



Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

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Issue 3

A Lydia in the 20th Century – in Lake Havasu City, Arizona

By Paul Anderson

THE “beloved physician” Luke writes in his second book, *The Acts of the Apostles*, about a certain important businesswoman named Lydia. She was an immigrant doing business in a Roman colony in Macedonia called Philippi. It was there that she heard the Apostle Paul preach, and where she was baptized. In gratitude she insisted that Paul and his followers use her house. It became a regular meeting place for Christians there. (cf. Acts 16.)

Now let me introduce to you our friend, Susie. From the time she was born, I think, she had pains in her hip. Otherwise she seemed to be quite healthy. Her indomitable good cheer — that is, while she was awake — brought her many friends, and a loving husband. It was while she was asleep that she tore the heart of her husband with her cries of pain. This was more than he could bear. They must try something more to relieve her pain. Perhaps a change of climate would help. He left his job at A. O. Smith in Milwaukee and found work at a chainsaw factory in Lake Havasu City, Arizona. But perhaps she might find relief that is only temporary. They would just rent a house for a year and see if it would really help. The move to Arizona brought wonderful relief. Her arthritis was so much improved that they began building their own home — and moved into it in the next year.

The move to the rented house took place in 1978. But what about church? There was no confessional Lutheran Church anywhere near. Could they receive tape-recorded services from their home congregation in the farming community south of West Bend, Wisconsin? Trinity Lutheran Church would gladly send tapes together with hymnals and bulletins for every service. But maybe others would like to join them. Susie put invitations in the form of an advertisement in the *White Sheet* and *Havasus Herald* newspaper while they were living in the rented house on Beefeater Drive. A few came to see. They continued the advertisement with their new address on Sheenwater Drive

Susie had completed their son Tom's confirmation instruction which I had started for him before they left Wisconsin. In August 1979 we visited them on Sheenwater Drive and I examined Tom for confirmation and on the following Sunday I conducted the divine service and confirmed him in their home attended by 35 local people. Together we rejoiced that the Holy Spirit had thus begun gathering a flock in this Arizona desert.

Other pastors of our ELS also conducted services as they enjoyed vacations where “snowbirds” love to gather. Also the WELS pastor from Kingman visited once a month to serve them Holy Communion. After my visit, the retired pastor George Gullixson was called upon to help organize the con-

gregation so they could call a permanent pastor. Meanwhile the group moved to the Chamber of Commerce building and had the task of cleaning up the residue from the Saturday night parties before services on Sunday mornings. Next the new congregation was able to buy and remodel a building that had been a funeral home. It was time now to call a full-time pastor.



Our Saviour Lutheran Church was organized in the fall of 1979 under the guidance of Pastor Gullixson. Pastor Gullixson served for about one year, 1979-1980 Then Pastor W. Kessel, Ph. D., served from 1980 to 1984. Other pastors followed. God continues to bless this new congregation and its Chris-

tian Day School.

It happened in the 20th century and, by the grace of God, it can happen again in future generations that the Holy Spirit will multiply the Church of God through the modern Lydias who will invite others to come and hear the Gospel of salvation.

Where are Susie and her family now? They have had to follow the road of available employment as necessary in the world today. Now in retirement, they still live in the desert southwest, but in California. Susie writes: “*Jack has Rheumatoid Arthritis and a Pacemaker/defibrillator for his heart. I'm on crutches again — my arthritis is just worse with age. We are all wearing out — on our way to our Heavenly Home.*” Their children are all mature, productive members of society, serving God and our country in various parts of the world. The blessing of God has followed them and will continue according to His promise. May God grant us many more Lydias also in this 21st century!

Paul Anderson is a retired ELS pastor, living in Eau Claire, WI. He served as missionary to Nigeria and as pastor in several places in the US.

A Modern Priscilla — In Yelm, Washington

By Paul Anderson

SOME of what I write here is the result of putting together a few facts that I know and simply guessing how they fit together. I am sure of only some of these things. They have been stored in my memory for so many years without any way of verifying them that I must supply many grains of salt for you to take with them. But let me relate them before they are altogether lost forever.

