

# CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES<sup>SM</sup> 2

## A Second Helping

Inspired by the books of  
Janet Letnes Martin and Suzann Nelson,  
authors of the best- seller “Growing Up Lutheran”.

Written by Greta Grosch

Music and Lyrics by Drew Jansen and Dennis Curley

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CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES<sup>SM</sup> 2 opened at the Plymouth Playhouse in Plymouth, MN on March 8, 2008 and was produced by Troupe America Inc., Curt Wollan, Executive Producer. The production was directed by Curt Wollan; choreography by Wendy Short Hays; musical direction by Dennis Curley; set design by Jared Grohs; lights by Scott R. Herbst; costume design by Katrina Benedict; sound and video design by Mark Brodin and the production stage manager was Daniel J. Herman. The cast included the following characters:

#### ORIGINAL CAST

The Pastor  
Mrs. Lars (Vivian) Snustad  
Mrs. Gilmer (Mavis) Gilmerson  
Mrs. Elroy (Karin) Engelson  
Miss Signe Engelson  
Church Organist

Tim Drake  
Janet Paone  
Greta Grosch  
Dorian Chalmers  
Tara Borman  
Kyle Nelson

## Characters:

The Pastor – *Of indeterminate age. He has been the Pastor at this church for some time and has a wife “half his age”. The ladies have a great deal of respect for the Pastor and tolerate his wife. He is a nice man, if perhaps not a terribly dynamic preacher. He lives a life of service and humility.*

Mrs. Elroy Engelson (Karin) – *In her mid to late 40’s. Karin is Beverly’s mother and is the most fashionable of the ladies and the best cook in the kitchen. She married young, and has always strived to be a good wife and mother. Although she appears happy, had she been born in another time, her life might have turned out quite differently.*

Beverly Signe (Engelson) Hauge – *In her early to mid 20’s. Signe is a newlywed. After graduating from the “U”, she left home a year ago to move to “the City” with her new husband, Harry. She grew up in this kitchen and has a great deal of affection for the women of the basement. Although she is strong willed, she has a good head on her shoulders and a genuine love for the community.*

The Widow Snustad (Vivian) – *In her late 60’s. Her husband died very early in their marriage. She is the matriarch of the kitchen and holds tightly to tradition with both hands. The other women get a kick out of her and secretly enjoy watching her squirm a little when she is challenged.*

Mrs. Gilmer Gilmerson (Mavis) – *In her 50’s, she is an able-bodied farm wife. Mavis is extremely good-natured, and often tries to dispel any tension in the kitchen by changing the subject or telling a joke. She knows the lineage of every family in town, and is always willing to pitch in and fix someone’s tractor, peel a potato, or scrub the lutefisk pot. She believes hard work is good for the soul.*

Scene: The action takes place in the basement kitchen of a rural Lutheran Church in Minnesota.

### ACT ONE

Scene 1: May 1969

Scene 2: Fall 1969

### ACT 2:

Scene 1: January 11, 1970

Scene 2: May 1970

## CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES<sup>SM</sup> 2: , *A Second Helping*

*The year is 1969 and we are in the basement kitchen of a Lutheran Church in rural Minnesota. The kitchen is outfitted with a refrigerator, a large gas stove, a sink with dish towels hanging above it, cupboards filled with an assortment of pots and pans, and a large chest freezer. A center island serves as the main workstation for the meal preparation. The walls are painted mint green and the small basement windows, covered with pastel print curtains, give a glimpse of the world outside. Nothing is new or modern. There are three doors: an exterior door leads up to the parking lot, a swinging door leads to the fellowship hall, and a third door is marked “furnace room.” It is closed. A serving window opens onto the fellowship hall, where the congregation gathers for meals, programs and coffee. This is the domain of the Church Basement Ladies.*

### SCENE 1 – May 1969, Sunday evening The Luther League Banquet

*It is Sunday evening and it is storming outside. High School age Lutherans from many of the area churches have gathered after chores for fun, fellowship, and a supper of barbecues (ground beef sandwiches in tomato sauce), pickles, brownies, chips, lemonade, Jell-O, ice cream and a lettuce salad. Around the kitchen are scattered remnants of the meal preparation. There are pots on the stove and in the sink, stacks of coffee dirty cups and plates, and open bags and jars of miscellaneous items on the counters. Half empty serving dishes sit in front of the serving window. As the ladies work to get the kitchen back in order, laughter and chatter can be heard coming from the fellowship hall whenever the window or swinging door is opened.*

### PRESHOW

*The Pastor gives announcements/intros groups and makes everyone practice turning and saying hello to those around them.*

Good afternoon/evening. As Pastor of this fine congregation, I want to welcome all of you to our Church Basement. It's always good to see some familiar faces, although some of you I haven't seen since Easter..... And we welcome any first time visitors. We also want to extend a special welcome to some very special guests visiting us today. *(he names groups)*

Before we begin, let's take a moment to all turn and say hello to those around you. For the most stoic among you a slight nod will do, and if “Peace Be With You” slips out, that's okay, too.

Now we invite you to sit back and enjoy some “fun and fellowship” as we serve up a Second Helping of Church Basement Ladies.

**OPENING SONG**

*As the house lights go to half, we hear young voices singing, "Come out. Come out. Come out, dear ladies. Come out. Come out. Come out. Come out. Come out, dear ladies, come out." The kids are calling to the women of the kitchen to "come out" and take a bow. As the house goes to black, the sound shifts and we can tell it is coming from the fellowship hall. As the offstage singing fades, the lights come up on the Pastor.*

*He sings.*

**SONG: Everyone Knows A Church Basement Lady**

**Pastor:**

There's a song about women I'd love to render,  
Here and now, at the start of the show.  
And if anyone says they're the weaker gender,  
Well, they don't know the women I know.  
They're the ladies who toil 'neath the sanctuary,  
Cleaning, baking, re-stocking the shelves.  
But this song's about gals so extraordinary,  
That perhaps they should sing it themselves...

*We hear cheering, clapping and perhaps even a few catcalls from the fellowship hall. On this burst of noise from the kids, Karin, Vivian and Mavis barge through the swinging door into the kitchen.*

**M:** Uff da, those teenagers sure have a lot of energy.

**V:** You're telling me.

**K:** Hi, Pastor.

*They sing. As they sing they change from their serving aprons to their work aprons, stack dirty dishes and clear the items from the serving window.*

**Women:**

Everyone knows a church basement lady;  
The picture of glamour and grace.  
As pretty as pearls, paragons of devotion,  
These glorious girls in perpetual motion.  
Sweet as a rose, a church basement lady  
Can banish a frown from your face.

**Mavis:**

As cheerful as sunshine, as welcome as shade...

**Karin:**

You give her a lemon, she'll make lemonade...

**Vivian:**

So proud to be part of this blessed brigade!

**Women:**

Yes, it's an honor to be

A church basement lady like me!

