



# The Paddlewheel

## Moorhead Rotary Club

Volume 101—Number 25

December 22, 2020

### Moorhead Rotary Club 970 District 5580

President Jerry Roger  
President-Elect Gina Monson  
President Nominee 2021-2022  
David Sederquist  
Treasurer Emily Gess  
Secretary Teresa Joppa  
Past President Steve Schaefer

Directors (2020) Ernie Simmons,  
Pat Gulbranson and Greg Johnson  
Directors (2021) Kevin Heazlett  
and Tracey Moorhead  
Directors (2022) Tammy Finney  
and Steve Astrup  
RYLA Coordinator Randy Farwell  
Polio Plus Coordinator Cindy Nolte  
Sergeant at Arms Team  
Dave Sederquist, Eric Johnson  
& Jean Hannig  
Program Chair Jean Hannig  
Pianist Sharon Fangsrud  
Song Leader Bob Hanna  
Photographer Russ Hanson  
Paddlewheel Editor  
Nancy Edmonds Hanson

### 2020 Committees

### Other F-M Rotary Meetings

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



### Merry Christmas!

Our next Moorhead Rotary meeting  
will be on Jan. 5. No meetings on  
Dec. 22 and 29!



### Happy New Year!

### Paul Dovre shares his annual Christmas message of hope

President Jerry Rogers welcomed 22  
Moorhead Rotarians to our final meeting  
of 2020. The club will not meet for the next two  
weeks. Our first meeting of 2021 is Jan. 5.

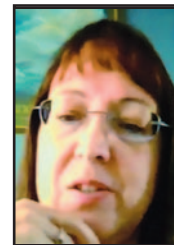
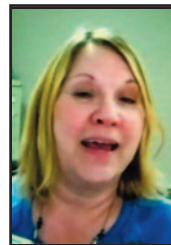
Sergeant at Arms Gary Nolte noted that 2021 is  
the club's centennial year. On May 1, 1921, the  
Fargo Rotary Club came across the bridge  
carrying torches to charter Moorhead's first and  
only club. It met at the Comstock Hotel until that  
landmark was condemned, then moved to the  
Moorhead Country Club. In recent years it has  
met at the Marriott, the Hjemkomst Center,  
Concordia College ... and now in cyberspace.

He reviewed notable members of past years,  
including four who have served as district  
governors.

Calling for happy dollars, he spoke up first for a  
visit with his 98-year-old father, who still lives in  
his own home. Bill Woods applauded the thank-  
you letters of children who received dictionaries  
this fall. Jean contributed in honor of our  
speakers and Paul Dovre. Barb Belcher said she  
is happy but sad at leaving her YMCA job and  
Rotary; she will move to Georgia and work  
remotely.

Chris Andreasen shared his pleasure at his and  
Nikki's new house and, soon, new baby. Steve  
Schaefer's daughter is recovering from Covid,  
and he's quarantining due to her visit. Violet is  
also happy her brother is recovering from the  
virus. Teresa Joppa applauded Paul's annual  
Christmas message.

Rotarian of the Day Ernie Simmons introduced  
Paul, the long- (and multi-) time president of  
Concordia, who has served on many boards  
over his time in Moorhead.



### Moorhead Rotary Club Board Election

Nominations welcomed. Positions to be filled by  
club election 1/19/2021

### Proposed Slate: Officers July 2021-June 2022

President Gina Monson  
President Elect Dave Sederquist  
Secretary Teresa Joppa  
Treasurer Emily Gess

### Director 2020-2023 \*two positions opened through board member attrition

1. Chris Andreasen
2. Steve Schaefer

### Director 2021-2024

1. Tracey Moorhead
2. Ernie Simmons
3. Megan Wiesneski

## December Birthdays

Lunak, Brandon	Dec 04
Andreasen, John	Dec 05
Deilke, Violet	Dec 20
Hanson, Nancy	Dec 24
Monson, Gina	Dec 30

## Wedding Anniversary

Sederquist, David & Jane	
Dec 08 1984	36 years

## Rotary Anniversaries

Finney, Tammy	5 years
Dec 08 2015	
Baldwin, Jill	20 years
Dec 12 2000	
Nolte, Gary	32 years
Dec 13 1988	
Parries, Kay	32 years
Dec 13 1988	

## Paul Dovre: 'amidst the shadows, the darkness, the confusions of this season — we have been given this light that illuminates the shadows of our confusion'

The recent cover of Time magazine features the number 2020 and describes it as “the worst year ever.” Survivors of the Holocaust or the flu epidemic of 1918 or WW II might disagree, but all would agree that there’s been nothing quite so daunting in the lifetimes of most of us.

The texts of this holy season often use the images of light and darkness as though they were mutually exclusive. But to my mind, often times for me the image of shadow is more appropriate. By shadow, I mean to denote a time of uncertainty, of confusion—some light, some darkness, but not clarity. There is certainly confusion in these days.

On the one hand there is the real darkness of the pandemic. More lives have been lost than in our world wars. Although we are 10% of the global population, we claim nearly 20% of the Covid cases. Rates of chemical dependency and mental stress are soaring.

A recent study reports that isolation—which many of us have plenty of—is more harmful to our health than either smoking or obesity, it can shorten a person’s life by 15 years according to former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. According to the CDC people without community engagement have a 50% higher chance of both dementia and early death.

