

St. Pauli Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 944
Thief River Falls, MN 56701
historicstpauli.org

January 2026 Newsletter

Annual Meetings

St. Pauli Congregation

February 1st at 11:30 am

(following worship services)

Potluck Dinner – Freewill offering to benefit Hospice

St. Pauli Cemetery Association

February 1st at 12:30 pm

(following St. Pauli Congregation annual meeting)

JANUARY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 No Sunday School 10:30 Worship Services Kevin Reich	5	6 Quilting 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Lunch included Hostess: Kathy Alberg WELCA 3:00 pm	7 Quilting 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Lunch Included Hostess: Jan Strandlie	8	9	10
11 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Services Kevin Reich	12	13	14 Lydia Circle 3:00 pm Potluck Snacks Confirmation Class 6:00 pm	15 Church Council 7:00 pm SPCA Meeting 8:00 pm	16	17
18 No Sunday School 10:30 Worship Services Kevin Reich	19 <i>Reports due for Annual Booklet</i>	20	21 Confirmation Class 6:00 pm	22	23	24
25 HOLY COMMUNION 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Services Pr. Darrel Cory	26	27	28 Confirmation Class 6:00 pm	29	30	31

St. Pauli News in Detail



ANNUAL MEETINGS

ST. PAULI CONGREGATION
February 1, 2025
11:30 am

**ST. PAULI CEMETERY
ASSOCIATION**
February 1, 2025
following Congregation Meeting

Potluck dinner
following annual meetings
Freewill offering to benefit Hospice



IMPORTANT: Designated persons need to submit their reports to Jana Prickett no later than January 19th for inclusion in the St. Pauli Annual Report. The booklets will be ready for review on Sunday, January 26th.

Submittals can be made in electronic (Word or Excel) or typed paper formats. Please place in Jana's church mailbox, email to urnotjana@gmail.com, or mail to her at 15689 110th St NE, TRF.

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St. Pauli Handbook

Be sure to check your church mailbox and pick up your 2026 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 2025: Kevin Reich for his steadfastness and Kari Torkelson for being willing to serve whenever called upon.

We are grateful that we had Pastor Marilyn Grafstrom presiding monthly for Holy Communion through August and for having Pastor Darrel Cory to conduct Holy Communion since that time. We are blessed.

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Greeting and Ushering

Jan. 4	Jim and Roxanne Rondorf
Jan. 11	Jordan and Erin Rondorf
Jan. 18	Arlo Rude
Jan. 25	Mike and Becky Stickler

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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Minutes of the St. Pauli Church Council

November 20, 2025

The St. Pauli Lutheran Church council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, November 20, 2025 at St. Pauli Church. Members present included Faye Auchenpaugh, Wade Benson, Jana Prickett and Kevin Reich.

Council President Faye Auchenpaugh called the meeting to order at 6:57 pm. Kevin Reich opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of Agenda: M/S/C (Prickett/Benson) to approve the agenda.

Secretary's Report: M/S/C (Benson/Auchenpaugh) to approve the Secretary's report for October 2025.

Treasurer's Report: M/S/C (Johnson/Auchenpaugh) to approve the Treasurer's report for October 2025.

Checking Account Balance End of Sept 2025	\$ 20,151.23
Oct 2025 Revenue	3,899.00
Oct 2025 Expenses	(2,407.93)
Checking Account Balance End of Oct 2025	\$ 21,642.30

Other Account Balances End of Oct 2025	
Edward Jones	\$ 91,997.48
Memorial Fund	8,901.33
Savings	45,595.22
Total St. Pauli Acct Balances End of Oct 2025	\$168,136.33

Cemetery Association Funds End of Oct 2025	\$ 66,217.80
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Kevin Reich's Report: A conference workshop will be held on April 11th to brainstorm ideas and gather thoughts on how to help congregations without a called Pastor.

Other Reports:

WELCA – Fall event netted \$1,800 which was slightly lower than usual. WELCA plans to give out \$2,200. Church cleaning was completed.

Board of Education – Sunday School Christmas program will be held during worship service on Sunday, December 21st with potluck to follow served by Lydia Circle.

Old Business:

1. Pulpit Supply
 - a. November 30 - Gideon, Felipe Nava, will deliver the message.
 - b. December 7 - Pastor Corey
 - c. December 24 - Kevin Reich
 - d. March 29th - Bishop Tesch
2. Cemetery memorial pavilion update – Johnson Funeral Home has donated 20 memorial markers for trees/shrubs. Plaques will be printed at Universal Screenprint.
3. Church exterior cleaning – WELCA/Virginia Anderson recommended a group for pest control spraying in Fall 2026.

New Business:

1. Jana Prickett agreed to chair the Nominating Committee for upcoming council vacancies. Faye Auchenpaugh will assist.
2. Church handbook questions
 - a. Annual meeting will be on Sunday, February 8th immediately following worship service.
 - b. Lenten services will happen as usual including Ash Wednesday with Communion, Wednesday evenings and Good Friday
 - c. Eastern service time will be held at 8:00 am
3. Received notification that our property insurance will be increasing by 20% for 2026.

