

St. Pauli News in Detail



Greeting and Ushering

Feb. 4	Bryan Grove
Feb. 11	Jerod Haugen
Feb. 18	Marc Haugen
Feb. 25	Darin Hurst

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

Sunday Service:

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

Altar Preparation: Tammy Haugen

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February Milestones

Birthdays

Feb. 20	Gary Iverson
Feb. 25	Arlo Rude
Feb. 26	Evie Johnson
Feb. 27	Edna Rondorf

Anniversaries

None that the editor is aware of



Journey with LWR this Lent!

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Lenten Services

The theme for this year's Wednesday Lenten services is "**Women of the Bible.**"

Unfortunately, the "round robin" pastor schedule had not been determined as of publication time.

As is our custom during Lent, the congregation will take part in collecting Personal Care Kits. When Lutheran World Relief distributes these kits, it is often to people who has lost everything. In the wake of an earthquake or hurricane, or having fled from violence as their homes were overtaken, they clasp a towel from a faraway place, with a bar of soap, a toothbrush...and washing up, they know that they have not been forsaken by the world.

The very simple gesture of giving a Personal Care Kit can give someone the encouragement to start anew, starting with a bath.

You can share God's grace and love by providing that simple comfort.

- Feb. 18: Bar of soap (4 or 5 oz. in original wrapper)
- Feb. 25: Bath Towel (sturdy, max size 27" x 52", dark color preferred)
- March 4: Toothbrush (adult size, in original packaging)
- March 11: Sturdy Comb
- March 18: Nail Clipper (metal, attached file optional)
- March 25: Bar of Soap

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Concordia Choir to Sing in Moorhead

Sunday, March 11, at 4:00 pm in Memorial Auditorium, Moorhead. Free and open to the public. René Clausen conducts the 72-voice a cappella choir in several spirituals and hymns, plus some dramatic new arrangements with various staging effects. Visit TheConcordiaChoir.org for complete concert information.

In Memoriam

Ruby (Alberg) Engelstad passed away on December 31, 2017 in Shoreline, Washington at the age of 84 years. She is Myles Alberg's aunt.



Ruby Anne Muriel Alberg was born at the home of her parents Carl and Louise (Finstad) Alberg on May 6, 1933. She was baptized at St. Pauli church and confirmed there on June 22, 1947.

She attended all eight years of elementary school at Busy Bee School in Hazel and graduated from Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls in 1951. She then worked as a secretary at Pennington County Extension Office before marrying Glenn Engelstad at St. Pauli church on September 6, 1952, while he was home on leave from the U.S. Navy.

Glenn, who was the love of her life, had grown up in the same rural neighborhood and had also been baptized and confirmed at St. Pauli.

To this union, three children were born, two while the couple lived in Thief River Falls: Dan in 1953 and Greg in 1955. They then relocated to Seattle, Washington where Richard was born in 1959.

Besides keeping the cleanest house on the planet, Ruby was the church secretary at Saint Stephens Lutheran Church in Shoreline, Washington for twenty years. Prior to suffering from dementia, she worked the *New York Times* crossword puzzle every day in pen and most often there were no mistakes.

Ruby and Glenn opened their home to many folks needing a place to stay. There were often kids living at their home for short and long terms. One young woman and her little boy lived with them for six years, becoming a sister of the heart to Dan, Greg and Rick and a daughter of the heart to Ruby and Glenn.

Their son Rick passed away in 1978 and even thirty-nine years after his death, friends of his continued to visit Ruby and Glenn. Dan and Greg say, "We could not be more proud of our parents. They didn't talk about being Christians. They lived it as they quietly went about the business of doing the work of our Lord, sharing what they had with people in need."

Ruby is preceded in death by her husband Glenn; son Rick; parents Carl and Louise Alberg; siblings Lillian (Ranum), Gladys (Nelson), Helen "Peggy" (Rolland), Stanley, Cleo (Sterle), and Mae (Dinsmore). She is survived by her sons Dan and Greg and her sister Connie (Kolden).



God Bless the Memory of Ruby Engelstad



Confirmation Class June 22, 1947

Back row (L to R): Reuben Finstad, Curtis Johnson, Orville Nelson, Dale Nettelund, Jim Gilbertson.
From (L to R): Rev. Fjelstul, Ruby Alberg, Sylvia Lokken, Geraldine Torkelson



Alberg Family

Back row (L to R): Helen "Peggy," Lillian, Louise, Stanley, Carl, Gladys.
Second row (L to R): Ruby, Mae Belle, Cleo.
Front row: Connie.

In Memoriam

*Mabel Torkelson, daughter of St. Pauli
charter member, Anfin Torkelson, passes away at age 90.*

Mabel Theresa Torkelson was born on November 13, 1927 in Rocksbury Township, Pennington County, MN to Anfin and Anetta (Lokken) Torkelson. She was baptized at St. Pauli on March 28, 1928 with Mr. and Mrs. Tobias Stene, Beatrice Loken and Ragnwald (also spelled Ragnval and known as "Roy") Loken as sponsors.

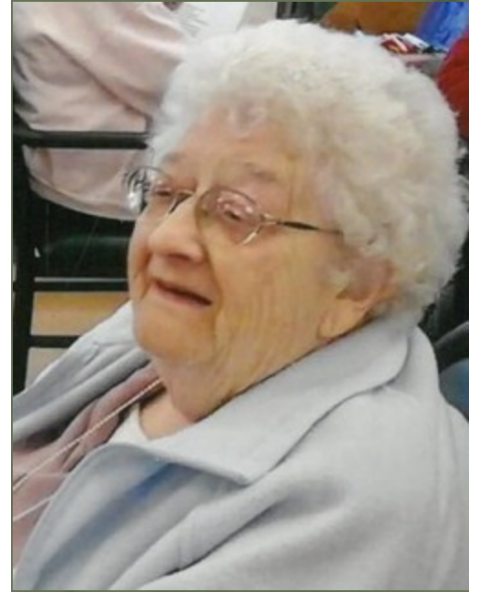
Mabel was confirmed on September 6, 1942 at St. Pauli by Rev. Skibsrud. She attended Washington #221 School near St. Pauli and grew to adulthood in that area. This is the school building Faye Auchenpaugh moved to her farm and rehabilitated.

Mabel worked at Oakland Park Nursing Home in Thief River Falls for many years. She worked her entire life taking care of other people. She enjoyed strolling around and taking a walk, watching television, and working crossword puzzles. Mabel had a quiet, easygoing personality.

