



ALC

December 2024

Newsletter



Showing Off

Dear Children of God at ALC,

I was talking with a pastor colleague last week and she shared with me that God had really been “showing off” to her lately. I unfortunately didn’t get all the details but the impression I got was that God kept showing up and providing for her and people around her in powerful ways.

God is “showing off” in a lot of ways in our community of faith! We have been seeing some glimpses of the ways God is working and guiding our congregation. See the Faithful Innovation article later in the newsletter for some specifics. And there is so much more beyond what is included in that article!

Through a lot of discernment, the church council has identified a couple of themes that keep coming up as we listen to God, the community, and each other. Those themes are an invitation to connect more deeply with the broader community and the underutilized asset of the church building. We are still listening for and discerning specifics, but our questions have focused in on what God might be inviting us to do to connect more with the community and utilize our building.

God has provided so much to our congregation and it’s encouraging to see the ways that you all are living as followers of Jesus. Thank you for your faithfulness! And thank you for your openness to explore our continuing journey as a congregation. There are, of course, SO many possibilities for our future together and this is both overwhelming and very exciting.

As we enter this new church year with the beginning of Advent, I am struck by what the repeating of the seasons throughout the

church year teaches us. The cycles of the church year repeating over and over remind me that we are on a journey. We never arrive. We always have more to learn, more to see, more to discover about ourselves and what God is doing in the world. Perhaps most importantly, we are reminded that God is with us on this journey. I'm so grateful that God is with us and guiding us. And I'm grateful that I get to be on this journey with you! I can't wait to see what new beginnings God has prepared for us! Peace,

Pastor Melissa

Electronic Giving

Thank you to those of you who have already given their offering online!

Whether you choose to give online or in person, your support is vital to the continued success of our church community. We are so grateful for your generosity and commitment to our shared mission.



Thank you for your continued support of ALC!

Faithful Innovations

On Saturday, November 16th, ALC's Faithful Innovation team gathered in Bozeman with the other churches participating in the Faithful Innovation process. For the past year the team has been gathering, engaging in conversation, listening to the community and the congregation and to God, doing some experiments, and reflecting on what we have learned. The Faithful Innovation process helps churches listen to what God might be calling them to do and to respond to that calling. This is about listening for the new things that God is doing, watching for the ways that the kingdom of God is already present among us, and joining in with what God is doing so that ALL people will hear the good news of what God's grace and presence.

Part of what the team did at the training was to make a timeline of the innovations or changes that have happened in our congregation. The things we put on our timeline are the evidence of new life in our congregation.

Here are some of things we identified over the past three years:

- the congregation moved out of survival mode after COVID and not having a pastor.
- began to acknowledge the past and let go so that we can move forward.
- adult education sessions helped congregation become more engaged with each other and with faith.
- book study and retreats helped shift the mindset of council members developing greater trust and taking more risks.
- greater connection through Pastor Melissa's vulnerability.
- bible study has deepened the discipleship of the participants, engaged us in scripture, and helped shift the view of clergy away from a traditional clergy-centric viewpoint.
- cleaned out classrooms which helped shift our mindset towards the possibility of the future and something new.
- became more open to using our building for the needs of the community.
- listening more to the community for the understand the needs in our community and to listen for what God is already doing.

Here's what the team plans to do going forward:

- work alongside the building task force and council to explore what we might do with the church building.
- engage the council in Dwelling in the Word at each meeting.
- communicate and celebrate what we as a congregation have done.
- continuing listening to the community and discern how we can meet needs.

- the team will continue to meet with their coach for accountability.
- invite new members onto the Faithful Innovation team ensuring some overlap with the council.

Our Faithful Innovation team successfully made it through the process! But the intention of this process is that it is a repeated and continual process of listening, acting, and reflecting. So, the team will continue with this process with the next steps listed above so that our congregation can continue to join in with the work God is doing around and through us.

Remember In Prayer

Randy and Linda Holland
 Mike and Vicky Ryles
 Mollie Waldum
 Holly Happe
 Carole Fagerli
 Anita Bueling
 Lynnette Evanson
 Bea Huber
 Larry Lovely
 Denice Harris
 Gary Hart



Taking Responsibility for the Future

As the days seem to be windier, colder, and darker, I would like to share with you some good news from your council. As most of you know, with any home, there are maintenance issues, minor remodel and sometimes major remodel projects. So, it is with our church home. A couple of months ago, I asked a group of ALC members to serve on a Building Task Force. The task force members were Cookie Linsted, Jenna Flatgard, Kitty Springer, Tena Versland, Verne Beffert, Dale Guidi, Jerry Happe, and Dennis Springer.