We begin in southern California in a suburb of San Diego called Chula Vista. A young lady of Dutch ancestry whose first name is Shirley, last name unknown, is hosting Avon parties. She is very effective as a

salesperson. She also finds time to entertain sailors, one in particular: Darrell Mundschenk. Her interest in Darrell led to instruction in Lutheran doctrine and to the conviction that, as she said, to the certainty that in the Holy Bible: “*God says what He means and means what He said.*” She was baptized and confirmed and married (to Darrell) in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The Mundschenks were stationed in Guam where they lived for some time until he was discharged from the navy. When they returned to California they found their church had changed. It was no longer the

“safe haven” from the worldly philosophies they had known before. Their pastor who had taught them so faithfully was rejected and was leaving. It was time for the Mundschenks to leave, too. They moved to Yelm, Washington.

About 25 miles from the Mundschenks’ home in Yelm there was a mission of the ELS in an area called Lakewood. When this mission would not grow and was on the verge of closing, it was moved to a better location and whom did they find serving there as pastor? It was their old pastor who had served in Imperial Beach, California. Now they were happy.

Shirley resumed her old position as an Avon lady in a new location, Yelm. As she made her rounds she happened on a home where Jehovah's Witnesses were having a Bible study. They invited her in. Like the Priscilla of Acts 18 who heard Apollos preaching and found he needed additional instruction, without hesitation she made corrections in their study and proved from the Bible that Jesus is true God, the only Savior. She was invited to return for more sessions and soon turned the leadership over to Pastor W. McMurdie who prepared the group of 15 for baptism and membership in the Lakewood church. (You may remember that Apollos knew only the Baptism of John so Priscilla and her husband invited him to their home to continue instructing him.)

By this time Lakewood had a Christian Day School with grades K through 9 (High School Freshmen). Children from Yelm carpooled to take advantage of this school.

They all became members of Lakewood Church. With so many adults and children commuting to Lakewood, the thought turned to starting a mission in Yelm. The first church service was in 1972 in a scout cabin rented for the occasion. It was organized as a daughter congregation of the Lakewood church and called the Yelm Evangelical Lutheran Mission.

From the work of this modern “Priscilla”, Shirley Mundschenk, with the blessing of God, came Our Redeemer Lutheran Church of Yelm, Washington. She is now with her dear Savior in the Church in Heaven. Blessed be her memory!

To God alone all glory

Cf. Acts 18:24-27 —

²⁴ *Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.*

²⁵ *This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.*

²⁶ *So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*

²⁷ *And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace.*

<p><i>Paul Anderson is a retired ELS pastor, living in Eau Claire, WI. He served as missionary to Nigeria and as pastor in several places in the US.</i></p>
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Kasota Valley Home

By Rebecca DeGarmeaux

As the baby-boomers reach retirement age, more and more retirement communities are springing up across the country. But how many of us remember that the ELS once had its own home for the aged? The Kasota Valley Home for the Aged was run by the Norwegian Synod from 1951 until 1973.

The idea of a special home for the retired men and women of the Synod started long before this time. Already in 1922 money was donated to start such a home. But the Depression and World War II soon put any plans on hold. In 1944 a committee was formed to look more formally into this type of home.

The first building was purchased in Northwood, Iowa. But it was found to be inadequate and soon sold. Next, several properties were purchased in Mankato including the 4 acres on Marsh Street where Mt. Olive Lutheran Church now stands. However, it was determined that upgrades to these properties were either too costly or not feasible. In 1948 an architect was hired to design a new home on the 4 acres.

Finally in the spring of 1951 the Synod's Board of Charity and Support was able to purchase the Kasota Valley Home. This property had previously been a privately-operated rest home and filled the desired needs. *Grace for Grace* (p. 167) describes it: "It is a comfortable 20-room house, completely furnished, in a quiet country community and makes an ideal home for our purposes."

The home also sat on spacious grounds. The long-awaited goal of a home for the aged of the Synod was now in sight and plans to open soon fell into place.

On September 30, 1951, the dedication service was held. The Rev. M. E. Tweit, the Synod's Vice-President, preached the dedi-

catory sermon with the Rev. G. C. J. Quill, pastor at Our Savior's, Albert Lea, serving as liturgist. Synod President C. M. Gullerud dedicated the facility.



The first superintendent, or manager, was Mr. Lauritz Houg, with his wife serving as matron. The Rev. J. B. Unseth served as the Home's first chaplain. He would come and conduct church services every Sunday, and lead a devotion every Wednesday. The superintendent led short daily devotions and the table prayers, acting, in a sense, as the "house father."

The Home was run by a Board of Directors: Rev. Grant C. J. Quill, Albert Lea, MN; Rev. F. R. Weyland, Thornton, IA; Mr. G. E. Solli, Mankato, MN; Mr. O. L. Pederson, Minneapolis, MN; and Mr. Arthur Wold, Princeton, MN. This board answered to the Synod's Board of Charity and Support.

