



# Mindekirken COMMUNICATOR

A Monthly Newsletter of the Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church - ELCA

2026 January  
Issue 258#



## A Look Back at the Bicentennial Year

*Pictured: Our Syttende Mai parade band, the Mindekirken Choir performing at Orchestra Hall, the visit from the King's Guard, and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon admiring our replica of the Restauration carved by Hans Sandom*



**Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church**  
924 East 21st St., Minneapolis MN 55404-2952  
612-874-0716 | mindekirken.org  
Office Hours: 10 am - 3 pm Tuesday - Friday



# PASTOR'S *HILSEN*

## MY TIME IN MINDEKIRKEN



Sadly, my time as pastor in Mindekirken will be done in the last part of this month. But then I have stayed longer than the 3 years I signed up for, it will be 4.5 years,

thanks to our Bicentennial celebration of the Norwegian Immigration.

And I have met with people I would never ever have met in Norway. Like Queen Sonja, Crown Prince Haakon and the prime minister, for example.

Which has been very nice.

But even nicer is my meetings with all the people who have visited Mindekirken, Norway House and all the other places I have been, like Peacehouse not far from our church.

My mission has been to be the spiritual leader of Mindekirken, and especially this last year that has been a challenging job, because of all the challenges our city of Minneapolis has faced.

I feel that people in our church have supported my choices of being a spiritual

leader more or less wholeheartedly, which has really given me faith and hope for the future.

Mindekirken is facing different challenges in the future, like calling a new pastor, and discussing how the governance should be, like now, or with a new structure.

All these choices are necessary. But I hope they all will be done in prayer, so that Jesus still will be the real leader of our church.

I will, for the rest of my life, be enormously grateful for the time here, and I thank God for your call to me, which made it possible for me to return here as your pastor.

I really love Mindekirken, it will forever be my church, and I hope to visit here in the future.

May God bless Mindekirken, and all of you.

- Pastor Gunnar

## Need Pastoral Care?

The Mindekirken pastoral care team wants to care for you and your family as you walk through life's celebrations and challenges.

Please contact Pastor Gunnar Kristiansen at 1gunnarkristiansen@gmail.com or call 651-955-5359, or the church office at 612-874-0716 if you are hospitalized, having surgery, or are in need of pastoral support.

## Have a Prayer Request?

Prayer requests can be emailed to: 1gunnarkristiansen@gmail.com. All requests will remain confidential.

## Hymn Blog by Gracia Grindal

*Hymnfortheday.com* is Gracia Grindal's blog on hymns and the text for the coming Sunday. It has a brief devotional and lots of information of favorite hymns, many from the Nordic countries. Go to the site, scroll to the bottom of the page, and you will find out how to sign up to receive the blog every week. You can also search for information on your favorite hymns on the site.

## MISSION OF THE MONTH



**The January Mission of the Month is The Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery.** The Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery ([www.crisisnursery.org](http://www.crisisnursery.org)) began in 1983 and remains committed to strengthening families in our community in order to end child abuse and neglect. They answer approximately 4,000 crisis calls annually and shelter up to 20 children per day, providing over 5,000 nights of care during the course of the year to children aged newborn through six.

- Wendi S.

## MORE ABOUT MISSION OF THE MONTH (MOM)

Non-profits and charities benefit from having a steady stream of donations. Our Mission of the Month program goal for 2026 and beyond is to have you sign up for a regular monthly donation to your preferred mission. They need our support now more than ever. You can commit to as little as \$5 - \$10 per month. Choose a recurring donation option on your Mindekirken Elexio account, selecting a mission of the month. Contact the office by phone or email if you wish to start an Elexio electronic giving account which also enables you to contribute to the offering fund and more. Why give this way rather than donate directly through a mission website? You can set your giving amount and it won't slip your mind again. Your donations will be reflected on your Mindekirken annual giving statement for your tax deduction records plus there is power in collective giving from the church; Mindekirken as the donor. A full list of Mindekirken's missions can be found at [mindekirken.org/giving](http://mindekirken.org/giving)



# FROM THE PRESIDENT



Nyttaarshilsen.....New Year's greetings to you all! Hope you had a wonderful Christmas celebration.

