



# Concordia News

## August 2020



Volume 15

A newsletter for members, family, and friends of  
Concordia Lutheran Church and Concordia Cemetery  
Association

Number 8

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### Matthew 14:13-21

13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went



ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16 Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." 17 They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." 18 And he said, "Bring them here to me." 19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

*Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.*

Immediately before this passage Jesus has been informed that his cousin, John the Baptist has been executed by King Herod. As many do when confronted by tragedy, Jesus sought to be alone. However, the crowd, having become used to Jesus healing their sick, tag along, uninvited. They catch up to Jesus and his disciples, who were most likely privy to Jesus attempts to break free from the throng of people, and press him to continue to care for them. Perhaps the disciples were disgusted by the crowd's clinginess, their over dependency upon Jesus, and after Jesus finished, once again healing their sick, while running on fumes the whole time, they tell (an impudent thing for them to do) Jesus to send them away to the surrounding villages so they could buy food. To their disbelief Jesus retorted, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." Gathering two fish and five loaves of bread Jesus blessed them and presented them to his disciples for them to distribute to the crowds. This probably made no more sense to them than his first encounter with the first disciple recruits who had been fishing all night with no luck at all, and Jesus tells them to throw their nets on the opposite side of the boat. However, despite the absurdity of Jesus mandates, they obeyed and in both cases the miraculous occurred, there was an overwhelming overabundance of fish (and later, of bread) provided.

There is a message for Jesus' modern day disciples that might be gleaned from these two accounts, sometimes we need need to take Jesus at his word even if it doesn't make sense. How many times have you not gone out on a limb not because a given action made logical sense but just because your conscience or that small voice in your head told you that the particular course of action would honor God or help your neighbor (which usually are one in the same)? If you can look back at such moments you know you are in the company of the first disciples who were the first to take the leap of faith and obey Jesus for no "good reason" other than they trusted him. Over the years I have stated numerous times on Sunday mornings, that the times Jesus' disciples acted out of obedience on far fewer occasions than the times that they acted out of pettiness or self-interest (in short, out of pride). based on their "common sense." Of course they, like we, could justify our willful disobedience very easily by saying that we were acting out of common sense, a rubric which serves as a thinly veiled rational for self-justification of our inherent tendency to rebel against God's will for our lives and for the world he loves.

*(cont'd on page 2)*

**ALL CHURCH ACTIVITIES SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

## Coffee and Cookie Servers

(when services resume)

August 2 Sue Kassenborg  
 August 9 Carolyn Edwards  
 August 16 Lloyd Gunderson  
 August 23 Orpha Hoelstad  
 August 30 Clinton Babolian  
 September 6 Barb Grover  
 September 13 Myron Hagene  
 September 20 Sue Kassenborg  
 September 27 JoLyn Johnson



themselves. It was a God's mirror in which we see our own powerlessness to earn God's love. The law was not primarily a moral guide for Christian living or a formula that if we followed we would earn God's favor. The law was meant to reveal the hopelessness of the human project to save ourselves. It was used as a bulldozer to clear the way the way of the coming of the Lord (to quote John the Baptist) in the lives of humanity in general and today in your and my life in particular. The law drowns the Old Adam and Eve and the gospel (Jesus saving act of on Golgotha and the empty tomb) is what raises the new Adam and Eve to new life. This event was played out in our lives first in our baptisms (drowning of the old self and the raising of the new self to new life, a divine adoption ceremony of sorts) and is renewed, or I believe you will see the gospel if you read out loud the portion of the text quoted above: "Taking the bread (the five loaves) Jesus looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the bread (the loaves), and gave them to the disciples..." This phrase is obviously a preview of the Lord's Supper and contain a portion of what we use on Communion Sundays as the Words of Institution. Jesus is the initiator of this meal not the disciples. Jesus is the host (the word that Roman Catholics use for the bread in Holy Communion) and the disciples are simply the waiters and recipients along with the others. The disciples are as unilaterally blessed as the crowd. Their need for Jesus' largess, his overabundant free gift of physical life giving bread is equal to the need of the crowd. Today our need for the lavish feast of Jesus bread of life is even greater. There are many different physical foods to fill our stomachs that help us continue our physical life, but there is no other spiritual food other than the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ that can give us spiritual life. Only in the gospel of God's self-sacrificing Son (revealed to us this weekend in Word and Sacrament), can we have any hope for true life in this world or the next. And guess what, he makes it available to us freely and without condition. To this end tomorrow Kathy and I will be blessed as Jesus' disciples to share with you, our Concordia brothers and sisters and fellow disciples, the awesome gift of the Body and Blood of the crucified, resurrected and eternally present Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit! Amen!

