



# Shining Mountains *news*

"IT IS OUR MISSION, AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD AND COMMAND TO GROW IN HIS WORD, TO GATHER AROUND HIS WORD, AND TO GO WITH HIS WORD."

*No matter what happens in the world or in the Church,*

## Do not forget one thing, friends!

It was a little bit hard not to laugh, wasn't it? Certainly the rest of the world was laughing. A Christian radio host had been promising that Jesus would come back to take his people home to heaven on Saturday, May 21st at 6:00 pm (PST). When the time came and went, the world snickered, "What a bunch of Bible thumpers! Nothing like that will ever happen!" When we look at their expectations, we're tempted to snicker, "What a bunch of Bible know-nothings! God makes it clear that we don't know *when* he will come again."

At times like this, it's worth remembering words that God gave to us through St. Peter: *First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation"* (2 Peter 3:3-4).

Peter talked about what's at the heart of the mockery: the unbelieving world completely rejects the thought of Jesus coming back and bringing this world to an end. It foolishly believes that everything will continue to go on the way it always has. It has no concept that

another world is coming that they must prepare for.

There's perhaps good reason to ask ourselves: As much as we rightly reject predictions that Jesus is coming back on *such and such a date*, do we give much thought to his coming back *at all*? Or do we show more of the complacency of the unbelieving world than the hopeful watching of those misled believers?

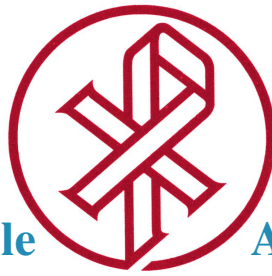
Looking forward to Christ's return doesn't mean emptying our bank accounts, removing ourselves from the world and staring at the sky. Again, Peter's words give us some helpful direction: *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance* (2 Pe 3:3-4).

Christ calls us to hold to his promises as we look forward to the end. Cherish the blessings of this life as gifts from God. Love our families—and gather around God's Word with them at home and at church. Understand that the



God who wants all people to come to repentance sends *us* to preach that message to them.

The world scoffs, but Christ will return. Until that day, let us hold to the truth so that we aren't misled by false prophets. May we pray for and correct those who are deceived. And let us share the promises of God who wants all people to come to repentance and his heavenly home.



## The Prayerbook of the People

## A closer look at our hymnal

*Hymnals have often been called “The prayer book of the people.” We usually think of the hymns that become near and dear to our hearts—words that often come to our mind even more quickly and memorably than some words of Scripture because of their rhyme and music. The hymnal, though, is much more than just hymns. Every month, this article will take a look at a different portion of our hymnal (Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal) in hopes of casting light on some of its often-overlooked blessings. (For those who don’t have one, copies of the hymnal can be ordered through Northwestern Publishing House at [www.nph.net](http://www.nph.net).)*

### The Lectionaries

How does a pastor decide what he’s going to preach on every Sunday?

In our circles—and throughout most of the Christian Church—the answer can be found in something called *lectionaries* (also called *pericopes*). Lectionaries are annual cycles of readings. In a lectionary, three readings (an Old Testament lesson, New Testament Epistle and Gospel) are set for each Sunday of the Church Year. The lectionaries that we use can be found on pages 163-166 in the front of our hymnals.

### Where did the lectionaries come from?

Over the centuries, the Christian Church developed a pattern of readings for each Sunday of the year. The “historic lectionary” was used fairly universally throughout the Church, with roots going back to about 400 AD. Within the Lutheran Church starting about the mid-sixteenth century, there was a one-year series of readings that was used consistently. If you would talk with a faithful Lutheran from the last century, they could probably attest that every year they heard the account of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey read to them on the first Sunday in Advent, or that they heard the account of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness from Matthew 4 read on the First Sunday in Lent.

A fairly significant change came in 1973. The *Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship* introduced a 3-year pattern of readings (Year A, B, and C—we’re currently in Year A) as an alternate option to the historic one-year series. The focus of each Sunday remained the same (we still celebrate Jesus’ birth at Christmas and the sending of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost), but moving to a three-year rotation of readings allowed Christians to be exposed to many more portions of Scripture in Sunday morning worship. For examples, the Gospel readings in Year A are taken almost exclusively from Matthew; Year B focuses on Mark’s Gospel, and Year C on Luke (readings from John are interspersed through out all of them).

Two other strengths of the three-year series are worth noting: they put greater emphasis on the Old Testament readings (many of which were not read in church before this). They also included “continuous readings” (*lectio continua*) from some of the New Testament Epistles. For instance, in “Year A” worshippers will hear consecutive sections of the book of Romans

read in worship during the summer months, giving a more complete sense of the book.

