



## In Memoriam

St. Pauli has lost a good friend, neighbor and lifetime member.

Clayton Bernard Mathson passed away on January 9, 2013 at his residence at the age of 86 years, 7 months, 23 days with his loving wife at his side.

Clayton Bernard Mathson was born May 17, 1926 to Martin and Alma (Moe) Mathson on the family farm. Clayton was baptized and confirmed at St. Pauli Lutheran Church and attended Cheerville Country School. Clayton graduated from Cheerville Country School and became a fulltime farmer with his father on the farm that was homesteaded by his grandfather in 1870.

Music was a great love of his from early on in his life. Clayton played button accordion, piano and guitar throughout his life and played his keyboard for his family often. Clayton wrote several songs that were placed at the library of congress in Washington D.C.

On June 14, 1952. Clayton was united in marriage to Inez Hagen at Rindal Lutheran Church. Inez joined him as a full-time partner at Mathson Family Farms. To this union, 5 children were born, and raised on the farm and were blessed to share his life: Brenda, Bruce, Clair, Christi, and Brian.

Clayton was a lifetime member of St. Pauli Lutheran Church where he sang in the choir, served many terms on the church council, and numerous church committees. Clayton served on the Rocksbury township board for 45 years and in 1996 Clayton and Inez were honored as Farm Family of the year. Upon retirement from farming Clayton drove school bus for ISD #564 for 13 years an experience he enjoyed a great deal.

Clayton is survived by his wife Inez, his five children: Brenda (Jeffery) Nielsen of New Ulm, MN; Bruce (Shelley) Mathson of Thief River Falls, MN; Clair Mathson of Thief River Falls, MN; Christi (Bruce) Carter of Janesville, MN; and Brian Mathson of Grand Forks, ND. Six grandchildren: Michelle (Jason) Forness, Rachel (Matt) Kleber, Peter (Betsy) Nielsen, Leah (Kai) Koehne, Travis Mathson, and Kayla Mathson. Four great-grandchildren: Chase, Kinsey, Carson and Lukas. Two step-grandchildren: Kelly (Rob) Moe and Bryon (Jamie) Clevon. Five step-great-grandchildren; Alexis, Dexter, Mercede, Hannah and Connor. Clayton is also survived by one sister Fern Bock and three sisters-in-law: Shirley (Ron) Smith, Joyce (Darrel) Qualley and Judy Mason, as well as several nieces, nephews and cousins. Clayton was preceded in death by his parents and his sister Mabel Lemky.

Funeral services were held at 10:00am on Saturday January 12, 2013 at St. Pauli Lutheran Church with Rev. Carl Hansen officiating. Burial followed at St. Pauli Cemetery. Visitation will be from 6:00-8:00pm on Friday January 11, 2013 with a 7:00pm Prayer Service at St. Pauli Lutheran Church. Visitation will also be held one hour prior to the service at the church.

Special music at the funeral service: Greg Dally  
"Mansion Over the Hilltop" & "The Lord's Prayer"

Congregational hymns at the funeral service:  
"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less" & "Beautiful Savior"

Congregational hymn at the prayer service:  
"Children of the Heavenly Father"

Organist: Faye Auchenpaugh

Casketbearers: Craig Folkedahl, Rob Finstad, Jim Rondorf,  
Milan Iverson, Gary Iverson, Herb Torstveit



# St. Pauli News in Detail



## Greeting and Ushering

Feb. 3 Ken Cedergren  
Feb. 10 Meribeth Dicken  
Feb. 17 Craig Folkedahl  
Feb. 24 Bryan Grove

**Cleaning:** Clean *prior* to your Sunday to usher. Don't forget to check the wastebasket in the pastor's office.

### Sunday Service:

- Light altar candles before service and put out flames after church.
- Act as Greeters and hand out bulletins.
- Usher for offering and communion.
- Tidy up pews after church to make it ready for the next Sunday's services.

**Altar Preparation** (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays):  
Evie Johnson

\* \* \* \* \*

## Lenten Services

There will not be a "round robin" schedule of pastors leading Lenten services. Pastor Carl will be leading us each week.

Coffee and refreshments will follow the services.

Feb. 13: None (Ash Wednesday)  
Feb. 20: Miriam Circle  
Feb. 27: Mary Group  
March 6: Sarah Circle  
March 13: Miriam Circle  
March 20: Mary Group

## February Milestones



### Birthdays

Feb. 18 Pastor Mary Hansen  
Feb. 20 Gary Iverson  
Feb. 25 Arlo Rude  
Feb. 26 Evie Johnson  
Feb. 27 Edna Rondorf

### Anniversaries

None that the editor is aware of

\* \* \* \* \*



## Church Basement Ladies 2: A Second Helping

They're serving it up again in the Church Basement kitchen. Due to the original musical's phenomenal success, a sequel has been written – the story of this same group of women, these "Steel Magnolias of the Prairie," as they deal with life, death and new adventures in the world and in their lives.

