

St. Pauli News in Detail



Greeting and Ushering

September 3	Ron Anderson
September 10	Faye Auchenpaugh
September 17	Wade Benson
September 24	Corey Berg

Altar Preparation: Katy Haugen

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Thrivent Cards

All Thrivent Financial members are entitled to two \$250 "Thrivent Cards" each year that can be used to fund special projects that benefit the community. At St. Pauli, we use them to help with our Stewardship and Fall Event speaker/entertainer costs.

If you are a Thrivent member, would you please let Jan Strandlie or Kathy Alberg know? They will help you apply for these cards. More than one card can be used for each project.

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Women of the ELCA
Northwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization

35th Annual Convention

Saturday, September 9, 2023

Registration & Coffee 9:00-9:30 am

Day includes worship, business meeting,
speakers, fellowship and lunch.

Concludes by 5 pm

Zion Lutheran Church
505 Main Ave N
Thief River Falls, MN 56701

**Love your Neighbor
as Yourself**

Mark 12:31

Hosted by Conferences 1, 2, 3

HOLY COMMUNION

Sunday, September 24
11:30 am

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September Milestones

Birthdays

Sept. 1	Deb Ernst
Sept. 12	Nancy Jensen
Sept. 13	Racheal Rondorf
Sept. 15	Cindy Cedergren
Sept. 16	Sally Torkelson
Sept. 17	Bruce Mathson
Sept. 19	Wally Torkelson
Sept. 26	Marisa Benson



Anniversaries

None that we know of.



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Sometimes our wonderful ladies show up for church each dressed in blue and white!





In Memoriam

Harlan Mostrom

March 23, 1943 – August 3, 2023

Harlan, his wife Judy, and their family were long-time members of St. Pauli Church. Harlan served on the Church Council for 6 years.

Harlan Albert Mostrom was born March 23, 1943 at Mercy Hospital, Thief River Falls, MN, the son of Albert Milton and Viola Willamenia (Anderson) Mostrom. He was raised and educated at Thief River Falls, graduating from Lincoln High School in 1961.

He served in the U.S. Navy from September 1961 to September 1965. He served aboard 5 Navy Ships: the USS St. Paul, USS Tulare, USS Monticello, USS Piedmont and USS Halsey Powell. He served in the Far-East three times, which included ports in Guam, Japan, Philippines, Hong Kong, Thailand and Hawaii.

Harlan and Judy Van Der Veen were united in marriage, June 3, 1967. They resided in rural Thief River Falls, where Harlan was employed by Prichard Brothers and Ram Construction Company for several years. He also farmed which consisted of raising hogs and beef cattle. For many years he provided handyman services for neighbors and friends.

He was a member of St. Pauli Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, where he served for 6 years on the church council and he was a member of Ecklund-Holmstrom American Legion Post #117.

He enjoyed fishing, both winter and summer, woodworking (he loved making things for the family and friends) and cooking, especially when he could cook with the grandchildren. Also, when he had time, he liked four-wheeling and motorcycling. He loved spending time with family, especially with the grandchildren. He also made frequent stops by the farm to check on how things were going and leave an occasional surprise package.

Harlan Mostrom, 80, passed away on Thursday August 3, 2023 at Sanford Medical Center, Thief River Falls.

He is survived by his son: Scott (Kris) Mostrom, Thief River Falls, MN and his daughter: Loretta (Dellas) Herbel, Fargo, ND; five grandchildren: Cassidy and Kaden Mostrom, Micah, Macrina and Anastasia Herbel; brother-in-law, Merlin Drangstveit, Goodridge, MN and his brother: Merle Mostrom, Thief River Falls, MN; as well as several nieces and nephews and other relatives and friends.

Harlan was preceded in death by his wife, Judy; parents; grandparents; an infant brother, Larry, and sister, Marlys Drangstveit.

In lieu of flowers, memorials should be directed to the Salvation Army or the Veterans Hospital, Fargo, ND.

A Memorial service was held at 7:00 pm on Thursday, August 10, 2023 at Johnson Funeral Service in Thief River Falls, with Steve Dahlen officiating. Visitation was held from 5:00 – 7:00 pm prior to the service. A private burial was held at Little Oak Cemetery, Trail, MN.

In Memoriam

Leah Marie Koehne

June 17, 1981 – August 11, 2023



Leah is the daughter of Jeff and Brenda (Mathson) Nielsen, granddaughter of Inez and Clayton Mathson, and niece of Bruce, Chris, Clair and Brian.

Leah Marie (Nielsen) Koehne was born on June 17, 1981 in Mankato, Minnesota and passed away on August 11, 2023 of an acute asthma attack in Denmark while on holiday with her family.

