

# St. Pauli News in Detail



## Christmas Eve

**Bell Ringing**  
4:30 pm

**Worship Services**  
5:00 pm

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## Greeting and Ushering

Dec. 2 Laurie Nelson  
Dec. 9 Staci Reay  
Dec. 16 Jim Rondorf  
Dec. 23 Jordan Rondorf  
Dec. 24 Arlo Rude

**Altar Preparation:** Virginia Anderson  
**Christmas Eve:** Jan Strandlie

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## Holiday Train

December 13<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 pm

## Food Shelf Month

December is Food Shelf Month. Please consider making a monetary contribution to our local organization. Checks can be made payable to St. Pauli Church, with a notation for Food Shelf on the check, or use an envelope provided near the mailboxes for checks or cash. There is a basket in the narthex for contributions.

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## December Milestones

### Birthdays

Dec. 5 Roxanne Rondorf  
Dec. 12 Heidi Haugen  
Dec. 23 Jim Strandlie  
Dec. 29 Neil Bugge  
Dec. 30 Richard Geske

### Anniversaries

None that we know of

Christmas and Birthday Greetings may be sent to Richard Geske at:  
2473 Idaho Ave.  
Maplewood, MN 55119

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## Christmas Cards

There are a limited number of St. Pauli photo Christmas cards available for purchase. If you wish to do so, please see Cindy Cedergren or Faye Auchenpaugh. Cost is \$1.00 per card. A sample card is posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.



# In Memoriam

## Brad L. Swanson

November 14, 1958 – October 31, 2018

Brad Lauren Swanson, died Wednesday, October 31, 2018 at his home in Baltimore, MD, with his dad "Skip," "cuz Talli" and his dear friends Jeff and Jane by his side. Brad was 59 years, 11 months and 17 days old.

Brad was born November 14, 1958 to Oliver 'Skip' and Patricia (Torkelson) Swanson. He was baptized and confirmed at Calvary Lutheran Church, St. Hilaire, MN.

He attended Northrup Elementary, Franklin Middle School and graduated from Lincoln High School in 1977. Brad was in track, Student Senate and band. He also played the French horn in Northland Community Band. He was a member of 4-H and enjoyed showing and riding horses. He

competed in barrel racing and other competitions.

While in High School, he worked for Bjorkman's, Pizza Hut and construction with his dad. Brad received his Bachelor of Science (Speech Pathology and Audiology), May 23, 1981 from North Dakota State University. He received a Doctorate of Psychology and Master of Science from Texas Tech University, May 13, 1983.

Brad moved to Baltimore from Texas to work shock trauma at University of Maryland Hospital. During this time, Brad travelled to places in India, Germany and Argentina for lecturing and teaching. He had great memories from these trips. Later he worked for Doctors Community Hospital and Future Care. When not working, Brad enjoyed the sun and sand of Aruba and other islands.

Brad was a loving and devoted son and brother. He had a generous heart and didn't hesitate to give. Brad would walk into a room full of people and know something about each person before he left. His interest in the people he met and served was sincere. He was a 'Master' of 'gotcha' humor, very convincing.



Brad is survived by his father, Skip (Oliver) Swanson of Thief River Falls, MN and many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends as well as his cherished dog, Baxter.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Patricia Swanson and his brother, Kevin Swanson; grandparents George C. and Katherine Swanson, Anton and Ellen Torkelson; and Aunt Eleanor, Uncles Dennis, Donald, Chester and Clifford Swanson.

Visitation will be 5 to 7 pm, Friday December 14, 2018 at Johnson Funeral Service, Thief River Falls, MN with a prayer service at 7 pm. A Memorial service will be held at 11:00 am, Saturday, December 15, 2018 at St. Pauli Lutheran Church, with Reverend Carl Hanson officiating.



*We give thanks for Brad's life. May his memory be blessed.*

# Minutes of the Church Council

October 18, 2018

The St. Pauli Church Council met on Thursday, October 18, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Pauli Church. Board Members present: Faye Auchenpaugh, Ivette Garrett, Larry Hurst, Gary Iverson, Arlo Rude and Pastor Carl Hansen.