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 18th at 7:00 pm.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer and adjourned at 7:37 pm.

Jana Prickett, St. Pauli Church Council Secretary

Minutes of the Women of the ELCA

November 19, 2025

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met at 3:00 pm with seven members present. President Jan Strandlie opened with Devotions titled "Glory on Display" based on Psalm 148:13.

Secretary's report: The minutes of our September 24, 2025 meeting were read.

Treasurer's report: September 25-November 19, 2025:
Expenses: \$479.12; Income: \$2,316.00. Checking balance \$3,428.39. Savings balance as of 10-31-25: \$611.27. CD balance as of 10-24-25: \$6,869.68. The CD matured on the October 25th and was renewed for 7 months at 4.2% interest. Interest we earned over the 9-month period was \$546.39.

Fall Event:	Expenses:	(\$ 665.29)
	Income:	\$ 2,518.45
	Net Profit:	\$ 1,853.16

M/S/C Virginia Anderson/Kathy Alberg to approve both the secretary's and treasurer's reports.

Virginia gave a report on the Fall Conference held on October 4th at Our Savior's in Thief Lake. The conference title was "Good Samaritan" based on Luke 10:37. Only 35 people were there – the lowest attendance ever. Main speakers were Brianna Gere and Nikki Hanson EMTs from the Middle River ambulance crew. They seemed very enthusiastic and up on their endeavors and calls. They said they are not as well trained as the EMTs are in Thief River Falls, e.g., they cannot administer oxygen, but they are adequate for their area. The closest service for them is Roseau, so they are a much-needed entity in the Middle River area. They showed the film "Six Minutes to Live" and had an actual ambulance there, which let us get a good view of the interior. Bonnie Wagner talked about the conventions and remarked that we should try

to up our Thankoffering a bit. There were a total of 103 baskets at the Convention in Alexandria, with an average sales price of \$40. One basket went for over \$100. She also talked about the willingness to do AED and CPR training. She cautioned the group to remember that when you're doing CPR you shouldn't forget to call 911 and to work as a team.

Tammy Swick has finished the fall cleaning. She had triple bypass surgery today. Cindy will send her a card.

Stewardship Report:

- Shipped November 8th to LWR: 19 quilts, 31 personal care kits, 30 baby care kits, and 7 school kits. Two fire quilts were set aside. Five quilts and 2 baby quilts were donated to VIP, and 1 quilt to the TRF Area Community Fund fundraiser and was appreciated.
- 27 potpies were delivered in February.
- Flannel cost \$269.55 and we got 68 diapers out of that. (The flannel was \$5.59/yard for diaper flannel. We got a 10% discount.)

Council will call Greg Radniecki to see if he will clean the carpet at the bottom of stairs.

Communications: From our Sunday School: "The Sunday School is excited to give this gift of \$50 to help support the causes you are selecting with your Fall Event!" From Steve and Linda Larson: "Thank you for your warm hospitality...and for welcoming us to worship with you in your Sunday service, which was filled with inspirational music and message. It was

such a blessing to be able to perform and share the "7th Inning Stretch" in the beautiful space of St. Pauli Lutheran Church! God Bless each of you!!" A \$100 donation was enclosed.

New Business:

- Virginia took the Our Family labels to the Heritage Center, and they were happy to get them.
- Meeting time: WELCA meetings are set for 3:00 pm for the next year. No hostess, no lunch.
- Circle: We will meet at 3:00 pm on Wednesdays, no Saturdays. Hostesses may serve lunch, but that is voluntary. M/S/C Sue/Cindy.

Thankoffering program: Wonderful program done by Kathy Alberg.

Fall Event net profit: \$1,853.16. Faye made a motion that we distribute \$2,200/seconded by Virginia. Kathy motion/Cindy second to approve the following designated gifts.

Heritage Center	\$ 200
Prowler Pantry	200
Northland Rescue	200
LB/LS	100
ELCA scholarship	300
Good Gifts	500
<u>North Country Food Bank</u>	<u>100</u>
	\$2,200

Faye Auchenpaugh, Secretary

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Gift of Appreciation presented to Kevin and Sheila Reich

This year we included Sheila in the Christmas gift of appreciation from the congregation. Sheila not only provides support to Kevin in his pastoral services but provides fodder now and then for his morning announcements and sermons.

Who can forget the lumpy oatmeal story?

She is a joy to all of us. She has a great smile and a terrific sense of humor.

The gift was presented by Faye Auchenpaugh, church president, following the Sunday School Christmas program.



Sunday School Program



Once again, our Sunday School students put on a wonderful Christmas program.



