



Faith Country
Shared Ministry

Faith Country Chronicle

May - August 2016



May 2016 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ - Throughout 2016 I invite you to reflect with me on the theme of "Practicing Our Faith" as you gather for church council, adult study, youth group, coffee group, choir rehearsal and are engaged in learning, discernment and reflection together. Dorothy Bass has edited an excellent resource published several years ago by Jossey-Bass, *Practicing Our Faith*, which I will be using as a primary resource. Together with Don Richter, Dorothy Bass has also edited a second book, *Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens*, published by Upper Room Books, which is also an excellent resource. Each article will include a Scripture reference, thematic reflection, questions for consideration, and a prayer.

*It is not you that sings, it is the church that is singing,
and you, as a member...may share in its song.*

*Thus all singing together that is right must serve to widen
our spiritual horizon,
make us see our little company as a member of the great
Christian church on earth,
and help us willingly and gladly to join our singing,
be it feeble or good, to the song of the church.*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

Singing Our Lives - Part 1

Our four children, then quite young, learned to sing a set of ritual songs. First, they would gather in a circle and teach one another, clapping and singing. Then one of them might suggest using a skipping rope and they would, one after another, slip inside the whirling rope for a few dancing steps before darting away. Then one would suggest a band and instruments would be created: plastic pails serving as a drum set, a broom becoming an electric guitar, a large cardboard box transforming into an amazing keyboard.

That dancing, singing, shared music making image has come back to me many times as I have thought of matters of worship. That circle of song and movement, with its delight and physical energy, its formal, ritual character marked by

surprising improvisation, remains for me an image of vitality and delight. This is but one reminder of the truth that human beings have always sung at play and at work, on festive and solemn occasions, in joy and in grief.

The act of singing together is deeply and indelibly human. When we sing, words are given greater range and power than when we speak. Something is shared in singing that goes beyond the words alone. This something has taken shape over many centuries in a practice that expresses our deepest yearning and priceless joy: the practice of singing our lives.

There is something about us that needs to make music, something that insists on song. It is not surprising then that music and song are so closely linked with the praise of divinity. As Saint Augustine observed long ago, whoever sings "prayers twice," in music as well as text. From its very origin, the Christian community sang. In the New Testament, Paul's letters are punctuated by doxologies, hymn fragments, and references to the practice of singing in worshipping assemblies. In writing to the church at Colossae, he joins singing to teaching and admonition, wisdom and the Word (Colossians 3:16).

The Christian church was born singing the songs of ancient Israel, the synagogue, and the Greco-Roman world. Psalms and canticles formed the heart of prayer and the music of the earliest Christian assemblies. Luke's Gospel barely gets through the second chapter without bursting into song four times: Mary sings that her soul magnifies the Lord, Zechariah sings blessing to the Lord of Israel, the angels sing "Glory to God in the highest," and Simeon sings a farewell song of peace. Each of these songs became regular parts of Christian daily prayers within the first two centuries. Saint Augustine, writing in the fourth century, could observe: "Apart from those moments when the scriptures are being read or a sermon is preached, when the bishop is praying aloud or the deacon is speaking the intention of the litany of community prayers, is there any time when the faithful assembled are not singing?"

We continue to sing these songs from Luke's Gospel, as well as many other songs both ancient and new. We continue to sing not alone, but in union with the whole creation and with our sisters and brothers through the ages. The gathering of a community of faith to sing praises to God seems such a simple act, and it has been going on for over two millennia. But we should not take this practice for granted. It needs to be learned and nurtured and taught.

Read and Reflect: Colossians 3:16

Discuss and Reflect:

What in this reading leads you to say, "I wonder about..." or, "I noticed..."

Consider sharing (and singing) a song from childhood that is part of your faith tradition. What is the most powerful memory the song evokes? What does it say about the faith of your childhood? Are there connections to the faith of your adulthood?

Reflect on the various ways in which music is sung in worship.

Comment on the following: "The gathering of a community of faith to sing praises to God seems such a simple act, and it has been going on for over two millennia. But we should not take this practice for granted. It needs to be learned and nurtured and taught."

Pray together: Maker of creation's choir, you sing the Song of Love to us. Breathe your Spirit into our singing until the rhythm of your mercy shapes all our music-making and we join with one another to give you thanks and praise. Amen. (Susan Briehl)

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

In Christ Jesus - Shalom,
+Larry

The Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer, Bishop
Synod of Alberta and the Territories
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Spirit -Led Leadership - Hope-Filled Discipleship - Innovative Tradition - Collaborative Partnerships

Ole and Lars

Ole and Lars are walking down a street in Minocqua, WI when they see a sign on a store that reads: suits \$5.00 each, shirts \$2.00 each, and trousers \$2.50 per pair.

Ole says to his pal Lars, "Looky here! We could buy a whole gob of dese, take 'em back at Dulute, sell 'em to our friends, 'n make a fortune. Now when we go in der, you be quiet, okay? Just let me do da talkin cuz if dey hear your accent, dey might tink we're ignorant 'n try to cheat us No way dey'll know we're from Minnesota.

