



Greetings from our pastors

Happy Holidays!

This past year we used colorful ribbons to show how time always cycles through church seasons: Advent to Advent. We are now entering a new time in our church season. Over the next two months, we begin our new church year as we transition from Advent to Christmas to Epiphany. We anticipate the celebration of Jesus's arrival as Savior of the world and the understanding of God's love for us. God can save the world through his son born in a humble setting and I believe he continues to work in our humble lives.

Whether you celebrate on your own or have family and friends surrounding you, may you see how God is active in your life. May God bless you richly with peace, love, and joy as the seasons change and a new future begins with God continuing to shower us with His love.

Shalom, Pastor Kara

I've had the honor of celebrating Christmas and the New Year with you for six years. We've shared in candlelight services, children's pageants, and Christmas carols. I've been introduced to lefse, lutefisk, and Julecake. I've heard you sing *We Are So Glad Each Christmas Eve* (even in Norwegian at times).

In this season of Jesus' birth I can't help but think about how the saints of Tri-County Ministry helped birth a pastor. Right out of seminary you took me in and through thick and thin taught me, challenged me, and encouraged me in my ministry. Thank you for walking this journey of faith with me.

Our journeys have not ended; we move forward toward the same destination, just on different paths. This season of light and life gives us hope for our futures. God did something unforeseen in coming to us in the form of a baby and God continues to show up and acts in ways unforeseen and surprising. However it may look, one thing is for certain: our future is in God's hands.

As you celebrate this Christmas and live into the New Year, may God's love and faithfulness give you courage, sustain you in faith, and fill you with hope.

May you have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Pastor Jessica

Christmas Schedules

Christmas Programs

December 9	11:15	First Presbyterian
December 16	9:45	Our Savior's of McHenry
	11:00	Trinity
	11:15	Faith
	11:15	Grace
	4:00	McVille

Christmas Eve

2:30	Griggs County Nursing Home
4:00	Lutheran Church of McVille Trinity of Binford
5:30	Grace of Grace City Our Savior's of McHenry
10:00	Faith of Hannaford Lutheran Church of McVille

Christmas Cantata in McVille

A Christmas Cantata, *A Light Still Shines*, created by Randy Vader jay Rouse and Camp Kirkland, will be presented by the McVille Lutheran Choir and Community Choir on Sunday, December 16th at 7:30pm. It will be held at McVille Lutheran Church, McVille.

The cantata is under the direction of Linda Loe and is accompanied by Verna Lindvall. Kelli Schmitt will narrate.

Words of the composer:

Christmas is a modern day miracle of ancient origin. Two thousand years of human history have not diminished the importance or the implications of the Incarnation. The vision of a star, a stable, shepherds, wisemen and a young mother and father, a tiny baby in a manger of hay, are still wreathed in wonder and awe. The tidings of great joy that reach to us from that time long ago, in that place far away, resound with this great promise and truth...

“the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

(Matthew 4:16 NIV)

Advent 2012

“Prophesy My People”

Theme hymn: “My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness”

Advent is a time when we anticipate Christ's arrival.

We will be focusing on songs and scripture about God's inbreaking to the world.



Jr. / Sr. High Youth Christmas Party

Sunday, December 2 3:00 — 5:00

Red Willow Bible Camp

Indoor and outdoor activities.

Come on out to the lake!



Annual meetings

January 13

Our Savior's of McHenry

January 20

Our Savior's of Kloten
Lutheran Church of McVille
Faith of Hannaford

January 27

First Presbyterian, Cooperstown
Trinity of Binford

February 3

Grace of Grace City

Our new Tri-County Ministry directories have been delivered to each church. Anyone who was pictured in the directory receives a free copy. TCM did purchase a few extra directories for anyone who would like to buy one. Cost is \$10. Please contact Theresa or your church secretary.

TCM Council Highlights — November 4, 2012

Tri-County Ministry Agreement & By-Laws: Revised documents were adopted as presented at the October TCM Council meeting.