### Why use lectionaries at all?

The argument could be made: *Using lectionaries stops the preacher from speaking about what’s relevant on any given Sunday. It doesn’t let him pick and choose what to talk about!*

It’s worth saying that the lectionaries aren’t a *rule*; no minister is forced to use these texts. It’s not rare for a pastor to choose special readings for Mother’s Day or after a particularly significant event (many pastors held special services after Sept. 11th). But think through the statement above again. Throughout the centuries the Church has found great wisdom in having a pre-set series of readings. Could you guess what might happen if the preacher picked out his readings for the week, every week? It’s all-too-easy for a preacher to fall into the habit of preaching on his own “hobby horses” - hitting the topics that he likes to talk about or considers to be the greatest needs. While there’s value in a pastor speaking to “where his flock is at,” using a lectionary serves a number of benefits:

- It leads pastor and congregation through an annual review of the life of Christ and the key teachings of Scripture
- It exposes us to texts that we might not normally think of reading
- It gets us to wrestle with topics that we might even want to shy away from.

### A recent development

Part of our Synod’s work in producing the *Christian Worship Supplement* (a book meant to complement our current hymnal) was a slight revision of the three-year series. While the Gospel readings for each Sunday remain the same, two main changes were implemented:

- There was a focus on bringing in more (and longer) Old Testament narratives to expose worshippers to OT events they might not be familiar with
- The “continuous readings” from the NT Epistles were dropped, in favor of Epistle lessons that connected more thematically with the Gospel for each Sunday.

God grant that these tools help lead us more deeply into his Word!



# Building project update

**“It is our mission, as brothers and sisters in Christ, according to God’s Word and command to grow in his Word, to gather around his Word, and to go with his Word.”**

Our congregation’s work towards a new church home continues to take encouraging steps forward. Below is a summary of recent developments and planned steps:

- The Church Council has nearly completed a “conceptual phase” with Massmann Studios. The result of this phase will be a number of different sketches and floor plans for a possible new church home. The Council has seen preliminary designs and requested a few changes to better suit our ministry and goals. Once those designs are complete, the Council will work on scheduling a presentation for the congregation
- At the congregational meeting on May 22, the congregation was introduced to a number of different properties. In addition to the Valley Center location that we own, an overview was given of two additional properties at the north end of town, as well as an option on S. 19th. Directions to these locations have been placed in your mail-boxes; please take the time to visit the properties and start forming feedback for the Council
- The congregation will need to make a decision regarding our location before too much more work can be done on designing a building. To help us toward that end, Mark Massmann (the owner of Massmann Studios) has offered to visit Bozeman in mid-June to evaluate site costs and negotiate prices for the different parcels of land we’re considering.

Continue to watch bulletins and newsletters for more information. Keep our work before God’s throne of grace in your prayers. If you have any questions or thoughts, please don’t hesitate to ask Pastor or a member of the Council.

## National Conference on Worship, Music and the Arts



Shining Mountains has received a \$1600 scholarship to send four of her members to the WELS’ *National Conference on Worship, Music and the Arts*. The four-day conference is held in July on the campuses of Gustavus Adolphus College and Martin Luther College in Minnesota.

Our four participants—Joe and Nicki Becker, Veronica Baker and Sarah Newton—will be able to attend workshops on worship, music and architecture that will be helpful in our current church home—and especially as we look to the future. They’ll also attend model worship services that highlight what Lutheran worship can be like.

Thank them for this work on our behalf, and keep their work and travel in your prayers!



## The Festival of St. Barnabas

### Special worship opportunity

On Monday, June 13th, Shining Mountains will host a special worship opportunity for her friends and members.

As WELS pastors and members from across Montana meet for a pastor/delegate conference hosted in Bozeman, our normal Monday evening worship will be replaced by an opening worship service for our conference. The service (still held at 7:00 pm), will be a celebration of the Festival of St. Barnabas.

Rev. Jay Bickelhaupt, the pastor of Apostles Lutheran Church in Billings, will preach the sermon. Pastor Bickelhaupt serves as our Montana “circuit pastor” - serving as a “pastor’s pastor” for our pastors throughout the state, as well as being a source of counsel and help for our congregations.

The service will be a special evening Compline service; the Lord’s Supper will be celebrated. As we look at God’s grace through Barnabas, the “son of encouragement” who served the early Church, may the Lord remind us of the ways he strengthens and cares for us, even in our struggles.

# Summer Opportunities for Spiritual Growth

This summer *Shining Mountains* will offer some unique opportunities to grow together in God's Word. These offerings are designed to be something special and unique for our members—as well as opportunities to invite friends to.

Look for more information in our monthly calendars, online, and in bulletin announcements!

