

St. Pauli News in Detail



Easter Sunrise Services 7:00 am



We will continue our tradition of sunrise services. A light breakfast will also be served following the services and we want everyone to know that there will be ample food for extended family.



Greeting and Ushering

April 5 (7:00am) Edna Rondorf
April 12 Jim Rondorf
April 19 "Wing-It"
April 26 Jordan Rondorf

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: Cindy Cedergren



April Milestones

Birthdays

April 3	Eunice Grove
April 5	Annika Halvorson
April 6	Jim Kolden
April 18	Shirley Johnson

Anniversaries

(None that we know of)

BLANKET SUNDAY

April 26th



Blankets and quilts for Lutheran World Relief and our local Law Enforcement agency will be placed on and around our altar ring for blessing prior to shipment.

**This is also our Potluck Sunday.
Freewill offering for Violence Intervention Project.**

In Memoriam



Joel Dahlen died unexpectedly on Thursday, March 5, 2015 at his home with his loving wife and son at his side. Joel is the uncle of Erin Rondorf. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to Erin and Jordan and the entire Dahlen family.

Joel Keith Dahlen was born on September 24, 1955 in Red Lake, MN, the son of Erling and Ella (Good) Dahlen. He was baptized and confirmed at Ekelund Lutheran Church rural Goodridge. Joel attended country school three miles west of the home farm in Star Township, Pennington County, for one year and then went to Goodridge School where he graduated with the class of 1974. Following high school, Joel graduated from the AVTI in Thief River Falls in the carpentry program.

Joel went to work for Stephen Builders in Stephen, MN and then went together with Jeff Dahlen, Danny Johnsrud, Jerry Johnsrud and Richard Vraa who formed Northwest Builders.

On May 20, 1978, Joel was united in marriage to Rosalee Iverson at Zion Lutheran Church in Thief River Falls by Pastor Richard Larson. They made their home in Thief River Falls for one year and then moved to Chisholm, MN where Joel joined Iverson Construction. In the late 1980s, Joel partnered with Steve Briski.

Through the next 17 years, Joel had the opportunity to build numerous homes, lake homes, businesses and friendships throughout the Iron Range.

In 1981 they were blessed with a son, Robby, and in 1986 were blessed with a daughter, Jamie.

In 1996, the couple returned to the Thief River Falls area where they owned and operated Power Sports Plus in Oklee, MN. After a short time, Joel returned to his passion of building and formed Dahlen Construction. Once again, he went to work building numerous homes, businesses and friendships throughout northwest Minnesota.

Joel had a God-given talent for building with great craftsmanship and attention to detail. He loved spending time with his family and friends. Joel was such a proud grandpa to Henry and Eden, and was looking forward to the birth of a new grandchild in May. He was the best husband, dad, brother, son-in-law and friend. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, building, going to the cabins he built at Lake of the Woods and rural Goodridge. Joel was an avid racing fan, be it NASCAR, World of Outlaws, or Robby's snowmobile and motocross racing.

He was a member of Bethany Lutheran Church where he served in several positions on the church council, was a director on Bray-Gentilly Insurance Board, and was a member of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians. He was a proud crew member of Tucker Hibbert's Team 68.

Survivors include his loving wife, Rosie, of 36 years; son Robby (special friend, Holly) Dahlen of Wayzata, MN; daughter Jamie (Todd) Nohl of Hallock, MN; grandchildren, Henry and Eden; siblings, Elaine (Dave) Roehl of Bloomington, MN; David (Gayle) Dahlen of Goodridge; Jeff Dahlen of Goodridge; Carolyn (Scott) Pahlen of Sandy Shores, MN; Kelly (Brenda) Dahlen of Goodridge; Kevin (special friend, Kathy Opdahl) of Thief River Falls; Donna (fiancé, Rob Endly) of Bloomington, MN; Leah (Mike) Nelson of Madison, WI; and Steven (Ladora) Dahlen of St. Hilaire; father- and mother-in-law, Leon and Sharon Iverson of Thief River Falls; sisters-in-law Roxanne (fiancé, LeRoy Boice) Iverson of Thief River Falls, and Rhona (Ryan) Haugen of Roseau, MN; and numerous nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

He is preceded in death by his parents; infant sister, Cheryl; and nephew, Cole Dahlen.

