St. Pauli News in Detail



Greeting and Ushering

June 7	Jim and Sue Kotz
June 14	Larry Liden/Deb Mostrom
June 21	Bruce and Shelley Mathson
June 28	Jana Prickett

Altar Preparation: Val Torstveit (June 28)

July 5	Staci Reay
July 12	Jim and Roxanne Rondorf (Communion)
July 19	Jordan and Erin Rondorf
July 26	Arlo Rude

Altar Preparation: Sue Kotz

August 2	Mike and Becky Stickler
August 9	Jim and Jan Strandlie
August 16	Craig and Sally Torkelson
August 23	Chad Torstveit
August 30	Val Torstveit

Altar Preparation: Sharon Bugge

* * * * *

Council Meetings

The church council will not meet face-to-face during the summer months of June, July and August. Any concerns or issues will be handled via email.

* * * * *

Holy Communion on July 12 and Baptisms

Opal Reine Torstveit, daughter of Rylan and Willow Torstveit, and Azora Jean, daughter of Blaine and JeAnna Torstveit, will be baptized on Sunday, July 12th, by Pastor Darrel Cory, along with one adult baptism.

Pr. Carl Hansen Memorial Service

Saturday, July 11th

11:00 am

Pastor Carl's funeral will be held at St. Pauli Church on Saturday, July 11th, at 11:00 am, followed by lunch in the church parlors.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to St. Pauli Church, St. Pauli Cemetery or Minnesota Public Radio.

* * * * *

June, July and August Milestones

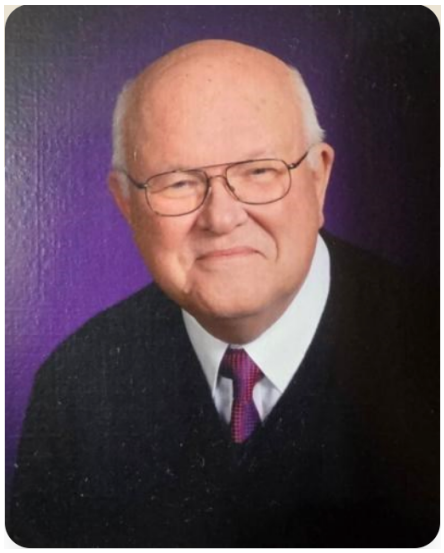


Birthdays

June 11	Myles Alberg
June 11	Peter Grafstrom
June 17	Kathy Alberg
June 17	Sharon Bugge
June 27	Jan Strandlie
July 1	Val Torstveit
July 4	Kari Torkelson
July 7	Rylan Torstveit
July 9	Sharon McCollough
July 31	Ron Anderson
August 6	Chad Torstveit
August 7	Aksel Haugen
August 7	Todd Prickett
August 11	Dennis McCollough
August 17	Faye Auchenpaugh

Anniversaries

June 18	Arlo Rude/Deb Ernst
June 28	Jana and Todd Prickett
July 1	Shelley and Bruce Mathson
July 6	Virginia and Ron Anderson
August 1	Sue and Jim Kotz
August 3	Cindy and Ken Cedergren
August 11	Katy and Ryan Haugen
August 27	Marisa and Wade Benson



In Memorium

Pastor Carl Gilbert Hansen

October 6, 1943 – May 9, 2026

Pastor Carl was our beloved pastor for 11 years.

A Life of Faith and Family

Reverend Carl Gilbert Hansen passed away unexpectedly at the age of 82 in his nursing home in Seguin, Tx on May 9, 2026.

In honor of Pastor Carl's Ministry at St Pauli Lutheran Church, rural Thief River Falls, MN, a Tree Planting Dedication was held at St. Pauli Cemetery at 10:30 am Sunday, May 31, 2026. All were welcome to attend.

Pastor Carl was born in Moline, Illinois, on October 6, 1943, to Woodrow and Maxine (McFall) Hansen. Following his seminary studies, Carl's calling brought him to the Upper Midwest, where he began his ministry in Sioux City, Iowa. It was there that he met the love of his life, Mary (Sears) Farris. Following a whirlwind courtship, they wed, and Carl joyfully adopted Mary's three young children, raising them with the unwavering devotion of a father.

Across a distinguished ministry career spanning more than 50 years, Carl served congregations throughout Iowa, Oklahoma, Texas, South Dakota, and Minnesota. His final chapter in the pulpit was an 11-year tenure as the "interim" pastor at St. Pauli Lutheran Church in Thief River Falls—a position he held with such dedication that the title became a fond local joke.

A man of deep intellect and a friend to everyone he met, Carl was cherished for his keen wit, his infectious humor, and his lifelong passion for history. He dedicated his life to sharing God's message, a mission he fulfilled with grace and gentleness. As a dear friend recently observed: "He was a fine, gentle, loving man, and now he's forever with his beloved bride."

