



From our pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

I have been back in North Dakota for three weeks now, and with my coming the wimpy winter (through January) has turned into a real North Dakota winter. Two blizzards in one week, that is something. I have told many of my friends that very few can appreciate spring like the folks in this country. We are at that point where we begin to long for spring. The Latin word for *spring* is the “Lent.” That is where we find ourselves.

We are in the midst of Lent. Our longing for spring translates itself well into what this season in the Church year is all about. We make the journey of Lent longing for Easter. But first we must make the journey towards Holy Week and the passion of Jesus upon the cross. It is this part of our journey -- the remains of winter -- that can make our hearts all the more glad for the proclamation, “He is risen!” Out of winter’s death comes the new life of spring. As we make Lent’s journey towards the cross — really taking the time to contemplate what this season is about — that we are made ready for Easter.

Take care to make this Lenten journey. Be attentive to worship, make devotional time for each day, pray more (commit yourselves to a time for prayer each day), contemplate on what God has done for us in the cross and resurrection. Do this well and you will indeed be ready to proclaim on Easter, “He is risen! He is risen indeed!” Winter will pass. Spring will come.

I am so grateful for the warm reception you have given me as your interim pastor. There are lots of people to get to know. Be patient with me as we become acquainted. I believe that this will be a wonderful adventure in ministry together. May God bless it.

In Christ’s Service,

Pastor Joel

Lent, Holy Week, Easter

Wednesday evening Lenten services

March 6, 13, & 20

- ◇ 5:30 at Trinity in Binford (supper following)
- ◇ 7:00 at Faith in Hannaford and Lutheran Church of McVile (supper at 6:00 at each church)

March 28

Maundy Thursday

Services of Holy Communion

- ◇ 5:30 Trinity
- ◇ 7:00 Faith
- ◇ 7:00 Lutheran Church of McVile

March 29

Good Friday Services

- ◇ 7:00 a.m. First Presbyterian
- ◇ 5:30 Our Savior's of McHenry
- ◇ 7:00 Grace
- ◇ 7:00 Lutheran Church of McVile



March 31

The Resurrection of Our Lord

- ◇ 7:00 Faith
- ◇ 8:15 Our Savior's of Klotten
- ◇ 8:30 Grace
- ◇ 9:30 Lutheran Church of McVile
- ◇ 9:45 Our Savior's of McHenry
- ◇ 11:00 First Presbyterian

Upcoming assemblies:

Presbytery of the Northern Plains

Friday-Saturday, March 8 & 9
Crookston

EaND Synod Assembly

Saturday-Sunday, April 20-21
Jamestown Civic Center

First Communion Class

Saturday, March 23

9:30 — Noon

(site to be announced)

This class is open to all youth younger than confirmation class age. Parents are also encouraged to attend.



Parents, please notify Pastor Kara, Pastor Joel, or Theresa to register your child for this class. Registration deadline is **March 14**. The site of the class will then be set, based on the participants.

If you have questions, please contact one of our pastors.

TCM Council 2013

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Grace | Kathy McCracken Janice Munson |
| Our Savior's McHenry | Corey Erickson Roy Brandt |
| Trinity | Marvin Goplen Bob Delfs |
| McVile | Mary Gleason Norma Trost |
| Our Savior's Klotten | Richard Hanson Warren Ophaug |
| Faith | Pat Larson Paulette Gronneberg |
| 1st Presbyterian | Vickie Goplen Dennis Jungels |

Who Needs Church?

Found on the internet, where it had been republished with permission of the author, an ELCA pastor

I had a really interesting conversation in confirmation class this last week. I think it is a set of questions that a lot of people have but most adults don't speak about it so clearly: Do we really need to go to church? Isn't it enough to just believe in Jesus on your own?

I began by responding that no, Jesus never told us to go to church. There isn't a law about going to church. The gift of faith isn't invalidated or canceled if you don't attend.

However, he and his disciples go to the synagogue throughout this ministry and Jesus is pictured more than once as teaching in the temple. From the beginning, following the resurrection, the disciples gathered together for prayer and to hear the word, to share the meal, and to care for those in need.

Following Jesus is not pictured as a solitary activity but instead, Jesus calls and gathers people together. The vision that Paul gives of those who follow Jesus is that together, we are the body of Christ. All of us together make one body.

But my students pushed. "So I don't HAVE to go to church if I can still believe."

So I challenged them back. "Right. You may not need to, for yourself. But there are people who need to see you there." Worship is not just about getting but also about giving.

One of the major challenges of small town and rural ministry is our shrinking and aging communities. Most of our members are very aware of how things have changed over the last 60 years and how they continue to change.

Having our younger members at worship and actively participating and visible in leadership and servant roles is a clear sign of hope and life that the congregation needs. It's not about "passing confirmation" or being good, it is one action that can really make a difference in the lives and outlook of other members.

I'm afraid I got passionate and sermonized a bit. But to get back to the original question, does it really matter?

Yes, it matters. We are created to be in partnership, to be in companionship with one another and with God.

The second chapter of Genesis tells of God's search for partnership, for companionship "because it is not good for one to be alone." From the resurrection on, God's people have been gathered together around word and sacrament.

Can you pray and hear the word while watching your television or with an online community? Sure. But your screen cannot feed you at the Lord's table.

We are not just about spirituality and good living, we are the people of God's bread, fed at God's table, and sent to bring that bread out into the world. Real bread. Bread that brings forgiveness but also the bread brought as gifts that goes out to feed the hungry, care for the sick, and gather in the lost.

Belonging to God is not just an exercise of the inner spirit. Faith is attached to the real physical things of life and death. Both inside and outside of the church, we neglect this truth at our own peril.

The word leads to prayer leads to bringing our gifts leads to thanksgiving leads to the table and back out again into the world to serve and to share. Neither worship nor table nor prayers are an end to themselves but a cycle that strengthens both faith and life.

We gather and share ancient words of faith in the creeds. There are times when because of grief or doubt or confusion, I may not understand or be able to claim it as "my" statement of faith, but I can find comfort in the weight of the millennia of saints before, with and after me that affirm what I cannot firmly hold for myself.

It is like a bank that holds the riches in trust for us that we can draw upon when our own pockets of faith feel empty. The words spoken with sureness by all the gathered around us bear witness to God's power and promise even when we come before God weak, or empty, and even in anger.

The saints around us are not perfect. They may come grumpy or empty themselves. It is not the perfection of the assembled people or our worship that matters; we just need to trust in the promise that together Christ is among us and even more than that: together we are the body of Christ given to the world, warts, grumps, hugs, confusion and all.

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“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them”

~Matthew 18:20

“But as it is, God arranged the members in the body ... If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

~1 Corinthians 12:18-21, 27