**V:** Coffee, Pastor.

**P:** Thank you, Mrs. Snustad.

**Women:**

Everyone needs a church basement lady

When skies are depressingly gray.

**Mavis:**

She's nothing but nice, someone you can rely on

**Vivian:**

For words of advice...

**Karin:**

...or a shoulder to cry on.

**Women:**

Nothing impedes a church basement lady;

You'd better not stand in her way.

**Karin:**

From brewing egg coffee to dusting the pews,

**Vivian:**

When she hears her calling, she'll never refuse.

**Mavis:**

A dainty drill sergeant in sensible shoes.

**Women:**

Every gal wishes she were

A church basement lady like her!

**Vivian/Karin:**

It's much wiser to praise than to mock her,

This woman we humbly extol.

**Karin/Mavis:**

Part Ann Landers and part Betty Crocker,

She'll nourish you, body and soul.

**Mavis/Vivian:**

Of her mission, she couldn't be prouder;  
 She's faithful and true to a fault.

**Women:**

And you cannot deny that without 'er,  
 The church would come screeching to a grinding halt!

And that's why...

Everyone loves the church basement ladies;  
 They spend their lives serving the Lord.  
 Displaying their praise in a manner most splendid,  
 So when all their days on this planet have ended,  
 Heaven above's where church basement ladies  
 Will go for their final reward.

**Vivian:**

They'll polish the gates while St. Pete checks them in;

**Karin:**

Roll up some krumkake, impossibly thin,

**Mavis:**

Then scrub 'til the Kingdom's as neat as a pin.

**Women:**

And it shall always be thus  
 For church basement ladies like us!

**Pastor:**

So, hats off...here they come, those dutiful girls--

**Women/Pastor:**

The work's never done for this competent crew.  
 They're second to none and they always come through.  
 Oh, if everyone in the world only knew  
 A church basement lady like you!

**SONG ENDS**

**P:** Well, ladies, you've done it again, everything was delicious. But I think I know now why my wife calls them "Sloppy" Joes. *(indicating a spot on his pants.)*

**M:** Oh, Pastor. *(She rushes to get him a wet dishtowel.)*

**V:** They may call them Sloppy Joes down in the Cities, Pastor, but around here we don't need a fancy name for our barbecues.

**P:** Well, whatever you call it, Mrs. Snustad, it still makes a mess when it lands on your trousers.

*Mavis tries to help clean the Pastor's pants without actually touching him. Eventually he takes the towel and does it himself. Meanwhile we hear Chopsticks being played on an out of tune piano in the fellowship hall.*

**P:** Thank you, Mavis. I think I can get it. I must say, it sure looks like everyone is having a wonderful time.

**V:** Uffda feeda! sure sounds like it, too.

**P:** Now, Mrs. Snustad, my wife says those teenagers will lead this church right into the 1970's.

**V:** *(Closing the window.)* Well, your new wife doesn't have to listen to them playing Chapsticks on that old out of tune piano.

**K:** *(gently correcting her)* Chopsticks.

**V:** Ja, that's what I said. Chapsticks.

**MM:** Too bad about the rain. I'm sure they'd rather have the Luther League picnic outside, but the fields need the moisture.

**K:** Considering this tornado weather, the church basement is probably the safest place for those teens to be.

**P:** An asylum.

**V:** You're telling me.

**M:** Well, being inside certainly didn't spoil their appetites. Uff da. Those Luther Leaguers can eat!

**K:** Look! They ate most of the chips, all of the pork and beans... *(as she speaks she is looking over the dirty bowls and pans)* Of course, no one touched my lettuce salad.



**M:** Rabbit food.

**V:** I advised against it.

**K:** Now, Vivian. I'm trying to give those teens some healthy food choices. We had a demonstration about it just last month at Homemakers Club.

**P:** Good for you, Karin. As Euell Gibbons writes, we should "Learn to appreciate new flavors." (*He notices the ladies confusion.*) My wife is trying to get me to eat more vegetables. She has his new book "Stalking the Healthy Herbs". (*he pronounces it "her"-b*)

**M:** Oh, that's...nice.

**V:** My Grandfather Nokkleby never ate one vegetable. He lived to be 93.

**K:** The time's they are a changin'.

**M:** Brownie, Pastor? (*offering one to him.*)

**P:** Don't tell my wife.

*Mavis offers one to Vivian.*

**V:** Oh, no, just half that.

**M:** (*She takes one and nibbles, too.*) Who made these?

**K:** Arlene Jespersen. Her cousin Marilyn was in town from Milwaukee and they dropped by for coffee yesterday on their way to the bus depot.

**M:** Oh, sure. I read about her visit in the paper. She was in town for her late husband's nephew's 10th anniversary. The Grangaard girls sang a duet, Delores Larson poured, and....

All: ....a good time was had by all.

**M:** (*As she nibbles a bar.*) Yep, that Arlene sure makes a good brownie - even though she does keep pet chickens in her kitchen. It's like a brooder house in there. (*It occurs to her*) Maybe that's how she gets those fancy designs on her homemade flatbread.

*As she says this, Mavis takes another enthusiastic bite of her brownie while Vivian spits hers into her napkin. The Pastor, however, simply stops chewing, sets his bar down, and sits for a moment. He takes a few tentative chews, not wanting to spit, not wanting to swallow. Karin sees his dilemma.*

**K:** More coffee, Pastor?

**P:** *(mumbling with his mouth full)* Yes, yes, I believe I will.

*He manages to choke down the bar as Karin smiles and takes the brownie away.*

**M:** So, Karin, any news from your daughter and her new husband down in the Cities?

**V:** Terrible place. *(with disgust)*

**P:** Ja, Karin, have you heard from Signe lately?

**K:** Actually, it's Beverly again.

**M:** What?

**V:** Who's Beverly?

**K:** Signe

**P:** I thought you said, Beverly.

**K:** I did.

**M:** You did what?

**K:** I said Beverly.

**P:** You said Beverly?

**K:** I did.

**V:** Who's Beverly?

**K:** Signe.

**M:** Signe is Beverly?

**K:** Signe is Beverly.

**V:** I don't get it.

**P:** She WAS Signe?

**K:** She was.

**M:** Oh! and now she's Beverly?

**K:** She is.

**P:** Well, that makes sense.

**V:** You lost me.

**K:** (*in an attempt to clarify*) She called yesterday afternoon and said she and Harry had discussed it, and she was going back to using her first name.

**V:** She called long distance? In the middle of the day? Uff da fyda. The way some folks throw their hard earned money around these days.

**P:** I'm sure they can afford it, Mrs. Snustad. Harold has that good job with, what's the name of that company again, Karin?