Leah is survived by her husband Kai Gernot Koehne, son Lukas Nils, and daughter Nora Grace of Stuhr-Moordeich, Germany. She is survived in the United States by parents Jeff and Brenda Nielsen of New Ulm, Minnesota; brother Peter

Nielsen and nephew Carson Nielsen of Granite Falls, Minnesota; grandmother Inez Mathson of Thief River Falls, Minnesota; uncle Bruce (Shelley) Mathson also of Thief River Falls; uncle Brian Mathson of Carlos, Minnesota; aunt Chris (Bruce) Carter of Carlos, Minnesota; aunt Mary Plath (Tim Donakowski) of Shoreview, Minnesota; Ann (Mike) Degrood of Fairbault, Minnesota; and many cousins.

Leah is survived in Germany by father-in-law Hans Hermann (Ava) Koehne of Feuchtwagen, Germany; and mother-in-law Lena Tapkin of Bremen, Germany. She was preceded in death by her maternal grandfather, Clayton Mathson; her paternal grandparents, Don and Arlene Nielsen, and uncles, David Plath and Clair Mathson.

Several who knew her referred to Leah as one of a kind. She was an adventurous, confident, strong, and kind young woman. She grew up and attended New Ulm Public Schools graduating in 1999. She was active in many vocal music activities including Pops Choir, Payne Street Singers, Concert choir, musicals, and Our Saviors Church choir. Her special love was being a member of New Ulm's youth folk group, Menagerie. She was active in dance, swimming with New Ulm Swim Club, and high school golf team. Her athletic claim to fame was being the first member of the NU Swim Club to complete the mile lake swim at Lake Carlos.

She was curious about other cultures, enjoying language academics, and had a knack for learning languages. She spoke Spanish, albeit rusty, and German fluently.

Leah had many good friends and loved her relationships with U.S. friends as well as friends from other countries. She spent her first year after high school as an AFS exchange student in Bremen, Germany. There she learned the German language fluently and met the love of her life, Kai Koehne.

After her year abroad she returned to Minnesota and attended the University of Minnesota Duluth graduating summa cum laude in international studies and German in 2004.

She worked as a nanny and in the banking business in Minnesota after college graduation until October 22, 2005 when she married Kai at Our Saviors Lutheran Church in New Ulm. They made their home in Bremen until Lukas was born in 2011 when they moved to Stuhr-Moordeich. Nora was born in 2015.

Leah's strong language skills served her well in her employment career as an English tutor and then a translator of insurance claims from German to English over the past 15 years.

Her smile lit up a room. She fiercely loved her family and friends and was a lioness in caring for her family. Missing this young vibrant woman who had recently battled and winning her fight with breast cancer over the last 18 months is an understatement.

Leah will be buried at a private service in Stuhr-Moordeich and interned in the cemetery across the street from her family home. It was a favorite place she often went to find quiet, a place to walk, and to reflect.

A memorial celebration of her life will occur at a later date this fall in New Ulm. Memorials can be directed to: B the Light Supporting Survivors of Breast Cancer, 15 South Minnesota Street, New Ulm, MN 56073, or at connect@bthelightinfo.org, or to the donor's choice.

MINUTES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

May 11, 2023

The St. Pauli Church Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, May 11, 2023, at 7 p.m. at St. Pauli Church. Members present: Jim Strandlie, Cindy Cedergren, and Sue Kotz. Guests: Faye Auchenpaugh, Arlo Rude, and Gary Iverson (Call Committee representatives).

Council President Jim Strandlie called the meeting to order and opened with prayer.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as distributed.

Secretary's Report: The minutes of the February 9, 2023 meeting were previously approved via email. M/S/C (Strandlie/Kotz). The Council did not meet in March and was cancelled in April due to weather.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report for April was approved. M/S/C (Kotz/Strandlie)

Checking Account Balance End of March 2023	\$11,123.06
April 2023 Revenue:	4,039.79
April 2023 Expenses:	(3,751.50)
Checking Account Balance End of April 2023:	\$11,411.35
Other Account Balances End of Apr 2023:	
Education Fund	\$ 1,413.05
Edward Jones	74,579.42
Memorial Fund	8,976.21
Mission Grant	5,483.23
Savings	37,017.12
Total St. Pauli Account Balances	
End of April 2023	\$138,880.38

Reports of Members in sickness or distress: We continue to keep Kari Torkelson, Barb Nelson, and Gary Iverson in our prayers.

New Members or Interest in Membership: No report.

Other Reports:

- 1) WELCA: Cindy Cedergren reported that the spring shipment to Lutheran World Relief was held on May 6. High school graduates Noah Haugen and Mason Haugen will be presented graduation quilts during worship on May 21.
- 2) Sunday School Committee: Sunday School students will sing during worship services on Mother's Day, May 14, their last day of Sunday School until fall. Gary Iverson reported that two students are eligible for First Communion instruction. Gary will schedule the instruction with the students and arrange for the first communion when an ordained pastor is scheduled to preach. Gabe Haugen has completed confirmation requirements and tentatively will be scheduled for Confirmation on the last Sunday of October, as typically done, if an ordained pastor is available.

