

journey



Calling a thing what it is

The power of positive thinking is over- and underestimated. No doubt, our attitude can have a tremendous impact on our circumstances, positively or negatively. You need only consider the smile of someone dear to you, and the effect it has on your own mood, to begin to see what this can look like. Yet positive thinking, whatever power it might have, is not the whole story.

When someone has completely rose-colored glasses, for instance, we get a little queasy. Sooner or later, we know, reality will set in, or something will cause the glasses to crack (think Pollyanna). Moreover, such happy-go-lucky people can hurt others more than they might realize. It can feel as if anything negative is off-limits to mention around such a person, that problems are simply off the table. Around this kind of person, we can begin to feel trapped, especially if there actually is a serious problem building under the surface.

On the other hand, many of us know people who swing completely the other way, for whom a good day is simply out of reach, perhaps for a whole variety of factors. Most of us, I would venture to guess, fall somewhere between these two extremes, regularly trying to balance our gratitude for life's blessings with some honest attention to life's problems. On our best days, we practice something like the serenity prayer: accepting what we can't control, courageously addressing what we can, and praying for the wisdom to know the difference (and act accordingly).

In the 1500s, as Martin Luther began to step back and identify the most serious problems facing the church, what he called a "theology of glory" quickly jumped to the top of his list. Simply described, this is a church obsessed with appearing holy, powerful, or shiny. By contrast, a community that practices what Luther came to call a theology of the cross "calls a thing what it is." For Luther, this meant attending honestly to the suffering and sin in people's lives. Don't sugarcoat it, we might say.

When I first learned about this area of Luther's thought, it was like coming up for air, like a needed antidote to the idea that if I just believed harder, life would be better. By contrast, I began to emphasize that the Christian life is not about pretending life is or should be good, but starts with being honest about all the ways life is not good, my own life and the lives of others in my community. In other words, the Christian life starts with being honest about our need for God.

This is mostly right, but the more time I spend around people of faith, the more I've begun to realize something crucial: calling a thing what it is – it's not just about calling a bad thing "bad," but calling a good thing "good." It might seem like this just gets us back to where we started: between two extremes, somewhere near the serenity prayer. While in a way that's true, here's where faith in Jesus is everything. We don't just go through life balancing the scales between blessings and hardships. Being alive, being loved, having a fresh meal, or a warm shower: these are astounding gifts. This isn't unbridled optimism. This is calling a thing what it is. Yes, there's a deep need and permission in our lives of faith to be honest and vulnerable about our struggles. Yet, there's an even deeper need and permission for us to be honest about the workings of God's grace and mercy in our lives, whatever our struggles might be (Romans 5:15). Because, in a world with Jesus at the center, life is grace all the way down.



Hayden Kvamme

HAYDEN KVAMME
pastor in residency

journey

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MISSION

St. Paul Lutheran Church is a faith community, shaped around five core values: radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith formation, adventurous mission and service, extravagant generosity.

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ON THE COVER:
Elaine Olson

A MAP IS ONLY ONE STORY

Twenty writers on immigration, family, and the meaning of home

From rediscovering an ancestral village in China to experiencing the realities of American life as a Nigerian, the search for belonging crosses borders and generations. Selected from the archives of *Catapult* magazine, the essays in *A Map Is Only One Story* highlight the human side of immigration, as 20 writers share provocative personal stories of existing between languages and cultures.

Victoria Blanco relates how those with family in both El Paso and Ciudad Juárez experience life on the border. Nina Li Coomes recalls the heroines of Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki and what they taught her about her bicultural identity. Nur Nasreen Ibrahim details her grandfather's crossing of the India-Pakistan border sixty years after Partition. Krystal A. Sital writes of how undocumented status in the United States can impact love and relationships. Porochista Khakpour describes the challenges in writing (and rewriting) Iranian America.

Migration is an experience that crosses borders and generations, and the writers in *A Map Is Only One Story* share an array of perspectives as immigrants, children of immigrants and refugees, people directly affected by immigration policy and how the country treats those who come here.

While their stories are different, a truth they share is that immigration is not, ultimately, the story of laws or borders, but of people – of individuals, families, and communities. As one of the contributors, Jamila Osman, winner of the 2019 Brunel International African Poetry Prize, writes in her essay: "A map is only one story. It is not the most important story. The most important story is the one people tell about themselves."