Mabel lived her entire life in Thief River Falls with the last few years at Valley Home and most recently at Oakland Park Communities. It is fitting that she passed away on Wednesday, January 17, 2018 at Oakland Park where she had spent most of her working years.

Survivors include her sister, Agnes Hanson; nieces, Dianne Gilbertson and Donna Kukowski; nephew, Donald Hanson; and many other relatives and friends. She is preceded in death by her parents; siblings: Thorvald Torkelson, Oscar Torkelson, Sophie Helgeland, Ragna Terry, Ludvig Johnson, and Rose in infancy.

Funeral services were held on Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at Johnson Funeral Service in Thief River Falls, MN with Rev. Terri Cuppett officiating. Burial followed at St. Pauli Cemetery, rural Thief River Falls, MN.



God Bless the Memory of Mabel Torkelson



Confirmation Class September 6, 1942

Back Row (L to R): Beverly Nettelund, Esther Hanson, Rev. Skibsrud, Rosemary Hauge, Mabel Torkelson
Front Row (L to R): *unknown* Urdahl, Marion Torkelson, Kermit Finstad, Leslie Snetting

Minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting of St. Pauli Church

January 29, 2017

The St. Pauli Lutheran Church congregation held its Annual Meeting on January 29, 2017 following the 10:30 am worship service, with 25 members present. Council President Arlo Rude called the meeting to order at 11:30 am.

Approval of Agenda: A motion was made by Barb Nelson, seconded by Evie Johnson, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Reports:

Secretary's Report: The minutes of the January 31, 2016 Annual meeting and the October 2 and October 23, 2016 Special Congregational Meetings were presented. A motion was made by Skip Swanson, seconded by Jim Strandlie, to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Rude reviewed the 2016 Year-End Treasurer's and Assets Reports. A motion was made by Janet Strandlie, seconded by Larry Hurst, to approve the reports. Motion carried. The following is a summary:

Total Revenue including internal transfers	\$ 40,972.30
Total Operational & Special Projects Expenditures	(31,656.74)
Revenue less Expenditures	\$ 9,315.56

Asset Balances as of 12/31/16:

Checking Account	\$ 18,588.14
Investor Savings Account	35,973.94
Certificates of Deposit	20,000.00
Edward D. Jones Investments	42,576.27
Memorial Fund	11,292.93
Mission Grant Fund	2,023.53
Total Church Funds	\$130,454.81

Pastor's Report: Pastor Hansen stated that May 23, 2017 will mark the 50th anniversary of his ordination in 1967. He has served congregations in eight settings since then. He is delighted to serve as interim pastor at St. Pauli, on a renewable 3-month contract basis.

He continues to be involved in continuing education through Bible Study groups with Thief River Falls pastors every Tuesday, and with Crookston area pastors on Thursdays. He stated that area pastors are working on the Lenten services round-robin program and schedule, which will begin on March 8. He asked for questions from the congregation.

After his report, Arlo Rude presented Pastor Hansen with a thank you card and gift from the congregation, as a small token of their appreciation for his excellent leadership and service to the congregation.

Membership Report: A motion was made by Valarie Torstveit, seconded by Evie Johnson, to accept the following Membership Report. Motion carried.

Total confirmed members:	90
Baptized -Not Confirmed:	19
Total Baptized Members:	109
Members deceased in 2016:	0
Baptisms:	0
Confirmed:	3
Transfers In:	0
Transfers Out:	0
Average Weekly Attendance:	27
Total Number actively participating in the life of the congregation:	90

Board of Education/Sunday School Treasurer's Reports: A motion was made by Virginia Anderson, seconded by Barb Nelson, to approve the reports. Motion carried.

WELCA Treasurer's Report: A motion was made by Evie Johnson, seconded by Ron Anderson, to approve the report. Motion carried.

Old Business:

- 1) Steeple Repairs: Rude provided an update on this project. He has done much of the work needed, and will continue working on the project next summer, replacing lighting in the steeple.
- 2) Constitution and By-Laws and IRS Non-profit filings: Rude reported that after extensive searching of church records, there is no record of the church ever filing for non-profit status. He recommended this be done this year, and with that filing, an updated Constitution and By-Laws must be submitted to the IRS. He expected the processing fee to be \$800. A motion was made by Bruce Mathson, seconded by Larry Hurst, recommending that the Council take the steps necessary to obtain non-profit status. Motion carried.
- 3) Church Building and Property Security: Rude reviewed the vandalism incidents that occurred during the past year. He presented several options for discussion on ways to deter vandals or trespassers on church property. The options included: 1) Exterior video monitoring system; 2) Game cameras with cell phone notification; 3) Aluminum or steel gate to prevent access to the west side of the property; 4) Remove approximately nine trees on the property to increase visibility (in addition to reducing fire risk to the building and thinning out unhealthy trees to promote growth of remaining trees). Each option included estimated costs, some with one-time set up/installation and ongoing annual costs. Following a lengthy discussion on the options, a motion was made by Ron Anderson, seconded by Jim Strandlie, to install dusk-to-dawn lights on the west side of the church, as a starting point to deter trespassers. If more security is deemed necessary, other options could be reconsidered at a special meeting. Motion carried.

New Business:

- 1) **2017 Budget:** Budget changes from 2016 to 2017 were reviewed by Rude. Faye Auchenpaugh thanked the Council for a proposed increase in the organist compensation, but declined the increase, and asked that it be removed from the budget. Other new items in the budget were reviewed and discussed: 1) Pathways Bible Camp donation and potential membership; 2) Education Fund – primarily established to assist students with Bible Camp expenses; 3) ELCA Seminary donation – to assist seminary students with education costs; 4) Accounting fees – projected to be \$100 or less per month. Rude asked the congregation for suggestions on other special projects that should be considered in the budget. No suggestions were given. A motion was made by Larry Hurst, seconded by Barb Nelson, to approve the budget. Motion carried. Total Projected Expenditures for 2017 is \$41,885.00.
- 2) **Setting time for Special Services:** Rude asked the congregation if there were any concerns about current times for special services. No concerns were raised. Times for the following will remain as is: Easter- 8 am, Christmas Eve- 5 pm., Lenten services- 7 pm.
- 3) **Internet Service:** Rude presented various options for consideration for internet service for the church through Sjoborg's, including one-time set-up/installation and ongoing annual costs. Several questions were raised and comments made on the usage of internet. Faye Auchenpaugh recommended that Marisa Benson be consulted during the process of selecting the equipment needed to provide the service, since that is her field of expertise.
- 4) **Synod Assembly Representatives:** Rude asked for volunteer(s) interested in attending the Synod Assembly on June 9-10, 2017 in Moorhead. Pastor Hansen will be recognized for his 50 years of service sometime during the Assembly.
- 5) **Bishop's Annual Report:** The report was included in the meeting materials and members were asked to read it on their own.
- 6) **St. Pauli Cemetery Association Update:** Rude reported the Cemetery Association currently has a checking account

balance of \$34,104.03. Rude briefly reviewed the plans for improvements to the cemetery, which will be paid from the cemetery fund.