**Thursday, Feb. 14**  
**7:30 pm**  
**Lincoln High School Auditorium**

*The St. Pauli WELCA ladies are ushering!!*

# Minutes of the 2012 Annual Meeting

(approved January 27, 2013)

January 29, 2012

The St. Pauli Annual Meeting was held Sunday, January 29, 2012, following the 10:30 am worship services. Council President Wahna Smith called the meeting to order at 11:25 am.

Smith asked for any additions to the agenda. There were no additional items and the agenda was considered approved as printed.

Secretary's Report: Jodie Torkelson presented the 2011 annual meeting minutes which were also included in the meeting packet. Jan Strandlie made a motion to approve the report with a correction to change "Val Torkelson" to "Val Torstveit" on the first page of the minutes. Barb Nelson seconded, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: The 2011 audited treasurer's report was presented by Faye Auchenpaugh, co-treasurer. For 2011, Income and Other Deposits totaled \$44,205.53. Operational Expenses totaled \$31,910.84. Other one-time expenses (parting gift for Pastor Cuppett, printing church brochures, and landscaping) totaled \$3,638.41. There was a positive cash flow of \$8,656.28.

Another notable item in the treasurer's report is the elimination of Worker's Compensation Insurance payments for 2012. Without a full-time pastor or a joint parish secretary, the church no longer has employees and Worker's Compensation Insurance is not necessary. The 2011 budget expense for this item was a pre-pay of the 2012 insurance and the church will be receiving a refund of \$526.00.

Income and Other Deposits:	\$ 44,205.53
Operational Expenses:	-31,910.84

General Fund balances as of 12/31/11:

Checking account:	\$ 14,535.29
Investor savings account:	20,355.46
Value of investments:	<u>30,668.44</u>
Total General Fund balance:	\$ 65,559.19

Special Funds and Accounts (Memorial Fund) balances as of 12/31/11:

Investor Savings account:	\$ 4,308.51
Certificate of Deposit:	<u>14,878.28</u>
Total Memorial Fund:	\$ 19,186.79

Total General Fund, Special Funds and Accounts as of 12/31/11:	\$ 84,745.98
--	--------------

St. Pauli Cemetery Association balance as of 12/31/11:	\$ 2,513.93
--	-------------

Auchenpaugh noted the cemetery association balance of \$1,013.93 as printed in the annual report is an error. She will supply the revisions.

The congregation was asked whether they wanted to continue tracking the parsonage funds separately now

that the funds had been merged into the savings account. Skip Swanson made a motion to no longer track the parsonage funds separately. Jim Rondorf seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Skip Swanson made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report with the pending correction to the Cemetery Association balance sheet. David Lee seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Carl Hansen, interim pastor since September, reported that he was delighted to serve as interim pastor. He said he sensed warmth in the congregation and it was a joy to be here. He reminded the congregation that he is always happy to be of pastoral service and his telephone numbers are listed in the newsletter and in the weekly bulletin.

Board of Education and Sunday School Report: Kari Torkelson presented the Board of Education report and thanked Roxanne Rondorf for her years of service on the Board. She also thanked the teachers and everyone who worked together to make Sunday School a reality for the seven students who attend. Because one of the families can only attend every other Sunday, a decision was made to hold Sunday School every other Sunday.

Val Torstveit presented the Sunday School Financial Report. The balance in the checking account as of December 31, 2011 was \$1,260.40. The students still need to decide on a project or charity to put the Christmas program offering toward.

Barb Nelson made a motion to accept the Board of Education and Sunday School Reports as presented. Pat Swanson seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

WELCA Report: Barbara Nelson presented the WELCA financial report. Total income was \$5,518.00 and total expenses were \$5,946.49. As of 12/31/11, the checking account balance was \$988.36, the savings account balance was \$7,242.15 and the Certificate of Deposit balance \$5,896.19.

Virginia Anderson made a motion to accept the WELCA report as presented. Evie Johnson seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Thrivent: There was no Thrivent report.

Old Business: Arlo Rude led discussion on whether the congregation wanted a permanent pulpit base. The temporary base was installed after a previous annual meeting where the congregation noted that there was not enough space between the altar ring and the wall and moving the pulpit forward was the only possible

solution. The congregation was in agreement on the new location of the pulpit and the need for a permanent pulpit base to be constructed. It was suggested that Don Schindler be contacted about building the base since he did the recent restoration of the pulpit itself. As part of the discussion on the pulpit base, it was noted that the hymn board was difficult for those in the west pews of the church to read because the pulpit was now in the way. Rude said that if the board were raised about 16" it would be visible. Auchenpaugh noted that it would balance out the cross on the west wall. Rude said he could design a mechanism to lower the number board rather than have people climb on a stepstool to put up the hymn numbers.

Jan Strandlie made a motion to have Rude lead a committee to work on a permanent base for the pulpit and raise the hymn board so that those on the west side of the church are able to read the hymn numbers. Barb Nelson seconded, motion carried. The actual cost of the mechanism was not known at the time of the meeting but an estimate will be brought back to the congregation when it is determined.

