



## ***From Pastor Jessica***

*“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:27-28)*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

“We are Family” by Sister Sledge was a popular song during my teenage years. (Yes, Pastor Kara, this dates me.) They sang of their bond as a family and living their lives together as such. We have our own family that we can sing about – each of us has said those words at any baptism we’ve attended at our churches. During the welcome to the newly baptized you may hear “God has made you a member of the household of God.” Or you may say, “We welcome you into the body of Christ.”

We are brothers and sisters. Our fellowship in church is a gathering of family to worship and praise, to support and nourish, to share in the meal, and to stand side by side one another. In a society that prizes self-sufficiency and individualism, church becomes something that is countercultural; we are dependent on one another because we are part of something together: the Body of Christ. God has made us one body with many members. Like my body, I can’t tell my foot to take a hike or my eye to get lost; I need all of me. The Body of Christ needs all her parts; not one of us is indispensable. We are incomplete without one another. What happens in our churches does not just affect one individual, or a few, but the entire community. Take a moment to visualize what your body did the last time you stubbed your big toe. It was a whole body experience!

This Body, this family of brothers and sisters in Christ, is made up of such diversity that only God could have birthed us. We pray Our Father to the Mother of us all. And this family looks forward to seeing you. It’s just like those great feasts at Thanksgiving or Christmas — we like to see all the chairs at the table filled; we don’t like to see any empty. Something has taken that person away from being able to be a part of the family gathering. That something may be good or bad; nonetheless, there is an empty chair.

When our family is separated from one, another we feel the loss. When a brother or sister no longer engages in our gathering, we are diminished. We mourn the empty chair; the Body is not complete. God — who has given us so many blessings, who has enriched us through the Spirit, who has given us life through Jesus Christ — invites us to this family gathering. There is a place for us, and the greatest delight of God is to see us there. It gives God great joy to see beloved sons and daughters gathered together to worship, supporting one another in prayers and presence, partaking in the meal that makes us one, and then sending us out to be with and help other brothers and sisters.

Listen to God’s invitation and let us gather as a family! You don’t need to bring anything, for when God is the Host we can bring nothing but ourselves.

Your Sister in Christ,

*Pastor Jessica*

# ***Stewardship — it's not what you think***

Really, it's not.

Why am I writing about stewardship (but not in the way you typically think of stewardship)?

Because your preachers are going to be preaching about stewardship (but not in the way you think). We will be taking six weeks over the next couple months to think about how our lives are affected by stewardship since being a good steward affects every part of your life (not just your checkbook).

What am I talking about?

Well, folks, stewardship is more than money. Yes, we all know that supporting God's mission requires some money to change hands so that mission work is funded (and your staff is paid). But stewardship really is far more than money. So we are going to talk about how stewardship is more than writing checks or tossing dollar bills into the offering plate. Pastor Jessica, Pastor Russ and I will all be putting our own spin on stewardship (and I can promise you that none of us will drone on about money).

Lesson of the day: the word *steward* comes from the Old English "stiward" that is composed of sti (meaning household) and ward (warden, keeper). Stewards originated as the people in charge of hospitality, making sure that everyone had food and drinks. Hospitality (caring for the needs of others)

continues to be a large part of stewardship. But stewards came to have more and more responsibility. Eventually, the role of steward was often the appointed representative of the monarch, chosen to govern and to rule on behalf of the absent ruler (think of the Stewards of Gondor in *Lord of the Rings* trilogy). In this way, stewardship also contains an emphasis on wise management of resources.

In the Bible, we learn that the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it (Psalm 24). So we, having been given care of the earth (Genesis 2), are called to be good stewards. This means that we are always aware that what we care for and possess doesn't really belong to us but to God. We are called to be managers with the responsibility to look after the world and all God's people. As stewards, we use our time, talents, material possessions, bodies and minds in order to act as the hospitable, responsible representatives of the great ruler who entrusted the world to us.

Our goal is to help you frame your life through the lens of being God's steward, using all that you have and all that you are to care for all that belongs to God.

Please come with your thoughts, questions and your stories of how you strive to be a good steward representing God in all you do and say!

