

NORGE NEWS

Saturday-Tuesday, 9-12 February 2019

Bergen, Norway

Strange Words, Familiar Cadences

Mariakirken (St. Mary's Church) next to our hotel in Bergen, Norway. This is the oldest church in Bergen, having been finished after about 50 years' construction around the year 1180. It was damaged in the many fires that swept the city over the centuries and was last restored in 2015. All churches built during this period were Catholic, but most became Lutheran in 1536-37 as a result of the Protestant Reformation. This church is rare in that it was in a German neighborhood that protected the religious art inside from the Taliban-like removal of statues and other objects that was carried out across northern Europe by Protestants. Google images for "mariakirken Bergen" to see interior photos tourists are not allowed to shoot.

Weather 10-12 February		
Sunday / Søndag	Monday / Mandag	Tuesday / Tirsdag
36°F / 2°C	33°F / 1°C	43°F / 6°C
33°F / 1°C	41°F / 5°C	37°F / 3°C
Sun	Snow	Rain

Strange Words, Familiar Cadences

The words rolled unintelligibly and musically Scandinavian from the priest's mouth. But some of the hymn tunes Hildegunn Isakson sang with us were familiar.

When our friend, Eli Beate Presthus Nilsen, whom you met 16 months ago here <https://bit.ly/2hXdmvQ>, pointed to where we were in the church bulletin and whispered, "This is the Lord's Prayer," Emily and I could begin to piece

together what the Lutheran priest was reciting to us in Norwegian using the German we occasionally sing in our church choir back in San Jose.

She said:

Vår Far (we guessed at "Father" here)

i himmelen (heaven, as from Bach/Martin Luther's "vom Himmel hoch" – "from heaven above").

La navnet ditt helliges ("holy," like "heilige" from the

- Continued on next page



Eli Beate Presthus Nilsen at an outdoor agricultural museum we visited near Bergen.

Strange Words, Familiar Cadences

- Continued from previous page

German words to the Christmas carol "Silent Night:" "Stille nacht, heilige nacht").

La riket ditt komme (come).

La viljen din skje (pronounce that one, English speaker) *på Jorden* (Earth: "jord," pronounced "yoord," appears in both the Norwegian and Swedish national anthems I heard many times at Winter Olympics).

Gi oss (us) i dag (day) vårt daglige (daily) brød (we have brown *brød* every morning for breakfast in our hotel).

Og tilgi oss vår skyld, slik også vi tilgir våre skyldnere. Og la oss ikke komme i fristelse, men frels oss fra det onde. For riket er ditt, og makten og æren i evighet. Amen.

- Continued on next page



Emily and Gordon outside composer Edvard Grieg's (1843-1907) home, Troidhaugen ("troid" is a variation on the more familiar word "troll," and "haugen" is a hill). When she was a young piano student, Emily played many of Grieg's pieces and he was her favorite composer. Historically, much of Grieg's work used Norwegian folk tunes as its basis and was part of an artistic movement to create a separate Norwegian identity. The furnishings in Troidhaugen are a mix of European styles and designs based on Viking art. Norway didn't get its own constitution until 1814 and wasn't independent of Sweden until 1905.

Strange Words, Familiar Cadences

We were at home in this old church, and yet we weren't, the odd place that Eli, who now works for the Church of Norway, was in the year she spent as an exchange student at my home county's high school in North Carolina 15 years ago.

Our visit to church was a taste of the common experience we share – language, memories, music, each other's food, women's sermons, women's soccer and more – that make Eli, Emily and me members of the same human tribe.

It's what I look for when I go to places that, on the surface, are so different from where I live.

And the Arctic, where we're headed over the next couple of weeks, is going to be different from where I lived in Hamlet, Chapel Hill, Asheville, Charlotte and San Jose.

View from Troidhaugen over the frozen Nordåsvannet, a bay near Bergen.



The Fantoft Stave Church is one of the few remaining examples of these wooden buildings, constructed without nails. They date to about the year 1000 when Vikings brought Christianity to Norway from their conquests in the British Isles and France (Normandy, the land of D-Day, is named for the Norsemen who settle there). At this early period in religious change, the fire breathing dragons on the roof who protected Vikings from their previous evil spirits have been put to work protecting their new god from those same demons. The Vikings also carried the Germanic predecessor of the word "kirk," meaning "church," to Scotland.



Night descends on Fana in the southeast region of the municipality of Bergin.