Jim Nelson was presented a red, white and blue quilt by Esther Johnson, member of the Red, White & Blue Quilters in Thief River Falls, a local group known for making and gifting patriotic quilts to area veterans. You can tell by Esther's expression that Jim has just made one of his famous humorous comments. (Photo submitted to *The Times*.)



Thanks to LeRoy and Carol Stumpf, we had another beautiful live Christmas tree.

Why Make Quilts for Lutheran World Relief?

Once again, we will hold our annual quilt-making activities for two days in each of the months of January, February and March. We'll begin with Tuesday and Wednesday, January 6-7 beginning each morning at 10:00 a.m. (lunch included)

Why make quilts for Lutheran World Relief (LWR)?

LWR distributed its first quilts in 1945 to families in war-torn Europe following the Second World War. Within a decade, the ministry was reaching around the globe to villages far removed from the world's attention. Today, an average of 300,000 quilts are lovingly given worldwide each year.

LWR Mission Quilts are highly regarded throughout the world because of their quality and consistency. St. Pauli's careful adherence to LWR's quilt-making guidelines ensures that every quilt is useful, consistent and fair.

Making these quilts for LWR serves as a tangible expression of our care for global neighbors in times of crisis, providing both immediate survival aid and long-term health benefits.

Practical Uses and Survival

LWR Mission Quilts are designed to be highly versatile tools for people facing poverty, war, or natural disasters:

- **Warmth and Bedding:** Their primary purpose is to provide insulation against cold and rain as durable bedding.
- **Emergency Shelter:** They are frequently used as simple tents or floor coverings for families displaced from their homes.
- **Utility Tool:** Used as wraps to carry babies, sacks for transporting belongings, or room dividers for privacy.

Health and Development

- **Preventing Stunting:** In cold regions like Tanzania, quilts help children retain calories for growth rather than burning them to stay warm. Research has shown that providing these quilts helps prevent physical stunting and helps children grow up healthy.
- **Encouraging Healthcare:** Distributions are often paired with local medical programs; for example, offering a quilt may encourage families to travel long distances to prenatal clinics.

Meaning and Connection






- **Symbol of Dignity:** Receiving a high-quality, handmade item communicates to those in crisis that they are not forgotten and are loved by people they may never meet.
- **Intergenerational Community:** The process of making these quilts brings together volunteers of all ages—including middle schoolers and experienced mentors—to learn a skill while serving a humanitarian cause.
- **Impartial Aid:** LWR distributes quilts based solely on need, regardless of the recipient's religious or political background. To maintain this impartiality, quilts must not contain religious or patriotic symbols.

Global Reach

Since its founding in 1945, the ministry has distributed nearly **28 million quilts** to 136 countries. While many are sent abroad to countries like Ukraine, Haiti, and Tanzania, the program recently expanded in late 2025 to include domestic disaster responses within the United States.

In addition to quilts, St. Pauli makes school, personal care, baby care, and fabric kits. Check the 2025 Annual Report for details.

803,181 Quilts and Kits in 15 Countries

 315,818 QUILTS  179,200 SCHOOL KITS  231,811 PERSONAL CARE KITS  66,984 BABY CARE KITS  9,368 FABRIC KITS <small>This shipping information is from LWR's 2025 Fiscal Year (Oct. 2024 - Sept. 2025).</small>	COUNTRY	SHIPPING WAREHOUSE	QUILTS	SCHOOL KITS	PERSONAL CARE KITS	BABY CARE KITS	FABRIC KITS
	ANGOLA	Maryland	33,000	16,900	27,000	9,000	
	DJIBOUTI	Minnesota	9,520	15,225			
	GEORGIA	Minnesota			65,100		
		Maryland	49,500				
	HONDURAS	Minnesota		29,290			
	JORDAN	Maryland	6,600	6,500			
	LIBERIA	Minnesota	5,100			3,500	
	MADAGASCAR	Minnesota	9,520			7,350	
	MALI	Maryland	51,975	19,500	15,000	6,000	1,568
	ROMANIA	Maryland	6,270	3,380	3,900		
	SERBIA	Maryland	7,425		6,300		
	SIERRA LEONE	Minnesota		15,225		7,350	
	TANZANIA	Minnesota	9,520			7,350	
	UKRAINE	Maryland	8,250		6,000		
	UNITED STATES - EAST	Both	85,737	40,794	65,561	20,950	5,360
	UNITED STATES - CENTRAL	Both	17,720	4,350	9,150	784	1,800
	UNITED STATES - WEST	Both	10,581	28,036	33,800	1,200	640
	ZIMBABWE	Minnesota	5,100			3,500	
	TOTAL		315,818	179,200	231,811	66,984	9,368

Continuing our “Hymn to the North” series ~

JACKET JOHNNY

“The sparrows are preparing for winter, each one dressed in a plain brown coat and singing a cheerful song.” Charles Kuralt

Johnny took a quick glance at the online forecast for Aberdeen, South Dakota, but he ignored the featured illustrations, the image of a snowflake next to predictions of the day’s accumulation or the swirly lines indicating brisk winds. Through his mind’s eye, he saw only jackets.