Old Business:

- 1) Call Committee Report: Faye Auchenpaugh shared the schedule for the summer months for pulpit supply as follows:
 - June 4 - Kevin Reich, with Pastor Gary Johnson overseeing communion distribution
 - June 11 - Kevin Reich

- June 18 – Pastor Joy Grainger, Holy Communion
- June 25 – Kevin Reich
- July 2 – Kevin Reich
- July 9 – Pastor Joy Grainger, Holy Communion
- July 16 – Kari Torkelson
- July 23 – Kevin Reich
- July 30 – 5th Sunday – Hymn Sing, Volunteers needed to help with service
- August 6 – Kevin Reich
- August 13 – Kevin Reich
- August 20 – Kevin Reich
- August 27 – Pastor Joy Grainger, Holy Communion

- 2) Cleaning Contract: Cindy Cedergren reported that Tammy Swick has been secured to clean the church in late May or early June. WELCA officers identified tasks that need to be done.
- 3) Stained Glass Window Project: Tabled until Marisa is available to report progress.

New Business:

- 1) Well Water Status: Complaints have been voiced about the quality of the water this spring. Discussion was held on the fact that due to infrequent usage, the water needs to be run for an hour or more periodically to flush out the water pipes. Arlo Rude will take care of this.
- 2) *Atlantic Crossing* Series: Jim reported there has been favorable attendance and positive feedback on this series. This may be something we'll continue to do next year.
- 3) Lawn Mowing: Jim will contact Justin Folkedahl to see if he is interested in mowing again.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Next meeting date: Thursday, June 15, 2023. It will be determined in June whether a July meeting is necessary.

Cindy Cedergren, St. Pauli Church Council Secretary

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June 15, 2023

The St. Pauli Church Council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, June 15, 2023, at 7 p.m. at St. Pauli Church. Members present: Jim Strandlie, Cindy Cedergren, Sue Kotz, Myles Alberg, and Marisa Benson.

Council President Jim Strandlie called the meeting to order and opened with prayer.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as distributed.

Secretary's Report: The minutes of the May 11, 2023 meeting were previously approved via email. M/S/C (Benson/Alberg)

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report for May was approved. M/S/C (Kotz/Alberg)

Checking Account Balance End of April 2023	\$11,411.35
May 2023 Revenue:	5,045.00
May 2023 Expenses:	(1,696.14)
Checking Account Balance End of May 2023:	\$14,760.21

Other Account Balances End of May 2023:	
Education Fund	\$ 1,415.09
Edward Jones	72,747.60
Memorial Fund	8,989.17
Mission Grant	5,491.15
Savings	<u>37,076.85</u>
Total St. Pauli Account Balances	
End of May 2023	\$140,480.47

Reports of Members in sickness or distress: We continue to keep Kari Torkelson and Barb Nelson in our prayers as they recover from injuries.

New Members or Interest in Membership: No report.

Other Reports:

- 1) WELCA: No news to report.
- 2) Sunday School Committee: No report.

Old Business:

- 1) Call Committee Report: Jim Strandlie shared correspondence from the synod office pertaining to the call process status within northwestern Minnesota.
- 2) Cleaning Contract: Tammy Swick has completed the cleaning tasks identified by WELCA officers and will submit an invoice this week.
- 3) Stained Glass Window Project: Marisa Benson shared several design options she found online. After discussion, the Council asked Marisa to poll the congregation on the options, via email, to obtain their feedback. A decision will be reached at the next meeting, based on the feedback received.

New Business:

- 1) Lawn Mowing: Justin Folkedahl has agreed to mow the church lawn again this summer.
- 2) July 16th Worship Service: Marisa Benson will contact Kari Torkelson to see if she is able to conduct the service on that date, as previously scheduled.

- 3) July 30th Worship Service: Discussion was held, and Jim Strandlie agreed to read a sermon from our supply of Pastor Carl's sermons; Sue Kotz will do the readings. Others will be asked to do various portions of the service. Marisa will acquire Faye's outline from recent services that were conducted by members.
- 4) Communion at worship services: It was decided that for the summer months we will continue to have only one communion service per month. We will revisit this in the fall.
- 5) AED Equipment: Myles Alberg and Arlo Rude will install the equipment in the location the Council selected, based on industry recommendations. We will arrange for training to be held in the fall.
- 6) Phone Landline: After discussion, it was determined that the landline is not necessary, due to the fact that the line has not worked for the past year, despite repairs conducted, and the majority of members carry personal cell phones. It was decided to poll the WELCA group to ensure they are comfortable with that decision, since they use the church building more than others. Cindy Cedergren will poll the WELCA group and report the results to the Council Treasurer.
- 7) Gift: It was decided to purchase a \$100 gift card for Kevin and Sheila Reich for their 50th wedding anniversary celebration. Kevin has been so willing to help us during this time of transition. M/S/C (Benson, Alberg)

Meeting Schedule: It was determined that the Council will not meet in July, unless necessary. Next Meeting date: Tentatively Thursday, August 17 at 7 p.m. (may consider switching to an alternate night that week).

