



Greetings from Our Pastors

Ein gesegnetes Weihnachtsfest und ein gluckliches neues Jahr!

Recently while in Germany, I was astounded at how many people have Advent calendars and know exactly when Advent starts. No matter if they have ever entered a church or not, everyone knows that on December 1 we start counting down 24 days until Christmas. Advent may not be part of our cultural language, but we understand well how to countdown to Christmas. Some TV and radio stations start in November. Some stores were even ready back in October. The anticipation builds until the day when we celebrate Christ's birth, which is when we then start counting the 12 Days of Christmas. May you cherish the time with family and friends during this time of anticipation as we wait for Christ to arrive yet again. And may God bless you in the start of the new Church year and in the new calendar year!

A Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Pastor Kara

I learned a new word in Bible Study yesterday. *Tempo giusto* (pronounced "juice-toe"). It is a musical term that describes a balanced pace or "playing at the right speed". This was the last session of a 3-part series on God's call for us to have a faithful balance in life's rhythms. Can there *really* be a faithful balance during the holiday season? Christmas Carols; Thanksgiving Feast; Advent Season; shopping for presents; lefse-making; attending a Christmas program; parades; a nap; traveling; inviting guests; Christmas Eve; lefse-eating; worship; watching "It's a Wonderful Life" or "Santa Claus is Coming to Town;" a Savior is born..." Can there really be a balanced rhythm to the next few weeks?

For any musicians reading this, you have seen the words "allegro" (quickly) and "adagio" (slowly) that give us clues on how fast to play the music. I think these musical terms can be more descriptive of real life. How can I bring "the right speed" into my preparation activities?

We might start with the reason we are preparing. We are preparing for Jesus — who comes in a manger, and Jesus — the one who will come again. In the Gospels, Jesus tells his disciples to be ready for action and to have our lamps lit because the Kingdom of God is coming and the Kingdom of God is here. May your Advent Season be sprinkled with times of quiet prayer and times of joyous song. May your Advent Season be a time of preparation for God's Kingdom and held by *tempo giusto*.

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever." -Revelation 11:15b

Pastor Sherri

Christmas in Tri-County Ministry

CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS

December 13

- * 11:15 — Grace of Grace City
- * 11:15 — First Presbyterian of Cooperstown

December 20

- * 9:30 — Lutheran Church of McVille
- * 11:00 — Our Savior's of McHenry and Trinity at Binford
- * 11:15 — Faith of Hannaford

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

- ◇ 2:00 CMC Nursing Home (led by First Presbyterian)
- ◇ 3:00 Our Savior's of McHenry
- ◇ 4:00 Trinity
- ◇ 4:30 Lutheran Church of McVille
- ◇ 5:30 Grace
- ◇ 10:00 Faith

Annual meeting schedule

- January 10 Our Savior's of McHenry
- January 17 Our Savior's of Klotten
Faith of Hannaford
- January 24 Trinity
First Presbyterian
- February 7 Grace
Lutheran Church of McVille

Area pastors working with STAR event

Small Town and Rural Ministry (STAR) is a group of pastors helping to prepare seminary students for ministry through immersion in our community. In January of 2016, STAR is offering a seminary course where pastors will teach the students about our faith communities and the wider communities. Students will arrive at Red Willow Bible Camp on January 18 for the week.

On **Wednesday, January 20**, they will visit towns and congregations throughout TCM. The rest of the week includes visits to Dacotah Oyate congregation on the Spirit Lake Reservation, community leaders and organizations in New Rockford, the hospital/nursing home, school and businesses in Cooperstown. A panel discussion on multi-point ministries will take place on one of the afternoons.

Pastors Sherri and Kara will both be actively participating in this educational week.

Worship time alerts

First Presbyterian

- ◆ 9:45 December 20 and January 17 at Assisted Living
- ◆ 9:45 January 10 & 31



Trinity

- ◆ 9:45 January 3

Pastor Kara's tour of "Lutherland"

In November, I traveled to Germany where the history of the Protestant faith is experienced by walking into old churches (some over 1000 years old), along cobblestones and through museums. I traveled with 22 others who flew into Berlin, hopped on a bus to Lutherstadt Wittenberg and spent the next few days acclimating to German culture and time zone. We had several walking tours through cities, a highlight reel of people and events that shaped history for that place. I heard stories about Martin Luther (former monk and university professor who started the unplanned Reformation), his wife Katharina von Bora (former nun), Philip Melanchthon (fellow reformer and

professor) and Frederick the Wise (local ruler who supported reforms). We visited the communities where Luther was born and died (Lutherstadt Eisleben), the castle where he translated the New Testament from Greek into German in 10 weeks (Wartburg near Eisenach), and several other locations where he traveled to preach and promote the Reformation.

Our trip emphasized Luther and the Reformation but also taught about German culture. One of my favorite parts of Europe is the mix between old and new, a history that makes people proud or makes people cringe. A home in Eisenach contains the story of Bach and his musical family who lived there. Weimar

cherishes the fact that famous authors Goethe and Schiller lived there but also has to accept the history of connections to Hitler and concentration camps. Leipzig is a city where a boys' choir has been actively performing for over 800 years but is also where peaceful protests in the 1980s started to bring down the wall between East and West Germany. Berlin has monuments that celebrate victories in past wars while others serve as memorials for the Holocaust.

My trip was educational and emotional. Germany may be far away and yet the history there helped to shape our lives today. This trip was a great experience and I will be sharing pictures and stories over the coming weeks.

Odds and Ends:

Faith WELCA Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 2, 6:30 p.m.
Potluck; bring a gift to exchange.

Marvel's Mission (in honor of Marvel Oakley)

First Presbyterian in Cooperstown is participating in the Christmas Gift Program for ND State Hospital patients. A list of acceptable gifts is available at the church.

Angel Tree at McVile Lutheran

Each angel lists the age, clothing sizes, gift ideas, and favorite color for a specific person in Nelson County. Gifts need to be brought to the church before December 15.

Souper Bowl of Caring—February 7

Each congregation may decide if they wish to participate in this annual event for hunger projects.

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McVile Area Choir
Christmas Cantata

“The Mystery and the Majesty”
by Joseph M. Martin

Linda Loe, Director
Verna Lindvall, Accompanist

Sunday, December 20
7:30 p.m.
Lutheran Church of McVile

