



Residents wanted!

We are accepting applications for summer and fall residents!

Do you know a student who would love to live in an accepting, close-knit, Christian community, across the street from UM? We have options from single rooms to two bedroom (shared) apartments.

Contact John or Kristen for info or an application!



(Intern Pastor Kaylie at Lake Alva)

Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization



By Rev. John Lund
One of our biggest challenges as Christians in the U.S. and especially in Montana is to develop reconciling and trusting relationships with

indigenous peoples in each of our communities. The history has been deeply painful and traumatic for them and its devastating effects are lived out in our communities to this day.

At the same time, the descendants of white settlers, including myself, continue to benefit from that history, which was built on the evils of presumed cultural and racial superiority, backed up by the (supposedly) Christian-based doctrine that whites were destined by God to claim the “New World” from its original inhabitants (Manifest Destiny). Alongside this were fabricated narratives that dehumanized first nations people and delegitimized indigenous wisdom, stories, language, culture and spiritual practices. All of this was propped up and propagated by Christian people, individual congregations founded by early settlers, and denominations.

These forces all contributed to practices of genocide, forced removal of peoples from homelands to

reservations and systematic dismantling of indigenous culture, community, language and wisdom through punitive laws and forced participation in boarding schools. Millions of settlers, including myself, have occupied those stolen homelands and many have profited off of their use of that land.

Dominant white culture still operates out of internal identities of entitlement and superiority paired with either no regard or disparaging regard of indigenous people. Racist remarks regarding indigenous people are still commonplace in many sectors of our state and especially in towns that border reservations. Also, more than once I have heard indigenous leaders talk about erasure as a common problem. They are often not thought of, seen, nor considered by white leaders and decision makers across most segments of our society.

Authentic Christian identity calls us into a vision of community where all people are valued with shared leadership, wisdom, and agency which results in shared resources, dignity, power, and quality of life. This is Jesus’ vision of the Beloved Community and one that we are called to work towards and live into. In this time we need church leaders who are settlers (or descendants of) to pick up this work for ourselves and each other.

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Emmaus Campus Ministry is a ministry of ELCA Lutherans in partnership with the Episcopalians and United Church of Christ. We are a Reconciled in Christ Ministry, welcoming students of all perspectives and identities.



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This will only happen through the intentional and often painful work of truth-telling, correcting the settler narrative of history, understanding the dynamics of white supremacy and power, repentance, humility, letting go of being right, and the slow process of building trust and relationship with indigenous leaders and peoples around us.

In Missoula through Common Good Missoula we are developing a process to begin this work in earnest. With partners across the Northwest we have developed a workshop called Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization and have nine leaders trained to run it. In addition, we are building relationships with leaders from All Nations Health Center, the Confederated Salish

and Kootenai tribal council, the Blackfeet tribe and other indigenous leaders in Missoula.

Our plan is to run this workshop in the late spring for the leaders of our 35 partner organizations within Common Good Missoula. This might include staff, board members, volunteers and key leaders of each church, neighborhood, union, and non-profit. Our hope is to build a common understanding and narrative of our shared history and current state. In addition, we will build relationships, commitments and accountability to move into a more equitable future for all. If you don't fit into one of these groups, there is still room for you to join in this work. Please reach out and let me know.

Ways to Support

Currently we need volunteers to help John and the Emmaus crew with renovating work on Wesley House on Monday, Wednesday, and/or Friday mornings. No special skills required!

Apply for a Thrivent Action Team Grant to support our year-end picnic, or another project! If you are a Thrivent member you can apply for two \$250 grants each year. Please call or email Pastor John if you would like to support us in this way.

Donate via mail or **visit ecmum.org** to see all the ways to give!



(From left: Garrett, Johnathan, Leonard, and Emily thinking hard on trivia night)

Welcome!

Hi there, my name is Kyle Lefler (she/ hers) and I am thrilled to join the staff of Emmaus as the new Director of Fundraising & Development. I have been living in Montana for nearly seven years, previously serving as the Associate Director at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. I am passionate about creating intentional community spaces where young adults feel accepted,empowered, advocated for & loved- grateful to be joining Emmaus in this mission!

