

St. Pauli News in Detail



Greeting and Ushering

March 3	Myles Alberg
March 10	Ron Anderson
March 17	Faye Auchenpaugh
March 24	Corey Berg
March 31	Neil Bugge

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: Roxane Rondorf

March Milestones

Birthdays

Mar. 4	Ken Cedergren
Mar. 10	Laurie Nelson
Mar. 13	Gabe Haugen
Mar. 15	Sue Kotz
Mar. 22	Deone Cerny
Mar. 26	Staci Reay



Anniversaries

Mar. 12	Neil and Sharon Bugge
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March is Food Shelf Month at St. Pauli. Please consider giving a monetary donation to this charitable organization. Many individuals and families depend on this service to help them through tough financial times. Checks may be made payable to St. Pauli Church, and then one check will be sent by the church to the Food Shelf. A basket for the donations is located in the narthex.

Lenten Service Schedule

March 6:	Ash Wednesday Services with Communion
March 13:	Pastor Linda Molitor – Oklee – (Mary)
March 20:	Pastor Carl Hansen – St. Pauli (Lydia A-F)
March 27:	Pastor John Golv – TRF - (Lydia G-Z)

Sermons will be based on the Beatitudes.



Journey with LWR this Lent!

As is our custom during the Lenten season, the congregation will take part in collecting Personal Care Kits.

March 10:	Bar of Soap (4 or 5 oz. in original wrapper)
March 17:	Bath Towel (sturdy, lightweight, max. size 27" x 52", dark color preferred)
March 24:	Toothbrush (adult size, in original packaging)
March 31:	Sturdy Comb (wide-tooth preferred)
April 7:	Nail Clipper (metal, attached file optional)
April 14:	Bar of Soap

Barbara Brown Taylor to Speak at Concordia

March 26, 2019 | 7:00 p.m.
Concordia College - Centrum

The Forum on Faith and Life is delighted to announce that New York Times bestselling author Barbara Brown Taylor will speak on campus March 26, 2019 at 7 p.m. in the Centrum.

Barbara was recently included on *TIME* magazine's annual list of 100 Most Influential people and is the recipient of numerous awards, including Author of the Year and The President's Medal.

Concordia is honored to be one of the stops on Barbara's tour for her new book, an interfaith memoir entitled "Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others" (release date Mar. 12, 2019).

Minutes of the Church Council

January 17, 2019

The St. Pauli Church Council met on Thursday, January 17, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Pauli Church. Board Members present: Faye Auchenpaugh, Ivette Garrett, Gary Iverson, and Arlo Rude.

The meeting was called to order by President Garrett.

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved as submitted.

Secretary's Report: **M/S/C** (Garrett/Iverson) to approve the December 20, 2018 secretary's report.

Treasurer's Report: **M/S/C** (Iverson/Garrett) to accept the report as presented for the month of December.

Balances as of 12/31/2018:

Checking Account as of 11/30/2018:	\$ 20,135.88
Income	\$ 6,071.00
Expenses	<u>\$ (4,710.73)</u>
Checking Account as of 12/31/2018:	\$ 21,496.15
Investor Savings	\$ 36,222.94
Edward D. Jones Investments	\$ 65,097.12
Memorial Fund Savings & CD	\$ 10,912.73
Education Fund Balance	\$ 516.45
Mission Grant Fund Balance	<u>\$ 4,037.71</u>
Total Church Funds as of 12/31/2018:	\$ 138,283.10

Pastor Carl's Report:

No report. Pastor Carl is on vacation.

Reports of members in sickness or distress: Prayers were given for Larry Hurst. He has requested to resign from the church council due to his present health situation. Garrett said that he has been an excellent council member but that she understands his concerns about having to miss so many meetings. Therefore, we accepted his resignation, with regret.

New members or interest in membership: None.

Reports.

- 1) WELCA: The ladies made eight quilts in January. The next two scheduled quilting days are in February, but a few of them may get together again in January.
- 2) Board of Education: The Christmas program offering was a substantial amount this year: over \$500. The children are planning to sing for church services, perhaps in May.

Old Business:

- 1) 2019 Budget: Members went over the proposed budget by line item. Since the Cemetery Association is a completely separate entity, our contributions are donations and will be listed as such. The Cemetery Association will pay all of its own expenses. **M/S/C** (Rude/Auchenpaugh) to approve the proposed 2019 budget.
- 2) Annual Review of Membership Report for Annual Report: Rude had prepared this report as well as a membership listing for the council to review.