**K:** UNIVAC.

**P:** That's right. UNIVAC

**M:** You know, Karin, when you told us Harry was going to be an engineer, I thought you meant a Whoo Hoo (*She makes a sound like a train*) engineer. I had no idea you meant a fancy indoor desk job. Boy, if I'd a known that some men come home from work at the end of the day with clean clothes on, I never would have settled for a farmer. (*joking*)

**V:** Well, Beverly is a perfectly fine name. Why she ever went and changed it in the first place is beyond me.

**P:** I believe it was when she was doing her confirmation reading for me, isn't that right, Karin?

**K:** That's right. Back in '60.

**M:** Nine years already? Uff da. Time flies.

**K:** She said she didn't think it was fair that her Catholic friends got new *names* when they were confirmed, when all Lutherans got was a Bible Verse.

**V:** Mark my words. When Lutherans and Catholics start cavorting it leads to nothing but trouble. Why, that youngest Walther boy used to be a nice, quiet young man until he married that Catholic girl and turned. Now he drinks beer, shoots pool, and drives a Dachshund.

**P:** I believe you mean a Datsun.

**V:** Ja. It's red.

**K:** So, anyway, your wife...

**M:** ...your new wife.....

**K:** ...She suggested Beverly could use her middle name, and Elroy and I agreed. She was 15. She wanted to rebel.

**M:** And using her middle name was all she could come up with? Uffda! She really is a Lutheran!

**K:** And, of course, her Great Grandma Signe had just passed away and she really missed her. . I'm sure that was part of it, too.

**P:** Now she was quite a character. Didn't she chew tobacco?

**K:** That's right! When I was a little girl, she tried to teach me to spit.

**V:** All I know is she wore pants to church one Sunday during threshing season back in '32. Old Pastor Norvold made her sit in the back. *(Thunder. Vivian addresses God.)* Ah! you remember.

**P:** I'm sure chins were wagging in the parking lot that day.

**M:** You know, Karin, THAT Signe was actually your grandmother through marriage on your father's side. Your father's mother, your biological grandmother, now she died when he was a baby, and then HIS father, your grandfather, married Signe Arnesdaughter Jorgensen just two weeks after she got off the boat from Norway!

*Everyone has stopped to listen and they now all response with an "oooohh" as if interested..*

**P:** Mavis, you are amazing. I don't know how you keep track of people like that.

**M:** Me either. You know Pastor, after I'm gone, maybe the University of Minnesota should pickle my brain and see if they can't figure out why I can remember the family history of everyone in town, and what I was wearing when I first kissed a boy in the 8th grade, but I can't remember to turn off the cream separator before we put a new filter in! Uff da. Oh, well, live and learn. Ice cream?

*As she says this she gives the Pastor a bowl of ice cream.*

**K:** Uh oh, Mavis. What happened?

**M:** My Gilmer lost another finger in the cream separator on Friday.

**All:** *(react)* Oh no. Mavis! *Etc.*

**M:** Yep. We hurried and finished the milking, got everything cleaned up and ready for the next morning, and then motored directly on over to Doc Swenson's with the finger floating right there in the bucket of cream. *(To the Pastor)* That's what you do.

**P:** Thank you, Mavis. I'll try to remember that. *(He has stopped eating.)*

**M:** By the time we got over there it was too late to try and reattach anything but, since it was just the baby, we figured no harm done.

*Vivian exits into the fellowship hall. We again hear CHOPSTICKS. She hollers to an unseen teen.*

**V:** Very nice, Ruthie and Janie. I think you've mastered that one. How about a nice hymn?

**M:** Of course, now he can't get the field dirt out of his ears without using his pick-up keys, but I suppose he does it that way anyway.

*Vivian opens the window from the other side.*

**V:** Brownies! *(We hear Heart and Soul start)* Well listen to that, my favorite hymn. Uffda.

*Vivian takes the pan of brownies and closes the window.*

**M:** And you know, it could have been worse. I remember when Mel the snow plow operator cut off four of his fingers in the table saw – let's see, he lost his pinky, the Ringman, Thumbkin and the point... *(As she speaks, she folds each finger down. She is about to fold down the pointer finger, which would leave only her middle finger up, when Karin stops her.)*

**K:** I think we get the idea, Mavis.

**P:** After all your Gilmer's injuries, I'm amazed he can even farm anymore.

**M:** Well, you know, Pastor, a lot of it is done by machines these days. You know, that new-fangled, self-propelled stuff.

**K:** My Elroy has folks coming into the dealership every day trying to finance the new John Deeres, especially now, during seeding time. But he never turns any of them away.

**P:** He's a good man, Karin.

**M:** Ja. He let us skip two payments on the manure spreader when my Gilmer crushed his spleen.

**K:** And when the Johnson's lost their crop last year, Elroy didn't sleep for a week. I worry about him. He takes it all to heart.

**V:** (*Reentering, slightly disheveled.*) Pastor, I don't mean to tell you your business, but you had better get out there and remind those kids that this is a house of God and NOT A DEN OF INEQUITY.

**P:** (*gently correcting her*) Iniquity?

**V:** That too! The Sorenson girls are twirling around the poles in their flarey skirts; a mixed group of boys AND girls are sitting in a circle playing Wink 'Em; and that Christianson boy brought a deck of face cards! To church! When I walked by they weren't exactly playing Rook!

**P:** Thank you, Mrs. Snustad. I appreciate your vivillance...vigilance. (*She blushes at the compliment*) If you'll excuse me, ladies. Come on now kids! Put the cards away...(He exits and the ladies continue cleaning the kitchen).

**V:** Next thing you know they'll be playing BINGO down at the Legion with that Walther boy.

**K:** (*smiling*) Remember, Vivian, those teens are the future of this church.

**V:** Now you sound like the Pastor's new wife.

**M:** You know, Vivian, they've actually been married longer than Johnson was President.

**V:** Marriage is a sacred vow. Just because your spouse passes away doesn't give you the right to step out. My Lars has been gone almost 30 years. You don't see me gallivanting around town... with some young buck... half my age.

**K:** After 30 years, Vivian, I think God would understand.

**M:** Ja, especially if he was half your age! *(they all laugh and sigh)* So, what else did Signe, I mean Beverly, have to say? Any news of a bun in the oven?.

**K:** Nothing yet.

**M:** Well, it's early yet. For some folks it takes awhile. Got to get the plumbing all in working order. Figure out what goes where, and all.

**V:** Mavis!!

**M:** Oh, Vivian. You've lived on a farm, you know.

**V:** I prefer adoption. Such a modest way to have a baby.

**M:** Maybe so, but then you miss out on half the fun. *(Vivian blushes)*

**V:** Luther's Small Catechism says we should "live a chaffed and decent life".

**M:** Chaste?

**V:** That's what I said, chaffed.

**M:** Yeah, but it also says, "I believe God made me and all creatures". Face it, Vivian, the whole baby thing...perfectly natural.