Through the power of personal narratives, as told by both emerging and established writers, *A Map Is Only One Story* offers a new definition of home in the twenty-first century.

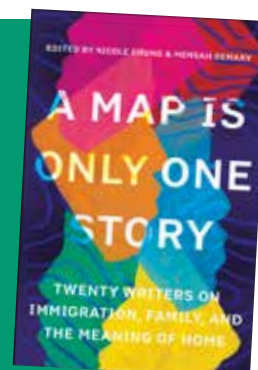
Since its launch five years ago, *Catapult* magazine has published a wide array of personal narratives from writers all over the world, in hopes of realizing a central tenet of the magazine's mission and *Catapult's* overall company vision: through writing that seeks to bridge rather than widen the rifts between people, literature can provide a pathway to greater empathy and understanding.

"While this is the first anthology of writing from *Catapult* magazine, it will not be our last," editors Nicole Brown and Mensah Demary wrote in the book's introduction. "Our hope is that this on-going series will introduce many readers to exciting and essential voices – urgent, necessary writing that will help us all better understand ourselves, our communities, and the world we live in."

A Map Is Only One Story: Twenty Writers on Immigration, Family, and the Meaning of Home is the 2021 All St. Paul Reads book. All St. Paul Reads is encouragement for all to read and talk about a single book title in the same year. In 2021, this virtual event will take place on Thursday, February 11, 7-8 p.m., with speakers and an encouragement to patronize specific Quad City restaurants for takeout dinner that evening.

A Map Is Only One Story is available for purchase for \$12 in the St. Paul Book Corner. Pick up is available by emailing bookcorner@stpaulqc.org, or during Book Corner business hours, posted on the St. Paul website.

Contact: Karen Holden, Book Corner manager, 563-326-3547 ext. 242, bookcorner@stpaulqc.org.



January HAPPENINGS

The Bible for Worship

Fridays, beginning Jan. 15, 11 a.m., Chapel

In addition to the Friday in-person session, you can now enjoy a brief video study of the Scripture lesson on which each week's sermon is based. Teaching pastor Peter A. Pettit offers a bit of background and insight each week, not a fresh sermon but perhaps a helpful dive into the text that shapes the sermon. Look for the link each week in enews, and find the whole series on the St. Paul Quad Cities YouTube channel under the "Bible for Worship" playlist.



Travel with St. Paul to Germany in 2022

Vaccine hopes make a German Willkommen possible once again! The Oberammergau Passion Play has been rescheduled for 2022 and St. Paul has reservations for the June 30 performance.

This study travel will take place June 20–July 2, 2022 and there is a place in it available for you! The travel industry is not yet clear about what will happen as things open up after pandemic season, so the 2020 price of \$5,699 (per person, double occupancy) cannot yet be guaranteed. However, it provides a good guide to estimate what the actual cost may be.

Sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups to get on the list and to be sure to learn more as plans develop. Contact: Peter Pettit, ppettit@stpaulqc.org.

Outdoor worship for kids and families

Third Saturdays of the month, 4 p.m.

Bundle up and gather with other families, well spaced and regardless of weather, on our North Lawn for worship! We'll praise God in playful and creative ways, tell Bible stories, dance (in place!) and sing (quietly)! While everyone is welcome, these services are planned especially for elementary-aged and younger children and families. Sign up online at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org.

One Night 2136 Book Discussion

Thursday, Jan. 28, 7 p.m., Zoom

2136 is St. Paul's young adult group. In January, they will be holding a one-night book discussion on *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor. As the nights remain long and the pandemic continues to make us feel as if we're in uncharted territory, come consider what it would mean for us to be more comfortable walking in the dark, literally and spiritually speaking. While Christianity is often cast as bright and sunny, hidden in the depths of Christian faith is the reality that much of our lives are spent walking in the dark — and that just may be a place God is most present and relishes being found. Copies of the book are available at the St. Paul Book Corner for purchase, or the St. Paul Library to borrow. If you're not interested in reading the whole book, specific chapters to focus on will be sent out prior to the discussion. Contact: Hayden Kvamme, hayden@stpaulqc.org.