Pastor Kara

## ***Carrington Conference Assembly***

***Sunday, October 9***

***2:00***

***Red Willow Bible Camp***

***Each of our ELCA congregations should have at least one representative at this annual meeting.***

***Agenda includes the renaming of the Carrington Conference.***

**October  
is  
Clergy  
Appreciation  
Month**

Our Savior's  
of rural Kloten

*125th Anniversary  
Observance*

Sunday, October 9

Worship at 2:00  
Followed by anniversary cake  
and coffee.

Everyone welcome!  
Come and reminisce  
with old friends and  
visit with new friends.

*Congregational Special Meetings*

*Sunday, November 6*

*A brief congregational meeting will be held following the worship service in each congregation for the purpose of voting on the 2012 per member assessment for Tri-County Ministry.*

*Your representatives to the TCM Council will have budget information following their October 26 Council meeting.*

***m&m's in the  
car***

Bishop Rindy is extending a challenge to all congregations in EaND Synod to help provide support for the mission work being done in the Central African Republic.

This project will help build schools and hospitals, provide clean drinking water, and support missionaries in the C.A.R. The Western North Dakota synod raised \$54,000 doing this same project, and hopefully all of us will rise to the challenge and return the tubes full of quarters and raise even more.

m&m's in the CAR (aka Mission and Ministry in the Central African Republic) is a variation of an extra mile offering with a bit of a twist: the Synod purchased tubes of m&m's and sent boxes home with pastors to hand out to members in their congregations. The goal is for you to keep the tube in your car (or in another place you won't forget) and put in your extra change. Each tube can hold

\$14 in quarters (as well as different amounts of dollar bills or checks).

Pastor Kara came home from the pastors' conference at Fair Hills with numerous boxes of m&m's in her car (and didn't eat any of them), so we have numerous tubes of m&ms that will be handed out within the next month at each of the congregations.



## **October at RWBC**

**Ignite Retreat**  
**“Leaf It to Jesus”**  
**October 7-8**  
**Grades 4-6**



**Impact Retreat**  
**“On a Mission”**  
**October 14-15**  
**Grades 7-9**

**Country Jamboree**  
**Friday, October 21**  
**Grades K-3**

**Senior High Fusion Retreat**  
**October 28-29**

For more information, call the camp  
or go to their website.  
[www.redwillowbiblecamp.org](http://www.redwillowbiblecamp.org)

## **Odds & Ends**

**October is Clergy Appreciation  
Month!**

**For Faith in Hannaford:  
Annual Thanksgiving Service  
and turkey dinner on Sunday,  
November 20**

**Northlands Rescue Mission  
Saturday, December 10**  
**All jr/sr highers and adults are  
invited to join our confirmation  
students for this annual day of  
service at the mission in Grand  
Forks.**  
**Donations for the mission will  
be accepted after December 1.**

## **Ordination of Jodi (Naas) Myrvik**

**Saturday, October 22**  
**3:00 p.m.**

**Our Savior's Lutheran Church, rural Kloten**

**Stay tuned for the final  
God's Global Barnyard report.**

**Total donations and designations  
will be in the November newsletter.**



## **Are you using the TCM website?**

Our website is updated as much as possible, but your help would be greatly appreciated.

The site currently includes all TCM newsletters for the past couple of years, lists of staff and council members, articles about coming events, and a complete calendar.

If you have something that could be submitted concerning your congregation, please e-mail it to the TCM office in Binford. Council minutes are currently being posted if they are sent to the office.

TCM is also on that social networking site that we probably can't mention in the newsletter since we are using a non-profit mailing rate. But you can like us on that site and see whatever updates are posted. That site can also be used for such things as cancellations due to storms.

Please help us bring our website to its full potential!

# ***TCM Council Highlights***

## ***August 25***

**Needs Survey:** Some suggested questions:

- ◆ Which age group needs more activities?
- ◆ Tri-County Ministry or local congregational activities?
- ◆ What are you willing to do / bring to the table?
- ◆ Where can we be doing more for Christ in our communities?

Council members are asked to bring other suggested questions to the next TCM Council meeting, and to get input from the local councils/session.