In Johnny’s perfect world, a different jacket would have been drawn for each variation in the forecast. Any radio weather reports would be delivered with thoughtful descriptions of the specific jacket required for that day. He then daydreamed that world into existence, grinning with his eyes closed.

“It’s a real puffer-jacket day, folks,” Johnny said, in his best radio voice. “And not just any puffer-jacket, one with down feathers from mature geese. There are too many immature duck down jackets circulating out there. Steer clear. And make sure your down has a fill-ratio of 550 or better. You don’t want to skimp on a cold day like this. Tomorrow, we warm up to a simple, wool-lined corduroy, and it’ll stay that way through the weekend. That is, unless your job has you working the graveyard shift outdoors, in which case grab a heavy shearling-lined hoodie and wear it under some waterproof polyester.

“The North is tailor-made for jacket junkies,” Johnny told me, savoring the pun. He said he owned 18 currently and didn’t view this as excessive. He said if he had the same number of shirts no one would bat an eye, and, in the North, “jackets are more important than shirts.”

Johnny had separate jackets for temps in the 30s, temps in the teens, temps near zero, and temps far below zero. He also kept what he called a “stash late-autumn number” for the rare times 40 appeared on his winter thermometer. He had each of these jackets in three different fashions: what he termed “stepping out,” “day-to-day,” and “outdoor workwear.” Some jackets were solely for wearing under other jackets. If visiting someone’s lake cabin, for instance, the heavier jacket would come off, but the inner jacket remained because Johnny knew rural winter cabins were often cooler than city homes. He did the same thing at bars and restaurants, where the inside jacket came in handy when he was seated near the door. Some of those inside jackets appeared to be nothing more than light autumn jackets, but he insisted they were strictly winter jackets intended to be part of a cold weather ensemble. Of course, he clearly loved his many autumn jackets as well, and they also varied in material, color, and design.

Johnny talked incessantly and fervidly about his favorite subject, like a teenager describing a first love. His expressive baby face moved like a stage play below his blond crew cut. He could show incredulity, delight, and wonder all in a single breathless sentence.

Johnny told me he felt pity for those who lived where the climate was steady and a jacket arsenal unnecessary. “The jacket doldrums,” he called these worlds.

He told me he relished the feel of jackets when first putting them on, the way they almost seemed to embrace him with compassion. If the jacket was vintage, he swore he could feel

the years, all the seasons it had known, and the yeoman’s effort it had taken to lend comfort. He said he cherished old photos of his ancestors in the jackets of yesteryear and marveled at how the styles had changed. All styles suited Johnny. None seemed out of fashion. Every jacket was a revered bridge between climate and comfort.

“It’s the great equalizer,” he said, slapping his hand on the table.

Dressing for winter was an avocation for Johnny, and when summer came, the sartorial monotony was a palpable letdown.

“Anyone can remove layers,” he said. “The trick is in figuring out which layers to throw on in the first place and in what manner and in what style.”

Johnny claimed that dressing for a winter day could change his emotional state and his level of confidence. When he got it just right, he said the outdoors could feel like another room in the home, only more alive and vaster. It’s then that he knew he had perfectly matched his ensemble with the weather. The comfort was exquisite, he told me, and the sense of satisfaction almost intoxicating.

He said he liked seeing what other people wore and in what manner they wore it and if they seemed comfortable or if they had mismanaged the whole process.

“Every winter you see the guys who dress for November in December or dress for December in January,” Johnny said. “They’re endlessly missing the mark, and you can tell just by looking at them. Their shoulders are up near their ears, and they’re wincing. They’re not happy. They botched it. They grabbed any old coat and gave the matter no more than a second’s thought. Now they’re uncomfortable, even in pain. And that makes them impatient with other people and irritable. But they’ve done this to themselves. I swear, I just want to tell them all to more to Miami if this is the best they can do.”

Johnny rarely uses the term “coat,” because he doesn’t appreciate what he calls “that weak single syllable.” He is quite fond of the word “overcoat,” however. He said there’s strength in that term, a gravity that matches the season. He is also fond of the term parka, though he uses that with only one of his closet offerings.

Johnny told me he knew that when he talked about all this with such passion, I could be put off and might view him as obsessive. But, he asked, would I say the same thing of an expert fly fisherman carefully choosing from an array of 60 flies, each having a separate story and separate purpose? No, he said. I would admire the dedication and expertise of that fisherman. “What’s the difference?” Johnny asked.

Johnny opened a cedar chest and pulled out a heavy wool peacoat. He said two of his friends owned peacoats, but he didn’t think they fully appreciated the design and utility of this Dutch invention.

"I really don't think people give a moment's thought to the miracle of wool. It actually adsorbs moisture. Not absorbs, adsorbs. How many even know that word?"