"Sweeping Christmas out".....In Norway this happens on St Knut's Day (St. Knutsdag) on the 13th of January. The day is also referred to as "Tjuende dag" (20th Day). Some keep their holiday decor up until that day; yes, even today.

Your Call Committee continues to work diligently to secure a new pastor for Mindekirken. In the meantime, we are fortunate to have Tim Peterson be our interim pastor from second week in February and he is available through the end of May.



(top row, left to right) Our choir joining singing during joint-service at Latvian church.... - Daughters of Norway had a ball taking a road trip to Norwegian Ridge; While at Giants Heritage Center they were treated to a Norwegian class.

(middle row) Edvard Grieg Society of MN Board Chair, Dan Dressen, visiting with attendees of performance, Haugtussa. EGS is now an Independent Affiliate of Mindekirken. - Kari Fosse's first great grandchild "taken" by Hans' ship, so grandpa lifted him as high as he could to get a good view. - Kathryn did such a good job tour guiding at Mindekirken for Anita Kerssen's group bus tour.

(bottom row) Three seatings and "sold out" event for Lutefisk dinner this fall. **Save the date for the next lutefisk dinner, hosted by Norwegian Men's Glee Club, which will be Saturday March 21.** Bob and Connolly welcome you!

## BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

The Bicentennial celebrations are over and we have had a fine time. It started with the replica of the Restauration ship which launched our celebration last October. It is maybe the only addition to our beautiful sanctuary since it was built in 1930. And we are so grateful to Hans Sandom for making such a beautiful piece. Marilyn Sorensen and the Tuesday Open House committee have added considerable richness to the year with their careful planning of lectures that told the story of the migration of Norwegians to the American continent over many centuries, especially in the summer presentation. We are grateful for that. Then, of course, the... (continued on page 6)



## MINDEKIRKEN FOUNDATION

Since Mindekirken was founded in 1922, the church has relied on the generosity of our members and friends for support. The Foundation continues to provide energy and financial resources to Mindekirken for projects not normally covered by the church budget.

The Foundation will not be sponsoring the Julebord this season. We hope that you will honor the Foundation by contributing the amount that you would spend on tickets in addition to the amount that you would consider for donation. You can donate on the Foundation website - [www.mindekirkenfoundation.org](http://www.mindekirkenfoundation.org) or mail in your checks payable to the Mindekirken Foundation:

Mindekirken Foundation  
924 E 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

- Magne Hatlevik, President  
Mindekirken Foundation

## TREASURER'S REPORT

By the time you receive this, Christmas will have gone by, and we look forward to celebrating the New Year. Thank you for your support of the church, either through your donations or supporting our programs and events. We are a unique community, unlike any other in the United States. We are the only church in the US that has weekly services in Norwegian. We also have an English service. I have always said that we are a small church with big programs.

Our members feel comfortable and like being a part of the church, almost like family. Tusen Takk for your giving and being a part of the family.

The deadline is too early in the month to have the November figures and do a proper analysis. I will be working on our budget for next year, which will be presented at the annual meeting in February, along with where we are financially for 2025.

I wish you a very happy new year.

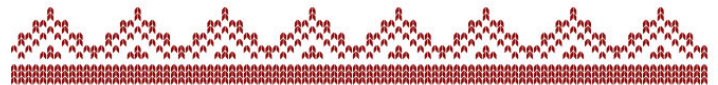
- Nancy Olson, Treasurer

## CONGRATULATIONS TO LESLEE HOYUM!



Our own member Leslee Lane Hoyum was awarded the Going Viking Award at Norway House's Vinter Fest event. Leslee has a long history of volunteering in many Norwegian organizations. In her acceptance speech she said it was not the me but the we, as she said she has collaborated with many to reach her goals. Congratulations to Leslee!

(Pictured: Leslee (middle) holding Tokheim ale bowl that she was awarded.)



## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Please join us in celebrating our member's January birthdays! If you have a birthday that's not listed, please notify the office so we can acknowledge your birthday.

