



# Lutherans in Indian Communities

**LINC** is a newsletter by the Montana District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod for Native communities and the Lutherans living in and/or serving those communities.

## The Headman Dancer

*"Then maidens will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow,"*  
Jeremiah 31:13

The announcer had just called for all the dancers to clear the floor; it was time for an honoring. As I stepped out from under the arbor roof to seek a drink of water, a woman came up. She said, "I saw you dancing here two years ago and I wanted to give you this to dance with," and she handed me a beaded cross. We spoke briefly and then she went to find other family and I tied the cross into my regalia.

Dancing is very important in these communities. It is important to life. In fact it has been said that we pray to dance, we dance to live, we live to celebrate, we celebrate to serve, And as things move full circle, dancing is part of that service.

No dancer dances alone; we always dance with the people, even if no one were around. A dancer carries family and friends and strangers. A dancer carries the sick and the crippled and the old and the mourning and all who cannot dance. A dancer carries creation, in regalia and in heart. A dancer dances unto Creator. We dance in prayer and in thanksgiving, I can never forget that in my regalia, for it bears signs of the Trinity and a large IXTHUS, a fish outline that confesses Jesus Christ, God's Son and Savior, and now a beaded cross.

Yet for all the love and joy and community of the powwow, we still have incomplete dancing. Death still touches the people. Sorrow, guilt and shame burden many hearts. Confusion, worry and fear trouble many minds. Sickness, injury and pain torment many bodies. Evil, abuse and hardship plague many souls.

However, in the face of all this we can still dance because the true Headman Dancer has led the way. He has danced this earth to fill it with heavenly life. He has danced into the heart of the enemy's camp. He has danced into death. He had danced on the serpent's head. He has danced out of the grave. He has danced eternal, resurrection life into His people, for all people. He has danced into heaven to bless the heavenly dance floor for us.

And He will dance back to gather us into His eternal powwow. Here there will be no sorrow, no mourning, no suffering. All will dance; all will celebrate, all will be at peace. Our heavenly Father, our big brother Jesus, and the Holy Spirit will sing beautiful songs, and we will dance forever with Christ.

Dear Father, your gift of dance is a great kindness to lift us up in the face of this world's sorrows. Even when life weighs us down, fill us with your Spirit that our hearts would still dance as we await the great day when we will dance with Christ in the fullness of your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Rev. Dan Jacobs , Crow Agency, Montana

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## A brief history of the Montana District – LCMS in Indian Country

From the beginning of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod's presence in Montana, there have been individuals and some congregations who boldly shared the love of God in Christ Jesus with all their neighbors regardless of race or ethnicity.

A more focused effort to proclaim the Creator's forgiveness for Christ's sake among Native communities began in the 1960's when several District LCMS pastors met Ralph Red Fox (N. Cheyenne). From there, ministry of various kinds began on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. In 1982, Rev. Dennis Bauer was called as missionary to that reservation where he and his family have lived and worked for the past 30 years.

About 1980, a couple of LCMS pastors in Billings became friends with some Crow people. An invitation was extended to a LCMS member to become better acquainted with the Crows by living on the reservation for a year. In 1984, a student pastor, Daniel Jacobs and his wife were sent to the Crow Agency. In 1986, Rev. Jacobs was called to be a missionary-at-large on the Crow Reservation. He and his family have served the Crow people for 26 years.

Over the years, the Gospel spread and in 1996, Crow Lutheran Ministry, based in Crow Agency, became a congregation of the Montana District LCMS. Three years later, in 1999, Circle of Life Lutheran Church, based in Muddy Cluster on the N. Cheyenne Reservation became a congregation of the Montana District-LCMS.

In 1999, Rev. Jacobs began visiting the Fort Peck Reservation to become acquainted with people there and to help the pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Wolf Point, reach into the Native community with the Good News of peace with the Creator through Christ Jesus. In 2006, Rev. George Draper began the "Gospel Minute" radio broadcast. With a few interruptions due to funding, this ministry continues today.

In 2001, IMC Chairman, Rev. Jacobs began visiting Browning at the request of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Columbia Falls, to become acquainted with the Blackfeet people and to assess ministry needs and openings in that area. As a result, in 2005, Our Redeemer L.C. held its first Vacation Bible School at the Native Days Powwow in Browning. This congregation continues to hold VBS at the Powwow each year and provides support ministry to various shelters in Browning.