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Cindy Cedergren, St. Pauli Church Council Secretary

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Minutes of the Women of the ELCA

May 24, 2023

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met at the church on Wednesday, May 24, 2023 at 7:00 pm with seven members present.

Kathy opened with devotions titled "Shifting Priorities in the Silence" based on Psalm 4:4.

Secretary's Report: Accepted as read.

Treasurer's Report: Checking balance as of 5/24/2023: \$2,393.14; Savings as of 4/30/2023: \$578.34: CD as of 12/31/2022 \$6,258.88.

M/S/C Virginia/Cindy to donate \$200 to BIO Girls. Check will be given to Ally Hopperstad after she speaks tonight.

Stewardship: Thank you to Ron and Virginia for boxing and delivering our shipment.

Council Report: Two students are qualified for first communion instruction. Gary will line it up for when we have an ordained pastor at worship services.

Call committee reported on pastoral coverage for the summer months. All Sundays are covered except for the July 7 and the "Fifth Sunday" in July.

Spring Gathering: Cindy attended and reported that approximately 40-50 people attended. There was special music and good speaker: Marilyn Grafstrom, who spoke on her mission trip to Tanzania. Fall Gathering is

September 9 at Zion in TRF. The 2024 triennial will be held in September in Phoenix. Quilting challenge for triennial convention using theme of gathering in your design.

Old Business: Tammy Swick, cleaner, will begin end of May. If we're expecting her to clean the floors, we need to get things up off the floor. She asked for a written list and Cindy is putting this together based on what we talked about at our April meeting.

New Business: Watering schedule – June: Kathy/Cindy, July: Virginia/Faye; August: Kathy/Sharon

Virginia and Ron put two bags of mulch on the gardens but could only do the corner in front. We need more. Church should pay for it and pick it up.

We've been using Kathy's ironing board for quilting and have worn a spot in the center. Virginia talked to Sue and Jim about making a replacement board for Kathy, which they will do, and we will keep the old one here at the church.

The basement light by the quilting cupboards is not working. Council will be notified.

Val has June communion prep. Lydia Circle is June 14 at Jan's house. WELCA is at Virginia's on June 28.

Thank you to the ladies for making the two graduation quilts. Thank you to Cindy for serving tonight.

Offering was taken, prayer partners shared, and the Lord's Prayer prayed.

Faye Auchenpaugh, Secretary

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June 28, 2023

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at 7 pm with six members present.

Prior to the business meeting, the group worked on cutting fabric and sewing receiving blankets, diapers, and backpacks for Lutheran World Relief kits.

President Kathy Alberg opened the business meeting with devotions entitled "The Peace in Perfect Love" and prayer. No secretary's report was available. The Treasurer's report was approved as read:

Expenses for the month: \$205.08; Income \$123.00. Balances as of 6/28/23: Checking \$2,311.06; Savings \$579.23; CD \$6,258.88. It was noted that Larry Hurst gave a donation of \$50 in memory of JoAnn Hurst, and a thank you note has been given.

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A 14-year-old Moorhead boy has one of the best fishing stories of the summer to tell. There's just one thing: It has nothing to do with a fish.

Connor Halsa is just days away from his freshman year at Moorhead High School and more hockey. And he has a summer vacation story that will be hard to top.

"We were doing a walleye drift, so we stopped the boat, put some spinners on, and let the waves take us," he said. He was fishing with his family on Lake of the Woods, when he thought a fish had struck his line.

"I thought I had a huge fish, so I set the hook really hard," Connor said.

But it was no walleye. "My cousin netted it," he said.

It was a billfold full of money.

Stewardship Report: Jan Strandlie shared information from Lutheran World Relief on a new tracking system in the development stages for tracking LWR shipments.

Council Report: Cindy Cedergren shared information on items discussed at a recent council meeting regarding the stained glass window project, plans for July 30th worship service, AED equipment, disconnection of landline phone at the church, and spring cleaning completed.

Old Business: Kathy Alberg shared thank you cards from the BIO Girls headquarters in Fargo, and another from the TRF Bio Girls group, as well as a thank you from the Pennington County Sheriff's Dept/National Safety Council for our recent donations to these organizations.

The Northwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization Convention is being held on Sept. 9 at Zion Lutheran Church in TRF. The registration fee is \$75 prior \$40 toward each person's registration fee, to encourage participation. Motion carried. Interested persons should register on their own using the form provided at the meeting, and the WELCA treasurer will reimburse them \$40 after their payment is made.

New Business: Fall Event: A couple of ideas were discussed as possible programs. Jan Strandlie will contact a potential music duo.

Thank you to Ron and Virginia Anderson and Faye Auchenpaugh for taking care of the mulch needed for the flower beds, and for the mulch donated by Dan Benoit from Cider Mill. Virginia and Faye are scheduled to do the watering in July.

There is no WELCA meeting scheduled in July. Kathy Alberg is working on a potential program for the August meeting.

The meeting concluded with prayer partners, offering, the Lord's Prayer, and Table Grace. Virginia Anderson served as hostess.

