



## ***From Pastor Kara***

Lent is my favorite church season.

This is the time of year when I think most about the difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is a fleeting moment, and I always think of balloons that float for a short time before they sink back to earth. Joy, on the other hand, is the deep well that continues to hold water even when we can't see the bottom and think it to be empty. I may not always be happy, but I'm always joyful. I think that we can be joyful even in the midst of sorrow and death and pain simply because joy does not come from anything we can do or say or buy. My joy is always lurking deep down, right where God has written his words on our hearts. During Lent, when I'm giving up things that make me happy, I am reminded yet again that joy comes from God and not anything of this world.

Lent might not be so happy for some of us who have given up something that we "love," be it chocolate or pop or red meat or shopping...I personally am going without sweets during Lent. This tradition of giving something up is a reminder of the great sacrifice that Jesus made for all of us. Other years I have treated the season of Lent as a time of intense reflection and preparation, which meant that I took on tasks of reading certain books of the Bible or deep theological writings to help me grow in faith intellectually. Both habits find a place during this season as the church prepares for Holy Week with its utter desolation and the triumphant joy. The intent for either path through Lent (sacrifice or self-reflection) is that our faith would grow abundantly as we seek to better understand our own imperfect selves and to appreciate what God does for us through the person of Jesus Christ.

I am completely serious when I say that I love Lent. I appreciate most of the church year, but love Lent. I love the seriousness of Lent when we are given freedom to embrace the low parts of life, when we can talk about death and sin, when we set aside a few weeks in order to refocus our lives back onto the God who walked among us. My emotions are often in turmoil whether due to what we are hearing in church or because of what challenges exist in my life. Lent is the church season when I feel most connected with the reality of how difficult life can be. We look deeply into ourselves and see how sinful we can be, how broken apart we are, and how much we need God. But what I love most is how even in the dark days, in the midst of intense reflection and sacrifice, as winter is drawing to a close, we sit and wait in anticipation for God to triumph over sin, death and the devil. New life is just around the corner...

Thanks be to God who walks with us, who never abandons us in the midst of the turmoil and pain and brokenness and sin of our lives, who died so that we might have full lives. Amen.

Peace,  
Pastor Kara



## First Communion class being offered

A two hour class on the Lord's Supper will be offered on Saturday, March 24. It will happen at Trinity in Binford, 10:00 until noon.

All youth who are wanting to participate in communion are invited to attend. (There is not a definite age requirement.) Parents may attend the class too.

If you have any questions, or are unsure about sending your child to this class, please talk to Pastor Jessica or Pastor Kara.

Pre-registration would be appreciated, so the pastors may be adequately prepared for the number of students. You may talk to either pastor, or contact the TCM office in Binford.

## Office hours now on the calendar

As a way of being more accessible to our members and friends, Pastors Jessica and Kara are planning to have office hours in our churches.

Pastor Kara has been in the McVille office on Thursdays, and will now be at the Trinity office in Binford on Friday afternoons, from 1:00 until 4:00.

Pastor Jessica is planning monthly office hours at each of her four primary congregations, also from 1:00 until 4:00, as follows:

- ◆ First Monday at Grace
- ◆ Second Monday at OS McHenry
- ◆ Third Monday at Faith
- ◆ Fourth Monday at 1st Presbyterian



Office days and/or hours are subject to change, and will be listed on the church calendar as much as possible. Stop in and say hello whenever you have the chance.

Our pastors also plan to be at senior meals on the day of their office hours, as their schedules allow.

## New at Faith:

Sunday morning coffee hour

9:00

Now through May 13

Coffee and rolls served by the confirmation students and their families.



## Get ready for summer

### Home and Garden Art Retreat

March 30-31

### Red Willow Bible Camp

Lots of projects:

- ◆ Lamps and shelves from old books
- ◆ Mosaic tile bird bath or table
- ◆ Succulent garden
- ◆ Painted rocks
- ◆ Window conservatory

Contact the camp to sign up:

676-2681

[www.redwillowbiblecamp.org](http://www.redwillowbiblecamp.org)

*A representative of Gideons International will give a brief talk at Faith, Trinity, and First Presbyterian at the beginning of the worship service on Sunday, March 18.*

# Pictorial directory update

We now have the photography dates for our 2012 TCM pictorial directory.

George Dutton and staff will be in our parish three weekends in June:

**June 2-3**

**June 8-10**

**June 24-25**

You'll notice that each of these weekends includes a Sunday plus one or two more days. The hope is that sometime during the scheduled seven days, each and every member and friend of our congregations will find a time to be photographed.

Our directory is not limited to those who are official members of our congregations. All who are active in some way in our churches are invited to have their pictures in the directory.

Those who are not available any of the three weekends in June may stop in at the studio in Valley City at any time to be photographed.



Family photos may be submitted for the directory, but the studio charges \$15 for that.

Watch for photography appointment sign-up sheets in each church the first part of May.

And if you have been snapping shots of events in your church, please start thinking about which ones could be submitted for use on the directory's activity pages.

## ***TCM Council Highlights***

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

President – Kathy McCracken  
Vice President – Iris Brandt  
Secretary – Amy Olson  
Treasurer – Paulette Gronneberg

**Needs Survey:** The survey was discussed at all annual meetings. The staff is now looking at ways to implement the suggestions.

**TCM Council Retreat:** Pastor Jessica will bring possible dates to the next TCM Council meeting.

**Intern Program:** Intern Committee will consist of one representative and one alternate from each cluster of congregations (McVille/Our Savior's Kloten; Faith/First Presbyterian; Trinity/Our Savior's McHenry/Grace). A youth member will also be an at-large representative to the committee.

The Personnel Committee will review the Intern Manual.

The Council agreed that a brochure about TCM should be completed.

**2012 Congregational Membership:** Active confirmed membership numbers of each congregation as of January 2012:

Faith	97
First Presbyterian	33
Grace	(not yet reported)
McVille	98
Savior's/Kloten	30
Our Savior's/McHenry	60
Trinity	88

**Updating of By-laws:** Discussion of Program Committee, its necessity and its job description. The Executive Committee will complete the updating and revision of the by-laws and bring to the April TCM Council meeting for approval. Executive Committee will also consider the wording of the by-laws to allow for a youth on the Council.

**Recognition of Darla Fliflet:** Motion approved that the TCM Council recognize the hard work and dedication to our youth by Darla Fliflet.

**Next meeting:** April 25, 7:00 in Binford

**TCM STAFF**

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**TCM CONGREGATIONS**

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**Grace of Grace City ..... 674-3112**  
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**Our Savior's, Kloten..... 322-4952**  
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**Tri-County Ministry News is**  
**published nine times per year:**  
**January, February, March, April, June,**  
**August, September, October, and**  
**November.**

**Our Lent Schedule**

Every Wednesday in March:

- ◆ Noon at First Presbyterian
- ◆ 5:30 at Trinity in Binford
- ◆ 7:00 at Faith in Hannaford and Lutheran Church of McVile

Our theme for Sundays during Lent: "A Covenantal God"

Wednesdays: hear the Gospel from the viewpoint of a character in the story.