



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.

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“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”
(Proverbs 22:6)

Many Lutheran Churches have a preschool ministry. At St Paul Lutheran Church in Ronan, Montana on the Flathead Reservation, Kay Bowman is the teacher at Little Lambs Preschool. This year, about half of the children are from Native American families. Kay shared this story:

The grandmother of one of my students runs a cafe in Ronan and often the grandson spends time in the cafe after preschool.

One day the young boy took hold of the hands of a regular customer, with whom he interacts almost every day, and said, **“Did you know that Jesus had nails put through His hands? Bad people hanged Him on the cross just cuz He said He was God's Son.”**

The man asked him **how he knew this?**
The boy put his hands on his hips and replied,
“Everyone in preschool knows this!”

(There is joy in watching a little child learn and share with excitement and confidence!)

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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

METH..."Not even once"

Rev. Dan Jacobs pastor of the Crow Lutheran Church, at Crow Agency, addresses the subject of "meth addiction".

The meth problem is big on the Crow Reservation as on many reservations. It seems that the leaders don't recognize it as a symptom of a much deeper problem.

A few months ago, an elder speaking to a small group talked of how things are dying here because the people are losing contact with and respect for what he called "Power" or "Energy", meaning the Source and Sustain-er of all things. This is the only time I've heard someone here make that spiritual connection to the problems here, and he is correct. Whatever the belief system spoken of here, it seems to always involve a "God" made in our image, one that fits our idea of what a creator should be and do.

Christians and non-Christians alike basically all work from a theology of glory. A case in point is a preacher who told the mourners at a large funeral that they needed to choose Jesus, then life would be easy. All they would need to do is love God with all their heart, soul, and mind, and love their neighbor as themselves. That's how one is able to partake of life after death he claimed. Such burdening of people is common here. If honest, most people know they don't keep those commandments, so what hope do they have? People wonder why we are plagued with alcoholism, meth and other drug abuse, child neglect, depression, suicide, etc.

Satan rules by death and the fear of death here because the Gospel has been nearly silenced. It is not that the churches are doing that on purpose; they mostly claim they are preaching the Gospel. Although some claim everyone already knows the Gospel so we should be preaching more "important" things, it is more a matter that they don't actually know Gospel. I have yet to attend a funeral where the resurrection of Christ, or us, is mentioned.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we give You thanks that, because of the death and resurrection of Your Son, You do not count our wrongs and impurity against us but rather have cleansed us and made us pure in Christ. Thank You that even the cords of the grave will surely not bind us to the fate of this dying world. You have given Your Church the keys to everlasting life whereby we are released from the deadly entanglement of our sins and are bound to the resurrection of Jesus. Bless us with courage and compassion to share this Good News of life with all those around us so that they too may live and dance with You in peace and joy now and forever. Amen.



Christ is risen! Hallelujah!
Rev. Dan Jacobs

VBS scheduled for Powwows

Rev Dan Jacobs will attend four Powwows this summer and with the help of volunteers he will lead a VBS for the youth. Creative materials are developed to depict the theme. None of the tables lack for children on any of the days. A portable booth purchased specifically for use as Rev. Jacobs travels to the Powwows on the east side of the state is a recognizable site. Dan and the men set it up in preparation. Water is also available for adults who stop to visit. If you are in any of these areas for the dates listed, stop and volunteer.

The dates for the Powwows where you can assist with VBS are:

Wadopana at Wolf Point--August 4-7

Crow Fair--August 19-22

Labor Day Powwow at Ashland--September 2-5

Rev. Jacobs is a presence at the Arlee

Powwow but does not hold a formal VBS.

Fourth of July Celebration at Arlee--July 1-3



On the other side of the state, in Browning, a group from Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, in Columbia Falls brings a trailer of supplies and another portable booth to hold VBS at the Native American Indian Days, to be held this year July 14-17.

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church has been traveling to Browning to hold a VBS for the past ten years.

Imagine the thoughts of the young ones who might wonder why these people come to do things with them, give them snacks and crafts to make, all "free". What an opening to share the story of God's love.

Buildings in progress on the Cheyenne Reservation.



In **Lame Deer**, on March 20, members gathered to break ground for the new building of Everything Beautiful Thrift Store. This new structure will house opportunities for serving the community in many ways, making it a “hands up” facility rather than a “hand out” facility.

Volunteers came from other states with equipment and expertise to offer their help. Terry Schultz from S.D., a cement contractor, brought his equipment, materials and a friend to assist him. Lynn Miller, a general contractor from Ohio arrived to organize the construction of a floor to protect the foundation. Volunteers from Lame Deer will be assisting him. We have invested our current funds and are writing grants to keep moving forward. Our goal is to provide opportunities for employment and growth for the Cheyenne people in Lame Deer and the surrounding towns. Suzette Shreffler, manager



In **Muddy Cluster** the lodge being constructed on the Circle of Life property is moving forward as logs are milled. Rev. Dennis Bauer shared that the structure now has two or three beams on each side with electrical boxes for outlets in the beams.. Groups of workers from around the United States will volunteer their time this summer to work on this project and offer Vacation Bible School programs for the youth.

In another area, on another note: This year Trinity and Peace congregations in Great Falls have provided copies of the devotional booklet **Portals of Prayer** for the Native American Welcoming Center at Benefis Hospital. Via a contact with a fellow hospice worker who receives copies of the LINC, permission was given for these booklets to be left in the center. Copies of Rev. Dan Jacobs' booklets on Grieving and Suffering are also available in the center.

Barbara Going, editor, Great Falls, is a member of the MT District Indian Ministry Committee.
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