Cindy Cedergren, Acting WELCA Secretary

"My cousin opened the wallet up, and he said some words you probably shouldn't say, and he showed everyone, and we took the money out and let it dry out," Connor said.

Inside the billfold was \$2,000 in cash.

"My dad said we should give it to the person, and I said we should, too," he said. The family found a business card inside, called the number, and tracked down the owner of the billfold.

"I tell you what, I have the billfold in my hands, and it is still hard to believe," said Iowa farmer Jim Denney.

Denney was at Lake of the Woods fishing one year ago when he lost his wallet. "The water was really rough, and I was

sitting on the back of the boat and it was rocking back and forth, and it worked itself out and slipped off into the water,” he said. He didn’t realize he had lost the billfold until he reached into his bib overalls to pay the final bill at the resort.

“They had to float me the money for the whole deal. That’s the (worst) feeling I ever had, didn’t have a penny on me,” Denney said.

“The odds of ever finding or hooking a billfold in 20 feet of water — I don’t think there’s a number,” Denney said.

It’s hard to calculate, but the odds are out of this world. One million acres of lake. Seventy miles long, 70 miles wide, and Connor hooked a billfold the size of a deck of cards.

So, Denney made the trip from Iowa to Moorhead, where he met the Halsa family and even offered to give Connor money, but the teen turned him down.

“To meet people like that, who are that honest, I tried to get them to take the money, and they wouldn’t do it,” Denney said.

Denney gave Connor a fancy cooler, but more than that, he gave the teen a compliment worth much more than the cash found at the bottom of Lake of the Woods.

“I would take Connor as a grandson any day, and I would fight for him any day,” Denney said.

Connor learned some great lessons about himself and doing what’s right.

“Be nice to everyone and give back. We didn’t work hard for the money, he did. It was his money,” he said.



Connor Halsa, a freshman at Moorhead High School, stands next to Jim Denney of Iowa. A year ago, Denney lost a billfold full of money while fishing on Lake of the Woods. Halsa was fishing with his family this summer when he hooked the billfold. The two connected in Moorhead just days ago. The odds of hooking a billfold on Lake of the Woods are almost impossible to figure.

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Who is a “real” American?

by Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA

My husband and I live in Skokie, Ill., a diverse community. Our neighbors to the west are an octogenarian Taiwanese Evangelical couple who regularly order meals from “Kosher to Go.” Our neighbors to the east are a Ukrainian and Russian multigenerational family. Our grocery stores have both kosher and halal departments. As I drive past the elementary school on my way to work, I see moms and dads in jeans along with women in saris or hijabs and men in thobes or yarmulkes. More than 90 languages are spoken in the homes of our school district. We pay our taxes, mow our (tiny) lawns, worship, raise our children and pretty much get along in our little village of Skokie.

Late one afternoon a few years ago I was finishing up yard work. I had been weeding and trimming all day. I was tired and grass-stained. Just one more pile of leaves needed to be swept up. I noticed a woman walking toward me, so I hurried to get the sidewalk cleared. She stopped and told me that she had seen me working all day and thought I might be too tired to prepare supper. She had made a meal for me and my husband. It was during Ramadan—the month when Muslims fast from food and water during the day and engage in prayer and acts of charity. This was her act of charity and generosity. She smiled and walked away. I was stunned.

There has been an alarming rise in hate speech and violence against religious and ethnic minorities in this country. At the same time, we’ve seen an increased polarization among us, even in our dear church. There is a movement to define what it means to be a “real American.” Some would define this as white, Christian, and native born.

When Lutheran immigrants first came to this country in the 18th and 19th centuries, they weren’t considered real Americans. They didn’t speak English or fit in with the Deist, Calvinist religious majority. They were “other” and therefore suspect. German Lutheran immigrants weren’t considered white when they settled here. Neither were Irish, Italians or Poles. Catholics and Jews were considered an alien threat.

It’s ironic that the Puritans fled religious persecution and that the First Amendment states “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free expression thereof,” yet an element in our country wants to legislate that the United States is a Christian nation where Christianity should be privileged and only Christians should hold office. This is Christian Nationalism, which is neither Christian nor patriotic. There is no doubt that the Founders were Christian



and that a majority of Americans identify as Christian. That is different from declaring Christianity as the established religion of the United States. And, dear church, let's be clear, a Christian Nationalist does not define Lutherans as "Christian."

God knows I love my country. This beautiful, fragile, yet surprisingly resilient experiment in democracy and nationhood that's not predicated on shared ethnicity is unique among nations. My grandfather, father and uncles all served during World War I and World War II. I had the honor of placing a wreath on behalf of the ELCA at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. I won't have my patriotism questioned. Christian Nationalism is a perversion of the gospel and a threat to our democracy. It's precisely because I love my country that I warn against it.

Who is a "real American"? I say that my Muslim neighbor walking freely down the street in a hijab to offer a meal to her Christian neighbor during Ramadan is a real American. Motivated by her Muslim faith, she acted as neighbor to me. She is not less American because she is Muslim. Because she is an American, she can be her authentic self and participate in building our community and country. What binds us together is not ethnicity but shared participation in our civic life springing out of our cultural heritages and working for the common good.