New Business:

- 1) Financial Secretary position: The title "Co-Treasurers" will cease to exist. The Synod's preferred term for the person who gathers the church offering, tracks them by donor, and deposits those funds is "Financial Secretary." Thus, the budget will reflect that and will be split into two line items: Treasurer and Financial Secretary.
- 2) Disposal of paintings: During searches in the church for items to be placed in the display cabinet, three paintings by Furuseth were discovered. The council suggested they be brought to the congregation at the Annual Meeting for a decision on what should be done with them.
- 3) Box of outdated brochures: Garrett also found this box during searches. The council agreed that they should be disposed of by recycling.
- 4) ELCA webinar at 12:00 noon on February 21, 2019: Registration is due on or before February 2nd. The webinar includes a legal checklist for congregations.
- 5) Proposed agenda for Annual Meeting: Garrett presented a proposed agenda for approval by council.
- 6) Nominating Committee: Bruce Mathson and Barb Nelson have agreed to be on the nominating committee.

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 3, 2019 following worship services.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

M/S/C (Auchenpaugh/Rude) to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

Faye Auchenpaugh, Secretary

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WELCA Minutes

January 10, 2019

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met on January 10, 2019 at 10:00 am for cupboard cleaning and quilting. The business meeting was held at 4:00 pm.

The secretary's minutes were read and approved by Cindy C. and Faye A.

No meeting was held in December so both the November and December treasurer's reports were given.

Checking balance as of October 31, 2018:	\$ 2,874.33
Income: Christmas cards sold	10.00
Expenses: Century Link	(21.98)
Mathson funeral	<u>(162.42)</u>
Checking balance as of November 30, 2018:	\$ 2,699.93
Savings Balance as of November 30, 2018:	\$ 867.37

Checking balance as of November 30, 2018: \$ 2,699.93
 Income: Christmas cards sold 575.00
 Expenses (include charitable donations) (2,580.62)
 Checking balance as of December 31, 2018: \$ 694.31
 Savings Balance as of December 31, 2018: \$ 867.74

Sharon B. made motion to approve the treasurer's report.
 Ivette G. seconded.

Old Business: President Janet S. read thank you letters from Little Brother/Little Sister and Northlands Mission that included a list of items they need. It was decided that letters requesting donations will be left until its time to make donations this fall. Kathy A. and Sue K. will work on altar cloths.

New Business: It was decided to wait until the 125th anniversary next year to replace the plastic on the dining tables. JoAnn Fabrics and Grand Forks Salvage sell it.

Janet has set up an email list for church women and will send a group email before events.

Janet will make a photo album with old pictures for the anniversary.

January Circle is canceled due to member unavailability. It was decided to not schedule a January meeting for next year.

February 3rd potluck following the annual meeting. Lydia G-Z in charge of kitchen. Freewill offering for Hospice.

Offering collected.

Sharon Bugge, Secretary

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Historic Minutes of the St. Pauli Congregation

12 November 1936

St. Pauli congregation held its annual meeting on November 12, 1936.

Pastor M. L. Dahle declared the meeting opened in the church, and it was continued at Martin Finstad's house with prayer and hymn song.

Pastor Dahle reported that, during the year, he had held 24 divine services and that he had had the pleasure to teach one confirmation class. And the religion school was held as usual.

The youths' club had worked with progress and that the congregation had paid most of the budget.

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.

The following officials were elected.

Secretary: O. J. Snetting, 1 year

Treasurer: Tobias Stene, 1 year

Trustee: Emil Thune, 3 years

Sexton: Nels Nelson, 1 year

School committee: Helmer Finstad, O. J. Snetting, and Mrs. Ole Odegaard

Organist: Mrs. Carl Alberg

Assessment committee: Gust Gustafson, Ole Valsvig, Ole Pederson

On proposal the meeting was ended.

Secretary O. J. Snetting

Historic Minutes St. Pauli Lutheran Church Women (L.C.W.)

2 June 1966

The regular meeting of the LCW was held at the church Thursday afternoon, June 2nd, with general serving.

Vice President Mrs. Clayton Mathson had charge of the meeting in the absence of President Mrs. Theo. Bjorge.

Meeting opened with the hymn, "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name." Scripture taken from Psalm 15 and prayer by Mrs. Clayton Mathson.

Treasurer's report read and approved. Secretary's report read and approved.

Mrs. Gustafson suggested a party for our new pastor. Nothing decided.

