St. Pauli News in Detail



Greeting and Ushering

March 1	Myles and Kathy Alberg
March 8	Ron and Virginia Anderson
March 15	Faye Auchenpaugh
March 22	Wade and Marisa Benson
March 29	Corey and Nikki Berg

Altar Preparation: Roxane Rondorf

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Communion in March and April

Pr. Darrell Cory will conduct Holy Communion services on March 8. Bishop Tesch will conduct Holy Communion services on Palm Sunday, March 31.

Kevin Reich has permission from Bishop Tesch to serve communion for Easter morning services.

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March Milestones



Birthdays

Mar. 4	Ken Cedergren
Mar. 10	Laurie Nelson
Mar. 13	Gabe Haugen
Mar. 15	Sue Kotz
Mar. 16	Larry Liden
Mar. 26	Staci Reay

Anniversaries

Mar. 12	Neil and Sharon Bugge

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Quilting

Thursday and Friday, March 5 and 6
10:00 am – 4:00 pm

We're going to quilt for two days in March, and we need your help! If you can thread a needle, you have the skills required. Lunch is provided (coffee breaks, too) and we have fun! In addition to sending quilts to Lutheran World Relief, we always keep two quilts on hand to donate to local families in need.

Bishop Bill Tesch Sunday, March 29

We are blessed and honored to have Bishop Tesch conduct Holy Communion services at St. Pauli on Palm Sunday, March 29.

Please make every effort to attend this service.

Potluck follow ingthe service.

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We are again taking part in collecting items for Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief.

March 1 – (2) Bars of soap (4 or 5 oz in original wrapper)
March 8 – Bath towel (sturdy, max size 27" x 52", dark color preferred)
March 15 – Toothbrush (adult size, in original package)
March 22 – Sturdy comb (wide-tooth preferred)
March 29 – Nail Clipper (metal, attached file optional)

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Easter Sunday Service Time

REMINDER

April 5 – 8:00 am

At our annual meeting, the congregation affirmed that Easter Sunday services will be held at 8:00 am.

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March is Food Shelf Month

March is Food Shelf Month at St. Pauli, and the Food Shelf receives some matching funds for donations we make this month. A basket for the donations is located in the narthex.



In Memorium

James “Jim” Nelson

October 20, 1937 – January 27, 2026

Jim and Joan are long-time members of St. Pauli Church.

James R. Nelson, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather passed away peacefully at his home on January 27, 2026, in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, surrounded by family.

Born on October 20, 1937, in St. Paul, Minnesota, he lived a full life marked by dedication to both his profession and his loved ones. His education began in South Minneapolis where he completed high school, later earning a two-year degree in Ag School, laying a solid foundation for his future endeavors.

On October 25, 1958, Jim was united in marriage to Joan Adams in St. Paul, MN. To this union, two sons were born: Jeffrey and Bradley. Jim proudly served in the United States Army, contributing to the country he loved.

Jim worked in telephone repair at Northwestern Bell for 30 years, a career during which he became known for his reliability and skill. Following his retirement, he embraced farming, a passion that allowed him to connect with the land he cherished. He was an avid horseman, as well as a fine leather worker and saddle maker.

He was known for his witty personality, always ready with a great sense of humor that brought joy to those around him. Jim loved to be silly and joke, he loved to sing and was a big flirt. He was a natural charmer. It never took too long for him to captivate the hearts of those around him. He loved reading, shooting, and reloading. He was an avid deer and bird watcher. He loved a good cup of tea, good conversation, and some old-time music.

Jim leaves behind his devoted wife, Joan, and his two sons, Jeffrey and Bradley; his grandchildren, Ambra, Bryan, April, Amanda, Benjamin, and Tyler, and his great-grandchildren Aadra, Jenna, Zander, Emelia, and James; and nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Ruben and Marianne Nelson, and his sister Janet Haas.

Jim will be remembered not only for his contributions to his community and family but also for the warmth and kindness he shared with everyone he met. His spirit lives on in the hearts of all who knew him.

A memorial service was held at 10:00 AM Thursday, February 5, 2026, at Johnson Funeral Service with visitation one hour before the service. Burial will be at a later date.

