

# St. Pauli News in Detail



## Greeting and Ushering

- Nov. 3 Ron Anderson
- Nov. 10 Faye Auchenpaugh
- Nov. 17 Corey Berg
- Nov. 24 Neil Bugge

**Altar Preparation:** Kathy Alberg

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## Thanksgiving Services

**Wednesday  
November 27<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00 pm**

**Zion Lutheran TRF**



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## November Milestones

### Birthdays

- Nov. 7 Blaine Torstveit
- Nov. 15 Marc Haugen
- Nov. 16 Barb Nelson
- Nov. 16 Jonathan (JD) Torstveit
- Nov. 17 Larry Hurst
- Nov. 28 Wahna Smith

### Anniversaries

- Nov. 26 Dennis and Sharon McCollough

## WELCA

**Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00 pm**

Each year at our November WELCA meeting, we decide which charities should receive the proceeds from our Fall Event. It is also our annual Thankoffering Program.

The proceeds from our "Cathy Erickson" program to date are \$2,315 in donations, \$237 in pie sales, plus \$250 for a Thrivent card. Our expenses were \$250 for Cathy Erickson and her band members and \$41.12 in other costs to date for a net profit of \$2,510.88. Attendance: 55 guests and members plus 3 band members.

Thank you to everyone who provided pies, helped with set-up and resetting, decorating, serving, greeting guests, cleanup, and thank you also to all who helped clean the church after the Fall Event.

Thank you for donating so generously so that we can help others who are less fortunate than we.

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## CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

**Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**

**9:30 am**

The annual WELCA Christmas Brunch is on Saturday, December 1 at 9:30am at the Country School on Faye Auchenpaugh's property. The meal will be catered with cost of to be determined.

Please email, call or text Jan Strandlie to sign up for the brunch by **Nov. 29**. Payment can be made at the event, or in advance to Jan, but we need a headcount for the caterer and for set-up. The seating capacity is 32. You are welcome to bring a guest if you wish. Please indicate the guest's name when you sign up. We filled all the tables last year.

The Country School is a beautiful and unique place to gather and we appreciate Faye's generosity in sharing it with us. We look forward to seeing many of you at this year's brunch.

# Minutes of the Church Council

## WELCA Minutes

*The secretaries' reports for September have been approved yet, so are not included in this edition of the newsletter.*

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

*From this point forward, all of the church minutes are in English.*

#### **16 November 1939**

The St. Pauli Congregation held its annual business meeting in the church parlors, November 16, 1939. The meeting was called to order by Rev. Dahle and opened with scripture reading and prayer.

The following business was transacted:

Motion was made and accepted that the church business be transacted in the English language instead of the Norse. The Secretary's report was read and accepted as read. The Treasurer's report was read and accepted as read.

Rev. Dahle reported that in the course of the year he had conducted 27 services, 8 of which were held in the Norse language; that he had read with a class of 13 Confirmands 70 semester hours; conducted 5 adult and 6 infant

baptisms, also 1 funeral; that he had made 18 sick calls and 26 house visits. A term of parochial school was also held.

The following officers were elected for the coming year:

Secretary – O. J. Snetting – 1 yr.

Treasurer – Tobias Stene – 1 yr.

Trustee – Emil Thune – 3 yrs.

School Committee – Mrs. Otto Netteland, Mrs. Carl Alberg,  
Mrs. Carl Finstad

Organist – Mrs. Carl Alberg; Evelyn Nelson (assistant)

Caretaker for Cemetery – Iver Iverson

Janitor – Gust Gustafson

The Treasurer was given authority to divert \$2.00 of the church funds for use as office expenses. The motion was made and accepted that the meeting be adjourned.

Olaf J. Snetting, Secretary

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#### **14 November 1940**

The St. Pauli Congregation held its Annual Business Meeting in the church parlors, Nov. 14, 1940.

The meeting was called to order by Rev. M. L. Dahle and opened with scripture reading and prayer.

Rev. M. L. Dahle reported that in the course of the year he had held 24 services, 10 of which were held in the Norse language. That he had held 2 Communion services, 4 infant baptisms, and had attended all Ladies Aids except one. He also attended most of the Luther Leagues, made 18 house calls, and read with 5 confirmands. Two weeks of Parochial School were held. The Budget was paid in part.

The following business was transacted:

The Secretary's report was read and accepted as read. The Treasurer was absent, so his report could not be read.

Officers Elected:

Secretary – Olaf Snetting – 1 yr.