Next meeting Thursday afternoon, June 16, with Mrs. Roy Loken and Mrs. Melvin Torstveit as hostesses. Business adjourned.

Bible Study – Mrs. Gust Gustafson

Hymn – "O Sing All Ye Lands"

Worship Meditation – Mrs. Anton Torkelson

Lord's Prayer prayed and Table Blessing sung.

Mrs. Norman Nelson, Secretary

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

5 June 1932

The St. Pauli Luther League held its last meeting at the church Sunday evening, June 5, 1932. The meeting was called to order by President Helmer Finstad.

The following program was rendered:
Song by audience.
Scripture Reading – Helmer Finstad.

A program was given by the Hazel String Band consisting of song and music.

Closing song by audience.

The following program committee was appointed: Myrtle Nelson, Minnie Stene, Margit Loken.

Motion made that the next meeting be held in two weeks.

Meeting adjourned.

Lunch was served by the Luther League.

Proceeds: \$10.35

Gust A Gustafson, Secretary

19 June 1932

The St. Pauli Luther League held its Annual Meeting at the church Sunday evening, June 19. Meeting was called to order by President Helmer Finstad.

The following program was rendered:
Song by audience.
Scripture Reading and Prayer: Rev. Dahle
Song: Myrtle and Evelyn Nelson
Reading: Gladys Nyland
Song: Choir
Reading: Helen Alberg
Solo: Myrtle Nelson
Talk: Rev. Dahle
Song by audience.

The secretary's report was read and accepted as read.
The treasurer's report was read and accepted as read.

The following officers were elected for the coming year:

Olaf Thorstveit, President
Carl Alberg, Vice President
Anna Stene, Secretary
Joe Thorstveit, Treasurer

Motion made and carried that the League buy five Lutheran Hymnary Song Books at \$1.75 each.

Martin Matson was appointed to investigate the fence around the cemetery to see how much wire and posts are needed to rebuild the fence.

The following program committee was appointed: Signe Valsvik, Olaf Thorstveit.

The meeting adjourned. Lunch was served by Helmer Finstad and Mrs. Carl Finstad. Proceeds: \$9.05.

Gust A. Gustafson, Secretary

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23 October 1955

On October 23, 1955, Luther League was held at the church with Betty Rude, president, presiding.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved, as was the treasurer's report.

Circuit realignment was brought up as we were asked to send two delegates to the meeting to be held at Trinity Lutheran in Thief River Falls on November 2nd at 8:00. Connie Alberg and Elinor Gustafson volunteered to represent the St. Pauli Luther League.

The program opened with "Thy Life was Given For Me." Scripture and Prayer was given by Lorrie Weckwerth. A discussion entitled, "Sheep in Wolves Clothing" was put on by Elinor Gustafson, Corrinne Torkelson, Carol Rude, Wahna Torkelson and Lorrie Weckwerth. After the panel discussion, "I Need Thee Every Hour" was sung by the congregation.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer and Table Blessing.

Servers: Mdmes. Roy Lokken, Melvin Torstveit and Eugene Rondorf.

Proceeds: \$10.00

Lorrie Weckwerth, Secretary

18 December 1955

The December 18th meeting of the St. Pauli Luther League was held at the church with Vice President Janice Finstad presiding in the absence of the president.

This was the Christmas party.

Readings on Christmas were given by Janice Finstad, Connie Alberg, Elinor Gustafson and Wahna Torkelson. Christmas carols were sung.

Meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer and Table Grace.

Recreation was held with Janice Finstad heading the games. There was no business meeting.

Lunch proceeds: \$4.10

Lorrie Weckwerth, Secretary

LENT: Taking Up Faith Practices



Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a season when God calls us to reflect on the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection. The imposition of ashes – when you receive ashes in the sign of the cross on your forehead – sets the tone for Lent. Each moment you encounter your reflection, your ashes are a striking reminder that “you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19b). But the cross, a symbol of Jesus' crucifixion, offers hope.



Similarly, in baptism, you received the sign of the cross on your forehead. Many of us begin our Christian life with baptism, called “to live among God's faithful people, to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth” (ELW 236).

In the ELCA, we describe these instructions as faith practices to guide our daily living. But what do faith practices mean? And how do we practice them?