## Fire and Brimstone Bible Class

Twice this summer we'll gather together for an outdoor Bible study. We'll meet up around a bonfire ("fire") and have a grill going ("brimstone") so that we can all roast up our dinner. After a time of food and fellowship, we'll enjoy the Bozeman summer evening as we dig into a portion of God's Word.

## Mountaintop Experience

The Psalmist once wrote, "As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore" (Ps 125:2). This summer we'll try a unique way of both enjoying the beauty of God's creation and growing in our knowledge of his saving love. In August we'll schedule a congregational hike (on the easier side) up to a scenic lookout where we'll have a Bible study or brief worship service.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions for study topics, feel free to suggest them to Pastor.

# A look at Christian Ed. at Shining Mountains

Sharing God's Word with the next generation is one of our greatest privileges and serious responsibilities. There is much that Shining Mountains does as a church to carry out that work well right now: Sunday School, confirmation class, Vacation Bible School and our Christmas Eve service are fine examples.

We also face some clear hurdles in our work: our facilities limit what we can do in Sunday School, and many of our members drive a considerable distance, which can make other learning opportunities difficult to attend.

This summer Pastor Seifert will lead the congregation in a discussion of the way we approach Christian Education for our youth at SMLC. We'll have a chance to share what we appreciate, what our challenges are, and what opportunities we see for further improvement.

A number of forums will be held this summer. All members are invited to take part, especially those who either have children or serve in teaching roles at SMLC. More information will follow in the bulletins.

What should you expect from these meetings?

- A chance to share your thoughts and suggestions
- Concrete ideas for family devotions at home
- A discussion of modification to our Sunday School program
- A renewed understanding of the role we all have in passing the truths of the Savior to the next generation

May God bless these efforts!

## Montana Divine Call News

This year the Lord blessed our Montana WELS churches with two called workers from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Pastor-elect Jacob Hanneman was assigned to serve our congregations in Terry and Circle (churches formerly served by Pastor Dave Ruddat.

Mr. Peter Walther was assigned to serve as a vicar (pastoral intern) for one year at Mt. Zion Lutheran in Missoula.

Praise be to God for his goodness, and may the Lord continue to bless and care for his Church.

## Serving Us in June *Thank you to those who served in May!*

	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Refreshments</u>	<u>Flowers</u>	<u>Cleaners</u>
6/5	J Lauersdorf / T Zulauf	Joecks	L & V Baker	Buchholz (6/6-6/11)
6/12	T Linn / P Marozick	Buchholz/Wilcox	E Baker	Giese (6/13-6/18)
6/19	D Pruitt / M Joecks	<i>open</i>	Joecks	Gustafson (6/20-6/25)
6/26	J Kohler / T Armbrecht	<i>open</i>	Seifert	Hunziker (6/27-7/2)

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. **Psalm 84:10**

# June 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 9:00 Bible class 10:00 Worship	6 7:00 pm—Worship	7 6:15 pm Church Council	8	9	10	11
12 9:00 Bible class 10:00 Worship	13 7:00 pm—Worship “The Festival of St. Barnabas”	14 9 am—4 pm—Pastor/ delegate conference held at Shining Mountains	15	16	17	18
19 9:00 Bible class 10:00 Worship Narrated service	20 7:00 pm—Worship	21	22	23	24	25
			6:00 pm—Fire & Brimstone Dinner and Bible Study			
26 9:00 Bible class 10:00 Worship	27 7:00 pm—Worship	28	29	30		

Marriage retreat in Missoula

# Upcoming Messages

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In June we bring the Easter Season (and the Festival-half of the Church Year) to a close. We enter into the *Year of the Church* as our focus shifts from *the life of Christ* to *the teaches of Christ that shape a Christian's life*. Below is a list of our Sunday worship focuses and readings.

May the following schedule help you as you prepare for worship or look for opportunities to invite a friend!

## ***Worship in June***

June 5 *The Seventh Sunday of Easter (1 Sa 1:21-28; 1 Pe 4:12-17, 5:6-11; Jn 17:1-11a)*

June 12 *The Day of Pentecost (Joel 2:28-29; Ac 2:1-21; Jn 16:5-11)*

June 13 *The Festival of St. Barnabas*

*Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt preaches for this special Monday evening service, focusing on the way the Lord uses his Word and his people to encourage us during difficulties*

June 19 *The Sunday of the Holy Trinity (Ge 1:1-2:3; 2 Co 13:11-14; Mt 28:16-20)*

*On Trinity Sunday we'll have a 'narrated service'. Our worship will be interspersed with readings from a narrator that help explain what we're doing in worship—and why we're doing it. (The sermon will be shortened to keep the service the regular length.)*

June 26 *The Second Sunday after Pentecost (1 Kg 22:10-28; 2 Pe 1:20-2:3; Mt 7:15-29)*