Johnny went on to breathlessly describe adsorption, where water molecules get trapped in the porous fibers of wool. Because the water is trapped, wool doesn't feel wet, even when it is.

"And the outer layer of wool actually gets rid of the water. It releases it back into the air as vapor. In fact, a certain type of wool, Merino, generates heat as it does this. It's like its own little furnace. It's astounding."

Johnny passed briefly, appearing concerned that he was coming off to strong or droning on, but then just as quickly plowed ahead, as if convinced only a fool would find this topic uninteresting. He pointed to the Ulster collar on his peacoat, named for the wet windy world of Northern Ireland. He said the collar was intended to button closed but would only do so with the eight-button peacoats, not the six.

"People typically wear six-button peacoats, never understanding how these things are supposed to work. If it doesn't have eight buttons, and by the way some rare ones have 10, then it's just a showy jacket made by someone who doesn't care about history. Six-button peacoats are now the most common. Can you believe that? We're losing our connection to the utility of things. There's a reason British and American Navies adopted the peacoat. It's a marvel."

Johnny stopped to take a breath and appeared to ponder what more he wanted to say. I could tell he didn't want to stop, but he was 20 minutes late for work at a nearby bank. He started to bring up something called "the greatcoat," another wool creation that was much longer than the peacoat but then stopped himself.

"There's so much more I could say. I wanted to talk about Eddie Bauer damn near dying of hypothermia back in 1936. It changed his life; did you know that? By 1940 he was receiving a patent on the down jacket. Do I like that Eddie suffered and almost died? No, but what a great moment in jacket history. And I haven't even gotten to my love for polar fleece, which wasn't invented until the 1970s. What a great decade that was for jackets, by the way."

Johnny was still talking as he threw on his wool duffel coat and walked out the door. He pulled up the oversized hood and struggled with the wooden toggle fasteners as he hurried to his car.

"You know anything about the duffel coat?" he shouted over his shoulder. "I have some more interesting jackets in the car that I'd like to show you, but perhaps a different time. I keep 'em there in the event that I stall out in a blizzard in some desolate environment and need to trudge out of there. They always say you're supposed to stay with your vehicle, but those people don't understand jackets. When you have a good jacket, you have a good friend. You're going to be fine."

Johnny opened his car door and turned to give me a hearty wave. He then slipped inside, revved his engine, and tore off down the road, revealing a license plate that read:

"BUT N UP"

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History of the Peacoat



Whenever the mercury starts to dip there has always been one piece of outerwear that emerges in force on the city streets. The peacoat has been one among the shortlist of items in menswear that has become a staple in the majority of closets and wardrobes as this versatile piece of naval outerwear seems to have made the leap from military issue to complete mainstay in menswear.

The history of the peacoat is deeply rooted in military and naval backgrounds. Surprisingly, the jacket has been around since the 1800s when the first variation was worn by the then-naval powerhouse, the Dutch. The name *Peacoat* originated from the Dutch word "*pje*" (they pronounce their j's differently than we do), which was used in the Dutch language to describe a coat made from coarse wool fabric.

While the Dutch are credited with inventing the peacoat, the British navy can take credit for popularizing it. The British version of the coat was similarly designed for naval duties, particularly as a uniform for petty officers. Thick, tightly woven *with wool* was used to protect sailors from the biting cold and blistering winds of seafaring. (Melton wool is a dense, tightly woven, and felted wool fabric known for being exceptionally warm, durable, and weather-resistant, with a smooth, soft, almost fuzzy surface that conceals the weave and minimizes fraying. Traditionally used for heavy outerwear like military coats, peacoats, and hunting jackets, it's prized for its ability to block wind and moisture while remaining soft and substantial, making it ideal for cold-weather garments and even upholstery.)

The peacoat then made its way across the Atlantic for a third appearance, this time with the American Navy. The U.S. Navy adopted the coat and used it for "*reefers*," sailors responsible for the unenviable task of climbing up the rigging of sailing ships. While many sources state that the peacoat was adopted by the US in 1913, USN Uniform Regulations from 1897 depict an '*enlisted men's overcoat*' that looks exactly like a WWI-era peacoat.

The common denominator for all three countries that used a peacoat was a need for a durable piece of outerwear that could withstand the harsh rain, wind and cold temperatures typically experienced out at sea. Why are so many drawn to this particular silhouette? Why do designers and labels seem so willing to sell slightly tweaked peacoats every fall season?

By taking a look at the history and origins of the coat, we can see the popularity of the peacoat runs deeper than just a seasonal trend.

Peacoats are produced from Melton or other densely woven wool fabric which provides protection from cold and wind. And while tighter at the waist, peacoats normally flair out slightly at the hips, which made it easier for the navy officers to climb the ropes at sea. Most production contracts were double-breasted and featured an ulster collar which could be buttoned all the way up to protect the wearer's neck and ears from harsh conditions. Depending on the contract, variations either had side vents, a center vent, or no vents at all.