Funeral services were held March 9, 2015 at 10:30 am at Trinity Lutheran Church in Thief River Falls with Rev. John Voelker officiating. Burial was at Ekelund Cemetery, rural Goodridge.

God Bless the Memory of Joel Dahlen

In Memoriam



Paul Hutchinson, 44, died peacefully on Thursday March 19, 2015 at Oakland Park Communities, Thief River Falls.

Paul Merton Hutchinson was born September 8, 1970 in Thief River Falls, MN the son of Merton R. and Juanita (Burrell) Hutchinson. He was baptized at Trinity Lutheran Church and confirmed at St. Pauli Lutheran Church in 1985. Paul attended Northrup Elementary, Franklin Middle School and graduated from Lincoln High School in the class of 1989. While in high school Paul was a member of the FFA and was Snowfest King in 10th grade. Also in high school he worked at Florence's Café as a dishwasher and at Bugge's Oil and Service starting as a gas pump attendant and then going out on wrecker calls.

At the age of 20, Paul entered into service with the United States Army in 1990. He served mainly in Germany and was present when the Berlin Wall came down. Paul was honorably discharged in 1993 and returned to Thief River Falls and got his CDL and began work with his father as a truck driver both intra-state and inter-state. He was eventually owner of Thief River Trucking and Hutchinson Logistics. He also drove for Thygeson Construction and worked for the City of Thief River Falls Sanitation Department. In August of 2013 he sold his trucking equipment and was most recently employed at Arctic Cat Inc. on the Paint Line.

On July 6, 1996, Paul was united in marriage to Janelle Skjerpung and to this union two children were welcomed, Jessica and Austin, and they made their home in Thief River Falls. On April 25, 2004, Paul was united in marriage to Kerri Pederson.

Paul had a great sense of humor, was a prankster and liked to make people laugh. He enjoyed collecting antiques, history, buying and selling vehicles, fishing, and spending time with friends and family. Paul loved to travel; he visited his Aunt Shirley in the Washington/Oregon area in the summer out of high school, visited the southwest states in field research while enlisted with the U.S. Army and also toured Germany and Denmark while stationed there. He was a member of the VFW Post 2793 in Thief River Falls.

Survivors include his daughter, Jessica of Fargo, ND; son, Austin of Thief River Falls; father, Merton of Thief River Falls; siblings, Cindy (Scott) Brandon of Middle River, MN, Boni (Todd) Fossell of Karlstad, MN and Michele Hutchinson of Thief River Falls; several nieces and nephews; several great-nieces and great-nephews; uncles and aunts, Conrad (Jean) Burrell of Middle River, MN, Virginia (Bernard) Wells of Goodridge, MN, Lorraine (Stanley) Olson of Big Lake, MN, Marvin (Eileen) Hutchinson of Springsteel, MN, James (Norma) Hutchinson of Thief River Falls, MN; and many other relatives and friends.

He is preceded in death by his mother, Juanita in 1997; God-son and nephew, Cody Brandon in 2002; grandparents, Clyde & Beatrice Hutchinson and Carl & Adeline Burrell; aunt, Shirley Russell; uncle, Ronald "Butch" Burrell; and nephew, Lars Sundberg.

The service to celebrate the life of Paul was held at 10:30 AM on Friday, March 27, 2015 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Thief River Falls, MN with Rev. John Voelker officiating. Burial followed at the German Evangelical Cemetery in rural Middle River, MN.

Special Music: Greg Dally & Paula Adamson
Soloist: Amanda Sundberg ~ Go Rest High On That Mountain & I'll Fly Away
Congregational Hymns: Amazing Grace, On Eagle's Wings, Jesus Loves Me
Pallbearers: Paul's Nephews, Jamey Brandon, Tony Brandon, Michael Brandon, DJ Anderson, Adam Anderson, Andrew Anderson, Brody Jesme, Brenden Jesme
Honorary Pallbearers: Paul's Classmates in the Lincoln High School Class of 1989, Paul's Co-workers throughout the years and Paul's friends

God Bless the Memory of Paul Hutchinson

The Hutchinson family has always been so wonderful to St. Pauli when it came to hauling Lutheran World Relief to the Cities from TRF, Roseau and the surrounding areas. First, it was Paul's father's trucking business, and then it became Paul's. Both did the hauling at no charge to us. They always said it was just their donation to the church. Paul continued to do this until he no longer had the business. They are a wonderful family and our hearts go out to them.

