



## ***From Pastor Jessica***

*“...but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.” Ephesians 2:19-22*

Have you driven south of McHenry these days? The two sloughs that border the road have begun to come over the road. McHenry lifers have said that they’ve never witnessed this before – they can remember when the sloughs were two big alkali beds that when there was a strong wind would blanket the town in white. Things are changing.

I love hearing families talk about being able to Skype (Skype is an internet telephone that allows for a visual connection.) with their relative over in Iraq or Afghanistan. It used to be that you’d have to wait for a letter or just hear a voice over the line; now you can talk face to face with a loved one. Things are changing.

Tri-County Ministry began with eight churches, grew into ten, then became nine, and is now seven. We’ve been blessed with different interns over the years; coming and going after a year of ministry. And now we welcome Pastor Kara into our midst. Things do change.

However, in this ever changing landscape there is one thing that remains the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow: The Church. Notice, I didn’t say your church, because we’ve all seen changes in our own church; but the Church does not change. Worship styles and hymnals may change; but the Church endures. It was, is, and always will be the Body of Christ, whose foundation is Jesus Christ. God has made it the place where the Word is spoken and sacraments given. She is the living-breathing brothers and sisters in Christ whom the Holy Spirit gathers, calls, and sends. In this place, God’s creative intent of us living in relationship with one another is experienced. The Church moves out into the world through people living out their life of faith with and for others.

God invites us to bring to the table our hopes and dreams, our anxieties and woes. When we pray together, we bless one another in words and presence. This is a place for our children where we help them hear, experience, and learn the Apostles’ Creed and The Lord’s Prayer (better than they could ever learn in Confirmation). They witness firsthand how faith is lived out in the lives of others. These gifts of the Church do not change.

In a world that is changing, in a society that continues to isolate us from one another, the gifts of the Church include fellowship, renewal, remembrance, and solidarity. Where we no longer need to speak to one another face to face, the Church calls us into community sharing with one another the ministry of presence.

God has united us in one baptism, one faith, and one Lord. Tri-County Ministry has experienced much change but we will always be the Church; for although we change, the Church still stands.

*“Built on a rock the church shall stand, even when steeples are falling;  
crumbled have spires in every land, bells still are chiming and calling – calling the  
young and old to rest, calling the souls of those distressed, longing for life  
everlasting.”*

*“Built on a Rock” Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig*

## ***Permanent staff in place***

July brings changes in the staffing of Tri-County Ministry.

**Rev. Kara Wiechmann** joined the staff at the end of June as Associate Pastor. She joins our Senior Pastor, Jessica Merchant. Kara graduated from Luther Seminary in May, and was ordained in her home congregation in Parkston, SD, on June 19.

The other change will be seen on Sunday mornings.

**Rev. Russ Pollock** will become a part of our weekly worship rotation. Pastor Russ is retired and lives in McVillie with his wife JoAnn. He recently completed an interim ministry in Hoople, ND. Russ will fill out our preaching staff, and will rotate through our parish on Sundays and holidays.

Rev. Thea Monson completed her interim ministry among us on June 19.

Because of various special events in July, neither Pastor Kara nor Pastor Russ will rotate through all seven congregations of the parish. So please be patient with our worship schedule until it gets more back-to-normal in August. And everyone will have the opportunity to meet Kara and Russ at the TCM Parish worship on July 10.

## ***Two from TCM attending Churchwide Assembly***

Pastor Jessica Merchant will be attending the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Orlando FL August 15-19. She is attending as the clergy delegate from the Carrington Conference. Lay delegate from the Carrington Conference is Becky Goetz, member of Trinity in Binford and co-director of Red Willow Bible Camp.

The theme of the churchwide assembly is "Freed in Christ to Serve." Theme verses come from the book of Galatians: "For freedom Christ has set us free ... only do not use this freedom as an occasion for self-indulgence, but serve one another in love." (Galatians 5:1, 13)

## ***Get to know Kara***

Greetings, Tri-County!

I'm so happy and blessed to be joining your parish as your new pastor. I look forward to getting to know all of you and hopefully will have all your names memorized by this time next year.

And now to share a bit about myself: I hail from Parkston in southeastern South Dakota.

My parents were blessed with five daughters, and I am number one in the lineup. I studied religion, philosophy and German at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, where I graduated in 2007 and within three months was starting my M.Div at Luther Seminary.

