

# St. Pauli News in Detail



## Greeting and Ushering

Feb. 6	Neil Bugge
Feb. 13	Ken Cedergren
Feb. 20	Craig Folkedahl
Feb. 27	Bryan Grove

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

### Sunday Service:

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

**Altar Preparation:** Tammy Haugen

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## February Milestones

### Birthdays

Feb. 15	Jordan Rondorf
Feb. 18	Becky Stickler
Feb. 20	Gary Iverson
Feb. 25	Arlo Rude
Feb. 26	Evie Johnson
Feb. 27	Edna Rondorf



### Anniversaries

None that the editor is aware of.

## Quilting

Changing things up a bit so those with day jobs can join us!



We will quilt on Tuesday from 1:00 pm – 9:00 pm with a light supper around 6 pm. Wednesday we will quilt from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm with a light lunch served at noon. We will finish Wednesday with our WELCA meeting at 4:00 pm.

### Tuesday, February 22

1:00 – 9:00 pm

Light supper at 6:00 pm

### Wednesday, February 23

10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Light lunch at noon

WELCA meeting

4:00 pm

Come and enjoy the fun, fellowship and food!

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## Mission Work

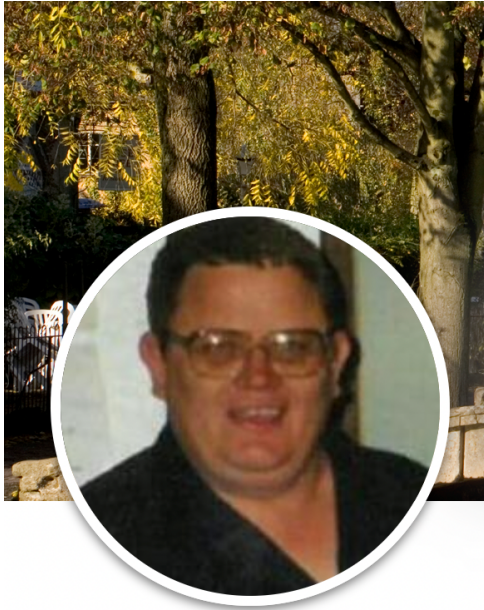
Because we did not have in-person worship until Easter Sunday in 2021, we did not do our customary collection for the "Baskets of Promise" during Lent. In Lutheran World Relief language, those items are known as "Personal Care Kits."

In spite of not meeting or having worship services during the beginning of 2021, the WELCA ladies managed to make and contribute the following items:

- 10 quilts
- 1 blanket
- 14 baby care kits
- 18 school kits
- 17 fabric kits

Please keep in mind when you're volunteering at the church:

Myles Alberg takes care of the heating and Kathy Alberg takes care of watering plants.



# In Memoriam

## Kevin Dahlen

**November 13, 1958 – December 31, 2021**

*Kevin Dahlen is the uncle of Erin (Jordan) Rondorf.*

Kevin Dahlen, 63, Thief River Falls, MN, passed away on Friday, December 31, 2021, at Oakland Park Communities, Thief River Falls, MN.

Kevin Lee Dahlen was born November 13, 1958 along with his twin brother, Kelly at Red Lake, MN, the son of Erling and Ella (Good) Dahlen. He was baptized and confirmed at Ekelund Lutheran Church, rural Goodridge. He attended school in Goodridge, MN, graduating from high school in 1977.

He served his country with the United States Navy from June 15, 1977 until August 11, 1978, when he was honorably discharged.

Kevin worked at a wild rice farm in Gully, MN, and then worked at Arctic Cat in Thief River Falls. Kevin then worked at Seven Clans Casino for 16 years, before returning to Arctic Cat.

He enjoyed motorcycles, sports, music, traveling, and spending time with family and friends. He also enjoyed volunteering at various places including Pennington County Humane Society, area cemeteries, and the Food Shelf. He was a proud member of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Eagle Clan; Eagle's Club in Thief River Falls, DAV Chapter 14 in Crookston and the American Legion Post 117 in Thief River Falls where he enjoyed volunteering on the Color Guard and serving burgers at the Legion on Saturdays.

Survivors include his siblings: Elaine (David) Roehl, Bloomington, MN, David (Gayle) Dahlen, Goodridge, MN, Jeff Dahlen, Goodridge, MN, Carolyn (Scott) Pahlen, Warroad, MN, Kelly (Brenda) Dahlen, Goodridge, MN, Donna (fiance Rob Endly) Bloomington, MN, Leah (Michael) Nelson, Madison, WI, Steven (Ladora) Dahlen, Thief River Falls, MN; sister-in-law, Rosie Dahlen of Thief River Falls; special friend, Kathy Opdahl; many nieces and nephews; great nieces and great nephews; and many other relatives and friends.

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

Funeral services were held on Monday, January 10, 2022 at Ekelund Lutheran Church, rural Goodridge, MN with Rev. Kristen Ostercamp officiating. Visitation was from 3:00 PM until 6:00 PM with a 5:00 PM prayer service on Sunday, January 9, 2022 at Johnson Funeral Service in Thief River Falls.



# In Memoriam

## Keith Bugge

July 28, 1945 – January 3, 2022

*Keith Bugge is the brother of Neil (Sharon) Bugge.*



Keith Bugge, 76 of Thief River Falls, MN passed away peacefully on Monday, January 3, 2022 at Sanford Medical Center in Thief River Falls with his loving family by his side.