1/3 Laurie Agrimson  
1/6 Robert Hanson  
1/7 Toby Hillman  
1/9 Kathy Manderscheid  
1/9 Marlys Thorsgaard  
1/10 Nancy Watkins  
1/10 David Holland  
1/14 Fay Sandven

1/15 Anne Johnson  
1/17 Lowell Edlund  
1/21 Roald Fosse  
1/22 Bradley Urberg Carlson  
1/23 Sharon (Sherry) Johnson  
1/29 Nancy Sand Olson  
1/30 Steven Swenson  
1/31 Sandra Andersen





# TUESDAY OPEN HOUSE

## Schedule

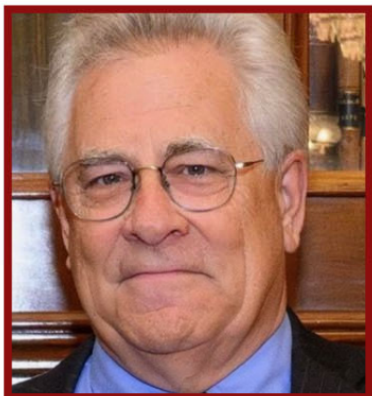
10:30 a.m.	Doors open
11-11:30	Lunch served
11:45	Announcements & Brief Devotion
12-1	Program

*Arrive early to find a seat, enjoy coffee, and socialize before lunch starts. A donation of \$15 is requested at the entrance to the Fellowship Hall.*

### RESERVATIONS

To make a reservation, please send an email to [reservations@mindekirken.org](mailto:reservations@mindekirken.org) or call (612) 874-0716 option 8

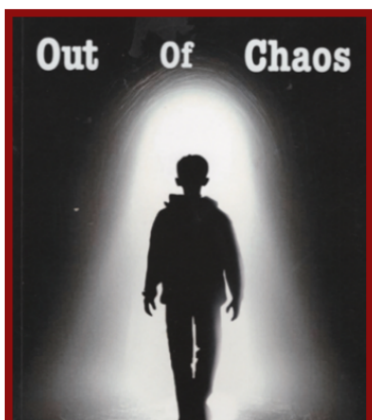
**WEATHER CANCELLATION:** In case of a snow event, check [www.mindekirken.org](http://www.mindekirken.org) or call the office for updates before coming



## January 6

### Norwegian Bishop Resists Hitler Presenter: John Matthews

Pastor John Matthews will speak about the Norwegian Lutheran Bishop, Eivind Berggrav. Known for his unyielding resistance to the Nazi occupiers, Berggrav was placed under house arrest for most of the war, having spent a brief time in the Bredtvet Concentration Camp in 1942. A most interesting man and story. The Norwegian Resistance is a proud chapter during this turbulent time of European history.



## January 13

### Out of Chaos Presenter: Vernon Rowland

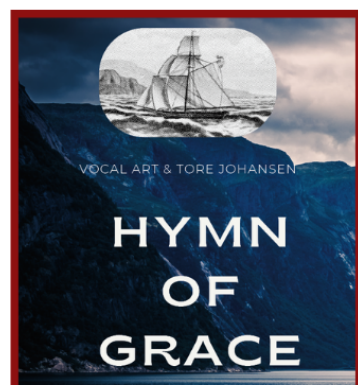
In his memoir, "Out of Chaos," Vernon "Chico" Rowland takes us on an unforgettable journey through the heart of adversity. Born into a life marked by poverty and racial complexity, Rowland navigates the harsh realities of food stamps, shelters and homelessness. He discovers the strength of the human spirit and the profound impact of community support including Community Emergency Services. His journey is one of resilience, determination, and faith in God in a world fraught with challenges.



## January 20

### Farvel til Gunnar Presenters: TOH Team

Tuesday Open House will be reminiscing about the unique role Gunnar has had with our program for the past few years. His contributions relating to programs and music will be remembered with participant involvement and some videos. His contributions have been greatly appreciated. There may be some surprises. Mange Takk Gunnar!!



## January 27

### Hymn of Grace

This is an event of great importance in Vocal art performed in Bodø, Norway. Gracia Grindal made a special trip to Norway to provide the music text. We are fortunate to have a recording of this performance and at the recommendation of Pr Gunnar Kristiansen, the video will be replayed for the TOH audience.