Discussion was then held on the repairs to the steeple which had been postponed because of the other pressing issues during the dissolution of the parish. Arlo Rude shared photos of the damage to the inside of the steeple that he took last spring. The steeple is in need of more repairs than just paint. The rails and balusters have deteriorated and need to be replaced. The pine bead board on the walls needs to be replaced and a composite is available that will match. The base for the bell is also in bad shape and the pulley mechanism needs to be repaired. The chair rail trim and cross also need to be replaced. Quotes for the materials are estimated at \$2,125.00. In addition, Rude checked with Paul and Peter Mosbeck who purchased an 80' manlift when they repaired the steeple on their church. They are willing to let us use the manlift. The cost was not known. Arlo Rude offered to donate his time to do the repairs.

Wally Torkelson made a motion to move forward with the repairs to the steeple not to exceed \$2,200.00. David Lee seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

New Business: Discussion was held on whether additional copies of "The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration," the new hymnal of the ELCA, should be purchased for use at St. Pauli. The cost is \$25.00 per hymnal which includes imprinting "St. Pauli Lutheran Church" on the front cover. A large print edition is \$80.00. The order form was reviewed and congregants were encouraged to purchase a hymnal in honor or memory of a loved one. A total of 80 hymnals are needed for each pew to have four hymnals. Pastor Hansen shared his insights on the new hymnal which was well-received at his previous congregations. He said that it has 10 worship settings, including the setting we use currently. In addition, it has over 700 hymns and

combines much of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* and *With One Voice* which could eliminate switching from hymnal to hymnal during the worship service.

Jan Strandlie made a motion that we use Memorial Fund monies to purchase whatever number of hymnals are needed after members of the congregation purchase copies in honor or memory of a loved one. Deone Cerny seconded, motion carried.

The draft partnership agreement with Zion Lutheran Church was reviewed. Following the September 2011 special congregational meeting, Arlo Rude, Jodie Torkelson, Chad Torstveit and Cindy Cedergren drafted a letter to Trinity, Zion and Redeemer churches requesting a meeting to discuss a possible future partnership. Zion was the first to respond and the group met with them on December 7, 2011. They expressed an interest in providing pastoral services and the agreement currently before the congregation for discussion was the result of that meeting. The group also met with Trinity but they do not have an interest in a partnership. Redeemer did not respond to the request for a meeting.

The partnership agreement from Zion would provide St. Pauli with pastoral services including Sunday services beginning no earlier than 10:00 a.m. There would be an average of 12 Sundays per year when no pastoral services would be available and \$100 per Sunday would be deducted from the contract payment for those dates. Cost to St. Pauli would be 25% of the salary and benefits of Zion's associate pastor, currently \$84,986.27, rounded to \$1,770 per month. Compensation would be reviewed annually. The agreement would be in effect until 60 day notice by either church.

Some concerns with the partnership agreement were raised including: 1) Zion's inability to provide pastoral services for Lenten services or our Christmas Eve service, 2) starting worship services at 11:30 am, and 3) the unavailability of a pastor from Zion for 12 Sundays per year due to vacations and continuing education. Gary Iverson suggested that the group try to meet with other smaller, country churches. Val Torstveit said that the congregation was initially interested in a church in Thief River Falls because of the Sunday School opportunities without losing families to another church. Sharon Bugge added that the distance would be problematic. Arlo Rude said that the initial reason we were instructed to meet first with the TRF churches was because they were in the same school district which would make it easier for the children in our church. Torkelson suggested we continue working with Zion on the partnership agreement language but that we did not need to rush into starting the arrangement. She added that if Pastor Hansen were agreeable, we would like to have him as our interim pastor for as long as possible. Additional discussion clarified that this was not an agreement to

enter into a parish arrangement with Zion but instead a contract for pastoral services with St. Pauli keeping its own identity. The group will continue to work with Zion on the contract language to ensure that Lenten and Christmas Day services at St. Pauli are included. Another congregational meeting will be called when the language as amended is satisfactory to recommend to the congregation for approval.

The proposed 2012 budget was presented by Treasurer Faye Auchenpaugh. Changes as presented were:

- an increase in organists/piano tuning of \$140 to reflect actual costs
- elimination of the \$25 parish treasurer payment
- a \$200 increase in fuel because of rising prices
- an increase of \$30 for property insurance
- elimination of Worker's Compensation insurance because the church no longer has any employees
- moving the cost of printing and postage for the newsletter and bulletin from Shared Parish Expenses to Operating Expenses
- elimination of website hosting expenses since payment in 2011 was for a 3-year contract
- elimination of Shared Parish Expenses of \$1,460 (the other \$1,000 moved to cover printing and postage noted above)

Discussion was held on increasing synod mission support since our support had not increased in many years. In response to questions, Pastor Hansen told the congregation that half of our synod support was spent within the synod territory and the other half spent church wide on mission support, seminary support and other needs throughout the United States. Arlo Rude made a motion to increase synod support by \$400 to \$2000 per year. Virginia Anderson seconded, motion carried.