Keith Ronald Bugge was born July 28, 1945 in Thief River Falls, the son of Earl Berge and June Lila (Lund) Bugge. He was baptized at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Thief River Falls. He attended District 147 Roosevelt rural school in Numedal Township, Pennington County and Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls.

Keith worked for several area farmers, and when he turned 21, Keith started driving milk truck for Willie Jablinske. Later, he began working at Charlie's Tire Service which eventually became ITS. Keith worked as an automobile mechanic for Northern Motors until retirement. In his retirement, he worked for his son, Brian, at B & B Auto Recycling for three years.

On October 5, 1970, Keith was united in marriage to Leona Kathleen Vesledahl in Sisseton, SD and the couple made their home in Thief River Falls. To this union three children were born: Lance, Brian and Jessica.

Keith enjoyed the outdoors, fishing, driving around in the country, planting deer food plots, feeding the birds, bird hunting, deer hunting, and prairie dog hunting in South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana. He loved going to gun shows and was a licensed firearms dealer. Keith owned/operated Bugge's Guns. He also enjoyed following the Minnesota Twins and Minnesota Wild. Keith loved to give hugs, enjoyed going to his children and grandchildren's events, always had a comical story to share and greeted everybody with a smile. He could fix just about anything. Keith was very proud to teach his children and grandchildren about automobile repair, snowmobile repair, hunting, and gun repair and safety.

He was a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Duck's Unlimited, and Thief River Rifle Club.

Survivors include his loving wife of 51 years, Leona; children, Brian (Julie) Bugge and Jessica (Darwin) Klemetson all of Thief River Falls; grandchildren, Brandi, Brittany, Dalton, Lance Jr., Emily, Madison, Katrina, Mariah, Blake, Hunter, Hannah, Haley, Ashton, Jilliana; great-grandchildren, Aaliyah & Gemma, Maesyn, Khloe & Emery; brothers, Neil (Sharon) Bugge, Bruce (Ruth) Bugge and John (Sharon) Bugge; numerous nieces & nephews; Godchildren, Jeremy McQuiston, Michelle Bugge Barry & Aubrey Bergerson; sisters-in-law, Carol (Jim) Chaput, Mary Jane Gall; brother-in-law, Tom (Laurie) Vesledahl; and many other relatives and friends.

He is preceded in death by his parents; and sons, Chad and Lance.

The service to celebrate Keith's life will be held 11:00 AM Friday, January 14, 2022 at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Thief River Falls, MN with Rev. Mark Helgeland officiating. Visitation will be 5:00 PM until 7:00 PM with a 7:00 PM prayer service on Thursday, January 13, 2022 at Redeemer Lutheran Church and one hour prior to the service. Burial will be at Greenwood Cemetery in Thief River Falls.

*When someone you love becomes a memory...*

*That memory becomes a treasure.*

# Minutes of the Church Council

December 16, 2021

The St. Pauli Church council met Thursday, December 16, 2021 at 7 PM at the church with the following members present: Virginia Anderson, Craig Folkedahl and Pastor Carl Hansen. Council member, Tammy Haugen, joined through a conference telephone call so a quorum could be met. Members absent: Wade Benson and Jim Strandlie.

The meeting was called to order by President Craig Folkedahl. Pastor Carl opened with prayer.

Agenda: Remained as presented

Secretary's Report: M/S/C (Hansen, Folkedahl) to approve November Secretary's report.

Treasurer's Report: M/S/C (Folkedahl, Hansen) to approve the Treasurer's report for November as presented.

## St. Pauli Treasurer's Monthly Report November 2021

Checking Account Balance End of Oct 2021	\$16,105.61
Nov 2021 Revenue:	\$4,259.46
Nov 2021 Expenses:	(\$1,832.69)
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Checking Account Balance End of Nov 2021:	\$18,532.28
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Other Account Balances End of Nov 2021:	
Education Fund	\$1,101.12
Edward Jones	\$77,049.93
Memorial Fund	\$14,878.45
Mission Grant	\$4,436.97
Savings	\$36,610.58

**Total Account Balances End of Nov 2021 \$152,609.33**

**Cemetery Association Funds End of Nov 2021: \$62,593.77**

Pastor's Report: Pastor Hansen reminded council of his departure date of December 25<sup>th</sup> for vacation through January 11, 2022. Kari Torkelson will be filling in for worship service on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Pastor Gary Graff will be filling in for worship service with communion on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Carl is scheduled for a medical procedure on January 20<sup>th</sup> and doesn't know, at this time, if he will be able to do the service for the following Sunday. He will let the council know as soon as he consults with his doctor.

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

New members or interest in membership: N/A

### Reports:

a. WELCA – The church women's Christmas Tea that was rescheduled from December 5<sup>th</sup> due to bad weather was held on December 12<sup>th</sup> at the Country School at Faye's. The afternoon was a huge success with fellowship and holiday treats. Wearing a hat for the occasion was an option and many joined in the fun. Prizes were awarded for the funniest, the largest and the prettiest hat.

- b. Board of Education – The Sunday School Christmas Program is scheduled for December 19<sup>th</sup> during worship services at 10:30.
- c. Other Reports – N/A

### Old Business:

- a. We need to decide when and how much to pay Danita Torkelson for cemetery mowing this past summer. That amount has been budgeted in the general fund budget for church mowing. Council said we had designated \$700 as the amount to pay Danita. Tammy Haugen suggested we pay her before Christmas.
- b. The Drevlow event on November 28<sup>th</sup> went very well for those attending. The Brian Trulson's, as honored couple, thanked St. Pauli Church for allowing them to use the church. They said the church had changed a lot since their wedding at the church 40 years ago.
- c. We may need to borrow prefilled communion cups from Trinity Church should we run short with several communion services coming up. Our supply has been ordered but will not be here until January 4<sup>th</sup>. Trinity has been approached as to the possibility of borrowing or purchasing from them.
- d. Virginia Anderson suggested we hold the last Cemetery Association council meeting of the year in December sometime before the annual meeting as we need to discuss what should be on the agenda for that annual meeting.

