



From our pastor

Recently I was woken up in the wee hours of the morning when my phone started making a weird noise. Since I was sleeping, I was confused enough to think it was dying. But it turned out that it was a message to warn me about a blizzard. It would not disappear until I confirmed that I had read the warning. I literally had to click a “Confirm” button so that I could go back to sleep.

One line of this warning was literally “Prepare.” This got me thinking about the warnings that Jesus gave to his disciples to prepare themselves for the danger and death that was to come. During Lent we prepare ourselves; we think about the reality of death starting with Ash Wednesday, and are faced with Jesus’ death on Good Friday. Lent is a very somber time and yet is very honest. I could compare the somberness of Lent to a warning from a meteorologist who is trying to warn us to be prepare for a worst-case scenario. Jesus warned his followers who lived in denial, and I can understand. Few people spend their life preparing only for the worst. I myself do not like living my whole life in such a state of preparation, but for a short time each year, I am honest about danger and death. Most of the time we prefer to prepare and plan for the good things in life, and the list most definitely does not include betrayal, beatings and death upon a cross.

The reality of our world is that bad things do happen. We have blizzards, extremely cold temperatures, ice and countless other weather phenomenon that can threaten our safety. But we can prepare when we are warned. The same applies to us preparing for the reality of Jesus’ death. Jesus’ warnings unsettled the followers who ought to have had a “Confirm” button so that Jesus could know that they paid attention to the warning. They had to know that the danger would not go away even if they ignored it.

Lent is coming in a few short weeks. We are being warned yet again of how messed up our world can be. Some of us will decide to make sacrifices or seek to change habits. Others will live in denial. But at the heart of the whole season is a warning that comes to us again, telling us that bad things are going to come, but also reminding us that God can see us through even the worst that this life can throw at us. We can prepare ourselves so that when the time comes, we won’t be shocked but can learn to live with the reality of mortality and be at peace.

Prepare yourself. Please confirm.

Peace,

Pastor Kara

Interim pastor arriving

Rev. Joel Brosten will begin serving as our interim pastor on February 1. Pastor Brosten comes to us from Great Falls, Montana. He sends this greeting to introduce himself:

Friends in Christ,

I am excited to be joining you as your interim pastor these coming months. I recall when this cooperative ministry began. At the time, I was pastor at Atonement in Jamestown. What a vision for ministry, as well as an adventure into something brand new. It is a pleasure to join you as you prepare to call another pastor. We go on with the adventure.

I was asked to write something in order to introduce myself. Well, I have been a pastor for 34 years. I served in Eastern North Dakota my first 18 years of ministry: Bethlehem in Fargo, Bisbee/Egeland Parish in Bisbee, and Atonement in Jamestown. From there I served as senior pastor at First Lutheran Parish in Rugby, and for the last 12 years, as senior pastor at Our Savior's in Great Falls, Montana. I believe that I have continuously grown in my call to ministry and love what I do.

I am the father of three children: Joshua (Vanessa), 32 years old, a teacher in Bismarck and father of two adorable granddaughters, Sophia and Lilly; Emily (James), 27 years old, a team leader in the Centene Corporation in Great Falls and mother of almost two adorable granddaughters, Aunika and Kennedy (February 9); and Andrew, 23 years old and a shift manager at Starbuck's in Great Falls. All grown up, love them and am very proud of all of them.

You might like to know that my father was born in Cooperstown, ND; my uncle and aunt used to farm just north of Hannaford; and I used to be a counselor at Red Willow Bible Camp back in the early 70's. The world is very small. I look forward to getting to know you in these next few months. Brought together in the love of Christ let us proclaim this in our words and deeds that others, too, may know.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Joel

Call Committee in place

Each of our seven congregations has chosen a representative and an alternate to serve on our call committee. The committee has held their organizational meeting and will next be collecting the congregational profiles.

The reps and (alternates) on this committee are:

Grace

Jay Kulsrud
(Cindy Meehan)

Our Savior's McHenry

Iris Brandt
(Jeanne Hoyt)

Trinity

Denny Goetz
(Mitch Trostad)

Lutheran Church of McVile

Glenn Phillips
(Corrina Olson)

Our Savior's of Klotten

Richard Hanson
(Olen Ophaug)

First Presbyterian

Rita Jungels
(Ryan Campbell)

Faith

Jill Larson
(David Hook)

Corrections to the Tri-County Ministry directory

A few errors have been found in our new directories:

Page 11:

- ♦ Lyle and Annola Black should have a green border for Our Savior's of McHenry
- ♦ Joanne Brennan should have a yellow border for Our Savior's of Kloten

Page 16:

- ♦ Willard and Alice Hareland (not Hanson)

Page 24:

- ♦ Lowell and Carole Skjolden should have a yellow border for Our Savior's of Kloten

If you have found other errors either on the picture pages or in the congregational listings, please notify Theresa at the TCM office and they'll be noted in the next newsletter.

First Communion Class Saturday, March 23 9:30 — Noon (site to be announced)

Parents, please notify Pastor Kara, Pastor Joel, or Theresa to register your child for this class. (If you have questions, please contact one of our pastors.)

“Beneath the Cross of Jesus” series for Lent

Ash Wednesday is on February 13. Services of Holy Communion will be held —

- ♦ 5:30 at Grace in Grace City and Trinity in Binford
- ♦ 7:00 at Faith in Hannaford and Lutheran Church of McVile

We live our lives beneath the cross of Jesus, beneath God's manifold love and grace that reach to us even from Calvary. Based on the hymn “Beneath the Cross of Jesus,” this year's midweek Lenten series explores what it means for us to abide at the foot of the cross, to cling to the rock of our salvation, to dwell in the house of the Lord, and to confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness.

Three services will be held each Wednesday evening, February 20—March 20:

- ♦ 5:30 at Trinity in Binford
- ♦ 7:00 at Faith in Hannaford and Lutheran Church of McVile

Many thanks:

The Tri-County Ministry Council will reorganize on Wednesday, February 6.

A huge thank you to outgoing members of the council for their diligence and dedication in serving our parish: Jo Black from Grace, Iris Brandt from Our Savior's of McHenry, Darrell Moon and Amy Olson from Lutheran Church of McVile.

Worship time alerts

Starting in February, our congregations will again take turns being on their own for a Sunday worship service. Only one time change to watch for in February:

First Presbyterian — Worship on February 17 will be at 9:45.

Worship services at Lutheran Church of McVile return to their regular time of 9:30.

TCM STAFF

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