

# St. Pauli News in Detail



## ANNUAL MEETINGS

### ST. PAULI CONGREGATION

February 2, 2025

11:30 am

### ST. PAULI CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

February 2, 2025

following Congregation Meeting

#### Potluck dinner

following annual meetings

Freewill offering to benefit Hospice



**IMPORTANT:** Designated persons need to submit their reports to Faye Auchenpaugh no later than January 20<sup>th</sup> for inclusion in the St. Pauli Annual Report. The booklets will be ready for review on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Submittals can be made in electronic (Word or Excel) or typed paper formats. Please place in Faye's church mailbox, or email to [auchenpaugh@gmail.com](mailto:auchenpaugh@gmail.com), or mail to 11094 195<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, TRF.

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## St. Pauli Handbook

Be sure to check your church mailbox and pick up your 2025 Handbook. It contains the schedules for St. Pauli

meetings and events, cleaning/ushering schedules, contact information, and much more. Thanks go to Cindy Cedergren and Jan Strandlie for updating this handbook. Extra *Christ in our Home* devotion booklets are also available for pickup on the table below the mailboxes.

## THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who has conducted services in 2024: Kevin Reich for his steadfastness and Kari Torkelson for being willing to serve whenever called upon.

We are grateful that we have Pastor Marilyn Grafstrom presiding monthly for Holy Communion and thank her for her willingness to make the long drive from Roseau to do so. We are blessed.

\* \* \* \* \*



## Greeting and Ushering

Jan. 5	Staci Reay
Jan. 12	Jim Rondorf
Jan. 19	Jordan Rondorf
Jan. 26	Arlo Rude

**Altar Preparation:** Barb Nelson

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## January Milestones

### Birthdays

Jan. 13	Noah Haugen
Jan. 17	Erin Rondorf
Jan. 29	Marilyn Grafstrom

### Anniversaries

Jan. 3	Jim and Jan Strandlie
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# In Memoriam

## Melba Geraldine Lundeen

*November 16, 1934 – December 1, 2024*

*Melba and her parents, Gust and Marie Gustafson, were long-time members of St. Pauli Church. Melba was baptized there on December 16, 1934 with Edwin and Evelyn Nelson as sponsors. She was confirmed on October 31, 1948.*



Melba G. Lundeen, age 90, of Spicer, MN passed away Sunday, December 1, at CentraCare Rice Memorial Hospital in Willmar.

Melba Geraldine Lundeen was born on November 16, 1934, in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, the daughter of Gustaf and Marie (Peterson) Gustafson. She grew up near Hazel and graduated from Thief River Falls High School in 1952. She received her Teachers Training Certificate and began teaching elementary school in Pennington County.

On January 2, 1955, Melba was united in marriage to Erling LeRoy Lundeen. They made their home in Goodridge and she worked hard as a farm wife. When

they moved to Elkhorn, Wisconsin in June of 1968, Melba worked as a cook at Lutherdale Bible Camp and later became a para-professional with the Elkhorn Public School District. In 1976, they moved to Spicer where Melba became employed at the Green Lake Bible Camp as a receptionist and bookkeeper. Melba began working as a bookkeeper for Ed Holst, LPA in 1984. Later she worked many summers as a cook for the Green Lake Ministries at Camp House in Brimson, Minnesota and at Green Lake Nursery in Spicer.

Melba and Erling enjoyed spending many winters in Mesa, Arizona, where she was an active member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church. She was also an active member of Faith Lutheran Church, serving on the Altar Guild, bible study groups and sang in the choir.

Melba enjoyed singing and was a member of the Sweet Adelines women's quartet group. She enjoyed jigsaw puzzles, playing horseshoes and card games, gardening, sewing and knitting.

Melba is survived by her four children, Lana Ferry (Doug Jensen) of Sturgeon Bay, WI., Kathy (William) Neil of Downs, IL, Karen (Ernest) Watson of Emery, SD, and Mark (Judy) Lundeen of Spicer; thirteen grandchildren and twenty-three great grandchildren. Also surviving is her brother-in-law, Walter Wiskow of Wadena, besides other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Erling in 2016; sister, Elinor Wiskow in 2024; and grandson, Dayton Tiegs.

A celebration of life service will be held at Faith Lutheran Church, Spicer on Saturday, April 26, 2025. Arrangements are entrusted to the Peterson Brothers Green Lake Funeral Home in Spicer. [www.petersonbrothers.com](http://www.petersonbrothers.com). Check the funeral home website for service details TBD. Memorials to honor Melba's life may be directed to: Green Lake Lutheran Ministries or Lutherdale Bible Camp.



### Confirmation Class October 31, 1948

Back row: Marlyn Bjorge, Peter Engelstad, Donald Netteland, Donald Thune

Front row: Marjorie Lokken, Rev. Fjelstul, Melba Gustafson



# In Memoriam

## Julette “Julie” Adelle Jasperson

October 25, 1946 – December 9, 2024

*Julie, along with her siblings parents Clarence and Myrtle Weckwerth, were long-time members of St. Pauli Church where Julie was baptized on December 29, 1946.*



Julette "Julie" A. Jasperson, age 78, of Hastings, MN transitioned peacefully while physically surrounded in the loving embrace of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren on December 9, 2024.

Julette Adelle began her life journey on October 25, 1946 in Thief River Falls, Minnesota born to Clarence and Myrtle (Nelson) Weckwerth.