Treasurer – Tobias Stene – 1 yr.

Trustee – Gust Gustafson – 3 yrs.

School Committee – Mrs. Otto Netteland, Mrs. Carl Alberg,  
Mrs. Carl Finstad

Assessment Committee – Nels Nelson, Carl Alberg,  
Iver Iverson

Organist – Mrs. Melvin Torkelson

Janitor – Nels Nelson

The motion was made and accepted that the meeting be adjourned.

Olaf J. Snetting, Secretary

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## **Historic Minutes of the St. Pauli Congregation (continued)**

### **1 December 1940: Letter**

*St. Hilaire, Minn.*

*Dec. 1, 1940*

*To the Board of Trustees of St. Pauli N. L. Church*

*Greetings!*

*I hereby tender my resignation as pastor of said congregation, taking affect June 1st, 1941.*

*Respectfully yours,*

*M. F. Dahle, Pastor*

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### **26 December 1940**

A special business meeting was held in the church parlors, Dec. 26, 1940.

The meeting was called to order by Rev. M. L. Dahle. The purpose of this meeting was to accept Rev. M. L. Dahle's resignation and to elect a committee for calling another minister. Motion was made and accepted to accept Rev. M. L. Dahle's resignation. Motion was made and accepted

that the congregation's officers be elected as call committee.

The following were elected:

Mr. Joe Torstveit

Mr. Emil Thune

Mr. Gust Gustafson

Mr. Tobias Stene

Mr. O. J. Snetting

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***The following two letters were inserted into the Minutes book.***

*March 18, 1941*

*Luther Theological Seminary*

*Saint Paul, Minnesota*

*To Mr. A. Bilden*

*Secretary of Joint Meeting of Call*

*St. Hilaire, Minnesota*

*Dear Mr. Bilden:*

*After due consideration I feel it is God's will that I accept the call to serve as pastor to the St. Hilaire Parish. I am enclosing my formal letter of acceptance which I trust you will present to the four congregations.*

*I received a letter from Dr. Aastad this morning saying that you would like me to preach in St. Hilaire Easter Sunday. This will be perfectly possible for me and I shall look forward with pleasure to being with you at that time. Kindly let me know further as to when you would like to have me come.*

*The prospect of such great opportunities to serve God as I feel certain I shall find in the field to which I have been called gives me just cause to rejoice. I am thrilled with the thought of soon going out to assume actual pastoral work. It is with the constant prayer that God will strengthen and prepare me that I may faithfully and diligently do His will. May He who has begun the good work in us, perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

*Sincerely in Christ,*

*Alvin O. Skibsrud*

March 18, 1941

St. Hilaire, St. Pauli, Clearwater & Oak Ridge Lutheran Churches  
St. Hilaire, Minnesota

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Inasmuch as I am of the faith that through water and the Word I became God's child, that He has nurtured and kept me in that faith and brought me to see that "he that loseth his life for my sake shall surely find it," and made it possible for me to pursue that course of study which would enable me to serve Him best, I am also of the faith that as you have taken it upon yourselves to call me as your pastor that through me you may be supplied with God's Word and the Holy Sacraments, so God has opened a way in which I may serve Him.

It is with most grateful and heartfelt thanks, therefore, that I accept the call to serve as pastor in your parish. And in assuming this responsibility I faithfully promise to do my best, by the grace of God, to preach the Word rightly, administer the Sacraments, and in all things seek to do that which will work to the winning and saving of souls in Christ and the furtherance of God's kingdom among us.

With the prayer that God will bless our joint labors, I await further word as to when I shall be expected to officially assume my duties.

Yours in His service,  
Alvin O. Skibsrud

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<b>Historic Minutes</b> <b>St. Pauli Lutheran Church Women (L.C.W.)</b>
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**4 August 1966**

The regular meeting of the LCW was held at the church Thursday afternoon, August 4<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Lyle Bjorge and Mrs. Walter Wiskow, hostesses.

Meeting opened with the hymn, "Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now."

Scripture taken from John 16:7-13 and prayer by Mrs. Theo. Bjorge.

Minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. Treasurer's report read and approved.

Mrs. Bjorge reminded the nominating committee of the election of officers on September 15.

Next meeting will be August 18 with Mrs. Anton Johnson and Mrs. Alma Mathson as hostesses.

Business adjourned.

Program with Mrs. Herman Rude in charge opened with the hymn, "The Church's One Foundation."