Sharing a few condolences from Johnson Funeral’s website:

Bruce H.: Jim is my uncle. Looking through old pictures, I’m flooded with memories. My first was in 1952. I was 5 months old, when he was reading me a pamphlet on shooting, while lying in his bed and feeding me a bottle. He taught me lots because that’s how he lived. Here’s a few: Join Cub and Boy Scouts; Always carry a knife and handkerchief; How to canoe through ice; Be a straight shooter, literally and figuratively; Raise your kids to shoot straight; Take care of your wife; Like polka music; Too many more to mention. A couple of his favorite slogans were: You have nothing ‘til you share, and “Love you, see you, bye!”

Jean T.: I met Jim and Joan when my mom became a resident at Greenleaf. Jim with his ability to humorously banter with my mom made her transition to a completely NEW life at the facility easier and brought out a side of my Mom I did not know existed and I have had so much fun getting to know her. It’s like Jim played the funny man and Joan the straight person in your comedy team. Jim was able to find the best in a situation; I pray that he had a sense of this. Thank you both for sharing his humor and being a part of it. You both have helped so many adjust to a new life in a situation that isn’t easy. I pray we all keep his memory alive for all the good he did.

Ken F.: I did not know Jim early on, but we became good friends after his retirement. In my job as Chief of Police there were often stressful times and gray-type days. Jim always made my day so much brighter and better. I shall never forget his kindness and that wonderful smile. May his memory be blessed.



In Memorium

Ethel Wellen

December 23, 1925 – February, 2026 (age 100)

Ethel was Kathy Alberg's mother.

Ethel Wellen, age 100 loved by her family and friends, passed to her heavenly home on February 2, 2026. At the time she was living at Karlstad Senior Living.

Ethel was born on December 23, 1925, in Ross, Minnesota, to Harold and Annie (Solem) Peterson. She grew up in the Ross and Badger area and graduated from Badger High School with the Class of 1944, believed to be the last surviving member of her graduating class.

On June 18, 1945, Ethel was united in marriage to George Wellen in Badger. Together they built a life rooted in faith, hard work, and family. George preceded her in death on March 21, 2008.

Ethel was known as a dedicated and hardworking woman throughout her life. She helped on the family farm raising cattle, sheep, chickens, and geese, and also worked as a waitress. Along the way she worked at and owned the Badger Cash Market, spent time working at Polaris, in the potato fields with the neighbor ladies, which was her vacation. She later retired from Cenex after 28 years of service.

She was a longtime member of Badger Creek Lutheran Church, where she served in various roles and was always willing to lend a helping hand.

Ethel had a deep love for her Norwegian heritage. Lutefisk and rommegrot were the top of the list of her favorite foods. Teaching her family to roll lefse, hardanger and flatbread was enjoyable, but also sometimes a challenge. But the tradition will carry on.

She enjoyed having a nice yard with beautiful flowers. The hummingbirds and orioles were just a few of the birds and animals she would watch through her window. This gave her a lot of entertainment. Her lawn was always groomed, and she loved to mow on John Deere riding mowers. Her love of baking kept her awake into the wee hours. She was known for buns and Aunt Sally cookies which we all will miss.

She enjoyed playing many games and was always willing to challenge the grandkids in a game of Farkle, Yahtzee, or any game. She never forgot the grandkid's birthdays, giving them a card and a $10 bill.

She is survived by her children Barbara (Don) Burkel of Greenbush, Kathy (Myles) Alberg of Thief River Falls, Earl Wellen of Troup, Texas, and Loren (Jeannie) Wellen of Badger; 12 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; and 18 great-great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, George; her son, Jerry Wellen; her parents; and was the last surviving member of her siblings and of the ten Wellen in-laws.

Thanks go to the Karlstad Senior Living Center caregivers for the care she received. The many memories we have made with her will stay in our hearts forever.

A Funeral Service for Ethel Wellen was held on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 2:00 PM at Helgeson Funeral Home in Roseau, MN. Visitation was held one hour prior to the service at the Funeral Home.

A few condolences from the Helgeson Funeral website:

Pam H.: Ethel was such a great lady! Always had a smile to greet everyone. Her awesome baked goods were purchased by me a number of times - especially her buns and Sally Ann cookies. They were the best! She lived a long and wonderful life. My dear friend, Jeannie, couldn't have asked for a better mother-in-law. She will be missed by many.

Danny, Pam and Devon D.: Ethel will be dearly missed. She was always a joy to visit with, always had a pep in her step! RIP Ethel. P.S. Best Buns Ever!

Yvonne E.: Ethel was a very special lady! I wonder how many of us enjoyed Ethel's donuts, buns, rolls, and cookies. Her baked goodies were always delicious! I remember Ethel as a very hard-working woman with a kind heart, smile on her face, and faith in God. Ethel, you touched so many hearts. We will never forget you.

