’s heart—in our world and in our lives?

- **March 26th—Daily Bread**

Remembering that God provides to all, what should be our heart’s response?

- **April 2nd—Forgive us**

Jesus frames this prayer not only between us and God, but us and our neighbor.

- **April 9th—Save us**

Is this not what “Jesus” means—God Saves? Where will God reach us?

Corrections to Our Savior’s Church Directory

- Copenhaver, Marlene—address is Nashville, IN (Not TN)
- Weldele, Renate—email address is weldelerenate4@gmail.com
- Schmidt, Anne—husband’s name is Matt Holbrook
- Hanson, Elaine— phone number is (406) 4525456. Delete (406) 750-8214.

Our Savior's Events during March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 10:00 Worship <i>11:15 Sunday School</i>	3	4	5—Ash Wednesday 7:30 Men's Sq. 12:00 Bible Study 7:00 Worship at Our Saviors	6	7	8
9 10:00 Worship	10 1:00 Human Concerns Cmt 7:00 Property & Finance Cmt	11 5:30 Worship Cmt	12 7:30 Men's Sq. 12:00 Bible Study 6:30 Lenten Meal & Worship at Our Saviors.	13 9:30 Quilters	14	15
16 9:00 Exec Cmt 10:00 Worship 11:15 Sunday School	17	18	19 7:30 Men's Sq. 12:00 Bible Study 6:30 Lenten Meal & Worship at Our Saviors. 7:30 Church Council	20	21 Loaves and Fishes Dinner Serving from 4:30 - 6:30	22
23 10:00 Worship	24 Newsletter Deadline! Book Club, Etc. 6:30	25	26 7:30 Men's Sq. 12:00 Bible Study 1:15 Prayer Chain Mtg 6:30 Lenten Meal & Worship at First Presbyt..	27 9:30 Quilters "Ladies Let's Talk" 1:00	28 6:00 Game Night	29
30 10:00 Worship <i>Change for Change</i>	31	April 1	April 2 7:30 Men's Square 12:00 Bible Study 6:30 Lenten Meal & Worship at First Presby.	April 3 9:30 Quilters	April 4	April 5

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

invites you to attend
the

Installation

of
REV. DAWN BUSCH

Sunday, March 9, 2025
1:00PM
Reception to follow

1009 18th Ave SW - Great Falls, MT

Offering will benefit: First Call Theological Education
and Montana's Fund for Leaders

Clergy are invited to vest and process. Please arrive by 12:40PM for vesting.
The color of the day is purple.



**Daylight Saving
Time Starts**

March 9, 2025

Remember to set your
clocks **ahead** one hour
Saturday night or Sunday
morning the weekend of
March 9.

Serving this March

March 2nd

Usher: Sanna Beerman
Greeter: Juanita Hogenson
Reader: Volunteer or Pastor Eric
Altar Guild: Joyce Morgan, Nancy Traner
Fellowship: Ellen Forslund
Offer. Coll.: Robin Sainsbury
Counters: Helen Beckley, John Allen
Pianist/Organist: Michelle Payton
Cantor: Ellen Forslund

March 9th

Usher: Jerry Ramstead
Greeter: Kerrie Ramstead
Reader: Volunteer or Pastor Eric
Altar Guild: Joyce Morgan, Nancy Traner
Fellowship: Ellen Forslund
Offer. Coll.: Robin Sainsbury
Counters: Helen Beckley, John Allen
Pianist/Organist: Michelle Payton
Cantor: Ellen Forslund

March 16th

Usher: Gloria Johnson
Greeter: Lilli Milton
Reader: Volunteer or Pastor Eric
Altar Guild: Joyce Morgan, Nancy Traner
Fellowship: Ellen Forslund
Offer. Coll.: Robin Sainsbury
Counters: Helen Beckley, John Allen
Pianist/Organist: Michelle Payton
Cantor: Ellen Forslund

March 23rd

Usher: Joyce Morgan
Greeter: Nancy Doughten
Reader: Volunteer or Pastor Eric
Altar Guild: Joyce Morgan, Nancy Traner
Fellowship: Ellen Forslund
Offer. Coll.: Robin Sainsbury
Counters: Helen Beckley, John Allen
Pianist/Organist: Michelle Payton
Cantor: Ellen Forslund