In Memoriam

The Walsberg Family has lost two siblings within a month. Our deepest sympathies to Virginia Anderson, Jeannette Walseth and the entire Walsberg family.

**Ralph Walsberg, 78, of Two Harbors, MN died Monday, February 23, 2015 in Duluth.
Carol Adeline Jerde, 82, of South Elgin, IL, died Thursday, March 19, 2015 in St. Charles.**



Ralph Walsberg was born September 6, 1936 to Victor and Yvonne (Gregoire) Walsberg in Thief River Falls.

Ralph attended country school through the sixth grade, and graduated from Thief River Falls High School 1954. He enlisted in the United States Army, and later moved to the Duluth area in 1967.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Victor and Yvonne (Gregoire) Walsberg; three siblings: Russell W., Gertrude Mason, and Duane W.

Ralph will be missed by his former wife Rosemary; two sons Roger (Jenny) W. and Bill (Anna) W.; five grandchildren: Ruby, Kate, Abi, Joe, Rick; ten siblings: Colleen (Willy) Lazar, Yvonne (Lloyd) Johnson, Victor (Jo) W., Carol (Harold) Jerde, Judy Badgley, Jeanette Walseth, Virginia (Ronnie) Anderson, Joanne (Larry) Wold, Dennis (Susan) W., and Mary Ellen Johnson; extended family and many friends.

Private Services will be held.



Carol Adeline Jerde, 82, of South Elgin, Illinois, formerly of Sycamore and DeKalb, died Thursday, March 19, 2015, in St. Charles.

Carol was born October 10, 1932, in Grand Forks, North Dakota, the daughter of Victor and Yvonne (Gregoire) Walsberg of Thief River Falls, Minnesota, now deceased. She married Harold E. Jerde after she graduated from Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls. Carol was a homemaker but worked in various occupations and helped with the building and excavating companies that the couple owned. She was a member of Christ Community Church in St. Charles.

She is survived by her husband, Harold of South Elgin; three children, Dan (Donna) Jerde of Gladstone, MO; Debbie (John) Smith of Charleston, IL; and Darin (Janet) Jerde of Centennial, CO; grandchildren: Danielle (Pavil) Cherian of Chicago, Allison (Scott) Ohlander of Glen Ellyn and Natalie Smith of Glen Ellyn, Eric Jerde of Springfield, MO, Krista (Tyler)

Hughes of Richmond, MO, and Hanna Jerde and Elsa Jerde of Centennial, CO; eight great-grandchildren; siblings: Colleen Lazara of Fairbault, Minnesota, Yvonne (Lloyd) Johnson of Victoria, MN, V. Rene (Jo) Walsberg of Wichita, KS, Judy Badgley of Federal Way, WA, Jeanette Walseth of Thief River Falls, Virginia (Ron) Anderson of Thief River Falls, Joann (Larry) Wold of Detroit Lakes, MN, Dennis (Susan) Walsberg of Federal Way, WA, and Mary Johnson of Spring, TX; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her mother- and father-in-law, Carrie and Clifford Jerde; brothers, Russell, Duane and Ralph; and sister, Gertrude.

The memorial service was held at 11:00 a.m. Monday, March 23, at Christ Community Church Chapel, St. Charles, IL.

God Bless the Memories of Ralph Walsberg and Carol (Walsberg) Jerde



Minutes of the Church Council

February 16, 2015

The St. Pauli Church Council held its regular meeting on Monday, February 16, 2015 at 7 p.m. at St. Pauli Church. Members present: Arlo Rude, Andrew Halvorson, Ron Anderson, Cindy Cedergren, and Pastor Carl Hansen.

The meeting was called to order by Arlo Rude. Pastor Carl Hansen opened with prayer.