NAMI Family & Friends seminar

Tuesday, Jan 19, 7-8:30 p.m., Zoom

This free seminar, sponsored by National Alliance on Mental Illness through St. Paul, is led by trained people with lived experience of supporting a family member with a mental health condition. They will cover these topics:

- Understanding diagnoses, treatment and recovery
- Effective communication strategies
- The importance of self-care
- Crisis preparation strategies

Registration is required, at bit.ly/39SYR8S.
Questions? Beth Laureijs, beth@stpaulqc.org.



One-year-old milestone

Sunday, Jan. 24, 9:15 a.m., Zoom

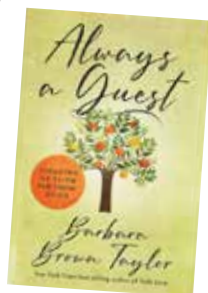
Connect and share in the joy and exhaustion of life with a newborn. Learn what it means to form a child's faith. A gathering for parents of children born the previous year is held in January. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Sara Olson-Smith, sara@stpaulqc.org

Occasional Tuesdays Book Group

Tuesdays, January 12, 19, 26, 7:30 a.m., Zoom

St. Paul's Occasional Tuesday Book Group will meet in January to discuss *Always A Guest: Speaking of Faith Far From Home*.

From beloved writer and renowned preacher Barbara Brown Taylor, this is a new collection of stories and sermons of faith, grace, and hope. Taylor, author of the best-selling books *Holy Envy* and *An Altar in the World*, among others, finds that when you are the invited guest speaking of faith to people you don't know, one must seek common ground: exploring the central human experience. Full of Taylor's astute observations on the spirit and the state of the world along with her gentle wit, this collection will inspire Taylor's fans and preachers alike as she explores faith in all its beauty and complexity.



The book is available for purchase in the Book Corner. To pick up a copy, message bookcorner@stpaulqc.org. To sign up, visit stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Katy Warren, katy@stpaulqc.org.

Heart. Soul. Mind.

Resumes the week of Jan. 17, Wednesdays, 12 noon –1 p.m., Zoom; Thursdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m., Chapel; Saturdays, 11 a.m.–12 noon, Chapel

"The Bible's Key Stories" will be the focus of weekly Bible study in Heart. Soul. Mind. for the winter-spring season of 2021. Creation, Israel's Ancestors, Slavery and Exodus, Israel's kingdoms, Exile, Jesus, the Early Church – what's at the heart of each story and how did different biblical writers understand it? Video background will prepare you for each week's discussion, available on Zoom on Wednesdays and in safe small-group options on Thursday and Saturday. Contact Pastor Peter A. Pettit to be added to the list for the video link and handout; check out past videos on the St. Paul Quad Cities YouTube channel under the "Heart. Soul. Mind." playlists. Contact: Peter Pettit, ppetit@stpaulqc.org.

CC Conversations

Thursday, Feb. 4, 6-6:45 p.m., Library Commons

Enjoy conversation with other St. Paul people on topics involving faith, politics, and culture, using articles and news from the *Christian Century* magazine as a springboard for conversation. Gather in-person for only 45 minutes (intentionally brief). Bring a face covering, passion, perspective, and openness to others. Articles for discussion will be posted on the church calendar 10 days before each session — stpaulqc.org/calendar. Stop at the church to read an onsite copy secured in the library or read via subscription (special St. Paul rate cards available at the Info Center). Contact: Peter Marty, peter@stpaulqc.org.

On-going opportunities

St. Paul has a variety of ways to connect with others, even through a pandemic.

Podcast Discussion Group | Second Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Zoom

Discuss a few episodes from different podcasts centered around a certain theme, listened to ahead of time. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups. Contact: Hayden Kvamme, hayden@stpaulqc.org.

Theology Pub | Second and fourth Thursdays of the month, 7 p.m., Zoom

Belly up to your computer with your favorite beverage and join in a lively discussion of today's headlines or whatever else lands on the "bar" as a topic. Contact: Peter Pettit, ppetit@stpaulqc.org.

Second Saturday Men | Second Saturdays, 9 a.m., online via Zoom

Men of St. Paul gather for service, fellowship, and discussion. Contact: Todd Byerly, todd@stpaulqc.org.