Elections:

Nominating Report and Nominations: The nominations for the 2017 election were as follows:

- **Council Member:** Larry Hurst – 1st year of first 3-year term
- **Treasurer:** Staci Reay – 1-year term, with possible second term
- **Secretary:** Faye Auchenpaugh – 1-year term, with possible second term
- **Financial Secretary:** Barb Nelson – 1-year term, with possible second term
- **Board of Education:** Valarie Torstveit – 1st year of two-year term
- **Board of Education:** Kari Torkelson – 1st year of two-year term
- **Heating Caretaker:** Myles Alberg – 1-year term without limits
- **Church Recorder:** Valarie Torstveit – 1-year term without limits
- **Organist:** Faye Auchenpaugh – 1-year term without limits

Voting: Rude asked three times for nominations from the floor for any of the positions on the ballot. A motion was made by Jan Strandlie, seconded by Skip Swanson, to accept the slate of officers as presented and ask the secretary to cast a unanimous ballot. Motion carried.

Closing: Rude thanked everyone who helped in various ways throughout the year. The congregation gave Arlo Rude a round of applause for his leadership on the Council and all the volunteer work he does on church building projects. The meeting concluded with the Lord's Prayer, adjournment at 1:05 pm, followed by Table Grace.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Cedergren
St. Pauli Church Council Secretary

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St. Pauli WELCA Minutes

November 8, 2017

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met on November 8, 2017 at Valley Home with nine members present. President Cindy called the meeting to order and led us in "Prayer Ventures for November."

The Secretary's Report was read and approved. Faye gave the Treasurer's Report as follows:

August 30, 2017 balance:	\$ 72.55
September income:	310.00

Expenses	(274.00)
September 30, 2017 balance:	\$ 108.35
October income:	2,399.00
Expenses	(637.38)
Balance as of October 31, 2017:	\$1,869.97
Savings balance as of 10/30/2017:	\$1,563.56

Cindy read thank you cards from VIP and Paul & Jeff (entertainment for Fall Event).

Virginia gave the stewardship report for 2017:

Quilts	14
School kits	16
Personal Care kits	38
Newborn kits	7
1 fire quilt and 1 quilt for Pathway Quilt Auction	

Old Business:

Faye reported that Don Schindler was too busy right now to give quotes for cabinets.

Discussion on back wall storage. Our goal is to have a cost to bring to the annual meeting.

Cindy thanked everyone who came for the fall cleaning.

Virginia gave a report on the Cluster 2 gathering in Plummer. All agreed it was an enjoyable day.

Fall Event was discussed. Our numbers were down a little in donations and people. The entertainers were very enjoyable.

The "Last Supper" needlework has been repaired.

New Business:

December 2nd is the Christmas Brunch at the Country School. Kathy will check with the caterer and take the count for them until November 27th.

Cindy will meet with the officers on December 1st at 2:00 at her home to make the new booklet for 2018.

Virginia and Ron will pick up a live Christmas tree.

The Sunday School Christmas program is December 17th followed with potluck. Lydia Circle H-Z are servers.

Janet made a motion that we should donate \$2,000 for our charitable gifts. Ivette seconded. The following is our selection:

Pennington County Salvation Army	\$ 400
Haiti Medical Mission	100
Northland Rescue Mission	200
Little Brother/Little Sister	250
Women of the ELCA Scholarship	250
LWR Gifts	200
ELCA Good Gifts	500
Can Do Canine	<u>100</u>
Total	\$2,000

Prayer partners were exchanged. Lord's Prayer and table grace said.

Virginia and Evie gave our Thankoffering program.

Thank you to Shirley for the delicious lunch.

Secretary Kathy Alberg

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January: "What Makes for a Good Story?"

Biblical reading: Genesis 1-3

At the heart of every good story is a tension needing to be resolved. This is a fundamental truth for authors and movie directors. For example,

- Tension is created when the audience hopes for one outcome of a situation and is afraid of another. [1]
- Tension in a short story or novel is part of what keeps readers turning the pages. [2]
- Or, more colorfully, in the words of Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde: "The suspense is terrible. I hope it will last."

At the heart of the Bible's story is a tension that emerges in its very first chapters.

The First Pole of the Tension

One pole of the tension is the wild, overflowing generosity of a Creator-God, who fashions a wondrous world and then

turns it over to human beings for safekeeping. In Genesis 1 and 2 we read two "takes" on the story of creation.

Genesis 1 casts the creation story as a seven-stanza litany describing seven days on which God creates the universe, solely by uttering a solemn Word: "Let there be..." Six of the stanzas end with a repetitive formula: "And there was evening and there was morning, the ____ (first, second, third, etc..) day" and seven times the Creator pronounces his handiwork "good."

Genesis 2 offers a more down-to-earth, homespun version of the creation story. Instead of creating via a sovereign word over the span of a cosmic week, Genesis 2 depicts "the day" (Genesis 2:4) in which the work of creation is accomplished.

Rather than being the culmination of God's creative activity on the sixth day (Genesis 1), the second chapter of Genesis starts with God like a sculptor kneeling down to form a man from "the dust of the ground," breathing into the man's



nostrils the breath of life. The rest of the creation—including a wondrous woman for the lonely man—flows forth from the moment the man becomes a living being.

In spite of the differing nuances we perceive in

Genesis 1 and 2, both renditions of the creation story make certain things clear:

- God and God alone is the Creator of a wonderfully good creation.
- God's creative activity is responsible for the amazing expanse of the universe as well as the dazzling diversity of

created things: heavenly bodies, light, darkness, the earth itself, all living things, and humanity as the culmination of God's creative activity.