Reading – Mrs. Herman Rude

Bible Study – Mrs. Clayton Mathson

Hymn – "Praise to Thee and Adoration"

Worship Meditation – Mrs. Alma Mathson

Lord's Prayer prayed and Table Blessing sung.

Mrs. Norman Nelson, Secretary

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**12 August 1966**

The Executive Board met at the Herman Rude home Friday evening, August 12, to make plans for Mr. and Mrs. Olaf Snetting's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to be held August 28 at the Snetting home.

Plans were made to serve 175 people. Menu as follows: Sandwiches, cookies, cake, ice cream, Kool-Aid, coffee, mints and nuts. It was decided to have 525 cookies (175 from each group, 3 loaves dark bread, 3 loaves white bread (using the Pullman loaves), ground meat filling for sandwiches, 3 pkg. mints, 2 pkg. peanuts, and 1 can mixed nuts. 15 pkg. Kool-Aid, 5 from each group. 3 lbs. coffee, 1 from each group and 1 lb. from church. 15 cups sugar (those who bring Kool-Aid to bring sugar), cream, 1 box loaf sugar. The group chairmen to let each person know what they are to bring.

We are to bring from the church spoons, dishes, coffee pots and urn, and dish towels. A corsage and boutonniere will be presented to Mr. and Mrs. Snetting.

The relatives will furnish the cake, ice cream, guest book, candles, napkins, coffee service and tablecloth. The board members and group chairmen will do the serving.

Officers present were: Mrs. Jesse Skaaren, Mrs. Clayton Mathson, Mrs. Melvin Torkelson, Mrs. Theo. Bjorge, Mrs. Herman Rude, and Mrs. Norman Nelson. Mrs. Leslie Snetting was a guest.

Lunch was served at the close of the meeting.

Mrs. Norman Nelson, Secretary

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

**4 September 1932**

The St. Pauli Luther League held its last meeting at the church Sunday evening, September 4, 1932.

The meeting was called to order by President Olaf Thorstveit.

The following program was rendered:

Scripture Reading by Rev. Dahle  
Duet by Weibe girls  
Recitation by Theressa Stene  
Song by Myrtle and Evelyn Nelson  
Reading by Lillian Alberg  
Song by Weibe girls  
Reading by Myrtle Nelson  
Song by Choir  
Remarks: Rev. Dahle

The minutes of the last meeting were read and accepted as read.

Melvin Stene and Gust Gustafson were elected as delegates to go to Roseau to the Luther League Convention September 24 and 25.

A motion was made and seconded that the Young Peoples Society donate (\$4.00) four dollars to the Young Peoples Mission Work.

The following program committee was appointed: Thelma Torkelson, Gina Valsvick and Omer Snetting.

Motion was made and seconded that we have our next meeting in two weeks.

Meeting was closed with song by audience.

Lunch was served by Mrs. Kvall, Mrs. Thune and Mrs. Thorstveit. Proceeds: \$9.95.

Anna Stene, Secretary

**19 September 1932**

The St. Pauli Luther League held its last meeting at the church Sunday evening, September 19, 1932.

The following program was rendered:

Song by Harvey and Russell Thune.

There was no business meeting. No program committee was appointed.

The next meeting will be held in two weeks at the church in the afternoon after services.

Lunch was served by Mrs. Ole Thune, Mrs. Valsvick and Mrs. Houske. Proceeds: \$10.70.

Anna Stene, Secretary

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**18 March 1956**

The St. Pauli Luther League met at the church Sunday evening, March 18. The meeting opened with a program entitled, "Why do we have Lent?"

Scripture and prayer by Rev. Person. A reading entitled "Lent and the Church Year" was read by Corine Torkelson. A song entitled "The Hour in Dark Gethsemane" sung by the audience. "The Lenten Season" was read by Carolyn Nelson and "Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday" was read by Betty Rude and Wahna Torkelson. A song, "Beneath the Cross of Jesus," was sung by audience. A reading entitled "Holy Week" was read by Carol Rude. "The proper use of Lent" was read by Janice Finstad. Another song, "Sweet the Moments Rich in Blessing" also sung by the audience.

The business meeting was opened with the secretary's report, which was read and approved. The treasurer's report was approved as read.

The Luther League constitution was read by the president. Also a letter was read about the Workers Conference at Wannaska May 6<sup>th</sup>.

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

Servers were: Emil Thune, Carl Alberg, Norman Nelson families. Proceeds: \$10.35.