Motherless Daughters | Second Saturdays, 10 a.m.

Open for any woman who has experienced mother-loss at any time and needs a safe place for support. Contact: Nicole Rathje, rathjefamily@gmail.com.

Virtual Guys Coffee | Two Mondays a month, 10 a.m., Zoom

Grab a cup of coffee and settle in with your computer to connect with fellow St. Paul men. Contact: Hayden Kvamme, hayden@stpaulqc.org.

2136 | Twice monthly, 7-8:30 p.m.

2136 is a ministry for adults in their 20s and 30s to be social, to study, and to serve. Contact: Hayden Kvamme, hayden@stpaulqc.org.

Coffee Conversations | Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m., Chapel

Bring your coffee and a chair for discussion on a variety of topics. Sign up at stpaulqc.org/signups.

PAINTING TO *pray & play*

The pandemic prompted Elaine Olson to pick up her paintbrushes once again



Elaine Olson first started painting when she was pregnant with her son, more than four decades ago. As time passed, her paintbrushes fell to the side.

But when coronavirus quarantine began in March, Elaine searched for ways to hone her creativity and newfound time at home. She picked up her paintbrushes for the first time in 42 years and attempted to rekindle an old passion.

Beauty jumped from the page — brightly colored flowers; trees with hues of greens, yellows, oranges, and reds; blue birds; and for fun, a woman on a shopping adventure.

Elaine and her husband, Terry Haru, moved to the area almost five years ago. Membership at St. Paul was a natural move for this couple, as Elaine's daughter, Sara, serves as a pastor. Terry now works as a host at St. Paul and is a warm and welcoming presence in the building.

Elaine worked as a psychotherapist and a pastoral counselor. She was ordained as a pastor in the ELCA in 2008. Prior to retirement, she worked as a pastor of campus ministry at the University of Illinois.

Some of her many hobbies include writing, traveling, being a grandmother, and now, painting. Elaine emphasizes that she is a newbie at painting, but that does not affect her enjoyment of the activity or its plentiful benefits.

Last spring, Elaine read an article about essential components to a good day, as the pandemic caused ev-

eryone's days to be restructured. When she read about the importance of the creativity, she began to evaluate ways to strengthen this portion of her daily life.

She pulled out her old paints from their hiding place. With an addition of some new paints from her husband and a few lessons gifted by her daughter, Elaine was on her way to rediscovering her passion for painting.

Many benefits have resulted in Elaine's painting this year. She has been able to focus more intently by slowing down.

"Painting gives me permission not to be perfect," she said.

Elaine has enjoyed the freedom to try new things that painting has offered her, and, most importantly, to keep trying for improved results.

As a therapist and spiritual director, Elaine is experienced in paying close attention and noticing things with her ears. Painting allows her to do the same thing with her eyes, slowing down enough to see something that may not be assumed. Observing and listening skills are more robust with one another, she said.

"You could never imagine how many shapes and colors go into a single flower until you slow down and really look at it."

Painting has also enhanced her grandma skills. Elaine has noticed that she is pulled into mindfulness more intently. She has been enjoying doing things with her grandchildren instead of for them. The family has enjoyed outside time together, but Elaine looks forward to young ones running around inside her home again someday.

As a writer, a challenge is to show readers things,





rather than just tell them. Painting helps Elaine focus on the visual and physical aspects of life. She has noticed an improvement in her ability to vividly describe things using observation skills practiced in her painting.

Elaine recently finished and is publishing her memoir (see sidebar). The book is specific to her ten years as a widow and how that time shaped her life.

For the warmer months, Elaine painted on her deck. With the colder weather, she has started painting inside. Her desk is positioned near a window overlooking the tree in her yard. Her favorite way to paint is listening to podcast worship on Sunday mornings. The activity allows her to focus more clearly on worship and the message being conveyed.

“I use my painting to pray and play,” she said.

While Elaine cannot choose a favorite painting, she does give preference to her most recent ones because they show her improvement. Her hope is to one day learn to paint faces.

Elaine will continue to paint after this pandemic, she said. The act of painting will allow her to leave the intensity of life behind for a few moments while her brushes are in hand.