The endless stories of growing up on a northern farm delighted [the Weckwerths lived south of Albersgs] and enriched those around her with reflections of how things used to be. Julie enjoyed sharing her memories of her early life with cold winters, no indoor plumbing and being one of six kids, which meant she was truly blessed and never bored. It was well known that her mother was her favorite cook and no one could hold a candle to what she created in the kitchen.

True to Julie's passion in the field of medicine she found her journey guiding her fresh out of high school through nursing school. She started out working as an LPN in a hospital in Phoenix, Arizona. This was the beginning of a decades-long career that she took great pride in. Soon marriage and motherhood had her stepping to the side to run her own business of an in-home daycare while her children were young. Through difficult times when most would want to give up, she always found a way to be creative and compromise to take care of her kids.

Deciding she had not fulfilled her goals in higher education, she acted on the decision to return to college and earn her RN degree from Arizona State University. She was known to take her kids to some of these classes where they would sit in the back and try to absorb what their mother excelled at. Many late nights she could be found with a project waiting in the sewing machine and her head resting on a textbook taking a brief nap. In the midst of all of this, Julie somehow found the time to coach her kids' softball and baseball teams, lead girl scouts and sew church choir robes. Nothing could stop her determination to create and provide.

Eventually her career took her through all areas of nursing within the Mayo Clinic system. Health issues had retirement coming earlier than she expected. This didn't find her slowing down. Becoming a grandmother and then great-grandmother became her favorite role in life. The mention of seeing "Grandma Julie" always lit up little faces with excitement. Museums, trips to movies and making special blankets that would carry on to future generations are just a few examples of how she gave everything to this stage of her life. Rhubarb, the Minnesota Twins and a good debate will be a few ways she will quickly come to mind. No one was left questioning how she felt as she was a firm believer in speaking her mind. It is well known that Julie took delight in embracing all that came into her world as her own. Whether born into it or joining in, they were hers regardless.

Julie taught us the courage of stars before she left. How light carries on endlessly, even after death. With shortness of breath, she explained the infinite. And how rare and beautiful it is to even exist. Her legacy will move forward in practicing kindness, love and celebrating her life as she hoped for.

Julie is once again with her mother and father; sister, Lorrie Townley; brother, James Weckwerth; and nephew, James "Jimmy" Weckwerth.

Julie is survived by her children, Kimberly (Scott) Piersel, Jeffrey (Theresa) Jasperson; grandchildren, Brandon (Shyanne) Salchow, Joseph (Marisa) Salchow, Johanas (Amanda) Harrer, Eli Piersel, Trevor James and Martina Jasperson; great-grandchildren, Trey & Ryker Salchow, Shawn Harrer, Layla & Forest Salchow; brother, Gene (Eunice) Weckwerth; sisters, Myrna Weckwerth and Alyce Weckwerth; as well as many nieces and nephews.

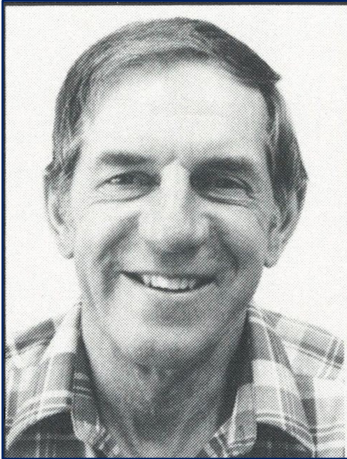
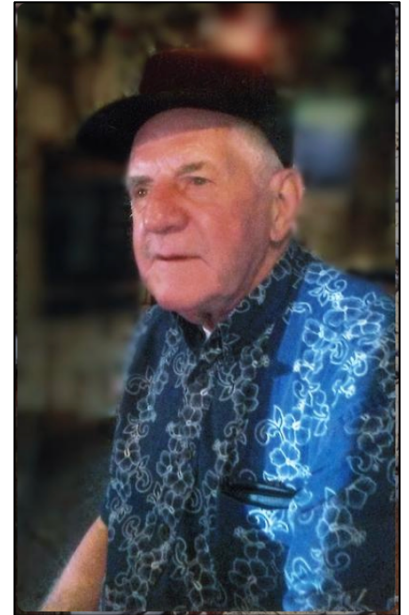
Services for Julie will be held at a later date in the spring when all of her family can attend. All memorials should be directed towards pancreatic cancer research in the Weckwerth family name. The Starkson Family Life Celebration Chapel of Hastings is handling arrangements. <https://www.hastingsmnfuneral.com/>

# In Memoriam

## Oliver “Skip” Swanson

July 29, 1935 – December 22, 2024

*It goes without saying that Skip was a faithful and vital member of St. Pauli Church. He rarely missed a Sunday service and served on the council. He was also instrumental in bringing Sunday School back to our home church.*



Skip Swanson, 89, of Thief River Falls, MN passed away on Sunday, December 22, 2024 at his residence surrounded by his loving family.

Oliver Clayton Swanson was born July 29, 1935 in Sanders Township, Pennington County, MN the son of George C. and Katherine (Anton) Swanson. He was baptized and confirmed at Calvary Lutheran Church in St. Hilaire, MN. He attended District 166 Country School in Sanders Township, then at St. Hilaire School through the eighth grade, and graduated from Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls. Skip had served as class president all four years of his high school.