Carl is survived by his 3 children: Dawn (Ross) Bryant of Thedford, NE, Heather Burrier of Thief River Falls, and Kevin (Michele) Hansen of Seguin, TX, his 8 grandchildren: Christopher (Katherine) Sestak, Amber Burrier, Noelle Hansen, Danielle Hansen, Megan (Korey) Hanson, Chelsea (Matthew) Young, Ariel Bryant, and Aidan Bryant, and a great-grandchild: Sophia Grace (4 months)(parents Christopher and Katherine).

He was preceded in death by his parents Woody and Maxine Hansen, his brother Steve Hansen, and his beloved wife Mary.

After ten years of patient longing, Carl has finally joined Mary in their heavenly reunion. We miss you, Dad; tell Mom "Hi."

*** * * * * ***

Among the memories shared at the Dedication Ceremony was this from Erin Rondorf:

"When I think of Pastor Carl, I am fondly reminded that he was serving our congregation in those first early years of our marriage.

As our family grew, I always felt supported feeding babies in the pew and parenting young toddlers as he preached. I often teased, "Why did we always choose to sit towards the front on display for everyone to watch us "struggle" yet honestly, I have never felt judged for having noisy kids during church." P.S. We sat there, as we all seem to have our "spots" because that's where Grandma Edna sat and how cool is it to sit 4 generations in a pew.

Pastor Carl would remind me that it is a blessing to hear children in the congregation as it means we are bringing them to the service and it's all joyful noise.

He baptized Ella in February 2014 and always fondly referred to her with her first and middle name, Ella Jae. Not many folks call her that. He baptized Kyland in February 2017, which was an extra special day that we also celebrated Grandma Edna's 90th birthday at the same time.

Edna's funeral in 2022 I imagine was one of the last funeral services he led, but I don't know that for fact.

He was there for our family as we brought new life in and said our goodbyes as well.

I will always feel grateful that both of our kids were baptized by Pastor Carl and they grew up in those first years listening to his sermons where he preached not only the gospel, but shared stories of his own up bringing and how he cherished his wife, children, and grandchildren.

St. Pauli equals generational faith for the Rondorfs (as it does for so many others) and Pastor Carl always spoke so fondly of his own family, which I loved."



In Memorium

Joan A. Nelson

October 29, 1936 – May 29, 2026

Joan and her husband Jim were long-time members of St. Pauli.

Joan A. Nelson, a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother passed away at her home on May 29, 2026 in Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

Joan was born on October 29, 1936 in Racine, Wisconsin. She lived a full life marked by commitment to both nursing and her loved ones. On October 25, 1958, Joan was married to James Nelson in St. Paul, MN. To this union, two sons were born, Jeffrey and Bradley.

Joan was a dedicated nurse for many years and a master gardener by heart. She understood that both people and plants thrive when given patience, love, and a little extra care. Joan took pride in her flower arrangements. She was also an avid craftswoman, as well as a great cook. She enjoyed volunteering after retiring from nursing. She loved gardening, crafts, and puzzles. She was an avid bird watcher. She enjoyed listening to music.

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

She is preceded in death by her husband, James Nelson, her parents, and her brother.

Joan will be remembered not only for her contributions to her community and family but also for the kindness she shared. Now tending the gardens of heaven, please plant something beautiful in your own garden in remembrance.

* * * * * *



In Memorium

Sonja Knaack

July 31, 1970 – November 25, 2025

Sonja was the daughter of Sandra Skaaren, who grew up in St. Pauli and whose parents were Jesse and Miranda Skaaren. Sonja's father was Phil Torgerson, a longtime employee of Bridgeman Creameries in Thief River Falls.

Sonja Knaack, 55, Red Lake Falls, passed away Tuesday, November 25, 2025 at her home from natural causes.

Sonja Rae Knaack was born July 31, 1970 in Thief River Falls, daughter of Philip and Sandra Torgerson. She was baptized at Silver Creek Church and confirmed at Abundant Life Church. She graduated from Lincoln High School in 1988 and attended both Northland Community College in Thief River Falls and UND in Grand Forks, ND.

On September 23, 1995, Sandra was united in marriage to Kim Robert Knaack at Trinity Lutheran Church in Thief Rier Falls. Sonja was employed with Thorson Construction, Land O'Lakes, and spent the last 26 years at Digi-Key, most recently as a Sr. Content Associate.

In 2004, Sonja and Kim moved to his family farm in Red Lake Falls. Kim's death in 2007 created a huge void in her life. For the past 18 years she has helped organize an annual golf tournament in memory of Kim, which raised money to purchase many musical instruments and provide scholarships for the school in Red Lake Falls.