Gary Rolandson, Secretary

**15 April 1956**

The St. Pauli Luther League met at the church on Sunday evening, April 15.

The program was given by Group # Lyle Bjorge. The words "Lord, I Believe" were the title of the program.

Lyle Bjorge and Carmen Lokken were the narrators. Connie Alberg, Lorrie Weckwerth and Gary Rolandson were the choir. Mrs. Clarence Weckwerth sang "Were You There?" and "Living for Jesus" was sung by Patricia and Wahna Torkelson.

The audience sang several hymns, closing the program singing "Beautiful Savior," followed by the Apostle's Creed and the Benediction by Rev. Person.

The business meeting was opened with the secretary's report, which was read and approved as read. It was decided that we would send \$17.50 to Youth in Action.

The president read the constitution for the second time. The Worker's Conference at Wannaska on May 6<sup>th</sup> was again discussed.

Offering amounted to \$17.90 was taken in place of serving lunch.

Gary Rolandson, Secretary

# TAKE TIME TO CELEBRATE

## Why should we celebrate a church anniversary?

Throughout the Bible, the Lord reminds people to tell all generations of their Lord's wonderful works. Part of what that means for us as churches is that we must preserve the memory of how God has worked in our lives. A church that has a strong sense of its history will have a better sense of identity to build on for the future. Periodically, each congregation should take a look back to rediscover how their church came into being, what its early ministry was like, and how it has grown and changed over the years.

Such a celebration gives individual members the opportunity to join together in focusing on the church as a body of believers who have been blessed by the Lord. It can also be a wonderful time to benefit from the gifts of the people. And it's an occasion for church members of all ages to tell and hear stories of the past and present days of the church.

### How often should we celebrate?

Every church should celebrate its anniversary at least every 25 years, so that each generation has an opportunity to learn about the church's history and to join in a celebration of the church on a grand scale. It may also be good to celebrate the anniversary more frequently in a smaller way, perhaps by using one or two elements of the major celebration on a yearly basis. For instance, a particular anniversary theme or song could be repeated each year on the Sunday closest to the anniversary date.

### How should we begin?

The first thing a church should do is to appoint a committee whose job it will be to plan and coordinate all elements of the celebration. The anniversary steering committee should include members who have abilities and interests in worship, writing, publicity, finance, and organization.

When this committee first meets, ideally about 18-24 months before the anniversary, it should clarify its goals for the celebration, decide how the history should be recorded, choose which kinds of special activities it might like to plan in connection with the anniversary, and set a budget. The main committee should also appoint subcommittees to focus on researching, writing, and recording the history; planning special events (like banquets and programs); fundraising and organizing publicity; and planning the worship.

### How should we celebrate in our Worship?

How should a church worship during its anniversary? The possibilities are endless, but here are some suggestions to get you started:

- *Develop a theme.*  
It's a good idea to begin with a theme that can unify the other worship elements. The theme could be a Scripture text or a line from a song that demonstrates God's faithfulness to your congregation over the years.
- *Use members' gifts.*  
Perhaps the next step should be to examine the gifts of former and current members and look for opportunities to use them in special ways in worship. You will certainly want to invite former pastors to return for the celebration to preach again. But don't stop there! Consider your musicians, poets, artists, and provide ways for them to be creative and included in the special services.
- *Pay attention to the physical environment.*  
Think about the visual environment of the church, too. Consider making a new set of banners, using the theme. You might find other places to use that design – e.g. on bulletin covers.
- *Select and/or write appropriate music.*  
Be creative with your music while celebrating your anniversary. Choosing a theme song or hymn, whether it is original for the occasion or a favorite from the hymnal, is a good place to start. If you have poets or songwriters in your congregation, commission them to write something new for the anniversary. Ask them to consider the particular personality of the congregation and perhaps to incorporate the chosen theme for the anniversary. If your congregation has especially gifted musicians among its members—or perhaps among members who have moved away—consider inviting those people to share their gifts in a recital or in an evening service that features one or more musicians. If your church has a number of instrumentalists, use them to add flair and depth to the singing.

### Pay attention to liturgical details.

As you examine your usual order of worship, look for places to incorporate moments of celebration. Could your theme be used as a call to worship? A special litany can be very meaningful to the congregation. It should include the theme, a reflection of the history of the church, and a sense of hope for the future.

**Don't forget the children!** The children's message can provide an opportunity to focus on what memories are, why they are important, and what makes church special to them. After all, they will be the ones to carry on for us into the future!

