



Thoughts about Lent

Busy, Busy, Busy. If you're like me life is busy; places to go, things to do, people to see. And, if you're like me it takes a nasty virus to make you stop and rest a bit. In a society of cell phones, palm pilots, filled calendars, and sports schedules we can just keep on going and not stop. That is until something stops us. And usually that something isn't always good. The whole Sabbath rest thing is foreign to us; it takes blizzards and ice storms to keep us home. How does one catch a breath these days?

The creators of the church calendar must have known about us 21st century people. That we'd become so efficient with making things easier that life would get a lot harder to keep up with. What they've given us is Lent. Now, many have either a negative feeling towards the season of quiet and songs in minor keys or just move along as if it's just like any other time of the year. What Lent gives us is period of time, 40 days to be exact, to give ourselves permission to slow down and listen. The rhythm of Lent allows us to slow down and listen to our lives, to hear what we've been missing by keeping ourselves so busy.

The rhythm of Lent changes the rhythm of our fast paced, over extended, busy lives. It is here to allow us to stop and think, to experience silence, to respond intentionally to what our lives are telling us.

How does Lent do this for us? The big one, the one everyone always associates with Lent is *giving something up*. Right off the bat that has negative connotations; sacrifice is the buzz word. That's not it at all; what it is is all about paying attention to what we do. We can be such automatons, continuing actions or behaviors day after day, that we no longer pay attention to what we're doing and why we're doing it. We move away from being unconscious actors in our lives to conscious ones. That we don't just do something automatically because, well, that's always the way I did it. It calls us to have to think. Thinking: that's not so negative.

Thinking; not a bad thing when it comes to faith. Thinking: do my actions/inactions reflect my faith life? Thinking: Are there things I do/don't do that are detrimental to my faith life? Thinking: What does God have to say about my life? Thinking: Have I even asked God? Thinking: Am I even listening? Are we going through the motions, or are we thinking about what we're doing? It's not about sacrifice; it's about paying attention.

And paying attention during Lent isn't always about food. (Giving up chocolate seems to be a favorite.) It can also be about paying attention to certain ways of living, certain ways of reacting, certain ways of thinking. Let's see from St. Paul some thoughts he has on Christian living: *"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers."* (Romans 12: 9-13) Maybe the paying attention isn't a matter of subtraction but of addition...

Prayer, devotion, fasting, reading the Bible, these are just some of the ways in which the rhythm of Lent breaks the cacophony of our lives; setting in motion new behaviors or renewed behaviors. And who knows, maybe those behaviors won't end with the church season of Easter; maybe the rhythm will become a way of life that moves into the whole year.

~ Pastor Jessica

First Communion Classes

**Saturday, April 4
9:30-11:30 a.m.
Trinity in Cooperstown**

**Saturday, April 4
McVile Lutheran Church
(time TBA, date tentative)**

**Binford, McHenry, & Grace City
Dates and times to be announced**

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- If you have a news item, calendar item, or
- pictures that could be used on the TCM website,
- please e-mail them to Theresa at
- trinitybinford@mlgc.com.
- A goal for our website is to keep everyone
- current on everything happening in our
- congregations. Check it out.

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www.tricountyministry.org

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*Having trouble finding correct addresses?
The Tri-County Ministry directory might be just what you need. It lists both street addresses and box numbers. Several copies are still available. Check at your church, or contact Theresa at the Binford office.*

“Faith” in Hannaford lives up to its name!

In 2008, the Faith congregation was an example of living in faith, when it spent over 16% of its annual budget for mission giving—giving to benefit causes other than the day-to-day expenses of congregational life. A similar amount of their 2009 budget has also been dedicated for mission giving.

May the Hannaford congregation be an inspiration to the rest of us for faithful living and discipleship!

Mission trip in March

A group from Tri-County Ministry and the Cooperstown area will be joining a larger group from First Lutheran Church in Fargo for a March trip to Mexico. TCM members of this group are Dan & Marla Larson, Darla Fliflet, Sara Jo Fliflet, and Dillon Fliflet.