Sonja loved music, especially playing guitar, cello and violin. She spent a few years playing in the Grand Forks Symphony Orchestra. She ran lights and sound for the bands "Cedar Ridge" and "Luck of the Draw." Both were bands that her husband Kim played in.

Horses were another life-long love of hers. That led to being a member of the North Country Horsemen Club for many years where she served on several committees, as secretary in 2003 and president in 2004. In 2000, she joined the Marshall County Sheriff's Mounted Posse. She was a member there for several years and served on the training committee.

She also cherished making lefse with family, wine making with friends, the many dogs and cats she had over the years, her book club's annual "Tentafestivus," and just spending time with family and friends. Those who knew her well say they will always remember her giggle and generosity.

Sonja is survived by her parents Philip Torgerson of Thief River Falls and Sandra (Curtis) Cobb of Spokane, WA; sister Anita (Wayne) Monsen of Randall; brothers- and sisters-in-law: Lyle Knaack of RLF, Sharon (Roger) Schatzke of Billings, MT, Bonita (Darwin) Roth of New Leipzig, ND, Verna (Michael) Prebeg of Goodland, and Leslie (Doria) Knaack of Crookston. Nieces and nephews: Heather Arnold, Neil Knaack, Todd Knaack, Tracy Malwitz, Nicholas Knaack, Ryan Schatzke, Matthew Schatzke, Adam Schatzke, Jesse Roth, Rachel Gorden, Treva Jefferson, Joshua Knaack, and Seth Knaack. Also, several aunts, uncles, cousins, and special friend Alan Holt.

She is preceded in death by her husband Kim, grandparents Melvin and Amanda Torgerson, Jesse and Miranda Skaaren, father- and mother-in-law Vernon and Violet Knaack, and several aunts and uncles.

A celebration of Sonja's life was held May 2, 2026 at Riverside Park in Red Lake Falls. Burial was at Oak Grove Cemetery in Red Lake Falls.

* * * * * * *



(Left) Ava Don Berg was baptized on Sunday, April 26, by Pastor Darrel Cory. She is shown here with her parents, Corey and Nicole, and brothers Easton and Carter.



Sunday School students Ella, Kyland, Elsa and Aksel gave bouquets of flowers to every mother on Mother's Day. Peeking over their shoulders is greeter Heidi Haugen.

Thanks a bunch!



Susanne Hinrichs, her daughter Emilie, and Kari Torkelson spoke to the congregation on May 31st about their eye mission trip to Belize. After the service, they shared coffee from Belize, which was smooth and delicious! Susanne is wearing a blouse that was hand-dyed and woven by Belize women.



Around the Neighborhood



"SOUND OF MUSIC"

Daughter and mother duo, Elsa and Katy Haugen are part of the cast and crew of the TRF Area Community Theater's production of "Sound of Music." Elsa portrays Louisa von Trapp, who keeps life interesting in the von Trapp household.



Elsa is a familiar face in TRFACT's STARS youth theater program, appearing in productions including The Addams Family, Finding Nemo, 101 Dalmatians, and more. When she's not on stage, Elsa enjoys sewing, creating things by hand, learning new skills, and helping with set construction. The Sound of Music has long been one of her dream shows, and she is thrilled to be part of bringing it to life. Her mother, Katy, is the set designer for this year's production of Sound of Music, which runs from June 10-12 and 15-17 at Northland College Theater.

* * * * * * *

A Sound of Music Connection

Debbie Turner played Marta in the 1965 film version of 'The Sound of Music;' now her granddaughter, Fifer Steer, has been cast in the same role on stage.



One of the most beautiful things about theater is that it doesn't really end when the curtain falls. A song learned as a child becomes a memory. A story shared on stage becomes part of a family's history. The art we create has a way of living on long after a performance is over.

As you can see in the comparison image at left, 61 years ago, actress Debbie Turner stepped onto a movie set and played Marta von Trapp in the beloved 1965 film The Sound of Music. She could never have known that decades late her granddaughter would help tell that same story.

We are incredibly excited to welcome Fifer Steer onto the TRFACT stage this summer, where she will play Marta von Trapp, the same role her grandmother once brought to life on screen.

Think about that for a moment.

A role that shaped one generation's childhood is now being shared with another. A story that captivated audiences in 1965 is still being sung, performed, and passed forward today. That is the quiet power of art. We never really know where a story will travel after we tell it, or who it will inspire, or what it will become part of.

Yet somehow, a film made 61 years ago led to a granddaughter standing on a stage in Thief River Falls, learning the same songs, telling the same story, and discovering the same joy of performance. This pattern of artistic connection across generations is exactly what we mean when we say community theater brings people together.