Kevin Reich's July 2nd sermon based on Matthew 10:40-42

"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.

*Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward;
and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous;
and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—
truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."*

Welcoming a Prophet

What would you do if Jesus showed up at your door? Would you recognize Him? Would you welcome Him into your home?

I think most of us think, if Jesus did show at our door, we would recognize Him. And yes, we would invite Him into our home. We would probably scramble to gather up something to eat as it would be the hospitable thing to do. It would be the Scandinavian thing to do. And we all know one can usually strike up a good conversation when one is sharing and enjoying good food.

I shared with you last Sunday how I was a man of very few words when Sheila and I were first married. We would sit at the table enjoying a good meal and I would say absolutely nothing. Although one time I did say something that I shouldn't have said.

Sheila had asked me if I would like her to bake a cake. I said sure. I asked, "Would you please make a chocolate cake with hard boiled chocolate frosting?" It was my favorite. Being the pleasing new wife she was, that is what she baked. Following supper, Sheila served me a piece of the cake. I took the first bite, kind of made a face but said nothing. I took the second bite, again making an unfavorable facial expression and then said, "This does not taste like the cake mom bakes." The response I received was not favorable.

The cake was so different to me because it was from a box cake mix. My mother had never made a box cake. Needless to say, I did not make any other comments about the cake. I forced myself to eat it, acting appreciative.

What if Jesus showed up at your door and the house was in disarray? What if the laundry was piled on the sofa waiting to be folded? What if the kitchen counter and sink were full of dirty dishes from the past three days? What if the table was piled with last week's mail, the bills scattered you were working on to pay, and magazines were piled on all of the chairs except the one you sit on?

You have all probably heard and seen the phrase, "Come in, sit down, relax, converse. My house doesn't always look like this. Sometimes it is even worse."

Would you still invite Jesus into your home under these conditions? Sometimes our dreams don't match reality. Sometimes we don't see things the way they really are.

What does it mean to welcome a prophet, and what is a prophet's reward for such a welcome? To answer this question, we have to know what a prophet *is* and what a prophet *does*.

A prophet is not a fortune teller. Prophesying is not predicting what will happen in the future. A prophet is a *truth-teller*, someone who announces God's Word in God's voice making it clear what is to happen. "Thus says the Lord..." usually introduces the prophet's proclamation.

In today's Old Testament reading we heard two prophets claiming to speak the word of the Lord. Hananiah tells the people what they want to hear. Jeremiah tells them the truth: It's time to make the best of a bad situation. It's time to surrender to the fact Babylon is going to carry Israel off into captivity. "Go peaceably," Jeremiah tells the people.

This isn't what they want to hear. They are proud. They don't want to surrender. That's actually been their problem all along – they didn't want to surrender themselves fully to God's purpose, and their pride has cost them their homeland.

This truth that Jeremiah speaks sounds strange to them – how can they know peace in exile? How can they welcome this kind of a prophet, who tells them to accept defeat?

Sometimes our dreams don't match reality. Sometimes we don't see things the way they really are. That's why we *need* prophets, to help us bridge the gap between what *is reality* and what we wish was true.

But we don't always treat those prophets so well. When Jesus says "a prophet's reward," he isn't necessarily talking about a generous compensation package or enjoyable gift. Often it is the opposite.

In Matthew 13, we read about Jesus returning to his hometown, where his neighbors mock him and he can't do many miracles "because of their lack of faith." Jesus tells

them, “A prophet is not without honor *except* in his own town and in his own home.”

And in the familiar passage we know as the Beatitudes, Jesus tells his listeners to rejoice when they are persecuted, “for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

A prophet’s reward might not be so wonderful, after all. Sometimes our dreams don’t match reality. Sometimes we don’t *want* to see things the way they really are.

My dad and Grandpa Reich trucked cattle to the St. Paul stock yards. This was in addition to their operating the cattle farm we lived on. Generally, grandpa would make the rounds picking up the cattle, starting early in the morning. He would make two or three loads with the straight job truck. While he did this, dad would do the morning chores. Once the cattle were picked up and loaded into the semi-trailer, dad would make the run to St. Paul. Grandpa would do the evening chores and chores the next morning.

One day as a child, I was riding with my grandpa picking up cattle and we were going to be passing through Swatara, the small community my Grandma and Grandpa Halvorsen lived in. Grandpa asked me if I would like to stop and say hello to them. I answered, “Yes.”

My Grandma Halvorsen was a short, stocky Norwegian lady. To this day, I can remember what grandma said when she came to the door to welcome us into her home. She said, “Well, hello. Please come in for a little lunch. I don’t have much but a few scraps.” As you can imagine, we were served a small feast followed by her delicious chocolate chip cookies.