New Business: WELCA had received a request for a donation of \$350 to Pathway's Bible Camp to be used for new mattresses. That request was turned over to the council as there is an amount in the church budget for Pathway's Bible Camp. A motion was made to send the designated amount to Pathway's. M/S/C (Anderson/Hansen).

The St. Pauli Annual Meeting date has been set for January 30<sup>th</sup> following worship services.

The Cemetery Association Annual Meeting will follow immediately after. A potluck meal will follow on a tentative basis. Any potlucks throughout the year will also be on a tentative basis due to COVID restrictions that could be imposed.

The time for Easter 2022 worship service was set for 8:00 AM on April 17<sup>th</sup> with a light breakfast to follow worship.

A nominating committee will need to be selected for a slate of officers for the coming year. It was suggested council will ask Cindy Cedergren, Gary Iverson and Arlo Rude to serve on the committee. M/S/C (Folkedahl/Hansen). Virginia Anderson will contact each person. Council needs to refer to the new church constitution as to the requirements for those serving on council and their terms. It looks as though we will need a new council President, Treasurer and Secretary.

President Craig said we should hold our January council meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January rather than on January 20<sup>th</sup>



which would be our usual date so we would have adequate time to go over the annual meeting agenda and discuss other items. M/S/C ( Hansen/ Folkedahl).

We will need to send out a notice to the congregation of the St. Pauli Church Annual Meeting possibly by email using Faye's contact list at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Notice of the annual meeting will be announced twice in church prior to the annual meeting and a notice could go in the local Times paper.

It was suggested that Ron Anderson and Skip Swanson be approached to audit the church Treasurer's books after the year end. Virginia Anderson will ask both about this. Lord's Prayer was prayed.

President Craig asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. M/S/C (Hansen/Folkedahl). Meeting adjourned.

Virginia Anderson, St. Pauli Council Secretary

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## Minutes of the Women of the ELCA

November 23, 2021

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met on November 23, 2021, at 7 pm with seven members present.

President Kathy Alberg opened the business meeting with prayer. The secretary's report was approved as read. The Treasurer's report was approved as read. Balances as of 10/31/21: Checkbook \$1,717.18; Savings \$573.43; CD \$6,209.21; Total Assets \$8,499.82. Faye Auchenpaugh noted that there is a credit balance at Hugo's of \$180.13 and fall event donations totaled \$1,825. She also noted that the cost of boxes for cookbooks was higher than the original order, due to a shipping and handling cost increase, but we should continue to offer them for \$1 during this season.

Stewardship Report: Virginia Anderson reported that she and Ron had boxed up and delivered 15 boxes of items for Lutheran World Relief on Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>.

Council Report: Virginia Anderson reported that Greg Radniecki will schedule the carpet cleaning after Christmas. While Pastor Hanson is on vacation, Kari Torkelson will preside on Jan. 2, and Pastor Gary Graff will preside on Jan. 9. A private gathering for a former member will be held on Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> at the church. Rental fees will be charged.

Old Business: Kathy shared a thank you note from Barb Smith for the farewell gift she was given. An update on the Christmas Tea was given.

New Business: There will be no potluck served following the Sunday School Christmas program. Virginia and Ron will pick up a Christmas tree for the church, and decorating should take place the week of Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>. December is Food Shelf month for St. Pauli. Kathy will check with the Food Shelf regarding the months they receive matching funds.

Discussion was held regarding communion being served three Sundays in December. Virginia will consult with Pastor Hansen on the need to acquire additional disposable cups from Trinity Church, until our new supply is received.

Charitable Giving: The total donations for the fall event drive were \$1,825. A motion was made by Jan Strandlie, seconded by Virginia Anderson, to distribute \$2,000 to charitable organizations, using current WELCA funds to make up the

difference. M/S/C. A motion was made by Virginia Anderson, seconded by Faye Auchenpaugh to make the following contributions for 2021. M/S/C.

Hospice of the Red River Valley	\$300.00
Lutheran Social Services (Senior Meals)	200.00
Violence Intervention Project	200.00
Pennington Co. Salvation Army	300.00
Thief River Falls Area Community Fund	200.00
Prowler Pantry (Lincoln High School)	100.00
Northland Rescue Mission	100.00
ELCA Scholarship Fund	200.00
ELCA Good Gifts:	400.00
Share of Well	\$250
Goat	\$ 50
(2) Piglets	\$ 60
(4) Chicks	\$ 40

The meeting concluded with prayer partners, offering, the Lord's Prayer, and Table Grace. A Thankoffering program was presented by Virginia Anderson, Kathy Alberg, and Sue Kotz.

Sue Kotz served as hostess.

Cindy Cedergren, WELCA Secretary

**A grandfather was walking through his yard when he heard his granddaughter repeating the alphabet in a tone of voice that sounded like a prayer.**

**He asked her what she was doing. The little girl explained, "I'm praying but I can't think of exactly the right words, so I'm just saying all the letters, and God will put them together for me, because He knows what I'm thinking."**

# Kari Torkelson's Message

January 2, 2022

Second Sunday of Christmas

Readings: Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 144:12-20; John 1:1-18

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Have you ever been in complete darkness? I'm an optometrist and I work with light and how it refracts through the eye, but as an optometry student in Indiana I experienced complete darkness.