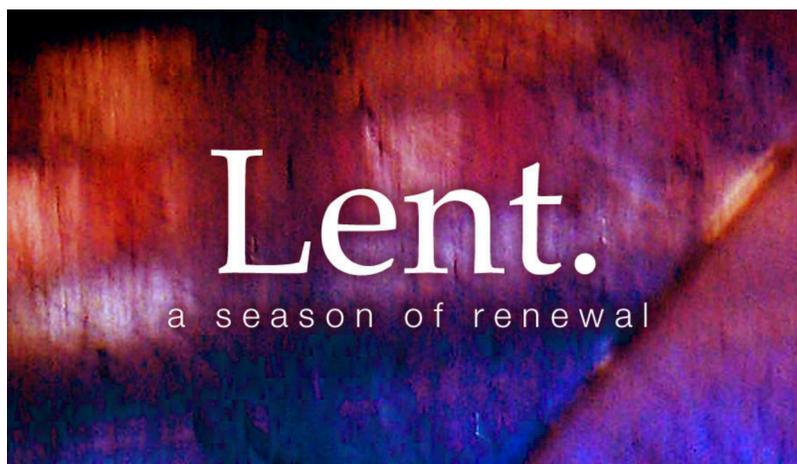
This Lent, as you begin your journey toward the baptismal waters of Easter, we invite you to take up faith practices as a spiritual discipline.

Living in community as God's faithful people is a gift of love, and an invitation to serve in mission. We are chosen not for position or privilege, but to live as faithful witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ.

In our baptism we were made children of God and members of the body of Christ, the church. God's message of hope and reconciliation strengthens us in our faith walk. Our life in Christian community supports us as we experience the joys and struggles of life. In our walk we are encouraged to equally embrace all differences and celebrate the diversity of gifts that can strengthen us.

As we live among God's faithful people we:

- Read and study God's word.
- Celebrate God's presence in our lives through regular participation in worship.
- Receive gratefully God's blessings and return a portion of God's abundance through our giving.
- Live a new life in Christ by caring for and encouraging others.
- Pray daily for each other, our communities and all of creation as we move into God's future.
- Renew daily a connection with baptism by making the sign of the cross on your forehead.



For Youth and Their Families

March 10, 2019 at Zion Lutheran in Thief River Falls

Free Will Offering for Lutheran Disaster Response

Taco Bar Meal beginning at 6 pm; "Witnesses" begins at 7 pm

Sponsored by Thief River Falls Conference of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod

Paraphrase Theatre Presents

WITNESSES

One Actor / 8 Characters / A Fresh Look at Jesus



written by Curt Cloninger
performed by Jonathan Swenson

for more information
visit Paraphrase Theatre on Facebook
or www.paraphrasetheatre.com

The Thief River Falls Conference of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod (ELCA)
Invites Youth and their Families

Meal (Taco Bar) for all beginning at 6:00 PM

Witnesses begins at 7:00 PM

Zion Lutheran Church
Thief River Falls, MN

There is no cost to attend. A free will offering will be taken to
support the work of Lutheran Disaster Response.

For more information, call Kristin at 218-684-1155



During the final months of Bishop Wohlrabe's term, the Synod is republishing selected monthly bishop's studies from the last twelve years. The following study was originally published in February of 2010.

“Life Overflowing: Visible Words”

*In Baptism every Christian has enough to study and to practice all his life. Dr. Martin Luther, Large Catechism (1529)
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. I Corinthians 11:26*

Walking to the Font

Recently I witnessed a baptism of two little boys. Though both were old enough to walk to the font, their parents still carried them.

Have you noticed how we're seeing more and more baptisms of children, youth and adults—not just babes-in-arms? In a missionary time, in a missionary church, smack dab in a mission field like North America, we can expect to see that sort of thing with greater frequency.

Later in the worship service, the two new “baptizees” got a little wild. Refusing to stay put in the pews, they kept “escaping” into the aisle of the church, making a small scene.

“Oh, boy,” I thought to myself. “Those little guys and their parents have some learning to do, about how we ‘do church’ around here.” And almost immediately my own self-righteous words convicted me, making me realize that...I was 100% correct.

Everyone, mark me, *everyone* who comes through the waters of Baptism has a whole lifetime to grow into the saving act and the enlivening identity God graciously bestows in the water-wed-to-the-Word. This washing is neither cheap fire insurance nor a precaution to be taken “just in case.” It is for life—full, free and eternal. Baptism and the Supper that nourishes the baptized is for *life overflowing*.

God's Kiss

One of my favorite terms for the sacraments comes from the great church father, St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) whose long-suffering mother Monica prayed fervently for his conversion from a sin-drenched existence into the fullness of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. When he was finally baptized, ordained and chosen to be a bishop in the church of northern Africa, Augustine distinguished himself as one of the greatest theological thinkers of his age.