**K/M** This is most certainly true!

***SONG: God's Way of Sayin'***

Mavis:

While 'round the farmstead I'm perambulating,  
There's something that I find quite fascinating:  
I'm so amazed by all  
The creatures great and small  
Who proudly put the "pro" in "procreating!"

Look over in the corner of the barnyard  
At who's been chasing after Mrs. Hen.  
It's cocky Mr. Rooster,  
Who promptly introduced 'er  
To the fine and fancy pleasures of the pen.

And if they choose to spend their day all cooped up,  
 Don't cluck your tongue and scorn them with a scowl.  
 She's built for goin' broody  
 And it's his sacred duty  
 To make sure the end result's a little fowl.

Go take a peek; there's no denyin',  
 We were made for multiplyin';  
 One thing you can always depend upon.  
 When two things that were single  
 Commence to intermingle,  
 That's just God's way of sayin' life should go on!

**Mavis/Karin:**

That's God's way of sayin'...life should go on!

**Mavis:**

The pigs are only pretty to each other.  
 And even though they're living in a sty,  
 He gets her motor revvin'  
 And soon they're in hog heaven,  
 They'll be busy makin' bacon by and by. (busy makin' bacon by and by)

And when that swollen swine's set to deliver, (there she blows)  
 That overburdened stork will be in shock.  
 She'll curl her snout and wiggle it;  
 Out pops another piglet!  
 Bet those hams'll live out all their days in hock!

**M/K:**

Make no mistake, it's truly awesome  
 Watching all creation blossom;  
 One big biological marathon.  
 The flora and the fauna  
 Invariably wanna.  
 That's just God's way of sayin' life must go on.

**Mavis/Karin/Vivian (reluctantly):**

That's God's way of sayin' life must go on.



**Mavis (Karin/Vivian under):**

Each entity from human to amoeba  
Bears witness to the miracle of birth.  
To cuddle, coo and coddle  
With God's most recent model  
Is the most astounding thing we'll do on earth. (most astounding we'll ever do)

It's difficult to not become disheartened,  
When pondering our planet's plaintive plight.  
But when I see a baby,  
It's telling me just maybe,  
We've got one more chance to finally get it right! (our future's bright)

It's been that way since Eve and Adam  
Wanted kids and thus begat 'em .  
Ain't no vile and vulgar phenomenon. (phenomenon)  
Yes, God in all His splendor  
Enjoys when we engender...

**Karin:**

Each act of duplication  
Provides more affirmation...

**Vivian (with temporary enthusiasm):**

When bodies get an urgin'  
To do a little mergin'...

**Mavis/Karin/Vivian:**

That's just God's way of sayin' life will go on;

**Mavis:**

Yes, that's God's way of sayin' life will go on!

**Mavis/Karin/Vivian:**

Life will go on!!!

**SONG ENDS**

*Applause. Suddenly there is a big thunderclap, the lights on stage flicker and go out. We hear a big whoop from the fellowship hall.*

**V:** (to Mavis - in the dark) Mavis, I blame you.

*Pastor enters.*

**P:** Whoo hooo! Sounds like God just bowled a strike. Do we have any flashlights in here?

**M:** I do! I do! I do! *(Turning on a flashlight from her purse.)* In my purse.

**K:** I think we have some more around here. Although they might need batteries.

*Karin starts rummaging through drawers. Some of the flashlights work, and some don't.*

**V:** Pastor, it was Mavis.

**P:** I'm sure it's just the storm, Mrs. Snustad.

**K:** *(handing him some flashlights)* Here you are, Pastor.

**M:** You know it might not be the storm at all. Maybe the current is just out. I'll go take a look at that fuse box. Anybody got a penny?

**V:** You could take one out of the Sunday School birthday bank.

**K:** I'll go to the closet to see if there's a bobby pin in my purse.

**P:** I've got a penny, Mavis.

**M:** Thank you, Pastor. Don't you worry. I will find some way to get light for this church! Oh, this door. Got it!

*Mavis takes the penny and heads toward the furnace room. The door sticks, so she has to give it a big shove to open it. She exits.*

**K:** Pastor, I'll go get some candles from the altar room. *(she exits)*

**P:** And I'd better get back out there. You know how excited those teenagers get when the lights go out. *(realizing what he just said)* Oh, dear. Now, everyone just settle down.

*He exits, and Vivian is left, sitting alone, in the dark.*

**V:** Don't worry about me, I'll hold down the fort.

*Vivian whistles for a bit. Comedy. We hear a pop and the lights flicker and come back on.*

**M:** *(from the furnace room)* Owwww. I'm alright.

*The Pastor comes bounding in as Mavis exits the furnace room nursing a finger (and leaving the furnace door open.)*

**P:** Mavis, you've done it again!

**M:** Thank you, Pastor. Farmer's wives, you know. We gotta know how to fix just about anything. *(As the lights crackle and pop)* But you might want someone to come take a look at that.

**P:** I'll have Oscar take a look at it in the morning.

**V:** *(perking up)* Oscar?

**P:** Oscar Clementson.

**V:** The widower?

**P:** He's our new janitor. Since Willie died we've had a hard time keeping anyone on around here. They keep dropping like flies. Maybe it's our wiring. Enoways, my wife saw Oscar last week at the Thorson auction and he said retirement just didn't agree with him. He starts tomorrow.

**M:** *(From furnace room)* Now, his wife was German Lutheran and a shirt-tail cousin to your late husband, Lars, Vivian. Her Sweet and Sour pickles took blue at the State Fair eight years running. Then she died four years ago and they thought her recipe was gone forever. But last August her daughter-in-law, who smokes cigarettes, well she was cleaning out the highboy and found it under a pair of long johns.

**V:** Three.

**M:** What?

**V:** She died three years ago last November. Unexpectedly.

*Karin enters and sets the box of candles down.*

**K:** Looks like we won't be needing these, after all.

**V:** Oscar has been very lonely since she passed.

**M:** (*curious about Vivian's interest in the matter*) Oh, he has, has he?

**K:** Oscar who?

**P:** Clementson.

**M:** He's our new janitor. The Widow Snustad here seems to have taken an interest. (*teasing*)

**V:** Now don't you go making something out of nothing, honestly, Mavis Gilmerson. I'm not about to go making a fool of myself at this age.

**M:** You've got nothing to be ashamed of, Vivian Snustad. it's perfectly natural.

***REPRISE: God's Way of Sayin'***

**Mavis (w/Karin and Pastor):**

And even though you may be graying,  
Deep inside, your heart is saying,  
"Lonely days and lonelier nights, begone!"  
And if you'd only listen,  
You'd find what you've been missin'!  
That's just God's way of sayin' life should go on.  
Yes, that's God's way of sayin' life should go on...