Generations are connected not only by family, but by the stories they share. For all of us at TRFACT, Fifer as Marta is a reminder that the art we create doesn't stay with us, it moves forward, carried by new voices and new dreamers. And sometimes, if we're lucky, a story finds its way home.

A warm thank you to Debbie Turner for sharing her art with the world, and for the lasting impact it continues to have on all of us.

Why We Are Better Off Than a Century Ago (final in the series)

Our ancestors built grand public systems to conquer hunger, thirst, darkness and squalor. That progress can be lost if we forget it.

By Charles C. Mann

I began this series of articles by describing a destination wedding that made me think of Thomas Jefferson. As I was writing this afterword, I went to another wedding in a faraway place, which put me in mind of another president, Calvin Coolidge.

The groom was a career military man from a conservative Catholic family. The bride's family was liberal and Jewish. As I talked with the families, it became clear that they had strongly diverging ideas about issues like crime, immigration, religion, economics, and the environment. It is commonplace to observe that in the United States, and every other Western nation, these divisions have become so heated that threats of civil war and government collapse have become familiar news headlines. But at the reception there was a shared sense of happiness as the bridesmaids, beautiful young women in flowing dresses, and the groomsmen, handsome young men in dress uniforms, danced together under a splendid full moon.

The political fights that beset the nation are real and important. But at the same time people would have to be pretty far gone not to join in celebrating two nice young people beginning their lives together.

But the people at the wedding had deeper commonalities, too. All of them — like all the inhabitants of the United States and every other Western nation — stand together atop a mountain of successful efforts to improve human well-being. Conservative and liberal, atheist and believer, every race, age, and social class — each and every one has benefited from the great systems built up in the last century and a half that deliver to us good food, clean water, instant electric power, and advances in health. In every material sense, the people at the wedding were far better off than their forebears.

I was bluntly reminded of our good fortune the day after the wedding, when I visited friends who lived nearby. When I took a shower, I looked down and noticed that one of my calves was flushed and swollen. *One of my legs is bigger than the other*, I thought. *That can't be good*.

A few hours later, I went to the emergency room, where a doctor diagnosed the swelling and redness as a skin infection: cellulitis. I asked if cellulitis is risky. "Oh, yes," the doctor said. "These things have an excellent chance of killing you." He prescribed antibiotics, which I bought afterward. Within a few hours of taking the first pill, the swelling had subsided. The episode was over — which put me in mind of Calvin Coolidge.

In the summer of 1924, Coolidge's sixteen-year-old son, Calvin, Jr., played tennis on the White House grounds. For some reason, he wore sneakers without socks. He got a blister on his toe, as one might expect. It quickly became infected. The White House physician took Calvin, Jr., to Walter Reed General Hospital, then as now one of the nation's finest health care facilities. Unsurprisingly, the son of the president got the best care available. Multiple specialists visited and the full resources of the hospital were devoted to his care. But none of this did any good. Within a week, the president's son was dead. Coolidge went into a deep depression from which he never fully recovered.



Calvin Coolidge, Jr.

Staphylococcus aureus, a common bacterium, was the cause of death. Staph was responsible for my infection, too. It was striking to realize that a) a century ago I might well have died; and b) the cost of maybe saving my life was three hours in the ER and $4.16 worth of antibiotics.

Another way of saying this is that I, like billions of others, have benefited from the progress humankind has made during the last century.

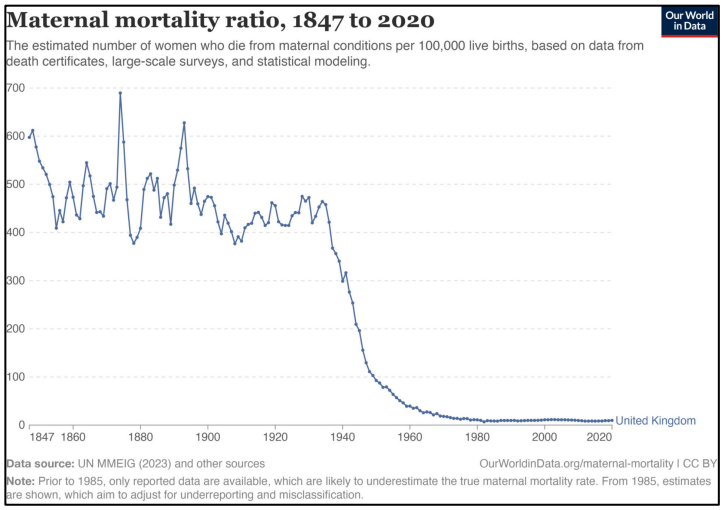
P*rogress* today is a loaded word. The idea and its name both arose during the Enlightenment, when modern ideas about science first became widespread. Progress's most important exponent was probably the French philosopher and mathematician Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet, who wrote *Outline of a Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind* in 1794. The *Outline* is a triumph of hope over experience. Its author initially supported the French Revolution, believing it would lead to more freedom, including freedom to criticize the government. But the revolutionary junta branded Condorcet as a traitor after he criticized it. He wrote about progress while hiding from the police. Soon after finishing the book, Condorcet was caught and thrown in prison. He died in his cell — possibly murdered, certainly still dreaming of progress — two days later. The *Outline* appeared posthumously.