I traveled about 200 miles to Kentucky to Mammoth Cave. It is the world's longest known cave system with more than 420 miles of passageways. The tour took us inside the cave in lit passages to a larger, open space. The park ranger said they were going to turn off the lights so we could experience total darkness.

So, now, on top of the fact that I was thinking about the massive rocks that were overhead with seemingly no support, we were going to be in darkness. They turned the lights off for just a moment. There was no sliver or ray of light beaming in from anywhere. I held my hand up in front of my face and saw nothing but complete darkness.

But, perhaps, we don't have to be standing in a massive cave to have the feeling of complete darkness. When sin and hatred enter our lives, a loved one dies, or we lose our job, we can enter into dark places in our lives.

Then, in today's gospel reading we hear that Christ is the light of the world. Just last week we heard the Christmas story of Jesus' birth. This little baby born in a humble stable has brought and continues to bring us out of that darkness. He is that ray of light that breaks through those times of complete darkness.

It is fitting that in this first Sunday of the New Year, John's gospel takes us back to the first words of the Bible in Genesis—"In the beginning."

John 1 verses 1-2 read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." Genesis 1 verses 1-3 reads. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light;' and there was light."

When John refers to Jesus as the Word, he is saying He is God and Jesus was there at the beginning of creation. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

It is a beginning of a new year and the start of another year with the COVID pandemic, and I think talking about God's grace can give us hope. The flip of a calendar page to January doesn't magically solve the problems we had at the

end of December. We often look to January for a new beginning.

I haven't kept my YMCA membership through the pandemic, but I remember January 1<sup>st</sup> would bring in a whole new group of people trying to keep their new year's resolutions of working out. By the end of January there would be very few of those new faces left in the gym.

Unlike our new year's resolutions that fade, Christ's light and love continues to bring us new beginnings each and every day. This morning we confessed our sins and were forgiven so we can get a new beginning. This is an important way that we experience God's presence in our lives. We don't need a new gym membership or a flip of the calendar for our new beginning. God, in Christ, has become flesh among us.

To John, Jesus is the beginning of everything; He is the light the world needed. Jesus has the power to make things new and to make new beginnings. John testifies about his time with Jesus. He had personally seen the light of the world. Jesus knew John, Jesus touched him, Jesus embraced him and walked with him.

Through Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection we, too, get to experience Jesus with us. Another name for Jesus we hear at Christmas time is Emmanuel which means God with us. When the Word became flesh, He experienced what it was like to be human. He laughed, He loved, He ate dinner and attended weddings with his friends, He knew what it was like to be hated, and He wept.

I find that very comforting to know that God knows what it is like to be human. He's seen it and experienced it for Himself. We might think, how can anyone possibly know or understand what I'm going through? We can be comforted by knowing God is with us. I'm not saying that there will never be sorrow or pain. We all know that isn't the case. But, with Christ lighting the way, we can see the glimmer of hope.

A verse in the Psalm stood out for me today as the temperature outside dips dangerously below zero. Psalm 147 verse 17: "He casts forth his ice like morsels; who can stand before his cold?" Even in these dark and icy days when the cold creeps into our bones, God saves us from the dark and icy patches of life that can bring us into darkness.

According to Jerome Creach, a professor of the Old Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, these verses illustrate an essential truth of scripture: God's work in creating cannot be separated from God's saving work for humankind. John 1:1-18 links creation and salvation specifically in terms of God's word: The Word that ordered the world in the beginning took on flesh in Jesus Christ.

The verse in our reading from Ephesians that stood out for me today was verse 7: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the

riches of His grace which He lavished upon us.” And, later, in Ephesians chapter 2: “But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works.”

These words where God *shows* and *lavishes* us with grace upon grace almost make me feel uncomfortable. Can it really be true that God could pour that much love, grace, and mercy on me? Yes! It’s true for me and for you! He knows us—the good and the bad—better than anyone, and yet He loves us so much that grace and love abound.

What are we to do knowing that God showers us with grace upon grace? Well, technically, like I just read, we don’t need to do anything. We are not saved by works. But I think we are to do our best, to pass it on to others; to be witnesses of how God has touched our lives. We are to live in community with one another to let others know about grace, mercy, and love.

I was confirmed here, at St. Pauli, in 1987 and the one thing that sticks out about the things I learned, that I remember the most is this: GRACE means God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense. I’m no expert in economics but that’s a pretty good deal. We get everything and Christ pays for it all!

Since we didn’t have to pay for anything, and nothing can separate us from the love of God and God has lavished and showered us with grace and love I think we should have some extra to share with others when they are in those dark spaces and can’t seem to see that ray of Christ’s love shining through.

In these first 18 verses of the Gospel of John, also known as the prologue, we get a great summary or Cliff notes of the Bible. God created, there is the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, He brought forth light and life, He came to us in human form, He loves us so much that He died and overcame death so we can receive exorbitant amounts of grace upon grace. As we begin a new year, I pray that these verses can bring us hope in those times when we feel complete darkness.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Amen.

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## Charitable Donations

Once again, we were not able to host a Fall Event, but through the generous donations of our congregation we raised \$2,065 to give away to a variety of charities (\$240 in donations came in after the November WELCA meeting when the distributions were determined). While the WELCA ladies had only \$1,825 to work with at meeting time, they decided to increase it to \$2,000 and the designations are reported in the WELCA minutes elsewhere in this newsletter.