Minutes of the Church Council

January 15, 2026

The St. Pauli Lutheran Church council held its monthly meeting on Thursday, January 15, 2026 at St. Pauli Church. Members present included Faye Auchenpaugh, Jim Rondorf, Jana Prickett, and Kevin Reich.

Council President Faye Auchenpaugh called the meeting to order at 6:59 pm. Kevin Reich opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of Agenda: Kevin Reich asked to add the topic of his compensation to the agenda under new items. M/S/C (Rondorf/Prickett) to approve the revised agenda.

Secretary's Report: M/S/C (Auchenpaugh/Rondorf) to approve the Secretary's report for November 2025. There was no meeting in December.

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

Checking Account Balance End of Nov 2025:	$ 25,198.05
Dec 2025 Revenue	6,606.00
Dec 2025 Expenses	(4,550.11)
Checking Account Balance End of Dec 2025:	$ 27,253.94
Other Account Balances End of Dec 2025	
Edward Jones	$ 93,870.40
Memorial Fund	8,934.83
Savings	45,820.28
Total St. Pauli Acct Balances End of Dec 2025:	$175,879.45
Cemetery Association Funds End of Dec 2025:	$ 66,878.24

Kevin Reich's Report: Kevin attended a conference get together in Warren today. A conference meeting/summit will be on Saturday, April 11th at Redeemer and will focus on lay people and congregational members. More info will be included in the March newsletter.

Other Reports:

- WELCA – Quilting and soup making (chicken dumpling) will be held on February 11th and 12th .Soup deliveries will be made on the 12th .
- Board of Education – Kevin said there is talk about a local youth gathering that is being spearheaded by the SAM from Oklee parish.

Old Business:
Pulpit Supply:

a. January 25 - Pastor Darrel Cory
b. Feb 8 – Pastor Darrel Cory
c. March 29 - Bishop Tesch
d. Easter service – Faye will request permission from Synod for Kevin to serve communion on Easter Sunday.

New Business:

1. A new kitchen faucet is needed. Jim Rondorf agreed to replace it for us.
2. Kari Torkelson's mission fund request was approved. M/S/C (Prickett/Rondorf)
3. Kevin Reich's Compensation - Kevin asked if the council would consider a $50 increase for Sunday services. He also asked if the church would consider paying him $50 or $100 for special services like funerals or weddings (this is in addition to what the family would pay him). This will be discussed in a closed session at the next meeting.
4. Annual meeting will be on Sunday, February 1st immediately following worship service.
5. The proposed 2026 Funds and Budget report was reviewed by council and unanimously recommended to the congregation for adoption.
6. Lenten services will happen as usual including Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Easter service time will be held at 8:00 am.
7. Concern was raised after Myles Alberg discovered that we had run out of propane. Myles was able to get Red Lake County Co-op to come out immediately to fill. He will work with them to install a monitor so he can be notified via email or text when running low.

Next regular meeting date: Thursday, February 19.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer and adjourned at 8:04 pm.

Jana Prickett
St. Pauli Church Council Secretary

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Minutes of the Women of the ELCA

January 6, 2026

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met at 3:00 pm with 7 members present. President Cindy Cedergren opened with Devotions titled "Bigger Picture" based on Lamentations 3:22-23.

Secretary's report: The minutes of our November 19, 2025 meeting were read.

Treasurer's report: November 19-December 31, 2025: Expenses: $2,399.90; Income: $242.45. Checking balance $1,216.70. Savings balance as of 12-31-25: $613.58. CD balance as of 12-31-25: $6,929.76.

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

Stewardship Report:
Kathy said we are using flannel sheets for quilt filler today. Virginia has a Thrivent card to purchase batting and backing from Oklee Quilting. Kathy will apply for a Thrivent card for our Valentine's Day meals we deliver. Cindy will check with LWR to see if they will accept pre-folded diapers with snaps that we can get free from Sweet Repeats. She found $2 hooded sweatshirts at Walmart.

Council Report: The slate of officers is ready for the annual meeting.

Communications: Thank you cards and letters received from HIA Hospice (Jan said the Tree Walk made about $10,000 for Hospice), Northland Mission, BioGirls, and Women of the ELCA (our Thankoffering gift).

Thank you to Faye Auchenpaugh and Marisa Benson for hosting the Christmas Tea.

Old Business: What should we do with the old vacuum cleaner we no longer use? Decided we would put a "Free" sign on it for a week or so and see if anyone wants it.