On August 25, 1956, Skip was united in marriage to Patricia Rae Torkelson at Calvary Lutheran Church in St. Hilaire by Pastor Eldon Person. To this union two sons were born, Kevin Alan Swanson and Brad Lauren Swanson.

In 1953 Skip entered into service with the Minnesota Army National Guard. While a member of the guard, Skip served as Assistant Supply Technician and Company Clerk. On May 10, 1974 Skip was Honorably Discharged.

Growing up Skip worked on his family farm and neighbor's farm. After graduating from high school, he worked many jobs including the oil fields of North Dakota. His brother Chet got him a job working for Ranum Construction. With that experience he started his own construction company in the late 1960's: "Swanson Construction." His crew often included his sons Kevin and Brad.

During his early years, Skip was a member of Calvary Lutheran Church in St. Hilaire and was currently a member of St. Pauli Lutheran Church. Skip was very active in the Thief River Falls community. He served as a Pennington County Commissioner for 32 years, on the Pennington County Fair Board for 15 years, and was active with the Golden Pioneers. Skip was a member of the American Legion Post 117, Eagles Thief River Falls, and the Heritage Center.

Survivors include his sister, Sharon (Neil) Bugge; sisters-in-law, Shirley Swanson, Corine Bjorge and Carolyn (Chuck Larson) Haugen; brother-in-law, Craig (Sally) Torkelson; sidekick niece, Talli Swanson; many other nieces and nephews, including great- and great-great nieces and nephews, other family members, and many friends.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Patty; his parents, George Carl and Kate Swanson; his sons, Kevin and Brad; siblings, Chester (Janet), Lenord (Marcie), Eleanor, Lillian "Mickey" (Chuck Richards), Donnie (Cerise), Cliff, Dennis, and Leslie (Bernie); brother-in-law, Lyle Bjorge and many other relatives.

Visitation was held on Friday, January 3, 2025 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Johnson Funeral Service in Thief River Falls with a prayer service starting at 6:30 PM. Visitation also began at 10:00 AM with the service to celebrate Skip's life starting at 11:00 AM on Saturday, January 4, 2025 at Johnson Funeral Service in Thief River Falls, MN with Kevin Reich officiating. Burial will be at St. Pauli Cemetery at a later date.



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

**That memory becomes a treasure.**

**God Bless the Memories of**

**Melba Lundeen**

**Julie Jasperson**

**Skip Swanson**

# Minutes of the St. Pauli Church Council

November 22, 2024

The St. Pauli Lutheran Church council held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, November 22, 2024 at St. Pauli Church. Members present: Marisa Benson, Wade Benson, Jim Rondorf Barb Nelson and Kevin Reich.

President Wade Benson called the meeting to order. Kevin Reich led us in opening prayer.

Secretary's report: Motion by Jim to approve, seconded by Marisa. Carried.

Treasurer's report: Motion to approve by Barb, seconded by Jim. Carried.

Checking account balance end of September.	\$ 26,242.80
October revenue.	3,975.54
October expenses	<u>(1,080.90)</u>
Balance end of October 2024.	\$ 29137.44

Other account balances end of October.	
Education Fund.	\$ 551.16
Edward Jones.	83,308.96
Memorial Fund.	8,648.63
Mission Grant.	5,665.96
Savings.	38,624.52

Total balances end of October 2024. \$165,936.67

Cemetery Ass'n funds end of October 2024. \$ 76,861.61

Total funds under management end of October 2024.  
\$242,798.28

Old Business: Jim reported he has not gotten any more information or estimate yet on the generator to be used in case of power outage.

Marisa reported the new lights in the basement were rewired and LED bulbs placed by Northwest Electric. They are very nice.

New Business: Need a nominating committee. Marisa will be contacting people for that.

Kevin Reich reported he will be conducting the Christmas Eve service and asked Wade to request permission for him to serve communion at that time. Wade will take care of that. Kevin would also serve communion to the helpers after everyone else instead of before. That will be passed on to the helpers.

Kevin will also be a part of the joint Thanksgiving Eve service at Redeemer Church. He has also been attending Synodical Approved Ministers Conference meetings. He asked permission to host the group at St. Pauli. Permission granted!!

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25. Motion by Jim, seconded by Marisa. Carried.

We closed by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

Barb Nelson, St. Pauli Lutheran Church secretary

## Minutes of the Women of the ELCA

November 20, 2024

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met on November 20, 2024 at 3:30 pm at the church with 7 members present.

President Jan opened with devotions "The Peace That Protects" based on Proverbs 14:30.

Secretary's Report: Minutes of October meeting were approved as read.

Treasurer's Report: October 16 to November 20:  
Expenses: \$496.71; Income: \$3,079 (includes \$3,019 for Fall Event). Checking account balance as of November 20: \$4,113.30; Savings account balance as of October 31: \$597.66. CD balance: \$6,500.41.

Fall Event report:

Donations: \$3,109.00; Expenses \$703.54; Net profit: \$2,315.46. WELCA decided to donate a total of \$2,400, as follows:

ELCA Good Gifts	\$ 500.00
ELCA Scholarship Fund	300.00
Heritage Center	250.00
BIO Girls	100.00

Pennington County Salvation Army	500.00
Northlands Rescue Mission	200.00
(plus misc. clothing donations)	
TRF Area Community Fund	100.00
Little Brother/Little Sister Program	100.00
North Country Food Bank	100.00
Minnesota Public Radio	50.00
Lincoln High School Prowler Pantry	<u>200.00</u>
	\$2,400.00

Thrivent Cards totaling \$500.00 were applied mostly to our Hugo's account; other purchases were for baby care kit items (towels and soap) and The Times bill.