Bruce Mathson made a motion to approve the 2012 budget of \$36,185.22. Kari Torkelson seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

ELECTIONS: The nominating committee of Sharon Bergerson, Edna Rondorf and Wally Torkelson presented the slate of officers for 2012:

Council members:

Arlo Rude, Wahna Smith, Patricia Swanson

Secretary: Jodie Torkelson

Co-Treasurers: Sharon Bergerson (council member)/

Bruce and Shelley Mathson

Board of Education:

Eunice Grove, Valarie Torstveit, Kari Torkelson

Church Recorder: Valarie Torstveit

Heat Caretaker: Myles Alberg

Cemetery Sexton: David Lee

Faye Auchenpaugh made a motion to approve the nominations. Jim Strandlie seconded, motion carried.

On behalf of the church council, Wahna Smith thanked everyone for working on church maintenance and improvements, landscaping, Christmas decorating, Fall supper, Task Force, church partnership committee, nominating committee, weekly cleaning and ushering, altar guild, Sunday school teachers and the Board of Education, WELCA and circles, the organist. A special thank you was extended to Pastor Hansen and the congregation applauded in thanks.

Cindy Cedergren made a motion to adjourn. Arlo Rude seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 1:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jodie Torkelson, Church Council Secretary

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Pastor's Report for 2013 Annual Meeting**

*"I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Corinthians 1:4-7)

"We're just a (fill in the blank) congregation."

In my 46 years of ordained ministry, I have learned to listen very carefully to how church members fill in the blank and describe the congregation to which they belong. Usually the blank is filled in with descriptions of what they lack as a congregation; things such as money, members, eager volunteers, families with children, etc.

In addition to being a terrific theologian, an unbelievable organizer with far more energy than the Energizer Bunny, St. Paul was a marvelous pastoral psychologist. When we read the letters that he wrote to congregations, he almost always begins with a salutation thanking God for the wonderful gifts that he has given to the congregation that he is addressing. He does that whether the congregation is very faithful (e.g. Philippians) or feisty (Corinthians). Paul identifies and affirms the spiritual gifts that God gives to a particular congregation. The Apostle begins with blessings, not with blanks.

St. Pauli is a congregation that makes it very easy for me to follow in the steps of the saint after which the congregation is named. In the 16+ months it has been my pleasure to serve Christ in your midst, I have noticed an abundance of gifts given to you by the Holy Spirit. Among those gifts are:

- A bright and warm spirit of community.
- A huge variety of occupations and avocations that enrich the service of Christ.
- Music that makes both “a joyful noise” and a beautiful sound.
- A generosity of giving for Christ’s mission in our neighborhood and throughout the world.
- Excellent congregational leadership with a “can do” spirit.
- A high level of interest in Christian faith and life.
- The blessing of a growing number of children.

Our challenge and opportunity as a congregation is to build upon these blessings as we seek to serve Christ in 2013 and beyond. So let us talk, brainstorm and pray together for the Spirit’s continuing direction as we look to serve Our Lord in the days, months and years to come.

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel.

Yours in Christ,  
*Pastor Carl Hansen*

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Minutes of Special Congregational Meeting**

(approved January 27, 2013)

**May 20, 2012**

Council President Arlo Rude called the meeting to order following the conclusion of the 10:30 am worship services. He gave a short explanation of each of the four agenda items:

1. Fill the unexpired term on the church council
2. Church maintenance/improvements
  - a. Install gypsum boards on basement walls
  - b. Install rain gutter on roof
3. Constitution and Bylaws review/update committee
4. Partnership with Zion Lutheran Church

Barb Smith made a motion to approve the agenda. Faye Auchenpaugh seconded, motion carried.

1. Oliver (Skip) Swanson agreed to fill the unexpired council position for Patricia Swanson. This position will be open for nominations at the next annual meeting. Wahna Smith made a motion to approve. Gary Iverson seconded, motion carried.
- 2a. Estimated cost for materials is \$1,100. Labor will be done by church members. Materials estimate is for gypsum board, taping materials, ½” trim for windows and doors, installing a 36” x 6’-8’ closet where north cabinet currently is located, repair north wall of furnace room, install oak trim at top of wall at ceiling line. Rude suggested setting aside \$1,250 for this project. The project will need to be completed by the end of August for sufficient time to get painting of walls and carpet installed before church fall supper. Bruce Mathson made a motion to approve the expenditure. Barb Smith seconded, motion carried.