Hymn of Grace is a homage to the first organized group of Norwegian Immigrants who came to the USA two hundred years ago. The text to this work is written by Gracia Grindal, and the music is composed by Tore Johansen. This work was commissioned by Mindekirken, Minneapolis, and is a highlight of our church's Bicentennial celebration.



## BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE CONTINUED

(cont. from p.3) ...King's Guard made a spectacular appearance in May, singing and playing popular Norwegian hymns and other pieces. The Leif Eriksson program in October was also a wonderful time of celebration as well, thanks to Jim Reilly and Pastor Gunnar. The major event of the whole year for us was of course the visit of Crown Prince Haakon Magnus in October. He was here with Bishop Olaf Tveit to dedicate the ship. We are grateful to Leslee Hoyum for pushing to get the ship built and for arranging for a plaque with the names of those who contributed over \$1000 to the project which will hang on the back wall of the sanctuary. Pastor Gunnar has been most helpful. In September we were glad to hear the Tidløs group present their wonderful music based on Norwegian hymns. At the time of the visit of the Crown Prince, he had arranged for a dramatic performance of Doom by an actress, Wenche Strømdahl telling the story of her own experience coming to grips with a statement of her pastor saying she should not go into the theater. Along with her we also were privileged to hear the organist Petra Bjorkhaug at Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim. She played for the performance and for the appearance of the crown prince. Then Gunnar had also asked me to write a libretto for the Vocal Arts group in Bodø on the emigration. They performed it on October 12 in the concert hall there and it was live streamed to Mindekirken where people could listen to it here. I was privileged to be at the concert in Bodø. It was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life, hearing my words and the words of familiar Norwegian hymns that the emigrants sang in their joys and troubles. The music was classical jazz composed by Tore Johansen. It will soon be published by Norsk Musikforlaget. It was also good to have Pastor Ole Amund Gillebo and his wife here for a few days. All in all the year was filled with events that helped us remember and ponder the meaning of the immigration and why we as a congregation have as one of our goals the honoring of the pioneers for their life and faith that gave us so much. Thanks to all who helped, especially the committee which included President Kris Grodahl, Nancy Olson, Marilyn Sorensen, and Pastor Gunnar! It was a wonderful year.

Gracia Grindal  
Chair of the Bicentennial Committee

### JOIN OUR INCREDIBLE TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS!

Interested in volunteering during a  
Sunday worship service?

Please visit :  
[tinyurl.com/mindekirkensunday](https://tinyurl.com/mindekirkensunday)  
or scan the QR code on the right  
to sign up for a slot. No need to  
log in, just click "sign up" next to  
the available job.



Want to volunteer but don't know where to start?  
Contact the office via email at [office@mindekirken.org](mailto:office@mindekirken.org)  
or by phone at (612) 874-0716

### MANGE TAKK!

Mange takk and thank you from the Alle Kvinner to everyone who helped with the bake sale - the sandbakkel workshop ladies, the bakers and those who worked the other venues. We couldn't do it without all the volunteers.

- Mary Martin



### ANNUAL MEETING 2026



The annual meeting will start promptly at 11 am on Sunday, February 8, after the 10 am worship service (no 9 am service on this day).

The 2025 Annual Report booklet will be available at church by Sunday, February 1 for members to take home and read prior to attending the meeting. It can also be sent via email by request - [office@mindekirken.org](mailto:office@mindekirken.org)

### FAREWELL PARTY

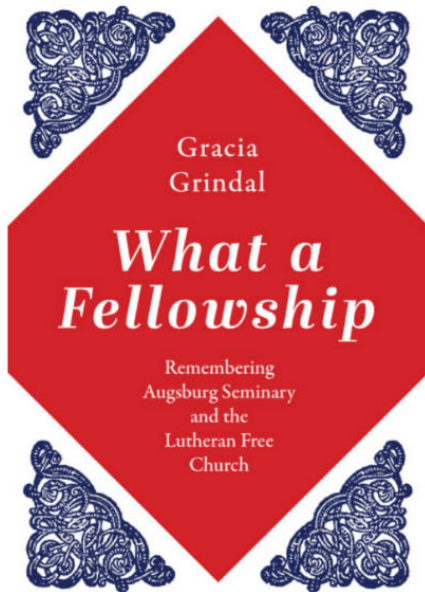
Join us at a special kirkekafe on **Sunday, January 25 at 12:30** to say farewell & thank you to Pastor Gunnar Kristiansen and Music Director John De Haan. They will be greatly missed!