Then without much warning, we experienced a stunning and disheartening surge of racial injustice and social unrest which reflect the persistent racism embedded in our society. And there are no quick fixes in view for as James Baldwin once said “we cannot fix what we cannot face.”

I am disturbed by our increasingly tenuous hold on reality. In former days we agreed widely that while everyone has a right to their own opinion, they don’t have a right to their own facts. Now, increasingly, people want to lay claim to both their own opinions and their own “facts” and with the cyclonic systems of social media, reality is increasingly unstable. And this trend—along with our fragile political system—poses a real threat to democracy.

But in contrasts to these dire circumstances we also experience light in the heroism and sacrifice of our critical care workers—health care workers doing 12 hour shifts for 12 days in succession, food servers and store workers who are subject to

maximum exposure, teachers and firefighters and law enforcement professionals whose work goes on with high risk and often little support or recognition. And we see the light in our communities through act of service and generosity exceeding anything we have known in the past. In recent hours the first inoculations of a new vaccine have been administered, another bright light shining on our future. So light and darkness mixed together making this a shadowy and confusing time.

Given all of this it is also, and not surprisingly, a time of confusion about what all of this means. On the one side you have the rationalists who see this pandemic as a phenomenon of nature that will run its natural course and then disappear. They believe it’s all downhill from here.

Some say that although this is serious, it should not lead us to sacrifice our freedom to travel or convene or no require us to keep a social distance or wear a face mask. They say that our political life is not dysfunctional but rather the righteous consequence of the deep state interfering with our lives. On the other hand, some see the outsized Covid 19 spread in our country as a sign of our selfishness. And they see the growing political dysfunctions as a sign of a deep and growing malady reaching the very essence of our democracy. Light, darkness, at best shadows in our public square.

There are also shadows of confusion about what all of this means in a religious sense. Some see it as a consequence of God’s judgment on a self-absorbed idolatrous people. Jesus foretold it in these words “For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of creation...” (Mark 13:19) Or as Peter wrote “the day of the Lord will come like a thief and then the heavens will pass with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be dissolved.” (II Peter 3:10) Others say that God doesn’t have anything to do with it. To use a colloquial expression: “we brung it on ourselves.” It’s a human consequence of human will. What will be, will be. There is a determinism here that boxes us in with little hope—there is no light here, not even a dim one.

Then there is a growing segment of our population—especially among the young (including

Generation Z) who design their own religion. Melandra Denton and Richard Flory have been doing extensive research on the spiritual life of this emerging generation. Typical of their beliefs is that everyone goes to heaven, morals are self-evident, heaven and hell are merely abstractions and really—it's all good. For them it's all light!

Now to add to the matter—and you may think I'm piling on here—there is for many ambiguity at best and confusion at worst—in the messages of Advent and Christmas. On the one hand there are the calls for judgment from the prophets, from John the Baptist and Jesus too. And on the other hand there is the promise of forgiveness and life. “He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” (Mark 16:16)

On the one hand there is the promise of salvation and plenty. Jesus put it this way “...he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth and the ends of heaven.” (Mark 13:27) And on the other hand there are calls to do justice, to take up crosses, and even to die on crosses as did Jesus, his disciples, and disciples of every age—including our own.

So light and darkness, shadows and confusion over what now is and what still awaits us. Is that it? Maybe the seemingly inconsistent messages I have cited are not inconsistent or confusing at all. For example, the lessons about salvation and service presuppose the message of judgment and the call to repentance. We don't experience salvation (even episodes of it in our lives today) if we lack a sense of moral responsibility. Michael Gerson, a Washington Post columnist put it this way: “Without a transcendent moral order, ideas such as good and evil, noble and ignoble, are pegged in midair.” I submit that the texts of judgment and counsel imbedded in this season provide us with our transcendent moral order and its pillars are love, justice, equity, faithfulness, and personal responsibility. One of their functions is to cast a light on what is amiss in our lives and the life of our society.

Likewise, we won't experience the light of salvation without the experience of darkness.

This is why most Christian services begin with the confession of sin—the confession of our darkness and it is this confession that then opens us to the light of God's salvation and there are no shadowing conditions on that grace filled light.

And there is one more light giving connection among our texts and that is that we experience the fullness of God's salvation when we enlist ourselves in God's work. Think about the Israelites: after 40 years of wandering they established a new kingdom of justice, worship, and learning. They had experienced God's judgement and would again, but at the point of their deliverance, they saw the connections between their guilt, their deliverance, and their faithfulness.

So too did the followers of Jesus who in the end and after initial confusion—did not mistake salvation for a political or economic miracle but rather as a freedom from their own darkness and a calling to take upon themselves the work of God's righteousness on earth. And it was messy work—dealing with their doubts, misunderstanding when Jesus might return, and experiencing punishment for their thoughts and deeds by both the heavy hand of Rome and the religious establishment of their time.

So amidst the shadows, the darkness, the confusions of this season—we have been given this light—this light that shines in the darkness and thus illuminates the shadows of our confusion. And this is a light which “the darkness shall not overcome.”

Thus we can turn to our present circumstances with confession ...and our future possibilities with the confidence of this great gift and the convictions of our faith.

With apologies for some editing, I close with these words from a favorite Advent hymn:

Christ be our light, Shine in our hearts, Shine through the darkness.  
Christ be our light, shine in your world darkened today.