Things started out slowly. In the November 12, 1951 issue of the *Lutheran Sentinel*, the Rev. F. R. Weyland, chairman of the Board of Directors, put out an appeal. Although there was room for 18 residents, there were only four. Also, money and food were running low. Pastor Weyland asked the members of the Synod to help by submitting applications for residence and also cash and food donations.

Things did improve — by 1953 there were 13 residents — but fund raising didn't stop. One year later Pastor Weyland,

through the *Sentinel*, asked that Thanksgiving week be set aside for donations to the Kasota Valley Home. This became a yearly appeal for the next few years. Almost from the beginning, the Young People's Society of the Synod sent out Christmas seals which supported the Home and the "Soldiers of the Cross" (retired church workers).

In 1961 the Kasota Valley Home celebrated its 10th anniversary. The Hous retired as managers and Mr. & Mrs. W. Judson Soule of Princeton, MN, stepped in as the new manager and matron. In April of 1962 Rev. Hugo Handberg reported to the Synod, via *Lutheran Sentinel*, how things were faring at the home. There were 10 current residents. The Rev. Milton Otto of the Seminary was now serving as chaplain of the home. The residents' rooms and the manager's office had been repainted. Additional staff had been hired: full-time kitchen help and laundress and a night attendant. Because of state codes, a new sprinkler system had been installed at the cost of \$10,000. The town of Kasota helped pay for the system with the agreement that the water pressure system needed for the sprinklers could also be used by the Kasota fire department for its fire fighting needs. Mr. Soule thanked the members of the Synod for all of their support. Also at this time the use of Christmas seals was discontinued and direct appeals were made for funds

Starting in December of 1963 and almost annually for the next five years, Mr. Soule had a list printed in the *Sentinel* of all the gifts that had been given to the home and their donors. These gifts included foodstuffs (of which he listed the approximate cash value), cash, and occasionally other larger extras. These included board games, a television and stand and an ironer. It was not just Synod members who gave to the home. Several times the Kasota American Legion Auxiliary, Cub Scouts, and Presbyterian church were listed as donors, attesting to the

good will the home had in the community.

In June of 1969 the Soules left the Home and Miss Edna Busekist served as interim manager until the end of August when Mr. and Mrs. John Jordahl of Albert Lea took over the position. Mr. Jordahl continued the tradition of listing gifts in the *Sentinel*.

Life at the Home was meant to be a relaxing one for the residents. Aside from making their beds, there did not seem to be any chores for them. The staff was in charge of cooking and laundry (except for underwear and stockings). The house sat on a large property and residents were encouraged to walk outside on nice days. The manager would drive residents to appointments. Visitors were encouraged and Ladies groups and Youth groups from the area Synod churches would often come to visit and entertain the residents. Also a TV and board games were available for the residents' enjoyment.

One might find interesting the list of policies which were written up for the Home. Many of these were for the general welfare and safety of the residents. Some of these included:

A list of rates and application procedures.

No intoxicating drinks, and smoking only on the porch.

A night attendant will be on duty to check on the residents.

But some we might find a bit amusing. Among these:

No profanity or name-calling.

No running.

No aprons or overalls may be worn in the house (one wonders how lifetime farmers managed this one).

Men must be clean-shaven.

No talking to the cook for one hour before meal times.

No shoes in the bed and you must sleep between the sheets.

Times were changing. For several years the Home had run near or at capacity, with a waiting list. But starting in the early 1970s, it became harder to keep up with state codes.

Fewer Synod members were making use of the Home because of facilities closer to home. The Le Sueur County Social Services Department was asked to help supply residents. The Jordahls retired and Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Kontola, Mr. Paul Moldstad, and Mrs. Edna Wandersee were named as managers successively.

Finally the decision was made to close the home. The date for closer was set as September 1, 1973, and Le Sueur County

helped find new homes for the residents. But when the day arrived, the residents refused to move. The Home was kept open for two months but finally the residents moved out at the end of October and the house and its furnishings were auctioned off on November 6, 1973.

Rebecca DeGarmeaux is co-editor of Oak Leaves. She is a member of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Mankato, MN.

Researcher Requests Assistance:

History of Lutheran Attitudes about Bioethics

Do you know of any publications, conference papers, convention proceedings, sermons, personal anecdotes, or other sources that could contribute toward a history of Lutheran attitudes concerning bioethics? Confidentiality will be provided upon request.