- Though God loves the whole creation, God declares a special relationship with human beings, for they alone are created "in [God's] image," given "dominion" (Gen. 1:27-28) over the Creation, and embedded in a delightful garden, to "till it and keep it." (Gen. 2:15)

Genesis 1 and 2 furnish one pole of the tension that marks the biblical story: the cascading generosity of the Creator who forms a special bond with human beings and gives them responsibility for tending God's world and reflecting ("imaging") God's unconditional love.

The Second Pole of the Tension

In the third chapter of Genesis, the other pole in the tension underlying the biblical story emerges.

A slippery tempter appears on the scene, sowing seeds of doubt in the humans by zeroing in on the only limitation God had placed upon them: to avoid the fruit of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Gen. 2:17)

The intimate relationship between Creator and creature is suddenly threatened by this crafty, serpentine tempter. God's word is questioned, God's motives impugned, God's commandment set aside....and the man and his mate succumb to the notion that they can "be like God" (Gen 3:4).

Although the story narrated in Genesis 3 is commonly called "The Fall," a better title for it might be "The Rebellion." The human creatures, rather than trusting their Creator, wanted to be on a par with God. Why be content with creaturehood, when they can take the place of the Creator?



The generous, over-flowing love of the Creator is deemed insufficient by the humans. Trust degenerates into distrust and mistrust. This is the essence of sin: being unable to take God at God's

word, **no longer believing the promise that God always means us well.**

With the emergence of this second pole, the tension at the heart of the whole Bible comes out into the open: ***Though God is utterly trustworthy, human beings aren't buying it.*** And the results of this rebellion infect all the harmonious relationships that God built into the very fabric of the creation: the man blames the woman, the woman blames the serpent, and they all blame God: "the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." (Gen. 3:12)

The rebellion of the man and woman against their Creator-God has devastating consequences, not just for their own relationship with the Creator, but for the creation itself. The tempter, the woman, the man and the ground itself are all accursed (Gen 3:14-19). Death now marks the end of every human's story.

And the curse becomes inter-generational in scope. The sin of the parents is passed on to their descendants, their first son being murdered by their second son (Genesis 4:1-16). Soon sin and death soon engulf the world. Things get so desperate that "the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, 'I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.'" (Genesis 6:6-7)

But here's where things get even more interesting.

Although God cannot tolerate the wickedness that has invaded his creation—he also can't bring himself to blot out humanity, not to mention the rest of the creation. So, just as the Lord plans a world-destroying Flood, he also provides an escape hatch: Noah and his family miraculously survive the Flood, along with enough creatures to repopulate the world (Genesis 6:9-8:22)

Here we see clearly the tension at the heart of the biblical story: Despite their wickedness, God remains hopelessly in love with God's creatures. **Rather than wiping everything out, God embarks on a heroic quest for reconciliation with humanity and with the creation itself.**

Relentlessly Pursuing Reconciliation

God's unfailing pursuit of reconciliation with his beloved wayward ones—you and me—is what the biblical story is all about. This daring quest reaches its climax in God's own decision to enter the world in the flesh of Jesus, newborn son of Mary, who eventually gives his very life for us on the Cross of Calvary.

As I write this Bible study on New Year's Eve, I still hear ringing in my ears the opening line of the Prayer of the Day for this First Sunday of Christmas: *"Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord..."* [4]

This restoration, God's relentless quest for reconciliation, will be our focus in these 2018 monthly Bible studies. My goal—and my prayer—is that as we walk through the Bible's great stories of reconciliation we'll keep running into ourselves. May God unbind our hearts from all that enslaves us so that we can taste afresh the freedom of being bound to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

For Reflection or Discussion

1. How do the first chapters of Genesis help us better understand our individual lives? Our families? Our congregations? Our world?
2. In what relationships are you hungering for reconciliation right now?
3. The Apostle Paul sometimes referred to Christ as "the Second Adam." Read this paraphrase of Romans 5:18-21: "Here it is in a nutshell: *Just as one person [Adam] did it wrong and got us in all this trouble with sin and death, another person [Jesus Christ] did it right and got us out of it. But more than just getting us out of trouble, he got us into life! One man said no to God and put many people in the wrong; one man said yes to God and put many in the right.*

All that passing laws against sin did was produce more lawbreakers. But sin didn't, and doesn't, have a chance in competition with the aggressive forgiveness we call grace. When it's sin versus grace, grace wins hands down. All sin can do is threaten us with death, and that's the end of it. Grace, because God is putting everything together again through the Messiah, invites us into life – a life that goes on and on and on, world without end." From *The Message* by Eugene Peterson. [5] How does this passage enrich your understanding of the reconciling work of Christ?

[1] <http://www.scriptmag.com/features/storytelling-strategies-interstellar>
 [2] <https://shelleywidhalm.wordpress.com/2012/06/24/achieving-tension-in-storytelling/>

[3] "Eden" means "delight" in the Hebrew language.

[4] Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW), p. 20.

[5] <https://www.biblestudytools.com/msg/romans/5.ht>

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February: "FAMILY FEUDS"

Biblical reading: Genesis 11:1-11

In The Beginning

The Book of Genesis could just as easily be called The Book of Beginnings—"genesis" being a word that means "beginning." As we saw in our January study, the first three chapters of Genesis lay the foundation for all that follows. God is revealed as the creator of all things, and the fashioning of humanity is the Creator's crowning work.

But starting with Genesis 3, we also see how evil has its beginning, coinciding with the unfolding of God's good creation. The sin of our first parents in a garden called "Delight" ("Eden"), is passed on to their offspring. Just as sin produces bitter fruit for Adam and Eve, so also the first children born to them end up in an armed struggle that leaves one of them dead, his blood crying out from the earth itself (the story of Cain and Abel, Genesis 4:1-16)

Even after the calamity of the Flood and the preservation of a single family in an ark, even after God calls Abram and Sarai (later Abraham and Sarah) to leave their home and travel to a Promised Land where they will be blessed to be a blessing to all nations of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3), sin and its effects are continually present and visible. And this is not low-level, "misdemeanor" sin, either. As we trace the stories of the descendants of Abraham and Sarah—sin keeps rearing its ugly head, drawing even siblings to make war on one another. In a sense the tragic story of Cain killing his brother Abel, keeps playing out in succeeding generations.

Where is God in this? Where do we witness God unbinding the hearts of kinfolk who are engaged in the bitterest of family feuds?

