

Barden's Installation Offers Blessings, Welcome



Rev. Arden K. Barden was installed into the Office of Pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church at a special service on Sunday afternoon, on October 9, 2005. The Reverend Bishop Richard R. Omland of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officiated the installation as well as provided the message for the day.

Area pastors, both lay and ordained, from Lutheran, Episcopal, United Methodist and Roman Catholic churches, provided special music, read scriptures, and served the Holy Communion. The pastors also introduced themselves and brought a specific word of welcome for the newly installed pastor and commitment of support for his pastoral ministry. Tribal leaders brought comments, a gift of Sweet Grass, and a praise song to the Creator in the Cree language. The drum and song group, Red Paint, sang a "song of installation" traditionally used for a tribal chief or elders, a moment of inspiration and honor for Pastor Barden.

Pastor Barden began service at Our Saviour's on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation on August 1. "I am a guest on the reservation," he says about his role as he goes about his ministry in the congregation and the community. His emphasis is on understanding traditional ways, tribal history, and contemporary issues. "I want to be respectful of the people and to connect with them," he adds, "and I believe that traditional First Nation spirituality is very close to our Christian understanding." He hopes to build bridges to people's spiritual needs as well as to respond to other basic human concerns. "I serve with a model I call 'whole person spirituality' which views each person as relating to God, self, others, and world toward balance, integrity and wholeness," he explains, "but all is grounded in Christ who is our peace, in whom is our wholeness." Pastor Barden's brings a very practical style—faith alive in the everyday of love, hope and peace.

Pastor Barden was ordained in 1972. He has served parishes in Michigan and Washington. He was an ecumenical community chaplain in an affordable housing setting in Madison, Wisconsin. He was on the faculty of the Lutheran Bible Institute of Seattle where he developed a curriculum in Ministry with Older Adults. For the last ten years, he has served seven different congregations as an Intentional Interim Pastor.

Pastor Barden holds a Bachelor of Arts from Pacific Lutheran University, a Master of Divinity

and a Master of Theology from Luther Theological Seminary, and Graduate Certificates in Gerontology/Counseling and in Marriage and Family Therapy (Family Systems). He brings to Our Saviour's additional training in Interim Ministry, Process Facilitation, Calling/Caring, Healthy Congregations, Bridge Builders, Lombard Peace Center Conflict Reconciliation, and Alban Institute Chaos Theory of Leadership.

He and Carol have two adult children and six grandchildren. Carol is teaching at the Rocky Boy High School. The congregation and the community have given a warm welcome to them, and agency leaders have expressed strong interest in utilizing Pastor's background, leadership, and partnership in working together in serving the reservation.

New Funding Campaign to be Initiated

Funding this Lutheran mission at Rocky Boy is a challenge amid the great needs for giving in recent months. The tsunami, hurricanes, landslides and earthquakes together with existing poverty and hunger have placed great demand for care and for financial support.

AMBASSADORS 1000 will set the goal of a thousand new contributors with the requested support of \$25.00 per unit per calendar quarter. This goal for this campaign will be the rest of 2005 and throughout 2006.

The title comes from the Biblical basis of II Corinthians 5:11-21 in which we have been given "this ministry of reconciliation" and so "we are ambassadors for Christ."

All congregations and individuals who currently support the work here are asked to help refer these "new ambassadors" either by referring their names to the office at Our Saviour's or by referring our need to them.

It is hoped that this modest amount will be regarded as "Oh, I can do that...and I will!" even with all of the other pressing needs in our world. We believe that some will want to make that quarterly amount a larger regular commitment. One person has become the "First Ambassador" just at hearing of the campaign idea and responding with just that phrase and commitment.

A simple form is available as an e-mail attachment or standard mailing. Contact us at 406-395-4307 or at oslcrb@mtintouch.net. Or, just send us a list of names, and we'll take it from there.

Video Tape May Make DVD Available

The Service of Installation was taped with the idea that it could be reduced to a DVD for members and friends of Our Saviour's. The initial result has yet to be reviewed, but if the quality is there, it will be submitted to creative editing and preparation for distribution. It is hoped that this could be done to help to introduce Pastor Barden as well as to show some of the people and activities involved in the celebration. Please indicate to the office by phone or e-mail if you would have an interest in having a copy of the installation DVD.

Regular Support Levels Are Down

Administrative Assistant Tami Big Knife reported to the Church Council on September 30 that the current income is down. There was discussion as to whether this may be a product of being without a pastor for a year, or part of the present huge demand created by recent disasters. The

Council authorized expenses to be taken from a reserve fund, but will monitor budget closely. In recent months, there has not been an issue because of our pastoral vacancy, but now that we are back in the place of providing pastoral salary and benefits, built up reserves are now coming into use. The Council is confident in the historically good support, and also concurs with the concept of a campaign for new support.

Pastor Begins with Caution

Pastor Barden began ministry at Our Saviour's on August 1 by concluding "a difficult and dragged-out" move. The office is being reorganized with a new built in bookshelf. He has made several attempts to be present around the reservation by attending community gatherings and wakes, school activities, and sports events. Much of the first few weeks were taken with planning for the Service of Installation.

Pastor is interviewing each of the members of the Church Council to gain an overall perspective of the congregation's history and concerns, and begin to assess "where we need to go from here." He expects that a more complete report of these first discussions can be included in the next issue of *TeePee Smoke*.

"I'm taking it slowly," Pastor says. "I want to get to know people first, gain a beginning understand of tribal traditions and culture, and start with a lot of listening to both congregation and community." He notes that there is a long and proud history of Our Saviour's, first for 30 years as a mission, and then nearly 50 years as a congregation.

Pastor to Serve on Synod Group

The Montana Synod is shaping a group of 15 persons to develop a strategy for dealing with issues around the relationship of American Indians and the Larger Society. This may involve addressing racism, history, poverty, economics, and ecology as well as the differences and similarities in spiritual traditions between First Nation ways and Christian ways.

Pastor Barden will attend the first of three training sessions on November 28 and 29 in Townsend, MT. This is a part of a larger church emphasis in the ELCA to deal with concerns and strategies around ministry with Native Americans. Bishop Richard Omland of the Montana Synod and Outreach Staff Rev. Darius Larsen of Region I are on that ELCA planning group.