Each of the Dutch, British, and American variants of the peacoat kept a silhouette that was relatively form-fitting to keep out harsh winds, but it's the USN silhouettes that are known and loved today. The most iconic peacoat silhouettes are USN-issued variants from WWI and WWII, both constructed from thick Melton wool with two rows of buttons, but there are some differences between earlier and later peacoats.

WWI-issue peacoats came in long and short lengths, with the longer silhouettes having four pockets: dual flap-closure pockets at the hips, and slash entry pockets that sat higher up the chest. Short-length WWI versions *and* WWII-issued peacoats *only* have slash pockets, which typically sit lower towards the waist.



**Left: Early button with anchor surrounded by thirteen stars.
Right: WWII button with starless "fouled anchor" design.**

Buttons also differ between earlier and later peacoats. Up until the 1930s, peacoats featured anchor buttons surrounded by thirteen stars. The thirteen stars represent the 13 states from when the United States became an independent nation in 1776. By WWII, production contracts began calling for the starless 'fouled anchor' buttons which remain popular today.

by the 1930s, lower flap pockets had been phased out of the longer silhouettes, and Melton weight went from 36 oz. to 32 oz. after a production cost review. Many collectors see peacoats of the 1910s and 1920s as the best editions of the style.

Peacoats Today

Peacoats continued to be issued by the U.S. Navy until 2020. However, by this point, it had already been adopted by civilians over 50 years ago. Peacoats have been produced by thousands of makers, from fast fashion brands who produce them out of cheap, flimsy wool all the way to Japanese reproduction brands who honor every last detail when producing remakes of original issue peacoats.

A well-made peacoat makes for a brilliant investment. With the right care, a quality peacoat made from Melton wool will most likely outlive you! There are reproduction peacoats

available online for \$350-\$500. eBay offers used ones in the range of \$100.

USN Watch Cap

This cap has its origins in the early 20th century as part of the standard-issue cold weather gear for sailors in the United States Navy. Designed for warmth and practicality, the cap is made from tightly knit wool, providing insulation against harsh maritime conditions. Sailors would wear the cap during long watches on deck, where they were exposed to freezing winds and cold temperatures.

It is essentially a classic, functional beanie, known for its simple design and snug fit. It became especially popular after the war due to the fact that many sailors were issued with the watch caps and started to wear them in civilian life. What makes the Watch Cap different from regular beanies is that it is woven from heavy wool for superior insulation, even when wet and it is slimmer and close-fitting, with a thick, long ribbed brim that can be folded up twice for extra warmth and face framing.



And here is our very own Wally Torkelson, c. 1949, wearing his Navy-issued peacoat with stitched cuff and watch cap. Peeking through the window behind is his sister Wahna.

We Live Like Royalty and Don't Know It

Introducing "How the System Works," a series on the hidden mechanisms that support modern life

By Charles C. Mann, *The Atlantic*

At the rehearsal dinner I began thinking about Thomas Jefferson's ink. My wife and I were at a fancy destination wedding on a faraway island in the Pacific Northwest. Around us were musicians, catered food, a full bar, and chandeliers, all set against a superb ocean sunset. Not for the first time, I was thinking about how amazing it is that relatively ordinary middle-class Americans could afford such events — on special occasions, at least.

My wife and I were at a tableful of smart, well-educated twenty-somethings — friends of the bride and groom. The wedding, with all its hope and aspiration, had put them in mind of the future. As young people should, they wanted to help make that future bright. There was so much to do! They wanted the hungry to be fed, the thirsty to have water, the poor to have light, the sick to be well.

But when I mentioned how remarkable it was that a hundred-plus people could parachute into a remote, unfamiliar place and eat a gourmet meal untroubled by fears for their health and comfort, they were surprised. The heroic systems required to bring all the elements of their dinner to these tables by the sea were invisible to them. Despite their fine education, they knew little about the mechanisms of today's food, water, energy, and public-health systems. They wanted a better world, but they didn't know how this one worked.

This is not a statement about Kids These Days so much as about Most People These Days. Too many of us know next to nothing about the systems that undergird our lives. Which is what put me in mind of Thomas Jefferson and his ink.

Jefferson was one of the richest men in the new United States. He had a 5,000-acre plantation worked by hundreds of slaves, a splendid mansion in Virginia that he had designed himself, one of the biggest wine collections in America, and one of the greatest private libraries in the world — it became the foundation of the Library of Congress. But despite his wealth and status his home was so cold in winter that the ink in his pen sometimes froze, making it difficult for him to write to complain about the chill.

Jefferson was rich and sophisticated, but his life was closer to the lives of people in the Iron Age than it was to ours. This is true literally, in that modern forms of steel and other metal alloys hadn't been invented. But it is most true in the staggering fact that everyone at the rehearsal dinner was born and raised in luxury unimaginable in Jefferson's time.