We have received some wonderful thank you letters for your donations. Here are portions of three:

### From the Food Shelf, December 31, 2021:

*“This past quarter we worked on preparing our garden area for next year’s planting season. Through grants, we were able to drill a well for irrigation... We were also able to do much-needed maintenance on our walk-in refrigerator and freezer as well as purchasing two laptops for business purposes.”*

*“The supply chain issues that have hit our grocery and department stores nationwide have also caused issues with the North Country Food Bank where we purchase food. Because of this, we are rationing the frozen meat we supply our customers. We continue to supply high protein foods to our clientele by offering cheese, eggs, canned meat and fish, peanut butter, and beans to supplement our meat shortage.”*

*“We are humbled by your generosity and so very blessed!”*

### From Hospice of the Red River Valley:

*“This year marks an incredible milestone for Hospice of the Red River Valley: 40 years of providing comfort and care through life’s journey. Our founder, Dr. Joy Query, and a host of volunteers first brought hospice services to our region with the belief that everyone, including those who face end of life, deserves dignity and quality of life. They could see a better future for our communities—just as you have by investing in our care. Thank you for the incredible support and care you have given to ensure our mission continues well into the future—and beyond the original hopes and dreams of our founders. Your generosity helps those we serve to live fully and experience more meaningful moments with their loved ones.”*

### From Northlands Rescue Mission:

*“I am proud to say that our clients continue to find housing. Sixty-two percent of our clients this year left us with a home. That number has never been higher. Close to 200 men and women who had almost nothing now have a promising future. That happened because you gave them safety, support, and hope. With this foundation, they took the right steps.”*

*“When we needed food for our meals, God sent us your donations.... God calls upon us to bear one another’s burdens, in times of hardship and in times of prosperity. The Bible says (1 Peter 2:21) ‘To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.’ As we encounter those who are hurting or lost, I pray we have the strength to bear their burdens and ease their suffering as Christ would. By your side, we are excited to bring this Mission into a new year. We have faith that it will be full of grace and growth for those who seek it.”*

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## Snippets from your Editor’s favorite Christmas letters:

### From Russ Steer who has done pulpit supply for us:

“It is time to go Griswold. I have. We have every color of light in our collection, not many that match and coordinate, but lights nonetheless. No certain size or shape. All different, but bright. Most are pretty small, but when it gets really dark they seem to shine the brightest. Turning on the lighted snowman

last week, Grandson Ridge asked, ‘Grandpa Russ, where’s the light?’ I tried to explain that the light was inside and it shines out to light up the snowman.”

“Seems like a good question for all of us in these troubled times when the world seems dark. And maybe, just maybe, the answer is really quite simple. The light is within, but if we shine one small light at a time, no matter the shape or size, we can brighten the world. Jesus did. He saved us so that we might help light this world for him, for one another. Some brighter than others, but lights nonetheless. No one more important than the next. Jesus gave us the light; it’s up to us to make it shine. Go Griswold.”

**From my unnamed friend:**

“Here we are again—completely unprepared for the upcoming holidays. We put up just enough decorations to be proud of the end results, but what isn’t known is all the hours spent hunting for the decorations that we had stored *in easily accessible and obvious locations which were sure to be quickly remembered* when the rush to finish arrived. Then, of course, the sudden arrival of snow and cold complicating plans for shopping. *Why do we do this?* Because we are tough and able to handle whatever is thrown at us. We may shiver a little at times, but there is a certain pride in running to town in sub-zero weather. I’m not sure if extra points should be given for those brave enough to venture out when the countryside is shrouded in Siberian fog. Radar capabilities are not one of our built-in instincts.”

“Minnesota is unique in temperature extremes. There are three-day blizzards and we can have two-week cold spells where the temps range from -40 at night to -20 during the day. We have experienced thunder and lightning storms in January that coated everything with rain, which then turned to ice. We relish the snowless years that are called ‘open winters.’ We call them t-shirts and shorts weather and, as a bonus, they allow farmers to burn off their fields in preparation for early spring.”

“We firmly believe that our summers are the envy of the rest of the world. And it is true! We have learned to treasure the temperamental mood swings of our weather. The cool mornings and the balmy afternoons. Our rains replenish all

that grows, and I challenge anyone brave enough to claim that they have never watched the majesty of a nighttime thunder and lightning storm from an open doorway or a window. Obviously, we have inherited some primal attribute that sets us apart from the less gifted.”

“Our past summer was a challenge. The heat and drought took its toll. Surprisingly, the crops produced more than what the farmers had hoped or expected, but as trees began to drop their leaves, it seemed as though the drought of the 1930s had returned. Years ago, my uncles had told of those years. The temperatures were over 100 in the shade and haying was done during the night because it was too hot to work the horses during the day. They had fastened a lantern to the pole so that the horses could see where to walk and even the most feeble moonlight was appreciated. Ranchers had come from western North Dakota to purchase hay that had been put up in the Mud Lake area, and shipped carloads of hay back home by train.”

“My goal last year was to walk without the aid of my walker—that has not happened, but I still have goals. My current goal is to be able to do some of the Applebee fancy dance moves. I’m pretty sure that I can master the dance moves of the guy in the white shorts. It is sort of a limbo-type move where the dancer leans backwards and his shoulders and dangling arms keep time to the music. If I lock the brakes on my walker, I can practice that without sliding out of the walker. All those moves look like too much fun not to try.”