Council needs to get a new faucet for the kitchen sink.

New Business:

- February meal activity will be chicken dumpling soup, so we need to be saving quart and pint glass jars. Cindy will put a notice in the church bulletin and Faye will add it to the February newsletter. Kathy will get a Thrivent card.
- Faye will use leftover ham in the freezer to make scalloped potatoes for annual meeting. Mary Group is in charge of serving.
- Next WELCA meeting is February 11-12 with quilting and soup making. Hostess on Wednesday: Sharon, Thursday: Virginia. WELCA meets at 3:00 on Wednesday.
- Next Lydia Circle meeting is January 14 at 3:00 pm. Faye will furnish snacks.

Faye Auchenpaugh, Secretary

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Chicken Dumpling Soup!

In recognition of our love for neighbor and community, the WELCA ladies made a supper for people in the neighborhood on February 11th. The ladies began chopping, shredding, dicing and sauteing vegetables on Tuesday while quilting. On Wednesday, we got down to soup making in earnest.

By 3:00, the soup was done and the baskets were filled. We divided ourselves into five teams, and delivered boxes to 21 households with a total of 31 persons. We also included a dinner roll, cupcake, cookies, candy and a Valentine's Day card made by the Sunday School kids.

We even managed to finish eight quilts during those two days!





Here are your WELCA ladies:
Jan Strandlie, Faye Auchenpaugh, Sue Kotz, Kathy Alberg, Sharon Bugge, Deb Mostrom and Virginia Anderson. (Not in photo: Cindy Cedergren who came to help deliver after she finished her day of volunteering at Challenger Elementary School.)

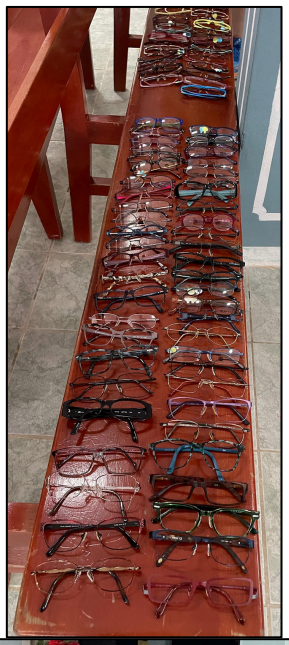
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Our Mission in Action!

Imagine a young lady from Grand Forks who traveled on a mission trip last year to Belize where she met a little boy named Henry who wasn't doing well in school because he couldn't see and needed eyeglasses. She came back home and got connected to our own Dr. Kari Torkelson, who has served on mission trips to offer free eye checks and give eyeglasses in other countries. Fast forward a year and here they are fitting Henry and his schoolmates and community with much-needed eyeglasses. Belizeans are loving and thankful.

The group saw about 400 people including all the students and teachers in the two schools on San Antonio. The St. Pauli Council approved a mission grant for Kari to go on this trip, and she thanks you and everyone who donates used eyeglasses. Among others accompanying Kari were Susanne(Johnson) Hinrichs and her daughter Emelia. Here are some photos of their faith in action.















I can see!



Around the Neighborhood



Front row: Owen Shaw, Audrey Shaw, Back row: Briley Olsonowski, Chad Torstveit, Rylan Torstveit, and Brianne Ellison. Not pictured: Ryder Olsonowski.

Pennington County 4-H marked the end of the 2024-25 program year by celebrating youth achievement, leadership, and community involvement at its annual Awards Banquet. Among those honored were Chad Torstveit's Poultry Project Bowl Team. Two of the Project Award recipients were our very own Aksel and Elsa Haugen.

This is how they did with their bird pens: Briley - Blue on Bantam Breeding Pen, Owen & Ryder both got Blue on their Brown Egg Layer Production Pens.

Briley & Owen had additional State Fair success too. Briley: Reserve Champion in Advanced Showmanship, 4th Place in the Senior Poultry Judging Contest and Poultry Interview Finalist. Owen: Champion in the Intermediate Poultry Judging Contest, Reserve Champion on his Poultry Educational Poster and Poultry Interview Finalist.

The Poultry Project Bowl teams also competed recently at the Northern MN 4-H Project Bowl Invitational in Crookston. The Junior Pennington / Red Lake Poultry team consisting of Owen & Audrey Shaw (Pennington) and Niah & Arlo Rupprecht (Red Lake) took first place in their division. The Senior Pennington Poultry team consisting of Brianne Ellison, Briley & Ryder Olsonawski also took first place in their division. The next event for the poultry teams is the Northern Regional Project Bowl contest held in Bemidji on March 21st.