The meeting was called to order by President Garrett. Pastor Carl opened the meeting with prayer.

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved as submitted.

Secretary's Report: **M/S/C** (Hurst/Rude to approve the August 16, 2018 secretary's report. **M/S/C** (Iverson/Garrett) to approve the September 21, 2018 secretary's report.

Treasurer's Report: Five security cameras have been purchased and installed: four at the church and one at the cemetery. **M/S/C** (Auchenpaugh/Iverson) to accept the report as presented.

Balances as of 9/30/2018:

Checking Account as of 8/31/2018:	\$ 20,754.12
Income	\$ 2,266.00
Expenses	\$ (5,733.68)
Checking Account as of 8/31/2018:	\$ 17,286.44
Investor Savings	\$ 36,147.61
Edward D. Jones Investments	\$ 66,236.35
Memorial Fund Savings & CD	\$ 10,856.52
Education Fund Balance	\$ 515.72
Mission Grant Fund Balance	\$ 4,032.01
Total Church Funds as of 8/31/2018:	\$ 135,074.65

Pastor Carl's Report:

This year's joint Lutheran thanksgiving service will be held at Trinity on Wednesday, November 21, at 7:00 pm with a mass choir and "goodies" after the service.

He will not be able to attend the November council meeting as he will be in the Twin Cities. He hopes to take his Nebraska daughter and granddaughter to a symphony performance in the Cities, but needs to verify that it will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in December.

Pastor Carl said he has not sung in a choir for probably fifteen years, but is now singing the second and fourth Sundays of the month with the Trinity choir at their 8:30 am service.

He will check with Ryan and Katy Haugen to see if they would like to formally join the church on Reformation Sunday, along with Wade and Marisa Benson.

Finally, he said that the Target Field surprise was probably his most memorable birthday.

Reports of members in sickness or distress: Concerns and prayers were said for those experiencing illnesses.

New members or interest in membership: No new interests.

Reports.

- 1) WELCA: Fall Event was a success with a large number of attendees from outside of our congregation. WELCA will purchase boutonnieres/corsages for the confirmands, as stipulated by our guidelines. Iverson felt this would not be necessary and Auchenpaugh will relay this to the WELCA president, Cindy Cedergren.
- 2) Board of Education: Confirmation is Sunday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. There may be a lunch following services, but Iverson was unsure at this time.

Old Business:

- Security: Cameras have been purchased and installed: 4 for the church and 1 for the cemetery, plus security signs for both.
- Pulpit Supply list: Garrett requested this list so she can arrange for pulpit supply in Rude's absence.

New Business:

- **M/S/C** (Auchenpaugh/Iverson) to renew Pastor Carl's contract for another three months.
- Historic photos for display cabinet: Right now, the photos are just print copies. **M/S/C** (Garrett/Rude) to pay for the cost of professional printing in an amount not to exceed \$500.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

**M/S/C** (Garrett/Iverson) to adjourn at 7:55 p.m.

Faye Auchenpaugh, Secretary

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# Historic Minutes of the St. Pauli Congregation

27 November 1934

St. Pauli congregation held its annual meeting in the Church on Nov 27, 1934.

The meeting was opened by chairman Pastor M. L. Dahle with hymn song and reading from the Bible.

The report of the secretary was read and accepted as it was read. The report of the treasurer was read and accepted as it was read.

Pastor Dahle reported that he, during the year, had held 19 divine services and attended most of the meetings of the women's group, and taught a confirmation class, and that he had attended most of the meetings of the youth group. There had been held one month of religion school and the work had been moderate.

St. Pauli congregation had paid its total part to the budget.

It was proposed and supported that the congregation shall instruct the trustees to find out what it will cost to repair the basement.

The following officials were elected.