*There is a popping sound and the lights flicker and go out again. We hear Mavis in the dark.*

**M:** Pastor, maybe you'd better call Old Man Clementson and have him come over right now.

*Vivian hears this and madly starts applying lipstick.*

**V:** He's not THAT old.

*The lights pop on and the others gather around Vivian as she fluffs her hair and pinches her cheeks.*

**All:** Life will go on.

**SONG ENDS**      *Vivian notices them watching her and smiles guiltily. **Blackout/End of Scene.***

**SCENE 2 – Fall 1969, Saturday early evening**  
**The Mission Festival**

*The missionaries are home on furlough and are giving a program in the fellowship hall. The entire congregation has gathered for a potluck supper to sing hymns, ask questions about life among the heathens, and to see the exotic things the missionaries brought back with them. Through the partially open serving window we see the flickering lights of a slide show. The counter in front of the serving window is covered with half empty hotdish pans and serving dishes. Throughout the scene the ladies will tidy up, put leftovers in tinfoil or Tupperware containers, and generally get the kitchen back in order. The furnace room door is open.*

*Beverly enters the dimly lit kitchen wearing something current and store bought. She peeks thru the partially open serving window and sees the folks gathered in the fellowship hall and she quietly shuts the serving window. As she looks around the room, she begins to sing.*

**SONG: Cardamom, Cinnamon, Ginger and Clove**

**Beverly:**

There's an image indelibly etched in my mind.  
 That I conjure whenever the world seems unkind.  
 It's the sight of my mother, in apron and hat,  
 Making marvelous treats while I patiently sat.  
 All the fragrant aromas perfuming the air  
 From the cookies and bars and the cakes she'd prepare...  
 And she'd teach me this song as she stood at the stove,  
 It goes, "Cardamom, cinnamon, ginger and clove."

When I'm here, I return to those innocent times,  
 Filled with nighty-night kisses and nursery rhymes.  
 When my mother could quell any tear I would cry  
 With a touch of her hand and a sweet lullaby.  
 Summer days when the sun shared its glow with the dew,  
 And the sky was a shade of impossible blue,  
 We would walk to the church through the chokecherry grove,  
 Singing "Cardamom, cinnamon, ginger and clove."

I have to admit, it's not much of a song,  
 A childish simple refrain.  
 How can something be so incredibly strong,  
 Yet soft as a September rain?

I don't know why this melody stays in my ear,  
 Or why lyrics so silly should now seem so dear.  
 But I'm sure there's a lesson that I'm meant to learn,  
 When these wonderful words and the music return.  
 Like a ribbon connecting my now to my then,  
 I'll start humming the tune, and we're here once again.  
 Just my mother and me, and the magic we wove,  
 Singing "Cardamom, cinnamon, ginger and clove."

*(BEVERLY tenderly places her hands on her belly)*  
 Would you look at me...standing right here at the stove,  
 Singing "Cardamom, cinnamon, ginger and clove."

## SONG ENDS

*As the applause dies, the lights in the fellowship hall come up and we hear the missionaries leading everyone in "I Will Make You Fishers of Men". Beverly decides to surprise the ladies and looks for a place to hide. As the offstage singing continues, she runs thru the open door of the furnace room and slams it shut behind her. The ladies enter carrying a few dirty dishes, Mavis singing along with the offstage voices. Vivian and Karin close the serving window, turn on the lights in the kitchen, and take their dishes to the sink. They all change from their serving aprons to their work aprons.*

**M:** I just love it when the missionaries are home on furlough. And in one of those slides I think I recognized one of Gilmer's old shirts I musta thrown in the clothing drive box. Although it's hard to tell. Things look different on someone with two arms.

**V:** I just wish they could do their mission work someplace more modest. Why Pastor doesn't censor their slides before they show them is beyond me.

**K:** Now, Vivian, it isn't anything you can't already see in National Geographic.

**V:** You mean National Pornographic. Maybe the Luther Leaguers could do another clothing drive so the natives don't have to walk around half-naked like that.

**M:** *(As she looks over the remaining food at the window.)* Maybe they should do a fundraiser to buy Arlene Jespersen a new cookbook. Did you try her Dry Beef Velveeta hotdish? Uff da. Of course she does have cats.

**B:** *(she is stuck in the furnace room)* Mom? Mrs. Gilmerson? Mrs. Snustad?

*All 3 ladies look to the heavens and at each other.*

**V:** Beverly? Is that you? Where are you?

**B:** I'm stuck. I'm in the furnace room.

*They all race to the door.*

**M:** Stand back. Uff da. *(She forces open the door and Beverly runs out)*

*The ladies turn into a swarm surrounding Beverly, fawning over her and inspecting her as Karin starts rambling a mile a minute, the other ladies joining her periodically.*

**K:** What are you doing here? I didn't know you were coming home? And what on earth were you doing....

K/M/V: ....in the furnace room?

**K:** And where's Harry? Have you seen Dad? Does he know you're home? I've got clean sheets on your bed if you want to stay with us. And I have a rump roast in the deep freeze. How were the roads? Any car trouble? Oh, dear, listen to me, rambling on like a crazy person. I'm just so surprised...

K/V/M: ... to see you!

**K:** Oh, why didn't you call ...

K/M/V: ...and tell us you were coming?

**B:** Harry is at his folks. We came home so he could help with the fall plowing. Yes, we stopped by the farm and Dad told me you were here for Mission Night. Harry will stay with the Hauges so they can get an early start on the field, but I'll stay at the house with you. The roads were fine, no car trouble, and I didn't call because I wanted to surprise you.

**K:** Well, you certainly did that. Oh, it's so wonderful to...

K/M/V: ...see you.

**K:** Are you hungry? Can I fix you a plate? There's plenty of food left.

**M:** Although you might want to steer clear of Arlene Jespersion's Dry Beef Velveeta hotdish. Meow.

**K:** Mavis!

*She holds it out to Beverly who turns away, a little nauseous.*

**B:** No, thank you. We ate on the way.

**V:** (*approvingly*) It looks like married life agrees with you. And not many young ladies could pull off a frock like that.

**B:** (*Teasing her. They have a good relationship.*) People in the Cities seem to think it's pretty hip.

**V:** Well, They would.....

**B:** I'm still waiting for you to come down and visit me, Mrs, Snustad.

**V:** And I'm still waiting for pigs to fly.

**B:** So, you haven't changed, I see.

**V:** And you're still sassy, my little sassy pants!

**K:** (*Still a little flustered.*) I think you look wonderful.

**M:** (*Mavis suspects she might be pregnant.*) I'll say... so, ah... how are you feeling? Everything staying down okay?

**B:** (*She can tell she knows.*) I'm fine, Mrs Gilmerson, thank you.

**K:** Are you sick?

*The following lines overlap.*

**M:** Maybe just a little in the mornings....?

**B:** It's nothing, Mom, I'm fine.

**M:** You should carry soda crackers in your purse.

**B:** Mrs Gilmerson!

**V:** What are you getting at?



**M:** Or you could try baking soda and water.

**V:** Oh! *(Suddenly she catches on and starts counting months on her fingers.)* Let's see, the wedding was how long ago?