Council President Election: Cedergren made a motion to elect Arlo Rude as Council President. Anderson seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was presented by Rude. Anderson made a motion to approve, seconded by Halvorson. Motion carried.

Secretary's Report: Rude made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular January 15, 2015 and the special January 18, 2015 meetings. Cedergren seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Halvorson presented the report. Discussion was held regarding the Mission Grant fund transfers. For future monthly reports, Andrew will report the church accounts separately from the cemetery association accounts.

Balances as of January 31, 2015 were reported as follows:

General Fund Expenses	\$4,365.24
General Fund Income	\$4,437.45
Checking Account	\$19,795.69
Investor Savings	\$35,836.23
Edward Jones Investments	\$41,422.03

The Treasurer's Report was approved with a motion by Anderson, seconded by Cedergren. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Hansen reported he was pleased to be back from an enjoyable and relatively warm stay with family in Seguin, TX. He attended worship services at a Baptist Church and Emanuel Lutheran Church. He appreciated the opportunity to sit in a pew and reconnect with what it's like to simply worship without the responsibility of leading worship and preaching. But he was delighted to resume sitting and standing at the front of St. Pauli's sanctuary.

The NW Minnesota Synod is offering a leadership orientation workshop on February 22 from 2:30-5:30 pm at Redeemer Lutheran Church. There will be small group sessions for council members and other congregational leaders. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Rolf Jacobson, professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary. Pastor Carl is looking forward to participating in this year's series of round robin Lenten services beginning February 25 through March 25.

Reports of Members in sickness or distress: No report.

New Members or Interest in Membership: A family who has attended services recently has expressed interest in becoming members. Pastor Hansen will contact a family who is interested in having their baby baptized at St. Pauli.

Reports:
WELCA – Cindy Cedergren forwarded a request from WELCA to have new wooden cabinets and a countertop installed in the northwest corner of the basement for storing stewardship

supplies throughout the year. The countertop would also be useful during the fall supper. Cedergren suggested that perhaps a committee of one or more council members and one or more WELCA members could meet and discuss this project. Rude will look at the area to determine layout possibilities. Further discussion will be held at the March Council meeting.

Board of Education – No report

Men's Group – Does not meet

Project List for 2015 – Rude will email the list to council members for discussion at the March meeting.

Lenten Services – The schedule for the round robin of pastors from area churches is in place. We will use the Holden Evening Prayer liturgy and CD. Pastors are only expected to provide the sermon for the services; individual churches are responsible for leading the other portions of the services.

New Business:

Synod Mission Support: Motion by Cedergren, seconded by Anderson to send payment of \$2,625 from the General Fund, as approved in the 2015 Budget. Motion carried.

Financial transfer to St. Pauli Cemetery Association: Motion by Cedergren, seconded by Rude, to transfer \$3,500 from the General Fund to the Cemetery Association, as approved in the 2015 budget. Motion carried.

Financial transfer to Mission Grant Fund: Motion by Rude, seconded by Cedergren, to transfer \$1,000 from the General Fund to the Mission Grant fund, as approved in the 2015 budget. Motion carried.

First Communion Age: Rude led a discussion regarding the idea of lowering the age in which students could partake in communion. Currently, fifth graders begin communion at St. Pauli. A separate curriculum would be required for a younger age. Rude will research materials available and will present more information at the next meeting. Discussion will also be held with the Board of Education. Any change to the current structure would need to be approved by the congregation at a special congregational meeting.

Purchase of 50" Television: Motion by Anderson, seconded by Halvorson, to approve the purchase of a 50" television, not to exceed \$850, as approved in the 2015 budget. The TV will be placed and secured to the existing rolling stand. Motion carried.

Purchase of a MIDI recorder for the organ: Motion by Halvorson, seconded by Anderson, to hold a special congregational meeting on March 8th to approve the purchase of a MIDI recorder for the organ. Estimated cost is \$900. Rude will obtain exact amounts and will give verbal notices of the special meeting at the February 22nd and March 1st worship services, and the notice and details of the purchase will be included in the March newsletter. The recorder will be used in the absence of the organist.

The Lord's Prayer was prayed.