Esau and Jacob

The promises God makes to Abraham and Sarah are meant to bear fruit in the lives of Isaac and his wife Rebekah. But there seem to be obstacles in the way. Sarah was beyond the normal age of child-bearing, making the birth of Isaac a gynecological miracle. (You can read the story in Genesis 21). And when Isaac marries one of his cousins, Rebekah (read the whole lovely story in Genesis 24), she proves to be

"barren"—unable to bear children during the first twenty years of her marriage to Isaac (Genesis 25:21). *An aside: have you noticed how few "normal" pregnancies and births there are in the Bible?*

Isaac prays to God, with whom all things are possible. In due time Rebekah becomes pregnant—with twins, no less! But the pregnancy is painful for Rebekah, described so colorfully in Genesis 25:22-26:

"The children struggled together within {Rebekah}; and she said, 'If it is to be this way, why do I live?' So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her,

'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger.'

When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. Afterwards his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob" (meaning: "supplanter").

The lives of these brothers, Esau and Jacob, continue to reflect the rivalry that seemed evident already in Rebekah's womb. According to the customs of that day, all the blessings that came from Abraham to Isaac should have passed to Isaac's first-born son, Esau.

But from little on up, the two brothers were always at odds with one another, with Jacob conniving ways to cheat Esau out of his birth-right (see Genesis 25:27-34). Jacob's natural tendency to be "one who supplants" was aided and abetted by his mother Rebekah, who favored her younger son, while Isaac favored the older son, Esau. This serious case of sibling rivalry reaches its climax in Genesis 27, when Jacob (assisted by his mother) bamboozles his aged, nearly-blind



father to give him the paternal blessing that should, by rights, have gone to Esau (Genesis 27:1-40).

At this point Esau has had enough of Jacob's treachery, so he utters a bloodthirsty threat against his brother:

"Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, 'The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.' But the words of her elder son Esau were told to Rebekah; so she sent and called her younger son Jacob and said to him, 'Your brother Esau is consoling himself by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran, and stay with him for a while, until your brother's fury turns away— until your brother's anger against you turns away, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send, and bring you back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?'" (Genesis 27:41-45)

The upshot of this sorry situation is that Jacob is forced flee to the home of his uncle Laban (Rebekah's brother) in the

land from which Abraham and Sarah had immigrated to Canaan. For twenty years Jacob is gone, out of his fear of his brother Esau. During these two decades (you can read about it in Genesis 28-31) Jacob marries two of Laban's daughters, Leah and Rachel, and he takes their two handmaids, Billah and Zilpah as concubines. The four women bear Jacob eleven sons and a daughter, and he prospers in other ways as well: ***"Thus the man grew exceedingly rich, and had large flocks, and male and female slaves, and camels and donkeys."*** (Genesis 30:43)

When the sons of Laban realize that their cousin Jacob is prospering at their own expense, they start grumbling. ***"And Jacob saw that Laban did not regard him as favorably as he did before. Then the Lord said to Jacob, 'Return to the land of your ancestors and to your kindred, and I will be with you.'"*** (Genesis 31:2-3) But the prospect of seeing Esau after so many years frightens Jacob. When word comes to Jacob that Esau is planning to meet him with 400 men (soldiers in Esau's own army?), Jacob grows more terrified. The prospect of seeing his family slaughtered and his flocks pillaged by his vengeful brother leads Jacob to spend a sleepless night by the river Jabbok where he wrestles until dawn with a mysterious stranger (Genesis 32:22-32)—a strange experience which Jacob considers to be an encounter with God: ***"So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.'"*** (Genesis 32:30)

This whole back-story leads up to the dramatic reunion, after twenty years apart, of Jacob and his brother Esau. Clearly, Jacob expects the worst, so he carefully lines up his large family and has them walk ahead of him as they meet Esau and his 400 warriors. In this way, Jacob makes sure that first Esau sees his concubines Billah and Zilpah and their children; next Esau sees Leah and her seven children; then comes Rachel (Jacob's favored wife) and her son Joseph (Jacob's favored son), and then finally at the "end of the line" comes Jacob himself.

Was Jacob trying to elicit some sympathy from Esau by making Esau look at Jacob's many children and wives before seeing Jacob? Or was Jacob planning a way to cut his losses, if violence broke out—arranging his family members in such a way that he, Rachel and Joseph could escape if Esau's men attacked the first persons they encountered?

Here, when the suspense almost becomes unbearable, the story takes a dramatic turn in a direction Jacob seems not to have anticipated: ***"But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept."*** (Gen. 33:4)



Does this sentence sound familiar to you? It's almost the same exact language that we find in Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son: ***"So [the younger son] set off and went***

to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him." (Luke 15:20)

This powerful story offers an arresting image of what reconciliation looks like. Living in a world where far too many stories like that of Jacob and Esau end in violence, Genesis 33 reminds us that reconciliation is always an option that reflects God's way and the future God intends for us. Jacob himself utters perhaps the best line in this whole dramatic reconciliation story when he exclaims to his brother Esau: ***"Truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God—since you have received me with such favor."*** (Genesis 33:10)

For reflection and discussion:

- Why are feuds among relatives sometimes worse than feuds with persons to whom we're not related? Why are conflicts within congregations—within the "Body of Christ"—so painful and difficult to resolve?
- So many themes within the story of Jacob and Esau continue to echo during the final great saga in the Book of Genesis—the story of Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37-50). Joseph is so hated by his older brothers that they consider killing him, but instead they sell him into slavery. This leads to a long, twisting journey for Joseph, from the pit of despair to the highest echelons of power in Egypt. Toward the end of the story, Joseph and his brothers are reconciled (Genesis 46-50). In the final chapter of Genesis Joseph puts the whole sorry story into a wider, more redemptive perspective: ***"But Joseph said to [his brothers], 'Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.'"*** (Genesis 50:19-21) When have you had the experience of seeing God bring good out of evil? Recall a time when your congregation (or another congregation) worked through a conflict and emerged stronger than it was before reconciliation was achieved.
- A recent *New York Times* editorial stated: *"In nine of the 10 deadliest mass shootings in modern American history, the gunmen had records of threatening, stalking or physically abusing loved ones....Most mass shootings—which are often defined as shootings of four or more people—are episodes of domestic violence."*^[1] How might your congregation engage more deeply in ministries that foster health, peace and reconciliation in homes and families?

[1] "The Terrors of Hearth and Home," editorial in the *New York Times* on December 31, 2017.