Condorcet saw the increase of scientific knowledge as leading unavoidably to greater political freedom and well-being. So did most of the framers of the Constitution. But the awful wars of the twentieth century called this idea into question. In a celebrated passage written in 1940, the German writer Walter Benjamin imagined the "angel of history" turning backward to look at the past. "Where we perceive a chain of events [leading to the present], he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage." The angel would like to stop to fix the disaster, Benjamin wrote. But he can't, because he is caught in a violent storm that hurls him helplessly forward "into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress."

From his perspective, the idea of progress is worse than meaningless. It is a story that we tell ourselves rather than look directly at what is happening. On top of that, some critics say, these tales are used as tools to justify an unfair status quo. If Europe and North America are materially better off,

that is not progress, but the profits from slavery, colonialism, and genocide. “We can find nothing in reality that might help to redeem the promise inherent in the word ‘progress,’” wrote the philosopher and critic Theodor Adorno in *History and Freedom*.

Adorno escaped the Nazis, who killed many of his friends and associates. Benjamin, one of his closest collaborators, committed suicide after the failure of his attempt to flee Europe. And after the war Adorno was dismayed by what he saw as German intellectuals’ clinging to German culture — its great music, writing, architecture, and so on — to avoid responsibility for the Holocaust. Adorno died in 1969, when Western cities were torn by riots, China was wracked by the Cultural Revolution, the two sides in the Cold War were racing to build ever more nuclear weapons, and warnings of imminent global famine were hitting the best-seller charts. Little wonder he doubted the idea of progress!

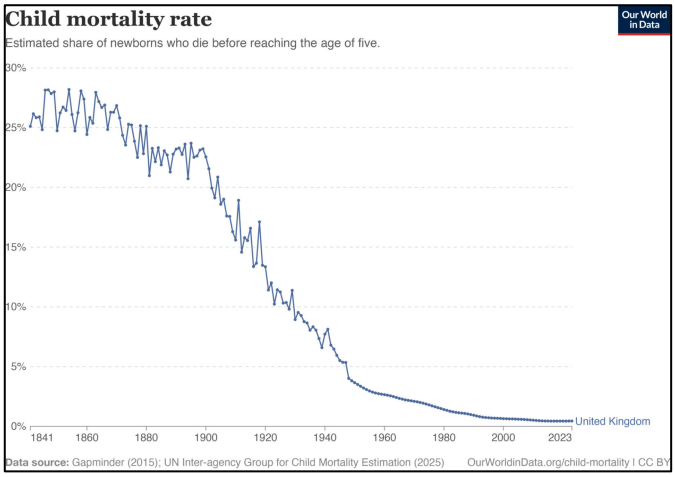


But Adorno lived before the Green Revolution drastically reduced world hunger. He never saw how modern anti-pollution techniques cleaned up rivers and water supplies all over Europe and North America. He never traveled to Africa, Asia, Latin America, and so did not see what it meant to have the gift of electric power. He didn’t see global public health campaigns eliminate smallpox, almost eliminate polio, drastically reduce malaria, and beat back a host of other infectious diseases.

Unlike me, Adorno never had the experience of going to an emergency room that was always open to the public, or of taking a life-saving antibiotic. Instead, his experience with medicine was that of multiple doctors being unable to diagnose or treat the incapacitating ailments — migraines, nausea, fever — that afflicted his wife for decades. On a larger scale, he did not have access to contemporary data and data-visualization techniques and so never saw charts like these:

The charts show the fall in the number of British women who die during pregnancy or childbirth and the number of British children who die before the age of five. I chose Britain because it has unusually good records, but similar (if sometimes smaller) long-term declines have occurred all over the world. One would have to be extraordinarily cynical not to conclude from these charts that in fundamental ways life has gotten better.

Everywhere these and other improvements have occurred for the same reasons: better nutrition, cleaner water, more energy for heating and cooking, advances in public health.



Condorcet, in other words, was partially right: the advance of science did lead to progress. But the progress was not so much political as material. And it wasn’t so much from science itself as the *use* of scientific advances — the invention of powerful pumps, the introduction of high-yielding crops, the discovery of electrons, the development of vaccines and antibiotics — to create systems that increased human well-being.