A motion to adjourn was made by Anderson, seconded by Cedergren. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Cedergren

Special Congregation Meeting

March 8, 2015

The meeting was held following the regular 10:30 AM Sunday worship service.

The meeting was noticed in the March Monthly Newsletter and at Church Services the two Sundays prior to the meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Arlo Rude, Church Council President.

In the absence of the Secretary, Arlo Rude took minutes of the meeting.

Discussion was concerning the purchase of a Portfolio MIDI Sequencer for recording organ music. The hymns and liturgies recorded will be available for playing during a worship service in the absence of the organist.

The Portfolio MIDI Sequencer is from the Westacott Company, Toronto, Canada. It includes a remote control. This allows the playing of recorded organ music from a location away from the organ.

The cost of the Portfolio MIDI Sequencer is the following.

Purchase price	\$799.00
UPS Shipping	\$53.47
Brokerage Fee (estimated by UPS)	<u>\$32.25</u>
TOTAL:	\$884.72

The recommendation was to approve a purchase not to exceed \$950.00. This will allow for possible other fees not known of at the time of the meeting.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Barb Nelson and seconded by Kathy Alberg to purchase a Portfolio MIDI Sequencer in an amount not to exceed \$950.00 for the purchase and expenses. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Evie Johnson, seconded by Faye Auchenpaugh, to use funds from the Memorial Fund, Investor Savings Account to pay the cost of the purchase and expenses. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn by Andrew Halvorson, seconded by Barb Nelson. Motion carried.

Arlo Rude
Acting Secretary for the Special Congregation Meeting

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Historic Minutes of the St. Pauli Congregation

12 December 1921

The St. Pauli congregation held its annual meeting in the church on December 12, 1921.

The meeting was opened by Pastor Grimsrud with hymn song and prayer, then the report of the secretary was read and accepted and thereafter the report of the treasurer was read and accepted.

The school committee reported that they had had one and one-half months of school.

T. Stene reported on behalf of the building committee that they had not done anything during the past year and that he wished that it should be dissolved. He also reported that the auditors accepted the report of the committee that was read.

Then the following officials were elected: as trustee for three years was elected John Kval; Secretary O. Odegaard one year; treasurer T Stene one year.

The building committee was dissolved and C. Oien expressed his wish that the congregation should thank it for the work they had performed.

As responsible for the cemetery was elected Bennie Odegaard and then it was decided to have a day for ornamentation of graves. The time was to be decided on later.

The apportionments committee the same as before: Netteland, Borgie and Valsvik. As sexton the same as before: Joe Torstveit.

Delegates to the district meetings: O. Peterson and Olaf Snetting; subst. Ed Viken and K. Finstad.

It was proposed and supported to hold two months of religion school and that it should be held in the church.

Then was decided to allow two hundred dollars for the expenses of the congregation.

Thereafter was elected a committee of three to collect to the different cash accounts, namely Emil Thune, Carl Alberg and B. Odegaard.

On proposal, the meeting was ended.

O. Odegaard, Secr.

Historic Minutes of the St. Pauli Young People's Society and Luther League

24 October 1926

The St. Pauli Young People's Society met at the church Sunday evening, October 24, 1926.

Meeting was called to over by the Vice President. The following program was rendered:

Song: by audience

Scripture Reading: Mrs. C. Finstad

Song: By Audience

Reading: Julia Malmquist

Reading: Louise Netteland

Song: Mrs. C. Finstad

Story: Mrs. Allen

A motion was made and seconded that the next meeting be held in three weeks Song by audience. The meeting adjourned. Lunch was served by the Young People's Society. Proceeds were \$10.55

Gilma Helgerson, Secretary

21 February 1954

St. Pauli Luther League held its Annual Meeting at the Emil Thune home Sunday afternoon, February 21.

A hymn "Love Divine, All Love Excelling" was sung.

President Connie Alberg led us in scripture and prayer. Another hymn, "Take My Life" was sung by congregation.

Doris Belange read a reading "The Value of Life" and the congregation sang "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

The secretary's report was read and approved. Treasurer Wahna Torkelson gave the treasurer's report, which was also approved.

