



Tri-County Ministry News

We exist to serve Christ in harmony with our member churches and communities.

From Pastor Kara

After 25 years of shared ministry, we have some exciting changes in the air within Tri-County Ministry's congregations, and I hope that you are willing to join us in a "Holy Experiment" or three.

Pastor Sherri and I were fortunate to travel to Luther Seminary with three TCM members to a "Rethinking Church" conference. In a world where Sunday morning worship attendance and overall church membership is dropping, we face challenges not seen by previous generations. The conference challenged us to think about what is truly important for us as people of faith. And while some may still value high membership numbers, the reality is that our congregations are not reflecting numbers where Sunday morning worship bursts at the seams. Instead, we face the challenge of not being discouraged when we compare what church was like a few decades ago.

As we move forward in faith with Holy Experiments to enliven and deepen our faith, a few questions to reflect on: What excites or ignites your passion? Where do your thoughts keep turning? What does it look like when we are encouraged to think about how God is not dead, but that God might be far more active outside our church walls than we previously imagined? Such questions could help us to rethink where our priorities lie as we strive to be faithful in following God's intentions for us. We want to celebrate all that God is placing in our hearts and minds.

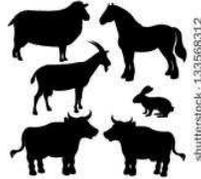
One last thought: Are our churches dead? Are our congregations, ministries, committees, or traditions on life support? Are there parts of our church life that are bringing us down, have become burdensome or have stopped being helpful? If we say yes to any of these questions, then let us celebrate the history, share the memories, and bury what has died. If we say no, then let us accept the fact that our future will not be the same as the past, but instead let us embrace the future with hope and find joy in knowing that God is not done with us yet.

For there really is a time and a season for everything, and I have great hopes for the church that we are rethinking, knowing and trusting that God has a plan for us (Jeremiah 29:11 and Ecclesiastes 3:1).

Summer Mission Project: *Buy a Farm*

How are you coming on your m & m container? Is it full of quarters yet?

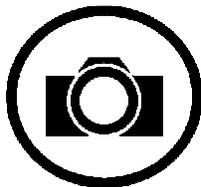
If you've forgotten, our annual summer project has to do with farming — providing funds for farm animals, tools, and seeds. Donations will be sent to ELCA Good Gifts and Presbyterian Gifts.



Your Tri-County Ministry staff is purchasing a farm; that is, making a donation which would purchase all the animals and tools needed. Can each congregation possibly collect enough to also buy a farm?

All m & m containers / donations should be turned in to your church by September 10. (And if you need an m & m container, please contact a staff member. Some of our containers even have m & ms in them!)

Directories



The 2017 edition of the Tri-County Ministry pictorial directory is now available. All who were photographed or who submitted a picture receive a free directory. (Please pick your directory up at your church.)

Directories are also for sale for \$10. Please contact Theresa at the TCM office in Binford if you wish to purchase one.

Family Fall Festival & Trail 5k Run/Walk/Pray *Saturday, September 9* *Red Willow Bible Camp*

9:30—Registration

10:00-2:00 — Activities for kids

10:30 — 5k begins. The 5K will begin at the Bible camp and will follow trails through much of the 500 acres of land. This includes rolling hills, some dirt paths and some mowed grass paths, open prairie land and also through areas surrounded by trees.

Noon lunch will be served.

\$30 registration fee for 5k. (You may register online.)

Kids' activities are free.

RSVP or get more information at 676-2681.



God's Work Our Hands

Sunday, September 10

Day of Service

Individual churches have events planned. Please watch your bulletin announcements or your church's newsletter page.



Confirmation class starts in September

Here is the quick summary of what is planned for confirmation class this year:

Team building and informational meeting at Red Willow Bible Camp on Saturday, September 16. This is for both Parents/Guardians and Students.

Class option #1: Sunday afternoon (typically first Sunday of the month) with rotating locations

Class option #2: Wednesday evenings (planning 2 each month) in McVile

Involving more adults in mentor positions, especially since we will be having a larger class than in previous years, and wish to promote the awareness that faith is a lifelong journey that doesn't end with confirmation

A mailing will go out to all prospective confirmation students at the beginning of September. If you know of someone who does not receive the mailing, please contact a staff member.

ELCA Youth Gathering June 27—July 1, 2018 Houston, TX

Open to all youth in grades 8-12 for the 2017-2018 school year

Registration opens September 15.

Are you interested?

Please talk to either of our pastors if so. The sooner the better so that fund raising can begin.



Lots of info online.

elca.org/youthgathering

P.R.A.Y. Event

Saturday, October 21

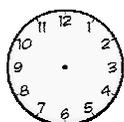
Lutheran Church of McVile

(Mark your calendars. Details in the next newsletter.)