The Mexico Mission Team will travel to a small village in the Yucatan Peninsula, where they will help construct homes. They will also provide Bible school-type activities. School, medical, and personal hygiene supplies will be given to the villagers by the group. If you have items to donate, please bring them to your church by March 4.

On the last day of their time in the village, the group will host a fiesta, and they are looking for items to use as prizes. You may donate new or gently used hair accessories, water balloons, small toys, jewelry, nail polish, face paint, school supplies, etc. Again, those items may be brought to your church by March 4.

Financial support is also welcome. Please contact Marla at 769-2474 for more information on how or what to donate.

Finally, the group asks for your **prayer** support. The dates of the trip are March 15-22. So please lift them up in prayer during that week, and also each day as they prepare for this experience.

Healing Service

**Sunday evening, March 22
7:00 p.m.
Trinity in Cooperstown**

*For all the people of
our communities*



TCM Council Highlights — January 31, 2009

Mission Challenge Grant: Discussion continued on this grant of \$500, which is to be matched by the congregations of Tri-County Ministry. Suggestions for use of the grant money:

- Coordinator for Transportation to medical appointments
- Seasonal chores for the elderly or disabled in their homes
- Community Gardens – coordinator to find garden plots and people to tend the gardens
- Food pantry fund raisers or food drives

Suggestion that anyone with an idea for the grant use write up a project plan and bring it back to the TCM Council. Decision was made to have plans submitted by e-mail and to give council members a chance to review each plan until a decision can be made.

Election of Officers: for 2009

- President – Richard Hanson
- Vice President – Vernon Knudson
- Secretary – Leona Kulsrud
- Treasurer – Connie Eslinger

Committee Assignments: Council members will remain on same committees as 2008. New council members will take the committee positions of the members they replaced. Becky Iverson will also serve on the Evangelism Committee, as Connie Eslinger moves to the Finance Committee.

Ad hoc Committee: Executive Committee will update the TCM By-laws.

Confirmed Membership Numbers as of 1.1.09:

Faith of Hannaford.....	124
First Presbyterian of Cooperstown.....	37
Grace of Grace City	71
Mabel of Sutton	37
Lutheran Church of McVile	136
Our Savior's of Kloten	34
Our Savior's of McHenry	79
Trinity of Binford	120
Trinity of Cooperstown	<u>311</u>
Total	949

(down 43 from 1.1.08)

Program vs. Administrative Committees: Pastor Cheri began discussion on the differences in these committees and how they operate. More discussion on committee parameters at future council meetings.

2009 TCM Council Meeting Schedule: Meetings will be held bi-monthly, as much as possible.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Minutes of the November 25, 2008, meeting were accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Approved and filed
General Fund 12/31/08: \$51,083.47
Parsonage Fund 12/31/08: \$2,642.26 (\$725 earmarked for Cooperstown parsonage)
Special Funds 12/31/08: \$7,637.73

NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday, April 22, 7:00 at Trinity in Binford

Coming up at Red Willow Bible Camp

Confirmation Retreat

- March 6-7

Garden Art Retreat

- March 20-21

Jr. High Retreat

- April 17-18

Scrap Booking

- March 20-22
- March 27-29

Grades 4-6 Retreat

- April 3-4

Quilting Retreat

- April 24-26

Annual Meeting

- Sunday, April 5



www.redwillowbiblecamp.org

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Wednesday Lenten Services

Bible People Monologues:

The Paralytic

Peter's Mother-in-Law

Mary Magdalene

Thomas

Martha

Lazarus

Trinity of Binford
5:30

Our Savior's of McHenry
7:30

(March 11 & 25)

Trinity of Cooperstown
6:00

Grace of Grace City
7:30

(March 4 & 18)

Mabel of Sutton
6:00

Faith of Hannaford
7:30

McVilLe Lutheran Church
7:00