



# 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.

*Fall 2015 -Issue #8*

## **THANKSGIVING**

**The season of remembering and  
giving thanks for God's blessings!  
Thanking HIM for each new day!**

*"O Give Thanks unto the LORD for HE is good and HIS mercy endures forever." Psalm 100:8*

- For HIS beautiful creation and bountiful harvest.
- For the progress made on the lodge at Muddy Cluster and the many teams who came to help with the construction, VBS and other projects.
- For a larger than usual gathering at the Tepee Capital of the World, the Crow Fair in August.
- For the support for the new building program for Everything Beautiful Thrift Store in Lame Deer on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.
- For receptive ears to the "Food For Thought" radio message that is heard daily on KVCK on the Fort Peck Reservation. People are recognizing the voice of Rev. John Vallie as the one on the radio.
- For successful VBS programs at four Pow Wows this summer, and for faithful volunteers.
- For a Cheyenne high school girl, who beaded a "key fob" for a prize at our booth at our church convention this past June.
- For God's Word touching lives and showing all that forgiveness is "for giving" It is a free gift. **THANKS BE TO GOD!**

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Indian Ministry Committee, (IMC) - 30 Broadwater - Billings, MT 59101  
For additional information contact Rev. Dan Jacobs, IMC Chairman  
Box 335 - Crow Agency, MT 59022 – [crowlutheranministry@gmail.com](mailto:crowlutheranministry@gmail.com)

## Plans to break ground in March 2016



This is the property purchased for the site of the new energy efficient building for EVERYTHING BEAUTIFUL THRIFT STORE in Lame Deer. It is located in the center of town facing the main street.

Volunteers are stepping forward to donate their expertise. An architect is drawing the plans at no charge. Another volunteer with expertise and equipment will break ground in March 2016. He has committed his time and will bring volunteer workers

as the ground is excavated and the foundation of the building is laid. A third volunteer has committed his expertise as project manager and six months of time to lead volunteers in the construction process.

Generous gifts from The Ministerial Association, friends and community members, as well as those who contribute to the building fund as they shop at the Thrift store have been sources of income in the past three years. Grant requests have been submitted for needed financial support.

For a complete story go to [www.everythingbeautifulthriftstore.com](http://www.everythingbeautifulthriftstore.com)

The vision statement for Everything Beautiful Thrift Store is: **Reflecting God's love for all, in Christ Jesus, we seek to serve our people's needs, protecting each one's dignity."**

Working together through Christ Jesus, *Suzette Shreffler, Store Manager*

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**Pow Wows:** During the evenings at the Crow Fair and on The Fort Peck Reservation, Rev. Jacobs participated in the dancing. At the dance arbor in Wolf Point a worship service was held on Sunday morning. Rev. Vallie was at the Fort Peck Pow Wow on Friday where people were able to connect the voice of the radio ministry "Food for Thought" with a face. Bobbi Scherderline and Mike Aswegan were helpers with VBS at this Pow Wow.

The Crow Fair saw VBS helpers from First Lutheran, Bozeman; Circle of Life Lutheran Church, Muddy Cluster, and Ashland. The 108 degree heat, during this Fair, had many of the youth in the river from late morning to dusk. Adults came to the booth with questions and concerns. One young Japanese couple, new Christians, found encouragement knowing that our pastors have shared the Gospel message for 30 years on reservations in Montana.

In Ashland, at the Labor Day PowWow there was an abundance of children for VBS, so many that teaching the lesson, (doing crafts and answering questions) was almost impossible. What a wonderful blessing to have so many curious children!



## Only one thing is Needful

**Since the Crow Fair in August 2014, there have been many problems in the Crow community.** The economy is still bad, and it seems all the helpful plans the tribal government comes up with get derailed by circumstances beyond their control. The drug problem, especially meth, has grown. This led to an increase in various kinds of crime, as well as child abuse and neglect. Death is never ending, seeming to strike almost daily—which is significant in a population of less than 15,000 in which everyone is connected in some way. These deaths are from almost every cause imaginable.

