

View from the pew

By Bruce Lindquist

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Reflections on 3 members of our family -- We lost three wonderful members of the Spirit of Christ family in 2017. I've been here now for nearly four years, and I was lucky enough to get to know all three. **Gorden K. (Gordy) Westermann**, 91, of SLP, died Jan. 7th of this year; **Harold Edward (H.E.) Larsen**, 83, of SLP, passed away March 19, and **Jillian Patricia Berge**, 26, of Hopkins, died April 28. The funerals for **H.E.** and **Jillian** were held here; **Gordy's** was in Northeast Minneapolis. About three years ago, I was asked by our parish nurse **Renee Compo** to join **Glen** and **Eileen Soderberg** and **Dave** and **Pat Latvala** on this church's visitation team. One of my assignees was **Gordy**. I would stop by his Maryland Avenue home here in SLP about once a month. Both of us being vets, we would swap war stories, but given his vast WWII hand-to-hand combat experience in the South Pacific, the conversation was pretty one-sided -- which meant I did a lot of listening. I miss those informal talks with him. **H.E.**, also a vet, and I shared interests in art and joke-telling, although he was much better at both. He would almost always surprise me with some story that would inevitably take a dramatic turn for the hilarious. (He and his wife **Marcee** danced and danced some more during their time together, which I enjoyed hearing about). And he seemed to have that look in his eyes that something funny was about to happen or be said. I miss laughing with him. **Jillian** joined SOC in the same new member class that I was in, May, 2014. She was a former trumpet-player for the over-the-top Pride of Minnesota -- U of M Marching Band -- and she acted like it. Members of that group always struck me as having a lot of interesting things going on in their lives, and **Jillian** was no exception. She held a biomedical BS degree from the U, was valedictorian of her '09 Farmington High class, assisted in the operation of a small gift business, etc., etc. I miss the vast promise she held for our congregation. I hope their families and friends are finding some comfort, in this very reflective time of year, in the wonderful memories they left us. I know I am. I've learned over the past four years that our loved ones *never* leave us, but help to guide us to that positive ground, because of the exemplary lives *they* led.

The sound of (special) music -- I sit in the back row of the choir and pretty much take up space, but it gives me a tremendous vantage point to take in the melodious sounds flowing from those in front of me, and on either side. My musical claim to fame is limited to strumming a few chords on the four-string ukulele. So I had a prime box seat on Dec. 17 to take in the SOC Christmas Cantata, directed by **Steve Stucki**, and it was a beautiful event. Hats off to **Jan Arnold, Linda Brandt, Jeanne Worm, Dina Strachota, Barb Endres, Karen Johnson, Karen Flatten, Anne Kraft, Renee Compo, Nikki Christensen, Nancy Malone, Lowell Brandt, Glen Soderberg, Bruce Strachota, Greg Flatten, Harding Hanson** and **David Latvala**. My take away? I think they are all very experienced -- and talented -- vocalists. Thanks also to narrators **Bret Hanson** and **Megan Patterson, Michal Sobieski** (violin), **Jim Jacobson** (cello) and **Larry Wilson** (piano). And a *special* thank you to **Dina Strachota** for arranging to have Park TV 15 Community Cable record the concert, which can now be found on Youtube!