The young people at my table were anxious about money: starter-job salaries, high rents, student loans. But they never worried about freezing in their home. They could go to the sink and get a glass of clean water without fear of getting sick. Most of all, they were *alive*. In 1800, when Jefferson was elected president, more than one out of four children died before the age of five. Today, it is a shocking tragedy if a child dies. To Jefferson, these circumstances would have represented wealth and power beyond the dreams of avarice. The young people at my table had debts, but they were the debts of kings.

Jefferson lived in a world of horse-drawn carriages, blazing fireplaces, and yellow fever. But what most separates our day from his is not our automobiles, airplanes, and high-rise apartments — it is that today vast systems provide abundant food, water, energy, and health to most people, including everyone at the rehearsal dinner. In Jefferson's time, not even the president of the United States had what we have. But few of us are aware of that, or of what it means.

The privilege of ignorance was not available to Jefferson. Monticello's water supply was a well, which frequently ran dry. The ex-president had to solve the problem on his own. Even if he had had a telephone, there was nobody to call — water utilities did not exist. To make his water supply more reliable, he decided to create a backup system: four cisterns, each

eight feet long, wide, and deep, that would store rainwater. His original designs leaked and were vulnerable to contamination. Jefferson, aided by hired architects and slave labor, spent a decade working out how to improve them. He was immersed in his own infrastructure.

We, too, do not have the luxury of ignorance. Our systems serve us well for the most part. But they will need to be revamped for and by



A cistern cover at Monticello. Rainwater from the roof and terraces was channeled through gutters into the cistern. In Jefferson's day, the cisterns had pumps on top of them. Library of Congress

the next generation — the generation of the young people at the rehearsal dinner — to accommodate our rising population, technological progress, increasing affluence, and climate change.

The great European cathedrals were built over generations by thousands of people and sustained entire communities. Similarly, the electric grid, the public-water supply, the food-distribution network, and the public-health system took the collective labor of thousands of people over many decades. They are the cathedrals of our secular era. They are high among the great accomplishments of our civilization. But they don't inspire bestselling novels or blockbuster films. No poets celebrate the sewage treatment plants that prevent them from dying of dysentery. Like almost everyone else, they rarely note the existence of the systems around them, let alone understand how they work.

Jefferson believed that an informed citizenry was necessary to democratic self-rule — a mandate that extends all the way

out to understanding the systems that envelop us. It's easy to see why he believed this: Voters who understand how we are entwined with these systems will support maintaining and expanding them for our children and grandchildren. Food, electricity, water, and public-health systems obviously make our individual lives more comfortable. But they are also essential to our collective economic prosperity. Failed infrastructure is one big reason why so many poor countries remain poor. As a citizen and a parent, I don't want our country to get anywhere near that territory.

There's another, equally important reason for thinking about the systems around us. Water, food, energy, public health — these embody a gloriously egalitarian and democratic vision of our society. Americans may fight over red and blue, but everyone benefits in the same way from the electric grid. Water troubles and food contamination are afflictions for rich and poor alike. These systems are powerful reminders of our common purpose as a society — a source of inspiration when one seems badly needed.

Every American stands at the end of a continuing, decades-long effort to build and maintain the systems that support our lives. Schools should be, but are not, teaching students why it is imperative to join this effort. Imagine a course devoted to how our country functions at its most basic level. I am a journalist who has been lucky enough to have learned something about the extraordinary mechanisms we have built since Jefferson's day. In this series of four articles, I want to share some of the highlights of that imaginary course, which I have taken to calling "How the System Works."

We begin next month with our species' greatest need and biggest system — food.

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My Annual Favorite Christmas Letter

Although we only have a skiff of snow on the ground, it is definitely winter in Northern Minnesota. The winds are those frostbite makers that produce white spots on the cheeks and noses in less than 5 minutes. The balmy temperatures of our homes, cars, trucks and fish houses keep us from embracing the cold temps that were once expected and accepted. I did put a survival kit in my car for winter driving and the temp in

my house is set at 77 degrees. I suppose I have capitulated to the modern attitude.

The kids in my neighborhood are adventurous and very talented. The oldest, a boy, learned 5 tricks this summer that he can do on his bicycle. Five! And he demonstrated them all for me. His sister, once the baby, has mastered her own toy car and is a budding archaeologist. She can spot petrified eggs of prehistoric reptilian birds and dinosaurs simply by walking down the gravel road. She shares the "eggs" of the reptilian birds—those given to me are sheltered in the flower planters. The dinosaur eggs are too precious to be given away. However, she does present invisible gifts cupped in her hands which are caught by placing your own cupped hands beneath hers. That's when the wonder of a child takes hold and you discover you are holding something—a dream, a wish, an insight into the future—that is magnificent. I think the world around us could use more of that childlike wonder.

