



Tri-County Ministry News

TRI-COUNTY
MINISTRY

September 2020

From Pastor Sherri

“A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.”

--John 4:7

Anyone who has been around the Eastern North Dakota Synod for a while knows what vital ministry has been taking place over the past 28 years at Tri-County Ministry. Serving the wider church beyond our communities does not always receive the recognition that it deserves because we focus on the daily life of ministry together. From our inception, the foundation was laid for ecumenical, multi-point parishes across the ELCA and PCUSA. But there is so much more! Pastors and even a new Bishop-Elect have been Baptized and shaped in our congregations. We have trained many Pastoral Interns that are serving in Eastern ND and beyond this synod and presbytery. Our Lay Preachers and Synod-Authorized Ministers (SaMs) have been steadily serving the parish in worship leadership, preaching, and leading in many other ways. Recently calling a Deacon to join the leadership team shows that we trust that ministry continues to evolve and take new forms. And can I mention that you have helped to shape me? A pastor that will soon serve a church in Norway through Global Missions? I am humbled by your faithful service to our neighbors and your faithful service to the wider church.

When we are open to God’s movements among us, we never know where God’s call will lead us. But we know that God’s Spirit will continue to guide us.

Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. He **sees** her and **knows** her. A tired, thirsty, living, breathing Jesus sees and engages her in theological conversation about water that will quench her thirst. Never be thirsty again? This woman has been through a lot in her life so she is tough and resourceful. We notice that she is at the well at an unusual time. What is she hiding? She knows the religious traditions—this Jewish Rabbi is not supposed to talk to her—and yet, she engages Jesus at every part of the conversation.

We need a God like this right now. Immanuel—God with us—in the flesh. Jesus who sees us and knows us. A Jesus that sees the things we want to hide. Jesus who knows our every failure and weakness and still seeks us out. Jesus who has living water to quench our thirst.

We are the ones that are thirsty and weary. Weary of the pandemic and social unrest. Thirsty for a more certain future. Weary of trying to be church in a changing world. “Jesus, do you see us? Jesus, do you know our situation?”

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Parish News

From Pastor Sherri continued

The woman left her water jar at the well because what she seeks is Jesus' living water. SHE is now the living container from which the water gushes. Jesus sees us and knows us. Take a big gulp, dear sisters and brothers and siblings in Christ! We drink the living water and let go of our jars. The living Jesus encounters us in our daily lives so that WE become his vessels. May we be open to God's baptismal waters moving through our lives and communities so that others may drink the living water that Jesus gives.

"We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give your daughters and sons new birth, cleanse them from sin, and raise them to eternal life." – Prayer during Holy Baptism. (We then welcome the newly baptized into the body of Christ and into the mission that we share.)

Synod Assembly Report

The weekend of August 14-16, voting members of the Eastern North Dakota synod met in a digital assembly. We elected a new Bishop - Rev. Tessa Moon Leiseth (who grew up at our very own McVille Lutheran). We heard from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. We celebrated ordination and church anniversaries. Pastor Russ Pollock from McVille was honored for his 50 years of service and Pastor Nels Lillejord (former pastor at McVille/Our Savior's) was honored for 60 years. We also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women, the 40th anniversary of the ordination of the first women of color and the 10th anniversary of the ordination of LGBTQIA+ individuals. In the video shared to celebrate this historic anniversary, there were at least four pastors who interned and were shaped by Tri-County Ministry: Amy Kippen, Trichelle Kirchenwitz, Jule Ballinger, and Bonnie Weaver.

In electing Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth, the Eastern ND synod elected its first female Bishop---a historic day for the church. Bishop Elect Leiseth has a wide grasp of the church having served as the country coordinator in South Africa for Young Adults in Global Mission, serving as a parish pastor and at Concordia College.

Long-range Scheduling

Last year at this time, our congregations/councils/session were scheduling events for the next 12 months. Having a long-range calendar worked very well for staff and for all organizations. Could such a thing happen again?

Yes, we're in a different time now that last year. However, if councils/session could schedule their meetings, and if organizations could make tentative plans for such things as church suppers and Christmas programs, we'd have a good head start on the next 12 months.

Any dates should be given to Theresa at the TCM parish office. Also—a reminder to send calendar info from your council/session meetings to Theresa so that changes can be recorded.

Congregational News

Lutheran Church of McVille

Synod Assembly — Rejoice! We have a new Eastern North Dakota Synod Bishop. It is with great honor and joy that we welcome Rev. Tessa Moon-Leiseth to that office. Tessa is a true child of God and a product of our own parish. Congratulations, Tessa, and know that you are wrapped in our prayers as you carry out your duties.

Romans 8:29—*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

END Synod Assembly was held August 14-16, 2020. It was very different and exciting with the knowledge that the assembly was held strictly online. We had the honor of voting for the new END Bishop, along with having ELCA Bishop Eaton and Interim Bishop Wohlrabe preside over the assembly and their leadership. Norris and Corrina Olson wish to Thank You for being chosen as your delegates.

Worship Services move back into the building on Sunday, September 6.

Club 3:16 will not meet in person for September and October for sure. Families have been contacted and kits/virtual lessons will take place for the time being. We will re-evaluate each month and look forward to being together soon!