Election of Officers was held and the following were elected:

President: Doris Belange

Vice President: Betty Rude

Secretary: Patty Torkelson

Treasurer: Bev Rolandson

Meeting closed with Lord's Prayer and Table Blessing.

Servers were Mrs. Carl Alberg, Mrs. Norman Nelson, Mrs. Emil Thune and Mrs. Olaf Snetting.

Proceeds: \$12.55

Betty Rude, Retiring Secretary

The light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection. The tailgating woman was furious and honked her horn, screaming in frustration, as she missed her chance to get through the intersection, dropping her cell phone and makeup.

As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a holding cell.

After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you and cussing a blue streak at him. I noticed the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'Follow Me to Sunday School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk, so naturally...I assumed you had stolen the car."

Editor's Note: You may recall that at our Annual Meeting in 2014 we voted to set aside \$1,000.00 annually to help fund a mission trip for a member of our congregation. The following letter refers to this St. Pauli mission program.

A LETTER OF THANKS

Dear St. Pauli Council and Congregation,

Thank you for approving my requests for financial assistance for my upcoming eye mission trips to Jamaica and Ecuador. It means so much to me to have your support.

The St. Pauli congregation has always been a great support to me, encouraging me and cheering me on in my accomplishments, and surrounding me and my family in love during our times of sorrow and grieving.

I don't know how to thank you, other than to do my best in providing vision care to those places in need and, in doing so, spreading God's love. And, I'd be happy to report back to the congregation about the trips, if that would be of interest.

Thank you again for investing in me and VOSH (Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity).

Dr. Kari Torkelson

The Train Of Life

At birth we board the train and meet our parents, and we believe they will always travel on our side. However, at some station our parents will step down from the train, leaving us on this journey alone.

As time goes by, other people will board the train, and they will be significant: our siblings, friends, children, and even the loves of our lives. Many will step down and leave a permanent vacuum. Others will go so unnoticed that we don't realize they vacated their seats.

This train ride will be full of joy, sorrow, fantasy, expectations, hellos, goodbyes, and farewells. Success consists of having a good relationship with all passengers, requiring that we give the best of ourselves.

The mystery to everyone is: We do not know at which station we ourselves will step down. So, we must live in the best way: love, forgive, and offer the best of who we are. It is important to do this because when the time comes for us to step down and leave our seat empty, we should leave behind beautiful memories for those who will continue to travel on the train of life.

I wish you a joyful journey on the train of life. Reap success and give lots of love. More importantly, thank God for the journey.

Lastly, **I thank you** for being one of the passengers on my train and God Bless You.

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ROMMEGROT BARS



- 2 pkg. refrigerated crescent rolls
- 2 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 egg, separated
- 1/4 cup sugar mixed with 1/2 tsp. cinnamon



Grease a 9x13 pan. Pat 1 pkg. crescent rolls into pan. Mix softened cream cheese with 1 cup sugar, vanilla and 1 egg yolk. Spread over crescent rolls in pan, then top with the other pkg. of crescent rolls. Beat egg white until foamy and spread on top of crescent rolls. Sprinkle cinnamon sugar mix evenly on top. (Use more or less of this to suit your own taste.) Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes.

Enjoy!!

The Cost of Discipleship

(from an LCA sermon in [Australia](#))

Those of us of a certain age will remember what it was like to grow up without TV or computers or text messaging. Yes, sometimes school holidays and weekends could be a bit lonely and boring. But if you grew up on a farm, there was always something fun to do - like hunting for rabbits. The burrows could be blocked up with dirt and then the dogs would be sent out into the bushes and the reeds in the creek to flush out the rabbits. The rabbits would race to their burrows but then get confused to find them blocked up. Some would just give up and become an easy meal for the dogs. When the rabbits were in plagues, farmers would gas them in their burrows to try to stop them from decimating the fresh young crops. Spotlighting at night was another way of trying to keep them under control, but the rabbits always won out. The farmer's best efforts could never wipe them out. But many children had fun trying: more fun than games kids play today on the computer, and certainly better exercise.

Have you ever noticed how football teams are named after savage creatures that attack and destroy? The Tigers, The Bulldogs, The Sharks? Someone from Sydney might say, "How about The Rabbits?" They might look like gentle creatures, but rabbits can be terribly destructive to our environment in their own way. Many of us have seen the footage of rabbit plagues of the last century and how they turned productive land into a dust bowl.