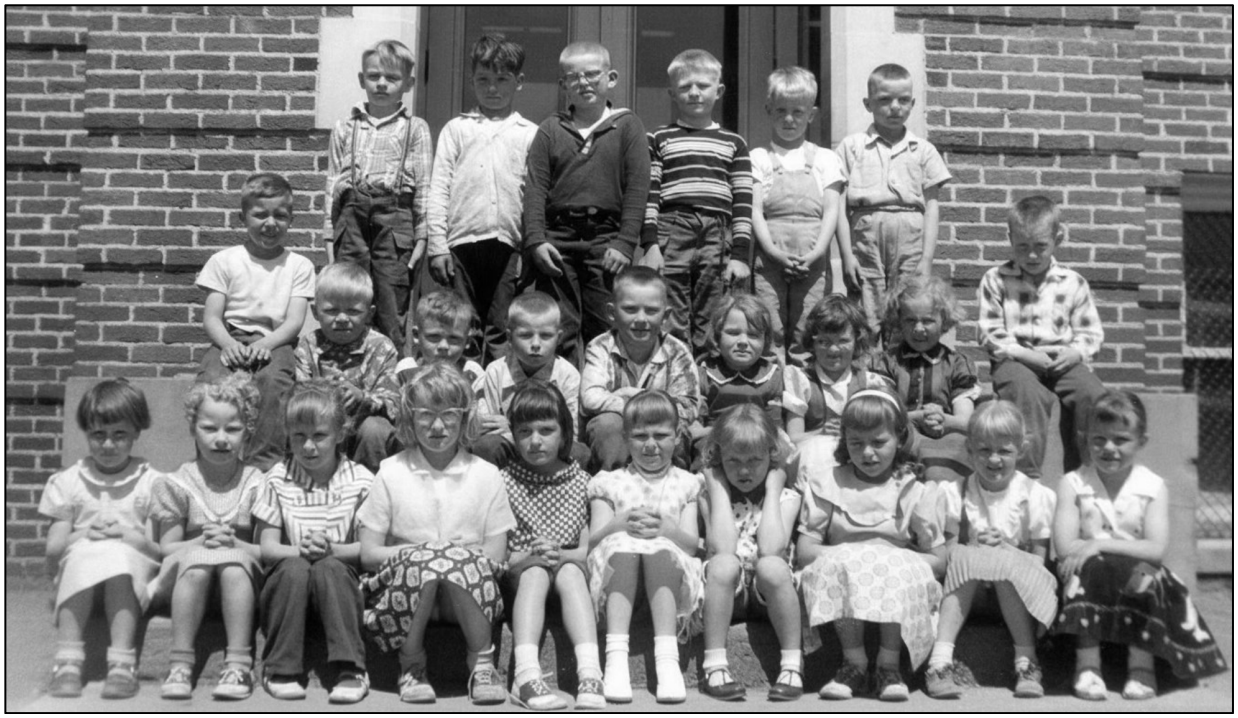
Chad is a grandpa, too, which makes Val a great grandma!

Meet Opal Reine Torstveit, daughter of Rylan and Willow Torstveit, at less than two days old. And a photo on the right a few weeks later.

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St. Hilaire Elementary School, 1st Grade 1956-57. You'll recognize some St. Pauli kids.



Front row: Marcia Jennings, Donna Sjulson, Teri Dawn Larson, Laura Lea Yonke, Bonnie Pearson, Vicki Pearson, Susan Swanson, Paulette Johnson, Debra Haugen, Lou Ann Johnson. Back row: Terry Allen, Jonas Nelson, Leslie Peterson, Howard Hawkinson, Dennis Rondorf, LeRoy Fromm. Middle row: Gary Almquist, Kenneth Skaaren, Stephen Hinrichs, Tommy Opdahl, Glenn Johnson, Linda Kopecky, Sandra Hinrichs, Renee Wald, Nick Drees. Photo was taken by Marian (Mrs. Klem) Gigstad, teacher

ENVY

(continuing our "Hymn to Winter" series)

Todd viewed the graceful palm tree towering over the gray-white sand and the green-blue ocean. As he felt the sun on his neck and the cool of his mojito in his hand, he knew it wasn't enough to privately own this moment. He needed to let someone else know he was enjoying it and, just as importantly, that they weren't.