If you know of someone in the hospital or in need of a home visit, or if you'd just like to talk through your concerns about the pandemic, contact Pastor Bruce at 218-329-2245.

## August Birthdays



August 4 Diane Murr  
 August 10 Bill Farabee  
 August 11 Sue Sip  
 Ron Horpedahl  
 August 17 Carolyn Edwards

### From Pastor Bruce (cont'd from page 1)

So is the main theme of this text for us today that we need to think of ourselves less and to think of God and our neighbors more? While it would be tempting to say yes (as to do so would be a very good thing for us to do), if this were the main thrust of this text we would be missing the deeper point and more importantly we would be replacing the gospel with the law, succumbing to the temptation to make this about what WE need to DO and deemphasizing what CHRIST has already done for US. Let me elaborate. Gospel oriented preaching is about Christ. Law centered preaching, based on a legalistic interpretation of scripture, is about human obligation and human good works. Martin Luther was very passionate about the need to have the law serve the gospel as opposed to the gospel serving the law. Lutheran preaching, ideally, involves preaching law and gospel. Luther gets this right from the Apostle Paul, particularly from Galatians and Romans, where time and time again Paul makes it clear that obedience to the law (God's expectations for human behavior) can never save us. This is because it Christ the law became used to reveal our incapability of humans to save

Grace and Peace, *Pastor Bruce*

# Thank You

The family of Sylvia Teigen thanks all who offered support, kind words, cards and memorials at her passing.

Donations will be published in the September issue of *Concordia News*.

## We Need Your Support



With worship services and other activities suspended for over two months, your donation to the general fund of any

amount can help fill that gap. Donations to the cemetery fund and newsletter are always greatly appreciated as well.

If you wish, your donation can be made in honor or in memory of a loved one or event.

### General Fund:

Make checks out to Concordia Lutheran Church and mail to:

Ray Johnson  
7333 70 St N  
Glyndon MN 56547

### Concordia Newsletter

Make checks out to Concordia News and mail to:

Walter Teigen  
915 4th Avenue South  
Moorhead MN 56560

### Concordia Cemetery Association:

Make checks out to the association and mail to:

Ray Johnson  
7333 70 St N  
Glyndon MN 56547

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of another.