**Stewardship – it’s not what you think:** The pastors are planning a series of stewardship sermons for six weeks in October and November. Council discussed their definitions of stewardship. Series will focus on what it means to be church as stewards of God’s creation and his gifts.

**Confirmation Program:** 2011-2012 confirmation program begins on September 9. The nine Saturday meetings include service projects and a trip to the Spirit Lake Nation / Dakotah O’yate Lutheran Church in Tokio. Council approved the use of the Re-form confirmation curriculum from Augsburg Fortress.

**Mileage Rate:** Tri-County Ministry will pay the IRS mileage rate to all employees, retroactive to July 1, 2011.

**Preliminary 2012 Budget Discussion:** Discussion of financial concerns in individual congregations, creative ways of doing ministry, intern program, a possible visit with another cooperative ministry to share ideas, use of technology, what we are willing to do or to give up to make the budget work.

**Staff Reports:** Pastor Jessica reported that the Global Barnyard collections will continue through the Rally Sunday of each congregation; the Sunday School of each church will then designate the collections. She also asked that each congregational council consider paying the fees for their confirmation students. Pastor Kara asked that students be encouraged to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering in July 2012.

## ***September 22***

**Needs Survey:** More suggested questions, and suggestion of possible categories for the survey questions:

Goal of the survey: How can TCM support the congregations, and how can the congregations support TCM?

Executive Committee will work on the survey and bring it to the October TCM Council meeting.

**2012 Budget Discussion:** Preliminary 2012 budget was presented. Council members are asked to take the budget back to their individual councils/session for input, and report back to the TCM Council at the October meeting.

Motion was approved to authorize Pastor Jessica Merchant to apply for an intern pastor through the Horizons program of the ELCA.

**Staff Reports:** Pastor Kara reported on m&m’s in the car. Carrington Conference Assembly will be held at Red Willow Bible Camp on October 9. Confirmation class has begun, and a make-up session has been scheduled for those who had to miss the first class. Registration for the ELCA Youth Gathering opens on October 9. We continue to encourage youth in grades 8-12 to attend. Kara will be in the Twin Cities October 3-4 for continuing education.

Theresa asked that before the next TCM Council meeting, each council/session look at Christmas weekend and determine what they would like for Christmas services. (Christmas Eve and/or Christmas Day) Each church should also decide whether or not they would like the Hanging of the Greens service again this year. Dates and times for Sunday School Christmas programs should also be given to Theresa by the next TCM Council meeting.

TCM has been doing a pictorial directory every five years. Next directory would be done in the summer of 2012. Council members were asked to consider whether or not a directory should be done, and if so, whether we would go with Olan Mills or Dutton’s Valley Gallery.

**TCM STAFF**

**Rev. Jessica Merchant.....769-2231**  
**(cell) 218-230-4479**  
**uncas16@hotmail.com**

**Rev. Kara Wiechmann .....322-4952**  
**(cell) 605-770-4005**  
**pastorkaraw@gmail.com**

**TCM Parish Administrator**  
**Theresa Fiebiger .....676-2761**  
**trinitybinford@mlgc.com**

**Youth Leader**  
**Darla Fliflet.....789-1613**  
**darlamomof3@yahoo.com**

**TCM CONGREGATIONS**

**Faith of Hannaford .....769-2387**  
**faithl@ictc.com**

**First Presbyterian of Cooperstown**  
**797-3112**  
**bthomas@invisimax.com**

**Grace of Grace City.....674-3112**  
**kmac@daktel.com**

**McVile Lutheran Church.....322-4952**  
**mcvilleparish@gondtc.com**

**Our Savior's, Kloten.....322-4952**  
**mcvilleparish@gondtc.com**

**Our Savior's of McHenry.....785-2117**  
**trinitybinford@mlgc.com**

**Trinity of Binford .....676-2761**  
**trinitybinford@mlgc.com**

**Tri-County Ministry**  
**Box 226**  
**Binford, ND 58416**  
**Phone 676-2761**  
**trinitybinford@mlgc.com**

**www.tricountyministry.org**

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***TURKEY SUPPER***

**Sunday, October 16**  
**Grace Lutheran in Grace City**  
**5:00—7:00**

**Turkey and all the trimmings!**  
**Bake sale too.**