“Last year, I sent out Season’s Greetings by addressing everyone in the terms ‘Kith and Kin.’ ‘Kin’ refers to ‘family,’ but the definition of ‘kith’ encompasses more than just the term ‘friends.’ It means ‘the native land and its people.’ So here we have it—familiar country, acquaintances, friends, and family—all the elements of Kith and Kin! Merry Christmas to all!”

**And a last one is on “The Back Page.”**

The first-ever cordless phone was created by God. He named it “Prayer.” It never loses its signal and you never have to recharge it. Use it anywhere.  
Amen.

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As a follow-up to last month’s article on book shapes, we include here

## “A Very Brief History of Reading”

Senjuti Patra, January 8, 2021

The history of reading is a topic that probably interests all readers. Reading what someone else has written brings with it a sense of continuity and solidarity. This sense of solidarity is strengthened when we get to know how others read. What we read and how it affects us can reflect our personalities and our experiences as individuals. The history of readers and reading can offer much insight into the nature and history of the society as a whole. The topic is a fascinating one, and one that has several absorbing aspects. Join us as we try to construct the bare bones of the process of the evolution of readers and reading over the course of history.

### Very Practical Beginnings

In the 4<sup>th</sup> Millennium BCE, with agricultural prosperity and increasing complexity of social structures, urban centers started developing in Mesopotamia, and an unknown individual changed the course of human history by using some squiggles on clay to represent a goat and an ox. There, at the birth of the concept of writing – the representation of spoken sounds using visual signs – its inseparable twin, the art of reading, was also born. Writing was initially used to keep records of transactions that involved several entities and were carried out across vast distances. The earliest known clay tablets used picture-like signs to depict lists of goods.

Around 2600 BCE, the cuneiform script developed and writing became more versatile. It was used to document laws and



An old woman reading, circa 1600.

narrate deeds of kings, in addition to keeping records of transactions. In the cuneiform script, each syllable was represented by a different sign, and the number of characters one had to learn in order to be able to read ran into hundreds.

To be a scribe in ancient Mesopotamia was an enormous achievement. If a king could read, he made sure to boast about

it in his inscriptions. An elaborate system of schools trained young scribes from an early age. The ancient pioneers of writing and reading were aware – and in awe – of the potential of this new form of communication. In ancient Mesopotamian culture, birds were considered sacred because the marks their feet made on wet ground resembled cuneiform characters. The foot patterns made by wandering birds were believed to be messages from the gods, waiting to be deciphered.

As the ancient writers discovered their power to make and alter myth and history, the first works of literature were written. The earliest known author named in history is a woman, the Akkadian princess and High Priestess Enheduanna, who composed temple hymns around 2300 BCE and signed her name on the clay tablets on which she inscribed her works. It was around this time that writers began to explicitly address the absent “dear reader” in their writings.

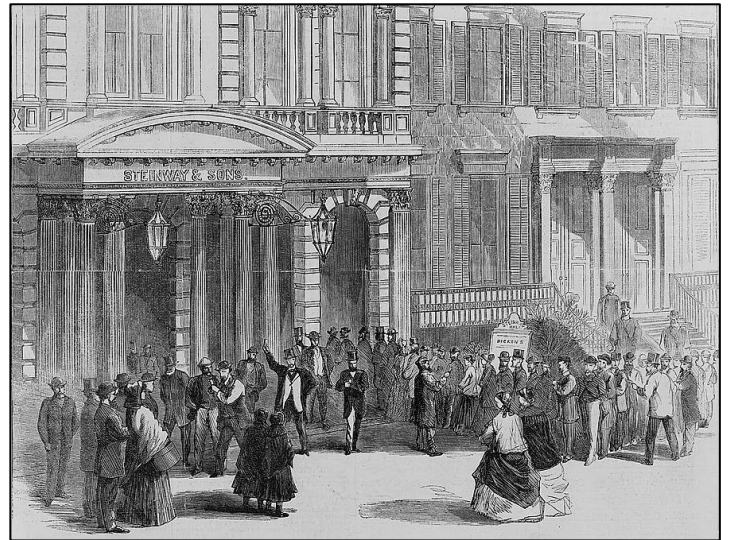
### Reading as Performance

The earliest written texts were meant to be read out loud. The characters were written in a continuous stream, to be disentangled by the skilled reader when reading out loud. Punctuation was used for the first time only around 200 BCE, and was erratic well into the Middle Ages. The masses were still illiterate, and written material only reached them through public readings, which took place in royal courts and monasteries. The performances of jugglers and storytellers were in vogue in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. Reading from a book was considered pleasant dinnertime entertainment, even in humbler homes, from the Roman times to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the famous Greek historian Herodotus used the platform of the Olympics to read his latest works. Authors’ readings were a social convention in Rome as early as the first century CE. Public enthusiasm for these readings might have waxed and waned across centuries, but the tradition has endured. Popular authors have embraced this tradition with varying degrees of fervor, ranging from Charles Dickens’s carefully planned readings to the uninterested monotones of others.

Even as education became more widespread, being read to was a major avenue for entertainment and acquiring knowledge, especially for women. Well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women were encouraged to acquire only very minimal

education, and their scholarly ambitions were frowned upon. Being read to by family and friends was acceptable and provided women some semblance of an outlet for their curiosity and hunger for stories. Once primary education became more accessible and acceptable, younger members of the family read to the elders, in a sweet reversal of the classic grandma’s tales.