**M:** It's been over a year, Vivian.

**K:** What is going on?

*Overlapping ends.*

**B:** I've got some news.

**K:** What is it? Is something wrong? Is it Harry?

**B:** No, no, it's nothing like that.

*Beverly takes a moment, looks at the other ladies.*

**V:** Mavis. Could you come help me in the fellowship hall?

**M:** I wanna see this.

**V:** Mavis!

**M:** Oh, alright.

*Mavis and Vivian exit.*

**K:** What is it, sweetie? Are you okay?

**B:** I'm going to have a baby.

*We hear Mavis and Vivian squeal outside the door.*

**K:** What? When? How? *(She didn't mean "how..." .)* I know "how." I didn't mean that! Oh, Beverly. A baby? Why didn't you call and tell me?

**B:** Because I wanted to tell you in person. I'm due in February, right around Dad's birthday. *(to the ladies peeking from offstage)* You can come back in now.

**K:** A baby. Oh, sweetie. Does Dad know?

**B:** Yes. I wanted to wait and tell you together, but he guessed right away.

**M:** Well, sure he did. He's got cows. *(The others don't get it)* You can tell by looking at the udders. *(Everyone looks at Beverly's "udders")*

**K:** You should sit down. Are you warm enough? Too warm? Oh, you're red as a beet. I should open a window.

*They sit her down as Karin and Mavis start fussing around.*

**V:** Stop fussing, Karin. You're making me a nervous wreck.

**B:** Mom, I'm fine.

**K:** You're going to have a baby. I can't believe it. I've got goose bumps. You should sit.

**B:** I am sitting, but I'd rather help. Is there something I can do?

**M:** I'm gonna get myself some water. Can I get you some water? OK.

**B:** No, thanks. *(to Vivian)* How can I help?

**V:** You could lower the hem on that dress. Karin, what can she do?

**K:** Oh, I can't think.

**B:** Mom, maybe you need to sit down.

**K:** *(still in shock)* You're going to have a baby.

**B:** Yes, Mom. I'm going to have a baby.

**V:** Well I'm glad that got sorted out.

**M:** Uff da. I feel like I'm having an episode.

*They all laugh and sigh as the Pastor enters singing, dressed in a native costume from the Pacific Islands, very outlandishly foreign and colorful. He has taken off his long pants, but still wears his black dress socks and shoes. He is carrying a conch shell.*

**M:** Pastor, look who's here.

**P:** Signe! I mean, Beverly! What a nice surprise. I didn't expect to see you in here. What do you think of my new get-up?

**B:** It's....nice.

**P:** It's from the missionaries. They're showing some artifacts and I'm part of the display. Listen to this. (*He blows for the ladies.*) Of course, I'm no Louis (*he says Louis instead of Louie*) Armstrong but, as my wife keeps telling me, you're never too old to learn something new.

**M:** (*under her breath regarding Vivian*) ...in most cases...

**P:** So, Beverly, what's the report?

**B:** (*trying to think of something that might interest him*) Well, I've been volunteering at the hospital, Harry and I are learning to play Pinnacle, oh, and we've been going to an ecumenical service.

**P:** Is that so?

**V:** Ecu - what?

**B:** Ecumenical. All different denomination: Lutherans, Catholics, Methodists. All worshipping together.

**V:** What?

**B:** (*it occurs to her that this might really bug Vivian*) Side by side. Holding hands and singing. With guitars and drums. And ever so often, when the moon is just right, someone gets so filled with the Holy Spirit, they jump right up and shout HALLELUIAH! ...In tongues.

**V:** (*to Karin*) I blame you.

**B:** Oh, Mrs. Snustad. It's not for everyone. But, Pastor, you'd love it. It's like a Christian Woodstock.

**V:** (*putting her head in her hands*) Ah, that Woodstick!

**P:** That sounds wonderful, Beverly. But I don't think something like that would go over very well around here.

**B:** I think you might be right.

**K:** (*blurting it out*) And she's going to have a baby! In February! I'm going to be a grandmother!!!

**P:** A baby. Oh, that's wonderful. (*He quickly calculates the months.*) Congratulations.

**B:** Thank you, Pastor.

**M:** Yep, it took awhile, but they finally figured it out. You must have explained something right in that pre-marital counseling class, holy moly!

*This information makes the Pastor a little uncomfortable. The ladies get to work cleaning the kitchen, with Karin stopping periodically to hug Beverly.*

**P:** Yes, well, I need to run out and grab a hunk of scrap lumber from the pile behind the Parsonage. The missionaries had us clapping, and Ron's Mrs. got so excited she fell against the display tripod and broke a leg.

*Everyone reacts.*

**P:** Oh, no no no, ladies, she's fine. But that tripod won't be winning any three-legged races anytime soon. The missionaries had some rolled bandages as part of their display, so we're gonna make a splint.

**M:** Let me know if you need any help. I've got lot's of experience in that department.

**P:** I'm sure you do, Mavis, I'm sure you do.

*The Pastor exits up the stairs as Beverly is about to scrape some leftovers into the trash.*

**V:** Mark my words, when Lutherans start clapping it leads to nothing but trouble. Next thing you know they'll be dancing.

**M:** Woah there, Nelly. What do you think you're doing?

**B:** I told you. I want to help.

**M:** There's at least 2 servings left in there. (*Beverly gives her a look*) Small ones, anyway. We'll pack it up for the bachelors who never married. There's tinfoil over there. And I think we have some old Tupperware containers around here somewhere. (*she opens the Tupperware cupboard, and they all crash to the floor*) Found 'em.

**B:** (*Indicating a pan*) What about Arlene Jespersion's Dry Beef Velveeta hotdish? Do you want to save that, too?

*The ladies all pause as if considering it.*

**M:** Tell you what, scrape it into the slop pail and I'll take for the pigs. That'll curl their tails..

**K:** How 'bout I put it out for Fluffy. Here Fluffy! (at door) Nice doggie, yes, yes you is yes yes. (Dog barking). Whew! That dog'll eat anything!

**V:** Now listen here. I don't know how things operate down there in the Cities, but around here we don't toss something out just because it's old and a little crusty around the edges.

**K:** That's right. You never know when something might come in handy.

**M:** You think scrap lumber piles just grow on trees?

**V:** And just think of all the starving kids in China.

**All 3:** Use it up. Wear it out. Make it do or do without.

**M:** I've got a whole jar of string that's too short to save. But, you never know.

**K:** And now that you're going to be a mother, you'll need to learn to start saving, too, three.

***SONG: You Never Know***

**Karin:**

Don't be so quick to toss it out, don't be so rash...  
 You'll find there's treasure in what others think is trash.  
 A silly little dumb thing...  
 It must be good for something;  
 Your castoffs are as valuable as cash!  
 Those eggshells you're discardin'  
 Would do wonders for your garden,  
 Those coffee grounds will help your flowers grow.  
 You save a single penny,  
 Pretty soon, you're saving many.  
 These few examples only serve to show...

