

View from the Pew

By Bruce Lindquist

Week of Dec. 3, 2017, Vol. 1, No. 5

Christmas memories -- Last month, 14 members of SOC gathered for the regular monthly food, fellowship and fun get-together of Active Adults. To say that all of these active seniors qualify for an AARP card is a large understatement. Their longevity is astounding, and so is their upbeat attitude -- and activity level. While some members were recounting the early years of the group, I was busy calculating in my head (you're probably wondering why I would do something so dangerous!) and came up with an unofficial figure of slightly over **550 years** of total church membership represented that afternoon! Two of us at the meeting accounted for barely four years combined, but after that, at least four in the group estimated that they have been Ascension/1st Lutheran/SOC members for **60 years -- or more!** Those stats right there attest to a measure of strength and dedication worth highlighting. Renee Compo's surprise "table topic" was a request for each of us to come up with a brief special memory of Christmas. Here they are: **Pastor Durk** -- Because he has a December birthday -- eight days before Christmas Eve -- Pastor Durk said that he wanted (expected?!) to get a gift "bigger than my sister's." And he did, especially in about the third grade, when a sizeable present (an air hockey table!) appeared under the tree. **David Latvala** -- In his early years, he said, there wasn't much to go around, so the gifts he received had to be shared with his siblings. But later, David and Pat, with a family of their own, were afforded the opportunity to spend a special Christmas at a Bible camp north of Alexandria -- all to themselves for five days! **Pat Latvala** -- The year the couple adopted Nancy was a "very special year for us, as was the Christmas we all spent together later that December." **Renee Compo** -- In the early Christmases of her childhood on the farm, Renee said her family's resources were stretched thin, but her mother, on several occasions, was still able to sew new pajamas for all six of the Renneke girls! **Marcee Larsen** -- "Mom would buy gifts and spread them out all over the living room floor. Then later, we'd all jump on our snowmobiles and hit the trail (around Cloquet)!" **Karen Johnson** -- "Being pregnant during two different Christmas periods (with her sons) is something that I still associate with the holiday time of year," she said, "even now." **Virginia Strachota** -- "We would light the candles on the Christmas tree (after coming home from church), then our family would discover what was in the stockings at our home in the Janesville area." **Clayton Olson** -- With his family's farm near his grandparents in rural Glenwood, he remembers the special stories that were told around the holidays, and the lighting of the Christmas candles. **Bev Disrud** -- "Talking dolls came in the mail two weeks before Christmas, so when our parents left the house, we found them in a hiding place, and played with them for a while, before Christmas!" **Ginny Boe** -- In the early decades of the 20th century, food items were common gifts. She said that more than once among the various gifts she received at Christmas, was a quart of olives! **Lloyd Boe** -- Growing up in the Dawson, Minn. area, Lloyd agreed that the traditional small-town Christmases of his youth are still special memories for him. **Harding Hanson** -- Harding's special Christmas memories center on going to church -- here -- on Christmas Eve with his family, then coming home to a special large meal, memories which were repeated through the years. **Clark Johnson** -- He vividly recalls the frigid Christmases of far northwestern Minnesota, a mere eight miles south of the Canadian border, and having to fetch water over some distance at the request of his mother -- while wearing cold and unsnow-worthy "regular" church-going shoes!

(A pretty good collection of priceless memories from a spur-of-the-moment request!) --o--

