

From the Pastor

We are doubling up on this issue to include the Spring & Summer issues of the TeePee Smoke as we were unable to get the Spring issue out in March as planned.

The facts of life for this ministry vary from grim to great, sometimes on an almost daily basis. Every congregation faces difficulties, but, I believe this ministry, and others like it, face more challenges than most. Historically, before the ELCA formed, Native ministries had their own base of funding. While the ministries themselves did not change with the formation of the ELCA, the base of funding did. We now operate very much like a foreign mission, but without the guarantee of funds that foreign missions receive.

When our servant groups arrive and we talk about this ministry, I find people are often dismayed and, possibly, horrified to find out that I, literally, have to raise my own salary. If we were a larger entity,



meaning not “just” a church, that had a school & people dedicated to fund-raising, things might be very different. But, that is not the case with Our Saviour’s.

We are located within a community that has substantial poverty compared to many places within the United States. We have a large campus of buildings to maintain,

11 in all (some heated year-round and others not).

We have a budget that rivals much larger congregations. Much of the money passes through for expenses as we host servant groups, retreats, seminary cross-cultural events for people from off the Reservation, and as we make our facility available to individuals, families, and entities of the Tribe for wakes, funerals, memorial feasts, birthday & graduation parties, meetings & other events at minimal cost.

We have a small Thrift Store to which many people send gently used or new items. These things are sold inexpensively & all the proceeds are used for our Youth programs, which include VBS (run with counselors from Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp) & taking youth to a week of camp at FLBC on Flathead Lake.

I, personally, do my own fund-raiser for these same youth activities by selling soda out of one of our refrigerators. I buy & donate the soda, then charge our group participants \$1.00 per can. All the proceeds are

sent to FLBC to contribute to camp scholarships for youth from Rocky Boy.

I think understanding how the ministry at Our Saviour’s functions is very important to those who monetarily contribute to this ministry & for those who are praying for this ministry. I say, very honestly, that finances can be a real struggle. Currently, we cannot afford other staff.

In the past, we have had a maintenance person & an office person. Currently, I either do that work myself, ask for volunteers (which some are



forthcoming & some are not), or figure out how to pay a temporary person to do some of the work. I serve as a pastor to our entire community (as well as our little congregation), the servant group, retreat, cross-cultural experience coordinator, and the facility manager. I have served here over 11 years and confess, no matter how rewarding the work is, I am afraid of burn-out as much as anyone else is.

All that being said, I want to tell you that we are facing several crises at this point in time. We have at least two roofs, really three, that are in serious need of replacement. These include the parsonage (which needs underlayment, too), the Log Chapel, and sections of the Big Church. The Mission House will, for sure, be next. But, besides that roof issue on the Log Chapel, which is one of the oldest buildings on our site, there is the definite and immediate need to replace several of the hand-hewn logs. These buildings are all historic landmarks on the Reservation & each is important to this ministry. Along with all of this, we have a fairly minor remodel project to do in the Mission House that will make our stairways to the 2nd floor & basement safer for everyone to use.



I am trying to raise a crew of experienced roofers & carpenters to help with these tasks this fall, in the last 2 weeks of August.

There is an experienced, retired (?) contractor from one of the MT Synod’s congregations in Wyoming who will come & oversee the work.

I don't have any problem asking for help for this ministry. I have a lot more difficulty asking for help for myself. But, this is really a combination of the two. I



turn 65 in July, and though I do not plan on retiring soon, I will not be at Our Saviour's indefinitely. I want to leave this property & the people that it serves in the best shape possible.

If you are able to come during the last 2 weeks in August, please contact me & let me know. I wish we could host you free-of-charge, but that is not possible. We are asking that each person pays a minimum of \$30 per day, which will cover food & contribute a little towards the supplies needed. We are asking that you plan on being here a minimum of 5 days, if possible. We'll take you for a shorter time if that is all you can do!

On this page, I am including a form you can fill out & return to us. I

pray we can raise crews of 20 or 30 people to do this work in the 2 weeks allotted. We can house you on-site. We will have other servant groups on-site at the same time. We can provide transportation to & from the Great Falls airport & the Havre train station.



Life challenges us all & we often find we must rely on others to provide the help we need to make it through. I hope you can be part of the help we need at this time.



We will gladly accept donations to help pay for these much needed projects. We hope to have everything stabilized & fixed by this coming winter.

Now, on a lighter note, this summer has already been extremely productive. The seminary cross-cultural participants unpacked some boxes of toys & got those

organized in the layette room. They, also, helped with office filing and storage. One of the servant groups

this summer has already some amazing things, which include cleaning out and organizing both the metal shed & the small log barn & doing some maintenance on the Native Jesus statue, i.e. staining & weatherizing with polyurethane. The first group & the current group have built bunk beds & worked on painting the housing the Rocky Boy's schools provides for some of its teachers. The current group helped put together the packages of food for our end of the month giveaway with the Office of Victim Services.

August Remodel/Roofing Project

Please prayerfully consider how you might be able to be involved in these projects.

_____ Yes, I would like to come to help with the carpentry & roofing projects between August 18 – August 31.

I can come from August _____ to August _____ .

_____ No, I cannot come, but I will donate _____ to these projects. (Please make out checks to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.)

_____ Yes, I am a Thrivent member & will look to get a Thrivent Action Grant to contribute to this project.

I am skilled at _____ .

I will need space bunk/bed _____

I will come with a camper _____

I will come with a tent _____

I will look for housing in Havre _____

Return this form to:
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