

### Faith Communities as Containers for Moral Discourse and Public Witness



*Rev. John Lund*

We need to talk. In the wake of another horrific school shooting, as abortion access comes back into the spotlight, as children's graves are

being found at indigenous boarding schools in the US, as global warming tightens its grip on our land, as queer dignity and rights continue to be attacked, as an unjust war wages in Europe, and as we live in a hyper-polarizing political climate, we need to talk.

Increasingly, I find people afraid to talk about issues with the depth and complexity that they deserve. We often get soundbites and talking points from politicians and then verbal attacks of oppositional questions or ideas. We can do better.

What if faith communities understand part of their mission as to be communities of moral discourse? Places where people can come and share honestly and be heard and listen to each other. What if your church was the place to talk about religion, politics, gender, racism, sexuality, and all of the hard questions? What if we offered opportunities for our larger communities to do the same?

I realize this suggestion is scary for a lot of us. It might create conflict. It might divide the congregation. It might perpetuate harm. There is risk involved. However, the risk of not talking about these things is even worse. We allow ourselves to be silenced and allow other voices to speak on our behalf. Or we decidedly bow out of the serious issues and go on our merry way.

The path of Jesus calls us into the conversations, especially when issues of justice are at stake. Especially when people are marginalized, or when the creation is at risk. As Christians we are called into the hard moral discourse of our time. We can do this. We can train up on best practices and guidelines for conversation. We can build and agree on covenants and practice boundaries with each other. We can learn how to elevate marginalized voices without perpetuating more harm. We can build trust and learn how to really listen and speak our own truth.

In all of the things we do at Emmaus, this is at the heart of it. When we are able to get to these conversations, we are finally getting into holy space. Here is where we awaken to each other and to the presence of God in our midst. It is in these spaces of honest conversation that there is room for us to be formed, shaped, and inspired. It is here that we find our deepest empathy, truths and passions in life. And it is in these spaces where we will get the inspiration and drive to act with truth and love in our world. It is how we are formed as allies and agents of change and healing around us. Of all the things we offer and that we can do, this is the heart of it. Lets talk.

#### ***Caring for creation and investing in Emmaus***

We are installing solar panels on the Ark and Emmaus House! They will provide almost 90% of our electricity, reducing our carbon footprint, minimizing our exposure to rising energy costs, and serving as a visual reminder of our commitment to care for creation.

We are working with RE-volv, a nonprofit that helps other nonprofits go solar. We hope to begin installation by the fall. The project has an upfront cost of \$7,000. Consider making a special donation in support.





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**Emmaus Calendar**

**Faith and Climate Action Montana**

This summer, FCAM will be hosting a series called "Ecological Contemplation in the Community!" All are welcome to join for one or all of the outings.

*June 15th:* An Instruction in Abundance: meet at the main Rattlesnake Trailhead at 10 a.m. for a guided discussion on *Service Berries* by Robin Wall Kimmerer as we walk.

*July 20th:* Come float a section of the Blackfoot River with us (meeting location TBD) starting at 9 a.m.

*August 17th:* Hike a section of Lolo Peak (with an opportunity to reach the summit) at 7a.m. (meeting location TBD, subject to change based on fire conditions).

For more information and to join our email mailing list check out our website at [faithandclimateactionmontana.weebly.com](http://faithandclimateactionmontana.weebly.com).

**Confluence**

In June, July and August Confluence will meet on the *third Sunday of each month at 5 p.m.* We are excited to collaborate with Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Bonner to host a Mountain Vespers evening prayer Gathering at the Confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot rivers at the Milltown State Park Confluence Area on July 17th. Join us for a beautiful evening of bluegrass music, reflection, and prayer. Visit [confluencemissoula.org](http://confluencemissoula.org) for more info.

**Featured Ways to Give**

**Make a Special Donation**

To support Confluence or Faith and Climate Action. Write a check to Emmaus with the memo "Confluence" or "FCAM" or give online and include a note.

**Donate an auction item to Oktoberfest!**

Special homemade items, a weekend at a cabin, and items donated by businesses all make great auction items! Contact Kristen.

**Thrivent Action Team Grants**

If you are a Thrivent member this is a great way to support us. We always have ideas for projects and John will prepare the applications materials. Contact John.

**Donate by mail or visit [ecmum.org/support-us](http://ecmum.org/support-us)**



*Emmaus Campus Ministry is a ministry of ELCA Lutherans in partnership with the United Church of Christ, Episcopalian, and Methodist churches, welcoming of all perspectives. We are a Reconciled in Christ Ministry, meaning we welcome and affirm all orientations and gender identities.*

**Fast Financial Fact**

*We had 147 donors this year, compared to 105 last year. 32 of these were first time donors!*

## Reflection on Emmaus

*Lars Anderson, Seminary Intern*

I first arrived in Missoula in late August following a summer Clinical Pastoral Education internship at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. It was a quick turnaround for me and I jumped into programming hours after arriving at Emmaus. I was not sure what to expect for the upcoming year.