You never know...when it'll come in handy.  
 You never know...when you'll be glad it's around.  
 You never know...it might be just what you're needin';  
 A pot of gold you'll be happy you found.

**All:**

You never know, you never know, you never know!

**Karin:**

Leftover carrots and a half a cup of peas,  
 A little tuna and a chunk of cheddar cheese;  
 You throw a can of soup in,  
 And soon the gang'll troop in  
 For hotdish that is guaranteed to please! (M/V: Hot, hot hot dish)

It's sinful to be scrapping  
 All that wrinkled Christmas wrapping;  
 Just iron it until it's good as new. (M/V: iron it until it's good as new)  
 There's oodles of potential  
 In what seems inconsequential.

**All:**

Just look around; you'll realize it's true... (so true)

You never know...sometimes it's so amazing;  
 You never know...how useful something might be.  
 You never know...if you're a little creative,  
 It's almost like getting money for free.

You never know, you never know, you never know!

**Beverly:**

The same philosophy applies to people;  
 Sometimes it's best not to trust your eyes. (K/M: If you are wise.)

**B/K/M:**

The next time that you meet  
 A beggar on the street,  
 He may well be an angel in disguise. What a surprise!

**All:**

You never know...although he may seem hopeless,  
 You never know...it's probably just a facade.  
 You never know...so you should always remember.  
 That everyone's a creation of God.

We never know...when we'll be called to Heaven;  
 We never know...when our last day will be done.  
 We never know...so we should always be thankful  
 For everything and for everyone.

**K:** There's one good reason we should always be thankful.

**All:** You never know, you never know, you never know!

## SONG ENDS

**V:** (*casually to Beverly*) Oh, Beverly, I'll just take that leftover Macaroni Hotdish. I know someone who would appreciate it.

**M:** (*teasing*) Are you talking about Oscar Clementson?

**B:** Old Man Clementson?

**V:** He's not that old.

**K:** (*to Beverly*) He's our new janitor.

**B:** How do you know what Mr Clementson likes, Mrs. Snustad?

*Vivian blushes as she scrapes the leftovers into a container.*

**V:** He came to help me put up my storms last week and happened to mention it.

**B:** Oh, he did, did he?

**V:** Yes, he did, did he. And I'll thank you all to say nothing more about it. (*She is flustered and struggling with the lid of her Tupperware container.*) Oh, forevermore, they can put a man on the moon you'd think they could figure out a way to get a lid to fit.

*The Pastor enters with a piece of scrap lumber (an old table leg) as Vivian puts the Tupperware container in the fridge and pours herself a cup of coffee.*

**P:** Take a look at this. It's a leg from an old dining room table. I knew I saved it for a reason.

**M:** Better to have it and not need it, then need it and not have it, I always say.

**P:** That's right. You never know.

**M:** You never do.

**P:** It was at the bottom of the pile. Oscar is out there cleaning out the gutters, so he gave me a hand.

*Vivian suddenly perks up.*

**V:** HE IS? I mean..he is? I just remembered. I have to go get something out of the back of my Buick.

*As everyone watches she starts to exit up the stairs, the coffee pot still in her hands. She stops, crosses to the fridge, puts the coffee pot in, and starts to exit again. Suddenly she remembers the hotdish, crosses back the fridge, grabs the Tupperware, and exits.*

**K:** The times they are a changin'.

**M:** This is most certainly true!

**P:** *(As he watches her go.)* What was that about?

**M:** She had to go get something out of the back of her Buick.

**P:** Ah. So, Beverly, how long will you and Harold be in town?

**K:** Oh yes, how long are you staying?

**B:** We're going to be here for awhile, actually.

**M:** Uh, oh. Did Harry get canned?

**B:** No, it's nothing like that. *(Deciding to come clean.)* Well, OK. You know, Mrs. Hauge just got back from visiting Harry's brother, Harvey at the VA hospital in California?

**M:** Ja. I heard she visited a six bedroom model home out there selling for twenty thousand dollars!

**K:** Twenty thousand dollars! Oh, my.



**B:** Anyway, the Doctor's said Harvey probably won't ever be able to run the family farm. *(They all react)* Harry took the news really hard. I think he always feels guilty because he wasn't the one to go to Vietnam.

**K:** He had a deferment!

**B:** I know. Oh, this stupid war!

**P:** It'll be over soon. President Nixon has promised peace with honor.

**M:** It sure is wonderful to have such a wholesome, decent President in office.

**B:** Anyway, working in the Cities, Harry never really feels like he's doing his share. So, we were talking, and we both miss it here so much, and now, with Harvey .... Well, we've decided to come home to stay. The Hagues found us this beautiful little trailer: it's a Marshfield, 12 feet wide, turquoise, with the cutest little kitchen. Oh, Mom, you'll love it.

**M:** *(Mavis runs out and hugs her)* You're moving to the Hauge farm? Woo hoo – neighbors!

**P:** That's wonderful, Beverly. It will be good to have you back, although I am sorry to hear about Harvey.

**B:** Thank you, Pastor.

*Just then Vivian re-enters, whistling, with a silly grin on her face. Everyone watches her.*

**P: Mrs Snustad ? (V turns to him) Is that what you needed from the back of your Buick?**

**V:** *(She opens the tattered umbrella)* In case it rains.

**P:** Well, you never know...I'd better take this thing out there before the natives get restless....ha ha. Missionary joke. If you'll excuse me ladies. *(He exits. Mavis spots his artifact and calls after him, as Beverly notices her mother isn't smiling).*

**M:** Pastor, you forgot your thing-a-ma-jig...

**B:** Mom? Is something wrong?

**K:** Oh, Beverly. I don't know what to say. Of course, I've missed you, and it will be wonderful having you close by, especially now, with the baby... But moving back? To stay?

**V:** She's moving back? Oh, thank heavens you finally came to your senses. The Cities is a terrible place to raise a child. Ja, better here, with good, clean living, and nothing for you or your kids to do.

**K:** Sweetie, you have so many choices in your life. Many more than I did. You don't have to settle for being just a farm wife.

**M:** Hey, what's wrong with being a farm wife?

**K:** No, Mavis, that's not what I mean. It's just. Well, there's a big world out there. And the times are changing. You can do anything. Be anything. I don't want you stuck in a basement for the rest of your life.

**B:** Stuck?

**K:** No, I don't mean stuck. It's just that... I'm not making any sense. What I'm trying to say is... you could have so much more than ...this. (*Meaning the town and the basement.*)

**B:** But I love ...this. (*Also meaning the town and the basement.*)

**K:** I just want you to be sure you know what you're giving up. That's all. I don't want you to end up a Martha if maybe, just maybe, you were meant to be a Mary.