Virginia moved to approve both secretary and treasurer reports, Sue seconded. Carried.

Stewardship: Layette kits and school bags have been shipped. Carol and LeRoy Stumpf have a Christmas tree for us. Virginia and Ronnie will pick up.

Council report: No meeting last month. Basement lights are finished.



### Old Business:

Jan and Virginia went to The Forks Frammer shop and got a quote of \$2,387.34. We won't be charged tax because we are a church organization. The total could be less than that, but it will definitely not be more. Ronnie Anderson applied for a Thrivent card, and we can use only one card on this project because it is a service activity. Frammer says they need \$800 down to purchase supplies for the framing, which we will do from our checking account. Meatball fundraising dinner at Heritage Center gave us \$900 toward the project. Faye will apply to local foundations for money.

Thank you to everyone who helped with Fall Event. Our net profit was \$2,315.46. We served 60-70 and had approximately one tall pot of soup left over. Eight pans of bars would have been enough. Lots of bread left over.

New Business: Should we change our WELCA meeting time during winter to 3:00 in the afternoon? Kathy made motion that we meet at 3:00 on Wednesday October through April. Cindy seconded. Carried.

Middle River Choir: Based on our recommendations, Jan suggested Sunday, December 8, but hasn't heard back from Brianna yet. Jan will let us know later. We will serve pie and coffee.

Elections: Unanimous ballot case for President: Jan, VP: Virginia, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Sue; Secretary: Faye, Treasurer: Cindy, Stewardship: Kathy. Approved.

Potluck for Sunday School Christmas program on December 15. Lydia Circle serving.

Richard Geske has moved: Kathy will check for his new address.

Thankoffering: An abbreviated, but meaningful program was given by Kathy.

The Lord's Prayer was prayed. Meeting adjourned.

Faye Auchenpaugh, Secretary

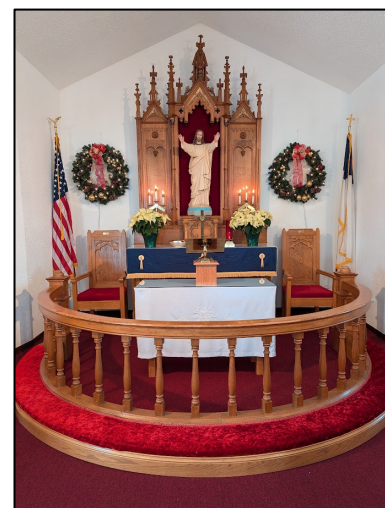
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## **Greetings St. Pauli Lutheran Church Members and Friends**

Once again, Sheila and I were blessed to be the benefactors of your generosity. Thank you very much for the monetary gift that was bestowed to us this past Christmas season, in gratitude of our service to St. Pauli. We are so fortunate and thankful for the fashion we have been received into your church family in the love of Jesus. We truly appreciate all of your kindness, love, and support.

May all of you be blessed throughout 2025. May the worship services at St. Pauli be a blessing to all who enter in. And may the service beyond the walls of the church be a blessing to those who are the recipients. In Christ's love, with love, Kevin Reich.

*Photo taken by Kevin Reich*



Look who we spotted helping to serve free Christmas Eve meals at the Evangelical Free Church!

## **Bell Ringing for Christmas Eve Services**



I think we have Kevin and Sheila to thank for some of these strong guys and gals.



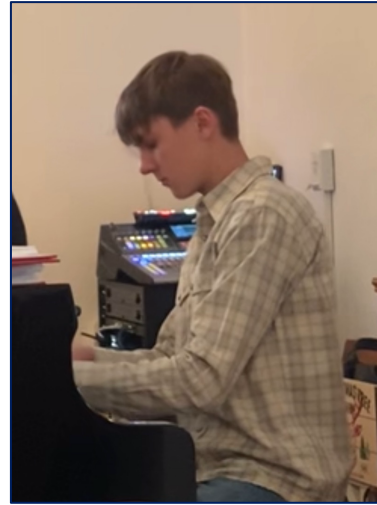
## Sunday School Program “Our Five Symbols of Christmas”



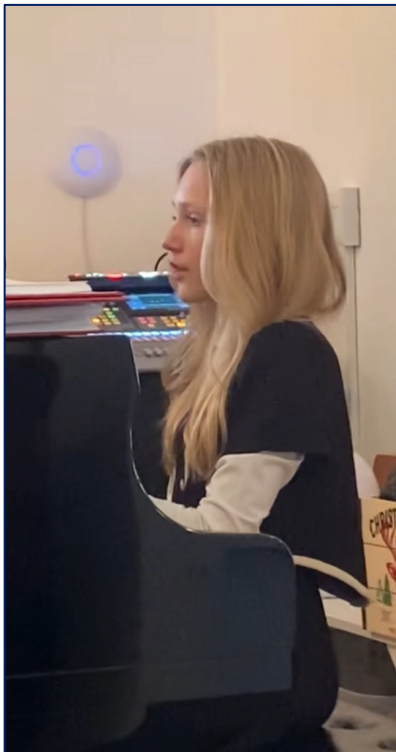
We have such a terrific group of Sunday School students! Here they are in the basement just before the Christmas program. (We were missing two students who were unable to be at the program this year.)