Some years ago, rabbit numbers in Australia plunged dramatically. Dead and dying rabbits could be seen all over the countryside. No shark, bulldog or tiger was responsible. No farmer with a gun or poisonous gas. Instead, it was a tiny virus that had wiped them out.

To be a member on Jesus' team, we don't need to be like a Shark or Bulldog, or even a Rabbit. Instead, we are to carry a cross and be more like a lamb. There is no shame in being like a lamb, the Old Testament animal of sacrifice.

Jesus says, *"If any one of you wants to be my follower you must first put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross, and follow me. If you try to keep your life for yourself you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me and my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will find true life."*

The kingdom of God isn't built by people using brute force. God doesn't build his kingdom with armed soldiers and weapons of mass destruction. The Spirit of God works deep down in people's hearts, more like the *Calici* virus in rabbits. It is deep down inside that God destroys selfishness, evil, sin and even the power of death. One day, there will none of these destructive and evil enemies left.

To be a follower of Jesus is to take up one's cross. It isn't the way of power and glory, but a way of death: a slow and terrible death. It is difficult and not always enjoyable. Jesus didn't enjoy it.

Today we often hear people say, "If it feels good, do it." Or, "Do what you love, the money will follow." These are appealing themes. We love to hear them. It appeals to our self centeredness. It appeals to the selfish person in us who likes to dominate and destroy.

But what Jesus says is the exact opposite. It is to become a lamb and sacrifice one's self for others. We might see this in a marriage, for example, where one goes out of one's way for one's partner. The selfish person is being crucified for the sake of the person God puts next to us.

In the middle of last century, Lutheran Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a book called, *"The Cost of Discipleship."* He wrote it in Germany where many people were 'Lutherans' only by name. It was said they entered a Church four times in their lives:

- when they were baptized.
- when they were confirmed.
- when they married.
- and finally when they were dead.

It was the social thing to belong to the Church. It could help in getting a job promotion or to win votes in an election. It cost virtually nothing to be a Christian. It was like in our current times of wearing a cross as a pretty piece of jewelry: worn when one dresses up on special occasions because it looks nice, and for no other reason. Pastor Bonhoeffer challenged this attitude and labelled it 'Cheap Grace'. He preached that the real cost of following Jesus was a person's life.

The cross cost Jesus his life. Jesus didn't choose the way of the cross because it was fun, or the social thing to do. It was a social disgrace. We know it wasn't easy because Jesus sweated drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemene the night before he was crucified.

From the moment of Jesus' birth in a humble stable, his life was a journey towards his death on the cross: a journey of only 33 years. He took this journey because of his deep love and concern for each one of us. He did it so we could become his brothers and sisters. He chose the way of the cross so we can share eternal life with him. We have a lot to look forward to!

Don't be ashamed to be a follower of Jesus Christ. When Jesus is the center of one's life, one doesn't look for praise and glory in the Church. One doesn't have to be noticed. One is focused on possible ways to minister to other people, to go out of one's way for others and be aware of those who are struggling and have special needs. We can be sure that Jesus has noticed you and me and he has great plans for us.

At times, the way can be lonely when one follows Jesus. When one gives a cup of water to the thirsting person, who is thrilled – apart from God? When one visits and ministers to a sick person, who might notice – apart from God?

Dying can be a lonely experience. It was for Jesus. Even most of his closest followers left him. But Jesus died so we will never die alone! He is forever with us, in our life of dying for others, and in our own physical dying. He loves us so deeply. And...

The peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The Back Page

The Day Peter Ran

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson (based on John 20:1-9)

By day it gnawed at him, but nights were even worse. He had betrayed his dearest friend. Not privately, not secretly, but blatantly, out in the open for all the world to see. And now it was too late to say, "I'm sorry." His friend was dead.

Peter tossed sleeplessly, unable to find a position that felt comfortable. Outside he could hear the sounds of Jerusalem stirring to life. This city he had once loved to visit, he now hated. It held too many painful memories impossible to erase from his mind. Today he would leave for Galilee and fishing, though even fishing held no allure for him now. Nothing did.