Matthew is not only recalling Jesus’ instructions to his first disciples; he is also speaking to us, a community of disciples many generations later. There is still a need to send out laborers into the harvest, to send missionaries out beyond the community into a dangerous world. And those sent will still need to depend on the hospitality of others. Jesus says of those who enact such hospitality, “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.”

In the old world, identity was tied to family and community. It was understood that in showing hospitality, one welcomed not just an individual but, indirectly, the community who sent the person and all that they represent. Therefore, welcoming a disciple of Jesus would mean receiving the very presence of Jesus himself and of the one who sent him, God the Father.

Jesus continues: “Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous.” The words “prophet” and “righteous” in Matthew often refer to the prophets and faithful servants of biblical history, but can also refer to modern day prophets and righteous or moral people of today. It is not clear whether Matthew is referring to two distinct roles within the community, or whether these are simply alternative ways of describing those sent out as missionaries.

What are the “prophet’s reward” and the “reward of the righteous” of which Jesus speaks? Elsewhere in Matthew we are made aware the prophets receive persecution, rejection, and death, and yet those who are persecuted are told, “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.”

Similarly, the righteous are promised that they “will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” This is not the type of reward we would expect or hope for, but the reward God blesses us with.

And Jesus says, “and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.” “Little ones” generally refers to children, but Matthew uses it to refer to Jesus’ disciples, especially those who are young in their faith and/or particularly vulnerable in their faith.

The statement about giving a cup of cold water to one of these little ones points ahead to the parable of the judgment in Matthew 25. Here the Son of Man says to the righteous, “I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,” and “truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” The righteous who attend to the needs of the little ones are told: “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

The word reward in Matthew 10 carries implications of something earned, but this word is not used in the parable of judgment. Here Jesus says to the righteous, “Come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you...” An inheritance is a pure gift. Those who welcome and care for the needs of little ones welcome and care for Jesus himself. To receive Jesus is to receive the one who sent him, God, and to become heirs to all that the Father has to give.

What does it mean to be sent? We are not all sent to be wandering missionaries, dependent on others for food and shelter, but that doesn’t mean we are off the hook. As baptized, we are sent into the world to tell and exemplify the good news of Jesus Christ. All are sent to bear Christ to others with humbleness and vulnerability, being willing to risk rejection or more.

What would happen if we stopped expecting people to come on their own initiative through our church doors, and instead took seriously our calling to bring the gospel to them? What would happen if we truly believed that we bear the presence of Christ to every person we encounter, in every home, workplace, or neighborhood we enter? What would happen if we saw every conversation as an opportunity to speak words of grace, every interaction as an opportunity to embody Christ’s love for the neighbor?

Recently I read a story of a lady who told of an interaction with a bagger at her local grocery store. She had been talking with this woman off and on for more than a year. Upon learning that the grocer employee no longer worked on Sundays, the lady invited her to come to her church. To an outdoor, come-as-you-are service. Much to the lady’s surprise, the employee responded by giving her a hug and attending the service the next Sunday.

We may not always receive such a positive response when we take the risk of reaching out, yet we may be surprised at how ready many are to receive our most humble efforts. For fear that we forget what we have to offer, we have Jesus’ promise: “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me.”

Let us pray. Heavenly Father we are aware we are to reach out to others making them aware of you and the love of your Son. Please give us the courage to do so and the wisdom as to what to say. We know we will be blessed and our gift will be the inheritance of your kingdom. For this we give you thanks. AMEN!

AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

There has been a LOT going on around the neighborhood over the summer months!

Outstanding Senior Citizens!



Virginia and Ron Anderson are Pennington County's Outstanding Senior Citizens for 2023.

Visits from Old Friends



Carol (Lokken) and Lloyd Halvorson were with us in July. They were married at St. Pauli on a cold and windy winter day. Carol's dad, Louie, went in the ditch on his way to the wedding. Carmen and Stuart and Joyce and Fred were also married at St. Pauli.



ACTORS!

Thief River Area Community Theater

Wade Benson as Tevje in "Fiddler on the Roof."



Elsa Haugen as Cruella de Vil in "One Hundred and One Dalmatians."

50th Wedding Anniversaries!



Eileen and John Kotaska were married at St. Pauli on December 31, 1973. It was -40 degrees on their wedding day and 88 degrees on August 9th, the day of their anniversary celebration at Valhall.



Kevin and Sheila Reich celebrated their 50th anniversary at the Legacy Event Center on June 17th. Kevin is our Lay Leader and conducts services three Sundays a month.