Front row: Carter Berg, Emma Klamar, Kyland Rondorf, Seth Klamar.

Back row: Hunter Klamar, Ella Rondorf, Shea Iverson, Aksel Haugen, Elsa Haugen and Easton Berg.



Gabe Haugen played a piano solo “Silent Night.”



Elsa Haugen performed a piano and vocal solo “Angel Carol.”





# WELCA Christmas Party

Marisa and Wade Benson hosted a fun evening for the ladies and their spouses featuring contests, games and prizes. One of the contests was to write a new verse for a favorite Christmas carol. Below are some of the entries. See if you can guess the carol.

1.

Oh, the WHITE clouds are a'changing;  
The BLACK clouds rearranging.  
But as long as you love me, Jane  
Let it rain, Let it rain, Let it rain.

2.

Now we still remember Grandma,  
And the lefse that she rolled.  
We should go look in the freezer  
And dig out the bags before they get too old!

3.

Everyone thought I'd met my demise  
But much to their surprise  
I looked into their eyes.  
I took quite a tumble  
But I'm just bruised a bit  
It was quite a sight  
On that dark and cold night.  
I didn't see it coming  
Even though his nose was so bright  
I'm sure I'll recover from this calamity  
So there's no need for such a pity on me.  
You might think this is just a made-up story,  
But you can bet your roasted chestnuts, I believe!

4.

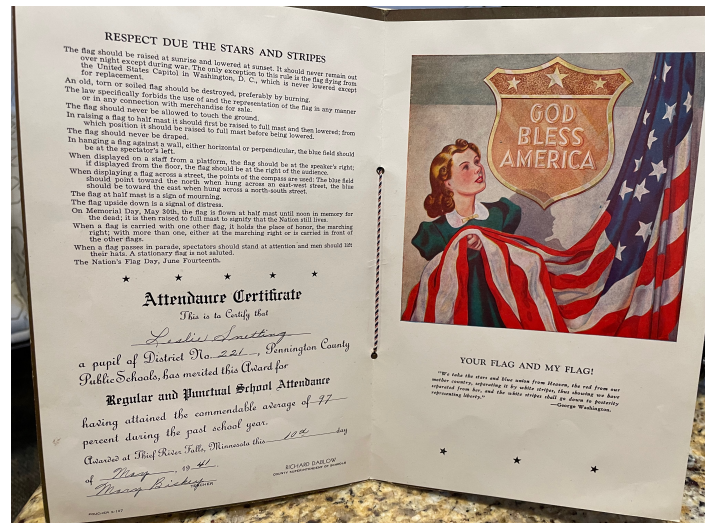
Driving through the snow,  
In my beat-up Chevrolet  
Over the roads I go,  
Chuckling all the way.  
The fenders' mostly rust,  
With a dent and rattle too.  
Tires are nearly bald,  
What more can this car do?  
Oh, bump and grind, bump and grind,  
Bumping all the way,  
Driving to St. Pauli on this  
Merry Christmas Day.  
Merry Christmas to you all!

5.

I'm thinking tonight of a place,  
More than I usually do.  
Although I'm far away,  
This I promise you.  
I'll be home for Lefse  
You can bet I will.  
Please have Klub,  
It'll taste so good,  
Sweet Soup and maybe Sild.  
Christmas Day will find me,  
Eating cheese and nuts with beer.  
I'll be home for Lefse  
My memory is so clear.  
Memory is so clear, is so clear, is so clear.

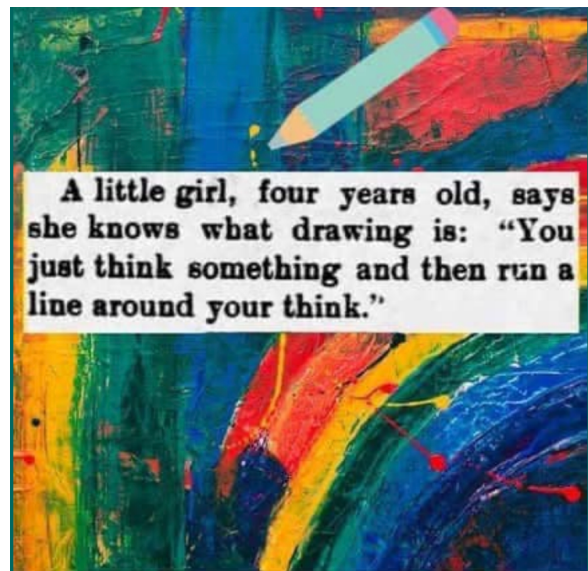
1. "Let It Snow" (Jim Strandlie)
2. "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer" (Jan Strandlie)
3. "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer" (Cindy Cedergren)
4. "Jingle Bells" (Ronnie Anderson)
5. "I'll Be Home for Christmas" (Virginia Anderson)  
Virginia added that this Christmas carol was very popular during WWII when returning home was on the minds of our Armed Forces as well as their families waiting for their return. "I'll Be Home for Christmas" was a huge hit for Bing Crosby in 1943.

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The photo above is of Les Snetting's Attendance Certificate for Washington District 221 country school (97% attendance). This is quite the award booklet, very similar to what our high school diplomas were like – with a padded cover but larger, and it was given by the county superintendent of schools.