The purpose of the committee was to do the following:

- Carefully examine the entire building, both interior and exterior
- To locate area that needed repair, updates or presented concerns
- Develop a priority list of repairs and updates
- Provide estimates on the repairs and updates
- Begin to determine new and innovative uses of the space we have at ALC to serve our community
- Provide a report to council

The task force completed their initial work, wrote up a report and that report was presented and discussed at a special council meeting on November 19th. At that meeting the report showed that the focus was on the exterior of the building. The task force unanimously agreed to prioritize the exterior of the building first as it was determined that the structural needs of our building were most important at this time. The initial phase of a 3-year plan was to deal with the exterior of our church. The result of the exterior inspection found that the north side of the building needed repairs to the fascia and soffits. The foundation along the parking lot has potential water destruction, the chimney (used for our furnace in the fellowship hall) is a potential hazard risk. Removal of the chimney would require a re-flue of the existing furnace or replacement of the furnace with a new high efficiency furnace. (Task Force recommended replacing the old furnace.) There is need for additional gutters on the building to help with drainage issues, mostly on the east side in the parking lot area. The entire parking lot has a major drainage issue. Finally, the flower garden by the main entrance needs to be removed and replaced. An estimate for all the above items listed was gathered. The estimated total cost of this phase of work could be about \$30,000 to \$35,000.

The interior of our building needs to have a complete assessment as to the needs regarding such areas as electrical, plumbing, flooring, lighting, windows, heating. This assessment will help us with how our building can potentially be used in new and creative ways to better serve our community and our own members.

An initial review of the sanctuary, communion room, coffee area and surrounding areas was looked at for improvements.

What happens next? Multiple bids for phase one work will be sought by contractors. A meeting, after church on December 15, will be held to further discuss the three-year plan for our building. This will be a time to ask questions, learn more, and understand what the plan for our church home might be. At our Annual meeting in January, we will bring this to the congregation for a vote on phase 1.

I would encourage you to think about this in terms of taking care of our church home and preparing for our future needs. If you have questions or thoughts, please feel free to contact anyone on council or any member of the building task force. Just as our ancestors worked to build a church and expansion of the education portion of the building, now it is our responsibility to take care of our place and dream for the next generations of what might be. I am excited for this time and opportunity to do this work. Let us be thankful for the place we call American Lutheran Church and let us follow God's lead when thinking about how we might serve our community.

Yours in Christ,

Randy Mogen



December Birthdays

- 4 Rich Muza
- 9 Anna Smith
- 13 Cooper Johnson
- 12 Marcia Olson
- 20 Bonnie Evanson
- 22 Holly Happe

Benevolence

DECEMBER BENEVOLENCE is for Elks' Holiday Food Basket Program in conjunction with Livingston Food Resource Center. This program provides Christmas food baskets for those in need in our community. Last year over 400 baskets were picked up or delivered in Park and Sweet Grass counties.

NOVEMBER BENEVOLENCE went to support Disaster/Flood/Fire Relief. This may include helping those who were affected by the Elk River Fire and Hurricanes Milton and Helene.

Winans school appreciates your generosity for the October benevolence of \$1530.

Spiritual Practices

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES will resume in January.

Remembering Christmas Past

In the Christmas spirit, we would like to share with you some of Gloria's childhood Christmas memories.

Looking back on holidays gone by, we're so glad for the upbringing we had; strict but happy! Our Christmas holiday usually began dark and early, a trip to the Logan Ranch on Rock Creek just out of Clyde Park. When we arrived, we were picked up by a hay wagon pulled by a team of Percheron horses. Down the hill we went to the farmhouse in the creek bottom. Once there we organized our toys and things and headed for the main house. And the horses waited patiently while the wild and crazy kids tried to get organized. We played games; I don't remember prizes for first place. I don't really remember what the goal of most of our games were!

In the evening the women cooked supper, quite simple but delicious! We played cards and fell asleep early, exhausted from our busy day! We woke up at staggered times, ate bowls of oatmeal, and were outside again to make tracks in the freshly fallen snow. I do remember that at each meal we would bow our heads to give thanks to Almighty God for the wonderful life we had and our love

for each other. I look back and thank the Lord for His presence;
under His watch I don't remember anyone ever getting hurt! Let's
all look back and remember to praise the Lord!

Happy, Holy Christmas!