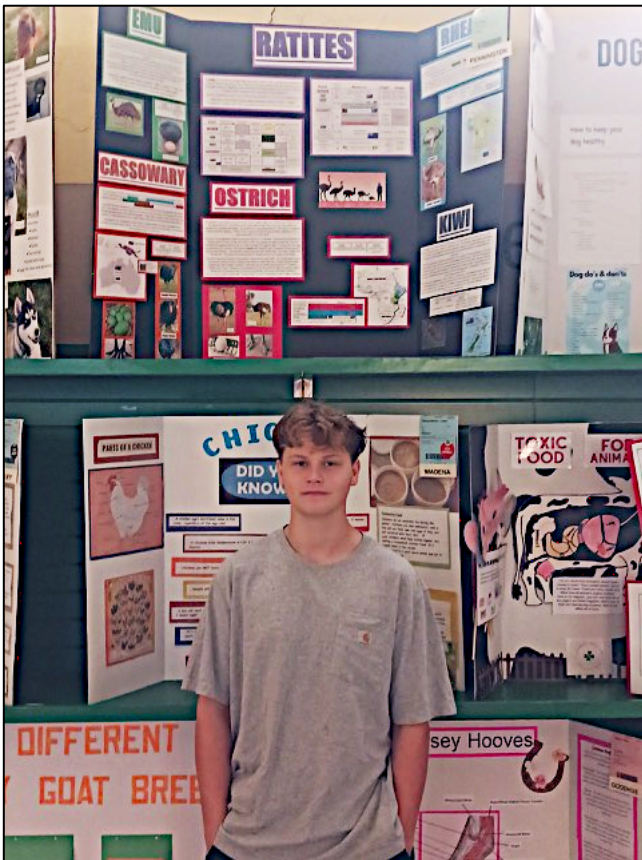


Sons of Norway members worked hard to rejuvenate a downtrodden Viking ship float in time for the Fair Parade. Its eyes flash, its head turns from side to side, and it breathes smoke! Pennants, shield designs and bubbles will be added next year.



They made open-faced sandwiches to serve at Norwegian Day at the Fair, in addition to rommegrot, pickled herring and lefse.

And, Oh My, the County Fair Winners!



Rylan Torstveit won a Grand Champion ribbon for his display on Ratites – large flightless birds such as ostriches, emus, rheas, etc. – and advanced to the Minnesota State Fair (shown here on the left).

There is a ratite section in the national avian bowl manual that the 4-H kids have to study for participating in Poultry Knowledge Bowl. Rylan's dad Chad is the coach and the team will use Rylan's poster for team training this winter.



Ella Rondorf with her Grand Champion planter. She also got a Reserve Champion on her brownies.



Jerod Haugen and his Grand Champion rhubarb and cherry mead.



Royalty crowned for the 2023 Pennington County 4-H Fashion Revue were first attendant Ella Rondorf (left) from Steiner 4-H Club and queen Lilly Kenner from Sanders 4-H Club.



Faye Auchenpaugh and her Grand Champion winner in the Open Class Flower Exhibit.



Marisa Benson and her Grand Champion cross-stitching in the Needlework division.

To cap off the summer, our very own Bruce Mathson was in the national magazine "Fur-Fish-Game!"



The Back Page

Did you know??

Moorhead's long-running Dairy Queen is the birthplace of the Dilly Bar

By John Lauritsen, June 7, 2023 / 10:45 PM / CBS Minnesota



Moorhead is a city known for a Viking ship, a Norwegian church, and a famous, frozen treat.

"One of my earliest memories of childhood is going to Dairy Queen about 60 years ago, and eating a Dilly Bar," said Margaret Grigorenko, visiting from Ohio.

There's no better place to have one than at the corner of 8th and Main. Seventy-four years ago, the Dairy Queen at that location opened its doors. Troy Deleon is only the second owner in the restaurant's history. Because it's been around for so long, it's no ordinary DQ.

"No grilled foods, no fried foods," Deleon said. "We make the barbecue, and we make our own chili. We don't buy anything out of a can. It's all made in-house."

That includes the famed Dilly Bars. In 1955, original owner Bob Litherland and a couple of guys from Minneapolis started experimenting with frozen treats. At one point, they froze a circle of ice cream onto a tongue depressor.

"They made it, they froze it down, and they looked at it and said, 'Isn't that a dilly?'" Deleon said.

Once word got out, it was hard to keep up with demand. Carol and Mitch Zakula heard about the history and made a stop while visiting from Arizona.

"The Dilly Bar is very good. Highly recommended," said Carol.

They actually use cardboard to get that perfect circle and swirl. Then they head to a negative-20-degree freezer dedicated solely to Dilly Bars. That's where they sit for six hours.

Once removed, the bars are dipped in chocolate, butterscotch, or cherry. The cool thing is that people wait all winter to get their hands on one. The restaurant opens on March 1, and this year customers lined up even as the snow was falling -- in the middle of a blizzard, no pun intended.

"We had 13 inches of snow this year [laughs]!" Deleon said.

And people still showed up. The Moorhead Dairy Queen is used to large crowds, having hosted the Stanley Cup before. And every summer a cow visits so people can thank dairy farmers. In this city, the DQ is GQ, all thanks to ice cream and tongue depressors.

"They perfected it and just stuck with it, and now it went from this store all the way across the country, to every store in the country," Deleon said.

They sell more than 100,000 Dilly Bars during the eight months they are open. At the end of July, they host an event where they sell Dilly Bars and raise thousands of dollars for Sanford Hospital in Moorhead.