““You could never imagine how many shapes and colors go into a single flower until you slow down and really look at it.”“

My Walk with Grief

Elaine Olson's book, *My Walk with Grief*, is a spiritual memoir about her ten-year search for identity and love after living in the shadows as a pastor's wife for 30 years, then eventually marrying an agnostic who embodies divine grace. When her first husband died, part of Elaine died, too. Unimpeded as a widow, her journey pulled her into soul struggles, grief, world travel, disastrous dating, dog drama, and spiritual surprises. Elaine's memoir inspires readers to seek new identities after a significant loss or transition, encouraging them to grieve deeply, live fully, and re-discover love and the largeness of spirit's embrace.



The cover of the book is one of Elaine's paintings. The memoir will be available this coming spring. Visit legacybookpress.com for more information.

Quilts of quarantine

The pandemic allowed Belinda Holbrook to focus on and build upon her quilting

Among other things, Belinda knits, makes wooden ornaments, reads, and is a devoted volunteer. Pre-pandemic, she volunteered at the Habitat QC ReStore and Hope at the Brick House, sang in the church choir, and participated in four knitting groups. Needless to say, she filled her days with different places and faces.

“I get on kicks and do a lot of one thing for a while; right now, it’s quilting,” she said.

Belinda made her first quilted piece in high school, a pillow she crafted from a kit given to her by her mother. She didn’t practice the skill again until the 1990s when she decided to tackle quilt tops. Since then, Belinda has been committed to the art form.

Constant learning is essential to Belinda’s craft. Over the years, by borrowing books, she has saved \$19,000 (an amazing statistic provided by the library clerk’s desk) at the Davenport Public Library. A portion of that amount has come from quilting books that Belinda has scoured the pages of to find helpful advice and patterns.

Over the past year, Belinda and her husband have been on pandemic lockdown multiple times in their living community. She credits her ability to channel her pent-up energy to quilting in these times. Belinda expresses gratitude to her husband, who enjoys doing the daily housework and cooking while she dives into her creative ventures.

With the surge of time at home, Belinda has increased her quilt production speed. She recently finished her 14th

“Switching from cutting to ironing to laying out to sewing keeps things interesting.”

quilt top of quarantine (as of press time). Her 11th was the first one she created without a pattern or guidance; it’s an original. It so happens that it is her favorite one so far.

“It looks like pinwheels. I call it my happy quilt,” she said

Belinda has made nearly all of her quilts this year from fabric scraps she had in her home. She started by piecing the quilts and sending them to a Missouri gentleman who then quilted and returned the finished product. Recently Belinda has started quilting the projects on her own.

Beginning with a straight method, she took to her sewing machine to explore yet another skill. She has gradually worked her way to the free-motion style. Belinda describes it as turning off the “pull” of a sewing machine and using your hands to guide the fabric through.

There are many different ways to use quilts; on walls, hanging fixtures, or beds. Belinda’s home does not have enough wall space to display all of her quilt projects, so she has gotten creative with her display methods. One innovative example is a fence that Belinda purchased at the Habitat ReStore and repurposed as a quilt hanger in her living room.

“I don’t really care how people use them; I just make them because it’s fun,” she said.

During a bizarre year, quilting has been a lifesaver





for Belinda. The hobby gives her something to look forward to each day. She has appreciated the quick transitions and dynamic aspects of the craft.

“Switching from cutting to ironing to laying out to sewing keeps things interesting,” she said.

Belinda uses two spaces in her home for constructing her projects. The living room floor serves as a drawing board to layout, arrange, and rearrange her fabric. Next, she moves to the spare bedroom, also known as her craft room, to assemble the projects.

Quilts have served as gifts for many people in Belinda’s life, such as a college send-off for her now daughter-in-law. Belinda’s mother, who lives in Kanawha, Iowa, was a recent giftee of a quilting project, and her grandson, who lives in Portland, will be the next proud owner of the quilt of his choosing. Sharing these unique gifts has been a way for her to connect with family no matter the distance.

With finished products, Belinda takes to Facebook to display to friends and family near and far. She delights in the feeling of accomplishment when she posts a photo of her newest work, and her Facebook friends are joyed as well.

