

Small Rural Church Thrives During Vacancy

When you don't have a resident clergy ...

Trinity Lutheran Church is located in Pincher Creek (pop. 3500) in Southwestern Alberta. We celebrated our 100th anniversary in 2005. Originally the church was located 6 miles south of town. Although the church membership is much higher, our weekly Sunday services have about 30 people.

Our last pastor moved to another parish in September of 2008. We tried to get a retired pastor to serve us full time, however the best we could do is to get a pastor about once a month – more often in the summer and less often in the winter.

We decided to have reading services - for a minimum. If the family volunteering to do the service could do better than a reading service, great.

Families have volunteered. Small groups have also come forward to do a service. Once or twice a musical group passing through have also done a service.

The results have been much better than we expected. Some of the sermons are prepared and given by individuals comfortable in doing that. Other sermons are obtained on the internet, especially The Lutheran Hour. The order of service is quite varied – formal to very informal. The majority of the congregation seems pleased and appreciative to have it this way.

We have sent four calls. They have all been returned.

The church members have continued to carry on community responsibilities. We take our turn at services at a seniors' lodge. We also have a Good Samaritan assisted living facility in town. In addition to having a monthly memorial service, we have weekly devotions for staff and residents. Visiting the sick and shut-ins at home and in hospital or care facility continues with everyone taking part. We also have a mid week bible study in progress.

We continue to hope for a pastor. In the meantime God is blessing us.

(written by Cliff Elle, January 2010)