

Dear Flock:

At my house, we called 2018 "The Year of Paul."

It was last New Year's, or thereabouts, that I was out at a party and got an email forwarded from our parishioner, Vicki Peterson, that a seventeen year old Swedish boy was coming in four days and there was no housing for him. In an utterly adventurous move, I called the number and said, "This doesn't have to be an emergency. I can get him started until you find a home for him." Turns out, it was a year-long endeavor, with a few pauses along the way. He flew off Christmas morning to see what else in the world awaits him.

We had a heck of a lot of fun. The kid is bright. The best part, I thought, was our regular, almost daily ritual of sitting by the fire, sipping tea, and conversing.....for hours. We'd talk about the day. We'd talk about school life. We'd talk about high ideas. We'd figure out routine problems. We'd imagine absurd scenarios. We laughed about as much as we breathed. I have frequently proclaimed, "I'm never doing this again. I already got the best kid for me."

Of course, I got in over my head. I had to enlist a mother for him, my longtime friend and old co-worker, Sue Geise who added her own thoughtful and creative touches to making his experience happy. Joe Vermeire and Jim Teske happily answered calls to pick him up from school in a pinch. Several of you had us for supper and the ladies of the church sent food home every once in a while so he wouldn't starve.

Many were astonished that I would go for this, not the least of whom was me. I never would have thought that I'd have a child at my age, but it was the ideal way to do it. My Paul story taught me that you just never know. As the new year rolls around again after this whirlwind of fun and growth, I can't wait to see what new adventures God will create for us all.

Yours,

Pastor Dan