So he texted his brother in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where the temps were in the teens and the skies were bland as bankers' slacks. It was his third text to Eric that week, always with the same theme.

"Life's pretty good here, Bro," he typed. "Probably as good as it gets. Cheers from Miami."

Eric received the text as he pulled into his driveway. He heard the familiar notification on his cell phone and looked to see who was contacting him. With his car idling and the heater blowing softly, he stared at the image from Florida. He considered texting a lone thumbs up. But he'd done that the last two times. So, he went in a different direction.

"What is it about people who leave Wisconsin for a tropical vacation?" he typed. "They can't enjoy themselves, not fully, not completely, until they have let someone else back home know how much better their situation is than that of the poor schlub stuck on the tundra. What part of your psyche is fed by this practice? Why is it necessary, in order to enjoy your day on the beach, to let someone who's not on the beach become aware that you're on the beach? How unfortunate that a good day isn't truly good, until someone else, who's not enjoying it, knows about it."

Todd received the text and read it twice. He couldn't tell if Eric was being facetious. He often had this problem with his brother's messages. He couldn't get a sense of the tone. Was Eric truly annoyed or just teasing? Todd determined that the words hit a little too close to home. In fact, they stung. Eric is being sincere, he thought. He had hoped Eric would type, "You lucky bastard." But it was true, Todd couldn't quite fell like a lucky bastard until someone who was a lucky bastard called hi one. He suddenly felt exposed. He typed back, "You're just jealous," words he longed to be true.

Eric typed his reply quickly, "Jealous? Thus far your thoughts are not with your surroundings but with making sure others are aware of those surroundings. That doesn't come across as an enviable state of mind. The photo you sent shows a landscape but not a state of joy or an experience of pleasure. What conversations are you having and with whom, and how rewarding are they? Is the tie away helping with your insomnia? I just learned from Nancy that your boss is being transferred to hospice care. This can't be the best time to be away from the office. Is any of this occupying your mind as you feel the warmth of the sun on your 51-year-old body? Call me when you get back in town and we'll go out for a scotch and talk about it. May the window seat at Schiller's. We'll watch snow fall and listen to those Nat King Cole Christmas carols on their juke. Meanwhile, here's a photo of my car, idling in the driveway. I'm staring at the cold ground, captivated by the dance of the exhaust above the icy concrete… Safe travels, Brother."

Todd put his phone down, agitated by the exchange. No more texts to Eric, he thought. He considered texting the beach scene to someone else, someone less prickly. Maybe Steve, his assistant. Then Todd realized how little weight Steve's reply would carry. He needed acknowledgement from a peer.

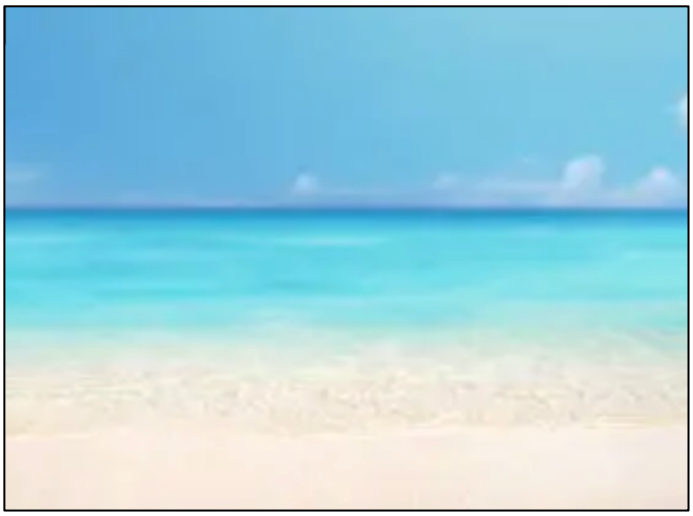
He scrolled through his contact list. He couldn't find anyone he judged as having sufficient gravitas. Except for his boss. So, against his better judgment, he clicked on her phone number and copied and pasted the photo of his idyllic beach scene. He spent a couple minutes trying to decide what words would be appropriate, given her situation. "Life doesn't get any better," was no longer an option. He chose instead what he thought would be a compassionate message. He typed, "I'm praying this is what the afterlife looks like," and pressed send.

Within seconds, he regretted it. Overwhelmingly. He felt a dense rush of remorse move across his chest, followed by a far deeper and burdensome shame. It sapped all the thrill from his vista and all comfort from the ocean breeze. Guilt-ridden and beside himself, he set down his mojito, gripped his forehead and said, in a whispered grimace, "sh*t, sh*t, sh*t."