~Charles Dickens

## Recipe of the Month August Ice Cream



### Ingredients

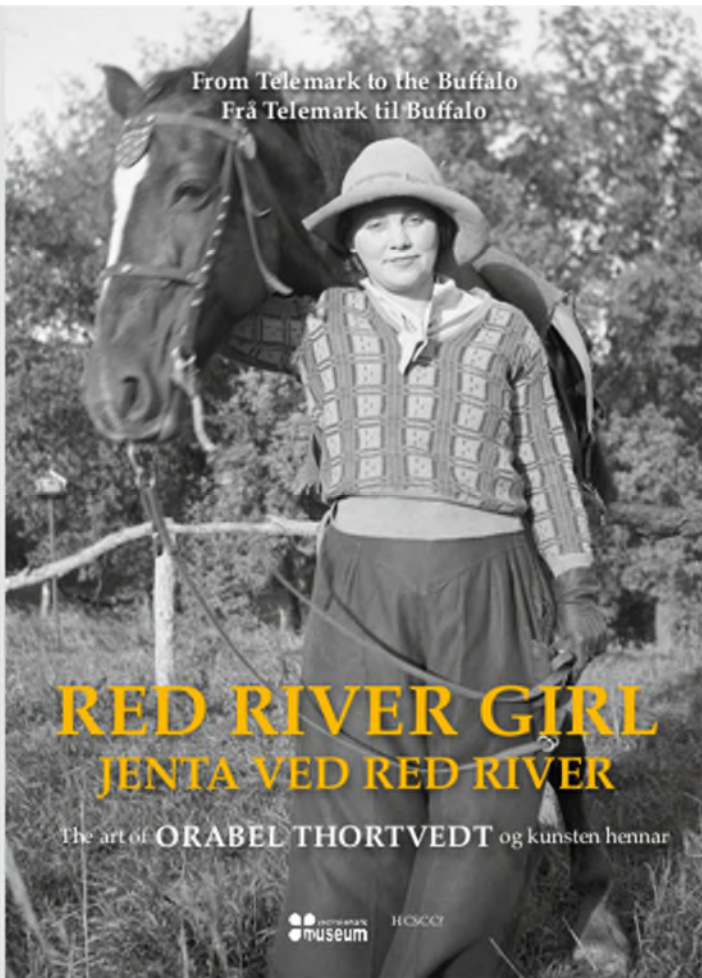
- 6 large egg yolks
- 1 ½ cups heavy cream
- 1 ½ cups whole milk
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¾ cup kosher salt
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ tsp almond extract
- ¾ cup pitted and halved cherries
- ¼ cup chopped pistachios

### Directions

- Set a medium sized bowl in a large bowl full of ice and water.
- In another medium bowl, beat the egg yolks for 2 minutes or so.
- In a medium saucepan, mix cream, milk, sugar, salt and vanilla.
- Simmer mixture, whisking constantly, until sugar dissolves.
- Slowly add about half of the cream mixture to beaten egg yolks, in a thin steady stream, whisking constantly.
- Whisk this mixture into the saucepan containing the remaining cream mixture.
- Cook over moderate heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon for 10-12 minutes, until the custard is thick enough to lightly coat the back of the spoon. Do NOT let it boil!
- Pour the custard into the bowl sitting in ice water and stir in the almond extract. Let it cool completely, stirring occasionally.
- Once cooled, pour into a large ziplock bag, press out all the air and seal.
- Lay flat in the freezer overnight (or at least 8 hours). Place a 9X4 inch meatloaf pan in the freezer to chill.
- Quickly transfer custard to a food processor and pulse in 5 second intervals until completely smooth.
- Transfer custard to the meat loaf pan and fold in cherries and pistachios. Cover in plastic wrap & freeze. Can store for up to a week.



VTM Orabel Thortvedt Red River Girl / Jenta ved Red River



## New Book from Norway Features Houston Pioneers

*Reprinted from the Houston (MN) Banner*

Near the end of last month, we received a long-awaited shipment of books direct from Norway. We have been looking forward to sharing this news with all of you, since the main section of this book tells a story of emigration from Telemark, Norway to Houston at the outset of the Civil War, and subsequent settlement along the Buffalo River near Moorhead in the Red River Valley, as told through the lives and experiences of one man and his extended family and friends.

That man was Ole G. Thortvedt (1829-1908), who came to Houston in 1861 in the company of a large group of acquaintances from Fyresdal in West Telemark to join their many compatriots who had settled here during the previous decade. Many others from neighboring parishes also made Houston their destination that year for the same reason. Their actions were a textbook example of chain migration, the main aspect of which is to join others from the same

family and community who have gone ahead of you, in this case into the relative unknown, as was the upper Midwest in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century; and which would remain a component of the lives of many of our early settlers for several decades to come.