Secretary: O. J. Snetting, one year

Treasurer: Tobias Stene, one year

Trustee: Helmer Finstad, three years

School committee: Mrs. Tobias Stene, Mrs. Ole Odegaard, Mr. O. J. Snetting

Assessment committee: Gust Gustafson, Joe Torstveit, Ole Valsvig

Sexton: Oscar Seeland

Organist: Mrs. Carl Alberg

On proposal the meeting was ended.

Olaf Snetting, Secretary

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## WELCA Minutes

24 October 2018

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met on October 24, 2018 with 7 members present. President Cindy led us in devotions from the *Daily Guidebook* based on Proverbs.

The secretary's report was read and approved. The treasurer's report was presented as follows:

August 31 checkbook balance:	\$578.33
September income:	389.00
September expenses:	(313.59)
September 30 checkbook balance:	\$653.74
September 30 savings balance:	\$866.71
CD:	\$6,038.40
Fall Event income:	\$2,675.00
Fall Event expenses:	(372.55)
Fall Event net income:	\$2,302.45

### Stewardship Report:

Virginia reported that she and her granddaughter had filled 20 school backpacks. She has finished the graduate quilt and will get it to the graduate or his family. Shirley Johnson had given her a donation to use for stewardship project. Shipping date is November 3rd.

### Old Business:

Discussion on Fall Event. Everything went well and was enjoyable. It was suggested we prefer no cream pies.

Cindy thanked Faye for her work on the display case. Looks wonderful.

On October 28, Ryan and Katy Haugen and family will also be recognized as new members.

We had three members attend the Fall Gathering at Redeemer in Thief River Falls on October 6. Cindy sent around a handout they had received with Lutheran World Relief totals from 2017 shipments (chart on following page. We are in Conference 2, which is highlighted).

### New Business:

Our November 14 WELCA meeting we will do our distribution of funds received at our Fall Event. Bring your recommendations for a charity or project. This is also our Thankoffering meeting.

Confirmation is Sunday, October 28. We will provide corsage, cake and cross from Thrivent for the 4 students.

Faye has invited us to the Country School for our December 1<sup>st</sup> Christmas brunch. Kathy and Sue will contact the caterer. Call Cindy to register. Deadline is November 21.

No Lydia Circle in November.

Prayer partners exchanged. Offering taken.

Program: Preparing our stewardship projects for shipment.

Lord's Prayer and table grace said.

Thank you to Sue for serving lunch.

Kathy Alberg, Secretary

# Lutheran World Relief Report 2017

Conference	Quilts	Fabric Kits	Personal Care	Baby Care	School Kits	Soap Pounds	Newborn Kits	Aids Hospice	Prayer Shawls
1	1,362		175	40	292	49.4	33		51
2	504	11	480	238	276		7		161
3	956	6	159	432	616	22.2		5	7
4	111		36	28	84				12
5	1,422	22	360	252	343	2.5			185
6	622	15	150	40	374		67	75	68
7	829	30	31	105	189				60
8	893	—	552	1,032	346	20	155	126	47
TOTAL	6,699	84	1,943	2,167	2,520	94.1	262	206	591

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## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

from Pope Francis, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Happy Christmas!

In Bethlehem, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. He was born, not by the will of man, but by the gift of the love of God our Father, who "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

This event is renewed today in the Church, a pilgrim in time. For the faith of the Christian people relives in the Christmas liturgy the mystery of the God who comes, who assumes our mortal human flesh, and who becomes lowly and poor in order to save us. And this moves us deeply, for great is the tenderness of our Father.

The first people to see the humble glory of the Savior, after Mary and Joseph, were the shepherds of Bethlehem. They recognized the sign proclaimed to them by the angels and adored the Child. Those humble and watchful men are an example for believers of every age who, before the mystery of Jesus, are not scandalized by his poverty. Rather, like Mary, they trust in God's word and contemplate his glory with simple eyes. Before the mystery of the Word made flesh, Christians in every place confess with the words of the Evangelist John: "We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Today, as the winds of war are blowing in our world and an outdated model of development continues to produce human, societal and environmental decline, Christmas invites us to focus on the sign of the Child and to recognize him in the faces of little children, especially those for whom, like Jesus, "there is no place in the inn" (Luke 2:7).