It also contains all of the American flag etiquette. Good information for all of us. Does anyone recall receiving one of these certificates? Your editor had never seen one before.



# Pope Francis: There is Faith in Humor

*By Pope Francis, December 17, 2024*

Life inevitably has its sadnesses, which are part of every path of hope and every path toward conversion. But it is important to avoid wallowing in melancholy at all costs, not to let it embitter the heart.

**These are temptations** from which not even clerics are immune. And sometimes we unfortunately come across as bitter, sad priests who are more authoritarian than authoritative, more like old bachelors than wedded to the church, more like officials than pastors, more supercilious than joyful, and this, too, is certainly not good. But generally, we priests tend to enjoy humor and even have a fair stock of jokes and amusing stories, which we are often quite good at telling, as well as being the object of them.

Popes, too. John XXIII, who was well known for his humor, during one discourse said, more or less: "It often happens at night that I start thinking about a number of serious problems. I then make a brave and determined decision to go in the morning to speak with the pope. Then I wake up all in a sweat ... and remember that the pope is me."

How well I understand him. And John Paul II was much the same. In the preliminary sessions of a conclave, when he was still Cardinal Wojtyła, an older and rather severe cardinal went to rebuke him because he went skiing, climbed mountains, and went cycling and swimming. The story goes something like this: "I don't think these are activities fitting to your role," the cardinal suggested. To which the future pope replied: "But do you know that in Poland these are activities practiced by at least 50 percent of cardinals?" In Poland at the time, there were only two cardinals.

Irony is a medicine, not only to lift and brighten others, but also ourselves, because self-mockery is a powerful tool in overcoming the temptation toward narcissism. Narcissists are continually looking in the mirror, painting themselves, gazing at themselves, but the best advice in front of a mirror is to laugh at ourselves. It is good for us. It will prove the truth of that old proverb that says that there are only two kinds of perfect people: the dead, and those yet to be born.

**Jokes about and told by Jesuits** are in a class of their own, comparable maybe only to those about the carabinieri in Italy, or about Jewish mothers in Yiddish humor.

As for the danger of narcissism, to be avoided with appropriate doses of self-irony, I remember the one about the rather vain Jesuit who had a heart problem and had to be treated in a hospital. Before going into the operating theater, he asks God: "Lord, has my hour come?"

"No, you will live at least another 40 years," God replies. After the operation, he decides to make the most of it and has a hair transplant, a face-lift, liposuction, eyebrows, teeth ... in short, he comes out a changed man. Right outside the hospital, he is knocked down by a car and dies. As soon as he appears in the presence of God, he protests: "Lord, but you told me I would live for another 40 years!" "Oops, sorry!" God replies. "I didn't recognize you."

And the Jesuits told me one that concerns me directly, the one about Pope Francis in America. It goes something like this: As soon as he arrives at the airport in New York for his

apostolic journey in the United States, Pope Francis finds an enormous limousine waiting for him. He is rather embarrassed by that magnificent splendor, but then thinks that it has been ages since he last drove, and never a vehicle of that kind, and he thinks to himself: OK, when will I get another chance? He looks at the limousine and says to the driver, "You couldn't let me try it out, could you?" "Look, I'm really sorry, Your Holiness," replies the driver, "but I really can't, you know, there are rules and regulations."

But you know what they say, how the pope is when he gets something into his head ... in short, he insists and insists, until the driver gives in. So Pope Francis gets behind the steering wheel, on one of those enormous highways, and he begins to enjoy it, presses down on the accelerator, going 50 miles per hour, 80, 120 ... until he hears a siren, and a police car pulls up beside him and stops him. A young policeman comes up to the darkened window. The pope rather nervously lowers it and the policeman turns white. "Excuse me a moment," he says, and goes back to his vehicle to call headquarters. "Boss, I think I have a problem."

"What problem?" asks the chief.

"Well, I've stopped a car for speeding, but there's a guy in there who's really important." "How important? Is he the mayor?"

"No, no, boss ... more than the mayor."

"And more than the mayor, who is there? The governor?"

"No, no, more. ..."

"But he can't be the president?"

"More, I reckon. ..."

"And who can be more important than the president?"

"Look, boss, I don't know exactly who he is, all I can tell you is that it's the pope who is driving him!"

The Gospel, which urges us to become like little children for our own salvation (Matthew 18:3), reminds us to regain their ability to smile.

**Today, nothing cheers me** as much as meeting children. When I was a child, I had those who taught me to smile, but now that I am old, children are often my mentors. The meetings with them are the ones that thrill me the most, that make me feel best.

And then those meetings with old people: those elderly who bless life, who put aside all resentment, who take pleasure in the wine that has turned out well over the years, are irresistible. They have the gift of laughter and tears, like children. When I take children in my arms during the audiences in Saint Peter's Square, they mostly smile; but others, when they see me dressed all in white, think I'm the doctor who has come to give them a shot, and then they cry.

They are examples of spontaneity, of humanity, and they remind us that those who give up their own humanity give up everything, and that when it becomes hard to cry seriously or to laugh passionately, then we really are on the downhill slope. We become anesthetized, and anesthetized adults do nothing good for themselves, society, or the church.