- 2b. Estimated cost is \$950. Brandon Wilde will do the work at this cost for labor and materials to install seamless gutters and downspouts on roof areas that don’t have gutters. Rude suggested setting aside \$1,000 for this project. Gary Iverson made a motion to approve the expenditure. Evie Johnson seconded, motion carried.
3. The church constitution and bylaws need updating. A model constitution and bylaws is available from the synod. Rude proposed a committee of 7 to review and recommend changes. He suggested 2 council members 1 WELCA member, 1 men’s group member, 1 Board of Education member, and 2 at-large representatives. This needs to be completed by November. The modifications will then be sent to every member, a congregational meeting will need to be held, and it will need to be approved at the annual meeting. Faye Auchenpaugh volunteered to be an at-large representative. Barb Smith made a motion to have Arlo Rude get names from each group to form the committee. Wahna Smith seconded, motion carried.
4. We have an offer to partner with Zion Lutheran Church (TRF) for pastoral services. This includes Sunday services, Lenten services, Christmas Day service, confirmation classes at Zion, funerals and weddings, and St. Pauli students may attend Sunday School at Zion. There will be approximately 12 Sundays during the year when the pastor is not available due to vacations/illness which St. Pauli will need to fill with pulpit supply. \$100 would be

deducted for each of those Sundays from the quarterly payment to Zion. The most recent estimate is \$1,770 per month, which is based on the associate pastor's salary. Pulpit supply is currently \$125 plus the IRS mileage rate to and from St. Pauli. The agreement would be for 12 months (renewable by both parties with a 60 day notice of cancellation. Barb Smith questioned if Pastor Carl Hansen would be able to continue with us. The Bishop states, however, that interim pastors are normally only available to a congregation for about a year. Church services for St. Pauli would be at 11:30 am since the pastor at Zion would also be providing services first at Silver Creek Church for their 10:00 am service. Discussion was held with congregation members stating 11:30 am services would be too late and attendance would suffer. It was decided that Arlo Rude will have the council do more research for other alternatives.

Wahna Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kathy Alberg seconded, motion carried.

Members in attendance: 22

Respectfully submitted,  
Shelley Mathson  
(for Jodie Torkelson, Council Secretary)

\* \* \* \* \*

## ***Historic Minutes of the St. Pauli Congregation***

### **8 December 1902**

St. Pauli Scandinavian Lutheran congregation held its 9th annual meeting in the church of the congregation on 8 December, 1902.

The meeting was opened with reading from the scriptures and prayer by the chairman I. T. Aastad. After which the chairman declared the meeting opened and everyone was free to speak.

Then the secretary read his report from the last annual meeting and likewise the treasurer gave his report. Both of these were unanimously accepted without change.

Proposed and supported and unanimously accepted to elect Gilbert Sjerva as trustee for a period of one year. Proposed and supported and unanimously accepted to elect Ole Viken as consulting member. Proposed and supported and unanimously accepted to re-elect Jacob Amundson as secretary for one year and Halvor Torstvet as treasurer for one year. Proposed and supported and unanimously accepted to elect A. A. Odegaard and Fredrik Sjerva as auditors of the accounts.

Proposed and supported and unanimously accepted to settle for a sum of ca. sixty dollars and what more might come in for the same purpose as permanent annual pastor's salary during the following financial year 1903. Accepted.

Proposed and supported and unanimously accepted to elect Jacob Amundson as sexton for one year.

Proposed and supported and unanimously accepted to elect a religion school committee of three members. The following were elected: A. A. Odegaard, Pete Nilson and Halvor Torstvet. These were to see to it that there were held at least one one-week religion school within the congregation and to collect as much as they could in order to be able to meet the expenses of the same school.

Proposed and supported and unanimously accepted to leave to the trustees of the congregation to carry on with the improvements and further maintain the church and cemetery of the congregation, and have a steeple erected by the church as soon as possible. Proposed and supported and unanimously accepted that the reports of the building committee were added to the report of the congregation.

Proposed and supported to admit Halvor Viken as a member of the congregation. Unanimously accepted.

Trustees: A.A. Odegaard 1904, H.J. Hostvet 1905, Silbert Sjerva 1905.

Halvor Torsvet, treasurer one year

Jacob Amundson, secretary one year.

Proposed and supported to consider Peter Thune as excluded from the congregation owing to his own relations to same. Accepted.

After which the meeting was ended by the chairman with the Lord's prayer.

Jacob H. Amundson, Secretary of the congregation

### **Editor's Note**

My apologies for not preparing a January 2013 newsletter. That nasty viral infection that has been making the rounds got to me between Christmas and New Year's.

Due to the length of the various church minutes included this month, historic Luther League minutes will not be included.

If you have suggestions or items for the newsletter, please contact Faye Auchenpaugh at 218-681-3410 or [auchenpaugh@gmail.com](mailto:auchenpaugh@gmail.com).

Cindy Cedegren has graciously agreed to do the worship bulletins beginning February 1, 2013. Please call her at 681-6939 or [cceder@recwild.com](mailto:cceder@recwild.com) for any schedule changes or items that should be included in the Sunday bulletins.



## Sunday School Christmas Program

December 16, 2012

These angels, Lainey Dicken, Siri Halvorson and Annika Halvorson, were just three of the children who presented the Sunday School Christmas program "Light a Candle."