In 2006, Rev. Jacobs started visiting the Flathead Reservation on a regular basis to assist the pastors with Gospel outreach across cultural lines. This too is an on-going endeavor.

In August 2011, Rev. Park Timber, Lame Deer, (N. Cheyenne) was ordained and installed as associate pastor of Circle of Life Church at Muddy Cluster. He, his wife Sheri and Suzette Cain another Northern Cheyenne woman are ministering to at-risk youth in the region. Suzette Cain is receiving theological leadership training that will provide her with a solid foundation for helping Native children discover salvation and hope through Jesus Christ. Rev. Park Timber also provides a spiritual witness as he works among other Native communities in the region.

## How Can We Serve You?

This is a grouping of LCMS churches on or near reservations in Montana.

### Blackfeet

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Rev. Matthew Nelson  
640 7th ST W  
Columbia Falls, 59912  
orlc@ourredeemerlc.org

### Crow

Crow Lutheran Ministry  
Rev. Dan Jacobs  
Box 335  
Crow Agency 59022  
crowlutheranministry@yahoo.com

### Flathead

Mt Calvary Lutheran Church  
Rev. Kyle Whaley  
1609 Second St. W  
Polson 59860

Zion Lutheran Church  
Rev. Kyle Whaley  
306 2nd Ave. N  
St. Ignatius 59865

St. Paul Lutheran Church  
Rev. Timothy Gordish  
35681 Terrace Lake Rd  
Ronan 59864  
stpaulslutheranchurch@ronan.net

### Northern Cheyenne

Circle of Life Lutheran Church  
Rev. Dennis Bauer and  
Rev. Park Timber  
Box 1214  
Lame Deer 59043  
circleoflife@rangeweb.net

Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church  
Rev. John Sias  
430 Olive Dr.  
Colstrip 59323  
pastor@mtcalvary-colstrip.org

Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Rev. James Koss  
323 N. Crawford  
Hardin 59034

### Fort Peck

Trinity Lutheran Church  
Rev. John Vallie  
103 Benton ST  
Wolf Point 59201

### Rocky Boy's

St Paul Lutheran Church  
Rev. Mark Schultz  
1100 11th ST  
Havre 59501  
stpaul@itstriangle.com



## Prayer Requests

### Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church ---Navajo, New Mexico

*This little congregation has been about ten years without a pastor. This has been very hard on the people. The lack of a shepherd has left them facing many trials without the necessary support and instruction of the Word and Sacraments.*

### The Crow People, Crow Indian Reservation—Montana

*Since the killings in October 2011, the gates of death have been opened as never before. During the past 4 1/2 months many have died. Not a week has passed without several deaths. Death has been touching all ages by all means. Not a family is untouched. All have lost more than one member. It is becoming overwhelming.*

## Other LCMS churches that may be of assistance to you.

<b>Located near College Campuses</b>		
<p><b>Billings</b>                      Trinity Lutheran Church                      537 Grande Ave                      Rev. Daniel Rinderknecht and                      Rev. Timothy Richolt  <a href="mailto:trinitylutheran4@gwestoffice.net">trinitylutheran4@gwestoffice.net</a></p>	<p><b>Bozeman</b>                      First Lutheran Church                      225 S. Black                      Rev. Samuel Grayl  <a href="mailto:lutheranbobcats@mcn.net">lutheranbobcats@mcn.net</a></p>	<p><b>Missoula</b>                      First Lutheran Church                      2808 South Ave. W                      Rev. David Renfro  <a href="mailto:flcmissoula@aol.com">flcmissoula@aol.com</a></p>
<b>Involved with Prison Ministry</b>		
<p><b>Prison Ministry Committee</b>                      Rev. Jay Reinke, Chairman                      Concordia Lutheran Church                      1805 Main ST                      Williston, NC 58801  <a href="mailto:concordia@nemon.net">concordia@nemon.net</a></p>	<p><b>Montana State Prison</b>                      St. John Lutheran Church                      Rev. Robert Mitchell                      410 Missouri Ave.                      Deer Lodge 59722  <a href="mailto:stjohndeerlodge@yahoo.com">stjohndeerlodge@yahoo.com</a></p>	

