



From our pastors

Season's Greetings Folks,

Oh no, Pastor Jessica's gone secular! Season's greetings? How scandalous.

Please wait and let me explain myself. There are three seasons that are covered in this newsletter. First we have Advent, which is the waiting and anticipation of the coming of Jesus (both of his birth and of his second coming). Then we have Christmas, and well, we all know what that's about. No, it's not about presents and lutefisk; it's about the most incredible gift we have ever received, and will ever receive in our lives; it's a gift that keeps giving even after death. And then the season of Epiphany, which includes the adoration of the nations (the *goyim*, Gentiles, or maybe you know them as the Wisemen), the baptism of Jesus; a season ending in the Transfiguration.

We've got some wonderful, exciting, and rich seasons ahead of us. God's in-breaking into the world – what could be better?

So, I could have written Advent-Christmas-Epiphany Greetings to all ya'll but thought the shorter version might just be easier.

Okay, alright then, I know this is the one you're waiting for...may you have a Merry Christmas and may God's blessing rain down upon you in the New Year.

Your Sister in Christ,

Pastor Jessica



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

As we transition from holiday to holiday and from 2011 to 2012, I hope that you have a blessed and wonderful time of year! I'm amazed at how Thanksgiving rolls into Advent which quickly becomes Christmas and then New Year on to Epiphany... And before you know it, it's Lent and then Easter!

My first few months have been filled with much joy and learning, and I want to say thank you for welcoming me into your churches, communities and homes. I can hardly believe that five months have passed or that this time last year I had no idea that Tri-County existed, let alone would become my new family. Transitions come quickly and changes always happen, but I know from my experience that God is truly at work in our lives with every breath we take, every decision we make and every word we say.

As the holiday season arrives (and quickly passes), may you be surrounded by and blessed with all the joys, friends and family that God provides!

Peace,

Pastor Kara

Christmas in TCM

Christmas Programs:

December 4 Grace City during 11:15 worship service

December 11 First Presbyterian during 11:15 worship
Our Savior's/McHenry during 9:45 worship

December 18 Trinity at 11:15
Faith during 11:15 worship
McVile at 4:30 in the afternoon

Christmas Eve Services:

- ◇ 2:30 — Cooperstown Nursing Home, hosted by First Presbyterian
- ◇ 4:00 — Trinity of Binford
Lutheran Church of McVile
Grace of Grace City
- ◇ 5:30 — Our Savior's of McHenry
- ◇ 10:00 — Faith of Hannaford

Christmas Day Services:

- 9:45 — Faith of Hannaford
- 10:00 — Grace of Grace City



Annual Meeting schedule

January 8 —

⇒ Our Savior's of McHenry

January 15 —

⇒ Our Savior's of Klotten

January 22 —

⇒ Trinity

⇒ First Presbyterian

January 29 —

⇒ Faith

February 5 —

⇒ Grace

⇒ Lutheran Church of McVile

m & m's in the car

Are your m & m's all gone yet?
If you're filling the containers with quarters, cash or checks, please remember to return them to your church on or before Sunday, **December 11**. The donations will then be forwarded to the Synod, and then to our companion synod in the Central African Republic.

Peppy the Peppermint Pig Party at the Parsonage (aka Youth Christmas Party)

I (aka Pastor Kara) am hosting a big event for the youth to celebrate Christmas (and the joys of being young Christians who like to have fun) on Sunday, December 11 from 3-7 pm at the parsonage in McVile (317 N Baldwin). You can come and go any time (but please know that you can stay the **WHOLE** time if you choose).

Here are some of the activities you can expect:

- * Peppy (my new 8 oz peppermint pig) is going to be savored. We will even draw names out of a hat to see who gets to be the lucky one to break Peppy to pieces...
- * Games (seriously, I have lots of options including board games, video games, and ping pong)
- * Christmas movies and music (since background noise is necessary)
- * Christmas card making (for people you know or strangers who would love a card)
- * Cookie decorating contest (bring your talent or lack thereof...)
- * Snacks and Supper (lots of food will be involved)
- * and if you stick around long enough, Christmas cantata at McVile Lutheran (I think it would be great to attend as a group)



Please come and bring your friends! (Carpool?) This is open to whoever shows up, is between the ages of 12 and 29 (7th grade on up to people my age), and wants to have fun!

Call, text, email or message me in a number of other ways with any questions!

What's with the Church Year?



A question was asked recently about the Church year and the scriptures that are associated with each season. The scriptures that we follow each Sunday are chosen for that season for a particular reason (sometimes more obvious than others). I came across the following explanation of the seasons of the

year (which will also help us understand the scripture focus during each season). I quote at length – but it's all good.

“One of the best aids to creating worship that portrays the dialectical attributes of God, that praises the totality of God's being, is the liturgical year. Beginning in Advent's season of repentance, which confronts us with our desperate need for a Messiah, God comes to us in mercy, in sovereignty over time, and with the promise that Christ will come again. The Christmas and Epiphany seasons convey God's grace, tenderness, and splendor. Lent reveals the faithfulness of God's suffering on our behalf through the immensity of Christ's sacrifice. Easter demonstrates God's power and victory over the principalities and powers. Pentecost brings us the mystery and wonder of God at work in us. The non-festival half of the Church year then celebrates many other attributes and actions of God in its focus on segments of Christ's teaching and life.” (From Marva Dawn's *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for This Urgent Time*)

Following the scriptures chosen for the seasons, we don't get to choose just the “good stuff” or the “easy scripture.” We follow an ancient tradition of being guided by the seasons of the Church to reveal the breadth, depth, and grace of God.

~ Pastor Jessica

TCM Council Report

During special congregational meetings on November 6, all seven TCM congregations have approved the assessment for the 2012 budget.

We have five outgoing members from the Tri-County Ministry Council. A huge thank you to them for their service!

Cheryl Rickford (Trinity)
Missy Erickson (Our Savior's/McHenry)
Laverne Larson (First Presbyterian)
Darla Fliflet (Faith)
Dale Nelson (Our Savior's/Kloten)

Join our confirmation service project

Our annual service project at Northlands Rescue Mission in Grand Forks will happen on **Saturday, December 10.**

Transportation will be by school bus. We need to know ahead of time how many people will be going along. Please contact Theresa at the TCM office in Binford by December 1.

We'll be collecting donations at each church through *December 4*. This year, the mission has a **Duffel Bags of Hope for Christmas** campaign going, and is taking donations to fill duffel bags or backpacks for both men and women. You may donate a duffel bag or backpack filled with supplies, or pick and choose from the list below:

- ◆ Razors
- ◆ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- ◆ Shower gel
- ◆ Shampoo
- ◆ Deodorant
- ◆ Underwear
- ◆ Socks
- ◆ Hooded sweatshirt (Men: medium-2XL; Women: medium-1XL)

If you choose to fill a duffel bag or backpack, please label it as men's or women's and also what size sweatshirt. Cash donations will also be accepted; just give your check (made out to Tri-County Ministry) to one of the pastors or send to the TCM office in Binford.



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August, September, October, and
November.

Christmas Open House

Pastor Kara invites YOU to

the McVilLe Parsonage

Saturday, December 17

Anytime between the hours of 1:00 and 4:00

Stop in and visit!



Christmas Cantata

Sunday, December 11 at 7:30 p.m.

Lutheran Church of McVilLe

"Gloria — A Christmas Festival of Praise"

Arranged by Doug Holck

Songs & narration telling the story of Christmas

Directed by Cinda Coe

Accompanied by Verna Lindvall