Crowd buying tickets for a Charles Dickens reading at Steinway Hall, New York, 1867

### Reading Silently

Given how early texts were meant to be *heard* rather than *seen*, the act of reading silently remained a curiosity. In 330 BCE, when Alexander the Great silently read a letter from his mother in front of his troops, the already awestruck men were further stunned by their general’s otherworldly capabilities. Much later, in his *Confessions*, written in 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, St. Augustine marvels at how his mentor, St. Ambrose, managed to grasp the meaning of a text while “his voice was silent and his tongue was still.”

The first regulations requiring scholars to work in silence in monastic libraries date from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The ancient and medieval libraries until then, and probably for a considerable time after that, would have been very different to the modern concept of a quiet place to study.

With increased literacy, better punctuation, and books that were made accessible to the general public by the inclusion of pictures or the simplification of language, silent reading became the norm. More and more readers began to be able to form a personal connection with the written text, without someone else’s voice and interpretation acting as intermediaries. Silent reading made reading a private activity – making room for more options in the choice of a reading nook. Chaucer recommended reading in bed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Omar Khyyam and Mary Shelley advocated outdoor reading, while Henry Miller and Marcel Proust preferred the absolute solitude of the bathroom.

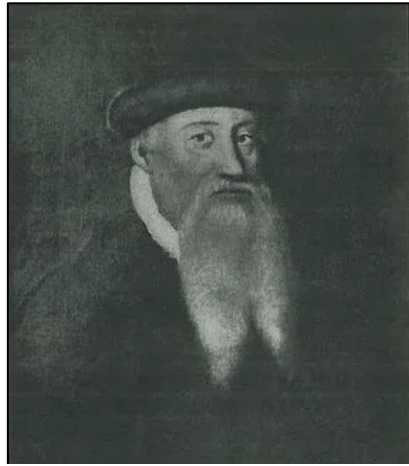
### Print Revolution

The earliest printing technology originated in China, Japan, and Korea. The imperial state of China produced a large volume of printed material, printed by rubbing paper against



inked woodblock, to sustain its extensive bureaucratic system.

The knowledge of print technology reached the western world around the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and woodblock printing attained widespread popularity by the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The increased ease at which books could be produced by printing, the durability of the final products compared to hand-written manuscripts, and the ever-rising demand for books led to further interest in the development of new printing techniques. In the 1430s, Johannes Gutenberg developed the first mechanical printing press at Strasbourg, Germany. The press was operational in Mainz by the 1450s, and was printing copies of what would later become known as the Gutenberg Bible.



**Johannes Gutenberg**

Once the inevitability of the eventual ubiquity of print and reading became apparent, churches all over Europe embarked on a spree to educate the masses, and through the establishment of village schools, literacy grew. Booksellers printed copies of popular ballads and folklores to increase public appetite for their wares. Small, cheap editions like the English chapbooks and French *Bibliothèque Bleue* were peddled by travelling salesmen. Periodicals started being published in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, increasing further the population of dedicated readers. It was around this time that the novel as a literary form took firm root in France and England. When, in 1849, Charles Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* was serialized in a magazine, the attraction of the novel was combined with the affordability of magazines, and readers could live in the story for months.

### **Libraries**

The Assyrian ruler Ashurbanipal put together a library of clay tablets in Nineveh (modern-day Iraq) in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The collection was amassed at the height of the Assyrian empire, mostly through plunder. The library housed original tablets dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE, featuring works written in both Sumerian and Akkadian. Specialized scribes were employed to produce copies of important works. Fiercely possessive of his collection, Ashurbanipal threatened anyone who dared misplace his books with terrible fates.

Centuries later, in 331 BCE, Alexander the Great founded the city of Alexandria in Egypt. Within years Alexandria evolved into a multicultural city with a complex bureaucracy. Alexander's successor, Ptolemy I, founded the library of Alexandria with the short-term purpose of organizing the vast reams of documents that had been stockpiled in the city, and the ostentatious long-term purpose of housing all the knowledge in the world. In order to achieve this goal, all ships stopping at Alexandria had to surrender all books on board to be copied (or retained) at the library.

The history of cataloguing or organizing written material is even older than the very first formal libraries. In the ancient Sumerian language, record keepers were called "Ordniners of the world." The first ever catalogue of books is the catalogue of the Egyptian "House of Books" dating back to 200 BCE.

The library of Alexandria was the laboratory for a lot of early experiments in library science, mainly through the works of Callimachus of Cyrene, who catalogued the library of Alexandria in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. He arranged titles into lists according to categories including drama, lyric poetry, legislation, history, medicine, philosophy, and miscellanies. He was also the first librarian in history to use an alphabetical ordering for arranging the books within these genres. Though libraries remained highly exclusive spaces for centuries after these developments, accessible and useful only to privileged and skilled scholars, the concept of a comprehensive library catalogue would prove invaluable to generations of readers roaming the aisles of these storehouses of information in search of knowledge.

The establishment of lending or circulation libraries, coupled with the advent of new printing technologies, were developments that revolutionized reading for common people. The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a proliferation of these institutions that actually allowed readers to take items in their collection home, both in Europe and in North America. Readers made use of this opportunity individually, as well as collectively by organizing themselves into reading groups and book clubs.

### **Reading as Rebellion**

As we have seen so far in our short exploration of the history of reading, the power of the written word, which is in turn transferred onto its readers, has been recognized since ancient times. It is therefore no surprise that authority figures throughout history have tried to prevent the people they oppress from accessing reading material and even literacy. For these marginalized groups, reading, against all odds and in severely adverse circumstances, has been a courageous act of rebellion and resistance.