I also work as an adventure guide at Chrysalis School in Eureka MT, a therapeutic boarding school for teenage girls. I hope to pursue my social work graduate degree one day and become a therapist. I love handwritten letters, live music (when it's safe!) and early morning lake swims.

I look forward to connecting with many of you as we work together in the future!



Rai Combs has been doing racial Equity training and decolonizing work with Emmaus and Common Good Missoula this past year. He comes from Tsimshian 1st Nations and German Origins and is pursuing a dual major Environmental Studies/ Native American Studies at University of Montana. Rai has had a full career in the US Army Air Calvary, US Coast Guard Search and Rescue, US Border Patrol, and as a Federal Air Marshal. He comes with a wealth of stories and wisdom and is excited about this next chapter in his life!

Our newest board member Amy Glaspey is a professor in the speech-language pathology program at UM. She lives in Missoula with her husband Brett Leischner, and their 10-year-old daughter, Maya. They are members of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Missoula. Amy enjoys book groups, has recently taken up Nordic skiing, and is working on visiting every state park in Montana.



Farewell, Friends

This past year two of our residents, Tess and Shalom have been living with us as covid-19 refugees. They have both been attending Union Theological Seminary in New York City but have lived with us in the Wesley House while they are attending classes online. Recently they have finally found housing above a church in Harlem, mailed their life belongings across the country, and moved to New York via plane. Both are getting MDiv degrees, with Tess hoping to work within faith-based nonprofits and Shalom hoping to do chaplaincy work with environmental refugees. We have been blessed to have them with us and we wish them Godspeed on this next big adventure in their lives!



(From left: Rebekah, Raina, Shalom, Tess and Emily at Wesley House)

Thanks to outgoing board member Deb Lutes! Deb and Duncan have relocated to Whitefish. We appreciate your years of service to Emmaus and we will miss you!

Program Highlights

One Coin Found Bookstudy

Reflection by seminary intern Rebekah Cochrane

Each Sunday evening in February, Rebekah and Intern Pastor Kaylie gathered students, friends, and congregation members from all over Montana for a book study that turned out to be so much more than a typical church basement affair! On Zoom the group was able to connect folks who would normally be outside of our usual circles and deeply engage with Pastor Emmy Kegler's book, *One Coin Found*. We began by examining the lenses that we wear and look through when we read Scripture and engage with our faith. These lenses are formed from our own individual experiences, identities, and beliefs about God and the world. As a queer woman, Pastor Emmy shares in her book what Christian stories mean through her own lens and invites us to consider what stands out and what we might miss when looking through our own lenses.

The following week, we interrogated our ideas of sin. So often, we understand sin as an individual matter. Pastor Emmy invites us to broaden this idea of sin to

include participation in systems of oppression that are bigger than any individual, like white supremacy and patriarchy, or our laziness to look these systems and the people they impact, in the eye.

In our third week, we took time to deconstruct our ideas of who Jesus is and what it really means to be a part of a church that seeks to follow this Jesus in the world today. After all, in countless Biblical stories, God takes the side of the loser, the underdog, the oppressed. What would it look like for congregations to truly live into that?

Pastor Emmy will join us for our final session in the beginning of March! This book study was indeed a place of meaningful connection and conversation that so many of us are longing for in these pandemic days that can feel overwhelming and isolating. Thanks to everyone who joined us!



(From left: Jeremiah, AJ, Sam, Leonard and Brooke at Discovery)

(From left: Laura and Kelsey on St. Patrick's trivia night)



We enjoyed a mini winter retreat with a day of downhill skiing at Discovery followed by a day of cross-country skiing or skating. We have also connected on skating outings to Lake Alva and had fellowship around our outdoor fire pit. With just a bit warmer weather on St. Patrick's Day, we feasted on Irish food and played Irish-themed trivia. We will celebrate the end of the year with a small picnic and hope to plan some fun outings this summer.

Our Wednesday night meetings continue online. This semester we have been focusing on questions about who you are, what you are about, what might life have in store for you, and what a life well-lived might look like.

Reflection by Rai Combs

Had you told me two years ago I would be working closely with a Lutheran pastor educating people on the Truth of Colonization, I would have thought you crazy. But that's exactly what inspires me these days.