Lawrence R. Wohlraabe
Bishop, Northwestern Minnesota Synod

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Vehicle at the bottom of the lake? Minnesota dive team explains process

By Brad Dokken, reprinted from the *Grand Forks Herald*, Sunday, January 21, 2018. Dokken is a reporter and editor of the Herald's Sunday Northland Outdoors pages. A Roseau native, he is a graduate of Bemidji State University.

DETROIT LAKES, MN.—Ask Gary Thompson why people break through the ice, and he'll say they usually don't do a good enough job of testing it before they venture out.



There's more to "reading" ice than measuring how thick it is. The Eskimos have more than 100 different words for snow, Thompson says. And while his vocabulary for describing ice is less extensive, it's no less accurate.

There's clear, black ice; milky ice; honeycomb ice—which is fairly good until there no longer is water visible on top of it, Thompson says—and finally, there's the ice he puts in the "oh (expletive)" category.

"That's when you go through," he says.

Owner of Tri-State Diving in Detroit Lakes, Thompson, 69, often gets the call when people experience the sinking feeling that results when vehicles, fish houses, ATVs, snowmobiles and who knows what else end up on the bottom of the lake or river.

Thompson, who in 2008 was featured on an episode of "Dirty Jobs" with Mike Rowe, recently wrapped up his 50th year of diving.

The Ada native says he's pretty much seen it all over the years.

"What we're finding now, more than anything else, is side-by-sides, four-wheelers and the big-wheel fish houses" breaking through the ice, Thompson said. "People are getting smarter in some ways—they're not taking a three-quarter ton pickup or 1-ton 'dualie' (pickup with dual wheels) out there and pulling their houses around on the ice. They just get too much weight in a small area."

BUSY SEASON

Thompson, who aptly is nicknamed "Seal," says Tri-State Diving does anywhere from 10 to 15 salvage operations in a typical winter. As of mid-January, the company already had

pulled nine ATVs, vehicles or fish houses from lakes across the region, and more jobs await them when weather conditions improve.

"It's getting to be more and more because of how well we're getting known and insurance companies calling us direct," Thompson said. "Dirty Jobs' put us on the map."

Tri-State shoots photos or video of all of its retrieval jobs and posts the footage on Facebook, Thompson said, which also helps to spread the word.

"Plus, there are a lot of the areas where conservation officers know the kind of work we do, and they refer (people) to us," he said.

Tri-State uses a device called a SUVE (pronounced soo-vee)—which stands for Submerged Underwater Vehicle Extractor—for retrieving vehicles. In very basic terms, the SUVE is like a big teeter totter with a winch on the top to raise whatever's submerged to the surface. Thompson has patents on both the apparatus and the teeter-totter concept it employs, he says.

"It's just two rails (the vehicle) rides up, and once it's up on top and gets past center, we just bring it down on the ice," Thompson said.

A foot to 2 feet of ice is preferred for retrieving a vehicle with the SUVE, Thompson says, but he also has used it on 9 to 10 inches of clear ice.

For smaller vehicles, the crew uses a lighter bipod apparatus. Safety is paramount to everything they do, Thompson says.

"We don't move anything until we determine how good the ice is," he said. "We'll use the bipod on about 4 or 5 inches of ice and bring up an ATV. If it's a side-by-side (vehicle), then I usually need about 6 inches of ice to bring them up safely."

A typical vehicle recovery using the SUVE takes 3 to 4 hours while ATVs and snowmobiles typically take no more than an hour or two, Thompson says. The crew, which varies from three to five or more depending on the size of the job, tries to avoid working in extreme weather, he says.

"I'd rather have a day with 0 degrees and no wind than a day that's 30 degrees and wind," he said. "That wind just bites."

STEPS TO FOLLOW

Thompson says anyone who loses a vehicle or other equipment to bad ice should contact authorities and their insurance company before doing anything else. While some salvage operations charge a flat rate, Thompson says Tri-State charges \$2,400 for the first hour and \$1,200 for every hour thereafter from the time they hit the lake until they're back on shore with the vehicle.

The goal, Thompson says, is to bring the vehicle back to the surface without any more damage than it sustained when it sank.

The vehicle might be totaled, but it's worth less to a salvage company if the metal's not usable, he says.

"We work real good with insurance companies," Thompson said. "Once I get a claim number, it makes it a lot easier for the client than to all of a sudden pull (the vehicle) out and

give this huge bill to the insurance company, and they're going, 'why did you go this route?'"

Full-coverage policies will pay the cost of the extraction and replacing the vehicle, minus deductibles. Some liability insurance policies may cover the cost of removal, as well, but that's something people who do a lot of ice driving should confirm with their insurers.

Despite popular belief, full coverage for dropping a vehicle through the ice isn't a one-time thing, Thompson says; not for most insurance companies, at least.

"The only way they could (not pay) is if they put a waiver on that it's not covered if you go on the ice," Thompson said. "But then, I guess I would look for a different insurance company if you're going to go out there fishing."

CHANGING WORKLOAD

While vehicle and fish house extractions dominate the winter workload, summer tends to be more commercial jobs, such as underwater cutting, power plant projects, working for the Department of Natural Resources or other agencies and looking for jewelry or other items of value, Thompson says. Occasionally, though, the Tri-State crew raises vehicles to the surface and tows them back to shore in open water. Such was the case on Lake of the Woods in June 2016, when Tri-State salvaged two vehicles that had broken through honeycomb ice that March.

"If we've got ice we can work on, I prefer to work on the ice because I can put my machine up," Thompson said. "The other way, we drop down, float them up with lift bags, get them to the surface and then we just tow them to shore with boats."

Side- and down-imaging technology such as Humminbird's Onix and Solix units has made the job easier, Thompson says. In one case, a boat that sank to the bottom of Pelican Lake in 34 feet of water was more than half a mile from where they'd been told it was, Thompson says.

Watching the electronics revealed not only the outline of the boat and how it was situated on the bottom of the lake but also showed a big fish about 2 feet above the sunken craft.

"It just makes the job so much easier to have these new electronics," Thompson said. "We would have been diving for days."

From mid-January until ice-out, driving too close to shore, especially in areas where cattails cause conditions to deteriorate, or anywhere there's current are among the more common reasons people run into trouble, Thompson says. Fish such as tullibees, which tend to school up high in the water column, also can weaken the ice.

Going too fast on the ice with larger vehicles is a problem any time of the winter, he says, and not because of traction issues.