"How could I have so utterly shamed myself? How could I? Peter, you d--- coward!" For the thousandth time he cursed himself. *"He was my friend! How could I have done this to my very best friend?"*

He could see Jesus riding that donkey down the hill into Jerusalem to the cheers of thousands. He saw him in hot anger overturning coin-laden tables in the temple. "You have made my Father's house a den of thieves!" the Master had told them in carefully measured but biting words.

Peter recalled blind men abruptly seeing, lame men suddenly walking, and loathsome lepers' skin turning baby-soft within a moment of Jesus' touch. He saw Jesus' smile, his compassion, his hours of gentle

teaching. He felt the Master's hand on his shoulder after a long day of caring for the multitudes. The accompanying words repeated themselves over and over in his mind. "Thanks, Peter, for your help today. You are a faithful friend... a faithful friend... a faithful friend." Tears began to well up in Peter's eyes. Faithful? Me?

When the High Priest's soldiers had tried to arrest Jesus, Peter had defended his Master with a sword. But later, when a servant girl had challenged him with: "You're one of his disciples, aren't you?" he had denied it with an oath. A mere servant girl! But again and again he had compounded the cowardly lie until the cock crowed, and Jesus' eyes from far across the courtyard met his. Sad, disappointed eyes. Then he had broken and run. Run from the High Priest's home into the dark streets. Run until he could run no more. Run until he had flung himself onto the cobbled streets sobbing.

Later that morning he had watched from a distance as they mocked and tormented his friend, finally nailing hands and feet with huge spikes, and suspending him from a cross until his life was spent. He couldn't bear another day in this city!

The thin light of dawn had appeared under the door. Night was finally over; today he would leave. Today he would run away, back to the only life he knew. Today Peter would leave this bloody city behind.

Bang! Bang! The nearby door shook as someone kept banging on it. Peter reached for his sword, and quietly took his place behind the door.

"Peter, John, it's Mary! Let me in."

It was a woman's voice, Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus' close friends who had traveled with them for months. He unbolted the door and Mary slipped inside. She took several deep breaths before she

could speak, then blurted out her message: "They've stolen the body! Jesus' body is gone, and we don't know where they've put him!"

John, who was wide awake by now, looked at Peter, and then threw on his clothes. Peter was out the door running, running down the streets, tearing around corners, headed for the garden tomb where Jesus' body had been laid.

Now John was close behind. Younger and faster, John soon outdistanced Peter. By the time Peter got to the tomb, John was standing outside the door peering in. The huge stone, designed to prevent desecration of the tomb, was rolled away. Peter rushed inside. It took a moment for his eyes to adjust to the dimness of the damp limestone cave.

There was the linen grave cloth that had been wrapped turn after turn around the body. It lay on the chiseled stone shelf where the body had been. Yet now with nothing inside, its coils lay collapsed, empty, like a chrysalis after the butterfly has emerged. Folded separately was the cloth that had been around Jesus' head.

Peter looked at John and motioned him inside. How curious! If the tomb had been robbed and the body stolen, he would have expected the wrappings to be nowhere in sight. Or perhaps strewn in haste around the narrow stone room. Yet here they were, orderly, as if laid aside, no longer needed.

John looked at Peter. Peter looked at John. Peter could catch the faintest smile playing at the corners of John's mouth.

What if? What if...he is risen?

Peter walked back into Jerusalem, but each step was a bit quicker than the one before. *What if he is risen?*

As Peter turned the corner onto the street where he was staying, he saw a figure waiting for him at the door. A *very familiar* figure — Jesus!

Peter *ran* to meet him!

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The Scripture records, *"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep"* (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

"They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, 'It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.'" (Luke 24:33-34).

Note: Peter is referred to by three names in Scripture: Simon son of John, his Hebrew name; Peter (Rock, the Greek form of the name Jesus bestowed on him); and Cephas (the Aramaic word for Rock).



The Disciples Peter and John Running to the Sepulchre on the Morning of the Resurrection (1898),
by Eugène Burnand (1850-1921), Paris Musee d'Orsay.