At the same time, Benjamin and Adorno were also partially correct. Condorcet believed that progress was inevitable, even guaranteed by natural forces. Benjamin and Adorno remind us that human failings can always make things worse. For understandable reasons, the two men thought in terms of human depravity. And it is true that terrorism, insurrection, and war, especially nuclear war, could negate much or most of the improvement in human well-being our forebears achieved.

But Benjamin and Adorno missed another, possibly more pernicious threat. Each increment of progress generates its own overhead. Even as brilliant minds pursue space flight, cancer cures, and flying cars, we also must undertake the largely invisible, sometimes thankless labor of maintaining and improving the sewage treatment plants our forebears bequeathed to us. The advances of our past are yokes around the neck of the present. The more advances, the heavier the weight of the yokes.

Power plants must be upgraded and replaced, along with power lines and distribution centers. Crops must be continually bred to face new pests and blights. Water systems must be renovated after use and wear. Medical treatments must adjust to diseases that are constantly evolving. Buildings must be renewed for new uses with new materials. And the standards behind all these efforts must be reviewed to take into account changes in science and society.

The list is long, daunting — and necessary. It is true that some new advances obviate past methods. A clear example: replacing lead pipes with plastic pipes can mean the water no longer has to be checked constantly for lead. But the systems overall will always need care. They will always be one generation from falling apart.

Sometimes it seems that in all the immediate tumult of a politically divided society, the need to continue these efforts for the common good can be forgotten. These articles have been written in the hope that they will play a small part in reminding us of the need to pay attention to them. Our ancestors gave us the food, water, energy, and public health systems that undergird our world; keeping them going is how we can pass on those gifts to our children.

A Brief History of Pickles

From ancient Mesopotamia to New York deli counters, pickles have played a vital role in the global culinary scene. But where do pickles come from, and how did the cucumber become the standard-issue pickling vegetable in the States?



Is there an alternate timeline where America is known as the United States of the Pickle-Dealer? It seems unlikely, but there's an element of truth to this half-sour hypothetical. Amerigo Vespucci didn't discover the Americas, contrary to what the map makers who named the continents believed, but his given name did end up lending itself to the so-called "new world." And Ralph Waldo Emerson once called Vespucci "the pickle-dealer at Seville," a derisive label that may have stretched the truth a bit but pointed towards a very real part of the itinerant Italian's biography.

Before traveling to the New World himself, Vespucci worked as a ship chandler—someone who sold supplies to seafaring merchants and explorers. These supplies included foods like meat, fish, and vegetables that had been pickled, which meant they would stay preserved beneath a ship's deck for months. Without pickling, expeditions had to rely on dried foods and ingredients with naturally long shelf lives for sustenance. Much of the time, this limited diet wasn't enough to provide crewmembers the nutrition they needed for the journey ahead. This made pickle sellers like Vespucci indispensable during the golden age of exploration. Vespucci even supplied Christopher Columbus's later voyages across the Atlantic with his briny goods. So, while he wasn't the world's most important explorer, Vespucci's pickles may have changed history by preventing untold bouts of scurvy.

And pickles weren't just enjoyed by 15th century sailors. From ancient Mesopotamia to New York deli counters, they've played a vital role in the global culinary scene. But where do pickles come from? How did the cucumber become the standard-issue pickling vegetable in the States? And what exactly *is* a pickle, anyway?

What Pickles a Pickle

The verb "to pickle" means to preserve something in a solution. That solution is often vinegar, which is, at its most basic, made of water and acetic acid. Most bacteria can't flourish in highly acidic environments, so submerging a perishable food in vinegar helps create a sort of natural forcefield against the microbes that cause spoilage.

Another common pickling solution is brine, a.k.a. salty water. The brining method also relies on acid's preserving properties, but the acid isn't added by the pickle maker. It's introduced by bacteria via a process called fermentation: Lactobacillus bacteria consume carbohydrates and excrete lactic acid, so if you leave a jar of vegetables in saltwater, those bacteria will eventually turn the briny solution into an acidic one.

Vegetables soaked in microbe excrement may sound unappetizing, but these bacteria and the acid they produce are perfectly safe to eat. They're even beneficial. Lactic acid protects pickles from other, harmful organisms, while lactobacillus bacteria can boost the health of your gut's microbiome.

Cucumbers in a Pickle

Pickles of all kinds were a hit with the ancient world. It's thought that the Ancient Mesopotamians were the first to enjoy some pickled dishes, and Herodotus noted the Ancient Egyptians ate fish preserved with brine. Columella proclaimed that "the use of vinegar and hard brine is very necessary they say, for the making of preserves."