March 30th

Usher: Nancy Traner
Greeter: Judy Spilde
Reader: Volunteer or Pastor Eric
Altar Guild: Joyce Morgan, Nancy Traner
Fellowship: Ellen Forslund
Offer. Coll.: Robin Sainsbury
Counters: Helen Beckley, John Allen
Pianist/Organist: Michelle Payton
Cantor: Ellen Forslund

FINANCIAL REPORT:		
OFFERINGS, DISBURSEMENTS & BALANCES		
as of January 31, 2025		
General Fund	January	2024 YTD
Giving	\$22,291.42	\$20,279.42
Interest Inc	\$298.11	\$593.77
Expenses	\$18,347.26	\$16,916.26
Totals	\$4,242.27	\$3,956.93

Council notes and is grateful for the Special one time Anonymous donation during January from one household of \$10,000 that boosted our finances this past month!

Celebrating all Birthdays

(Known to the Office this March)		
	3/16	Sean Dello Iacono
	3/18	Ryan Long
	3/19	Jared Long
	3/20	Rich Hamill
		Matthew Wade
	3/22	Jamie Kirkhart
		Dayton Kolstad
	3/23	Ellen Forslund
		Spencer Jovick
		Julie Swedberg
	3/24	Olivia Vanni
	3/25	Linda Lassila
	3/26	Lindsay Danielson
	3/30	Eloise Leque
		Emery Leque
	3/31	JoAnn Woods

News from within our Montana Synod

Information on the Montana Synod Bishop Election

Any ELCA member of a congregation in the Montana Synod may pre-identify **one** rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament (i.e., pastor) in good standing in the ELCA and submit their name. Names can be submitted to the Bishop Election Committee co-chairs using the appropriate form available on the web within the allotted time **beginning February 10 through March 30, 2025.**

The Bishop Election Committee will contact those pre-identified clergy to verify their willingness and eligibility to stand for election. If they are willing and eligible, we will ask them to provide biographical information and to initiate a background check via a link that will be sent to them. At least 30 days prior to the Montana Synod Assembly, the biographical information of all willing pre-identified candidates received by the deadline of March 30 will be distributed to all voting members of the 2025 Assembly by the Bishop Election Committee.

Voting members may then download the biographical information if they wish to retain it.

Since we will still conduct an ecclesiastical ballot at the assembly, persons pre-identified must also be nominated from the floor of the assembly during the first ballot according to S9.04 in the Montana synod constitution.

Co-chairs: John Sheppard, Kim Bloch <https://form.jotform.com/250357151029047>

**Flathead Lutheran
Bible Camp
REGISTER
FOR SUMMER
BY MARCH 31st:
HUGE DISCOUNT!**

\$100 will be deducted from your registration, when a youth camper registers for an overnight camp for summer 2025, by midnight March 1st! Sign up today!
(<https://flbc.net/>)



Northern Rockies Institute of Theology Event!

NRIT Event: Tuesday, March 18th 9:30am – 11:30am

Mark your calendars for this opportunity to talk with colleagues about real-life scenarios that pastors and LMAs navigate. Facilitated by Pastor Megan Hoewisch
Lutheran Theology in Practice: The Large Catechism and Case Studies on Baptism and Holy Communion

Description: If you run out of wine in the middle of communion, do you speak the Words of Institution over the hastily filled cups the assistant carries out? If someone

brings you water from the Jordan River and wants to be baptized with that, what do you say? If a twelve-year-old asks to be baptized without her parents' permission, do you do it? And for each of these questions: why? What is the theology that informs our choices when it comes to the day-to-day details of baptisms and communion? In this class, we'll think about Luther's Large Catechism writings on Baptism and Holy Communion and what Luther might be saying to us as we wrestle with different scenarios and questions about these sacraments. After an overview of justification by faith and the Large Catechism, we'll discuss several case studies related to the sacraments. Pastors, LMAs, and anyone interested in the theology that undergirds our sacramental worship (or, why we do things the way we do) are welcome!