Back in Wisconsin, Eric had walked next door to offer aid to his neighbor, who was clearing snow from his rooftop. They had chatted briefly, and Eric was now holding the man's ladder in place, while keeping his head down to avoid the cascade of cold powder being sent from above. Then Eric heard, once again, the familiar high-pitched tone of yet another text notification coming from inside his breast pocket. He removed his glove, pulled out the phone, and saw that it was Todd, passing along in capital letters that he had just received an angry text from his boss's husband, and did Eric have time to talk.

Eric sent a selfie as a reply, showing snow covering his hair, eyeglasses, and beard. He typed, "No. But wish you were here."

The reply from Todd was immediate: "Me, too."



"Life's pretty good here, Bro. Probably as good as it gets. Cheers from Miami."

Norway's Dominance at the Winter Olympics Has a Lot to Do with Youth Sports—and It's the Opposite of America

Here's what we can learn from a Winter Olympics powerhouse

By Brad Stulberg

Norway consistently wins the most medals at the Winter Olympic Games, with a population of just 5.6 million people. This year at Milano-Cortina, they broke the record for the most gold medals every won in the Olympics. They won the most medals in 2022. And they won the most medals in 2018.



(And before you say, *it's just because Norway is a snow wonderland*, let me remind you that Norway also wins three times the medals as the U.S. per capita at the *Summer* Olympics too.)

A big part of their success is how they treat youth sports—and it's the opposite of what we do in the U.S.

Here's what we can learn from Norway:

1. Scorekeeping

In the U.S.: Youth sports tend to be hyper competitive even at early ages. Leagues almost always keep score.

In Norway: Scorekeeping isn't even allowed until age 13.

Removing winners and losers keeps the focus on the process not outcomes. It keeps kids engaged longer because it minimizes pressure (and tears) and maximizes fun, learning, and growth. The goal isn't to win a third-grade championship. It's to love sport and keep playing.

2. Trophies

In the U.S.: If you give everyone a trophy, you're feeding into a culture of snowflakes who will never gain a competitive edge.

In Norway: Whenever trophies are awarded, they are handed out to everyone.

If getting a trophy makes young kids feel good, we should give them trophies. Maybe they'll come back and play again next year!! As for developing the next generation of snowflakes with no competitive edge—Norway's athletes are tough as nails, and they keep winning.

3. Prioritizing Fun

In the U.S.: Far too often, the goal is to win.

In Norway: The national philosophy is "joy of sport."

Youth sports in the U.S. are driven by adults, ego, and money. Youth sports in Norway are driven by fun. Only half of kids in the U.S. participate in sports. The number one reason they drop out? Because they aren't having fun anymore. In Norway, 93% of kids participate in youth sports. Fun is the foremost goal.

4. Playing Multiple Sports

In the U.S.: There's pressure to specialize early and play your best sport year-round.

In Norway: Try as many sports as you can before specializing as late as college.

Norway encourages kids to try all types of sport. This reduces injury and burnout and increases all-around athleticism. It also helps promotes match quality or finding the sport you are best suited for as your body develops, which is impossible if you commit to a single sport too early.

5. Affordability

In the U.S.: There is increasingly a pay-to-play model with high fees for leagues, equipment, and travel. This excludes many kids from playing.

In Norway: It's a national priority to keep youth sports affordable and therefore accessible for all.

Kids aren't priced out, which creates opportunities for everyone to participate (and develop into athletes), regardless of their parents' income level.