Dale & Gloria Guidi



ALC-WELCA met on Sunday, November 10 following worship. WELCA is a community of women here at ALC who are committed to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, society, and the world.

The following agenda items were discussed:

- The Treasurer reported our checking account balance of \$1,975.22.
- The quilters have squares cut and ready to be constructed into the quilt tops for LWR. They are in the quilting room and can be picked up anytime. **Thank you!!**
- Special **THANK YOU** to those who served at the funeral reception for Marilyn Olson.
- ALC will cook at Loaves & Fishes Monday, December 16.
- Member updates were shared.
- Norwegian Goodie orders are rolling in and the sign-up sheets are filling up. We have a total of 62 orders for 140 meatball trays, 62 salad cups, and 160 lefse packages.
- Revenue from the Goodies and other donations was discussed. Lutheran Disaster Response will be given the proceeds for hurricane relief.
- A reminder...Thankofferings will be offered Sunday, December 1. Examples of Thankoffering prayers were shared from the WELCA website.
- Christmas Greetings will be sent to members we miss.

Thank You Teams!

You were such a blessing, sharing your talents and time!!! YOU ROCK!!

Meatball Making Team - Diane, Leslie, Billie, Bonnie, Myrna, Sue, Cookie & Doug, Karla & David, Dale & Gloria, Barb & Heather, Larry & Nonie, and Jane & Dana.

Salad Making Team - Diane, Billie, Larry, Sue, Bonnie, Cookie, Karla & David, and Jane & Dana.

Lefse Making Team – Diane, Sue, Larry, Beatrice, Randine, Tena, Cathy, Billie, Kitty, Billie Kaye & Dennis, Lana & Don, John & Diane, Joan & Randy, Gloria & Dale, Cookie & Doug, Bonnie & Jim, Jane & Dana, and Karla & David. **WOW!!!**

There is nothing quite like bonding over food!!! Even making it! It was wonderful to have this time together with you all and carrying on this great ALC tradition. You did a marvelous job and WELCA thanks you!!

Our next meeting will be Sunday, January 12.



Shout Outs!!

Shout Out and thank you to those who are making a difference in our community and church! These people and their stewardship are examples of God's loving grace.

(Remember you can submit something for the shout outs at any time to alclivingston@gmail.com).



Shout out to...

- Lana and Billie Kaye for sewing backpacks for the LWR school kits. Lana for assembling more kits. Thank you for helping to make sure kids around the world have the supplies they need to go to school and learn.
- Everyone who gave to the October benevolence! Thanks to your generosity we were able to purchase 55 pairs of gloves and 25 pairs of snowpants for the students at Winans (this was the request from the school administrators). Thank you for answering Jesus' call to love our neighbors.
- Leslie for delivering gloves and snow pants to Winans. Thank you for being Jesus' hands and feet!
- Thrivent for providing an Action Grant to support our repurposed hospitality room! We stocked up on coffee, tea, and hot chocolate for the Keurig machine, creamer, snacks, and other supplies to provide rest and refreshment. Thank you to Dennis and Billie Kaye Harms for helping us access this grant through their Thrivent membership!
- Randy, Annette, Diane, Leslie, Nancy, and Sue who have helped provide treats, coffee, and other supplies to provide refreshment for the Elevate Montessori staff and parents and others who stop by the hospitality room!
- Lynnette who has been volunteering in the hospitality room to provide a friendly welcome to those using the space.
- The building task force (Dennis S, Jerry, Dale G, Tena, Jenna, Cookie, Kitty, and Verne) for their work to make recommendations to the council about possible building

upgrades. Special thanks to Dennis for his work in drafting the report and coordinating getting estimates. Thank you for helping us determine how to best care for the building God has entrusted us with.

- Dana for changing the lightbulb that was out in the fixture in the fellowship area in the sanctuary. Thank you for making sure we can see each other!
- Nancy and Jane for helping to pick the hymns we sing in worship. Thank you for helping us to worship God in song.
- Dale G for coordinating to have the elevator and furnace serviced and inspected. Thank you for making sure our facility is safe and warm and people can access the space.
- Everyone who brought delicious food to our potlucks- especially all the people who brought desserts to our November potluck! Thank you for coming to nourish each other in body and spirit.
- The Faithful Innovation team (Dennis, Randy, Lana, Curt, Dale, and Gloria) for your willingness to be part of this process, to ask the hard questions, and to reflect on what we are hearing from God. Thank you for helping our congregation to move forward.
- Jane, Cookie, and Diane M who helped serve and clean up for the funeral luncheon for Marilyn Olson. Thank you for providing hospitality to the family and friends so they could grieve and celebrate together.
- Dennis H. for building the paper organizers to specifications for the admin office. This makes the colored paper easier to access.