In describing the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, St. Augustine said that they were “visible words.” That is, the sacraments function in the same way that the bare Word works. The promise embodied in our Lord Jesus—the Word made flesh; the promise that grabs us by the ears in preaching; the promise that overflows from the printed Word—this same promise splashes in the water of Baptism and nourishes in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. God's claiming, naming promise scrubs our skin, fills our mouths, gets deep down inside of us.

But if Baptism and the Supper convey the same Lord, utter the same promise we receive in the bare Word itself—why bother? Isn't the spoken Word enough? God seems to think we need more—just as a married couple needs to do more

than say they love each other. The sacraments are like the hugs, kisses and other wondrous acts that “seal the deal” in marriage. God wants to make sure that we don't miss his promise, so God wraps the promise in syllables (for our ears) and signs or elements (for our other senses).



Elizabeth Ahola, baptized at Faaberg Lutheran Church, Rindal, on Mother's Day, 2009.

A Fuller, Richer Sacramental Life

If the sacraments impart the overflowing life of God in Jesus Christ, why don't we Lutherans always celebrate them with commensurate gusto?

For a host of historical reasons, we Lutherans allowed ourselves to descend into a sparse, Spartan sacramental practice. Baptisms were all too often enacted away from the worshipping community, and the Supper was celebrated as infrequently as possible—sometimes only quarterly in the churches of our ancestors.

I still remember the wry comment of one of my seminary teachers when asked how he'd respond to a Lutheran who was concerned about Holy Communion losing its “specialness” if it was offered too frequently: “*What's the matter? Don't you like to be forgiven?*”

Thankfully, over the last few decades, we have welcomed a renewal in our church's sacramental life. Baptism is not just celebrated “out in the open,” but baptismal theology permeates our faith, worship and witness. The Supper is available to more of the baptized, and on a more regular basis—in some of our congregations, every Sunday, if not every worship service.

(continued)

Hunger for the Word

Although scholars and other proponents of liturgical renewal have played a part in this resurgence of God's visible words in our churches, I believe that pure, simple hunger has also played a role. We hunger for the richness of the baptismal act—with colorful banners, blessed oil, and a blazing candle all complementing the confession of the Word and the splashing of the water. We hunger for the life, freedom and forgiveness that reaches down deep inside us every time we "taste and see that the Lord is God" (Psalm 34).

Parish pastors are most often the ones privileged to preside at the sacraments. And yet, over the past year I too have been delighted to exercise this aspect of my calling as regional pastor (bishop):

- In the baptism of little Elizabeth Ahola last May, at Faaberg Lutheran Church of Rindal, with Pastors John and Kelly able to bring her to the font, living out their vocation as mother and father;
- In the scores of hungry young adults and others who stepped forward to partake of the Lord's Supper during the August 8th wedding service for our daughter and her new husband, Kristen and Aaron Haddorff, in Sioux Falls;
- In the eager, open hands of Telegu-speaking communicants half a world away, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Vishakapatnam, India, during the Pastors Day Celebration of our companion synod, the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church last November.



Aaron and Kristen (Wohlraabe) Haddorff, married August 8 in Sioux Falls. Their first meal together as husband and wife was the Lord's Supper, during their wedding service.

Under the Gun

But sometimes we share the sacraments under less exuberant circumstances. Pastors are called to NICUs (neonatal intensive care units) to don gloves and gowns, using eyedroppers to administer Baptism to tiny ones struggling to survive the perils of premature birth. The Supper is occasionally celebrated around a hospice bed, the elements hard to swallow for tearful family members with lumps in their throats.

In seminary I remember a classmate asking one of our teachers about so-called "emergency" baptisms. Stroking his beard, the wise professor reflected, "Well, in a way, every baptism is an emergency, wouldn't you agree?" I've never forgotten that. We all live, every day, "under the gun" and

therefore in need of the constant comfort of God's promises in baptism. That's why every prayer or act of repentance entails a return to our Baptism. It's why we never outgrow our need for the assurance of Christ's Real Presence in the bread and wine of Holy Communion.

Counting the Cost

When Joy and I visited India last autumn we were told that some persons, transitioning from Hinduism to Christianity, put off receiving baptism as long as possible because of the high cost they will pay. Going under the splashing promise of God signals a break with their past, often rupturing relationships with family and friends. Indian believers—like many across the world—"count the cost" before they hand themselves over to God at the font.