Throughout my time here, I have learned that the community that Emmaus provides is special. I have not been a member of a group that is composed of people from very different backgrounds and identities coming together to share food and connection with each other. This diversity of life experience allows for richer conversation and trust to be formed. Being able to gather as our authentic selves is a strength of this group.

I have enjoyed watching the students, community, and myself grow this year. I find great joy in watching students become more confident leaders and community members. I am inspired by their passions, care for each other and creation, and their love of neighbor. There is a genuine connection both as a group and to Missoula as a whole. We are not just focused on

our group that gathers together.

I have learned a lot about gender and sexual identity, indigenous wisdom, housing scarcity, among other topics, from the student leaders at Emmaus. They continuously invite me to challenge my own preconceived notions and work through my biases. It has been a gift to me to be in such a caring and supportive place to continue learning and growing as a pastoral intern. A highlight from this year that sticks out to me is the spring break trip to Holden Village in the Cascade Mountains. It is a remote retreat and renewal center without internet or other ways to connect to the outside world. We had to drive, take a ferry, and a bus before we actually arrived at Holden Village. Consequently, we connected with each other and the other people staying at Holden in a deeper way than if we had the external distractions of the outside world. We were given different work tasks to do throughout the week that helped us be part of the community



at Holden in a way that was different than if we were just guests. I enjoyed getting to know the kitchen staff during my task. I also got great joy out of watching the other members of our group get to know the people they were working with.

The emphasis on relationship building and love of neighbor has been a main takeaway from my time at Emmaus this year. That is what we are rooted in and these connections have the power to make great change in our community. I am grateful that I have had the privilege to live and learn alongside all of the amazing people I have met here.

**Fast Financial Fact**  
Alumni donations made up 11% of 2021 individual giving.



**Fast Financial Fact**  
Net assets increased 1.2% over 2020.

## Program Highlights



**Emmaus resident community:** Our fifteen residents living in two adjacent houses and the Welsey House commit to leadership roles in the community, simple living practices, and hospitality. They encounter many conversations, questions, bonding experiences, and discernment opportunities just by being in the space every day. They also generate regular group activities that include other campus ministry students and friends, like dinners, poetry nights, cookie baking, movie nights, game nights, wilderness outings, and art walk tours.

**Emmaus student group:** Wednesday night meetings include a home-cooked meal and group work around the intersections of faith, spirituality, the Jesus story, identity, relationships, vocation, calling, creation, justice, and equity.



**Seminary Interns:** We were fortunate to once again host two seminary interns, Lars and Rebekah (for her second year). They helped plan and lead meetings and it was great to have them bringing fresh new ideas and providing more diverse leadership. It also helps to have other pastoral staff that students can connect and build relationships with. Rebekah and Lars were both critical to the growth of our Confluence ministry.

**Confluence:** Confluence flourished under the primary leadership of our seminary interns. Meeting twice monthly, this all-ages group focuses on contemplation through music, stories, poetry, and conversations. About twenty-five people of all ages and faith backgrounds are currently involved.

**Outreach Worship:** We love connecting to the wider church community through Outreach Worship: visiting congregations to lead worship, share a message, and lead an adult/youth education time to talk about young adults, Christianity and church. This year we had a great time connecting with friends in Polson and Hamilton.

**Service Work:** Recent projects include making sack lunches for the Poverello and writing Valentines cards to homebound folks. We are very excited that student AJ is organizing our group to provide a program assisting elders and folks with disabilities with home and lawn care.



**Trips and Retreats:** Over the summer we had several group outings to enjoy local rivers. The fall featured our usual camping retreat on the Blackfoot River. We were thrilled to return to our spring break trip after a two year hiatus. We traveled by ferry up spectacular Lake Chelan to remote Holden Village in the Cascade Mountains. Holden was a mining village that was bought by a Lutheran community in the 1950s. We spent mornings volunteering in the village while afternoons and evenings were filled with recreation, restoration, connection and learning. The trip was a walk back in time to a place without cell coverage or internet. Back to the basics of good food, people, music, art and lots of snow.



**Faith and Climate Action Montana:** FCAM seeks to create community that engages faith voices and spiritual wisdom to raise awareness, advocate and organize in the public sphere. This social justice community takes action in response to the intensification of the climate crisis that creation is facing. In the fall FCAM hosted a panel called "Future Leaders Striving for a Livable World." In the spring they focused on Indigenous teachers, organizing a book study of *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer and a lecture by Dr. George Price, "Paths Forward in a Dire New Reality."