After eight years on their relatively small farms on Mound Prairie (Section 5), in the shadow of the mound that gave the township its name, Ole Thortvedt led a wagon train with friends and family members 400 miles up to Clay County, and by leaving Houston and their recent experience with chain migration, becoming full-fledged pioneers on the open frontier of the Red River Valley in 1870. They were the first to settle along the Buffalo River, a tributary of the Red River of the North, and here they confronted *Nature* in all her fury with brutal winters, prairie fires, and grasshoppers, along with all the hardships involved with just “breaking” the prairie to open it up for cultivation and constructing shelters for “man and beast.”

This remarkable new book heralds the completion of an interesting and exciting new venture involving Ole’s granddaughter, Orabel, and ultimately Ole himself and his contemporaries. The West-Telemark Museum at Eidsborg, in conjunction with The Historical and

Cultural Society of Clay County (Minn.) (HCSCC), recently concluded an in-depth research project concerning Orabel Thortvedt and her life as an accomplished artist, writer and family historian, resulting in a traveling exhibit and a beautifully designed and fascinating coffee table-style book titled *Red River Girl—the Art of Orabel Thortvedt*.

Orabel (1896-1983) was a unique and captivating woman who loved horses, history, and art, but she probably loved her grandfather Ole most of all. It was at his knee she heard so many wonderful stories about the past and his experiences coming over from Telemark and pioneering in Minnesota, both in the hills and valleys of Houston and the great wide expanse of the Red River Valley. Growing up in what came to be known as the “*Buffalo-bygdi*” (Buffalo River Settlement—Houston’s largest Norwegian colony) Orabel never tired of listening to all that the old ones had to say and took it all into her memory, setting it down in her numerous notebooks as part of what was to become a lifetime research project.

Orabel was an exceptionally talented artist in her own right and loved to draw horses and other animals. As a teenager she lost most of her hearing, so she was fitted with hearing aids and later sent to Minneapolis to learn lip reading and take writing classes. While there she also attended art school to further refine her talents and was introduced to a whole new world, as you could well believe. She found she could make a living painting the pet dogs and horses of the well-to-do families in the city. Orabel developed the remarkable ability to capture the essence, the personality of the animals she painted—a rare talent.

She could have gone on living in Minneapolis enjoying life in the big city, but when both parents died in 1936 she felt compelled to move back to the farm where she and her sisters and brothers continued its operation for the rest of their lives. It was here that she also continued with what had become her life-long obsession: writing and retelling her family’s story, as well as the other families in the settlement, for posterity, illustrating them with fine pencil or pen and ink drawings and exquisite watercolors, themselves becoming historical and artistic treasures.

Ole Thortvedt’s entire extended family, including every sibling but one, his old mother “Gamle Jorand,” stepfather and stepbrother arrived in Houston during the summer of 1861, staying with various friends and relatives that

first year. Because of the intimate knowledge gathered over many years from those older family members and neighbors, Orabel was able to tell the story of the ocean crossing and overland travel to Houston, the movements and activities of her family as they acquired land and built a new life on Mound Prairie, their long slow trudge up to Clay County by wagon train in 1870, their pioneering efforts and encounters there along the Buffalo River, and the development of their new rural settlement up to 1899, *in almost unbelievable detail*. That, together with her artwork, is what separates her account of the immigrant experience, from all the others that have been written over the years.

But there is much more to the book than Orabel’s stories and illustrations, by the inclusion



This drawing of Ole Thortvedt, made by his granddaughter, Orabel, depicts the rugged and sturdy pioneer with his essential scythe resting over his shoulder during a pause from harvesting duties. No rest for the women though (just kidding) as you can see his wife, Tone, raking in the background.

of several well-researched and written articles, which while scholarly are also very accessible to the average reader.