We see Jesus in the children of the Middle East who continue to suffer because of growing tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. On this festive day, let us ask the Lord for peace for Jerusalem and for all the Holy Land. Let us pray that the will to resume dialogue may prevail between the parties and that a negotiated solution can finally be reached, one that would allow the peaceful coexistence of two States within mutually agreed and

internationally recognized borders. May the Lord also sustain the efforts of all those in the international community inspired by goodwill to help that afflicted land to find, despite grave obstacles, the harmony, justice and security that it has long awaited.

We see Jesus in the faces of Syrian children still marked by the war that, in these years, has caused such bloodshed in that country. May beloved Syria at last recover respect for the dignity of every person through a shared commitment to rebuild the fabric of society, without regard for ethnic and religious membership. We see Jesus in the children of Iraq, wounded and torn by the conflicts that country has experienced in the last 15 years, and in the children of Yemen, where there is an ongoing conflict that has been largely forgotten, with serious humanitarian implications for its people, who suffer from hunger and the spread of diseases.

We see Jesus in the children of Africa, especially those who are suffering in South Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic and Nigeria.

We see Jesus in the children worldwide wherever peace and security are threatened by the danger of tensions and new conflicts. Let us pray that confrontation may be overcome on the Korean peninsula and that mutual trust may increase in the interest of the world as a whole. To the Baby Jesus we entrust Venezuela that it may resume a serene dialogue among the various elements of society for the benefit of all the beloved Venezuelan people. We see Jesus in children who, together with their families, suffer from the violence of the conflict in Ukraine and its grave humanitarian repercussions; we pray that the Lord may soon grant peace to this dear country.

We see Jesus in the children of unemployed parents who struggle to offer their children a secure and peaceful future. And in those whose childhood has been robbed and who, from a very young age, have been forced to work or to be enrolled as soldiers by unscrupulous mercenaries.

We see Jesus in the many children forced to leave their countries to travel alone in inhuman conditions and who become an easy target for human traffickers. Through their eyes we see the drama of all those forced to emigrate and risk their lives to face exhausting journeys that end at times in tragedy. I see Jesus again in the children I met during my recent visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh, and it is my hope that the international community will not cease to work to ensure that the dignity of the minority groups present in the region is adequately protected. Jesus knows well the pain of not being welcomed and how hard it is not

to have a place to lay one's head. May our hearts not be closed as they were in the homes of Bethlehem.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the sign of Christmas has also been revealed to us: "a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes" (Luke 2:12). Like the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, may we welcome in the Baby Jesus the love of God made man for us. And may we commit ourselves, with the help of his grace, to making our world more human and more worthy for the children of today and of the future.

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## The Stories Behind Some of Our Beloved Christmas Carols

By the Pastor at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, San Francisco

### From Heaven Above/*Vom Himmel hoch*

Martin Luther wrote this song for his children, supposedly as a Christmas gift, in 1535. As so often, he took a folk melody and wrote new lyrics. For "From Heaven Above", he used the melody of a *Spielmannslied*, or a minstrel's song. These minstrels would have been the main news channel of those days, traveling from town to town and proclaiming the latest – or not so latest – news and gossip. The original song would have sounded more like that: "From foreign lands to you to bring the news to everyone".

Now, in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, industrialization was on the rise. Railways and factories were built. And with industrialization came a different kind of hardship for workers. So when Sears refers to the "Babel sounds," we may think of factory noises. And the words "above its sad and lowly pains," and "you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low" all of a sudden have a much more concrete meaning.

This Christmas carol is supposed to bring hope to those who suffer daily strife – hope, that, above and through it all, the angels continue to sing their song, even and especially for those who are at the bottom of society.

### Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming

This carol is somewhat of an oddity. How does a rose make it into the Christmas story? Well, it has something to do with translation. The lyrics were written in Germany as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The old German word *Ros* could be the flower Rose, but also a new shoot of a plant, a *Reis*. So this carol refers to the poetic prophecy in Isaiah 11:1: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots."