**Pastor connections on campus and in the community:** Last fall Pastor John and intern Rai taught a MOLL course called Spirit of the Rockies. John preached several times at our local ELCA churches and worked closely with community organizations such as Common Good, the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative, Empower Montana, and the YWCA.

**Anti-Racism and LGBTQIA+ Advocacy:** We helped plan the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day community celebration with Empower Montana, the YWCA and campus representatives. It drew a large group of students, UM faculty and staff, church folks, and community people, with a total of around 300 people. Emmaus renewed our commitment to welcoming and affirming LGBTQ+ people as a Reconciling In Christ ministry. This year, RIC expanded its commitments to include an affirmation of anti-racism.

John and Rai taught a MOLL course called Spirit of the Rockies that examined the ways people have understood their relationships with the land, animals, other people and the divine from a wide array of cultural and historical perspectives.

We worked closely with Common Good Missoula to offer Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization last November and in February of this year. Around ninety people went through the process each time. John and Rai were part of the leadership and teaching team of this effort that takes people from faith, labor, healthcare and community organizations through a process that sets the stage for right relationships and meaningful action with Indigenous people in their own communities.

## Alumni News

**Echo Kieffer** ('22) graduated in May with a liberal studies degree and will be serving for a year in Denver with the Episcopal Servant Corps.

**Colter Murphy** ('17) is working at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Missoula as the Youth and Family Director and is getting married in July to Stephanie Parker.

**Molly Jones** ('13) and **Peregrine Frissell** ('16) are engaged to be married early next year. Molly and Peregrine both lived at Emmaus at different times but met each other later in life. They reside in Columbia Falls. Molly is working as a speech therapist and Peregrine is a teacher.

**Eamon Ormseth** ('17) graduated this spring with a Masters in Peacebuilding from Hartford International University.

**Sean McQuillan** ('18) got married this spring to Katy Brautigam and is a lawyer at the Alaskan Immigration Law Center.

**Rev. Annela Rova** ('12) was ordained on December 11, 2021, and is serving in her first call at Trinity Lutheran in Choteau, Montana. Annela is married and has a one year-old daughter.

**Rev. Kaylie Ines** (seminary intern '20-21) was ordained on May 7th and will begin her first call in a two-point parish starting on June 1 in the Manhattan, Kansas area.

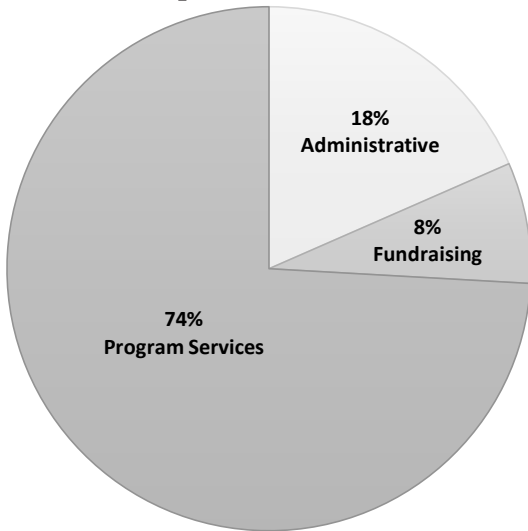


## A HUGE thank you to all our 2021 donors!

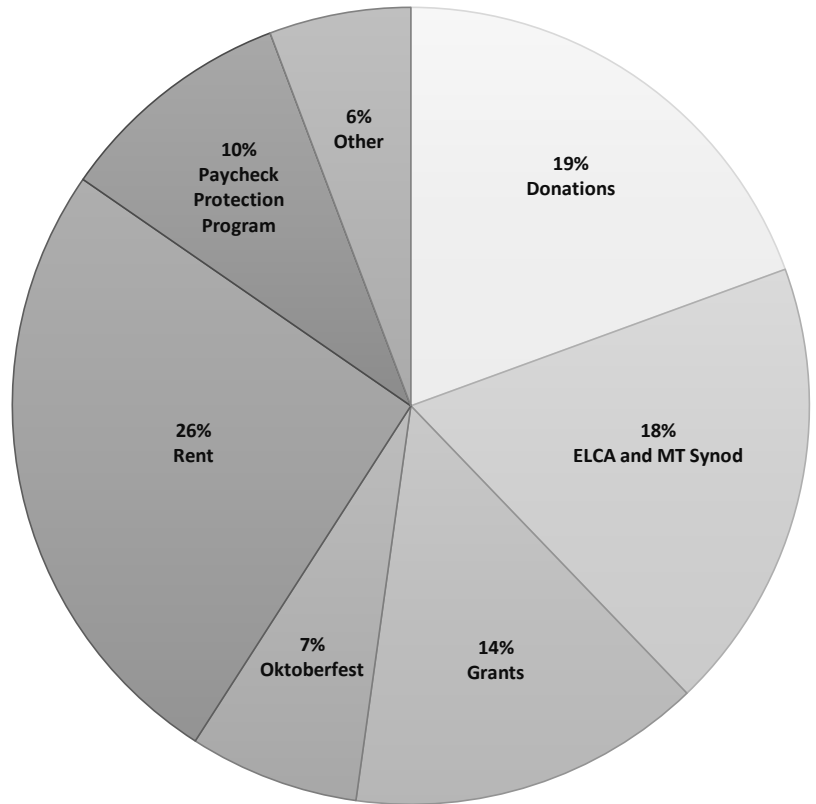
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Ingrid Davis	Aprille & Skip Jordan	Linda Redfern	*Alumni fund donor

