



The Paddlewheel

Moorhead Rotary Club

Volume 95—Number 25

December 27, 2016

Moorhead Rotary
Chartered May 1, 1921
Club 970
District 5580

- President Lynne Kovash
- President-Elect Corey Elmer
- Secretary & Paddlewheel reporter
Teresa Joppa
- Treasurer Doreen Filler
- Past President Eric Wilkie
- Director Russ Hanson
club administration, photos
- Director Dale Hetland
past president & advisor
- Director Jon Benson
past president & advisor
- Director Jill Baldwin
fund-raising, inc. Travel Raffle
- Director Tammy Finney
public relations & promotion
- Director Kay Parries
past president & advisor
- Director David Sederquist
fund-raising & projects
- RYLA Coord. Randy Farwell
- Polio Plus Coord. Cindy Nolte
- Sergeant at Arms Team
Dave Sederquist, Eric Johnson,
Mike Hulett & Jean Hannig
- Pianist Sharon Fangsrud
- Song Leaders Bill Schwandt,
Bob Hanna, John Andreasen
- Photographer Russ Hanson
- Meeting Reporter Teresa Joppa
- Paddlewheel Editor
Nancy Edmonds Hanson

The Moorhead Rotary board of directors meets the second Tuesday of each month.

- International President
John Germ, Chattanooga, TN
- District 5580 Governor
Herb Schmidt, Fargo
- District 5580 Vice Governor
Gary Nolte
- Assistant District Governor
Kay Parries, Moorhead
- District Governor-Elect
Craig Lochery
- District 5580 Polio Coordinator
Cindy Nolte
- End Polio Now Zone 28 Coord,
Gary Nolte

Other F-M Rotary Clubs

- Monday: FM/PM Rotary
5:30 p.m., Lucky 13 Pub
- Monday: Fargo West Rotary
Noon, Holiday Inn
- Wednesday: Fargo Rotary
Noon, Radisson
- Thursday: FM/AM Rotary
7 a.m., Ramada Plaza

If you attend meetings of any of these clubs, just check in. We have a reciprocal agreement.

Moorhead Rotary
P.O. Box 72
Moorhead, MN 56561



This week: No meeting! Enjoy your week ... we'll see you on January 3 back at the Hjemkomst Center, where we'll have a guided tour of the fascinating exhibit "Moorhead: Wet and Dry."

Paul Dovre lights up the Christmas season with his annual message of hope

Past President Eric Wilkie welcomed members and guests to our last meeting of 2016, since no meeting is scheduled for Dec. 27. He introduced guests including his own, Oak Grove High School president Mike Slette; Jim and Jan Hausmann and Marty Dovre, guests of Paul Dovre; Matt Peterson, guest of John Andreasen, and Ashley Quinn, guest of Gina Monson.

Amy Amundsen of Clay County Social Services accepted a check for the club's Christmas gift. It will be used to brighten the holidays for the 140 children who are in out-of-home placement (foster care) in the county.

Oak Grove High School's Madrigal Choir set



Photos: Past President Eric Wilkie & Amy Amundsen, Clay County Social Services. Eric at podium. Sergeant at Arms Jean Hannig. (Above) Paul Dovre. (Bottom) Oak Grove High School Madrigals.

the festive mood with a selection of Christmas carols.

Jean advises reducing holiday stress

Sergeant at Arms Jean Hannig focused on the





Eric Wilkie with Kay Parries & Cindy Nolte. Gary Nolte and PDG Tom Riley. Jan Hausmann and OGHs president Mike Slette.

Guests December 20

Amy Amundsen, Clay County Social Services, guest of club
 Matt Peterson, guest of John Andreasen
 Mike Slette, guest of Eric Wilke
 Mardy Dovre and Jim & Jan Hausmann, guests of Paul Dovre
 Ashley Quinn, guest of Gina Monson

Visiting Rotarians

Tom Riley, past district governor

Reported Make-Ups

John Andreasen, Fargo West Rotary, 12-19

December Birthdays

Andreasen, John	Dec. 05
Deilke, Violet	Dec. 20
Moore, Noel	Dec. 25
Monson, Gina	Dec. 30

Rotary Anniversaries

Wright, Edgar	61 years
Dec 06 1955	
Finney, Tammy	1 Year
Dec 08 2015	
Rosenfeldt, Jade	1 Year
Dec 08 2015	
Baldwin, Jill	16 years
Dec 12 2000	
Nolte, Gary	28 years
Dec 13 1988	
Parries, Kay	28 years
Dec 13 1988	

science of stress — something to avoid during the holidays. A few of her suggestions: Reduce your obligations. Eat healthy ... cookies are healthy! Take control. Find a balance, and remember what you're happy about.