The melody was probably written sometime in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in a German monastery.

There is a significant difference between verse 2 in the Catholic and in the Protestant version: whereas we are used to identifying Jesus as the rose, the shoot, which with Mary we behold, in the Catholic version Mary is the actual rose, the shoot. Protestants, of course, denounced the veneration of the Virgin Mary and thought they needed to give the lyrics a more Christ-centered spin. Regardless, it is still one of the oldest and most beautiful Christmas carols we have.



The entire Christmas story is told in this song, 15 verses in all, which made it easier for the illiterate folks of his day to hear the story. But then there is some good Lutheran theology in it, too, explaining the consequences Christ's birth has for all of humanity. By the way, Christmas wasn't celebrated much in Luther's days; it was just another day on the Christian calendar which had to compete with many other church festivals or saints' days. As many of those church festivals were thrown out with the Reformation, Christmas became a much more important celebration during the church year.

### Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

From Germany, we now move to Poland. "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" is an old Polish carol. As you probably can tell, we have the melody of a lullaby here. In almost every culture, we find Christmas carols which actually are lullabies, often sung by Mary to her baby Jesus, beautiful in their simplicity.

This Polish lullaby is an old folk song. The lyrics suggest that simple people found those words to describe the whole Christmas story in a mere two short verses: swiftly winging, angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing, Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the Child is Lord of all!

So let us enjoy the beauty of this old song – and the simple truth of what Christmas means for us and all creation.

### It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

This, again, is a carol which at first was sung to a different melody. Edmund Sears, a Unitarian minister, wrote the words around 1849 in Massachusetts. Unitarianism in those days focused on the social implications of the Gospel.

# WELCA Christmas Brunch Saturday, December 1



Our caterers, Broadway Station in St. Hilaire.



# What's a Holiday without Lutefisk and a Little White Lye?

December 15, 2016  
Tove K. Danovich

At Olsen Fish Co. in Minneapolis, workers make lutefisk out of dried ling cod brought in from Norway.

Every winter, Scandinavian-Americans gather in church basements, lodges and restaurants to feast upon the nearly see-through, white, gelatinous food known as lutefisk.

It's not an appetizing dish. Lutefisk is made from dried whitefish — usually cod— which has been rehydrated in baths of lye and cold water. The cook just has to heat and serve.

Lutefisk is famous for being terrible, and jokes about it are prevalent among Scandinavian-Americans. "Every Advent we entered the purgatory of lutefisk, a repulsive gelatinous fishlike dish that tasted of soap and gave off an odor that would gag a goat," wrote Garrison Keillor in his book *Lake Wobegon Days*.

But it's also strangely beloved. While most Scandinavians no longer eat lutefisk, for their American descendants—often many generations removed—it's an important link to the past.

Minnesota's Mount Olivet Lutheran Church has one of the largest congregations in the country and has been hosting an annual lutefisk dinner since 1929, when it charged only \$0.29 per plate. About 1,500 people attend the dinner, which happens on the first Friday in December. In addition to the 1,200 pounds of lutefisk ordered for the occasion, there are other Scandinavian dishes served—400 pounds of ground beef get turned into meatballs, 50 pounds of lingonberries are stirred into sauce, and more than 1,000 pounds of potatoes and rutabagas are cooked up just in case guests still have an appetite.

Sarah Bakken, one of the dinner's organizers, says those numbers have stayed consistent over the years. "Scandinavians are a prideful people," she explains. "They are committed to their culture and heritage and family."



Sometimes this takes the form of sending kids to Norwegian dance classes or Swedish language camp. Other times, it manifests as a plateful of lutefisk.

It's not surprising that the majority of lutefisk dinners happen in Midwestern states like Minnesota or Wisconsin, which are part of the affectionately termed "Lutefisk Belt." Both have a high population of people with Scandinavian heritage. St. Olaf College, a Lutheran liberal arts school, in Northfield, MN, has hosted a lutefisk dinner for students and guests since 1912.