# CONGRATULATIONS!

**Corey Berg and Nicole Axdahl**  
were married at St. Pauli on October 19<sup>th</sup>



## Lutheran World Relief Shipments

These are the boxes we shipped for Lutheran World Relief this spring. It may be difficult to spot here, but there are bar codes on the shipping labels and this is how our shipments are tracked and how we learn to which country they were sent.

The WELCA ladies have prepared another shipment for this November, this time including a number of school kits. We will keep you updated regarding their destinations.

# How poppies, strong and fragile, became a symbol of WWI devastation

Reprinted from the *Washington Post*

By Adrian Higgins, November 11, 2018



The corn poppy is a pesky weed, a sweet, delicate garden flower and, for the past century, the emblem of the human cost of war.

The custom of wearing paper poppies to remember that cost has waned in the United States but remains strong in Britain, the scene of national ceremonies on November 11<sup>th</sup> to mark the armistice that ended World War I in 1918. More than 40 million paper poppies are distributed by the Royal British Legion each year, and all the country's leaders, including Queen Elizabeth, wear them.

Between 1914 and 1918, the armies of Europe faced off for war in the machine age. Along the Western Front, the fixed nature of entrenched

warfare led to mass destruction on every level. At their most intense, artillery batteries could lay down 10 shells per second. Besides the flattened villages and towns, rolling farmland, forests and broad river valleys became wastelands of mud and splintered trees. In "Three Armies on the Somme," military historian William Philpott speaks of an airman's view of the Verdun battlefield, describing it akin to "the humid skin of a monstrous toad."

The shelling unearthed untold millions of buried poppy seeds, which can remain dormant for hundreds of years, that then began to germinate, grow and bloom. After one of his comrades was killed, the Canadian field surgeon John McCrae penned the enduring poem linking the corn poppy to the slaughter of industrialized warfare. "In Flanders fields the poppies blow/Between the crosses, row on row."

The British Legion tells us that the red poppy is not a token for blood or death, but that is clearly not a universally-held interpretation. Fields of scarlet blooms erupting from pummeled and blood-soaked battlefields seem the perfect metaphor for the casualties of that war.

Ever since then, they have come to be a symbol of remembering not just those who gave their lives in World War One, but all those who have died on behalf of their country.

The money raised from these donations is used to help servicemen and women who are still alive, whose lives have been changed by wars that they fought in. It help those who may need to find new jobs or somewhere to live, or any other support they may need. It is also used to help those who have lost loved ones because of wars.

Where did it all start?

The Royal British Legion was founded in May 1921. However, back then the poppies weren't made out of paper like they are today. They were made out of silk. They sold out straight away and raised more than £106,000 for those whose lives had been affected by the war, by helping to find them jobs and somewhere to live once they were no longer serving in the army.

In 1922, a factory was set up where disabled former soldiers were employed to make the poppies. This factory is still running - and producing many millions of poppies each year - to this very day.

While the majority of people wear their poppy on their chest, there is no right or wrong way to wear a poppy. As the Royal British Legion says: "We only ask you to wear it with pride."



Poppies continue to grow in Flanders Field

# 100 Years ago, 'patriots' in any language

## American Lutherans and World War I

by Laura Gifford, *The Lutheran* magazine, September 2014

*November 11 is Armistice Day.*

As a devout Presbyterian, President Woodrow Wilson understood the significance of 1917. Four centuries after Martin Luther's courageous stand unleashed the Protestant Reformation, Europe was again embroiled in conflict. By April, Wilson had concluded the U.S. must join the fight.

Proclaiming before Congress that "the world must be made safe for democracy," Wilson concluded with words lifted straight from the Diet of Worms: "God helping her, [America] can do no other" (*Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith* by Andrew Preston; Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.)

Between the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and U.S. entrance in 1917, Lutherans tended to be nominally pro-German. Many were descended from German immigrants, but even Scandinavian Lutherans inherited their ancestral lands' suspicion of Britain. The war upon Germany unleashed a wave of soul-searching and recrimination from outsiders who viewed Lutherans as "foreign."

### **Viewed with suspicion**

Many Lutheran churches, especially in the more recently settled Midwest, offered services in German, Norwegian, Swedish or other Scandinavian languages. Families often settled in church-centered ethnic communities.