Disciples in the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church receiving the Body and Blood of Christ during Pastors Day Celebration in Vishakapatnam, India, November 2009.

We may not experience such pressures in North America, but I am grateful for the recovery of missional language in the baptismal service—especially at its conclusion. In *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, we now make explicit what has always been implicit in the rite for Baptism, that God **saves** us in order to **send** us. "We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world."

Soon another Lenten season will begin, with signs that are profoundly sacramental—the sooty cross of Ash Wednesday on our foreheads, the Body and Blood of the Savior broken and poured out. Lent is no head trip. It is a "full body experience" of the Word—piercingly audible and stunningly visible. During these forty days of preparation for Holy Week may you and your fellow disciples return to God's baptismal grace and "mark that miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete."

Marked by the Cross of Christ,
Bishop Larry Wohlraabe
Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

REAL

By Diane Norstad, "Gather" magazine, December 2018

"Who are your 'real' parents?" That question was my first sense of being different in a negative way. My parents had told me about my adoption when I was little. We always thought of it as a good thing.

As the Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 4:4-6,

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!"

The topic of my being adopted had first come up outside the family in Mr. Hansen's fifth grade class. We were supposed to introduce ourselves to the class and share one unique thing about ourselves.

I shared that I was adopted. From the back of the room, I was called a very harsh name. This led to a direct trip to the principal's office.

There were many questions about my "real" parents in the next few days. Adoption no longer made me feel special. I felt ostracized and like an "unwanted child." I don't remember having the courage to talk to my parents about this.

There were great Sunday School teachers at our church. While some of the kids made me feel unwanted, my teachers taught me that there was no doubt that God loved and wanted me. As I grew up, I found in studying God's word that I was in great company. Queen Esther was adopted (Esther 2:7 & 15), and so was Moses (Acts 7:21). These two were *big time* famous.

The story that shaped me the most, however, was the story of our Savior, Jesus Christ. I don't remember the church using the phrase "out of wedlock" for his birth, but I was quite aware that Mary and Joseph weren't married. From what I knew, my original parents weren't married either. Joseph wasn't even Jesus' father!

What Joseph did do was choose to become a dad. It wasn't easy. Joseph had his reservations. He knew he wasn't the biological father, and that bothered him.

Many men and women today might stress about becoming a parent to a child through foster care, adoption or step-parenting. Fortunately for Joseph, God gave clear direction.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25)

Joseph was faced with a situation that he didn't see coming. Even before the angel, though, Joseph chose to be kind. "Unwilling to expose her to public disgrace" is quite the understatement. The punishment for adultery according to the Mosaic Law was public stoning! The community was willing to deal harshly with Mary, but Joseph was not.

Joseph, like many men today, was just an ordinary good person. The decision to parent comes from goodness and love. While Joseph had a serious assist from an angel in his decision-making, following his example in choosing the goodness of parenting is a decision we can all look up to.

We can definitely relate to Joseph as a person today. Joseph probably did some of the same things my dad did with me. Dad picked me up when I scraped a knee, taught me how to work, and loved me. I was his own, no matter what anyone had to say. Joseph and my dad stepped up to raise children they didn't have to raise. They *chose* to raise and love us.

Joseph's story is the story of the unsung Christmas hero. He's no different than any adoptive, foster or stepparent today. Loving a child is a choice. More importantly, families are made by God's love and not only by biology.

Family is Family

Speaking from the heart, please don't use phrases that make a child feel "less than." Don't ask about "real" parents and imply that theirs are not. Don't refer to biological children in a family as "real," and other children as adopted, foster or step. All children are to be loved and cherished. There is no need to make a designation.

There is also no need to make parents feel "less than" either. A common response to my parents was, "Oh, so you couldn't have 'your own' children." We were theirs, and they were ours. This hurtful statement was quite unnecessary.

God put a broken-hearted Mom and Dad together with two kids who needed parents. My parents had to stand before a judge and justify to a court system that they could and would take good care of us. It's awesome that they went to bat for us like that.

Isn't it time we quit labeling and quantifying others?

It's been 2,000 years since the example set by Joseph. Isn't it time we quit labeling and quantifying others? I don't mean just parents and children, but all families. Do my brothers and sisters have to be biological, adopted, half, step or in-law? Does anyone need to have these labels to explain things? I vote no. Family is family; the specifics truly don't matter.