"We still have people out there who feel the faster you go, the less problems you're going to have," Thompson said. "And it's just the opposite. You're creating a wave under there, and that's what destroys the ice. If I see someone going hell bent for leather across the ice—well, you're an idiot if you do that, you're stupid—I'm going to find a different route to go."

TAKE IT FROM SEAL

Here are some do's and don'ts for driving on the ice from Gary "Seal" Thompson, owner of Tri-State Diving in Detroit Lakes:

- Do test the ice before venturing out to make sure it's thick enough to support the weight of whatever you'll be driving. Remember milky or honeycomb ice isn't as strong as clear, black ice.
- Don't drive too fast on the ice with larger vehicles; keep the speed to no more than 10 or 15 mph. "We still have people out there who feel the faster you go, the less problems you're going to have, and it's just the opposite," Thompson says. "You're creating a wave underneath there, and that's what destroys the ice."
- Do avoid areas with cattails, which can weaken the ice, and areas with current, where the ice is always thinner.
- Do call authorities and your insurance company immediately after dropping a vehicle through the ice. As owner of an extraction business, Thompson says it's easier to work through the process if he has a claim number before starting the job.
- Do use the same GPS you used to mark the location of the sunken item—if you used one—when going out to find and retrieve the item. "You're always going to be more accurate," Thompson said. "Even if it's the same (GPS) brand, if you're punching the coordinates in, it's not the same as having the unit you're out there with. The coordinates might be off 15 or 20 feet. If you use the same one, you're going to be a lot more consistent."

Whoever said that
diamonds are
a girl's best friend..

Never owned a dog.



A Look at Technology

RADIOS

Paul and Joseph Galvin founded Galvin Manufacturing Corporation in 1928, making adaptors that allowed battery-operated radios to be plugged into household current. When the Great Depression ruined their market, they had to find a new product. The company next door was working on developing radio technology. The two companies teamed up to figure out how to install radios inside cars.

By 1930 they had designed a radio for cars. They finished just before the Radio Manufacturers Association convention in Atlantic City, NJ. Paul Galvin drove there to advertise the new radio but couldn't afford to rent a booth. Instead, he parked on the curb outside the convention doors, cranked the radio up to full blast, and started working the crowd, with good success.

Now it was time to name the new company, so Paul created a name that started with a word that suggested movement, and then added the popular suffix "ola" used in such well-known trade names as Victrola and Pianola. Today, it's a multi-national Fortune 500 electronics company: *Motorola*.

TRANSISTORS

In 1952, Bell Labs of AT&T sponsored a seminar that explained how the newly developed transistor worked. But companies had to pay a licensing fee of \$25,000 to attend.

In Tokyo, Akio Morita heard about the seminar. After World War II, he had started up a firm repairing radios, and had designed a tape recorder. He scraped up the \$25,000 fee, only to find that the Japanese government would not allow so much money to leave the country. Forty other companies attended the seminar, among them Texas Instruments, who used the knowledge to produce the first transistor radio released in 1954.

Undaunted, Morita traveled to Bell Labs on his own in 1953, and convinced them to grant him a provisional license. The Japanese government was impressed with Morita's industriousness and allowed the license to go through.

A year later, the first Japanese transistor radio was released. Although Texas Instruments beat him to the market, Morita's company made transistors commercially successful.

Morita based the name of his company on the Latin "sonus" which is the root of "sonic" and "sound." Today the firm is one of the world's largest conglomerates with annual revenues approaching \$100 billion: *Sony*.

BETTER SOUND

Ray was born in 1933 and grew up in California. In 1949 he got a job with Ampex Corporation, improving tape recorders and developing the video tape recorder. He focused on finding ways to overcome the noise interference caused by cosmic X-rays, which cause an annoying hissing on magnetic tapes. Ray realized that by separating recorded sound into two channels, he could strip unwanted noise while maintaining the clarity of the underlying music.

In 1966 he took a prototype to Decca Records, who were so impressed they bought his entire production run for the next six months. By the early 1970s, Ray had adapted the technology for the broadcast and motion picture industries.

"Star Wars" was the first movie to use his noise-reduction system.

His company now has 650 employees. Nearly 30,000 movie theaters use his sound system, and his equipment is used to record every radio and TV performance in the world, as well as in car stereos, cassette players, and DVD players. The technology was dubbed with Ray's last name: *Dolby*.

WIRELESS DEVICES

Harald was born in Denmark around the year 935 A.D., the son of King Gorm the Old. He grew up to become ruler of Denmark, just like his father. For a brief period he united Denmark, Norway and Sweden under a single ruler: himself. He ruled until his son deposed him, and died around 986 A.D.

A thousand years later, a Swedish telecom corporation called Ericsson Mobile Communications decided that the world needed a new wireless networking standard to unite computers, cell phones printers and PDAs with cable-free communications capabilities.

In 1998 Ericsson invited Nokia, Toshiba, IBM and Intel to strategy meetings. They worked to develop a new low-power, low-cost radio interface between computer accessories. Ericsson's idea was to integrate them all in order to drive a single wireless standard into the industry.

The project was given a code name of the English translation of Harald's Danish last name, because it was uniting technologies just as Harald had united countries. The logo is composed of the intertwined ancient runes for Harald's initials, HB: *Harald Bluetooth*.

VIDEO GAMES

A Japanese businessman founded a playing card company in 1889 and named it after the Japanese words meaning "leave luck to heaven." He handed the company down to his son-in-law, who handed it down to his son-in-law, who was named Hiroshi Yamauchi.

Hiroshi paid a visit to the largest playing card manufacturer in the U.S. He was shocked to find them operating in a tiny office. This convinced him he needed to expand his business beyond cards; he wanted a big factory, not a small office.

Hiroshi hired a man named Yokoi to oversee the assembly line. One day he saw Yokoi playing with an automatic hand-extender contraption, which he had manufactured in his spare time for fun. Hiroshi seized the opportunity, and the "Ultra Hand" sold over a million units. Yokoi was put into product development.

In 1977 the firm hired Shigeru Miyamoto, whose talent was electronic games. Yokoi and Shigeru worked together to develop a "Color TV Game Machine," which was one of the first video games on the market. In 1981 they had a hit with a game starring an ape, and that was followed by a game starring an Italian plumber who battled creatures in sewers.

The firm grew and eventually became Japan's third most valuable company, still named after the Japanese words for "leave luck to heaven:" *Nintendo* with the popular games called Donkey Kong and Mario Brothers.

