



As we enter Lent . . .

*Jesus . . . was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,
where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.
(Luke 4:1-2a)*

The wilderness. A place of hunger and thirst: of not having the things we need to keep life going. A place of loneliness and pain and temptation. The wilderness is a place where we've all been. The events of life hurt us and wring us dry; other people seem to turn away from us; we feel helpless, angry, confused. We find ourselves in situations where we do things and say things that we don't fully understand: things that would be better left unsaid and undone. We've all walked through the wilderness. And sometimes we've camped there for a season.

But the wilderness isn't just around us — it's also within us. We carry with us our grudges and suspicions, our hurt feelings and our harsh judgments, our fears and our misunderstandings. We strongly — sometimes even proudly — protect the borders of that wilderness so that no mercy or forgiveness or new vision is able to grow there. And so we continue to hunger and thirst, and to go without the things that we need to stay alive.

We are in the wilderness that God calls "sin." We declare that we can find our own way out, and we assert our will-power and search through self-help books and any other "map" we can get our hands on. But every time we think we've found the path of escape, it becomes confused and disappears. And we find that we are caught, trapped, lost.

The forty days of Lent provide us with a season in which God invites us to focus on the wilderness of our lives and to consider what we find there. To consider how Christ suffered and died there, so that we don't have to die there, lost and forsaken. God doesn't ask us to travel alone in the wilderness; but instead he offers to lead us by his Spirit. Being led doesn't just mean following behind and noticing what kind of landscape is around us. Being led means listening to how God interprets that landscape for us, and it means allowing him to plant the seeds of something new in those barren places.

And if we allow God's new planting to take root in us during these wilderness days of Lent we will find, as time goes by, that what has grown up in our hearts — in our wilderness — is the life-giving harvest of Easter. The bounty of God's forgiving love, the gift of a new beginning, a new wholeness that yields abundantly for all who will receive it.

God bless us as we make our Lenten journey!

Pastor Cheri

P.S. When we truly listen to God, as God leads us through the wilderness of our lives, we hear God pointing our attention to others around us who also struggle and suffer physically, mentally, economically, politically, and in every other way. As we hear God's voice speaking to us, God also helps us to hear the voices of others in their sorrows and prayers. Please, please! As you hear God's voice, listen also to the voices of others that God loves — especially at this time, the people of Haiti. Give as generously as you are able to the relief efforts of the PC(USA) or the ELCA, or to another avenue of help for those in distress.

Lent — “The Sign of Jonah”

Lent 2010 will give us the opportunity to meet Jonah, that Old Testament guy who spent three days in the belly of a whale. This series of services explores the meaning of “the sign of Jonah” as we follow Jonah on his journey, and Jesus on his way to the cross.

The Wednesday evening themes:

- ◆ God is calling (Jonah 1:1-3)
- ◆ Saved in the storm (Jonah 1:4-16)
- ◆ Our providing God (Jonah 1:17)
- ◆ Praying in the belly of the great big fish (Jonah 2:1-10)
- ◆ The God of the second chance (Jonah 3:1-4)
- ◆ About face (Jonah 3:5-10)

Ash Wednesday is February 17. Services of Holy Communion will be held. Wednesday evening Lenten services will be held through March 24.

The Wednesday Lenten schedule:

- ◆ Trinity in Cooperstown at 6:30 p.m.
- ◆ Faith in Hannaford at 8:00 p.m.
- ◆ First Presbyterian in Cooperstown — Noon
- ◆ McVile Lutheran at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ Trinity in Binford at 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ Our Savior’s in McHenry at 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ Grace in Grace City at 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ Mabel in Sutton at 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ Faith in Hannaford at 8:00 p.m.

Young Adult Group

This group is just getting off the ground in TCM. Plans are for some kind of activity twice each month.

For all young adults — single or married, parents or not.

Watch your Sunday bulletins and the TCM website for the dates and places.

Please contact Intern Trichelle if you would like more information.

Online study opportunity

**“Making Sense of Scripture”
Webcast from Luther Seminary
February 1st - March 1st
Monday evenings at 7:00pm
GCCHS in Cooperstown**

Based on his new book, "Making Sense of Scripture—Inviting People to Think about the Bible," David Lose will introduce themes, exercises and practical resources that invite all Christians to read the Bible with both heart and mind. He'll explore major questions Christians have about their book of faith.

If interested please contact Pastor Jessica. Call 769.2231 or e-mail uncas16@hotmail.com

You do not need a computer to participate in this course. If you do have a computer, but cannot make the Monday evening class, you can still participate in the program by viewing the class on your own computer at your convenience (if you have Adobe you should be able to view the program).

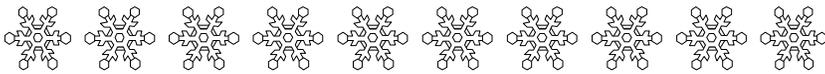
Do you have something for our website?

Anyone having calendar dates, news, or pictures that could be posted on the Tri-County Ministry website is asked to e-mail them to the parish office in Binford. From there, Theresa will either post them on the site or forward them to the webmaster to be posted.

First Communion Class Saturday, March 27

If you have not yet registered your child(ren) for this class, please call or e-mail Theresa (676-2761 or trinitybinford@mlgc.)

Pre-registration will help the pastors determine where to offer the classes that morning.



Kids — don't forget about the ski trips coming up in February.

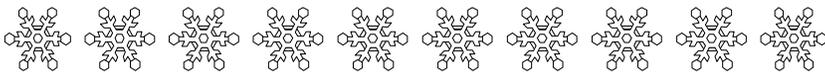
Jr/Sr high to Walhalla on Saturday, February 20

Elementary to Fort Ransom on Saturday, February 27

Registration forms were mailed out a few months ago. If you have lost yours, please contact the TCM office in Binford, or go to the youth page on the TCM website.

An overnight lock-in is on the calendar for Friday night, March 5. It will be held at the Hannaford Community Center.

Sunday night discussions continue at the home of Darla Fliflet. All junior and senior highers are welcome, 7:00—8:30.



Coming up at Red Willow Bible Camp

Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper

February 16

5:00—7:00 p.m. at the *Binford Firehall*
Freewill offering for the RWBC scholarship program

Winter Fun Day

Saturday, February 20

- ◆ Afternoon indoor and outdoor activities at the camp
- ◆ Silent Auction
- ◆ Supper at 6:00, Music at 7:00 provided by the Diers family from Grand Forks

Confirmation Retreat (grades 7-9)

March 5-6

Elementary Retreat (grades 4-6)

March 19-20

Garden Art Retreat

March 26-27

Day Play (grades K-3)

April 10

Jr. High Retreat (grades 7-9)

April 16-17



For more information, call the camp or go to their website.
www.redwillowbiblecamp.org

Lending closet being dismantled

All kinds of rehab needs have been stored at Trinity in Binford for the past few years, there for anyone to use. Items include crutches, walkers, canes, and a shower chair. Since none of these items are being used, they are available to anyone who needs them. If you would like to have any of these items, please come to Trinity in Binford before Friday, February 5 to pick them up. After that date, everything will be taken to the F-M Healthcare Equipment Recycling Organization in Moorhead.

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3rd Annual Valentine Banquet

Sunday, February 14
6:00 pm

Trinity Lutheran Church, Cooperstown

*Prime Rib & Shrimp, coleslaw,
Dairy potato bake, and dessert*

*Only 125 tickets are being sold.
Tickets can be purchased from
Todd & Rebecca Edland, Mark Urness,
Larry Olson, or @ the Cooper Trinity office.*

Entertainment provided

*Proceeds to go towards
Trinity's current building fund.*