"Norwegians have a very strong longing for the fjords or whatever it is," says Matthew Fogarty, executive chef at St. Olaf. "I don't know if it's genetic or just how people were raised."

Fogarty is Irish and doesn't quite understand the appeal of lutefisk — even though he serves nearly 800 pounds of it every year. When asked if he likes the stuff, Fogarty says, "There's not a lot of flavor."

However, Scandinavians have come up with a time-honored way to overcome this particular issue: sauce. Most lutefisk dinners are accompanied by one of two sauces. Norwegians traditionally pour melted butter on theirs (treating it a bit like lobster), while Swedes prefer a white sauce.

Whitefish, such as cod, was traditionally dried on outdoor racks. But now the fish is dried in sanitary rooms.

As Fogarty says, "One of the things that fascinated me is how much butter and cream and béchamel is used [in Scandinavian] cuisine. I've always said lutefisk is just an easier way to get butter and cream to your mouth faster."

Few to none of the annual lutefisk dinners are made from scratch. Instead, organizers turn to Olsen Fish Co., a Minneapolis-based company that makes most of its income from pickled herring. Yet every year from September through May, it gives lye baths to thousands of pounds of white fish and is the only high-volume lutefisk processor in the United States—though there are still a couple of smaller manufacturers. (There's a reason why Minnesota has not one but two towns dueling for the title of "Lutefisk Capital of the U.S.".)



The company's president, Chris Dorff, says lutefisk sales have been falling. "We see a drop of 5 percent a year," he says. Most of Olsen's lutefisk business is with churches and Scandinavian or fraternal organizations. "They're sticking with it, but a lot of them are having issues getting enough volunteers [to run the dinners]," he says. "It's such an aging population of people doing it."

Many lutefisk dinners take place in rural or agricultural areas where communities have been economically pounded and are struggling to survive. As of 2015, only 14 percent of the U.S. population lived in non-metro areas, a percentage that continues to fall as young people move to cities.

In the early 2000s, Olsen's briefly introduced a lutefisk TV dinner to try to entice younger generations and new customers. Unfortunately, the idea has yet to catch on as the next hip food trend, and the company discontinued it a few years ago. When a 23-year-old Minnesotan led an endeavor to keep his local lutefisk dinner alive, it was so out of the ordinary that the state's largest paper, the *Star Tribune*, profiled him and his quest.

But young lutefisk-haters are missing out—modern processing methods have made lutefisk better than ever. In Norway, towns near the Arctic Circle used to dry fish by stringing them on racks outside. "When it's hanging in the elements, you're not always going to have ideal conditions," Dorff says, adding, "That's the fish they used to make lutefisk out of." It's smelly stuff. And after adding a nice long lye bath? You have a recipe for generations of jokes.

"Nowadays, they're filleted and dried in sanitary drying rooms," Dorff explains. "What takes Mother Nature six months to dry, we can do in six weeks. Ideally, he says, the smell of dried fish shouldn't make someone wonder whether or not it's rotten. "We get emails from people asking us why the lutefisk doesn't smell like it used to."

With so many strong opinions about lutefisk, perhaps the best thing to do is to follow the advice emblazoned on T-shirts at so many Scandinavian gift shops: "Try lutefisk at your own lute-risk."

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## NORSK TORSK

By Liv Dahl

By Liv Dahl, March 30, 2017 in *Skogsavis*, the e-newsletter of *Skogfjorden*, the Norwegian Language Village. Images by Liv Dahl.

When summer visitors to Northern Norway sail along the beautiful Vesterålen and Lofoten Islands, they notice tall A-frame structures that rise up along the coast. What might be the purpose for such racks, they may ponder. Come back in winter and you will see millions of *torsk* (cod) suspended from the rafters. This has been the traditional way of preserving cod for hundreds of years in Northern Norway.



