



From Pastor Kara

We have officially entered the season of Lent, which happens to be my favorite of all the church seasons. Most people would probably say Advent/Christmas, but I love the starkness of Lent.

Right before Lent, we heard the story of Jesus' transfiguration, that time on the mountain where Jesus was literally glowing with a divine light and was claimed by God. That was the shining moment for Jesus; everything else to come would be a letdown in comparison. Jesus began his journey from that mountain towards the mountain of Jerusalem, where he would face persecution and death. Every step from that moment lead him closer to death.

Three days later, we gathered for Ash Wednesday services, that time when we are reminded that we are dust and ash. We are nothing more than the dirt from which God created life. What a humbling experience for each of us. Every year, when I place an ashen cross on foreheads, I question which one might not be back for one next year. From infants to adults in their 90s, none of us know when our life-giving breath will stop.

And with that humbling notion, we begin Lent. Lent is a time for us to be honest about life. We are honest about our shortcomings. We are human beings with tendencies toward sinfulness and always one step closer to death. This is not the time to sugar-coat or gloss over reality. We are not striving to be put onto a scale where our goodness outweighs the bad (because that would mean that our own actions could balance us out enough to not be condemned), but instead we face ourselves in the mirror with eyes wide open.

Such honesty can be brutal. As the apostle Paul wrote, "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). When we acknowledge that we are sinners, we can despair and cry out in need.

But the hidden blessing in such despair is that we cry out to God. We cry out, naming our need for forgiveness. We cry out, turning to God for mercy. We cry out, knowing that the one in whom we ought to put our faith is not ourselves (because we are broken, messed-up human beings) but God.

Honesty can be refreshing and life-giving when we learn to embrace our human weaknesses and turn to God for strength.

May God give you the strength and courage to look in the mirror. If you don't like what you see, may you turn to God who can guide you towards a better life. If you like what you see, may God continue to guide you as you journey through life. May your humble, honest journey through Lent be blessed by God. Amen.

~ Pastor Kara

Lent in March

Our series on the parables has begun and will continue through Easter. Our Sundays in March look like this:

- ◆ March 1 — The Hidden Treasure and the Priceless Pearl (Matthew 13:44-46)
- ◆ March 8 — The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- ◆ March 15 — The Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16)
- ◆ March 22 — The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)
- ◆ March 29 — The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7)

We've also begun our refresher course on Luther's Small Catechism at our Lenten midweek services.

- ◆ Lord's Prayer
- ◆ Ten Commandments
- ◆ Apostles' Creed
- ◆ Sacrament of Baptism
- ◆ Sacrament of Altar (Holy Communion)

Midweek services will be held all four Wednesdays in March — 5:30 at Trinity, 7:00 at Faith and McVile.

You're probably seeing a table or something at the back of your church which might already have some items for Northlands Rescue Mission in Grand Forks. This mission project continues through Easter. Check the poster or bulletin announcements in your church for suggested donations each week. (Listing was also in last month's newsletter.)

Reminders for the month

Church Council Workshop

**Saturday, March 14,
10:00 — 3:00**

Red Willow Bible Camp

Council presidents, please sign up your group up by **March 9**. You can do this by contacting Theresa. (676.2761 or trinitybinford@mlgc.com)

First Communion Class

**Saturday, March 28
9:30—Noon**

Open to children wanting to participate in the Lord's Supper.



If not already signed up, please contact a pastor or the TCM office as soon as possible.

Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly

April 18-19 at the Holiday Inn in Fargo

Registration opens **March 2**. Info and registration on the synod website.

Lenten trivia



The traditional symbol for Lenten prayer is the pretzel. In Lent, Christians made dough of flour, salt, and water. They shaped the dough in the form of two crossed arms to remind themselves to pray. The bread was called "bracellae" (meaning "little arms"), later called "brezel" or "pretzel". So pretzels were meant to be a Lenten food and thus only eaten during the period as a reminder to pray more often. (trivia found on a Presbyterian blog)

Tri-County Ministry Highlights — February 4, 2015

Election of 2015 Officers:

President – Bob Delfs
Vice President – Rob Loe
Secretary – Pat Larson
Treasurer – Marsha Scanson

Committee Assignments:

- ◆ *Property Committee* – Marvin Goplen, Rob Loe, Pat Larson, Paul Motter
- ◆ *Faith, Life, and Education Committee* – Olen Ophaug, Roy Brandt, Corey Erickson, Neil Reiten, Faith TCM Council member (yet to be determined)
- ◆ *Finance Committee* – Dennis Jungels, Marsha Scanson, Kathy McCracken, Richard Hanson

Active Confirmed Membership Numbers:

Faith – 76
Our Savior’s Kloten – 27
First Presbyterian – 25
Our Savior’s McHenry - 50
Grace – 59
Trinity - 85
Lutheran Church of McVile – 98
Total – 420 (down 25 from 2014)

Intern Program: Pastor Sherri reported that the intern application has been submitted,

and that we’ll know by the end of March whether or not TCM will be assigned an intern pastor for the 2015-2016 year.

Lay Sundays during Lent: For the first four Sundays in March, one church each Sunday will have a lay-led service, with entire service being provided to the churches.

Council Leadership Workshop: All council members from the individual congregations and the TCM Council are encouraged to attend this workshop at Red Willow Bible Camp on Saturday, March 14. Workshop is sponsored by the END Synod.

Visitation: Pastors discussed the need to be notified of shut in / hospitalization / pastoral care visitation needs. Also discussion of member visitation. Pastor Kara noted that the pastors welcome an invitation to someone’s home.

Worship Scheduling: Question was raised on pastor and pulpit supply assignments / mileage.

Souper Bowl completed



Most of our congregations participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring in January or February. Exact \$ amounts are not available, but both money and food were collected. Recipients

were the food pantries in Griggs, Nelson, Foster, and Eddy Counties.

Worship time alerts

First Presbyterian
March 15 at 9:45

Trinity
March 22 at 9:45



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Tri-County Ministry News is
published nine times per year:
January, February, March, April, June,
August, September, October, and
November.

Palm Sunday Supper

Grace Lutheran Church in Grace City

Sunday, March 29

5:00—7:00

**Turkey and dressing, ham, mashed potatoes and
gravy, corn, seven layer salad, rolls and dessert**

And a bake sale!