* Abortion * Contraception * In Vitro Fertilization
* Euthanasia * Stem Cells * Cloning * Etc. *

Contact: Ryan C. MacPherson, Ph.D.
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Oak Leaves needs your help!

Send us *your* ideas, articles, and suggestions for **Oak Leaves**. We welcome information and articles on church anniversaries, and articles of Synodical and local significance.

And remember to visit the Historical Society's website:

www.evangelicallutheransynod.org/history

or

www.els.name/history

Kasota Valley Home



Residents relaxing on the porch



Professor Milton Otto
conducting services



Sprinkler System Completed at Kasota Valley Home

by Hugo Handberg

Reprinted from the *Lutheran Sentinel*, April 26, 1962

The managers of our Kasota Valley Home, Mr. and Mrs. Judd Soule, extend their thanks to those congregations, societies and individuals who so thoughtfully remembered the home with gifts during recent months, particularly during the Christmas weeks. Gifts of money and food were received by the home, as well as individual presents for sometimes-forgotten residents. Personal gifts at Christmas are a source of special cheer for older folks, not least for the residents of Kasota Valley. Mr. Soule has tried to extend personal thanks to all donors, and hereby expresses his appreciation to all friends of the home for their prayers and gifts.

Currently there are ten residents at the home. Mr. Soule and his staff have been painting residents' rooms and the manager's office. Acoustic tile ceilings have been installed in some rooms.

In addition to the manager and his wife, a full-time kitchen helper and laundress and a night attendant make up the staff. Prof. Milton Otto of our seminary in Mankato conducts weekly devotional services at the home. Daily devotions are led by the "house father," Mr. Soule, at the breakfast table. Thus the Gospel of Christ Jesus is fed regularly to our Kasota Valley old folks.

In compliance with recent state regulations governing all homes for the aged, Kasota Valley Home has completed the installation of an \$11,000 sprinkler system. The system provides fire protection in every room of the home. This installation was authorized by the June 1960 synod conven-

tion. Since the village of Kasota has no municipal water system, a 6000-gal. tank was installed at the home to provide adequate water for the sprinklers. An addition to the basement was built to house the tank and pumps. As a result, Kasota Valley Home now offers the finest in state-approved fire protection. Our synod's Lutheran Youth Association, at its Luverne, Minn., convention last September, resolved to provide several pieces of lawn furniture (benches, perhaps a swing) for the spacious grounds surrounding the home. The residents are making plans to enjoy these improvements during the summer months.

If you would like to consider residency at Kasota Valley Home, simply write for information. Address: Kasota Valley Home, Kasota, Minnesota. Our presentable home, with its cheerful Christian atmosphere, is open for inspection at all times. Societies, families or individuals are invited to visit the home. No prior arrangements are necessary for such visits.



Mr. and Mrs. Judd Soule

A Skunk in the Schoolyard

By “Beautiful Black Lady”

I AM a beautiful black and white skunk. My name is Black Lady. I live under Lime Creek Lutheran Church in a warm cellar near the coal furnace. My children live with me.

The winter of 1944-1945 was cold, even for a furry skunk. We stayed warm in the cellar, but we were happy when the snow started to melt.

I crawled outside to feel the warm sunshine. The human children were in the school. I was alone. “I’ll walk to the other school. It is not far,” I thought.

The ditch by the other school was still full of snow. The snow covered some dry, brown grass. I found a small hole in the snow. I walked into the hole and fell asleep on the soft grass.

While I was sleeping, the human children came outside for afternoon recess. The little girls ran down the road to the other school to play in the ditch. A little girl found the same hole I had found. Amanda said, “I’ll use this hole for my house. The hole is small but I can crawl into it.”

I stayed very quiet in the dry grass. She did not see me. I did not want to make the little girl afraid.

Teacher Luther Vangen rang the school bell when recess was finished. The human children walked slowly to the school. They did not want to go into the school. They wanted to play outside. The boys made snowballs. They threw the snowballs at the telephone poles.

I decided to walk back to my hole-home under the church. I came out of my snow house in the ditch. I followed the human children to the school. I was very quiet so they would not hear me. Children do not like skunks, even beautiful skunks.

Amanda had turned around to see her house in the snow. She saw me come out of

the hole. She shouted, “A black and white cat was in my snow house. It’s following us!”

Sven looked back to see the cat. He saw me. Sven shouted, “That’s not a cat! That’s a skunk!”

