



# *The Elim Waterfall*

*October – November - December 2025*

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## *From the Pastor:*

Like most of my sermons, this newsletter article has three points. **#1, Janteloven.** **#2, Friluftsliv.** **#3, Hygge.** I know. Deep, right? Profound. Thought provoking. Enlightening. Life-changing. In a word? WWWHHHAAATTT?

Some of you may wonder why John Swanson and Ron Hall always have a smile on their face. The answer is simple. It's because they're both Scandinavian (John from Sweden and Ron from Norway). And Scandinavian countries consistently rank near the top for the happiest countries on earth! The 2024 World Happiness Report has Finland #1, Denmark #2, Sweden #4, and Norway #7. Sorry, my fellow Americans, but I'm afraid we lag at a distant #24.

So, what do the Nordics have that we don't have? Besides Sven and Ole, of course! By the way, did you hear the one about Sven and Ole putting new shingles on a house? Sven would pull out a nail from his pouch, and proceed to either pound it in or throw it out. Ole, looks at him and says, "Vy are you trowing dose nails away?" Sven says, "Vell, if I pull one out and it's pointed toward me, I trow it away cuz it's bad. But if it's pointed toward da house, den I nail it in. Ole, screams, "You Moron! Dose nails aren't bad! Dair jest for da udder side of da house!" Okay, my apologies to Ron, John, and all my Nordic friends. I just couldn't help myself!

So...back to business. What the Nordics seem to have that we don't have are *Janteloven*, *Friluftsliv*, and *Hygge*! **Janteloven** is a term that originated in a 1933 novel by Aksel Sandemose. At the time, it was meant to be derogatory, but as the years went by, it became part of their culture. Today, it's like the law of the land highlighting the values of humility, modesty, equality and respect. Living Nordicly means, 'nobody cares what kind of car you drive, what position you hold at work, or how large your home is.'

**Friluftsliv.** That translates into the joy of the open air (*fri*=free, *luft*=air, and *liv*=life). Rain or shine, the Nordics say go outside! There's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothes. They thoroughly believe that time spent outside, no matter what the season, is time well spent. More than a lifestyle, they cite *friluftsliv* as one of their keys to happiness. Enjoy nature and take care of God's creation!

**Hygge.** Pronounced "hoo-ga," this is the Danish term for comfort or coziness. If you've ever enjoyed reading a book indoors on a rainy day, or a cup of hot chocolate on a snowy day, you've experience *hygge* without even knowing it. It describes the art of enjoying the simple pleasures in life. Getting together with friends, enjoying your family, finding peace in your own home. It means slowing down, switching off, and sharing quality time in relaxed surroundings. It means understanding that a fun evening doesn't have to include Wi-Fi. It means eating together...non-negotiable – TV off, phones away, and everyone at the table for a home-cooked meal.

So, what do you think? Ol' Sven and Ole might be on to something! Those are all good principles to live by. Then again, I'm not sure it's the Nordics we can credit for this formula for happiness either. It seems to me that these are all principles that can be better found in the pages of God's Word. *Janteloven*. Isn't that what we talked about a few Sundays ago? Achieving unity through humility? Philippians 2:3-5, **"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus."**

*Friluftsliv*. Isn't that what God intended from the very beginning? Genesis 2:15, **"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."** Creation was always a gift to be enjoyed and protected.

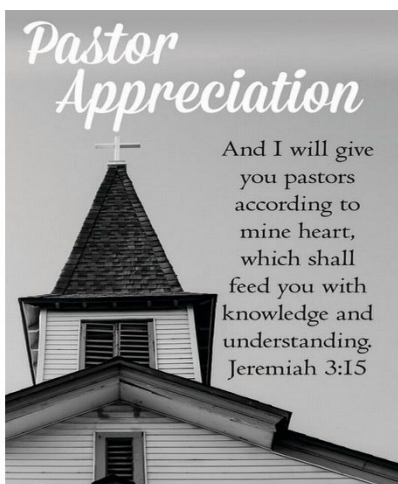
*Hygge*. Isn't that what Jesus was saying in His parable of the Rich Fool? **"Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions?"** (Luke 12:15) There is more to enjoying life than work and more to life than chasing the almighty dollar? Life is short. Enjoy it with those you love.

Still, let's give credit where credit is due. Whether the Nordics realize it or not, they seem to be living out these Biblical principles better than a lot of countries...which I'm sure accounts for their happiness! One way or another, home isn't just where you live—it's how you live. So, let's live here in accordance with God's Word...AND with a generous portion of *janteloven*, *friluftsliv*, and *hygge*!