What is family anyway? It's the bonds of fellowship and care we have with others. Perhaps some of your family consists of those you've come to know and love through church. Perhaps you are part of an organization that cares for each other deeply, such as our local volunteer fire department. Schools work together for the good and love of children. We exist with common interests and connection as communities, countries and as humankind. Human connection makes family in so many ways. In all of them, we have the opportunity to love and nurture each other. And all of these families continue to change and grow.

Let's look at our relationships through new and clear Christian eyes. Jesus' family wasn't strictly biological, and ours doesn't need to be either. The world is not owed designations and definitions regarding our relationships. When I introduce my brother, Bob, I don't offer an explanation as to why we look

nothing alike. No one is allowed to quantify if he is a “real” brother to me. He is simply, fully and completely my brother, and I love him. That is all we need.

The people who make up my family have continued to change. Last Christmas, my brother and I ate Christmas dinner with a brother I didn’t know existed for 50 years. We are *all* siblings and

family now. He is not just *my* brother, but *our* brother. We’ve chosen that in love.

I can’t be sure who will be at Christmas dinner this year. There may be even more surprises. No matter what happens, I can be sure that God created it in love. It’s going to be *real*.

* * * * *

Unique WW II Airplane Unearthed in Norway after 76 Years

A rare World War II fighter plane, piloted by a Scotsman who was a key figure in “The Great Escape,” has been recovered largely intact from a Norwegian mountainside.

In 1942, RAF Flight Lieutenant Alastair “Sandy” Gunn, 22, was on a clandestine mission to take photos of the German battleship *Tirpitz* in Trondheim Fjord when his plane was shot down by German fighter planes.

Gunn survived and nearby villagers first considered whether he could escape to safety in Sweden, but he abandoned that idea because he didn’t know how to ski.

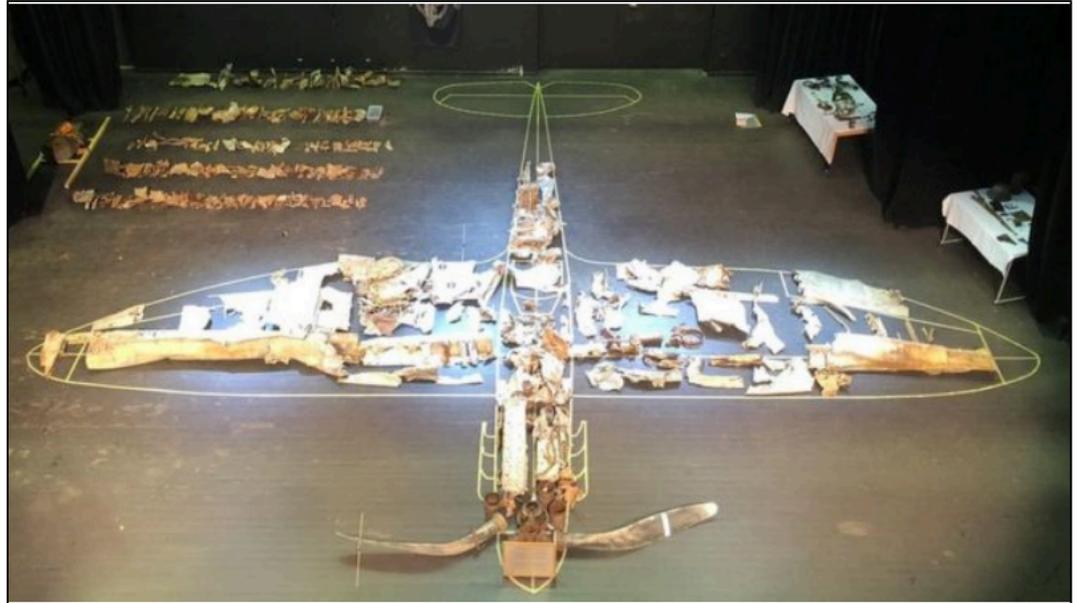


Image Credit: TONY HOSKINS



Image Credit: GUNN FAMILY

Gunn turned himself in, and after four weeks of interrogation, was transferred to the Stalag Luft III prison camp for Allied POWs in Poland. As one of the men who carried out the famed Great Escape breakout in March of 1944, Gunn and 49 others were ultimately re-captured and executed by the Nazis.

This plane wreckage is a rare find. Of only 400 Spitfire AA810s that were made, 398 were lost in World War II. Of the remaining two, one is in Sweden, and this last one was left mostly untouched for over seven decades.

Because they were used for espionage, these ultra-lightweight long-range aircrafts had no armor, weaponry, or radio, but extra fuel reserves increased their range from 600 miles to 2,000. Spitfire AA810 pilots went on risky missions to photograph infrastructure, buildings, troop locations and German battleships.