Further south in Norway, the tradition is to split the fish and fold it into a shape of a triangle, then salt it and sun dry it on the rocky cliffs. When this preservation method is used, the *torsk* is referred to as clipfish. Bacalao is a steaming casserole made from clipfish.

*Torsk* was mentioned in the sagas early on and has been eaten during Lent in Western Europe since 900 AD. From then on, and probably even longer back in time, Atlantic *torsk* have found their way to Vesterålen and Lofoten each winter. Here the icy currents meet the warm Gulf Stream waters,

providing the ideal breeding grounds for *torsk*. Fishermen come from all over Norway to take part in the winter fisheries. A hundred years ago, as many as 30,000 men would gather to fish. Nowadays 2,000-3,000 people, both men and women - are likely to come. Modern ships and different fishing methods are much more efficient.

Norwegian *torsk* is known all over the world. Today, Norway exports dry *torsk* to many western European countries, to



Africa, and to South America. It is an important ingredient in the national dish of Jamaica. In Brazil, clipfish is said to be more highly regarded than beef for festive meals.

Before oil was discovered along the Norwegian coast, Norway was a very poor country. Fish was plentiful and was the staple in most families. Sunday dinner and festive meals may have called for meat, but most other meals consisted of fish. However, this has changed. Now Norway's chefs win trophies in international culinary competitions, and the raw materials used are often fresh fish from the coastal waters. Norwegians

have come to understand and appreciate what a great food source *torsk* represents. Fresh *torsk* is now in great demand



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and a Christmas meal tradition in some areas!

In the Norwegian communities in the United States and Canada, food traditions around Christmas are tied to older traditions in Norway, and *lutefisk* is king, made from imported dried *torsk*, first soaked in water for several days, then soaked in caustic soda (NaOH), and finally washed thoroughly in running water for 1-2 days before cooked.

It seems like the history of *torsk* has run from feeding the masses over centuries to arriving on the most elegant tables. Ironically, the A-frame rack may also meet the same fate. As you fly in to Tromsø, there are no more racks with fish in the winter. The one rack which meets the eye by the airport is an eye-catching art piece. Both fish and preservation racks have made the route from the commonplace to the lofty and noble.

## For Norwegian-Americans, Christmas Cheer is Wrapped Up in Lefse

By Deena Prichep, NPR, December 29, 2014

For many Norwegian-American families, the biggest Christmas treat isn't foil-wrapped chocolate or sugar-dusted cookies. It's lefse, a simple flatbread.

Lefse are sort of like soft tortillas, made mostly out of mashed potatoes (with a little fat and flour mixed in to form a tender dough). They're usually spread with butter and sugar, or rolled up with a bit of lingonberry jam. And families that make them make them by the dozens.

"It's probably one of the first foods I fell in love with," says Megan Walhood, who lives in Portland OR, and has family roots in Norway. "The rest of the year, I would just think about, when are we going to have lefse again?"

Megan Walhood loves the unique toasty potato flavor of lefse. "There's something so comforting about soft, starchy things," she says.

For the Walhood family, that comfort goes way back.

Megan's dad, Dale Walhood, grew up in North Dakota, with a strong sense of his Norwegian heritage — and lefse. "On my father's side of the family, lefse arrived [with the family to the U.S.] in 1825, for the opening of the Erie Canal."

Many of the surrounding families in their rural part of North Dakota had similar roots. And it showed in the lefse.

"Weddings and funerals and christenings. Anything that smacked of a lot of Norwegians there — yeah, there'd be stacks of it," Walhood remembers.

These days, lefse in America is pretty much reserved for Christmas (and, in some families, Thanksgiving).



For the Walhoods, lefse-making is a true family project. Peggy Walhood, Megan's mother, has Swedish roots ("a mixed marriage," she laughs), but learned from her mother-in-law the art of wrapping up the still-warm lefse in towels to keep them soft and pliable.

As with many simple foods, much of it comes down to technique. The key to lefse, the Walhoods explain, is to

keep things tender. That means chilling the mashed potatoes so that you only need a minimum of flour to form a dough, and rolling them nice and thin with a special grooved rolling pin.