But war turned community assets into liabilities. As xenophobia (fear of strangers) swept the nation, Americans established defense councils, renamed sauerkraut "liberty cabbage" and heaped suspicion upon non-English speakers. Government authorities also required the ethnic press to file translations of all articles, said Maria Erling, historian of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Fears of perceived disloyalty led Scandinavian churches to hasten a transition to English already underway within a new, American-born generation.

German churches fell under particular suspicion. Many responded with Americanization campaigns. For example, Zion Lutheran, Ann Arbor, Michigan, stopped its German services and switched church records to English.

In 1917, four Pasadena, California churches had "German" in their names. By the late 1920s, there were none.

In Middletown, Connecticut, German Evangelical Lutheran Church sandblasted its façade and renamed itself "St. Paul." Even this action failed to protect Middletown delicatessen owner Carl Theodore Herrman. Roused from slumber by a mob and accused of making pro-German remarks, he was made to kiss an American flag. While police arrived, many townspeople contributed donations toward the ringleaders' fines.

Perhaps the most surprised victims were Southern Lutherans, many from long-established, even pre-Revolutionary families. John Horine, editor of the *Southern Lutheran Church Visitor*, wrote in 1916: "The relationship

of the Lutheran Church in America to the German nation and government, if it exists at all, must be very distant—a sort of second cousinship twice removed."

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary completed a magnificent granite building on the highest point in Columbia, South Carolina in 1911. Initially this was a source of pride. After 1914, however, "rumors began to fly that the 'German Lutherans' had built not a seminary, but a fortress on that elevation, so that they could rain cannon fire on the city from the cupola on top," said seminary historian Susan McArver.

While Columbians had experienced just that from Union troops 50 years prior, Southern Lutherans were shocked to find themselves under such suspicion, McArver said.

Many Americans applauded Wilson's 1916 promise to "keep us out of war." Once U.S. troops entered the fight, however, Lutherans came under particular suspicion. McArver's data notes that the Secret Service investigated Walton Greever, a Lutheran pastor and editor of *The American Lutheran Survey*, for articles he had written urging non-entry in 1914 and 1915.

But Lutherans throughout the country defended themselves against allegations of disloyalty. The South Carolina Synod passed a memorial in 1917 reaffirming its "loyal adherence . . . of patriotic devotion to the flag of the country [and] of respect for civil authority." The heavily German Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod passed a resolution in 1918 observing that more than 165,000 Lutheran men were fighting in the U.S. military and accusations of disloyalty were "either ignorance or malice," noted the *Waco (Texas) Morning News* in 1918.

The war years stimulated movements already underway to foster greater Lutheran unity. Three Norwegian Lutheran synods merged in 1917 to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. The predominantly eastern General Synod, General Council, and United Synod of the South forged the United Lutheran Church in America in November 1918. The needs of Lutheran enlistees also spurred formation in 1917 of the National Lutheran Commission for Soldiers' and Sailors' Welfare, which matured into the cooperative National Lutheran Council.

Lutherans, then, ended World War I a more united, but less ethnic, church community. As historian Fred Meuser put it, these years "constitute one of the most significant watersheds in Lutheran history in America. Theologically there was little change, but the self-awareness and the spirit of the church has never been the same."

(*The Lutheran* is published monthly through Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis.)

# The Back Page

## First, some humor

Bob forgot his wedding anniversary. His wife was mad. She told him,  
“Tomorrow morning, I expect to find a gift in the driveway that goes  
from 0 to 200 in 6 seconds  
AND IT BETTER BE THERE!!!”

The next morning when his wife woke up, she looked the window to find a  
box gift-wrapped in the middle of the driveway.  
She opened it and found a brand-new bathroom scale...  
Bob has been missing since Friday!

## Then, some food for thought

I was shocked, confused, bewildered  
As I entered Heaven's door.  
Not by the beauty of it all,  
Nor the lights or its décor.

But it was the folks in Heaven  
Who made me sputter and gasp—  
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,  
The alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade  
Who swiped my lunch money twice.  
Next to him was my old neighbor  
Who never said anything nice.

Bob, who I always thought  
Was rotting away in hell  
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,  
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, “What's the deal?  
I would love to hear Your take.  
How'd all these sinners get up here?  
God must've made a mistake.

“And why is everyone so quiet,  
So somber – give me a clue.”  
“Hush, child,” He said. “They're all in shock.  
No one thought they'd be seeing you.”

Judge not.

Remember, just going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than  
standing in your garage makes you a car. Every saint has a PAST. Every sinner has a FUTURE.

Life without God is like an unsharpened pencil. It has no point!