Tillman Hartenstein, educational programs coordinator at the West-Telemark Museum,

introduces the book and explains the project, talks about Orabel’s work, and even offers a psychological assessment of her obsessive pursuits, and

Dag Rorgemoen, director of the W-T Museum, writes specifically about the circumstances concerning immigration in 1861, the year the Thortvedt family left Telemark.

Mark Peihl, senior archivist at the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County, shares information about the family and what they meant to the region, as well as the materials

they left to the society which now occupy 70 linear feet of shelving, while local boy Jim Skree provides background information on Houston's early history with an emphasis on the decade that the Thortvedt, Gedstad, and Gunderson families lived here: 1861-1871.

Lene Teigland Kleivi, archivist and collections manager at the W-T Museum, writes about two people who both influenced the Thortvedt family moves, from Fyresdal to Houston County and then farther on to Buffalo River. On a more personal note Gunnar Midtgarden, a cousin from Fyresdal, tells about his visits with Orabel and her family in 1978 and 1981. Professor Emerita Betty A. Bergland of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls contributed an article on Orabel's years as an art student.

As a special treat, the last page of the book features a nostalgic poem written in early 1913 by Houston's own Ivar Vathing (Sigurd's uncle) as a look back at the early years of Houston's settlement. It is presented in the original Telemark dialect, along with a literal, non-rhyming translation. On the facing page there appears a large color portrait of Ole G. Thortvedt sitting in a *kubbestol* (log chair) of his own making, with the farms of he (to the left) and his brother Bendik Gunderson (to the right) on Mound Prairie in the background.

Another significant and beneficial aspect of this book is that it can serve as a vicariously rewarding and revealing stand-in for those who do not have a written family history of their own. After all, the experiences of all the pioneers who came to this part of the country at that time were basically the same, no matter their ethnic or racial heritage. They all had to face the same ordeals and adversities, suffering and privations, and of course accomplishments and joys, as they struggled to make a new and better-quality life for themselves and their successors.

I believe it would be safe to say that there is not another personal archive collection that comes close to that of the Thortvedt Family of Clay County in the annals of Norwegian-American immigration and settlement history. As

historians, especially, we owe a great debt to Orabel Thortvedt. She and her incredible lifetime of work have long been known in rather limited circles, but with the release of West Telemark Museum's critically acclaimed book, she now belongs to the world.

This exceptional book can also belong to you for only \$45.00, plus \$5.00 shipping if mailed. The coffee table-style, 9 ½ x 13 inch, hardcover book weighs in at over three pounds, and its 193 pages are printed on luxurious, semi-gloss, art silk paper, profusely illustrated with black & white and color photographs, including numerous scans of Orabel's artwork. The entire text appears in both English and Norwegian, so you can try your hand at reading *Norsk*, as well! To order, make checks payable to Telelaget of America and mail to Shelley Jerviss, P.O. Box 292, Houston MN 5594. If you have questions, email her at [smjerv@goacentek.net](mailto:smjerv@goacentek.net) or call 507-459-2143.

A copy of the book has been donated to Concordia's library and should arrive shortly.



from the  
**Moorhead Daily News**  
August 13, 1943  
Page Three  
**"Comets Have Meeting"**

The Buffalo River Comets 4-H Club had their regular monthly meeting Friday at the schoolhouse. The meeting was called to order by president, Helen Kassenborg. On the program was a demonstration by Helen Kassenborg and Ilene Olson on canning. Slides were shown by County Agent G. E. May and Sidney Snartland gave a reading. Lunch was served by Mrs. Olaf Wik and Mrs. Eleanore Kassenborg.

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Concordia Lutheran Church*  
Handicap Accessible

Because of COVID-19, this issue of Concordia News is only being distributed digitally. Regular mail delivery will resume after this crisis has passed.



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**Concordia News**

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**To submit articles, recipes, announcements,  
etc.**

**Email:** news@concordianews.org

**Mail:** Alene Sladky  
6938 State Highway 200 NW  
Laporte, Minnesota 56461

Submission deadline is the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month

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