All of this has made life on the reservation quite stressful and people desperate for change. This has led to more conflicts and divisions as families and clans get more focused on their own survival. Yet, it has caused some to see the need to draw together to cry out to the spiritual powers for the sake of the Apsaalooke people. Because of all the death, it was thought by some that the Crow Fair would be small this year, sparsely attended. In fact, there was even talk of canceling it.

However, the decision was made to continue. By Sunday before the fair, half to three-fourths of the camps were set up. There was larger attendance and more dancers than there had been in quite a number of years. The hope of all was that as we wound up one ceremonial year and began a new one, everyone's prayers, participation, and positive energy would change the Tribe's fortune and bring them "good luck". The adoption of Adam Beach into the Tribe seems to be part of this for it is assumed he would bring "good prayer, good plans, good wishes" with him. For now people are looking at what humans can do through prayers and ceremonies, through good works, and through economic and social planning.

However, the problems are beyond what we humans can alter. In the Psalms we read, "**Do not put your trust in princes, in a mortal human who can not save you. His breath goes out: he returns to his earth. In that very day his thoughts perish. (Psalm 146:3-4)**" The problems here, as with all human problems, are ultimately spiritual ones. The solution is not from our strength, power, or skills. It is from the Spirit of the Creator. What the Spirit gives is the Gospel of Christ Jesus. This is not based on our efforts, ceremonies or fasting. The Gospel is completely a gift. It is where we receive peace and life with Creator. Here is our help and refuge, even if the mountains fall into the sea and all of life blows up in our faces. Jesus delivers us from evil by His Crucifixion; He delivers us from death by His Resurrection. Because of this He carries us through today's struggles and sufferings, and He heals not only our break with God but also our breaks with one another so we can live as true community and love our neighbor as ourselves.

But sadly, even many of the churches here are looking for something other than the Gospel. As one preacher said, "Everyone knows the Gospel. Now we need to preach more important things."

**Yet, there is nothing more important than the Gospel. Without the forgiveness of sins there is no future; for it is only in the healing we receive through the medicine of Christ's blood that we are united to Creator, the One who is Life. In this we receive His wholeness and purity so we may truly live. The answer to the problems here will not come from us. They can only come from above, and have indeed come in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Walk in beauty all around, *Rev. Dan Jacobs, Crow Agency*



## MUDDY CLUSTER

As you enter Muddy Cluster from the highway, this is the sign that greets you. A witness to the fact that Circle of Life Lutheran Church is a very prominent part of this community. The church facility is used by this community for meetings and fellowship.



Progress on the Youth Camp Lodge continues with lessons learned along the way. The foundation was in place as we began work this year. We were able to complete all the support timbers in the crawl space, put on the sub-floor and begin the building of the walls. Our plan is to continue building the walls into the fall and perhaps even in the winter. We pray that by God's grace, we will have the roof on by the end of summer 2016.



This second view of the lodge gives a clear picture of the walls. We are doing all the milling of the logs as we move forward in raising the walls. We had four church groups work with us this summer. Most of the groups held VBS and worked on the construction project. In addition the volunteers painted all of the out buildings on the church property and did many other labor intense jobs that aren't as glamorous as the construction of the lodge but just as important.

Groups who came to work at Muddy Cluster this summer were: South Suburban, Littleton, Colorado; Redeemer, Dickinson, ND; First Lutheran, Rice Lake, Wisconsin; Our Savior, Laurel, Maryland, and Ron and Diane Norton from the Folsom, California area. Trinity, Billings helped this past spring and have plans to send additional groups to help.

We appreciate the encouraging presence of those who work with us in the ministry of the Lord in this place. We welcome groups from Montana who would like to experience life on the reservation and work with us on projects. Continue to keep us in your prayers and stop by and check out the progress.



Proclaiming the Christ! *Rev. Dennis Bauer, Circle of Life Lutheran Church*