Some of those happy thoughts spurred Happy Dollar contributions. Among them: Erhardt's concert at MHS; "Carols & Cocktails" at church; Gary Nolte and Kay Parries' 28th anniversaries as Rotarians; the Concordia Christmas concert; a furnace that went kaput in the cold, now working again; and a college graduate in the Nellis home.

Paul Dovre shares words to heal our nation's deep divide

As he has for many years, Paul Dovre — retired president of Concordia College — shared words of hope for the year ahead:

In this season of Advent, my very favorite, I have rejoiced with you in the singing of familiar carols and listening to the classic biblical texts. It is a season full of promise and possibility. This season I have also

been led to reflect on what the Advent message might have to say to our divided, disgruntled, dyspeptic nation.

And divided we surely are. We have sharply contrasting views of the direction we ought to take as a nation. There are deep feelings of mistrust: both for the leader we elected and the one we did not. There is growing disparity between rich and middle classes to say nothing of the gap between rich and the poor. In our neighborhood many feel oppressed, left behind by an economy in which they either can't find jobs at all or the ones they can find do not afford a sustainable life style. I think of the contrasting statements of two friends: One, the head of a multi-racial family and with close friends of many faiths, wrote in his Christmas letter about his family's fear of the future. While the other friend said over coffee, "finally, we'll get things shaken up in Washington." Each, in his own way, was feeling oppressed.

In a recent book with unusual title Thank You for Being Late, Tom Friedman tells us that we are caught in the vortex of

Continued on page 3

Looking Ahead

Tuesday, Dec. 27 — no meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 3 — board meeting

11 a.m.all members are welcome!

Tuesday, Jan. 3

Sergeant at ArmsJean Hannig
 Rotarian of the Day:Russ Hanson
 Program:Guided tour of "Moorhead Wet & Dry" exhibit by Hjemkomst programming director Markus Krueger.
 GreetersNathan Johnson & Gina Monson

Tuesday, Jan. 10

Sergeant at Arms Troy Nellis
 Rotarian of the Day

Program:City Engineer Bob Zimmerman, "Redrawn FEMA Maps for F-M Area"
 Greeters:..John Andreasen & Tracey Moorhead

Tuesday, Jan. 17

Sergeant at Arms.....Dave Sederquist
 Rotarian of the Day:Jill Baldwin
 Program:Todd Ganji, Travel Inc, "F-M Honor Flights"
 Greeters:Jill Baldwin & Troy Nellis

Tuesday, Jan. 24

Sergeant at ArmsEric Johnson
 Rotarian of the Day:
 Program:.....Les Bakke, "Launching a Well-Researched Family History"
 Greeters:Ron Kolb & Noel Moore

accelerating changes in technology, the economy, and the environment while, at the same time, we are, politically, acting more and more like Shiites and Sunnis—unable to communicate or cooperate or collaborate on the issues that are central to our survival. And this is an equal opportunity, bipartisan problem as illustrated by the congress's unwillingness to fix the affordable health care act as well as the sad case of our state leaders' inability to put the people's business ahead of their personal animosity. In view of all of this, the title of an upcoming PBS special, "The Divided States of America" seems appropriate no matter your party or candidate of choice. We are at a tipping point in America.

So what can the stories of Advent and Christmas offer us? I am reading a book by religion writer Karen Armstrong. The title is *Fields of Blood*. She describes and documents the condition facing Israel at the time of Christ's birth. Let me share three observations. It was a time of political oppression by the Romans. They were in charge and everyone knew it. Their rulers accorded to themselves god like status, and when the Jews attempted insurrection from time to time they were suppressed with great cruelty. We recall that shortly after Jesus birth, the Romans heard rumors of a new king among the Jews and proceeded to slaughter all of the male infants in Bethlehem. John the Baptist suffered a similar fate and so too did Jesus eventually.

It was a time of economic oppression. In order to elevate their own status and pay expected tribute to Rome, local governors imposed heavy taxes, decimating the middle class through foreclosures and confiscation. The peasant class nearly disappeared and Jesus own father Joseph, perhaps among them, became an itinerant carpenter. Finally, it was a time of religious oppression. Caesar would brook no rivals and, in addition to assuming god like status, he took control of the Jewish temple by limiting access, imposing taxes, and picking favorites.

As a result of these multiple levels and forms of oppression, the numbers of starving and neurologically impaired Jews grew exponentially. One interesting note in all of this is that religion, politics, and economics were inextricable—for both the Romans and the Jews. The Romans saw religion as a key to their suppression of the Jews while the Jews saw it as the doorway to freedom, health, and justice.

In light of this experience of oppression, consider the impact of some of the great texts of the season: About wolves lying down with lambs; about people being judged with righteousness; about the meek being treated with equity.

From the book of Isaiah, "Say to those with fearful heart, 'Be strong and do not fear! Here is your God. He will

come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.'" Is 35:4-6a.