## January – “THIS ‘N THAT”

*January was named for the Roman god Janus, known as the protector of gates and doorways, which symbolize beginnings and endings. Janus is depicted with two faces, one looking into the past, the other with the ability to see into the future.*

**January 15, 1943** - Construction of the Pentagon was completed to house the U.S. military. It is the world's largest office building, with 3,700,000 sq ft used as office space.

**January 13, 1888** -The National Geographic Society was founded in Washington, D.C. to “increase and diffuse geographic knowledge.”

**January 1, 1863** -As America approached its third year of civil war, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. This declared that all people held as slaves within rebellious American states were now ‘free.’

**January 1, 1892** - Ellis Island in New York Harbor opened. Over 20 million new arrivals to America were processed there until its closing in 1954.

**January 1, 2002** - The Euro banknotes and coins were introduced in 12 different countries. This was the world's largest monetary changeover ever.

**January 3, 1922** - English explorer Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings, near Luxor in Egypt. “King Tut” ruled Egypt as Pharaoh for ten years until his death at age 19, around 1324 BC.

**January 8, 793 AD** - Danish Vikings attacked Lindisfarne Island off the Northeast coast of England. Destroying the famous church of St. Cuthbert, the attack sent a shockwave throughout Europe and is considered to be the beginning of what we call the “Viking Age.” Despite the raid, a Christian community survived there and recorded the event on the famous “Domesday Stone.”

**January 11, 1569** - During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the first ever state lottery was held in England. Tickets could be purchased at the West Door of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Working to raise funds for several public works projects, Queen Elizabeth was given the choice between levying a new tax and holding the first state lottery. The Queen decided to hold a lottery.

**January 27, 1926** - Scottish inventor, electrical engineer, and innovator John Logie Baird demonstrated his new machine, the world's first live working television system, to the Royal Institution in London.

**January 28, 1807** - London became the first city in the world to be lit by gas lights. Gaslights cost around 75% less than oil lamps and candles. Baltimore was the first U.S. city to be lit by gas in 1817. Among the economic impacts of gas lighting was much longer work hours in factories.

**January 3, 1959** - Alaska was admitted as the 49th U.S. state with a land mass almost one-fifth the size of the lower 48 states together.

**January 4, 1809** - Louis Braille was born in France. Blinded as a boy, he later invented a reading system for the blind using punch marks in paper.

**January 6, 1412** - Joan of Arc was born in France. After a series of mystic visitations by saints, she inspired French troops to break the British siege at Orleans and win several important victories during the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) between France and Britain. She was eventually captured and sold to the

British who tried her for heresy and burned her at the stake. In 1920, Joan of Arc was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church.

**January 7, 1714** - A patent was issued for the first typewriter designed by British inventor Henry Mill “for the impressing or transcribing of letters singly or progressively one after another, as in writing.”

**January 8, 1815** – The Battle of New Orleans occurred as General Andrew Jackson and American troops defended themselves against a British attack, inflicting over 2,000 casualties. Both sides in this battle were unaware that peace had been declared two weeks earlier with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812.

**January 10, 1776** - *Common Sense*, a fifty-page pamphlet by Thomas Paine, was published. It sold over 500,000 copies in America and Europe, influencing, among others, the authors of the Declaration of Independence.

**January 10, 1878** - An Amendment granting women the right to vote was introduced in Congress by Senator A.A. Sargent of California. The amendment didn't pass until 1920, 42 years later.

**January 16, 1853** - French industrialist Andre Michelin was born in Paris. He started the Michelin Tire Company in 1888, pioneering the use of pneumatic tires on autos.

**January 20, 1942** - During the Holocaust, Reinhard Heydrich, Himmler's second in command of the SS, convened the Wannsee Conference in Berlin with 15 top Nazi bureaucrats to coordinate the Final Solution (Endlösung) in which the Nazis would attempt to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe, an estimated 11 million persons.

**January 21, 1954** - The *USS Nautilus*, the world's first nuclear powered submarine, was launched at Groton, Connecticut.

**January 24, 1848** - The California gold rush began with the accidental discovery of the precious metal near Coloma during construction of a Sutter's sawmill.

**January 24, 1895** - Hawaii's monarchy ended as Queen Liliuokalani was forced to abdicate. Hawaii was then annexed by the U.S. and remained a territory until statehood was granted in 1959.

**January 24, 1972** - Japanese soldier Shoichi Yokoi was discovered on Guam after he had spent 28 years hiding out in the jungle not knowing World War II had long since ended.

**January 26, 1788** - The British established a settlement at Sydney Harbor in Australia as 11 ships with 778 convicts arrived, setting up a penal colony to relieve overcrowded prisons in England.

**January 27, 1756** - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria. From the age of five, through his untimely death at age 35, this musical genius created over 600 compositions including 16 operas, 41 symphonies, 27 piano and five violin concerti, 25 string quartets, 19 masses, among others.

**January 28, 1915** - The U.S. Coast Guard was created by an Act of Congress, combining the Life Saving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service.

**January 28, 1986** - The U.S. Space Shuttle *Challenger* exploded 74 seconds into its flight, killing seven persons, including Christa McAuliffe, a teacher who was to be the first ordinary citizen in space.



## “Heroes”

*by Heather Cox Richardson, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday*

You hear sometimes that, now that we know the sordid details of the lives of some of our leading figures, America has no heroes left.

