



Tri-County Ministry News

March 2023

From Deacon Tara

By the time you receive this newsletter, Ash Wednesday will have come and gone, meaning we are well on our way through Lent. Those 40 days where the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. Those 40 days where we find ourselves traveling down that Lenten road to the cross and then finally to the empty tomb.

There are times in my life when it has felt like the longest Lenten weary road where we find ourselves in the limbo between life and death. And you may find yourself there this year. There have been so many times during those weary Lenten days I have just wanted to stop and sit on the side of the road waiting for someone to come along to walk with me.

This year Lent brings the fifth anniversary of my friend Ben's death. 1,825 days have passed since he took his last breath. At times, the grief has seemed somewhat subdued while at other times it has come on so suddenly and fast. Grief has a way of paralyzing us. We want to feel something, anything. Or we find ourselves trying to find a new normal in the midst of our grief. The anniversaries are a passing of time. They continually remind us that this person is no longer with us. And that is still true even five years later.

Lent is truly a time for us to feel, to remember the promise of eternal life spoken over us as the ashes are placed upon our foreheads. "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return." That ashen cross reminds us again and again of our humanity and our mortality. It reminds us that life not death has the final word. Once again, in the words of Clarence W. Hall, "Easter says you can put death in the grave, but it won't stay there."

There are times when it feels like death will stay in the grave. Yet God continually shows us the power that God holds. Lazarus is resurrected. Jesus is resurrected. Seeing and trusting in these acts of faith, I must also trust in the promise that God indeed has the power to overcome death. Those we have loved in this life may be gone, but they are still a part of our lives. We still remember them. We are thankful and know that we are better for having known them. "Thank You for giving them to us to know and to love."

Trusting in the promise of eternal life, we know that Lent should and can feel like a spiritual journey renewing our faith in God and each other. But a lot of the times it can feel so beautifully broken. The words to Gungor's song "Beautiful Things" are now playing in my heart and soul. "God makes beautiful things out of dust, out of us." The road to the cross is not easy. In fact, it is extremely difficult.

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Parish News

Our 2023 Lent Project: Project Ignite Light

Children in crisis situations will be the focus of our Lenten offerings this year. All Wednesday offerings will go to **Project Ignite Light**. A special offering plate will also be available on Sunday mornings.

Our goal is to collect **\$1750**. That amount would purchase approximately 35 backpacks and the items needed to fill them. These backpacks are then distributed to children of all ages.

Included in the backpacks:

- Pajamas, socks and underwear
- Toiletries
- Fruit snacks & water bottle
- Flashlight
- Other items that are gender and age specific

A fleece blanket accompanies each backpack. We'll be making those blankets in our churches during Lent. Materials and instructions coming soon!

Lent 2023:

Wednesday worship

The "Amazing Grace" series will be the theme of our five Wednesday evening Lenten services in March. The Holden Evening Prayer will be sung each week in each church.

Services each week:

5:30 at Trinity, with supper following

7:00 at Faith, with supper at 6:00

7:00 at Lutheran Church of McVille, with supper at 6:00

Week 1 • Isaiah of Babylon (Isaiah 6:7): We see God's amazing grace at work in the life of the prophet Isaiah, who proclaimed to God's people the salvation that was to come through the Suffering Servant.

Week 2 • The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:32): We hear of the great love of a father who lavished amazing grace upon the Prodigal Son, a picture of our Heavenly Father's lavish compassion toward us.

Week 3 • The Blind Man (John 9:24): We witness Jesus bringing sight to a man born blind, giving the man the added spiritual vision to see the amazing grace of God found in Jesus, who heals us all.

Week 4 • The Woman at the Well (John 4:13-14): We listen to Jesus teach a woman at the well of his amazing grace poured out for us abundantly, which satisfies our thirsting souls for all eternity.

Week 5 • Paul (1 Timothy 1:15): We marvel at the story of amazing grace in the life of Paul, who turned from persecutor of Christ to proclaimer of our Lord through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit.

A limited number of Lenten devotional booklets will be available in our churches: "Amazing Grace" and "How Sweet the Sound."

Congregational News

Faith of Hannaford

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 1. Kumla Supper!
Serving 4:00-7:00. Watch for more details in the next newsletter.

Lutheran Church of McVile

Wednesday evening Lenten soup suppers are planned. Supper at 6:00, with worship at 7:00. No supper on the weeks where no one has signed up.

Trinity of Binford

The annual Souper Bowl offering was collected on February 12. The donations were way more lopsided than the game, but the congregation did choose the winner. Score: \$64.76 Chiefs, \$29.22 Eagles. The total was sent to the Griggs County Bread of Life Food Pantry.

Wednesday evening Lenten suppers will be served following the 5:30 services March 1-29. Sign up in the narthex. On the weeks when no one signs up, we'll skip supper.

First Communion

classes

Saturday, March 11

Saturday, March 25

9:00—Noon each time

Sites to be determined.

Pre-registration is

required. Contact

Theresa at the TCM

office to sign up.

Choose the date that

works best for your

family.

First Communion will

be celebrated on

Maundy Thursday and

Palm Sunday.

From Deacon Tara continued

Yet in our humanity, God calls us to grab God's hand and walk along this Lenten weary road even when that Lenten weary road feels endlessly long. Because if we hold on tight, we eventually make it to the cross and then three days later, we come to the tomb to find it empty. It is a reminder that all is not lost. That life is meant to be lived and that death does not have the final say.

For it is at the empty tomb that we can truly declare that the world is about to turn. With Jesus' resurrection, God declares that life not death has the final word.

"My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn. Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn (Canticle of the Turning; Rory Cooney; Copyright 1990 GIA Publications)."

So may we continue to meander and trudge my way down this Lenten weary road ready to come to the cross on Easter and proclaim with all the saints that Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

(Revised and Edited February 2023 from a blog post from my blog PrayingonthePrairie.net; dated March 5, 2019; copyright Tara L Ulrich)

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harmony with our member
churches and communities.**