The Caring Closet at the Lutheran Church of McVille will be open each Friday from 9:00-4:00 starting September 11. Clothing and household items will be available for those in need at no charge. Please use the SE door of the church and go down the stairs. We have eliminated the food portion of the Caring Closet as food became outdated. Those who are in need of food assistance may call Deacon Tara Ulrich 701-580-0949 to obtain a gift card. Confidentiality is guaranteed. Donations: At this time, we are only accepting winter clothing for children and teens, and household items such as paper products, personal care products, laundry & dish soaps, etc. No food items will be stocked. You may also give money for gift cards if you would like to donate. Thank you!

WELCA News

The 2020 EaND WELCA Convention has been cancelled. The next convention will be held September 18, 2021, at Park River Bible Camp.

The WELCA Triennial Convention which was to be held in Phoenix has been set to August 3-5, 2021, in Phoenix.

The August explosion in Beirut destroyed three shipping containers filled with quilts, school kits, and baby-care items. More than 22,000 quilts were lost. Lutheran World Relief is working to replace the losses.

If you wish to give a monetary donation, you may go online to lwr.org/beirut. Or mail your donation to Lutheran World Relief, PO Box 17061, Baltimore MD 21297-1061.

Mailing info for congregational offerings:

Faith of Hannaford

Mary Jo Grover
707 Foster Ave. NW
Cooperstown, ND 58425
(online giving through Vanco is available)

First Presbyterian

Rita Jungels
509 10th Ave. SW
Valley City, ND 58072

Grace

John Gisi
1951 82nd Ave. NE
New Rockford, ND 58356

Our Savior's of Klotten

Mary Lou Krogh
Box 324
McVile ND 58254

Lutheran Church of McVile

Box 306
McVile, ND 58254
(online giving through Vanco is available)

Our Savior's of McHenry

Missy Erickson
9057 16th St. NE
McHenry, ND 58464

Trinity Lutheran Church

Box 226
Binford, ND 58416
(online giving through Vanco is available)

Our Savior's of Klotten

September worship — No worship service on September 6, Labor Day weekend. Regular worship will resume on September 13.

Pastoral Acts — DeAnn Galde and Steve Schneider were married at Our Savior's on Saturday, July 25. May God richly bless their union.

Trinity of Binford

September worship — September 6 is the Sunday that our worship services will move back into the church. Please note our worship times in September: 8:30 on September 6 and 10:30 on the remaining Sundays.

God's Work Our Hands — A special offering for Red Willow Bible Camp will be received on Sunday, September 13. Due to COVID, no special meal or event will be held this year.

Pastoral Acts — A graveside service was held for Ric Gardiner on Friday, July 31, at West Prairie. Pastor Sherri officiated. We continue to keep Karen and family in prayer.

Our Savior's of McHenry

Pastoral Acts — Yvonne Aasand passed away in Fargo on August 8th. A graveside service was held August 13 at Bethlehem Cemetery with Deacon Tara officiating. Please keep Richard and family in your prayers.

Faith of Hannaford

Worship services will continue outdoors through September—10:30 at the CAB park. We have been so fortunate to have great weather for outdoor services. However, if we do have a rainy Sunday and move indoors, our plans will change and we will stay indoors (unless Covid directs us differently).

Sunday School — Rally Sunday is September 13th. 9:30 Sunday school at CAB park, "The Creek." Pool Party is our theme for the three Sundays in September.

Pastoral Acts — Lincoln Alexander Burchill was baptized on June 28th at Faith with Pastor Sherri officiating. Lincoln is the son of Preston and Beth Burchill. He was Born July 8, 2019 in Jamestown, ND. Sponsors were Cassidy Burchill and Jayden Grover.

From Deacon Tara

“Do not be afraid.” These words have been playing in my heart and mind in the last months, weeks, and days. At one time, it was brought to my attention that these words appear 365 times in Scripture — once for every day of the year. I find such comfort in hearing these words because fear has a way of paralyzing us. Yet God continually reminds us that God will never leave us or forsake us.

In the early days of the pandemic, I will admit that fear often would find its way into my heart and mind. However, as we have learned more about how to protect ourselves and most especially, protect our neighbors, I have found peace and am no longer paralyzed as easily by fear. Yet there are some who think we are letting fear motivate our actions, but that is not it at all. We are simply loving and caring for our neighbors. We do not want someone to come to worship and become sick with the virus. The truth is that as leaders we are called to care for and protect the most vulnerable among us.

A few weeks ago, Pastor Sherri shared about the difficulties of serving the church during a pandemic. It’s true! There are people on all ends of the spectrum: (1) We are either being too cautious or (2) We are not being cautious enough. As a result, it does your leaders, the church or even yourselves no good to compare our actions to other area churches. They are caring for their people the best they know how. And we are caring for our people the best we know how.

Too often we let the comparison game get in the way of loving, serving and caring for our neighbor. It is important to me, as a daughter whose mom lives in a nursing home, to be as careful as we can be. I trust that God is with us during this pandemic. But I also know that we can take precautions to help prevent the spread of this virus to the vulnerable among us. For me, it is about loving my neighbor so that we are both protected. It is about loving all God’s people even when we may not agree about a certain issue. It is about knowing and clinging to the fact that God loved us so much God sent God’s one and only Son into the world for each and every one of us.

“This is how much God loved the world: God gave God’s Son, God’s one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn’t go to all the trouble of sending God’s Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again.” (John 3:16-1; The Message Translation)

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harmony with our member
churches and communities.**