St. Paul quilters continue to create from home

This devoted group of caring quilters, beginners and experts alike, sew, tie, cut, and piece together beautiful works of art. This crew is working on some special projects this winter, including lap quilts, facemasks, and quilts for kids, teens, and adults, all from home. Interested in being a part? Contact: Cathy Hagglund, crh4quilts@msn.com or Karin Hanson, 563-528-2064.

MADISON MARKET

The Madison Market food pantry changed in all sorts of ways in 2020. The pandemic meant a move from the Davenport school administrative office building into the gathering areas of St. Paul. Instead of people coming to shop, St. Paul volunteers packaged up food and brought it out to place in car trunks and the backs of pickup trucks. Those who came to be served changed too - expanding to families from other Davenport schools, as well as refugee families who are a part of Tapestry Farms. The number of families increased significantly. In January 2020, about 60 families came to two pantries. In December 2020, the pantry served approximately 150 families at its two pantries on Dec. 8 and 15.



Council Notes

The council met for its final meeting of 2020, gathering online via Zoom due to continued prevalence of COVID-19 in the community.

Council reviewed financial pledge commitments to date for 2021, and received a briefing on the first draft outlines of a 2021 budget. Appreciation for members' pledge commitments was shared. The treasurer spoke of hopes for the church finishing 2020 well, despite the pandemic.

The annual meeting for St. Paul, which will be held on Feb. 7, will take on a different format in 2021 due to COVID-19. A pastoral letter will be sent out prior to the meeting, with an outline of financials for 2020 and

budget information for 2021. A videotaped message from Dave Tews, council president; Jeff Bass, council treasurer; and Peter Marty, senior pastor, will be sent by email to all members on the morning of Sunday, Feb. 7, at 10 a.m. Members will then vote, using a Google Form, on whether they approve the budget for 2021.

The maternity leave policy for church staff has been changed to allow for more time for both parents. The personnel committee approved, and council ratified, the new policy for 10 weeks of paid parental leave for a primary caregiver, and six weeks for a secondary caregiver.

Mission Board Notes

The St. Paul Mission Board wrapped up its year by designating any unmarked monies left in the benevolence budget to a variety of organizations and initiatives.

- \$1,500 earmarked for water projects will go to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Lake Charles, Louisiana to help with hurricane relief.
- \$1,000 will go to Kings Harvest, \$1,000 to Cafe on Vine, and \$500 to Riverbend Food Bank for their food-related work.
- \$1,750 will be given to Humility Homes & Services to help with housing needs in the area.

Giving envelopes are ready for pickup

If you give through envelopes, your 2021 box is ready for pickup in the St. Paul office. The office is open from 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you'd like, contact Jennifer Garvey, jennifer@stpaulqc.org, 563-326-3547, to let her know you're coming and she will have them ready.



with SYMPATHY

as of Dec. 18:

- ▶ Chris Hoenig, her mother
Lynn Schloemer
- ▶ Carlette & Ron Ketelsen, son
Andrew Ketelsen
- ▶ Kelly & Tom Janoski, her father
Don Drumm
- ▶ Family of Ronnie Wells:
Marty & Martha Wells, his father
Molly & Brandon Yoder, her grandfather
Nathan & Rebecca Wells, his grandfather
Anna & Ben Wells, their grandfather
- ▶ Family of Janet Nichols:
Mike & Lisa Meloy, his sister
Laura & Maggie Meloy, their aunt
- ▶ Family of Derek Holland:
Jeanette Holland, husband
Justin, Graham & Emersyn Holland,
their father
Michelle & Jon Curtis, son-in-law
- ▶ Susan & Peter Marty, her mother
Joan Ward Chandler
- ▶ Family of Maxine Blane:
Jan & Jim Bush, her mother
Janelle & Josh Carter, her grandmother
- ▶ Eric & Sondra Engstrom, sister-in-law
Diane Engstrom
- ▶ Brandon & Molly Yoder, his grandmother

DEATHS

- ▶ Maxine Strunck, Nov. 15
- ▶ Boyd Conklin, Nov. 18
- ▶ Derek Holland, Dec. 2
- ▶ Darrell Lora, Dec. 4
- ▶ Don Drumm, Dec. 7