Enslaved people, both in the dominions of the British Empire and in the Americas, were denied access to reading for centuries. They still managed to learn to read, often risking their lives in the process – unobserved and using ingenious methods of learning. The literature that many of these people taught themselves to read and write went on to become a potent weapon in their battle against slavery and oppression.

Women's reading and intellectual ambition was discouraged, often violently, in societies all over the world, despite some of the earliest poets and authors having been women. Yet, largely cut off from the outer world and forced into the routines of domesticity, generations of women taught themselves to read and write. They wrote copious volumes about their own experiences, many of which stood the test of time and are now recognized as classics. Women in China and Japan invented their own dialects used specifically for communication between women. In India, Rashundari Devi, the author of the first autobiography in Bengali, taught herself to write by scribbling letters in the soot left over in the wood burning oven after the day's arduous cooking.

Totalitarian rulers have always recognized the importance of ignorance in keeping people subservient to exploitative regimes, and have been placing blanket bans on books that go against the version of reality that they wish to project, with a gusto that has been undiminished by history. The works of Protagoras were burned in ancient Athens; Chinese emperor Shih-Huang Ti wanted to burn everything written before his time so that history would begin with him. In 1559 the Roman Catholic Church began maintaining an Index of Forbidden Books. In Nazi Germany, the government propaganda machine made a spectacle of book burning, with each book being burnt receiving its own individual epigram. Colonial rulers tried to ban and prevent the circulation of printed material that would question the legitimacy of their rule. The power of the written word has also been misused, and is still being misused, to spread false information and hatred.

But the international community of readers has endured. At a large scale they have shown themselves equal to the responsibility that comes with the power of being readers. Over the course of history readers have demanded better from the things they read – and have gone ahead to write it themselves.

We lose the habit of reading because we're afraid of wasting our time. We think we need to be productive and "on the go" at all times.

But people are not machines, and you are nourished by naps and fiction and basking in sunlight, no less than by food and drink.



John Wesley was a prominent English religious figure whose teachings inspired Methodism. The following elaborate injunction is sometimes called "John Wesley's Rule of Life."

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

~John Wesley

## THINGS WE SAY TODAY, WHICH WE OWE TO SHAKESPEARE:

"KNOCK, KNOCK! WHO'S THERE?" "HEART OF GOLD"  
 "IN A PICKLE" "SET YOUR TEETH ON EDGE"  
 "FAINT HEARTED" "SO-SO" "GOOD RIDDANCE"  
 "LIE LOW" "FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE" "BAITED BREATH" "SEND HIM PACKING"  
 "COME WHAT MAY" "THE GAME IS UP"  
 "WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR SLEEVE"  
 "NOT SLEPT ONE WINK" "FULL CIRCLE" "OUT OF THE JAWS OF DEATH"  
 "TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING"  
 "WHAT'S DONE IS DONE" "NAKED TRUTH" "BREAK THE ICE"  
 "WILD LAUGHING STOCK" "BREADED HIS LAST"  
 "HEART OF HEARTS" "VANISH INTO THIN AIR" "GOOSE CHASE"  
 "SEEN BETTER DAYS" "MAKES YOUR HAIR STAND ON END"  
 "DEAD AS A DOORNAIL" "FOR GOODNESS' SAKE" "LOVE IS BLIND"  
 "GREEN EYED MONSTER" "FAIR / FOUL PLAY / PLAY" "OFF WITH HIS HEAD"  
 "THE WORLD IS MY OYSTER" "BRAVE NEW WORLD" "A SORRY SIGHT"





# The Back Page

## THE CABIN

By Peter Solem

The cabin turns fifty this year: 2022. Like most fifty-year-olds, it's starting to gray and show a few signs of wear and tear. In general, though, it still looks pretty darn good.

The idea of "someday building a cabin" dates back to my youth—when I was fourteen or fifteen. I was sitting on the grass in our pasture with my back up against a large oak tree. Fifty yards or so in front of me was a cow in the process of calving, and it was my job to make sure that everything went ok. It was a chore that I always enjoyed; in part, because it allowed me the luxury of having an occasional daydream. The big oak was surrounded by several other big oaks, and I began dreaming about "someday building a cabin" at that scenic location.

During the next school year, I wrote about that experience in Pat Johnson's tenth grade English class. In the essay, I mentioned that it was my goal to farm, raise Angus cattle, and live in a log cabin. I think I still have that essay somewhere in my present house.

Some years later on my father's sixty-fifth birthday, he prepared two cups of coffee and invited me into the parlor to talk. He asked me if I would be willing to take over the family farm, and I accepted.

Later in the conversation, Dad suggested that I have a place of my own in which to live. He thought buying a trailer house might be a good option. I had a better idea.

I called Dean Kaushagen on the phone. I knew that he was in the construction business and had built a log cabin for his home. When asked if he could build me one, he said he would—the following year: 1972.

That winter Dean teamed up with John Lubitz, also a carpenter, to help with the project. They leased some forest land near Bemis Hill and cut black spruce trees to use for logs. In the spring, they peeled the logs and left them to cure.

During the summer of '72, I became good friends with Lee Schulz, a social worker who had recently moved from Zumbrota, Minnesota. We had a lot in common with similar ages, backgrounds, and attitudes on life. He was looking for a place to live so we decided to become roommates once the cabin was completed.

That fall was an exciting time for me as I watched the cabin take shape among the same oak trees where I had once watched the cow give birth. What long ago began as a daydream was now becoming a reality.

Dean and John worked on and off throughout the fall and winter to finish the job, and in the spring of 1973, Lee and I moved in. It was just as I had always envisioned. It was perfect!