Bygone Times Revealed in Norway's Abandoned Farms

reprinted from *Sons of Norway* online newsletter

Author and historian Øystein Morten has studied *ødegårder*—abandoned farms—at length. Fascinated by their vacant, fallen structures, Morten believes deserted farms have a particular allure and tell us something important about the places and the culture that Norwegians have moved away from. With photographer Pål Hermansen, Morten has published—*Norske ødegårder—Historien om stedene vi forlot*—("Abandoned Norwegian Farms - The History of the Places We Left"), a book featuring nine deserted farmsteads that offer a glimpse into the past through clues found in diaries, photos and artifacts. Some of the farms were left in the Middle Ages, others within the last two decades.

What constitutes an *ødegård*?

This term originally applied to farms that stood vacant after the Black Death ravaged Europe in the mid-14th century. Roughly 60 percent of the Norwegian population perished as a result of the Plague. These farms, even ones that were later restored, were often permanently branded as *Ødegård* (or Old Norse variants Aunet or Øyjorda), with the old farm name lost to time. But *ødegårder* aren't all a result of the Plague. Since the 1970s, Morten writes, 115,000 Norwegian farms have ceased operation. By his count there are currently 30,000 farmsteads that are totally deserted, meaning no one lives or vacations there.

Sometimes the *ødegårder* can be tough to spot, as nature has almost completely reclaimed the land. In other instances, the silent buildings still appear eerily intact. To find suitable farms for his book, Morten contacted historians, municipalities and museums, got tips from friends and scoured Google. Morten compares abandoned farms to crime scenes, where he has to piece together their stories, by sifting through the desolate ruins. Traces of bygone times are found in the unraveled furniture, leaning structures, overgrown gates or a coffee cup left on the counter.



Mapcarta, an online searchable map that features past and present farms of Norway, reveals 427 entries with *Ødegård* in the name, 290 references to Aunet and 165 to Øyjord(a). Some entries refer to a hyphenated name, such as Jelsnes-Ødegård, which reincorporates the farm's previous name, but still refers to its former deserted status.

Morten lives on an *ødegård* himself, and jokes that in 100 years village historians will write that "the houses on the farm were well-kept until Øystein Morten took over."

Editor's Note: Because many of the "*ødegårder*" were reclaimed but their place names not changed, it is most likely that immigrants with the last name "Odegard" or "Odeggaard" occupied one of these farms in Norway.

Per Odd Smelhus in Norway recounts the tale of an *ødegård* being discovered while a man was out hunting in the woods. His shot missed his target and he heard a distinct "ping." Pushing through trees and heavy overgrowth, he discovered the remnants of an abandoned barn with a bell on the roof.

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Reuben Sliders

Cindy served wonderful Reuben Sliders for our WELCA quilting day. Here is the recipe she used from "Cooking Mamas."



1 (12 ct.) pkg. Hawaiian dinner rolls
1/2 lb. corned beef, thinly sliced
8 slices Swiss cheese
1/3 c. Thousand Island dressing
1 c. sauerkraut, squeezed dry

BUTTER TOPPING:
1/4 c. butter, melted
1 T. Dijon mustard
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. dried minced onion

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut the rolls in half. Place the bottom rolls in a 9x13-inch pan lined with parchment paper for easy removal. Spread dressing on the bottom rolls. Top with a layer of cheese, sauerkraut, corned beef and another layer of cheese. Top with the other half of the rolls. **BUTTER TOPPING:** In a small bowl, whisk together melted butter, mustard, garlic powder, and dried onion. Spoon or brush the butter mixture over the top of the buns. Bake about 20-25 minutes or until the cheese has melted and the tops are lightly browned. Cover with foil if the top gets too brown. Serve warm.

The Back Page

Archaeology News from Minnesota!

After having dug to a depth of 10 feet last year, New York scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 100 years and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network more than 100 years ago.

Not to be outdone by the New Yorkers, in the weeks that followed, a California archaeologist dug to a depth of 20 feet. Shortly thereafter, a story in the LA Times read: "California archaeologists report the finding of 200 year old copper wire and have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network a hundred years earlier than the New Yorkers."

One week later, a local newspaper in Minnesota reported the following: "After digging as deep as 30 feet in his pasture near Askov, Minnesota, Ole Swenson, a self-taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely nothing. Ole has therefore concluded that, 300 years ago, Minnesota had already gone wireless."

Just makes a person proud to be from Minnesota.

A kindergarten teacher was walking around observing her classroom of children while they were drawing pictures. As she got to one girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was.

The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like."

Without looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."

Two boys were walking home from church after hearing a strong preaching on the devil. One said to the other, "What do you think about all this Satan stuff?"

The other boy replied, "Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just your dad."

The Sunday School teacher was describing that when Lot's wife looked back at Sodom she turned into a pillar of salt, when Bobby interrupted. "My mommy looked back once while she was driving," he announced, "and she turned into a telephone pole."

Another Sunday School teacher said to her children, "We have been learning about how powerful the kings and queens were in Biblical times. But there is a higher power. Who can tell me what it is?" Tommy blurted out, "I know. Aces!"

Big Ed seemed to always fall asleep during the Sunday sermon. His wife was fed up and decided to deal with the embarrassing situation.

The next Sunday when he fell asleep, she quietly removed some pungent Limburger cheese from a ziplock bag in her purse and passed it under his nose.

Groggily startled, Big Ed blurted out, "No, Helen, no—don't kiss me now."

After explaining the commandment to honor your father and mother, a Sunday School teacher asked her class if there was a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters.

One boy, the oldest in his family, immediately answered, "Thou shalt not kill."

Lot again... A father was reading Bible stories to his young son. He read, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt."

His son asked, "What happened to the flea?"

Father O'Malley answers the phone. "Hello, is this Father O'Malley?"

"It is."

"This is the IRS. Can you help us?"

"I can."

"Do you know a Ted Houlihan?"

"I do."

"Is he a member of your congregation?"

"He is."

"Did he donate \$10,000 to the church?"

"He will."

A preacher was completing a temperance sermon.

With great expression he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river!" The congregation nodded their approval. With even greater emphasis he added, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river, too!" The people clapped and said "Amen." And then finally, he concluded, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river!"

As he sat down, the song leader then stood up quite cautiously and announced, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn #365: "Shall We Gather at the River."