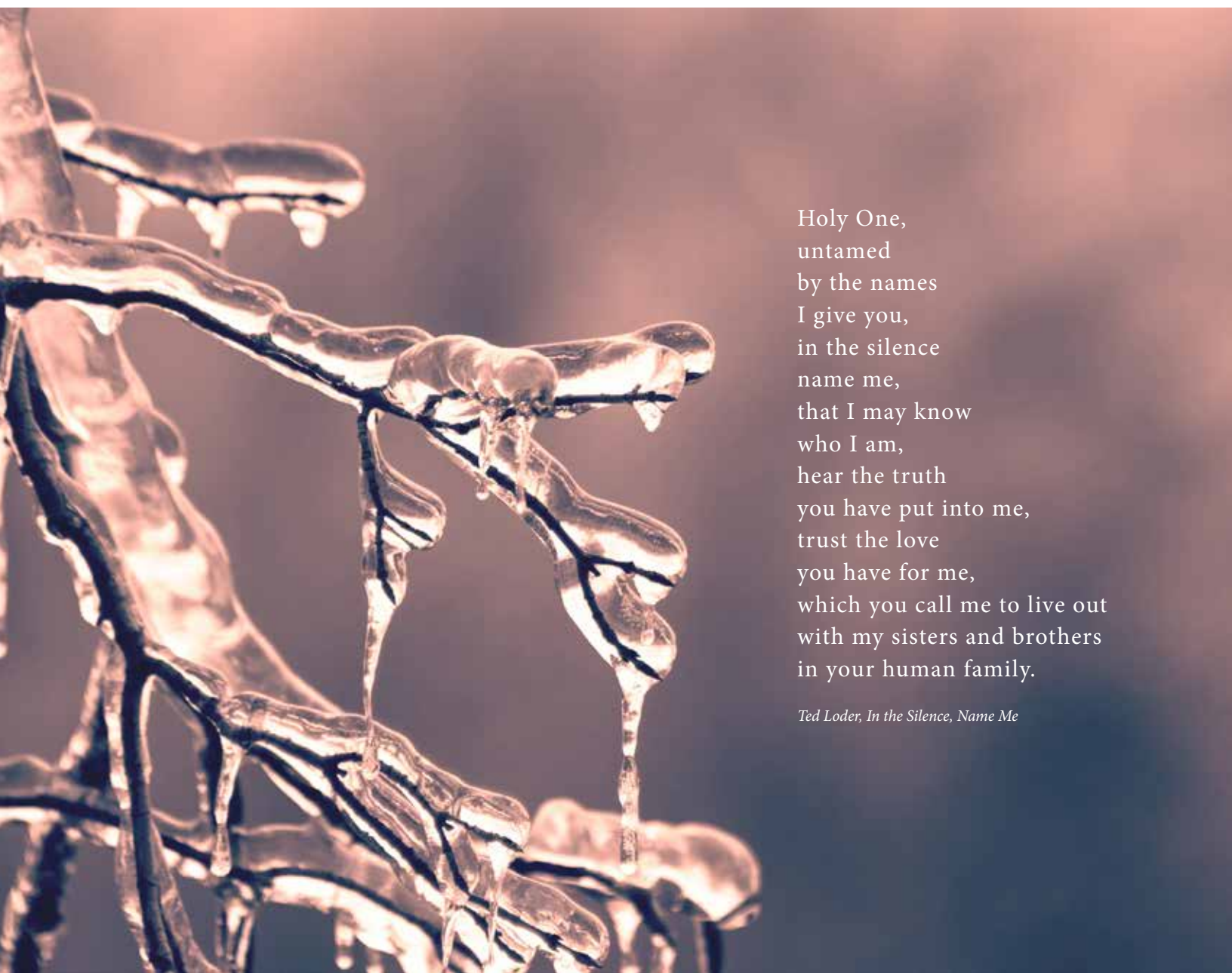
WEDDINGS

- ▶ Scott Schultz & Autumn Wagner, Oct. 24
- ▶ Stephanie Eckhardt & Brad Munos, Dec. 12



ST. PAUL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

2136 Brady Street
Davenport, IA 52803



Holy One,
untamed
by the names
I give you,
in the silence
name me,
that I may know
who I am,
hear the truth
you have put into me,
trust the love
you have for me,
which you call me to live out
with my sisters and brothers
in your human family.

Ted Loder, In the Silence, Name Me