Council Minutes, November 3

Pastor's report: Pastor attended a retreat at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. Park County Ministerial Association will be "Bell Ringing" with ALC covering during the Christmas Stroll on December 6 and Town & Country on December 20. 12 households have signed up for online giving so far. Newsletter articles are due November 21.

Benevolence: October benevolence will go to Winans to buy cold weather gear. November benevolence will go to Lutheran Disaster

Response for flood relief. December will go to Elks' Holiday Food Baskets program.

Building & Grounds: The furnace on the lower level should be replaced. Also, bids are being sought for excavating the back parking lot. Priority will be the removal of the chimney and then, gutters on the back. The council will have a special meeting and determine what will be presented at the ALC congregation meeting.

Finance: 8 more households need to sign up for online giving to meet November's goal. The finance committee will be meeting to prepare the 2025 Budget.

Building Usage: Beartooth Electric is determining the best time to install the heating and air conditioning units in the Montessori rooms, and possibly another grounded outlet in the administrative office. A lower table has been ordered for the coffee area.

New Business:

- Advent decorating will Sunday, December 1.
- Special Council Meeting will be on Tuesday, November 19@4 to discuss Building Task Force recommendations.
- The Annual Congregation Meeting will be Sunday, January 19.
- Reviews for Pastor and Administrative Assistant will be taking place within the next 2 months. The committee will meet with Pastor on December 9, and Annette on December 17.
- A nominating committee will be selected to nominate 2025 Council members.
- Next meeting is December 8.

Agape Circle is a women's Bible study that meets monthly either at church or in a group member's home. The group uses the Bible study out of the Gather magazine. The November gathering will be Thursday, December 5 at 7pm at the church with Diane Mueller hosting. The meeting date was changed to avoid being on the same day as making Norwegian Goodies.





Thank you to everyone who supported our Fall Fundraising Dinner featuring author, Heather White. The evening was a success and we raised over \$12,000 in support of LCM Campus Ministry. If you were unable to attend the event and would still like to make a donation, it's not too late! You can still make a donation!

December Worship Teams

- December 1 Diane Mueller, Ian & Jenna Flatgard
- December 8 Jane Haugen & Dana Latsch
- December 15 Jim & Bonnie Evanson
- December 22 Doug & Cookie Linstead
- December 24 John & Diane West
- December 29 Billie Roberts, Anna Smith, & Karla Pettit

January

- January 5 Dennis & Billie Kay Harms
- January 12 Verne & Leslie Beffert
- January 19 Dennis & Kitty Springer
- January 26 Don & Lana Sheen



American Lutheran Church is assigned one week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) to deliver Meals on Wheels about every other month. ALC's next delivery days are December 16, 18, and 20. Our dedicated crew is struggling and would like some additional volunteers. Please see Dale or Gloria if you are feeling a nudge to help with this ministry.

Christikon Clips

December 2024



As we move into the dark days of winter, and in the midst of a world weary of brokenness, division, natural disasters and war, we look yet again towards the promise of the coming Christ child. As the gospel writer proclaims, "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it."

A blessed Advent and Christmas to you and yours from your Christikon family.

It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ— exploring God's creation and the adventure of life together.

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Accessing the Website

The American Lutheran Church website is a treasure trove of information. If you copy this link

<https://www.alclivingston.org/news>

you'll find yourself on the page that has the monthly newsletter, weekly announcements, and weekly bulletin.

The weekly announcements have more in-depth information than the Sunday version. Scroll down to find upcoming events and worship teams for the next six months.

The bulletin is actually the leader guide so that you meditate on all the prayers and readings. This is usually uploaded on Thursday afternoon, so you can get a sneak peek if you desire.

Most tabs at the top of the website are self-explanatory. Click on the "Resources" tab. The monthly calendar is there if you forget what time something is. Check out the e-newsletter.

Click on the "Give" tab. Not only can you give to the church, but you can also give to various local organizations and designated funds. If you would like help with QR codes, see Pastor or Annette.

Loaves & Fishes

of Livingston

We continue to serve the evening meal at Loaves and Fishes on the third Monday of each month (that's **December 16th** this month). 32 meals were served on November 18th. If you would be willing to help, please let

Pastor Melissa or Cookie Linsted know or just come down to Loaves & Fishes at 10am and/or 3:30pm.