Have I told you lately how much I love and appreciate you?

Well, I do! It's a joy to serve you!

*Pastor Marv*



**October is Pastor  
Appreciation  
Month**

**Take some time  
to acknowledge  
ours, write a  
note/card, or say  
a prayer for him!**

We often hear:

**"Life is short,  
Enjoy it!"**

But we often forget:

**"Eternity is Long,  
Prepare for it!"**



Dear Marv and Elim Reformed,

Thank you so much for keeping us in your prayers over the course of this summer! Since we asked for your prayers on behalf of our residency permits in the last email, that same week we received notice of an appointment with the residency office, which resulted in our paperwork finally being successfully processed in the last week of July, praise God! With our legal status settled, we can continue doing the work that God has given us to do here in Germany: pastoring his people from around the world and supporting the work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

In the last couple of weeks, the kids have begun school once again (they had a six week summer break). Lorelei chose to attend St.-Ursula-Schule, a Catholic school that reserves places for Protestant children in each class, and which also supports their spiritual growth with weekly protestant chapel services and religion courses. I have to say, I never expected my child to attend Catholic school, but I'm praising God that Lorelei gets to grow alongside her brothers and sisters in Christ from other Christian traditions as well! Caspian has also started 2nd grade at the local elementary school with the same wonderful teachers in the same classroom with the same friends as last year, which he's really enjoying. Evander continues to learn and grow at home with Mom and Dad and a little help from the great kids' show Bluey (which we put into German to help him continue to grow in his language skills as well!).

Our biggest prayer request right now is for the staff of the WCRC as they work diligently to prepare for the General Council meeting in October in Chiang Mai, Thailand, which will bring together Christians representing around 150 Reformed and Presbyterian denominations around the world for an event that takes place once every 7 years. Pray that the Holy Spirit would move within this body that seeks to follow Christ's call to pursue mercy and justice throughout the world and to shine the light of his glory.

Thank you so much for your continuing support - we're so grateful for you!

In Christ,  
Jeff and Chelsea, Lorelei (12), Caspian (7), and Evander (3)

Evander (3) and Caspian (7) enjoy playing at the park



How many kids can fit in a pulpit? This summer, the Lampens led worship twice at Petrikirche, home of a monthly English language worship service







The summer months might be filled with vacations for many people, but we still are able to join in worship together with God's people from Namibia, France, Germany, Nigeria, India, Ghana, Bolivia, Cambodia, South Africa, Indonesia, Canada, and the USA!



Lorelei standing outside her new school (a Gymnasium is a kind of college-prep middle/high school here)



Jeff and Chelsea celebrated their 14th anniversary on August 6!



# dates to Remember

## October

### PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

- 5 – Consistory Nomination Ballots DUE
  - Communion Sunday & Benevolent Fund Offering taken
- 11 – Transport for Christ Banquet
- 13 – COLUMBUS DAY
- 18 – Chana UMC Chicken & Noodle Dinner
- 21 – CLASSIS @ Baileyville Reformed Church
- 31 – HALLOWEEN

## November

- 2 – DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS  
(turn clocks back 1 hour)
- 9 – Consistory (11:15 a.m.)
- 11 – VETERAN'S DAY
- 23 – Thanksgiving Sunday Potluck & Decorating Elim for Christmas
- 27 – THANKSGIVING

## December

- 14 – Annual Congregational Meeting
- 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (4 p.m.)
- 25 – CHRISTMAS

### Homemade Chicken and Noodles Drive – Up Dinner at Chana United Methodist Church



Saturday, October 18  
4:00 – 6:30 p.m.  
Each Dinner - \$12.00



## Birthdays & Anniversaries (A)

### OCTOBER

- 4 - **Bob Alderks**
- 8 - **Judy Ealey**
- 14 - **Ella Mueller**
- 24 - **Jan Kniss**

### NOVEMBER

- 3 - **Norma Swanson**
- 4 - **Hunter Bee**
- 20 - **Gary Nefstead**
- 22 - **Deb Maas**
- Denny & Sharon Alderks (A)**

### DECEMBER

- 4 - **Audrey Mann**
- 7 - **Lori Catron**
- Marilyn Remmers**
- 12 - **Leslie Mann**
- 15 - **Tricia Mueller**
- 17 - **Chuck & Bev Kearns (A)**
- 31 - **John Swanson**



### Transport for Christ (Rochelle Ministry) Annual Fundraising & Appreciation Banquet

Saturday, October 11  
First Presbyterian Church  
1100 Calvin Rd., Rochelle

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.  
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Music, Ministry Update, Free Will Offering