I think there is something in our nature that makes us enjoy the outdoors and woodlands. As a kid, I remember staying at my grandparents and being "allowed" to "bring the cows home for milking." It was probably a ploy meant to provide a break from the noise of running feet, constant talking and slamming doors, but it offered the prospect of an adventure. The pasture where the cows spent the day was a combination of meadow and woodland. A cluster of thornapples grew in the corner of the pasture where you entered, and from there the cow paths led you to the areas where the cows grazed. The paths were trodden to a depth of 3 or 4 inches and worn smooth by the hoofs of the cows. The brave could run barefoot down the paths, providing they were alert enough to keep an eye out for any surprises a cow might have left in the path ahead. It was a time to play hide and seek as the search continued for the cows, and one only had to keep an ear tuned to the sound of the cowbell to know the cows had been found. Once the cows were on their way home, no attempt was made to keep up with them. They were on a mission. I'm not sure, but I now suspect that the cows found us instead of us finding them.

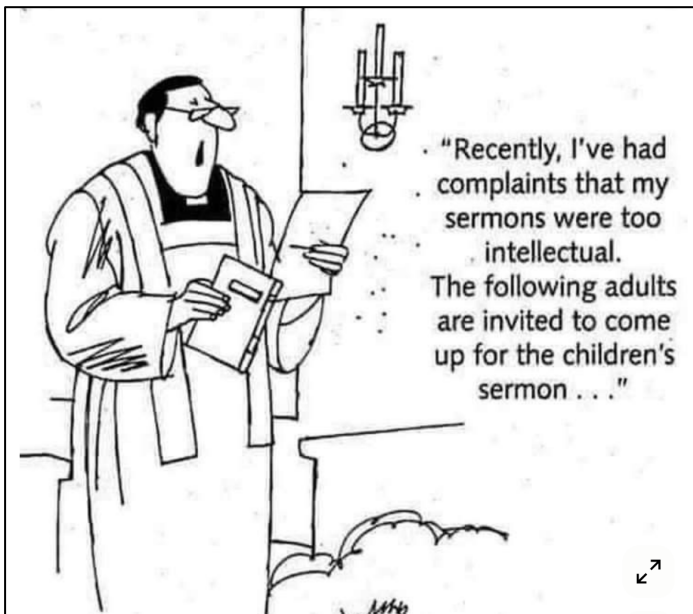
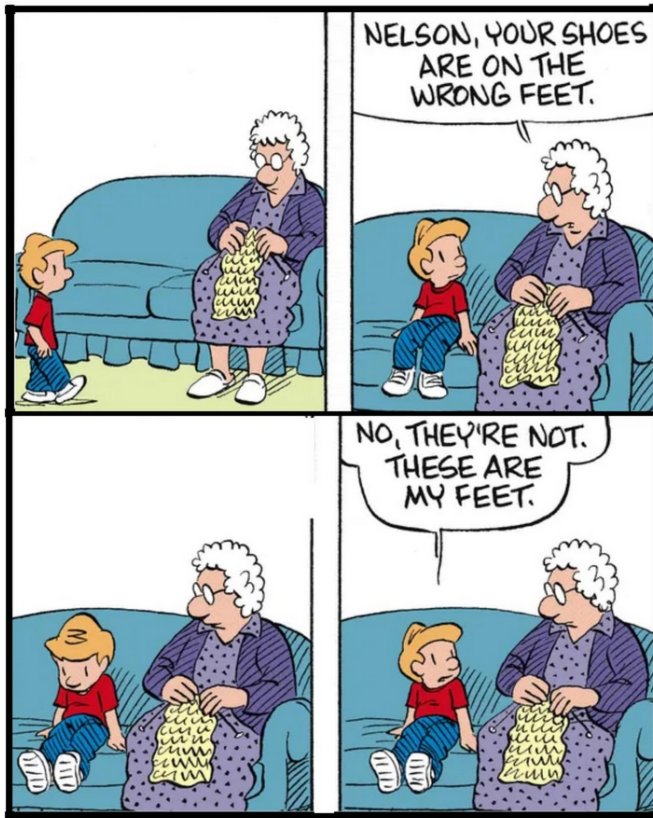
Looking back, I remember how park-like the wooded pastures were in those days. The pasture down at Einer's looked as if the grass had just been mowed with one of those reel-type lawn mowers. It was in that pasture where the Boy Scouts camped each summer. The pasture where Andy's cows grazed was next door to us and offered a great place to explore. A slough in the middle of that pasture filled with water each spring and in the eyes of a child it was the equivalent of a lake. Highbush cranberries grew in all of them and were used to make jellies and the much-loved this cranberry sauce that was eaten with cream.

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 2026.* ~ DelRay

Photo on left: Can you identify all of these Sunday School kids sitting on the old front steps of the church? Let Faye know and she'll publish the names next month.
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The Back Page



"Before you tell me about your diet, I would warn you, I follow you on Facebook."