Thank you to all our volunteers who helped to make our season merry & bright! Special thanks to the Henrikssen-Meyers family and Bob Worrall for acquiring and setting up the sanctuary tree, graciously donated by Happy Lands Tree Farm.



## SPONSORS

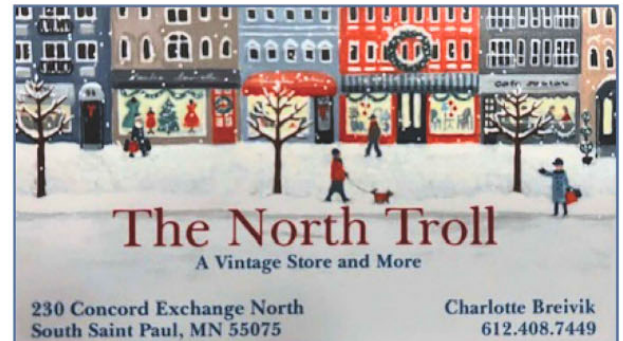


Poet, historian, and hymn writer Gracia Grindal weaves personal memoir and the history of Norwegian Lutheranism in the United States into a lively and insightful account of the Lutheran Free Church and its seminary.



**Gracia Grindal**

Available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, FortressPress.



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Email [office@mindekirken.org](mailto:office@mindekirken.org) for more information.

## MINDEKIRKEN STAFF

### **PASTOR**

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### **MUSIC STAFF**

John De Haan: Choir/Music Director  
[dehaa006@umn.edu](mailto:dehaa006@umn.edu)

Hui Chen: Organist  
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### **OFFICE STAFF**

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Curt Aaseng: Bookkeeper  
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Synneva Bratland: Office Staff  
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Charlotte Breivik: Husmor  
(Kitchen Coordinator)  
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### **PROGRAMS**

Krista Schweppe: MNLCP Administrator  
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Marilyn Sorensen: Tuesday Open House  
Coordinator  
[tuesdayopenhouse@mindekirken.org](mailto:tuesdayopenhouse@mindekirken.org)

## Mindekirken 2025 Congregational Council

### **Executive Committee**

Kirsti Grodahl, *President*  
Gracia Grindal, *Vice President*  
Jennifer Thue, *Secretary*  
Gunnar Kristiansen, *Pastor*

Nancy Sand Olson, *Treasurer*  
Nancy Watkins, *Deacons Chair*  
Toby Hillmann, *Trustees Chair*

### **Trustees**

John Dalland  
Toby Hillmann  
Karen Knudsen  
Tom Peterson  
Doug Watkins  
Bob Worrall

### **Deacons**

Laurie Agrimson  
Kathryn McKeen  
Wendi Storhoff  
Nancy Watkins

January 2026

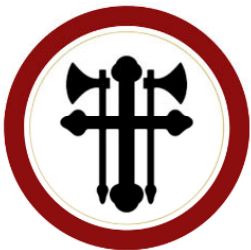
The Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church  
MINDEKIRKEN COMMUNICATOR  
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Minneapolis, MN 55404-2952

**Return Service Requested**

## MINDEKIRKEN WEEKLY

Want even more Mindekirken? Scan the QR code or contact the office to sign up for our weekly emails and stay up to date!

Sign up can also be found on the bottom of all pages at [mindekirken.org](http://mindekirken.org)



## JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### - January 4 -

9 am English Service with Communion  
11 am Norwegian Service with Communion

### - January 11 -

9 am English Service  
11 am Norwegian Service

### - January 18 -

9 am English Service with Communion  
11 am Norwegian Service with Communion

### - January 25 -

11 am Bilingual Family Service

### COMMUNICATOR MAILING

If you would like to receive an emailed copy of the Communicator in lieu of the mailed paper edition, please contact [office@mindekirken.org](mailto:office@mindekirken.org).

The Communicator is also available on our website, along with past editions. Please also contact the office for any address changes or requests.