I love to travel and have been to Europe three times in addition to trips to visit various parts of the USA. My other hobbies are reading, watching movies, playing Wii games, crocheting, shopping and baking.

I have been interested in ministry since my years as a teenager who was picked to help lead various activities at church. I love being part of congregations and being surrounded by faithful people who love God and their neighbors. In college, I was a leader of an outreach team that would lead worship services for congregations, which is when I learned to love worship planning. I love to teach, learn and grow with people in faith and through service, and I am excited to be doing full-time ministry on the prairie.

Please feel free to contact me at any time via phone, email or in person. I look forward to getting to know all of you in the coming weeks and months!

Peace,  
Pastor Kara Wiechmann



Kara & Bishop Rindy  
at her ordination

## ***Mid-week worship opportunities***

Faith in Hannaford has been having their worship services on Wednesday evenings in June, and will conclude their mid-week services on July 6. Both McVile and Binford will be having midweek services in July, with no Sunday morning services. McVile will continue their Wednesday services through August.

The schedule for July:

**July 6** — 7:00 at Faith in Hannaford, Lutheran Church of McVile, and Trinity of Binford

**July 13, 20, 27, and August 3** — 7:00 at Lutheran Church of McVile and Trinity of Binford

**August 10, 17, 24, and 31** — 7:00 at Lutheran Church of McVile

All are welcome to attend a midweek service!

## ***Upcoming jr/sr high youth events***

July 15-16: Canoe down the Sheyenne River and spend the night at Red Willow Bible Camp.

August 4-7: Dash to Duluth, mission trip and hiking in the Duluth area

September 11: Hayride

July 2012: ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

All registration info is in the youth newsletter that was mailed out in May. Or visit the TCM website.

## ***Disaster Response donations accepted***

The Tri-County Ministry office will continue to accept donations for Disaster Relief at any time. Donations will be forwarded to Lutheran Disaster Response or to the Disaster Response of the Presbyterian Church USA.

Your check maybe be made out to Tri-County Ministry, or directly to Lutheran Disaster Response or Presbyterian Church (USA). Donations may be designated, if you wish. (eg. Joplin, Haiti, Japan)

One hundred percent of the donations received goes to disaster relief. No portion of the donations is used for administrative costs.

## ***Barns in the church?***

What's with those barns in our ELCA churches? Well, they are one way for you to contribute to "God's Global Barnyard."

In keeping with the ELCA's "God's work. Our hands" theme, ELCA World Hunger gives us the opportunity to help support families throughout the world by donating funds to help with the purchase of farm animals. What can your money buy?

10 chicks for \$10

1 duck for \$20

1 pig for \$30

1 goat for \$50

1 sheep for \$125

1 cow for \$500

A barn bank has been placed in each of our ELCA churches. Our Savior's of Klotten has taken their special offering, and designated it for the purchase of two pigs and seven chicks.



The remaining ELCA churches will have the banks available each Sunday this summer. Then on Rally Sunday, the first Sunday of Sunday School this fall, the Sunday School of each church will count up the money collected and then decide what animals should be purchased with it.

Your loose change or loose cash may be dropped in a barn bank any time this summer.

## ***TCM confirmation class ends year with service project***

On May 7<sup>th</sup> the Confirmation Class volunteered at the Great Plains Food Bank in Fargo. The Food Bank provides perishable and non-perishable food to needy families throughout North Dakota and into Minnesota. Our young folks packed boxes of food that were part of a 1,600 box distribution that was leaving on Monday. The youth were challenged with packing 38 food items into a box that needed to be taped shut in the end; they worked hard packing 88 boxes in the two hour designated time for our volunteering.

I would like to thank Connie Eslinger for her assistance and Larry Halvorson for driving our bus.

When asked about the work that they did; our young people had to say:

- ◇ “Today was great. It was fun learning about what they all do there. It was also cool to see how they do it.”
- ◇ “Today was really fun. I loved the feeling of knowing I’ve done something good for people. I liked learning about the stuff.”
- ◇ “Today was fun. It was like a puzzle. It is amazing how much food there was.”
- ◇ “There was a lot of food. I liked the freezer and helping out.”
- ◇ “I liked the freezer and stacked a lot of boxes.”
- ◇ “The work we did was well worth it and it went to a good cause of families in need.”
- ◇ “I think it’s amazing what they do for people.”
- ◇ “I think it is awesome how people get things together to help others and not themselves.”
- ◇ “I thought it was amazing how much food there was to give to people all over ND.”
- ◇ “I thought it was fun today and really cool how much food they had.”
- ◇ “It was an experience that taught me to help the less fortunate and more often.”
- ◇ “Great experience – glad we did the prayer at the end. A good reminder of why we’re here today.”