Narrator: Sam Trinciante  
 Mary: Sophia Trinciante  
 Joseph: Rylan Torstveit  
 Shepherds: Dawson Haugen, Blaine Torstveit, Alex Trinciante  
 Wisemen: Devin Haugen, JD Torstveit, Chris Trinciante  
 King Herod: Mason Haugen  
 Lamb: Eidon Iverson

Board of Education chair Kari Torkelson also presented bibles to several students.

Our thanks to Kathy Alberg for directing the program and to everyone who volunteered to teach Sunday School this year. Thank you also to Sarah Circle for providing the lunch following the program.

\* \* \* \* \*

## The Case of the Marauding Coats

*Sometimes your best laid plans go awry.*



This was the case for Dennis McCollough when he arrived at the church to begin his work shift for the St. Pauli Fall Supper on October 28<sup>th</sup>. He had received a black North Face jacket as a gift from his wife Sharon. Wanting to make certain that it would not be mistakenly grabbed by someone else, he carefully hung it on the far side of the coat rack next to the wall. When he left that evening, he took his jacket from that very spot.

Bruce Mathson was one of the last to leave that evening, since he had volunteered for clean up duties. When he went to retrieve his jacket, there was only one remaining – not his, which was brown and said "Digi-Key" on it – but he definitely needed a jacket now that the weather was brisk and this one was brown, too, and seemed to fit so he took it home.

When his mother Inez heard about the missing jacket a day or two later, she contacted KTRF Radio's trading post program to air the case of the misplaced jacket.

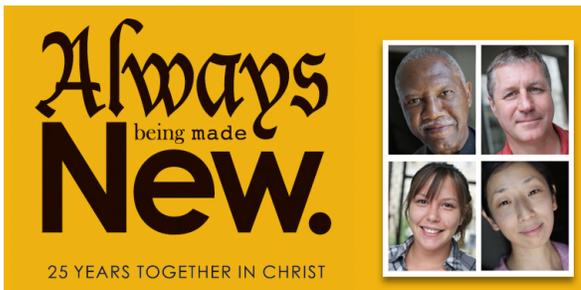
At home, Dennis was needing to go somewhere so he put his jacket on. Sharon said, "This jacket isn't yours. It's brown and says 'Digi-Key' on the back." Then they heard Inez' story on KTRF about Bruce's misplaced jacket. "Aha!" they said, "We'll return the jacket we have to Bruce and get ours back." Which they did, but the

jacket Dennis had been given by Sharon was black, not the brown one that Bruce mistakenly had.

Meanwhile, Ron Anderson all week long was at home looking everywhere for his soft leather gloves. He kept saying to Virginia, "I can't find my gloves!" Virginia pulled the gloves out of his North Face jacket and said, "Here they are," but Ron insisted those weren't the gloves he was looking for.

On Sunday, Dennis brought the incorrect jacket back to church and hung it in the coat rack, figuring that would be the best place for someone to find their missing brown jacket. But he felt badly about losing his black jacket, a gift from Sharon. After church as he was standing by the coat rack and getting ready to go out the door, he mentioned his missing jacket to the people around him. Ron said, "Well, I've been looking for my gloves all week." Virginia spotted a brown jacket hanging in the rack and felt in the pocket. She pulled out a pair of gloves and Ron exclaimed, "They're my missing gloves!" Ron picked up this brown jacket belonging to him and Dennis and Sharon followed him and Virginia home to pick up Dennis's black jacket.

The marauding coats had finally all returned to their respective owners!



This is the second in a series of Bishop Wolrabe’s monthly Bible studies in the *Northern Lights* during 2013 on the theme, “The ELCA at 25.” These columns are designed to equip the disciples and leadership groups, such as church councils, for faithful and fruitful ministry. You can also use the column for personal reflection or group discussion.

*And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the*

*parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.’ All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ Acts 2:8-12*

Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world.  
Black and yellow, red and white, They’re all precious in His sight.  
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

The Christian Church was born in Jerusalem on the Jewish festival of Pentecost in a crucible of amazing diversity. Jewish pilgrims “from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5) had streamed to Jerusalem for this holy day. When the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples, the Spirit’s powerful presence was evidenced as Christ’s followers proclaimed the **one** Gospel in a **diverse** array of global languages. Church historian Robert Louis Wilken, in his recent book *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* (Yale University Press, 2012), shows how in its first four centuries the Church carried the Gospel into virtually every part of the world as it was then known. He writes:

*“More than any other ancient Christian communion the Church of the East<sup>1</sup> made Christianity into a global religion... In the Latin West<sup>2</sup> the great mission to the north took place among the made Christianity into a global religion... In the Latin West the great mission to the north took place among the Germanic peoples... In the Greek-speaking East, missionaries went north among the Slavic peoples in the Balkans and in Russian and south to Nubia bordering Egypt and Ethiopian. But Syriac-speaking monks in the East had a more ambitious agenda, to carry the gospel [to]... China and India.” (p. 317)*

If you could take a snapshot of global Christianity—or even of global Lutheranism—the persons in the photo would represent all the races, ethnic groups and social strata on the planet. These would be wondrously colorful photographs! But a similar snapshot of North American Lutheranism would appear to be almost monochromatic. Members of the ELCA are over 95% white of northern European descent, in a nation that is about 65% “non-Hispanic white”—and growing more racially and ethnically diverse by the day. By the year 2050 at least 50% of the U.S. population will be made up of Latinos, African Americans and Asian Americans.