When I was writing a book about the Wounded Knee Massacre, where heroism was pretty thin on the ground, I gave that a lot of thought. And I came to believe that heroism is neither being perfect, nor doing something spectacular. In fact, it's just the opposite: it's regular, flawed human beings, choosing to put others before themselves, even at great cost, even if no one will ever know, even as they realize the walls might be closing in around them.

It means sitting down the night before D-Day and writing a letter praising the troops and taking all the blame for the next day's failure upon yourself, in case things went wrong, as General Dwight D. Eisenhower did.

It means writing in your diary that you “still believe that people are really good at heart,” even while you are hiding in an attic from the men who are soon going to kill you, as Anne Frank did.

It means signing your name to the bottom of the Declaration of Independence in bold print, even though you know you are signing your own death warrant should the British capture you, as John Hancock did.

It means defending your people's right to practice a religion you don't share, even though you know you are becoming a dangerously visible target, as Sitting Bull did.

Sometimes it just means sitting down, even when you are told to stand up, as Rosa Parks did.

None of those people woke up one morning and said to themselves that they were about to do something heroic. It's just that, when they had to, they did what was right.

On April 3, 1968, the night before the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated by a white supremacist, he gave a speech in support of sanitation workers in Memphis, TN, King had tried to broaden the Civil Rights Movement for racial equality into a larger movement for economic justice. He joined the sanitation workers in Memphis, who were on strike after years of bad pay and such dangerous conditions that two men had been crushed to death in garbage compactors.

After his friend Ralph Abernathy introduced him to the crowd, King had something to say about heroes: “As I listened to Ralph Abernathy and his eloquent and generous introduction and then thought about myself, I wondered who he was talking about.”

Dr. King told the audience that, if God had let him choose any era in which to live, he would have chosen the one in which he had landed. “Now, that's a strange statement to make,” King went on, “because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land; confusion all around.... But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough, can you see the stars.” Dr. King said that he felt blessed to live in an era when people had finally woken up and were working together for freedom and justice.

He knew he was in danger as he worked for a racially and economically just America. “I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter...because I've been to the mountaintop.... Like anybody, I would like to live a long life.... But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!”

People are wrong to say that we have no heroes left.

Just as they have always been, they are all around us, choosing to do the right thing, no matter what.

Wishing you all a day of peace for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

\* \* \* \* \*

## My Annual Favorite Christmas Letter

It looks as if we may be in for one of our typical Minnesota winters—one of those heartwarming and delightful times that are remembered and talked about for decades to come. In other words, snow has covered the ground and the temps are, as normal, continuing to fall. Our complaints about the harshness of our winters really don't fool any of the Minnesota natives—they know it is just another way of bragging that no matter what Mother Nature sends our way, we can handle it.

I suppose that attitude is a throwback to the Scandinavian heritage that so many of the inhabitants of Northern Minnesota can claim. A farm near Ibestad, Troms, Norway is where my grandfather John Sannes was born. It is north of the Arctic Circle and there are still family members living in that area. We have been lucky to have made contact with several descendants of one of Grandpa's brothers, and now with computers providing the option of translation, communications are made simple. One of our Norwegian cousins, Rune, participates in Polar Plunges and from what I can gather, actually plans some of the events. So, there you have it, our ability to handle the cold—it is a part of our DNA.

Last year I spent the holidays in the hospital—with both leg bones broken just above my left ankle and, no, I was not ditch-surfing on snow skis being towed by a car driven at a high rate of speed by a daredevil who couldn't wait for his turn to ski. Much to the relief of area parents, that practice ended during my teen years, so I'm pretty sure my generation was the last to consider ditch-surfing as a fun sport. Shark culverts waited, open mouthed, at every crossing and field approach to swallow the skis of any of the unsuspecting.

Nowadays, people of all ages are water skiing throughout the summer months and thoroughly enjoying it. I suspect that water skiing was a form of retaliation endorsed, if not invented, by the daredevil ditch-surfers of Northern Minnesota. Anyway, last winter a patch of ice got the better of me so that is why I ended up spending the holidays in the hospital and why no Christmas cards were sent.

It is difficult to dream of warm weather winter getaways when a person is busy plotting summer projects, planning for events that can't possibly be missed and just plain staying-in-the-know for the upcoming Minnesota summer schedule. Berry picking is still a must for many Minnesotans—a practice that often takes precedent for anything else on the summer schedule. Sadly, for the most part, gone are the chokecherries, wild plums, June berries, and high-bush cranberries that once added variety and nutrition to the family diet and created memories still treasured of those meals. It is still possible to find wild blueberry patches in Minnesota, so the challenge to be first on the scene still exists. (Hint: Blueberries are ripe when a certain wildflower blooms.) One of my uncles once commented that when the family went to visit the grandparents, they always smelled something good cooking when they entered the house. Many of us can recall a time when people opened windows so that the scent of lilacs and plum blossoms perfumed the houses.

So it is that time passes, and everyday events become memories to share. Now is the ideal time to wish both Kith and Kin: “Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year in 2025.” ~ DelRay

# The Back Page

When you just can't be bothered to put in the effort



**I FELL ASLEEP IN CHURCH, THEN I HEARD "STAND UP" SO I STOOD UP AND PEOPLE CLAPPED, THE PASTOR SAID WHO ELSE WILL GIVE \$2000**



Whenever my wife uses the phrase:

"I Was Thinking."



That means I have to move, build, paint, or buy something.

How quilters cut cake