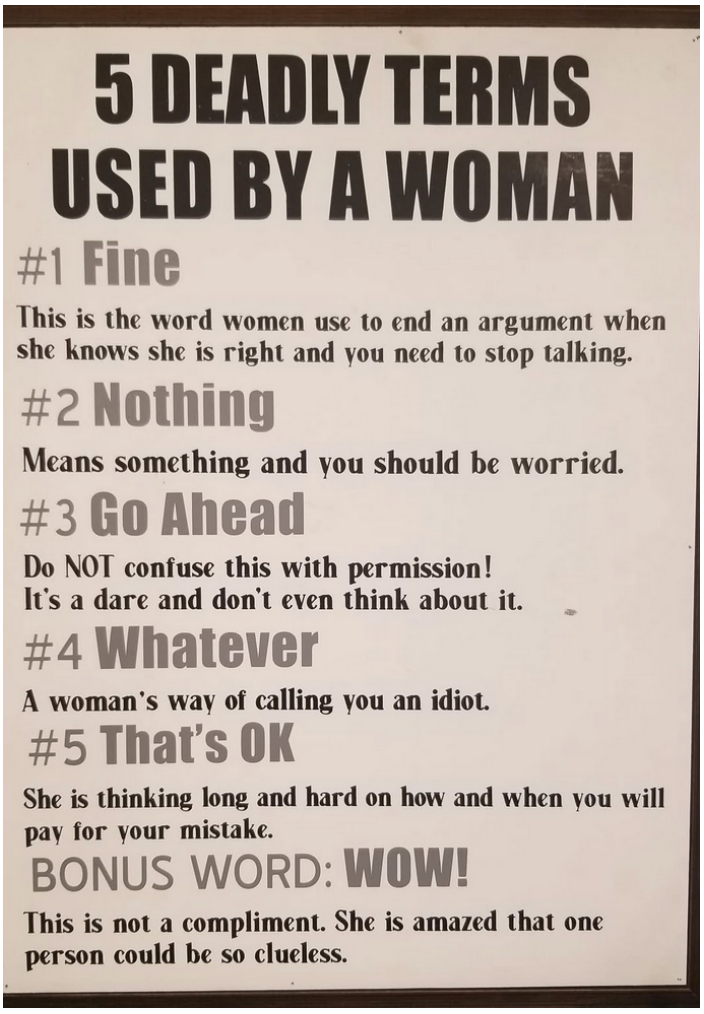
We Could Learn a lot From Norway

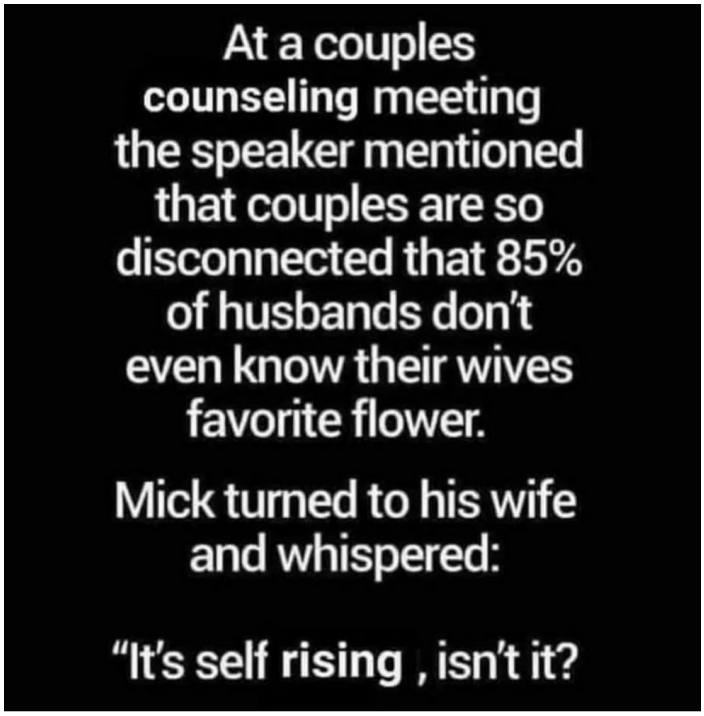
In the U.S., youth sports have become a mess, with angry parents, outsized egos, and astronomical costs keeping kids from sticking with it long enough to see what they could become. Seventy percent of kids drop out of by age 13. This not only diminishes the pipeline of elite athletes, but it also creates a hindrance for healthy habits, and all the character lessons kids can learn from sport.

In Norway, lifelong participation in sport is the norm. The goal isn't to have the best 9-or-younger team. It's to develop the best athletes. Those are two very different things. And Norway has the gold medals to prove it.

While the United Sates may never have the exact same model as Norway, we can certainly move closer to it and adopt its spirit.

The Back Page





The frantic young blonde calls out a May Day.

"My pilot has had a heart attack and is dead and I don't know how to fly."

She hears a voice over the radio saying: "This is Air Traffic Control, and I hear you loud and clear. I will talk you through this and get you back on the ground. Everything will be fine! What is your height and position?"

The blonde says, "I'm 5'4" tall and I'm in the front seat."

Long pause… Then…

"O.K." says the voice on the radio.

"Now, repeat after me."

"Our Father, Who art in Heaven…."



I remember being in a Sunday school class and the teacher asked us, "Who is Jeremiah?"

A kid who was a close family friend said, "A bullfrog."

She never recovered the class.