Worship time alerts

First Presbyterian

- ♦ 9:45 September 3
- ♦ 9:45 September 17 at Assisted Living



Our Savior's of Klotten & Lutheran Church of McVile

- ♦ No worship service Labor Day weekend

Trinity

- ♦ 10:30 September 10

END Synod WELCA Convention

Saturday, September 16

Faith Lutheran Church in Valley City

2017 Theme: **Be a Light — No Matter What!**

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." ~Matthew 5:6

Goal: *"To Glorify Our Father In Heaven"*

Please contact your WELCA president for information on registration and the schedule for the day.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER:

Rebuild Generous Communities

We continue to ask God how to be faithful in our spiritual practices, including our giving. In the past, stewardship has been about the churches and our own yearly budgets. Instead, let's start from a place of hope no matter what our circumstances.

The first spiritual practice is to COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS. The second is to COUNT YOUR CASH. We talked about contentment and labeled it LEARN TO BE CONTENT. We pondered CHOOSING A SIMPLER LIFESTYLE. Once we have those things in place, we have the power to KEEP ON GIVING. Going from personal practices we now look beyond ourselves.

"All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." (Acts 2:44-47)

Times of recession bring people together—those with physical, spiritual, and emotional needs meeting those with a willingness to share. We all know that farming has cycles and even individual crop prices are raised and lowered. Our economy overall has not grown, but has been stagnant for many years.

Today many neighborhoods are less strong than they used to be; residents barely know the names of their neighbors. In our smaller communities, we have the illusion of knowing everyone, however, there are people in our midst who are not incorporated into the overall community.

We may actually have a stronger sense of community at work, church, following the local high school or college sports team—or even in the virtual world. A sign of commitment to a community is our willingness to sacrifice something to meet the needs of others. As the body of Christ, our faith communities can demonstrate Christ's love in practical ways.

One of the ways that we practice this is with our Summer and Lenten giving. We rotate between worldwide and local projects or ministries and support others by giving funds or goods to the "front-line" workers. ANOTHER ACTION would be to spend some time getting to know the needs of our neighbors, colleagues, and the people you encounter every day. Where do you see the need? What can you do to help? In what ways can we share as a faith community? How does the sharing in the early Church shape how we give today?

Oh God who is Three in One, living in perfect community; grant us the desire to transform our communities, that we might reflect your love, grace, and generosity as we minister to others in your name. Amen.

25 years ago . . .

This is the last in our series of memories going back to the formation of Tri-County Ministry in 1992.

At our 25th anniversary celebration on August 6, Bonnie Foss talked about the presence of the Holy Spirit as our cooperative ministry came together. She talked about the installation service, which took place at Red Willow Bible Camp the fall of 1992. Anyone who was at the service knew, without a doubt, that the Holy Spirit was present. As the first TCM staff was called to the flatbed for the rite of installation, a strong breeze blew through the camp. The fall leaves rustled, and the congregation knew that this ministry was truly being led by the Spirit.

Even though we don't usually see the kind of visible presence of the Spirit as we did that day at RWBC, we know that the Holy Spirit has guided our congregations and members into all kinds of ministry over these past 25 years. We can't end this series without talking about some of the bigger milestones of our ministry. Like Our Savior's of Klotten and Lutheran Church of McVillage joining our ministry. Like the work done with and for Red Willow Bible Camp, especially during the time when TCM was providing the administration of the camp. Like the many adult and youth trips that have been taken — both for service and for fun. Like our participation in the intern program where we have helped new pastors prepare for

ministry. Like the GIFTS/Lay Ministry program and the BeFriender program.

To end this series of memories, many thanks need to go out to all who worked on the 25th anniversary celebration of TCM:

- ◆ Planning committee—Myrna Hanson, Corrina Olson, Vickie Goplen
- ◆ The staff at Red Willow Bible Camp for preparing the camp for our use
- ◆ The TCM Council members who were able to help with the worship, meal, and program
- ◆ Musicians — Linda Loe (choir director) and Verna Lindvall (accompanist), choir members, the brass ensemble, the McVillage Praise Band, and the Occasional Gospel Quartet (brought to us by Denny Goetz)
- ◆ Lots of others — Missy Erickson (photographer), Janell Feiring (baked our communion bread), Marvin Goplen (emcee for program), all who sewed the gift bags and crocheted the prayer squares, Bonnie & Carell Foss and Eric Hulstrand for spending the day with us and bringing back so many memories; to all others, too numerous to name, who helped with the celebration in any way.

As we begin our the next 25 years, we know that our ministry will continue to change, but (as Carell Foss reminded us at the celebration) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

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