But when did cucumbers enter the briny equation? While loads of websites and books talk about ancient Mediterranean peoples enjoying pickled cucumbers, according to a 2012 paper in the *Annals of Botany*, it's actually unclear when cucumbers arrived in the Mediterranean region. There are definitely early accounts that use words that people have *translated* as cucumber, but according to the paper, the texts in question are describing something more akin to snake melons. The evidence suggests it's not until the medieval era that Europeans were able to enjoy a cucumber pickle with their sandwich, as cukes made their way to the West via two independent paths: "Overland from Persia into eastern and northern Europe," before the Islamic conquests, and a later diffusion into western and southern Europe, which the paper's authors peg to a primarily "maritime route from Persia or the Indian subcontinent into Andalusia" in the southern part of present-day Spain.

As the centuries progressed, pickles continued to win famous fans. Queen Elizabeth I reportedly enjoyed them, and William Shakespeare liked them enough to reference them numerous times in his work. He even helped build a new idiom around the word when he had *The Tempest's* King Alonso ask the court jester Trinculo, "how camest thou in this pickle?" Merriam-Webster speculates that the Bard may have been playing off a Dutch expression that translates to something like "sit in the pickle," though given Trinculo's penchant for imbibing, the line may have also been a reference to the jester's preferred method of preservation. In any case, being "in a pickle" is now widely understood to describe any difficult situation (and—as *The Sandlot's* Benny "the Jet" Rodriguez taught us—has a specific, related meaning in baseball, used when a runner is caught between two bases and is at risk of being tagged out).

Scottish doctor James Lind discussed how pickles could fight scurvy, noting how the "Dutch sailors are much less liable to the scurvy than the English, owing to this pickled vegetable carried out to sea." The pickled vegetable in question was cabbage. And Captain James Cook was such a proponent of what he called Sour Krout that he gave his officers as much as they wanted, knowing that the crew would eat it as soon as they saw the officers liked it.

But not everyone was a fan. John Harvey Kellogg, of cereal fame who was deeply concerned about eating food with any known flavor, felt pickles were one of the "stimulating foods" that needed to be avoided.

The Big Dill with Pickle Brines

For most of pickling history, people have added spices and aromatics to their pickle brines. Ingredients like garlic, mustard seeds, cinnamon, and cloves all add flavor to pickles, but that's not the only purpose they serve. These spices all have antimicrobial properties, which could partially explain why they were added to pickle recipes in the first place.

Dill, perhaps the ingredient most closely associated with pickles today, is also antimicrobial. The herb has been found in Ancient Egyptian tombs, but it was hugely popular in Ancient Rome, where it spread alongside the Empire itself. Eventually, it found its way into Eastern European cuisine—and into pickling solutions. Pickles were already an important part of Eastern European diets: They provided a refreshing and nutritious contrast to the heavy, often-bland foods that were available in colder months, and it was customary for families to pickle barrels full of vegetables in the fall so they would have enough to last them through winter. Dill became a common ingredient in pickle brines.

When large numbers of Ashkenazi Jews immigrated from Eastern Europe to New York in the 19th and 20th centuries, they brought their pickle-making traditions with them. A classic kosher pickle is made with cucumbers fermented in a salt brine and flavored with garlic, dill, and spices. There are two main types of kosher pickles: crisp, bright-green half-sour pickles and the duller green full-sours. The only difference between the two varieties is that half-sours have a shorter fermentation time. ("Kosher pickles," by the way, aren't necessarily kosher. Early kosher pickles may have been made in accordance with Jewish law, but today the word is used to describe any pickles made in the traditional New York style.)

Initially, Jewish pickle-makers sold their products out of pushcarts to their immigrant neighbors. When Jewish-owned delis began popping up around New York City, pickles were a natural addition to plates of fatty lunch meat. And today, no matter where in the country you are, dill pickles and sandwiches are a common pairing.

The Origins of Bread and Butter Pickles

Some people prefer bread and butter pickles, which are made by adding something sweet to the pickling brine, like brown sugar or sugar syrup, and they generally omit the garlic that gives kosher pickles their distinctive flavor. But where does the name "bread and butter" come from?

It turns out it's a bit hard to pin down the origin of the unusual pickle name. Some say it's a holdover from the Great Depression, when families would eat simple sandwiches of bread, butter, and pickles. People may have done that, but if you're looking for a written record, it seems that one of the first known uses of the term came when Omar and Cora Fanning registered to trademark the logo of their product, "Fanning's Bread and Butter Pickles," back in 1923. GFA Brands, which at one point owned the company that came to be known as Mrs. Fannings, suggested that the "bread and butter" label came from a bartering system the Fannings once used. In this version of the story, the Fannings traded their delicious pickled cukes for groceries, including bread and butter.