### **MANY THANKS!**

As many of you know we've just ended another successful year of Confirmation. What you may not know is that there are members of our congregations that have helped tremendously in the last two years with that ministry. Known as the "The Crew," the people who have helped are Donna Evers, Denny & Becky Goetz from Trinity and Connie Eslinger from Faith. Their witness to our young people of living out a life of faith and sharing that faith with others has been an integral part of our commitment to our youth in helping them grow in faith.

Please give a word of thanks to these folks when you see them; they have helped make our Confirmation program this year happen. I have been very blessed to have them working with me for two years now and thank God for them.

Shalom,

Pastor Jessica

## **TRI-COUNTY MINISTRY COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS — May 25**

**Hannaford Parsonage:** The Parsonage Committee recommended that Tri-County Ministry pay the cost of materials for the insulation of the parsonage roof. Recommendation approved by council.

**New Pastor:** Kara Wiechmann will begin her call in TCM on June 27, 2011. Pastor Thea Monson's interim with TCM will end on June 19.

Installation Service will be held at Red Willow Bible Camp, with 10:30 worship and potluck dinner.

A workshop for parishes who have hired a first call pastor will be held in June in TCM. This workshop is offered by the synod. Council members and call committee are asked to attend.

**Pulpit Supply:** Rev. Russ Pollock, a retired ELCA pastor living in McVille, has met with Pastor Jessica and Theresa Fiebiger, and has agreed to serve as pulpit supply for TCM for the coming year, until TCM can re-enter the intern program.

**August 28 at RWBC:** Individual councils are asked to decide whether they wish to have worship in their own congregation on August 28 or have their congregation attend the worship service at RWBC that morning.

**Committees:** Discussion of function of the committees of the TCM Council. Focus was mainly on the Education, Youth and Family Committee. Suggestions for activities included family Bible studies, singles activities, group trip to the Opera House in New Rockford. Question: should the council do a needs survey within the parish? Everyone is asked to bring one possible question for the survey to the next council meeting. Iris will serve as chair of the committee, with Missy as secretary.

**STAFF REPORTS:** Darla Fliflet distributed the youth newsletter, which includes events for this summer for youth in grades 7-12.

Pastor Jessica reported on the May 7 confirmation service project at the Great Plains Food Bank in Fargo. A confirmation parents meeting was held May 4, and the parents voted to keep confirmation classes on Saturday mornings once a month, 9:00 to noon. Pastor Jessica attended the END Synod Assembly, and will be attending a meeting of Presbytery of the Northern Plains on June 20. Confirmation services have been held at McVille, Faith, and First Presbyterian; Trinity's confirmation service will be in June. She also reported that this year's Seminary on the Prairie is in question, due to low registration.

Next meeting will be scheduled as needed.

## **July/August at RWBC**

**Seekers**  
Grades K-3  
July 27

**Pathfinders**  
Grades 2-3  
July 19-21

**Creation Camp**  
Grades 4-6  
July 10-15

**Holy Hoops**  
Entering grades 4-7  
July 24-29

Entering grades 8-11  
July 17-22

**Disciples Camp**  
Grades 7-9  
July 31-August 5

**Wilderness Week**  
Grades 7-9  
August 7-12

Please check with your church council and WELCA for scholarship information. For more information, call the camp or go to their website.  
[www.redwillowbiblecamp.org](http://www.redwillowbiblecamp.org)

**Quilt Auction**  
**Sunday, August 28**  
**10:00** Worship in chapel  
**11:15** Lunch  
**12:00** Pie Contest  
**1:00** Auction in chapel  
**3:00** Quilt raffle  
drawing



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**Tri-County Ministry  
Parish Worship Service  
&**

**Installation of Rev. Kara Wiechmann**

**Sunday, July 10**

**10:30 a.m.**

**Red Willow Bible Camp**

**Potluck dinner to follow.**

**No worship services in  
our individual churches that morning.**