Certificates of Deposit: Policy adopted for the transfer of Certificates of Deposit into the General Fund: when a threshold of \$7,500 is reached, Parish Administrator may cash in a Certificate of Deposit as it comes due. If the General Fund balance drops to \$5,000, a Certificate of Deposit may be cashed immediately, regardless of the penalty.

TCM Budget and Assessment 2013: All congregations have approved the 2013 assessment of \$390 per active confirmed member. Budget for 2013 was approved as presented.

Resignation: Pastor Jessica informed the council that she has entered the call process, and will be accepting a Letter of Call. Her resignation as pastor of Tri-County Ministry will be effective December 31, 2012. Individual councils/session should begin considering representatives/alternates for the Call Committee.

NEXT MEETING:

Items for discussion: Letter of Resignation; interim / call process

Date: Thursday, November 29 at 7:00 p.m. in Binford

Worship time alerts

First Presbyterian: 9:45 on December 9, December 16, January 6, January 13, and January 20

Lutheran Church of McVille: no morning worship on December 16; January services at 4:30 Sunday afternoons

Faith: 9:45 on January 27

Trinity: 11:00 on December 16

All other worship services are at their regular times.

Trip cancellation

Our confirmation class' annual trip to Northlands Rescue Mission, scheduled for December 1, has been cancelled. Donations are still be collected for the mission, and may be left at your church through December 1.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

God planted churches in our communities years ago. Generations of families have grown up in our churches and the stories are plentiful of good times and bad; at one time the life of the community and for many families revolved around the church. It is the place of Baptisms and Confirmation, suppers and fellowship, a gathering for worship and Communion. It is where we are both nourished and can nourish.

Our churches are one of the symbols of God's in-breaking into the world. It is a visual reminder of the grace and love God has bestowed upon us; and it for all to see (and experience).

It is also a place that is threatened.

As the TCM Council sat last month working out our 2013 assessment, your leaders struggled with the reality of incurring deficits in order to continue in the work that we do. Representatives from numerous churches spoke of the difficulty of meeting budgets, concern that offerings are received from only a small percentage of the church membership, and a concern for how the coming year will unfold.

We've also listened to people from the churches speak of members who are faithful in their giving, generous in their offerings; people who, as a part of their relationship with God, support the church as well as their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. There are those who express concern that they are not able to support as they wish they could but do what they can.

For the sake of your church we will write very bluntly: unless ALL the members of the churches become more intentional in their offering of gifts back to God, your church will be facing a crisis.

And it will be more than a crisis of money. It will be a crisis of faith.

Stewardship isn't about money; it's about faith. Stewardship is about how we live out our "yes" to God; it's what we do after we say, "yes, I believe." Stewardship is about putting our faith in God as opposed to ourselves.

The church is where your children are baptized, the meal is shared, weddings are celebrated, and funerals are honored. It is the place where you hear the Word of God through the word, where you gather with other broken people to be healed, where your children play and learn about Jesus.

This is God's church which has been gifted to us. It is your church. Do you want God's church to be there for your children and grandchildren? Do you want this place of worship to be there for people in your community who yearn to discover the love of God and blessings of Jesus Christ?

Well, it is up to you. You are the only ones who can keep this sentinel of God's grace alive and available. Only you can do this. If you don't, who will?

Please, prayerfully consider your financial relationship with God's church. Seek out the Spirit's guidance in how to support your church so that she can continue to be what God has called her to be.

We know that some of you are already doing what you can; thank you. We also know some of you can do more, so we challenge you for the sake of your faith journey. The weekly act of taking something out of the wallet that is "mine" and putting it in the plate that is "ours" is a spiritual discipline. It reminds us that none of what we have is really ours.

Remember, we have been created in the image of God; you'll be doing only what you were created in the image of: God the Great Giver.

Pastors Jessica and Kara

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published nine times per year:
January, February, March, April, June,
August, September, October, and
November.

Tri-County Ministry Parish Worship

**Dinner and Farewell
for Pastor Jessica**

**Sunday, December 30
Faith Lutheran in Hannaford**

Worship and Farewell Program at 10:30

**A meal will be served by the Faith
congregation following the service.**