Sven and the two big boys, Lawrence and Philip, threw snowballs at me. I was not afraid. The snow did not hurt my thick fur. Then they threw small stones at me. I did not stop. I followed the children to the schoolyard even when the boys threw big stones and pieces of coal at me.

I walked right past the children. The big boys found a piece of wood. They threw it on top of me. They tried to jump on me. Now I was VERY angry. I stared at those three boys, turned around, lifted my tail, and sprayed them with skunk spray.

The boys stood quietly on the schoolyard. They looked at me. They looked at their coats and overshoes. They laughed and laughed. They were covered with skunk spray. They smelled bad.

I limped slowly to the churchyard. The big stones and the piece of wood had hurt my leg. The school children watched me limp to the church.

I did not want them to throw more snow or stones at me, so I stopped and looked at them a long time. Then I sprayed the white church wall with my yellow skunk spray. “Don’t come near me!” I shouted in my skunk voice. But I do not think they heard me.

My children were waiting for me under the church. Finally I crawled into the hole in the church foundation where I was safe. My leg hurt for many days. I knew the boys would smell bad for many days, too.

Amanda Madson wrote several childhood stories while teaching English to children in Korea in 2003. She and her husband, Pastor Norman Madson, live in North Mankato, MN.

From the Archives:

Reflections ...

The East Koshkonong Monument

By Mrs. Julia Reque

Reprinted from the
Lutheran Sentinel, Jan. 11, 1962

*“Grateful children and grandchildren
erected this monument on Oct. 10, 1894”*

*—A mighty Fortress is our God,
A trusty Shield and weapon.—*

THE East Koshkonong monument stands on the Sandfor Anderson farm, a great grandson of the first owner of the farm. Amund Anderson who bought the land from the government in 1840, and was one of the first settlers at East Koshkonong. The monument is 7½ feet high. The base is 6 feet in diameter, the next section is 5 feet and the top part is 4 feet.

It has an inscription on two sides: one in Norwegian and the other in English. On one side it reads as follows:

“Here the first Norwegian minister in America preached on Sept. 1st, 1844 and on Oct. 10, 1844, organized the East Koshkonong church, which nine years later, with 27 other churches, formed the Norwegian Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.”

On the other two sides it has this inscription:

“In memory of the pioneers of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.”

I remember well the day of dedication. It was a dark, dreary day. We were gathered in a large tent which was well packed. Near the close of the afternoon session a hard wind blew up almost of tornado velocity. It tore loose several pegs and as the ropes slack-

ened, the large center pole began to sag. Rev. Wiese saw it and held up his hands. We all saw it and immediately men rushed to the pole, and with outstretched hands and shoulders steadied the pole so it came slowly down. I could feel it rather than see it, as it came slowly down between mother and myself and came to a stop over my left shoulder. It was then anchored or braced.

When father heard the wind, he became alarmed about the horses. He was driving a pair of rather spirited horses, and they, as many others, were tied to a rail fence. He feared they would break away, and we saw him at the opening of the tent beckoning mother and I to come. We had 18 miles to go to get home.

Missing Tape Recorder Found!

Reprinted from the
Lutheran Sentinel, Jan. 26, 1967

We reported earlier that Rev. McMurdie of Lakewood, Washington, had lost his tape-recorder through a theft which occurred at the church in Lakewood on Halloween night. The tape-recorder was found! Parents who had read the newspaper report of the stolen item and saw their boy with a tape-recorder, called Pastor McMurdie who went to their house and identified it. How? The 21 year old young man had forgotten that a tape records on two sides. Consequently, Rev. McMurdie played the reverse side of one of the tapes and heard one of his sermons there. It was not hard, then, to prove ownership.

The two items on this page were submitted by Ryan MacPherson, who teaches history at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, MN, and also serves on the ELS Historical Society Board.

Oak Leaves
ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

Renew your membership!

ELS Historical Society

Name: _____

Address: _____

Send completed form and check (see box below right
for type of membership and correct amount) to:

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6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001

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Oak Leaves welcomes articles of both Synodical and local significance
for publication. Articles maybe edited for style, clarity, or length to al-
low for publication. Submitted manuscripts will be deposited in the
archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

MEMBERSHIP

All membership
renewals are due **June 1**

Voting Membership:

\$10/year: individual
\$15/year: husband & wife

Associate Membership:

\$15/year: individual
\$25/year: institutional
\$5/year: student

Lifetime Membership:

\$200