The Pickle Goes Mainstream

As pickles became more popular, American food companies hopped on the pickle-wagon. Heinz started selling them in the 1800s, and at the 1893 World's Fair, H.J. Heinz lured visitors to his out-of-the-way booth by giving away free pickle pins. The promotion was so successful that the company featured a pickle in its logo for more than a century.

Heinz was the business to beat in the pickle industry until the 1970s. That's when Vlasic launched an ad campaign featuring a cartoon stork who delivered pickles instead of babies. The advertising approach worked—it played on the belief that women crave pickles when they're pregnant. At one point, Vlasic even adopted the slogan "the pickle pregnant women crave."

And that's only the tip of the strange spear of this pickle marketing story. A 1973 newspaper reports an ad of a husband telling his wife, "Sweetie, it's time for your 4 o'clock pickle." Even the stork angle was part of a bizarre extended Vlasic universe mythology wherein life had been good for storks during the baby boom in the United States. Once the boom ended, the stork had to find a new job and wound up delivering Vlasic pickles.

Pickles From Around the Globe

It's not just cucumbers that get pickled—there are many notable pickles from around the world. In Korea, the pickle of choice is Kimchi. Like *pickle*, the word *kimchi* describes both a process and a food. Kimchied vegetables are traditionally salted, covered in a mixture of garlic, ginger, chili peppers, and fish sauce, and pickled in lactic acid via fermentation. Traditionally kimchi is made with cabbage, but any number of vegetables—including carrots, cucumbers, and radishes—can all be kimchi. The food is an integral part of Korean cuisine and can be served with almost any meal. Some families even own dedicated kimchi fridges for storing their mixtures in the ideal environment for fermentation.

But kimchi isn't the only fermented cabbage out there. Sauerkraut is a staple of many European cuisines. It's cabbage that's been preserved through lacto-fermentation, but unlike Kimchi, it doesn't contain any seafood or bold spices. The name means "sour cabbage" in German, but the condiment might not have originated in Europe at all. Food historian Joyce Toomre suggests it originated in China, and according to legend, laborers building the Great Wall first made it by pickling shredded cabbage in rice wine. The dish allegedly traveled West by way of the Mongolian army in the 13th century.

A jar of pickled eggs used to be a common sight in English pubs and American dive bars. Preserved eggs and booze may seem like an odd pairing, but it actually makes perfect sense from a nutritional standpoint. Eggs are high in cysteine, an amino acid that your body uses to help keep your liver happy. That means bar patrons might have reached for a pickled egg to go with their ale for the same reason you crave a bacon egg and cheese sandwich when you're hungover.

Another common non-vegetable pickle is pickled herring. In Poland and parts of Scandinavia, eating the preserved fish at the stroke of midnight on new year's is thought to boost your good fortune in the year ahead. With the success all things pickled have had around the world, we can buy it.

The Back Page

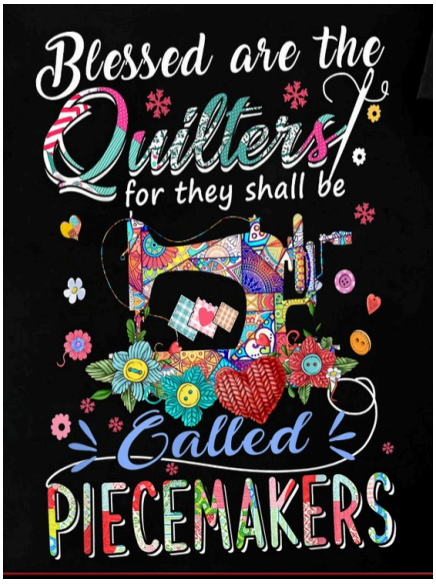


Mildred, the church gossip and self-appointed monitor of the church's morals, kept sticking her nose into other people's business. Several members did not approve of her extracurricular activities but feared her enough to maintain their silence.

She made a mistake, however, when she accused Frank, a new member, of being an alcoholic after she saw his old pickup parked in front of the town's only bar one afternoon. She emphatically told Frank (and several others) that everyone seeing it there would know what he was doing!

Frank, a man of few words, stared at her for a moment and just turned and walked away. He didn't explain, defend or deny. He said nothing. Later that evening, Frank quietly parked his pickup in front of Mildred's house … Walked home … And left it there all night.

You gotta love Frank!





ENGLISH IS HARD

1. The bandage was wound around the wound.
2. The farm was used to produce produce.
3. The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
4. We must polish the Polish furniture.
5. He could lead if he would get the lead out.
6. The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
7. Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
8. A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
9. When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
10. I did not object to the object.
11. The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
12. There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
13. They were too close to the door to close it.