How did this happen?

The racial and ethnic homogeneity of the ELCA reflects historical circumstances more than a calculated intention to shun diversity. Almost all of us North American

Lutherans are descendants of immigrants from northern Europe who came to America seeking food, land, work and opportunity. “The exodus from Europe began in the 1600s with trickles of people leaving the old countries for the new land,” writes church historian Todd Nichol. “By the 1800s the trickles had turned into rivers. They were still pouring into the United States during the first decades of the 20th century. For 300 years they came, until laws passed in the 1920s restricted immigration to a trickle again.”

Lutherans organized congregations and wider-church organizations (“synods”) uniting folks of similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds, almost all of them white. When the Lutheran churches of North America were growing, it was primarily due to a combination of immigration and reproduction.

When the ELCA was formed in 1988 only 96,403 of its 5.2 million members were non-whites, about 1.85% of the new church’s membership. **But the architects of the ELCA knew that this would have to change for the Lutheran witness to remain strong across America.** So the newborn ELCA committed itself to an ambitious goal: that within 10 years of its establishment its membership shall include at least 10 percent people of color and/or primary language other than English.

Other goals lifted up the place of laity, women and multi-cultural backgrounds in the organizational structure of the new church—the “representational principles” of

- having “at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units...**be laypersons;**”
- having “as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units...be female and 50 percent...be male;” and
- having “at least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units...**be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.**”

## How's that been working?

How have we who are the ELCA done in achieving these goals? Some of the results have been disappointing. We have yet even to come close to reaching the 10% membership goal—with just under 5% of the current membership of the ELCA made up of people of color or language other than English. Only 1.57% of our members in the Northwestern Minnesota Synod are from non-white racial or ethnic groups.

The “representational principles” described above have been criticized as being too “politically correct” or as fostering a type of reverse discrimination. I still remember the lament shared with me by a Latino ELCA pastor: *“Larry, just once I'd like to be asked to serve on an ELCA committee primarily because of my gifts and abilities—not just because I can fill ‘the Hispanic quota.’”*

We need to take seriously our inability thus far to achieve these goals, along with thoughtful critiques that have been offered. But the bigger picture is more complicated.

Perhaps the founding leaders of the ELCA simply underestimated how long it takes to make the sort of massive “culture change” required for us to become a more diverse church. In the same vein, I wonder if our founders took seriously enough the **significant demographic variations** across the regions of our country, e.g. Minnesota (and other states in the Midwest) has been and still is less racially and ethnically diverse than the USA as a whole—and rural areas in Minnesota are even less multi-culturally diverse (17 of the 21 counties in our synod have populations that are over 90% white). We have not always recognized the intimate connection between the **challenges of becoming a more diverse church** and the challenges of **becoming a more winsome evangelical church** (the topic of next month's Bible study).

But good things have still happened. As Edgar Trexler notes, “in its first 15 years... (the increase in ethnic members in the ELCA occurred) largely through the welcoming of people of color by predominantly white congregations” as opposed to increased membership in ethnic-specific congregations. Our church body has labored diligently to become a more welcoming church via leadership training, producing multicultural worship and music resources, offering anti-racism training, and planting new congregations in areas characterized by diverse racial and ethnic populations. Our organizational principles have had the effect of bring more laity, women and multi-cultural folks “to the table” of leadership in the ELCA.

Most of all, as we observe the ELCA's 25th anniversary, let us recognize and reaffirm the intention of the diversity goals of our church body. The *“face” of America is changing!* The “faces” of Minnesota and the 21 counties of our synod are also changing. Faithfulness to the Great Commission (Matthew 28) to make disciples of *“all nations”* will continue to spur those of us who are “cradle Lutherans” to reach out to persons with whom we may not share the same racial, ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

## The path ahead...

If you have read this far, you might be thinking: “Oh this ‘diversity stuff’ may be an issue for folks in Fargo-Moorhead, the greater Grand Forks area and around Bemidji...but we live in an all-white rural area. We can't embrace something that's not already out there in our community or area.” I believe that there isn't one of our 242 congregations that cannot look squarely at the issue of diversity and respond in ways that are faithful, thoughtful, and imaginative. Here are a few ideas for you and your congregation:

### 1. Re-read the scriptures

From Genesis to Revelation, God has a vision for drawing unto himself people of every race and nation. Engage one another in Bible studies or “dwelling in the Word” experiences on key passages like the call of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 12:1-3), the global visions of Isaiah (some of which we just read in worship during the season of Epiphany, e.g. Isaiah 43:1-7), the visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12), the many gospel stories of Jesus breaking boundaries between Jews and Gentiles, the story of Pentecost (Acts 2), Peter's encounter with Cornelius (Acts 10), the “cosmic Christ” passages in Colossians (e.g. Colossians 1:15-20), and the amazing closing chapters of Revelation (Revelation 21-22). Pray these and other scriptures in your personal devotions and your congregation's corporate worship.