They go in and Ole says with his best "Wisconsin" accent, "I'll take 50 of those suits at \$5.00 each, 100 of those shirts at \$2.00 each, and 50 pairs of trousers at \$2.50 each. I'll back up my pick and..."

The owner of the shop interrupts, "You're from Minnesota, ain't you?"

"Vell...yeah," says a surprised Ole. "How'd ya know dat?"

"Because this is a Dry Cleaners..."

Summer Worship Schedule

- Our regular worship schedule will continue until the last Sunday of June.
- There will be no services scheduled in July due to Pastor Rick's holidays.
- Our regular worship schedule will resume for **Hope** and **St. John's** on Sunday, August 14.
- Our regular worship schedule will resume at **Trinity** on Sunday, August 21.

(Please take note of service dates and times on the calendars included in this issue.)

A Mother's Scar¹

A little boy invited his mother to attend his elementary school's first teacher-parent conference. To the little boy's dismay, she said she would go. This would be the first time that his classmates and teacher met his mother and he was embarrassed by her appearance. Although she was a beautiful woman, there was a severe scar that covered nearly the entire right side of her face. The boy never wanted to talk about why or how she got the scar.

At the conference, the people were impressed by the kindness and natural beauty of his mother, despite the scar, but the little boy was still embarrassed and hid himself from everyone. He did, however, get within earshot of a conversation between his mother and his teacher, and heard them speaking. "How did you get the scar on your face?" the teacher asked. The mother replied, "When my son was a baby, he was in a room that caught on fire. Everyone was too afraid to go in because the fire was out of control, so I went in. As I was running toward his crib, I saw a beam coming down and I placed myself over him, trying to shield him. I was knocked unconscious but, fortunately, a fireman came in and saved both of us." She touched the burned side of her face. "This scar will be permanent, but to this day, I have never regretted doing what I did."

At this point, the little boy came out running towards his mother with tears in his eyes. He hugged her and felt an overwhelming sense of the sacrifice that his mother had made for him. He held her hand tightly for the rest of the day.

Jesus Christ bears the scars He received when he saved us. "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Cor. 9:15)

¹ (From *Chicken Soup For the Soul*)



The **Faith Country Chronicle** is published monthly from September through May by the partners in the Faith Country Shared Ministry:

Hope Lutheran, Forestburg
St. John's Anglican - Sedgewick
Trinity Lutheran - Lougheed

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Faith Country Shared Ministry

| ~ May 2016 ~ | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | |
| 1 10:30a Trinity Communion Service | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| 8 <i>Mother's Day</i> Mother's Day 9:15a St. John's Eucharist Service 11:15a Hope Communion Service | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | |
| 15 10:30a Trinity Song Service | 16 | 17 11a Lutheran Cluster Meeting | 18 7p Big Knife Villa Service | 19 | 20 | 21 | |
| 22 9:15a St. John's Morning Prayer 10:30a St. John's Vestry Meeting 11:15a Hope Communion Service | 23 <i>Victoria Day</i> Victoria Day (Canada) | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | |
| 29 2p Closing Service at Bethania | 30 | 31 | Notes: | | | | |



Faith Country Shared Ministry

| ~ June 2016 ~ | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| | | | 1 | 2 10a Galahad Health Centre Service | 3 | 4 |
| 5 10:30a Trinity Communion Service | 6 | 7 | 8 7p Hope Council meets | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| | | | | | | |
| 12 9:15a St. John's Eucharist Service 11:15a Hope Communion Service | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 ABT Synod Convention (Augustana, Camrose) | 17 ABT Synod Convention (Augustana, Camrose) | 18 ABT Synod Convention (Augustana, Camrose) |
| | | | | | | |
| 19 Father's Day Father's Day 10:30a Trinity Picnic | 20 | 21 11a Lutheran Cluster Meeting | 22 1:30p Hope Worship Committee 7p Big Knife Villa Service | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| | | | | | | |
| 26 9:15a Special St. John's Morning Prayer & picnic service at All Saints - Loughheed 11:15a Hope Communion Service | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | Notes: | |



Faith Country Shared Ministry

| ~ July 2016 ~ | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| | | | | | 1 Canada Day Canada Day (Canada) | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | Notes: | | | | | |



Faith Country Shared Ministry

| ~ August 2016 ~ | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|-----|---|-----|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| | 1 Civic Holiday Civic Holiday (Canada) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 9:15a St. John's Eucharist Service 11:15a Hope Communion Service | 15 | 16 1:30p Anglican Worship Committee Meeting | 17 | 18 10a Galahad Health Centre Service | 19 | 20 |
| 21 10:30a Trinity Song Service | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 9:15a St. John's Morning Prayer 11:15a Hope Communion Service | 29 | 30 10:30a Protestant Communion Service at Killam Health Centre | 31 | Notes: | | |