Pastor Megan Hoewisch has been serving in her first call as pastor of First Lutheran Church in Havre, MT for five years. Before that, she studied at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, GA, where she met her husband Matt. In November 2024, Pastor Megan took part in the Lutheran World Federation's Seminar for Pastors in Wittenberg, Germany, and this class is a way of bringing back to Montana some of what she received. Schnitzel not included!

To learn more and register! (<https://www.montanasynod.org/nrit.html>)



Lutheran Disaster Relief— Your Benevolence Dollars Bringing Healing

Since Russia invaded Ukraine three years ago, millions of Ukrainians have fled their homes to seek safety in neighboring countries — and been welcomed by Lutheran Disaster Response’s partners in the region. Even as the situation evolves, the impact of this conflict on people’s lives continues.

Your extraordinary generosity gave Lutheran Disaster Response the opportunity to immediately accompany our neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe and to continue to walk with them through recovery and healing. Here are a few stories of your impact:



“You brought the sunshine back.”

During a missile strike in Kharkiv, a woman’s windows and the outside wall of her apartment were severely damaged. With assistance from Lutheran Disaster Response, the wall was repaired and a new window was installed. Looking out through the window in her kitchen, she said with a smile, “Look, you brought the sunshine back.”

A home away from home

After Natalia and her family fled Ukraine for Moldova, she wasn’t sure where to go or how she could care for her family. But she soon found a new home at a refugee shelter, supported in part by your gifts. Her children enrolled in an educational center, and Natalia now spends her time volunteering at a resource distribution center for other refugees.



Finding “humanity and kindness”

In the Roma community of Tury’a Pasika, Lutheran Disaster Response is offering additional education to children. “I want to show them that there is a path beyond the struggles of the tábor [Roma camp] — a future where they can read, write, dream and build a life they choose for themselves,” said Nadia Fontosh, the class teacher.

The first day after Russia’s full-scale [invasion into Ukraine](#), Nadiia Kharytonova watched from her window as the streets filled with people fleeing Odessa by car. At first, she didn’t want to leave her home. “But, thinking of my children, who were frightened and traumatized by the sound of sirens and bombing, I decided

to gather our things, pack our lives in a bag, and head for peace and safety,” she said.

Kharytonova and her husband, who was out of the country when the first bombs fell, reunited in Romania. Upon her arrival, her priorities were to find a place to stay and access medical care, especially for her daughter who has cystic fibrosis and insulin-dependent diabetes. An acquaintance directed her to AIDRom, an organization that receives support from [Lutheran Disaster Response](#) (LDR). With AIDRom’s assistance, Kharytonova’s family found a place to live; received food, medicines and hygiene products; enrolled the children in school; and applied for Romanian citizenship.

After her family’s needs were met, Kharytonova was determined to help other refugees. She began volunteering and was soon hired as a translator by AIDRom. She now welcomes new refugees, listens to their stories—many of which are similar to hers—and ensures they get support.

“What is most important,” she said, “is that in the ELCA-funded project I found a second home, a second family, where I can be a driving force for help, for change.”

While the stories that Kharytonova hears sometimes leave her shattered at the end of the day, she also witnesses hope as she sees her fellow Ukrainians settling into their new communities. “I don’t think I could find the words to express my gratitude and satisfaction,” she said. “But I could say, on behalf of myself and the refugees who have received assistance from this project, that it has changed and is changing lives—and doing it in the best way possible.”

Over the past three years, LDR has accompanied countless people affected by war, both [in Ukraine](#) and in neighboring countries. By partnering with companion churches and community-based organizations in Europe, the widespread impact of Lutheran Disaster Response reaches people on a local level.

Ukraine isn’t the only war-torn country where we are responding. In Haiti, Sudan and the Middle East, Lutheran Disaster Response is accompanying communities ravaged by conflict. By working alongside local partners, Lutheran Disaster Response is able to offer holistic support and address a community’s most pressing issues.

Thanks to your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response, we can provide ongoing assistance to our siblings in Christ, in Ukraine and across Eastern Europe. To continue making a difference in the lives of people impacted by disasters, please consider a gift to Lutheran Disaster Response today.

<https://give.elca.org/page/73064/donate/1>

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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