Jesus had studied all of these texts and he understood his assignment well. So he addressed political oppressors by practicing and preaching in support of a kingdom based on justice and equity and open to all—not just the wealthy and powerful. And his answer to the question about paying taxes to Caesar "Render unto Caesar the things that are Cesar's and unto God the things that are Gods" was an ambiguous answer, an answer that would get him into trouble. And with respect to economic oppression there was no ambiguity—he preached in behalf of the poor, he fed the hungry, he healed the ill, he exorcised demons. Like so many of the poor he was an itinerant, going from place to place without security or resources. The third category of oppression was religious, even in the high and holy places. So Jesus took on the Pharisees and he ran out the money changes in order to get back to the basics of God's unqualified grace and righteousness which was not limited by race or tribe, by power or position, by economic standing or professional distinction.

So how might all of this apply to "the divided states of America?" Or politically divided communities, and friendships, and families? Now I am not arguing that there is somehow an equivalency between the dark times of the first century and our time of political upheaval, economic uncertainty, and reemerging prejudice. But then oppression is not so much a matter of historical experience as it is present perception. And present perception reveals a reality in our time which we cannot ignore or explain away.

So how and where do we begin to translate the Advent good news into current circumstance? I believe we begin by rallying around the commitments and values which are set out in the texts of this season. Shared commitments like caring for the hungry, the ill, the homeless, the refugee who cannot go home again, the handicapped, the people who—in increasing numbers are left behind. Shared values like truth, respect, decency, and honesty—this in contrast to the put down, the not so subtle racial insult, and manufactured facts.

I believe that we are more unified in these matters than we may realize. But we should not give our leaders a pass on respect, decency, and truthfulness. Let us hold up these and other commitments as the prophets and Jesus did. Let us express our righteous indignation when any person's needs are ignored, when the sick are left without care, when politicians consistently put the worst construction on our neighbors, when Machiavellian tactics seep into local and state government, when the facts are

ignored and distorted in the name of expediency. Now, as I said earlier, I believe that we are more unified than we may realize around these values. Just look for a moment at the service agenda of our club. But on the national level there has been of late a dulling of our moral sense and our political expectations; it's as though we care less or we've run out of gas. I don't suggest that reasserting these values and expectations is easy or obvious work. There is plenty of ambiguity with respect to public policy issues and plenty of diversity of opinion on those matters. So we will need to be both patient and long suffering perhaps. But the Advent mandate is, I believe, clear on this point.

Another thing we can do is to reset our relationships. Mutual respect and congeniality have been major casualties in our public life. While fear and insecurity are on the rise, I think a reset means searching out and honing in on our common values and commitments. As Concordia faculty member Jacqueline Bussie writes, it means recognizing that understanding and agreement are not the same—and recognizing, secondly, that we could be wrong. So it's best to start by seeking understanding and identifying common ground. Then disagreement may not vanish but it will surely be less toxic. This would be a kind of reversal of course in our public life. I am not sure we are up to it but I don't see another way. For if we cannot reset our relationships around shared understandings, values, and commitments—how will we be able to find the common ground that is essential to our common good? The politics of the Shiites and Sunnis is being shadowed in our own system, sometimes even at the local level. This is a sure and certain path to chaos.

I believe this has implications for our role as community leaders for this room is full of such leaders. In a recent interview Tom Friedman spoke of his youth, growing up in St. Louis Park. His family was Jewish and had lived previously in Minneapolis, a city which at the time was famous for antisemitism. His family and many other Jewish families moved to St. Louis Park, a then new suburb where they would eventually make up 10% of the population. He and his family prospered because the

community was led by people who insisted there be no restricted covenants in the ownership of property and that the schools and businesses of the community be welcoming and just to all.

According to a recent essay by James Fallows in *The Atlantic*, it appears that democracy is working best for us at the local level where government is less partisan, more solution oriented and more responsible to the values and commitments we share. Look at the work of the Moorhead City Council and the Fargo City Commission where differences of opinion are transcended, where amity prevails among adversaries, and the people's work is accomplished competently, transparently, and effectively. Leaders make a difference. This community has leaders who speak up for equality of opportunity, for fairness, for responsible and open government. This community—perhaps most important—has leaders who reach across lines of party and class and power in search of what is best for all. May their number multiply!

In my view, the issues that confront divided states and divided communities and divided friendships are very, very serious. They constitute a real threat to our democracy. But we can face these issues out of the richness of our faith traditions and in light of the sure and certain hope foretold by the prophets, embodied in the Christ child, and kept alive by all the saints.

Let me close with two verses from a poem by Madeleine L'Engle:

“God did not wait ‘til the world was ready, ‘til nations were at peace.

“God came when heavens were unsteady and prisoners cried out for relief.

“We cannot wait ‘til the world is sane to raise our songs with joyful voice.

“But to share our grace, to touch our pain, God came with love. Rejoice, rejoice.”