I met Pastor John Lund essentially by accident, and we almost immediately discovered that we occupy philosophical common ground. We are both strong advocates of true racial equity in these troubling times. I greatly appreciate John's openness, and courage to call out the church and its complicity in the generational traumas of Native Americans during their historical

and continual colonization.

John has graciously invited me to collaborate with him and his seminarians on several educational projects already: Sunday evening discussion sessions with Emmaus students off campus, a Diverse U presentation and a Molli course through the University of Montana, and a multi-week literature study and discussion group called the Spirit of the Rockies. We also have another large-scale educational project underway that will include Indigenous leaders from CSKT, and the Blackfeet nation. This project is an effort to decolonize largely white workplaces in the Missoula Valley. John and I are also on the ground

floor of a statewide Lutheran Racial Equality Task Force sanctioned by the Montana Synod. As a First Nations veteran I am currently pursuing the dual degrees of Native American Studies and Environmental Studies at the University of Montana. I am encouraged by the work John and I have partnered in doing, and by the many open-minded people across this state that we have met along the way. Once this year-long pandemic is more safely under control I look forward to building on our work and expanding it in person to those open to it in the Missoula Valley. I am also anticipating what new and exciting projects John and Emmaus will explore next.

Perspective from a Board Member, Celeste A. Yeager MSW, MDIV

WHAT DREW YOU TO EMMAUS?

I moved from Cut Bank to Missoula in August. I had been following the work of University Congregational Church since my daughter enrolled in UM two years ago. In September, UCC asked a member to step up as a representative on the Emmaus Board. I was a social worker, a former pastor, had worked in a variety of roles with college students, and had been a member of the Board of the Christian Association, the Protestant Campus Ministry of the University of

Pennsylvania.

It seemed like a timely perfect fit.

I met with John between The Ark and The Emmaus Building, while he interacted with students,

(Pastor John presiding over the Christmas Eve service for several local churches)



shared his excitement of the Seminary interns for the academic year, and passionately spoke of Emmaus' work with the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative and The Common Good, Missoula all while interacting with the internet repair guy, and staying in relationship with me, sharing his enthusiasm for the work of Emmaus, and giving me a tour of the space. In that conversation, I was hooked.

WHAT KEPT YOU COMING BACK?

That evening, when I met some of the residents and the seminarians, I was excited about the energy that was present, as students tried to connect their questions regarding

Faith, God, The Church and The Difficult Questions of Life, with their everyday life experience. Here was an intentional community, led by a very real, down to earth guy, with a great sense of humor, ready to stop, and gather for fun, food and fellowship... and Faith, however that fit for each one. I kept wanting to come back. To Emmaus. To Wednesday Night. To the Energy Safe Place.

AND NOW, WHAT IS YOUR TAKE ON EMMAUS?

This Spring Semester, Emmaus began Zoom book studies accessible not only to Emmaus students, but to members of congregations. The

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(First meeting with grandson)

Return Service Requested

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If you have an address change or wish to stop receiving newsletters or receive e-news instead, please contact us at ecmumt@gmail.com or (406) 549-7821 to update your information.
Thanks for helping minimize this expense!

Perspective from a Board Member

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intergenerational conversations are rich, thought-provoking, and community building. The opportunity to wrestle with difficult topics, such as the faithful journey of an open Lesbian Lutheran pastor and her premise that God reaches out to even the least; or the inter-relatedness of the land, the people, the original inhabitants, the animals, and the effects of Colonization; or even how do the People of Missoula faithfully collaborate with issues of injustice, race, power and privilege, while honoring and respecting all people in the discussion.

In conclusion, I am a 60-year old, white, queer, woman, social worker, person of faith, past clergy woman, who has found a Home with UM's Emmaus Campus Ministry. I hope to offer what skills, perspective, insights, questions, talents and experience I have to this ministry to campus and community, in Missoula, MT and Beyond, for as long as I am able, while along the way, inviting others to be a part of this Community, where it is The Questions, not the Answers of Faith, that are Important and Valued.



(From left: Jeremiah, AJ and Intern Pastor Kaylie at Lake Alva)