# 2021 Financial Highlights

## Expenditures



## Sources of Revenue



### 2021 Statement of Operations

#### Revenues

Donations (Individuals)	24,458
Donations (Congregations)	13,063
Donations (Organizations)	1,100
ELCA and MT Synod Grants	36,545
Lilly Grant	15,000
Other Grants	13,582
Oktoberfest	13,707
Rent	50,720
Paycheck Protection Program	19,148
Other	11,418

#### Total Revenues

**198,741**

#### Expenses

Buildings	12,605
Direct Program	18,175
Fundraisers	879
Operational	6,129
Salaries, Benefits, Payroll Taxes	158,440

#### Total Expenses

**196,228**

### Financial Position

#### Assets

Current Assets	178,731
Fixed Assets (Buildings)	865,421

#### Total Assets

**Dec 31, 2021**    **Dec 31, 2020**

178,731    177,734

865,421    865,421

**1,044,152**    **1,043,155**

#### Liabilities and Net Assets

Liabilities	44,362
Net Assets	999,683

#### Total Liabilities and Net Assets

**1,044,044**    **1,043,048**

### Thanks to these generous grantors!

Montana Synod  
Lilly Endowment Inc.  
ELCA  
Knutson Endowment  
Episcopal Diocese of Montana  
Hetzl Foundation  
Thrivent Action Team Grants

### Thank you to our committed church partners!

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Malta Lutheran (Malta)  
Messiah Lutheran (Red Lodge)  
New Hope Lutheran (Great Falls)  
New Life Lutheran (Helena)

Northridge Lutheran (Kalispell)  
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Our Savior's Lutheran (Bonner)  
Our Savior's Lutheran (Columbia Falls)  
Pella Lutheran (Sidney)  
Plentywood Lutheran (Plentywood)  
Redeemer Lutheran (Great Falls)  
Redeemer Lutheran (Livingston)  
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran (Townsend)  
St. John's Lutheran (Helena)  
St. Luke's Lutheran (Shelby)  
St. Paul Lutheran (Missoula)  
United Methodist Women of St. Paul's (Helena)  
Valley of Christ Lutheran (Frenchtown)  
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x



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## Confluence

*By Rebekah Cochrane, Seminary Intern*

As Summer approaches, perhaps you are noticing rivers and creeks rising, streams being rerouted by new log jams, and power of water to give life to this land and to all of us. At Confluence, we are also noticing the forces of life and nature that form and reform us throughout our lives - deep encounters with Creation that open us to awe and wonder, mentors and teachers who guide us, activists and organizers who inspire and connect us to neighbors, and the Divine that transforms us through it all.

Our Confluence community has been meeting together for seven months and has been blessed to welcome many new folks at our Sunday evening Gatherings and Kalani (one of the Emmaus residents) onto our Leadership Team. As we grow and change with the addition of new people with all kinds of gifts and experiences, we are anticipating a season of discernment and openness to the Holy Spirit and what She might be calling us into in the months and year to come.

This Spring we were surprised and overjoyed to receive the news that the ELCA will continue to financially support Confluence in a way that frees us to focus on our mission to be a “moment of meeting and the movement forward” for people in Missoula who are searching for the Divine in the midst of the complex realities of this life. If you are inspired by the work of Confluence and our dreams for the future, consider joining us for a Gathering or giving a gift to financially support this work. We will meet **ONLY** on the 3rd Sundays of the month for June, July, and August, and more information can be found on our website ([confluencemissoula.org](http://confluencemissoula.org)). Gifts can be made to Emmaus with a note that it is intended for Confluence. Thank you for your ongoing support of this new community that has blossomed out of the mission of Emmaus!