As part of its “Digging for Britain” series, the BBC produced a documentary about Alistair Gunn and the recovery of his plane. The show aired on November 11, 2018 showing how military historian, author and Spitfire enthusiast Tony Hoskins enlisted the help of local volunteers to locate and remove the wreckage from a peat bog in Møre og Romsdal county. [Editor’s Note: This is less than 30 miles from *Storviken*, Halvor Wiken’s family farm.]

The fragments were first pieced together and displayed in their approximate layout at the Surnadal Culture House, and then shipped back to the UK for restoration. The iconic plane, which was about 70 percent recovered, will be fully reconstructed using parts from other Spitfire wrecks. Engineers hope to fly the aircraft again by 2022 – 80 years after its last flight.

TRFACT Hosts Fargo-Moorhead Opera Young Artists



On Thursday, March 7, the Fargo-Moorhead Opera Young Artists program will spend the day educating and entertaining the residents of Thief River Falls and surrounding area.



During the day, the musicians will lead workshops and perform for elementary students in Thief River Falls. They will visit St. Bernard's school in the morning, with an afternoon session at Challenger Elementary. In the evening, the group will perform a concert of selections from *Così fan tutte*, *Carmen*, and a wide variety that also includes a set by the Beatles.

Music lovers of all ages are cordially invited to attend the concert at St. Bernard's Catholic Church at 7:00 pm. Admission \$10.00 at the door. Children free with an adult.

The evening concert will take place in the beautiful, acoustically favorable sanctuary of St. Bernhard's Catholic Church in Thief River Falls at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 7. General admission is \$10.00 at the door the evening of the performance. Children are free with an adult.

The Gate City Bank Young Artist Program was founded in 2013. The goal is to enrich young artists through training and stage experience that will enhance their performing abilities provided by guest artists, stage directors and the FM Opera General Director, David Hamilton. In turn, this training and stage experience benefits local area audiences as well.

Now in its sixth year, the program is the first of its kind in the region, bringing groups of young professionals to Fargo from mid-January through April of each year. The Young Artists will be featured in two Fargo Moorhead Opera productions in the 2018-19 season: lead roles in Mozart's "Così fan tutte" and in Bizet's "Carmen."

This Young Artist Program is funded by a generous grant from Gate City Bank with additional assistance from the Twin Cities Opera Guild, the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation and Anda Properties.

*This activity is sponsored locally by the Thief River Falls Area Community Theater.
Check us out at www.trfact.org or join us on Facebook.*



The Back Page

An elementary teacher had twenty-six students in her class. She presented each child with the first half of a well-known proverb and asked them to come up with the remainder of the proverb.

1.	Don't change horses	until they stop running.
2.	Strike while the	bug is close.
3.	It's always darkest before	Daylight Savings Time.
4.	Never underestimate the power of	termites.
5.	You can lead a horse to water but	how?
6.	Don't bite the hand that	looks dirty.
7.	No news is	impossible.
8.	A miss is as good as a	Mr.
9.	You can't teach an old dog new	math.
10.	If you lie down with dogs, you'll	stink in the morning.
11.	Love all, trust	me.
12.	The pen is mightier than the	pigs.
13.	An idle mind is	the best way to relax.
14.	Where there's smoke there's	pollution.
15.	Happy the bride who	gets all the presents.
16.	A penny saved is	not much.
17.	Two's company, three's	the Musketeers.
18.	Don't put off till tomorrow what	you put on to go to bed.
19.	Laugh and the whole world laughs with you. Cry and	you have to blow your nose.
20.	There are none so blind as	Stevie Wonder.
21.	Children should be seen and not	spanked or grounded.
22.	If at first you don't succeed,	get new batteries.
23.	You get out of something only what you	see in the picture on the box.
24.	When the blind lead the blind,	get out of the way.
25.	A bird in the hand	is going to poop on you.
26.	Better late than	pregnant.

A German Shepherd, a Doberman and a Cat Have Died.

All three are faced with God who wants to know what they believe in.

The German shepherd says: "I believe in discipline, training and loyalty to my master." "Good," says God. "Then sit down on my right side."

"Doberman, what do you believe in?" asks God.

The Doberman answers: "I believe in the love, care and protection of my master." "Aha," says God. "You may sit to my left."

He looks at the Cat, and asks: "And what do you believe in?"

The Cat then answers: "I believe you're sitting in my seat."