*Karin picks up the forgotten conch shell and exits into the fellowship hall.*

**B:** What is she talking about?

**M:** You remember the story in the Bible about the two sisters, Mary and Martha? Mary was the one who sat visiting with the men folk while Martha ran around like a chicken with her head cut off, feeding everyone, serving them second helpings, and then doing all the cleanup?

**B:** Yes. I did go to Sunday School, you know.

**V:** Why Jesus didn't tell Mary to get up and help her sister is beyond me.

**M:** Well, since then, women have tended to be either "Marys" or "Marthas". Even here at church. The Marys click around in their high heels and lead the devotions...

**V:** Introduce the speaker...

**M:** ...play the piano.

**B:** Like the Pastor's wife?

**V:** Exactly like the Pastor's new wife. It's not her calling to work in the kitchen.

**B:** Has anyone ever asked her? (*Vivian reacts*)

*V: Ah ha ha ha.....Cute!*

**M:** And then there's the Marthas, that's us. The gals "behind the scenes." We make the coffee...

**V:** And set the tables....

**B:** (*Catching on.*) And *dust* the piano.

**M:** Exactly.

*Karin enters*

**K:** They have Pastor doing a fertility dance.

*She exits.*

**M:** Your mom got married at 19 and, except for a brief stint at Bible College....

**V:** ...down in the Cities....

**M:** ...she's never really left here. She loves your father, but I think part of her feels she got stuck being a Martha, when maybe, if she'd done things differently, she might have been a Mary.

**B:** Like if she'd married the Larson boy.

**M:** Exactly! Like if she'd married the Larson boy.

**V:** He's a Doctor in Duluth now, you know.

**B:** Is that why it was so important to her that I get my degree?

**M:** Probably.

**B:** How come she never told me how she felt?

*Karin has re-entered.*

**K:** We're Scandinavian. We don't have feelings.

**B:** Mom? I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you.

**K:** Oh, Beverly. I'm sorry. Don't pay any attention to me. You just surprised me, I guess. I surprised me. My generation got so many mixed messages when we were young, we hardly knew which way was up. On one hand we were told to be wives and mothers, and on the other, we had Rosie the Riveter telling us to go off and work in a munitions plant somewhere.

**M:** We can do it!

**K:** I didn't realize how much I was counting on you to do the things I didn't. Never mind.

**B:** But I always thought you were happy with how your life turned out.

**K:** I am. But you know, I guess part of me hoped you'd go off to the Cities, have a career, own a split level and then, when your old mom came to visit, you'd take me out to a fancy department store and charge everything. But I'll settle for Sunday dinners and grandkids who live down the road. I am glad you're moving back. And Dad will be thrilled! And I am happy with how my life turned out.

**B:** What about you, Mrs Gilmerson? Are you happy with how your life turned out?

**M:** Absolutely. Get up, work hard, have some fun, go to bed.

**B:** Mrs. Snustad? Are you happy?

**V:** Happy? We're Lutheran. Happiness has nothing to do with it.

All: This is most certainly true!

*They sing.*

**SONG: Mary/Martha**

**M:** Listen, kiddo, let me tell you what it's all about:  
You want to know if everyone is happy with the way life turned out,  
but you won't find the answer that you're lookin' for,  
'cause happiness is more than a prize that you find behind  
door number one—like I said, it's about having fun.

**V:** (*spoken*) Fun? What are you now, Catholic?

**B/K:** BINGO!

**V:** Now, fun has its place, but let's not forget we're called to work.

**(Others:** Let's not forget that we're called to work!)

As Lutherans, we're duty-bound to cut on through the mud and the murk.

**(Others:** We're cutting through the mud and the murk!)

For the people out there, overseas is their mission,  
but those of us in here, it's not that! No, we're called to keep the  
kitchen running smoothly—

**M:** —and believe me, this life has its perks!

**V, M, K:** Some women like to address the crowd,  
they stand up to be counted; they're rightly proud.  
Other women work from behind the scenes.  
It depends on how their tendencies lean.

And ev'ry kind of gal on the street  
has got a story she'll repeat,  
but in the kitchen the heat  
will lead you right into the  
meat of the matter and you'll  
know what kind of sister she is!

Though Mary knows the right thing to say,  
at the end of the day  
you'll find her fading away from the stress.  
But Martha's got her feet on the ground.  
She's the one you want around  
when it's time to get down and get dirty,  
like when you have to feed a hundred and thirty!  
Her apron and her shoes are sensible and sturdy,  
she's not afraid to make a mess, no, no, no!  
Everyone serves a purpose,  
we all have our talents, each and ev'ry one.

**M:** But why be Mary when  
Martha's havin' all of the fun?

**K:** Now, I'd always hoped that there'd be more in store for me.  
**(Others:** There'd be more in store for me.)  
The way things were changing, I thought I'd better wait and see.  
**(Others:** Wait and see, you'd better wait and see!)  
Now I think I finally found the answers I sought.

This journey with my friends had been sweet, and it eventually brought me along, and I know that this is where I belong!

**V, M, K, B:** Though Mary knows the right thing to say,  
at the end of the day  
you'll find her fading away from the stress.  
But Martha's got her feet on the ground.  
She's the one you want around  
when it's time to get down and get dirty,  
like when you have to feed two hundred and thirty!  
From her apron to her shoes, she's sensible and sturdy,  
she's not afraid to make a mess, no, no, no!

Everyone serves a purpose,  
we all have our talents, each and ev'ry one.

**M, K:** But why be Mary when  
Martha's havin' all of the fun?

*DIALOGUE SECTION:*

**B:** What about the men? Can a man be a Martha?

**V:** Men do not belong in the kitchen, just as women do not belong behind the pulpit.

**B:** Hey! Jesus served fish.

*Pastor enters.*

**P:** Ladies. The missionaries wanted me to thank you for all the wonderful service you provided.

**B:** Pastor, we were just talking about how men do not belong in the kitchen.

**V:** Oh, well, Pastor's not a man.

**M:** He doesn't even have a pick-up.

*SONG RESUMES .*

**Women:** Everyone serves a purpose,  
we all have our talents, each and ev'ry one.

**M, K, B:** But why be Mary when  
Martha's havin' all of the fun?

**K:** Rosie said, "We can do it!"  
but it doesn't mean we oughta.  
I don't think I would change a thing in  
my life or my daughter's!

**M, K, B:** Why be Mary when  
Martha's havin' all the fun?

**M:** *(spoken)* Come on, sing with us, Pastor!

**M, K, B, P:** Why be Mary when  
Martha's havin' all the fun?

**V:** There's still some work to be done!

**M, K, B, P:** *(Vivian joins tentatively)* Why be Mary when  
Martha's havin' all the fun?

**P:** You gals are second to none!

**All:** Why be Mary when you know Martha  
Is the one who is havin' all the fun?  
Oh, yeah.

**SONG ENDS**

**INTERMISSION**