"You want to roll it thin enough, and then also even," Megan Walhood explains. "You don't want to have a fat edge and a skinny edge, which are not the ideal. They're not approved by the 'Lefse Commission,'" she and her dad laugh.

There's even an art to shimmying a long flat stick — called a lefse stick — beneath the dough to transfer it to the griddle.

Then you brush off the extra flour, to keep it from either burning on the griddle or being absorbed and toughening the flatbread. It's a step that yields a nice finished product, but also a fair amount of floury mess. Dale Walhood jokes that cleanup is "about a six-hour vacuum job."

Once the lefse are finished, all warm and toasty and inviting, they're spread with butter and sugar. And devoured.

Carrying on the lefse tradition is especially poignant this year, the family says. Dale Walhood was diagnosed with cancer in the spring. They didn't think they'd get this Christmas together.

The Walhøod lefse legacy extends far beyond this particular floury table. A few years back, Megan and her husband, Jeremy, opened a business and food truck in Portland, OR, called Viking Soul Food. The entire menu is based around Dale's lefse.

"I'm incredibly proud of her," Dale says, nearly overcome. "Her sensitivity, and her dedication to quality. And I'm one of seven children, so they all look to her for their lefse."

Megan and Jeremy estimate that Viking Soul Food will turn about 250 pounds of potatoes into lefse this week — enough to make memories on dozens of Christmas tables.



## *"You'll Never Believe These Are Gluten-free"* **Gluten-free Lefse**

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup Water
- 1 cup milk or milk alternative (rice milk, soy milk, etc. - unsweetened)
- 2 Tablespoons Oil
- 1 cup Mehl's Gluten-free Premium Flour
- 2 cups potato flakes (make sure and use dairy-free if you want dairy-free lefse)
- 1/2 cup any gluten-free starch or rice flour.
- Several sheets of wax paper, parchment paper or plastic wrap.

### Instructions:

1. Add liquid ingredients to mixing bowl first, then add dry ingredients.
2. Mix well until dough gets nice and thick.
3. Make two wax paper sheets about 12" x 12".
4. Create 2" dough balls until all dough is used up.
5. Roll dough balls in starch until fully covered.
6. Heat up a large non-stick frying pan to medium high heat with a little non-stick spray.
7. Take a sheet of wax paper and sprinkle a tablespoon of starch on center.
8. Place a dough ball on top of starch, press down on ball to flatten, and sprinkle a little more starch on top.
9. Place second piece of wax paper over top of dough ball.
10. Use a rolling pin to roll out dough until it is about six to seven inches in diameter. Be careful not to roll it too thin, or too thick. (Practice makes perfect)
11. Remove top wax paper, and flip rolled out dough into pan. Use a non-metal, heat resistant spatula to flip lefse after it cooks for about ten to fifteen seconds.
12. Store finished lefse with a small piece of wax paper in between each lefse sheet. Wrap with plastic wrap and freeze for long term storage, or refrigerate for short-term storage.
13. Heat lefse up for ten to thirty seconds in microwave (longer if frozen, shorter if refrigerated) to soften it for rolling when ready to use.

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## Christmas Comes Everywhere

Finns feast on Christmas Eve; salt fish and potatoes at midnight for the Portuguese, while Germans like their roast goose on Christmas Day. Grandfather Frost arrives with gifts for Russian children on January 7, while Saint Nicholas delivers to Belgian boys and girls on December 6. In Norway, Julenisse, the Christmas elf, gifts all children on Christmas Eve. Christkindl, a beautiful girl-angel, comes down from heaven bringing bounty to some Austrian towns. Santa Claus slides down our chimneys in scarlet velvet and soot-stained fur, but arrives Down Under on water skis, wearing a beard and bathing trunks. Swedish maidens in candle-lit crowns parade, paying homage to St. Lucia, while the English pull crackers, play charades, and attend pantomimes.

Such different ways to celebrate the one purpose we share – Christmas, the mass of Christ.



Christmas in Røros, Norway