### 2. Keep re-defining “our kind of people”

If you find yourself speaking of “our kind of people,” ask yourself: just who is included in that? The consistent witness of the scriptures is that God keeps broadening and expanding the circle of who's included as *“our kind of people.”* Or, even more simply, ask who's included within *“God's kind of people.”*

### 3. Question your assumptions

Although northwestern Minnesota remains one of the “whitest” parts of our state, we are continually welcoming new neighbors of color or a primary language other than English. At January's ELCA Bishops Academy, Dr. Daisy Machado of Union Theological Seminary pointed out that between the 2000 census and the 2010 census the region of the country that witnessed the *greatest percentage increase* in Latinos was the Midwest. Time and again, I am struck by how many non-white folks I see, encounter or visit with in even the tiniest towns of our synod.

### 4. Get to know your new neighbors

Every trip I make to the Hornbachers grocery store in Moorhead is a multi-cultural experience, a time to encounter persons with stories and backgrounds far different from my own. So I go out of my way to smile at, greet warmly and (if I can) converse briefly with the checkout staff and others. Because many persons of color in our region are new immigrants to this country, God is bringing the world to our doorsteps.

### 5. Get in touch with our “under the radar” racism

I'm confident that none of us would openly identify ourselves as racists. We would all readily affirm God's

inclusive vision of people coming from “every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9). But racism often flies “under the radar” in our lives—revealing itself in our fleeting thoughts, our unintentional comments (“where did that come from?”), even the jokes we chuckle at before thinking. Consider offering an anti-racism learning experience or diversity training in your congregation or community. Pay attention to and get involved in the debate over immigration policy that will be before the U.S. Congress in the months to come.

#### **6. Listen to congregations and disciples who are making a difference**

Learn about, pray for, and support multi-cultural ministries in and around our synod, e.g. Peoples Church of Bemidji; Trinity of Pelican Rapids; the Division for Indian Work of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota. Dip into the rich wealth of resources available on the ELCA website. Pay attention especially to the “first third of life” folks in your faith communities—college students whose friendship circles include multi-cultural companions and high schoolers returning from mission trips to racially-diverse or

ethnically-diverse parts of the world.

O God of all, with wonderful diversity of languages and cultures you created all people in your image. Free us from prejudice and fear that we may see your face in the faces of people around the world, through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

For reflection and discussion:

- How do you respond to our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s stated goals on diversity? How important are these goals, compared to other priorities for our church? What have we done right? What could we do better?
- How often and where do you encounter persons who are different from you (racially, ethnically, culturally)? What signs of growing diversity of the population do you see in your town or local area?
- Which of the six suggestions under “The Path Ahead” (above) would you like to pursue in your congregation?

\* \* \* \*

## **2013 Northwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly**

**June 7, 2013 - June 9, 2013**

Concordia College - Moorhead, MN

#### **We gather in assembly:**

- **to worship** as a synod, gathered around God’s Word and Sacraments;
- **to listen** to one another, learning from and being inspired by God’s Word for the sake of God’s mission;
- **to deepen our relationships** in the synod—meeting, learning, worshiping, laughing and enjoying one another’s company;
- **and to deliberate as a synod**, carefully discussing and prayerfully deciding about issues before us.

It is very important that all voting members—lay and rostered—attend the entire assembly.

#### Synod Assembly Bishop Election

The Northwestern Minnesota Synod will be holding a bishop election at this year’s Synod Assembly. There is **a new step in the election process** this year: **a pre-nomination step** in order to allow greater forethought on the part of nominators, more time for self-examination on the part of those nominated, and a lighter load during the assembly for those needing to prepare biographical information about the candidates. This process gives the Bishop Election Committee more time to compile biographical information on some candidates, rather than having to do all the work overnight on all the candidates. Any congregation or rostered leader in the NWMN Synod may **pre-nominate a candidate for Bishop** (Pre-nominee must be an ordained pastor in good standing on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.)

\* \* \* \*

### **Church Council Training**

(a.k.a. “EEEEvents”: Engaging Enlightening Energizing)

**Sunday, February 17, 2013**

2:00 - 7:00 pm

*Trinity Lutheran Church - Thief River Falls, MN*

The focus will be on "Living into the Next Generation Vision" --ministry to and with children, youth, young adults and the homes that nurture them. It will also include the standard “nuts and bolts” presentations, especially for new officers and council members elected at annual meetings.

# The Back Page



“Ha ha ha, Biff. Guess what?  
After we go to the drugstore and the post office,  
I'm going to the vet's to get tutored.”



**PICK YOUR BATTLES**

Some things are better left alone